

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

Rethinking Cannes: A Study of the Debate on the Cultural and Ideological Aspects of
Commercial Advertising in China

by

Melody Qian Song

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION STUDIES

CALGARY, ALBERTA

MAY, 2000

©Melody Q. Song 2000



National Library
of Canada

Acquisitions and
Bibliographic Services

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada

Acquisitions et
services bibliographiques

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Your file Votre référence

Our file Notre référence

The author has granted a non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of this thesis in microform, paper or electronic formats.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de cette thèse sous la forme de microfiche/film, de reproduction sur papier ou sur format électronique.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

0-612-55173-3

Canada

Abstract

The thesis involves a content analysis of the debate within the Chinese advertising community on China's defeat in the Cannes International Advertising Festival. In this study, I examine the relationships among actors in the project of modernity in China and the way they deal with international and domestic hegemonic forces during China's transition to a market economy. The result shows that advertising media, being cross-boundary between culture and economy, is appropriated for different political ends. To insure its powerful status, the Chinese government exerts the notion of "advertising with Chinese characteristics" through the discourse of cultural advertising for subtle ideological communication of a nationalistic discourse based on tradition. However, the Chinese government overlooks the way changes in economy will eventually influence and be influenced by changes in culture and ideology as shown in the case of advertising where professionals challenge elitism with professional solidarity that overrode the former boundaries of ideology.

Acknowledgment

I wish to thank Dr. Alan Smart, my supervisor, for walking me through the thesis process. I am also grateful to the faculties in the Department of Communications Studies at the University of Calgary for their help and financial support.

To my parents, Hao Song and Yanli Liu

Table of Content

Approval Page.....	ii
Abstract.....	iii
Acknowledgements.....	iv
Dedication.....	v
Table of Contents.....	vi
List of Abbreviations.....	vii
List of Terms in Pin Yin	viii
 CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	 1
Purpose of the Study.....	1
Choosing A Site.....	5
Research Questions.....	7
Methodology.....	8
Structure of the Thesis.....	10
 CHAPTER TWO: BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW.....	 12
Introduction.....	12
Modernity and Modernization.....	14
Historic Overview of Modernity and the State in China.....	20
Modernity and Confucianism: the East Asian Model.....	28
Modernity in Post-Mao China.....	31
Modernity and Advertising Media in China.....	34
Summary.....	42
 CHAPTER THREE: FINDINGS.....	 44
Introducing Chinese Advertising to the World.....	44
An Overview of the Chinese Advertising Market.....	47
The Discourse of Cultural Advertising.....	50
Advertising with Chinese Characteristics.....	55
The Market Perspective.....	62
Summary.....	68
 CHAPTER FOUR: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION.....	 70
Ideological Communication and “Ads with Chinese Characteristics”.....	70
Award Winning and Official Occidentalism.....	74
North, South and Beyond.....	76
Turning Right with the Left Turn Signal.....	80
Conclusion.....	87
 Endnotes.....	 91
Bibliography.....	93
Appendix: Examples of Ads with Traditional Appeals.....	99

List of Abbreviations

CAA	the Chinese Advertising Association
CCP	the Chinese Communist Party

List of Terms in Pin Yin

<u>Pinyin Terms</u>	<u>Chinese Translation</u>	<u>Applicable English Translation</u>
chong yang mei wai	崇洋媚外	admiring for anything foreign
chu guo re	出国热	leave the country fever
gang chang ming Jiao	纲常名教	the rules of personal conduct and the doctrine of names
He Shang	河殇	
jiegui	(与国际)接轨	docking with international practices
Jingji Ribao	经济日报	
li	利	profit
li (social etiquette)	礼	social etiquette
luan	乱	chaos
quanxi	关系	personal network
Shi Chang Yi Shu	《市场艺术》	
ti-yong	体用	
Wen Hui Bao	《文汇报》	
yi (trust and loyalty)	义	trust and loyalty
Yi Di	夷狄	barbarian foreign lands
yue shi minzu de, jiu yue shi shijie de	越是民族的，就越是 世界的	The essence of a national culture belongs to the world
zang, jia, su, yang	脏，假，俗，洋	dirty, phony, vulgar, and foreign
Zhong Guo	中国	the Middle Kingdom
zhong xue wei ti, xi xue wei yong	中学为体，西学为用	Chinese learning as substance and Western learning as application

Chapter 1. Introduction

Purpose of the study

In this thesis, I undertake a contextual analysis of ideological and cultural changes as represented in China's advertising industry for the construction of Chinese experiences of modernity in the latter half of the 1990s. I have chosen this subject for both personal and academic reasons.

Growing up in China in the 1980s, I have witnessed many changes the country has gone through due to mass commercialization, in part as a result of increased international exchange. Looking back, it was exciting to live through the transition from a closed, rigid society to an open, more rigorous one in the sense of both economy and culture¹. I still remember the times when my family went to the state-run cooperative to get our quota of food. Life was not hard, but it was linear. Choice was limited. One could either study hard enough to go to university and become a state cadre in a state-run institution or become a farmer or a factory worker after a certain number of years of education. Reform started in 1979, first with the privatization of agriculture in rural areas; then, in cities with policies that encouraged private businesses and entrepreneurship. Most importantly, the fate of the individual no longer had to be connected with the state. Life was filled with new possibilities and dreams that were not only economic in nature.

Along with foreign capital and technologies, foreign cultures, images, ideas rushed in. Threatened by the pressure from global capitalism, the Chinese government has undergone several movements that vilified Western ideological influence as the "spiritual pollution" in an effort to maintain socialist identity of the nation-state. At the same time,

among ordinary Chinese, the desire to travel to other countries formed an immense *chu guo re* (leave-the-country fever) and *chong yang mei wai* (admiration for anything foreign) accompanied by a continuous dissatisfaction with the lagging political reform and the lack of political rights. Such sympathy with Western capitalism was captured and elevated to the public sphere by the once hit TV series on Chinese television—*He Shang* in 1988. *He Shang* held Chinese traditional culture responsible for problems and dissatisfaction in contemporary Chinese society and proposed that China should adopt a wholly Western model in order to be truly modern and prosperous². The following year, the democratic movement of June 4th pushed the popular dissatisfaction to a new height but was tragically suppressed by the state government. Hence, as Stross (1990) stated: “great change in one sphere of individuals’ personal lives—the economic—may well have contributed to dissatisfaction that extended to other spheres, both the personal and the political” (p. 502).

In fact, behind all the excitement and turmoil, there has been one desire that is the most prevalent among important groups in the economic, social, and political circles in China, that is the desire to be modern while at the same time keep the uniqueness of a Chinese identity. However, different groups of domestic actors serving different political goals are not isomorphic in their efforts to construct their versions of a Chinese modernity. The most powerful among these groups is the Chinese government that articulates a nationalistic discourse with an emphasis on the socialist nation-state and total denial of Western ideological influence.

Another important group is the Chinese intelligentsia in non-governmental institutions who have been trying to incorporate some of the Western ideas into the contemporary Chinese society while at the same time using such a discourse to promote a counter-hegemony. Although some extremists of this group were suppressed during the June 4th movement, Chinese intellectuals continue to take on the responsibility of finding answers to historical and contemporary social problems and advocate that a balance be achieved in appropriating both Chinese and Western ideological and cultural elements (Li, 1992, p. 124).

Local cultural communities also constitute an enormous force in constructing a Chinese modernity especially in the front of popular culture. For example, as Tao (1999) observed, the Chinese rock'n roll community has been transformed from a few singers with mere imitation of the West in the 1980s to multiple groups from all over the country who developed multiple styles of their own. The blooming of rock'n roll groups in many urban entertainment spaces also pushed the development of China's own popular music production industry in the latter half of the 1990s.

Last but not the least, Chinese entrepreneurs and business professionals respond to the call of the government to build a "market economy with Chinese characteristics" by borrowing and co-operating with Western capitalists and carefully steering around the ideological issues.

From a broader perspective, changes in China did not just happen in a vacuum. As soon as Deng Xiao Ping announced his "open policy", China, like many other countries, was "propelled into a global order no one fully understands, but which is making its

effects felt on all of us” (Giddens, 1999, speech given on BBC). Central to such effects is the question of identity. Many believe that transnational communication allows hegemonic forces to deprive nations of their cultural subjectivities which lead advertisements to possible cultural convergence. Among these forces is a single Western version of modernity. Nevertheless, in *Global Modernities*, Featherstone (1996) and other scholars proposed that contemporary global conditions were multi-centered and multi-lateral compared with the imperialist period. Thus, modernity should also be considered on a spatial dimension as well as temporal. With the shift of global power away from the West, we should now talk about global modernities in plural terms rather than singular modernity. I think it is important to further explore this thesis by investigating a local situation and see how a specific modernity is constructed by local actors.

Furthermore, from the global point of view, an examination of Chinese modernity can also be regarded as a reception study in a broader sense with China at the receiving end against various global hegemonic forces. As Ien Ang (1996) reminded us, many studies of media production and reception often isolate the moment of the contact of the audience with the media and ignore the “embeddedness of ‘audience activity’ in a complex work of ongoing cultural practices and relationship” (p. 36). Grossberg (1996) also criticized some cultural studies traditions for their focus only on production and consumption processes rather than the conditions that constitute the context of cultural production and consumption. Therefore, according to Ang (1996), we should recognize the open-endedness of cultural studies and look for provisional answers “informed by

ethnographic sensitivity to how structural changes become integrated in specific cultural forms and practices, under specific historical circumstances” (p. 143).

I hope that by examining the relationships among different actors in China with regard to the construction of the Chinese modernity, this research study would serve as a test for some of these new theories regarding the contemporary global system while at the same time providing some indications on ideological and cultural trends in China’s development in the future.

Choosing a site

The purpose of the study provides both the criteria for choosing a site to conduct a practical research project and to design a method for conducting it. It is clear that it would be too ambitious and quite impossible to design a project that would include all those involved in China’s modernization. Hence, I decided to investigate the field of commercial advertising and focus on two groups—government (since government recognition is a condition in every walk of life in China) and advertising professionals and journalists in the Chinese advertising community.

I found that some unique characteristics of commercial advertising made it quite an encompassing and representative subject to investigate. Commercial advertising refers to a form of paid publicity for goods and services. However, commercial advertising has already gone beyond simple announcement of product information. It has become a form of representation of consumer culture in transforming our materialistic needs to symbolic, social needs. Despite its economic value, commercial advertising has ideological

function. As a cultural representation, it also has leaky boundaries with popular culture^{3,6}.

In China, where nationalistic ideology of the nation-state dictates every sphere of life, commercial advertising is regarded as an import from the capitalist West who possesses a potential conflict with the official ideology. Therefore, it is constantly under government scrutiny.

A debate among advertising professionals, researchers, and pro-official scholars on the ideological positioning of the advertising media provided me a great opportunity to study the tension between the government and Chinese advertising community, between Western influence and local groups, and among other contextual factors in the production and regulation of commercial advertising that would satisfy my original intention of the thesis. This debate from 1996 onward was invoked by successive failures of China's participation in the Cannes International Advertising Festival. Since the beginning of the 1990s, China has been exerting efforts to be in line with international practices in order to negotiate its entrance to the WTO. Participation in international contests has gradually become a way for the Chinese government to benchmark China's progress of internationalization. Under such circumstances, China participated for the first time in the 1996 and the 1997 Cannes International Advertising Festival. Participating advertisements reflected a revitalization of traditional culture and according to the official discourse were selected to represent "advertising with Chinese characteristics" However, none of the Chinese pieces received awards for two years in a row. The disappointment prompted advertising professionals to reflect on the notion of "advertising with Chinese characteristics", the intention of participating in international contests, as well as

problems within the advertising community itself. I believe that a closer examination of the local response to the Cannes disappointment through the debate on local advertising journals may reflect certain aspects of the current state of Chinese commercial advertising and provide some illuminations on the larger question of cultural identity under current domestic and global conditions.

Research Questions

From the analysis of the purpose of the study and selection of topic, the core question for the proposed study is as follows:

How is commercial advertising in China influenced by cultural and ideological forces in the latter half of the 1990s?

Related to the core questions are the following three sets of more focused questions:

1. What were the circumstances within Chinese advertising community during the latter half of the 1990s when the debate occurred?
 - Who are involved in the construction of a Chinese advertising industry?
 - What are the norms and constraints in the Chinese advertising industry?
2. How do local discourses construct and deconstruct the notion of “advertising with Chinese characteristics” from the debate on China’s disappointment in its participation in the 1996 and 1997 Cannes International Advertising Festival?

What cultural and ideological implications can be drawn from these discourses?

 - What were the main issues and different views towards these issues voiced in the debate?

- For whose ends do the two sides of the debate serve?
 - In building “advertising with Chinese characteristics”, what constitutes “Chinese characteristics”? Are there different versions of “Chinese characteristics”?
 - What is the importance of the debate on participation in and winning international contests for the Chinese advertising community
3. What is China's policy towards advertising and cultural change?
- What is the role of the government in the advertising industry?
 - What is the relationship between the government and the local advertising community?

Methodology

I have chosen the method of discourse analysis for several reasons. First, I believe that only qualitative data will answer my research questions. As I mentioned before, I am interested in how cultures are formed and how changes are made, not just what and why. No quantitative data would be sufficient to examine the practices and processes I intend to investigate. Furthermore, unlike many existing studies of advertising reception and production, I am not going to focus on the advertising text, but the context in which advertising is being produced. Many contextual inquiries can only be informed by qualitative findings.

Second, not until I had started field research in China did I realize that methods involving participant observation and interview had to be eliminated due to

inaccessibility and a cultural lack of understanding for research study in China.

Therefore, a discourse analysis is the most accessible method, which is also in comply with the time frame and scale of this study.

Such study is also not without precedent. A similar study is Xiaomei Chen's study on the TV series *He Shang* in which she analyze discourses that emerged from the media debate on the ideological and cultural implications of the series.

One limitation of the method is that the study of the discourse generated from a single event can be vulnerable compared to a multiple case study. As warned by Yin (1994), a single case might not be representative enough to inform larger theoretical questions. Nonetheless, I believe that the Cannes debate qualifies for the exception. It is unique and the most illuminating on the question of the social construction of "advertising with Chinese characteristics". Without the Cannes disappointment, such a debate may never have appeared in the Chinese media.

The research procedure consists of data collection and data analysis. The debate provoked by China's frustration over failures in Cannes had lasted for four years from 1996 to 1999. Most of the articles and reports presented here were collected from major advertising journals and essay collections published during 1997 and 1998. To increase the reliability of this thesis research, I have searched through all advertising journals available in China's National Library. Among these journals, China Advertising Yearbook is published by the official Xinhua News Agency; Modern Advertising is issued by Chinese Advertising Association in Beijing; and Chinese Advertising—the earliest and one of the most influential journals is published independently in Shanghai.

Other journals—Advertising Panorama, Advertising World, and Advertising Pointer are issued by media organizations in Jiangsu Province, Shenzhen, and Beijing respectively. Materials presented consist of articles by advertising professionals, advertising researchers and journalists, as well as interviews with government officials and personnel related to the festival⁴.

Media materials are analyzed in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4. In Chapter 3, materials are grouped into common themes that emerged from the debate and the two sides of the debate are described. In Chapter 4, the relationship between the two sides is further explored and explained. In the analysis, I am more interested to examine the interface of text and context rather than just the text because this discourse analysis focuses less on the linguistic proper, but more on the ideological and political dimension of the media message. According to Dijk (1991), media texts are representations of the beliefs of their writers and based on general social-cognitive schemata that are monitored by group-based ideologies. Therefore, social cognition, or how different groups arrive at their constructions of “advertising with Chinese characteristics” was paid special attention in the analysis of this research.

Structure of the thesis

In this Chapter, I have stated the purpose of the study and the general theoretical framework, the rationale for choosing commercial advertising as a site of investigation, research questions to be addressed by the thesis as well as methodological concerns. In Chapter 2, I will elaborate on the theoretical framework of the thesis and review

literatures on the background and various discourses on Chinese modernity and Chinese commercial advertising. Chapter 3 will be dedicated to the detailed description of the debate the findings. Finally, Chapter 4 will conclude the thesis by an analysis of the findings and of how they answer the research questions.

Some Chinese terms in the thesis are kept with Chinese phonetic system—*Pin Yin* (i.e. *ti yong*, *Zhong Guo*, etc.) to capture their original concept. *Pin Yin* terms used in this thesis are used according to the standard usage provided by the Xin Hua dictionary. Corresponding Chinese characters of these terms is provided in the List of *Pin Yin* Terms at the beginning of the thesis. Translations are provided in parenthesis following the words. All translations, unless otherwise identified, are my own.

Chapter 2. Background and Literature Review

Introduction

When Qin Shi Huang—the first emperor of China—founded the first unified state of China in 221 B. C. , he also ended the period known as “a hundred schools of thought”. One school of thought, Confucianism, was chosen as the ideological principle for the state and remained to be the only one in China for more than two thousand years of feudal domination. Not until Chinese society became half-feudal and half-colonial after the “Opium War” in 1840 was the deep-rooted Confucian tradition challenged by value systems from the West. Since then, as Dr. Liangyu Li (1992) observed, “any social change in the modern history of China has been influenced by the West” (p. 132, translation). As a result, the focus of the discourse of modernity in contemporary China has always been on the confrontation between Western modernity and Confucian tradition.

Before I go into the discussion of literature, it is necessary to point out that much of the literature on these debated confrontations refer simply to “modernity” in place of “Western modernity” as I put it, because “modernity” was, for the most part, seen as essentially a Western model. In many cross-cultural studies, this one-version modernity was often used with other old terms (such as First/Third world division, center/periphery, East/West opposition) that were borrowed from theories of imperialism. Nevertheless, old terms and assumptions, according to Grossberg (1996), overlook the changing global conditions that constitute the context of cultural production and consumption. Robertson (1992) tried to capture the “changing global conditions” through the concept of

globalization which he defined to “refer both to the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole (p. 8). Although the concept of globalization is still problematic because no one has been able to describe the shape of it, Tomlinson (1991) was able to note two distinctions between contemporary global change and imperialistic models. First, the new concept does not have a villain. It is hard to find anybody to blame for the outcome of globalization. Second, globalization has gone beyond the boundaries of nation-states as suggested by the rise of regional corporations, the global financial system, transnational corporation, and mass migration. He asserted:

For all that it is ambiguous between economic and political senses, the idea of imperialism contains, at least, the notion of a purposeful project: the intended spread of a social system from one center of power across the globe. The idea of "globalization" suggests interconnection and interdependency of all global areas which happens in a far less purposeful way. . . . More importantly, the effects of globalization are to weaken the cultural coherence of *all* individual nation-states, including the economically powerful ones—the "imperialist powers" of a previous era (p. 175).

I believe that the reason why globalization is especially important for those of us in the Third World, no matter how vague a concept it might be, is that it described the change in global conditions that marked the end of Westerncentrism. With increasing flows of people, money, machineries, images and ideas, people begin to question the singular “History”, or the singular “Modernity”. As Featherstone (1995) pointed out, with the shift of global power away from the West, we should talk about *histories* and

modernities in plural terms. Let's also not forget the temporal dimension of modernity and note that it is also problematic to use old assumptions since they belong to their own historical time.

Therefore, the purpose of the review of the old and new approaches is to establish modernities in plural and then to search for an alternative narration of Chinese modernity at the very end of the twentieth century. In order to do so, I will first deliver a historical overview of the theories on modernity and modernization. Then, I will go through the key schools of thought on Chinese modernity and their critiques. Finally, I will review the literature on Chinese advertising, its relevance to the theory of Chinese modernity, and the significance of this specific study to the body of literature under examination.

Modernity and modernization

Before discussing modernity in China in detail, it is necessary to distinguish the concept of modernity from the concept of modernization in relation to the Third World. As Robertson (1992) noted, models that were previously applied only to intra-societal structures of relations between societies were used in theorizing what was called "international stratification" (p. 5). To be more specific, the previous European debates on the pros and cons of modern life were translated into the modernization of the under-developed Third World. As an influential social theory during the 1950s and 1960s, the modernization approach discusses

trends towards integration into a cosmopolitan, homogeneous "one world" and focuses its attention on the nation-state. The latter is assumed to be an

autonomous, independent, sovereign entity, since formal political colonialism has all but disappeared. This approach tends to blame internal constraints--traditional values, beliefs, and institutions--for keeping societies backward, irrational, low achieving, or in other ways "inferior" to the rich industrialized nation (Anderson, 1984, p. 40).

Modernization theory assumes that: 1) modernity is essentially Western, 2) tradition is the only impediment to modernity, and 3) modernity is the cultural fate of all societies. Several characteristics of modernity lead to these assumptions.

Theories on modernity all seem to agree that modernity involves a shift from the "traditional" way of life to a new, better way of life because of technological advancement and changes in economic structure. This new, better way of life engages a set of principles that emphasizes rationality, order, the state, control, and the belief in progress. In Weberian terms, modernity can be described as a transition from a living philosophy of world-adjustment to world-mastery. Among the evidence provided by Weber to support his thesis was a study on modernity and modernization in China. Through this study which was the first of its kind to compare Chinese culture with that of the West, Weber established that Protestant ethics contributed to the rise of capitalism while non-Protestant traditions, Confucianism, for example, retarded such processes. He argued that:

The Chinese lacked the central, religiously determined, and rational method of life which came from within and which was characteristic of the classical Puritan. For the latter, economic success was not an ultimate goal...but a means (for serving God... The Confucian) gentleman was "not a tool"; that is,

in his adjustment to the world and his self-perfection he was an end unto himself, not a means for any functional end. This core of Confucian ethics rejected...training in economics for the pursuit of profit... Confucian rationalism meant rational adjustment to the world; Puritan rationalism meant rational mastery of the world (quoted in Tai, 1989, p. 9).

Weber's conclusion provided the basis for modernization theory that saw local tradition as the main factor of local economic underdevelopment and an essentially Western modernity as the emancipation from traditional domination.

Another theme that is central to modernization theory is the belief in modernity as the cultural fate for all societies. Apart from the assumption that modernity is inevitable in terms of the objective structures of the free market, some scholars (Berman, 1983; Anderson, 1984; Berger, 1974) also believe that the reason all societies are "condemned to modernity" is because the Third World had caught up with the narrative of development, a concept "with clear beginning in the culture of the West" (Tomlinson, 1991, p. 153). According to this view, modernity is seen as an *experience* brought by structural changes of the market system. Such experience brings people into a process of self-development. And as Tomlinson (1991) put it: "social structures can be changed, but individual self-development is a one-way journey" (p. 151).

These assumptions of modernization theory roll into a homogenizing model of globalization. It describes the global production process as "the ever rolling march of the old form of commodification, the old form of globalization, fully in the keeping of the West, which is simply able to absorb everybody else within its drive" (quoted in

Grossberg, 1996, p. 173). Yet, I agree with recent studies in social theories of globalization that found these old assumptions problematic.

When drawing from theories of modernity, modernization theory failed to recognize the discontent or ambiguity embedded in modernity itself (Tomlinson, 1991). Global cultural fatalism that sees the spread of Western modernity as based on objective structures of modernity and the perception that Third World countries had to accept the cultural consequence of economic development as if the force of modernity had become an irrevocable force on its own. Arguing against this idea, Tomlinson (1991) suggested that the spread of modernity should be also based on the narrative of development and the notion of social imaginary of a better life. With the lack of qualitative cultural goals, this idea of imaginary thought is always in movement of wanting more. This kind of narrative puts human agency back in the discourse of modernity. Therefore, the subordination of Third World countries to the West is because they are not “allowed” autonomy at the level of social imaginary as a result of the exporting of Western social imaginaries. Tomlinson (1991) emphasized that modernity was more of a choice rather than an imposition (as seen by critiques of Cultural Imperialism), although such choice has its inherent weakness. This weakness had already shown in the discontent of modernity in the West caused by individual autonomy. For example, Marx, Durkheim and Weber described modernity as “alienation” and the “iron cage”. According to Tomlinson (1991), the reason for the discontent was that modernity was based on a narrow principle of instrumental reason that lay at the heart of social institutions. He also drew from Habermas’s work that attributed the discontent of modernity to the “colonization of the

lifeworld” by system and institution. Institution dominates social existence in place of the “tradition” and results in the failure of the cultural process of meaning generation. As Tomlinson (1991) concluded:

As global cultures fall into the conditions of modernity through the spread of the institutions of modernity, they all face the same problem of the failure of a collective will to generate shared narratives of meaning and orientation (p. 165).

The demand for localization, he further argued, is a demand for the qualitative cultural goals of the social imaginary to fill the hole the process of modernity left in the center of culture. The predicament of modernity is open to challenge by our power of cultural agency.

Postmodernist theorists such as Featherstone (1995) asserted that postmodernism spoke to the growing awareness of the limits of the project of modernity. Featherstone (1996) argued that if we observed everyday life, we could still find “shared deeply cherished classifications people use as a form of the sacred” and that “modernity has not meant a loss of magic and enchantment or a reduction of the fictional use of symbolic classifications in local institutions” (p. 59). In a sense, postmodernity is not a new era, but the Western awareness of what Featherstone (1996) called “everyday aesthetic”. What has been going on, then, in non-Western societies?

Indeed, as King (1995) noted, all the characteristics of postmodernity had existed in cities in colonial societies for decades or even centuries. Other societies could have constructed modernity in different ways in the first place. In an effort to bring in a third-

world perspective, Wallerstein criticized the modernization approach for being only comparative, “with Western societies as the major reference points” (quoted in Robertson, 1992, p. 32). Robertson (1992) further argued that the examples of Meiji Japan and Russia of Peter the Great showed that modernity was not a project exclusive to the West. He observed that:

“latecomers” to the project of modernization (conceived somewhat more broadly than in mainstream modernization theory) were particularly prone to various dilemmas as to which images of modernity should guide them from where, in relation to the important issue of national identity, they should select the pieces of such images... modernization had been an ongoing problem for virtually all societies (Robertson, 1992, p. 12).

In the similar vain, Therborn (1995) suggested four passes of entry to modernity instead of one in the metanarrative of the modernization theory: the pioneering route of Europe through revolution or reform; the New Worlds route of America through independence from Europe and its traditions; the imposed or eternally induced modernization in different regions in Asia by external threat and selective imports; and the route of colonial zone in former colonial territories by conquest, subjection and appropriation.

In “Who needs postmodernism”, Anthony King (1995) asserted that modernities are different from the Eurocentric “modernity”. They are not only spatially defined but also temporally defined and can be further categorized into technological, economical, social

and cultural modernities. There is no postmodernity, he argued, “only modernities in different spaces and times”.

My research will be based on these new assumptions of modernization and modernities. Of course, I do realize that it is dangerous to romanticize the local construction of modernity and ignore Western hegemony and the exporting of Western modernity through economic domination and media penetration⁵. In the local construction of modernity, the Western force is always a major force. However, what I am interested in is how cultural and ideological forces in their local specificity appropriate both Western and traditional influences that affect the construction of a Chinese modernity. The term “modernization” mentioned in the thesis will refer to the process that China was going through to modernity rather than what it means in modernization theory.

Historic overview of modernity and the state in China

As I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, studies on modernity in China, whether they are about Western modernity or an alternative Chinese modernity, are debates on the confrontation of the traditional and the modern, the East and the West. Central to the debate on this confrontation is the issue of identity. More specifically, it is the question of what it means to be Chinese, what does the identity of Chinese mean to the project of modernity throughout Chinese modern history and what is the relation of this identity with the Western influence?

China in Chinese is *Zhong Guo* which literally means “Middle Kingdom”. It is not just a coincidence that the name of the country also reflects a sort of “center mentality”, as Ci (1994, p. 33) called it, of Chinese people towards their culture. Wu (1992) pointed out that this center mentality could be traced back to even before the Qin Dynasty when Mencius, another earlier Chinese philosopher, first used the word *Zhong Guo*. With the concept of the “Middle Kingdom”, according to Wu (1992), Mencius established the center/periphery binary where the center was China—the most superior culture on earth and the periphery was *Yi Di*—the barbarian foreign lands. This image of self and the other remained for centuries to a point that Chinese almost refused to look further beyond their own borders within which the only “true” culture was preserved. As Ci (1994) observed, before 1840, China “exuded a serene self-sufficiency, an indifference to difference” (p. 43).

Then came the Opium War, during which Chinese were forced, at gun point by Western imperialists, to see the superiority of foreign technology and to realize their subordinate half-colonial status. “For Chinese, to lose their center mentality was to lose an integral part of their cultural self-identity”, noted Ci (1994, p. 33). He continued: “What happened after the Opium War was the progressive disjunction of China’s self-identity and self-respect, with its concomitant center mentality” (p. 33). China had to give up the traditional model—namely, Confucianism in order to catch up with the West. At the same time, it was also reluctant to adopt capitalism that stirred up bad memories of imperialists. Furthermore, capitalism still could not restore the center mentality to Chinese, but would only keep China inferior to Western capitalists. This was why,

argued Ci (1994) and Wu (1992), China embraced Marxism—a Western model free of bad memories. More importantly, according to its narration of the progression of history, Marxism placed China with its new communist identity in a stage ahead of the West and in a way restored the center mentality. The adoption of Marxism also marked a major paradigm shift from what Weber called world-adjustment to world-mastery, a shift to modernity. This was where China was caught in the concept of “development” and where China began to catch up economically and technologically with a West that was “behind” China politically and culturally.

Ci (1994) believed that what went wrong after 1949 was an internal weakness in the utopian model of Marxism:

What made the West technologically advanced was precisely what Marx the Hegelian rejected and what China, following Marx, resisted—namely, the self-sufficient principle of capital, or the autonomous operation of the market. China resisted it first through its own tradition, then through Marxism. With his outlook of world-mastery, one that he shared with capitalism, Marx made the development of productive forces one of Mao’s overwhelming obsessions. But, Marx also taught Mao what turned out in the long run to be the least effective way of going about it (p. 53).

After Marxism failed to bring the reality to match China’s self-indulgence of its superiority over the Western other, another disjunction occurred that caused an identity crisis similar to the first one after the Opium War, except that this time the reason was

very much internal. Now facing a very different capitalism since its last imperialistic appearance, would China embrace capitalism? And more important, how would it?

Ever since China realized its subordinating status after the Opium War, it had been trying to regain its subjectivity. However, the elite class of China who was actively seeking a way to do so saw an identity dilemma because they often contradicted modernity with cultural identity. Therefore, among the Chinese intellectuals, “there has been in China an ongoing debate on the role of social ethics in China’s modernization, traditionalists on the one hand and anti-traditionalists on the other” (Cheng, 1989, p. 61). Traditionalists adopted a *ti-yong* formula in an effort to resolve the conflict between China’s cultural identity which they want to preserve and Western models of modernization which they see as necessary in the economic advancement of China. Ci (1994) explained the *ti-yong* formula:

Zhong xue wei ti, xi xue wei yong (Chinese learning as substance, and Western learning as application), which proposed the opportunistic compromise of sticking to the Chinese way in what was supposedly important (*ti*) but adopting the Western way in what was necessary for self-preservation yet supposedly of merely practical significance (*yong*). . . . The *ti-yong* formula was supposed to safeguard the integrity of the Chinese way of life by separating cultural essence from mere practicality, ends from means, what was really important from what was not (p. 26, p. 28).

A movement as a result of *ti-yong* was the short-lived reform of the Emperor *Guangxu* of Qing Dynasty which looked to Meiji Japan as a model (*yong*). Confucianism

was the *ti* at that time. Although the reform was unsuccessful, the *ti-yong* formula continued to prevail even after a new Chinese government decided to take on the new identity of Marxism. *Ti* then became Mao's version of Marxism. Mao introduced *ti-yong* in a different term—"appropriation". He believed that China could maintain its socialist identity while appropriating what was the best of the West and rejecting what was the worst. *Ti-yong* was also reflected in Deng's slogan of "socialist market economy, or market economy with Chinese characteristic". In fact, *ti-yong* has been the official discourse of China's modernization even until today.

Ci (1994) nevertheless pointed out that the *ti-yong* formula was an idealistic model that ignored and denied the need for ideological and cultural change. He asserted:

Not surprisingly their naïve belief that Western technology could be taken over without its corresponding institutions and values was matched by a lack of apprehension that the successful adoption of Western methods of production would give rise to new social relations and values that would challenge the Chinese cultural tradition (Ci, 1994, p. 32).

This error was repeated in Mao's China and Deng's China. The *ti-yong* formula became an instrument of nationalism for those in power in the state of China. As Ci (1994) argued:

It was only because Marxism was still useful to some, particularly those in power, that it was kept on the pedestal, in name more than in reality. . . . China emerged as a hybrid that was taking on more and more features of capitalism but insisted on calling itself socialist (p. 58).

Contrary to traditionalists, who were dedicated to the *ti-yong* formula, anti-traditionalists believed in total Westernization. Brought forth first by the May 4th Movement in 1919 and again by the June 4th Movement in 1989, anti-traditionalists rejected Confucianism and later Marxism in favor of Capitalism for a very different reason than Western imperialists and believers of modernization theory. In fact, they represented a counterdiscourse to the official discourse in China waging wars against domestic hegemony from those in power.

One representation of such discourse was the popular TV documentary series called *He Shang* (the River Elergy). *He Shang* compared Chinese civilization with Western civilization and concluded that the latter was superior. Chinese culture was characterized by the color Yellow as it is the color of the earth while Western culture was characterized by the color Blue as it is the color of the sea. The yellow culture was stagnant and resistant to change while the blue culture was open, fluid, and in constant self-development. The writers and producers of *He Shang*, in fact, presented a Chinese version of the world history which they believed that China would eventually become part of as much as the Yellow River was eventually flowing towards the sea. The series was aired eight months before the democratic movement of June 4th took place. Though banned later by the government for its “vilification of the Chinese culture” as termed by a Chinese minister, the series was widely discussed not only among Chinese intellectuals, but also among ordinary Chinese people.

It should be noted, Chen (1992) argued in a study of *He Shang*, that many symbols of Chinese cultural heritage—the Great Wall, the Yellow River—were deconstructed and

characterized as the barriers to the development of China. Many facts and thoughts from both Chinese and Western thinkers were manipulated to support the pro-Western theme of the series. Chen (1992) concluded that “such a discourse served above all as a counterdiscourse that aimed at subverting the ruling and official ideology” (p. 704). The target of their criticism though, is not Marxism, but traditional symbols that has been appropriated by the Communist government in support of a nationalistic discourse that government sees as necessary for maintaining the cultural identity of China. In conclusion, anti-traditionalists aim to seek emancipation from the authoritarian state and see complete Westernization as the only way to do it. However, putting aside its ideological ends, it appears to be a little too idealistic for the anti-traditionalists to assume that after the domestic hegemony is overthrown, Chinese society would completely absorb Western values and Western systems.

In fact, there are several problems with both views and even with such a division between traditionalist and anti-traditionalist. First, both traditionalists and anti-traditionalists tend to essentialize and polarize Chinese tradition and Western values for their own ideological ends. Anti-traditionalists attacked Chinese cultural tradition to initiate political reform while traditionalists used Chinese cultural tradition to resist political reform as the case of *He Shang* suggested. Second, I doubt if both, being elite discourses, represent what Chinese understand as their reality and their future. What they propose as China’s identity does not necessarily mean what Chinese understand as their identity. Third, as Li (1992) pointed out, the line dividing traditionalists and anti-traditionalists is not always as clear as it appears to be. Mao could be called an anti-

traditionalist since his adoption of Marxism had caused the most profound paradigm shift in Chinese history. However, under Mao's rule, the Marxist identity China acquired and through which China could be the center of the Third World and even the leader in the socialization of the world was in fact intended to regain the cultural pride of being the Middle Kingdom. Mao's cosmopolitanism and quasi-Marxist identity, argued Ci (1994), had "a self-confidence that could come only from a deep sense of tradition" (p. 41). Li (1992) also observed, that much of the content of Mao's ruling, for example, close-door policy and reapplication of ti-yong formula, was no different than his feudal predecessors.

Chen (1992) proposed a very different angle to look at the debate on the Western influence on Chinese society. She suggested that none of the Western models that were used or advocated in China were mindlessly replicated and without modifications:

As a result of constant revising and manipulating imperialistically imposed Western theories and practices, the Chinese Orient has produced a new discourse marked by a particular combination of the Western construction of China with the Chinese construction of the West (Chen, 1992, p. 688).

The new discourse she termed as "Chinese Occidentalism"—inspired by Edward Said's Orientalism—can be divided into two different appropriations, she further asserted:

In the first, which I term official Occidentalism, the Chinese government uses the essentialization of the West as a means for supporting a nationalism that effects the internal suppression of its own people. In this process the Western Other is construed by a Chinese imagination, not for the purpose of dominating it, but in order to discipline, and ultimately to dominate, the Chinese self at

home. . . . Alongside it we can readily find examples of what we might term anti-official Occidentalism, since its purveyors are not the established government or party apparatus but the opponents of those institutions, especially among the intelligentsia. . . . By suggesting that West is politically and culturally superior to China, they defended their opposition to established “truths” and institutions (Chen, 1992, p. 688 - 691).

While the *He Shang* debate on whether or not China should adopt a Western model of modernity was at its high time in Chinese mainland at the end of 1980s, as observed by Chen (1992), the West was studying the economic success of the “Four Dragons” of Asia—Taiwan, South Korea, Singapore, and Hong Kong—“whose economic miracles testify to the potential of Confucianism to offer a new model for an affluent society” (Chen, 1992, p. 712). What constitute these other narrations of modernity which originated from other regions and countries that too deeply influenced by Confucian tradition? Do they have any implications for China?

Modernity and Confucianism: the East Asian model

I have referred to “Chinese cultural tradition” many times in previous sections. However, I have yet to define it. The content of “Chinese cultural tradition”, as many believe, is Confucianism. And it is only fair to make clear what Confucianism entails before I explore further the relationship of Confucianism with modernity.

Many literatures including Ci (1994) tend to sum up Confucianism in four Chinese words “*gang chang ming jiao* (the rules of personal conduct and the doctrine of names)”

(p. 33). Many believed that the principle of *gang chang ming jiao* privileged the emperor's right, thus Confucianism was inherently conservative and supportive of government authority. Many of these scholars are followers of Max Weber who had conducted some of the earliest comparative studies of Confucius and Western cultures. Weber concluded in his work that by lacking a "rational matter-of-factness, impersonal rationalism, and the nature of an abstract, impersonal purposive association", Confucian tradition constituted a tremendous barrier to the process of modernization (p. 240). Weber and his followers were right to some degree. However, they overlooked that 1) Confucianism existed not only on one level (elite Confucianism in Confucian classics that many Western scholars studied), but on several levels, and 2) the practice of Confucian tradition was not timeless nor context-free.

The success of East Asian economies has put Confucianism and its relation with modernization under examination from a new perspective. Peter Berger called for a distinction between Confucian-derived values in everyday lives from "high" Confucianism in Confucian classics. He argued that the Confucian-derived values of ordinary Chinese people, "many of whom have never read a Confucian classic and have little education, Confucian or not", can be called a kind of "Vulgar Confucianism" or "Post-Confucius ethics" (Berger, 1988, p. 7). According to Berger (1988), Vulgar Confucianism entails "a positive attitude to the affairs of this world, a sustained lifestyle of discipline and self-cultivation, respect for authority, frugality, an overriding concern for family life" (Berger, 1988, p. 7). These qualities are the true characteristics that formed an Asian model of development. Rozman, on the same line, further asserted that

Confucianism could be viewed at several levels: “Imperial Confucianism, Reform Confucianism, Confucianism of social elites not holding high government posts, Merchant Confucianism, and Mass Confucianism” (Tu et al. , 1992, p. 40). Each country has different emphasis on different levels of Confucianism according to its own social conditions.

Luo (1992) argued that it is certain that Post-Confucian ethics had played an important role in the economic success of some East Asian regions and countries. Nevertheless, the reason why these Post-Confucian ethics could cast positive influence on the economy is that long colonial history of these regions and countries made them favorably disposed to capitalism. Such orientation was created by both the re-appropriation of Confucian ethics and Western cultural values and social system. There is also a possibility that because of the changing time and changing social context, Confucianism practiced by ordinary people today is quite different than Confucianism as an elite state ideology before. Therefore, he further argued, culture alone could not determine economic development. In contrast to other scholars who concentrated only on the relationship between characteristics of Confucian culture and capitalism to explain East Asian economic success (Tai, 1989; Redding, 1990; Tu et al. , 1992), Luo (1992) believed that political reform was also important, not just Confucian culture alone. He argued that social science in modern Western society is the product of liberal capitalism. Modern Western social scientists, therefore, tend to downgrade the importance of political factors (especially the nation-state) in the examination of economy. In fact, according to Luo (1992):

In Third World countries, political factor is the initiating factor in the modernization process. Political change is quantum while cultural change follows at a slower pace. . . . In many East Asian Confucian-culture-based countries, combined leadership of cultural elite and political reformer accelerated the reform of political structure. Only when political reform was successful could positive aspects of Confucian culture influence economic development (p. 151, translation).

Luo (1992) gave the example of many East Asian societies that are characterized by a social order of “Family Collectivism”. This order system is originated from the authoritarian political tradition from the region, but at the same time, it also borrows from Western political structure. Comparing with Western countries, it is more centrally controlled, but creates more alliances of state and private capital that are not possible under the Western systems. Therefore, Luo (1992) further asserted:

This kind of political system helps economy in its transition period. After economy becomes more autonomous, it in return helps the modernization of political structure. This is how East Asian regions and countries are realizing their modernities without wholesale Westernization (p. 151, translation).

Luo (1992) implied that China should borrow from this model of modernization that integrates both local and global cultural and political factors. However, as discussed before, China has a whole different issue with cultural tradition and Western models as they are appropriated by both nationalist official discourse and anti-official counterdiscourse. On the other hand, post-Mao Chinese social conditions have changed

dramatically with the opening up of the country and subsequent economic reform.

Increased transnational flow of goods, money, people and images inevitably poses a threat to the state control.

Modernity in post-Mao China

China entered a new era after Mao's death in 1976. The new regime led by Deng Xiao Ping announced his "open policy" which meant that China would open its borders to the West and move towards a market economy. Deng advocated a "socialism with Chinese characteristics". He firmly believed in state intervention in economic transition and picked up *ti-yong* thesis for his rationality. But this thesis posed a much more difficult task in an open society than in a closed one. The Communist *ti* has been constantly threatened by what was brought about by the Capitalist *yong*. First, there is the global threat due to the "influx of foreign capital, overseas Chinese, new commodities, images, and desires that bypass government rules and generally challenge the image of the socialist state" (Ong, 1999, p. 175). Second, increased economic integration with other Confucian-culture-based countries in Asia formed a regional threat to challenge state control of what constitutes Chinese modernity. Economists call this integration a "Greater China" effect. Nevertheless, as observed by Ong (1999), mainland government officials and nationalist elites quickly objected to the notion of "Greater China", fearing that "any ideological recognition of a Chinese transnational capitalist zone will undermine China as a territorially based political entity" (p. 176). Finally, increased exchange with the West stimulates demands for foreign goods, ideas, images, cultures

that give rise for a domestic threat that the regime feared most—the demand for democracy. I have already elaborated on the anti-official elite discourse that had existed in China for a long time. Now, communications with the West opened up the possibility for the Chinese masses to back it up. The June 4th Incident in 1989 was the regime's worst nightmare coming true.

As discussed before, one major error of the *ti-yong* thesis is the ignorance of the inevitable ideological and cultural changes that follow economic change. It is obvious that Communism as *ti* would not hold long, not to mention that Communism is an import itself. It has become only a label in Deng's China. What was really being held up by the Communist label is the Chineseness, the center mentality (refusing to take on a subordinate position in the capitalist world), something that would distinguish China from the rest of the world and more importantly something that gives justification for CCP's political monopoly that the Chinese nation-state is reluctant to let go.

Nevertheless, some believe that it is precisely the mismatch of lack of political reform with the encouragement of economic reform that causes internal tension and crisis for maintaining the national identity. Friedman (1995) observed a north-south split with the southern image being more open, modern, Westernized and transnational because of the closeness of the south to other East Asian countries and distance to the center of Chinese regime in Beijing. The north, on the other hand, is seen as rigid and nationalistic. The Communist label is clearly not working to hold China together. What would work? Some recent studies indicate that there has been a resurrection of Confucian tradition (Ong, 1999; Friedman, 1995) because Confucianism is probably what

would remind Chinese of their Chineseness. Confucian values will be used again for the sake of China's national identity in the construction of a Chinese, not just any, modern society.

Apparently, in a country under authoritarian state control such as China, political actors are very important in the construction of a Chinese identity. The question is if they are the only ones. Besides the anti-official elite discourse, the case of Chinese advertising shows that professionals working in the Chinese economy also actively protect themselves and their industries, not necessarily resist, against domestic and global hegemonies.

Modernity and advertising media in China

The ups and downs of commercial advertising media in China is a case in point to illustrate the ideological and cultural shifts in the Chinese modernization process.

Commercial advertising has two characteristics. First of all, it adds exchange value to a product and creates needs. Exchange value is not how the product is of use to us, but what the product means to us in expressing ourselves to others, in comparing ourselves to others, and in lots of other social relations. Leiss et al. (1986) compared commercial advertising practice to ritualization of exchanged objects in primitive societies:

Human relations are mediated by things, which express, conceal, shield, or distort our motives and objectives. To have things serve us in this way we must make them seem as if they are alive or endowed with life-force. They

serve thus as a “projective medium” into which we transfer the intricate webs of personal and social interactions (p. 261).

Judith Williamson (1978) also concluded after a study of the semiology of commercial advertising that “people are made to identify themselves with what they consume” (p. 13). Also, by way of making us, the audience, the “subject” of advertisements, advertising naturalizes its system of relevance for us.

Related to the first characteristic but on a deeper level, the second characteristic is the ideological bearing of advertising. The advertising system serves a material-based ideology. As observed by Leiss et al. (1986), advertising “defines, together with the forms of work and production, how our society reproduces itself over time” and therefore “should be understood as a major cultural institution” (p. 262). The cultural institution of advertising manufactures what Shudson (1984) called “capitalism realism” (p. 214). Shudson explained this term as the linking of a set of aesthetic conventions to the political economy whose values they celebrate and promote. Fowles (1996), in reviewing criticism of advertising, also stated that “current advertising and popular culture are treated contemptuously not because of what they contain but because of their metamessage about the growth of consumer, middle-class culture” (p. 68). Hence, advertising does not only relate audience to commodities; it also has an impact on society as a whole by communicating the ideology of a dominant class.

Being aware of the ideological function of commercial advertising, the Communist regime that came to power in 1949 branded advertising “the apotheosis of capitalist consumption and a totem of advanced capitalist culture” and halted it for three decades

(Hong, 1994, p. 326). After Mao's death and the new regime announced its plan for economic reform, it soon found out that advertising was a necessary instrument to create a consumer culture that was essential to a market economy. However, the regime chose to deny the ideological function of advertising and pronounce it to be only a *yong* to the socialist *ti*. As Stross (1990) noted:

The state offered a basic reason why advertising should be encouraged in China: advertising transmitted important economic information that helped link producers and consumers. This function, the authorities said, was as important in socialist society as it was in capitalist. . . . The state argued that advertising did nothing more than factory sales agents in China already did: pitching products to potential customers. Advertising merely diffused product information more efficiently. In a country of such vast size, advertising could reach hundreds of thousands in a fraction of the time it took agents to make personal calls on only dozens of potential customers. Simple geography dictated use of advertising; ideology had no bearing on the matter (p. 488).

However, the discourse provided by the state authority was not the only discourse in re-introducing advertising practice in China. Another group of people, including journalists and newly emergent professional advertisers in China also carried their case in defense of advertising. This group later expanded to form what Stross (1990) called "Chinese advertising community" with the establishment of the Chinese Advertising Association (CAA) in 1982 and prominent advertising journals such as Chinese Advertising dating from early 1980s and Modern Advertising from 1994. Most members

of this community are based in Shanghai, the most capitalized city before the revolution and which is now still the base for many mainland entrepreneurs and marketing professionals.

Few scholars who actually studied the ideological aspects of Chinese advertising (Stross, 1990; Barmé, 1999) tend to believe that this group of Chinese advertising professionals are only the mouthpiece of the state government in trying to restore the good name of advertising to the Chinese public. However, some evidence shows otherwise. First, the Chinese public had no case against advertising practice. Of course, Chinese might be tired of political propaganda or “corporate advertising” from the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), but they saw little of commercial advertising at all. Besides, Chinese longed for market reform and choices it would bring about. Various studies showed that Chinese publics had positive reactions towards advertising and its economic and social consequences. In a survey study of Chinese consumer’s reception of advertising conducted in 1987, Polley et al. (1990) found that: “Chinese consumers were quite favorably disposed to advertising. In particular, they perceived advertising as having very positive impact on the country’s economic environment” and “although the Chinese consumers were sensitive to possible negative social consequences of advertising, their reactions were far more positive than typical Western responses” (p. 88, 89). I don’t think this resulted from the magic work of the state rationality of reintroducing advertising. The acceptance of advertising practice among the Chinese public was because of their favorable attitudes towards the economic reform.

Therefore, what the new Chinese advertising community defended itself against was not the Chinese public, but state authority. By examining the discourse they have created during the 1980s, we can see that by carefully steering around the issue of ideology and building a case for “Chinese” advertising, they insured the survival and the development of advertising practice in China.

From the very beginning, new advertising professionals “were eager to de-emphasize both the newness of their profession and its connections with capitalism”, observed Stross (1990),

. . . so they spoke often of the ancient origins of advertising and its seemingly omnipresent character, stripped of a capitalist context and found at the beginning of recorded history. In a chronological list of “first” in the advertising industry that was assembled for readers of *Shi Chang Yi Shu* (Market Skills), the “earliest advertisement” was traced to ancient Egypt, circa 3000 BC, testimony to its apparent universal nature. China had its own early claims to a place in advertising history, too. The new Chinese historians of advertising reached back to the Warring States period (for “earliest banner for a wine shop”) and the Sui-Tang periods (for “earliest printed advertisement”). These milestones belonged to no particular historical or economic setting; they were merely “firsts” (p. 487).

Furthermore, advertising journalists and professionals portrayed advertising as a form of art rather than a marketing technique. As one of the first voices to support the resurrection of advertising in China in 1979, a Shanghai journalist for *Wen Hui Bao*

wrote: “outstanding advertisements can be used to beautify the people’s cities, pleasing both the eye and the mind” and “advertisement could make people appreciate “the socialist economy and culture” (Stross, 1990, p. 486). Stross (1990) noted: “The mention of aesthetics suggests that escaping a monochromatic landscape may have been as much a rationale for permitting advertising again as was anything else” (p. 486).

Another rationale, argued Chinese advertising community, was that “the consumer needs ‘scientific guidance in a socialist system as well as in a capitalist system’. If advertising were ‘scientific’—the attraction to science endured even when the attraction to Marxism-Leninism was fading—then it could fulfil the role of ‘scientific guide’” (Stross, 1990, p. 489).

Meanwhile, the presence of the West in the Chinese advertising scene should not be neglected. First of all, the nature of advertising and its function in a market economy seem to be inseparable from Western influence. In a study of advertising in Asia, Frith and Frith (1989) noted that the concept of advertising was so new in most developing countries in Asia that it was regarded as an imported “technology”. According to Frith and Frith (1989):

The technology of advertising tends to be transferred from the West as a complete entity. The implicit theory, practice, values and attitudes of Western advertising are bundled for export. Thus the corporate culture within which many Asian advertising messages are developed is inevitably a reproduction of Madison Avenue culture (p. 180).

This description is partly true in China which had little history in commercial advertising. Furthermore, the influx of transnational advertising and advertisements by transnational advertising agencies with their real “imported” advertisements soon made Chinese advertisements look unsophisticated and primitive which generated more cries for catching up with the West. However, although Chinese advertising companies had to copy their Western counterparts in many ways, they also had to be careful with any ideological implications and tried not to refer to advertising as a total “import” (as the example of advertising “firsts” suggests). In compliance with the state *ti-yong* thesis, Chinese advertising community claimed that they were just “borrowing Western techniques”. Stross observed that:

In China’s new advertising journals, the portrayal of advertising practices in capitalist countries was straightforward. In many instances, these specialized journals provided readers with samples of billboards and signs and other examples of foreign advertising without any accompanying explanations, ideological or otherwise. . . . Instead of focusing on the stupefying quantity of American advertising, the Chinese chose to focus on the sophistication of the artistic quality of foreign advertising, which was viewed as the exemplar of subtlety that the Chinese advertising industry would be wise to emulate (p. 494).

Nevertheless, the practice of commercial advertising was attacked during the “spiritual pollution” campaign of 1983–1984, which zeroed in on Western influences in the new Chinese advertising industry. According to Stross (1990), “China’s domestic

advertising agencies were criticized for having taken the ‘profits-point-of-view’ of their Western counterparts” (p. 496). To survive such criticism, Chinese advertising community offered self-criticism and declared their goal to achieve “socialist advertising”:

They carefully reaffirm the need to separate the essential Western things from the dross, and to blend the West’s quintessence with China’s to create “socialist advertisements” that reflected China’s own “special character”. This was a goal that all Chinese could support, and though the defining characteristics of a socialist style remained vague, mere mention of the goal served to deflect criticism of undue Western influence (Stross, 1990, p. 497).

In reviews of Chinese advertising, the word “Western technique” and “Western influence” always came up. Nonetheless one wonders about the point of essentializing something that in nature is the product of Western capitalist economic system. Even if one does essentialize it, what characters would be regarded as “Western” and what characters would be regarded as “China’s own” or “socialist”. Maybe what is “Western” is not the most important. Such essentialization enables peace for both the state government who needs a rationale for allowing advertising for ideological ends and Chinese advertising community who needs to survive and deal with domestic hegemony. At least in the case of advertising, it is clear that besides government actors, the local professional community is also involved in the construction of Chinese modernity.

There have not been any studies of the cultural dimension of Chinese advertising in the 1990s. However, Chinese advertising still faces the same two major threats from the

80s. One is the Chinese nation-state. As long as government nationalists insist on labeling everything “socialist” to maintain Chineseness, there will be tensions between the state and advertising practice that bears an opposing ideology. The other is transnational advertising agencies who pose competition. The questions still to be answered are: Has the domestic tension been relaxed because of a more relaxed economic policy? How would Chinese advertising community deal with or catch up with international competition?

Summary

Ong argued that in Asia, “contending sites of power—nation-states, capitalist centers—articulate different visions of modernity that are in tension and complicity with each other” (p. 172). Therefore, she identified three versions scholars have come up with on the issue of modernity in China: 1) modernity as a state project; 2) modernities as produced out of the articulations, productions, and struggles between capitalist forces and local communities in different parts of the world; and 3) modernist projects as knowledge-power processes that arise out of tensions between local and regional forces, and not merely in reaction to the West. In China’s case, the literature seems to overwhelmingly support the view of modernity as a state project. After all, Chinese nationalist discourse is deeply rooted in the Chinese modern history because of historical and cultural factors and is still omnipresent in China’s modernization project.

China in the 1990s so far has been characterized on the one hand by further integration with the rest of the world through the government campaign of

internationalization in several professional areas such as accounting and standard system etc. and transnationalism with the “coming-back fever” of former overseas scholars. On the other hand, there has also been an reiteration of Confucian tradition (Ong, 1999; Friedman, 1995). My objective in this thesis is to use Chinese advertising media as the site to examine the interplay of different actors in constructing Chinese modernity under these new social conditions in the 1990s and its implications for the new millenium.

Chapter 3. Findings from the debate on China's participation of the Cannes International Advertising Festival

Introducing Chinese advertising to the world

The city of Cannes in Southern France is the host of two international renowned art festivals: the Cannes International Film Festival and the Cannes International Advertising Festival. In the former event, Chinese films “Farewell My Concubine” and “To Live” had both won major awards subsequently in 1994 and 1995. Although either edited or restricted on the Chinese mainland for their ideological content, both films had gained praise from Chinese official media for their contribution in promoting Chinese film industry as one of the greatest in the world. However, in the latter event, China has failed to enlist itself as one of the greatest marketers—a disappointment that provoked a series of debates among members of Chinese advertising community.

It is not a coincidence that China frequently compares its achievement in art with those in the economy. Chinese government wants vehemently for the economic performance to match up with its other successes worldwide (mainly in sports and films) in the process of re-establishing itself as one of the superpowers in the world. Especially after almost 20 years of economic reform and stable economic growth, China's policy makers are eager to see not only Chinese-made products (with foreign brands and investment) but also Chinese-brand products competing in the international market. Thus “*jiegui*”—docking with international practices has quickly become the buzzword in almost every industry in the later half of the 1990s. *Jiegui*—a process that can also be called “internationalization”—includes better implementation of international laws and

regulations, as well as managing the market order according to international rules and protocols, all of which prepares China for entering WTO. Nevertheless, the Chinese government insists that docking with international practices does not mean giving up on a Chinese identity. As early as in 1992, the author of an article in China Advertising Yearbook published by the official Xinhua News Agency advocated that Chinese advertising should internationalize but not be internationalized by which he meant that the uniqueness of Chinese culture should always be maintained and reflected while participating in the international market (Tian, 1992, p. 252, translation).

In 1996, in response to the government's call for *jiegui* and encouraged by China's successful performance in Cannes Film Festival, Chinese Advertising Association sent a 150-person delegation of advertising professionals and government officials with 38 Chinese advertisements to the 43rd Cannes International Advertising Festival. All 38 advertisements were carefully selected by CAA and the Ministry of Culture to showcase the "Chineseness". For example, a selected piece for a Chinese liquor product depicted a family reunion of an overseas Chinese student. Music and color created a traditional Chinese ambiance in which Confucian family centered values and patriotism were celebrated.

Much to the dismay of their senders, save one print advertisement from a Sino-American joint venture advertising agency, none of the advertisements from Chinese ad agencies won any award. The event was nonetheless reported in the "Important Events Chronology" in China Advertising Yearbook (1997) in a cheerful fashion:

From June 24th to 29th, China for the first time participated in the 43rd Cannes International Advertising Festival with 38 Chinese advertisements. TV advertisement for Taita Nutrition Supplement from Shenzhen Zhongren Advertising Co. Ltd. had won best award for Chinese mainland (obtained highest mark among Chinese advertisements). Chinese delegation was warmly welcomed by organizers of the festival and appeared in all major media in France and Italy (p. 83, translation).

Within the Chinese advertising community, China's 1996 and later 1997 participations (also award-less) in Cannes were regarded as catastrophic. The disappointment with their performance also resulted in a debate that lasted for almost four years among Chinese advertising professionals and journalists on a series of issues that occur when Chinese advertising confronts and deals with international competition, especially the use of traditional appeals in advertising.

In this chapter, I will first present an overview of the Chinese advertising market in the latter half of the 1990's and some earlier discussions on ideological and cultural functions of advertising in China. Then I will present the debate that gave rise to two discourses. On one hand, the official discourse highlights the "Chineseness" in advertising as a form of resistance to global forces as well as a form of domestic hegemony. On the other hand, a discourse from advertising professionals serves as a critique of the official discourse that deconstructs the notion of "advertising with Chinese characteristics" with the market logic learned from the West.

An overview of the Chinese advertising market

Although advertising practice in China can be traced back to the banner of a wine shop during the Warring States period, the concept and the operation of an advertising agency as a profit-oriented organization and its crucial function in creating consumer culture can only be originated from a capitalist market economy. Inexperienced, China is deemed to have a bumpy road ahead in developing a market-oriented advertising industry. However, advertising is one of the fastest growing industries in China. Since 1979, the number of advertising agencies in China has increased by 40% every year and total advertising revenue by 60% (X. Sun 1998). According to G. Zhao (1999), the 1997 total advertising revenue in China was about 19.4 billions yuan (USD2.4 billion). The multi-billion dollar market is divided between domestic advertising agencies and transnational advertising agencies. On one hand, despite the lack of professional knowledge and proper market regulation, domestic advertising agencies flourished in number from less than 10 in 1979 to more than 57, 024 in 1997 (G. Zhao 1999). Many being subsidiaries of local media, these agencies follow the press-agentry model (merely announcing the information) and traditions from party propaganda period. On the other hand, in order to import advertising practice as a whole package, foreign advertising agencies including those from Hong Kong were allowed to establish joint ventures or wholly owned advertising branches in Chinese mainland. In 1997, there were 433 joint ventures and foreign agencies in China. Nevertheless, in spite of the proportionate disadvantage in number, foreign owned and joint venture advertising agencies still took away more than half of the top 50 positions in a recent ranking of the most profitable advertising

businesses in China and about 37.2% of total advertising revenue (Zhang, 1998; G. Zhao, 1999).

One reason for the mismatched growth and performance of foreign and domestic advertising agencies is the growth of transnational corporations in China during the same period. Foreign agencies and joint ventures equipped with imported experiences, human resource, and organizational cultures can often form the same business relations with their existing clients as they have in other countries. Together, they forged a regulated market environment compatible with those in the West. To the contrary of the expectation that foreign practice may help promote Chinese products, alliances between transnational corporations and transnational advertising agencies only gave rise to the seizure of Chinese market shares by foreign products. Foreign agencies seldom work with domestic firms. One staff member of a Hong Kong-based advertising agency told me that they are reluctant to work with Chinese firms because Chinese advertisers do not yet speak the language of market economy. They have little knowledge of the agency system that they regard as a fraud and will not choose foreign agencies because of the high commissions due to the protective policy in the first place. Indeed, in order for commercial advertising to pull the most satisfactory market result, every part of the communication chain, from advertiser to agency to media, must understand their corresponding responsibilities. Transnational corporations on the other hand also prefer to use the same advertising agency they have in other countries (Zhang, 1998, p. 8).

All of these circumstances make things worse for domestic advertising agencies who lack professional knowledge and who deal with less knowledgeable clients in a much less

ordered market. First, domestic advertising agencies lack professional management and professional personnel. As a popular saying in the advertising community goes, people in advertising have all sorts of majors, none is advertising related. Besides the shortage of human resource with professional knowledge, most domestic ad companies have few rules and regulations within the organization. Loose organizational structure and the *guanxi* culture (the idea that everything depends on personal connection) nurtured an opaque organizational culture characterized by unrealizable promises from employers, low employee morale, bribery, and high employee turnover. One author observed low ethical standards in many small marketing firms. Agents working in these firms use their personal relations with a client base as a bargaining chip to change jobs frequently (Yuan, 1998, p. 126).

Here, I would like to distinguish between these advertising agents and advertising professionals who are part of the debate on China's participation in Cannes. What I call advertising professionals are those who can really have a say in the advertising community in China. Many of them are at the upper management level of larger advertising agencies that are members of the Chinese Advertising Association. Although most advertising professionals were trained in other professions, they are familiar with the Western practice of advertising either from training provided by the state⁶ or university marketing courses developed in cooperation with programs in overseas universities⁷ offered to professionals. Many journal articles are written by these advertising professionals. However, unlike advertising researchers who work in universities and advertising journalists, these professionals are people who are involved

in the actual production of advertising. Nevertheless, the largest proportion of the workforce in marketing are those without marketing experience and professional knowledge who only want to take their share of the pie by joining a new industry at its growing stage.

Another problem with the Chinese advertising market is unfair competition. Advertising agencies subordinated to government institutions, official media or with good connection with local governments tend to be more successful. One manager from a profitable advertising agency admitted that connections with local officials were crucial to the early development of his business (Z. Sun 1998, p. 13).

All of the internal problems in domestic advertising agencies undermine the healthy competition and fair market environment without which the market is filled with poor advertising quality, ineffective advertising and false advertising. What worries Chinese policymakers as well as domestic entrepreneurs the most is that if the situation lasts, foreign brands with better advertising provided by foreign ad agencies will continue to threaten Chinese national industry and take markets away from Chinese brands.

The discourse of cultural advertising

In the meantime, advertising researchers and journalists have been trying to find explanations and solutions for the problematic circumstances that face domestic advertising agencies on a quite different note.

As I mentioned before, in order to re-introduce advertising without threatening the socialist identity of the Chinese nation-state (though only in name), state authority and the

Chinese advertising community had denied the capitalist ideological function of advertising and created a discourse that regards advertising more as a form of art. The evidence of the emphasis on artistic quality is still ubiquitous today. For example, advertising journals are categorized under Arts and Design in China's National Library. International advertising contests are often compared with contests of film and arts. Recognizing the leaky boundary between advertising and popular culture as well as the mediating function of advertising, state authorities and many advertising researchers claimed that advertising activity was different from other economic activities and should be regarded as a cultural activity. Therefore, a discourse of cultural advertising emerged in the latter half of the 1990's.

The discourse of cultural advertising blamed internal problems in the Chinese advertising market on the East-West cultural difference. For instance, one author wrote in Modern Advertising:

Chinese culture is characterized by thriftiness and the emphasis on the coexistence of nature and people while Western cultural values tend to exploit nature to the greatest extent to benefit people. The Western value system now prevails in our advertising market and damages our own healthy economic environment (Liao, 1998, p. 19, translation).

Another journalist argued: "To improve the management of advertising in China, economic and administrative measures are not enough. We also need to be aware of the nurturing of morality and traditional cultural values" (X. Sun, 1998, p. 23, translation). An advertising researcher asserted that commercial activities such as advertising should

follow the essence from the Confucian tradition characterized by *yi* (trust and loyalty) over *li* (profit). He quoted Xunzi—an ancient Chinese philosopher: “if you put *yi* over *li*, you will have glory, otherwise, you will have shame” (Zhao, 1998, p. 554, translation).

Researchers of cultural advertising also believe that culture should not only dictate advertising activities but also dictate forms and contents of advertising (Wu, 1995; Zhao, 1998). According to them, advertising should reflect and carry forward the national cultural tradition. Zhao (1998) asserted:

Advertising as a communication media plays an important role in promoting social conformity. A society with a high degree of social conformity is a society whose members identify with one national culture and create strong cultural coherence. . . . Social conformity can be strengthened by social control and social norms. Such social control and social norms can partly be achieved through cultural communication. Every social norm is communicated to every member of the society through cultural representations because of which all kinds of social control are realized (p. 160, translation).

Another researcher Wu (1995, p. 120) argued that besides economic values of advertising in guiding consumers, advertising also had spiritual values on three levels: knowledge, morality, and aesthetics so that the traditional state of the harmony among truth, goodness, and beauty could be attained.

The discourse of cultural advertising is also filled with an anti-imperialist spirit. In a review of the history of Chinese advertising, Zhao (1998) pointed out:

The emergence of modern advertising in China was closely related to the competition between national products and foreign products in the Chinese market. . . . As early as in the 1930s and 1940s, advertising had become a weapon for Chinese national capitalists to combat Western imperialists in the economic realm. . . . For a long time, consuming Chinese-brand products and resisting foreign brands had been the way by which Chinese consumers identify themselves. Today, economic reforms and an open policy has brought both opportunity and competition to Chinese national industry. Therefore, the emphasis on patriotism has again become a popular theme in many advertisements for Chinese brands (p. 121, translation).

Another aspect of cultural advertising is reflected in the criticism of “bad cultural taste”. The author of an article in China Advertising Yearbook asserted:

Another problem in Chinese advertising market is bad cultural taste. We must pay special attention to this problem because that advertising has become one of the most ubiquitous cultural representations in the life of our people. However, the wisdom from our cultural tradition is not well reflected in our advertising. Instead, advertisements that are *zang* (dirty), *jia* (phony), *su* (Vulgar), and *yang* (foreign) prevail the market (Zhu, 1996, p. 234, translation).

The first three kinds of bad tastes—*zang*, *jia*, *su*—refer to sexuality in advertising and false advertising. The last one—*yang*—refers to the use of foreign words and foreign models in promotions of Chinese made products in order to chime in with the trend of

chong yang mei wai (admiring anything foreign) among consumers who are in sympathy with Western capitalism. In another article, a state official also stated that one problem with Chinese advertising was the admiration for Western culture while depreciating Chinese culture. He observed: “for example, a lot of Chinese products use English names. While at the same time, many advertising modifies Chinese ancient idioms to suit their selling pitch. Such conduct is a serious abuse of our national culture “ (Zhao, 1997, p. 137, translation).

In summary, the discourse of cultural advertising supports the nationalistic vision of modernity by highlighting Chinese traditional culture in every aspect of advertising activity. Such essentialist and nationalistic discourse provides a rationale for state authority to promote “advertising with Chinese characteristics” to the world. By 1996, one of the three strategic directions for the development of advertising industry issued by the Chinese government was the “internationalization” of advertising. According to a Chinese official, internationalization refers to the expansion of Chinese advertising activity to the international market so that Chinese brands could subsequently be known to consumers in foreign markets and earn profits in foreign currency (Liu, 1995). Another official further affirmed: “in order for Chinese advertising to enter the world market, we must combine Western experience and techniques with unique Chinese characteristics” (Yang, 1996, p. 199, translation).

In the days before leaving for the 43rd Cannes International Advertising Festival in 1996 (also China’s first participation), both Chinese state authority and the Chinese advertising community were confident to show off the fruits of the 10-year reform to the

world. One reporter even claimed that although Chinese advertising still lagged a little behind the West in experience and techniques, the uniqueness and the richness of our traditional culture communicated through advertising would certainly be appealing to foreign eyes just as it was in the Cannes Film Festival (Song, 1996). In November 1995, the chairperson of the Cannes Advertising Festival visited China. It was reported in Modern Advertising that the chairperson had given high praise for Chinese print advertising. Even though he had shown a little disappointment in TV advertising, it was mostly due to language limit and problems in understanding cultural content. Thus, the report concluded:

Now, Cannes is not only a dream for Chinese advertising community. The key is great creativity and effective cultural communication. It is absolutely possible that we will find ourselves one of the contending award winners in the Festival (Song, 1996, p. 13, translation).

Despite the high expectation, Chinese advertisements were received poorly during the festival. Again in 1997, China scored nothing. Taken by surprise and great disappointment, Chinese advertising professionals started to question themselves: "What went wrong?"

Advertising with Chinese characteristics?

At first, many people believed that cross-cultural communication should account for China's unsuccessful performance in Cannes. With the idea of promoting Chinese culture through advertising, CAA only sent advertisements with distinctive "Chinese

characteristics” to participate in the festival. It was reported that after knowing that none of the Chinese advertisements were nominated, members of the Chinese delegation had questioned the judging committee of the festival: How could committee members understand the advertising language and traditional appeal if they did not understand Chinese culture?

Some advertising journalists and government officials were reluctant to accept that Chinese advertising was inferior to foreign advertising and argued that cultural difference was the main cause of the defeat. At the same time though, they still insisted that the use of traditional appeal when better communicated was the only way to make Chinese advertising the best in the world.

One report quoted the comment from Ms Luo Xiaohua, advisor for Chinese Advertising Association: “Besides some operational factors in the defeats in 1996 and 1997, committee members were obviously Western-centered” (Li, 1998, p. 22, translation). The report also compared Cannes festival with the International Out-door Advertising Contest in which China had won a major award. In the latter event, representatives of the Chinese delegation had issued a statement to the judging committee about cultural differences and had sought agreement from the committee. “It is not fair to judge without considering cultural differences in international events”, said Luo Xiaohua, “Meanwhile, China should take part in more international events so that foreigners can be more familiar with Chinese culture and learn to appreciate it” (Li, 1998, p. 22, translation).

Furthermore, Li (1999) asserted that we should not simply blame the use of traditional appeal in advertising for the downfall in Cannes. Advertising from Japan, Singapore, Thailand, and South Korea with their cultural distinctiveness have all been awarded in the same event. According to Li, advertising producers in these countries were aware of cross-cultural differences in putting forward a traditional appeal, thus using cultural symbols that were more well-known world-wide.

However, a government market administrator argued in an interview that the problem might be that traditional appeals used in Chinese advertising were too superficial and did not reflect the quintessence of Chinese traditional culture:

Foreigners could not understand our advertisements. It was because of cultural differences, not because our advertisements were poorly made. . . . The economy of China is still in development; however, our cultural tradition was one of the oldest and the greatest. We should try to benefit from this advantage. This is why Chinese Kongfu was able to shine on the international stage and Peking Opera was well received among foreign audiences. The key is that they are the quintessence of the Chinese traditional culture. Only if the “essence” of the “national character” is well represented can Chinese advertising be accepted internationally (Z. Sun, 1998, p. 14, translation).

Supporters of this view often quote Lu Xun—famous writer and pioneer of the May Fourth Movement—of his well-known remark: “yue shi minzu de, jiu yue shi shijie de (the essence of a national culture belongs to the world)”. However, there was a

divergence of views on what constitute “national character” or the “Chineseness” that according to them should be represented in Chinese advertising.

Luo (1998) in Advertising World, believed that advertising with Chinese characteristics can be represented by the use of the following: famous historical figures, characters in celebrated ancient writings, national décor to create typical Chinese ambiance, idioms and ancient verses, images with a sense of history, words used in a specific historical period, and patriotism. Nonetheless, Chen (1997) a journalist from Chinese Advertising asserted that the mere image of several ancient characters and landmarks with national color was only the outlook, not the essence of traditional culture. True Chineseness should be reflected by values, worldview, and social ethics. For example, one prominent characteristic of Chinese traditional value system is collectivism, therefore, themes that portray family harmony and national unity should be preferred.

Other advertising professionals, on the other hand, see the interpretation of “Chineseness” by local color and Confucian values one-sided and out of fashion, even disagreeing that traditional culture should be used in advertising to highlight the “Chineseness”. Cui (1999) argued that Chineseness did not have to equal Chinese traditional culture nor anything that were related to the ancient times. He indicated that the idea originated from Confucian tradition that “the older, the better” is obsolete. According to him, ancient culture could only be a resource, not the essence of Chinese culture. Related to this point, Cui further asserted that culture was not fixed and unchangeable. Based on the fluidity of culture, he suggested:

First, localization or nationalism is not the solution for cross-cultural communication. Instead, we should investigate current social and cultural trends of our target market to customize our strategy accordingly. . . .

Second, advertising appeals that are based on a set of fixed national characters are not as effective as those based on human nature and human feelings. Only when we understand the needs of our people, can we really promote our nation (p. 24, translation).

Other advertising researchers argued that traditional appeal was based on needs of the Chinese audience. According to Zhang (1999), advertising directed by market positioning imposes the product on audiences while advertising directed by cultural positioning make the audience the subject of advertising. The latter definitely has a greater effect. From this perspective, advertising could be better accepted by the Chinese target market if people identified with values and cultural habits represented in it. Chinese advertising professionals need not be disappointed with Cannes because our advertising is for the Chinese eyes only. L. Chen (1997) even pointed out that highlighting “Chineseness” with traditional appeal in advertising to suit a Chinese target market would not contradict the movement of “internationalization” or *jiegui* since the Chinese market was a transnational market. According to him:

One fifth of the world population is Chinese and one fourth of the world population speaks Chinese. Chinese markets including those outside China are among the biggest markets in global economy. For these segments, advertising with distinctive Chinese characteristics works better (p. 115, translation).

Wu and Gao (1998) believe that Chinese audience sees Confucian philosophy as the rule of personal conduct. Confucian social ethics is centered by high moral standards. Hence, a theme that is not in keeping with the Confucian moral standard, even if it portrays a universal human feeling (such as sexuality), will not be accepted by the majority of the Chinese audience. They also argued that traditional culture exerted an imperceptible influence on Chinese audience so that they are subconsciously favorable to advertising with traditional themes or traditional symbols.

In contradiction to Wu and Gao's view, Li (1996) asserted that:

In rethinking the use of traditional appeal in advertising, there is a common delusion that tends to subjectively define Chinese audience as traditional and conforming to Confucian standards. . . . (In fact), China had experienced 10 years of development with extraordinary speed. The habit and mentality of Chinese audience also changed to be less predictable. The development of modern industries and market economy revitalized many basic materialistic desires repressed by traditional and cultural ethics for many years. More freedom in economic and ideological realms enables Chinese people to be more open-minded and grants them more choice of lifestyles. Facing these changes, it is imperative for us marketers to re-identify the cultural preference of our audience. . . .

When creating advertising appeals, many Chinese advertising professionals still stick to the so-called "human feelings" within the traditional framework of social ethics such as *li* (etiquette) and *yi* (loyalty). What we really need though

are ideas more appealing to individual human emotion and human nature (p. 43-44, translation).

In conclusion, Li (1996) reminded us again that under the globalizing environment today, we did not have to set national culture against modernity. Instead, we should be aware of the merging of the traditional and the modern. Working with this new perspective in market analysis and the production of advertising will be our first step towards success worldwide.

In summarizing the debate on the use of traditional appeal in Chinese advertising in international competition, I have made two observations that will be further elaborated in the following chapter. First, the debate started with the issue of cultural differences but later developed into a discussion on the national cultural characteristics in cultural representation that has in fact gone beyond the field of cross-cultural communication. I have noticed that many articles overlooked the question from the Cannes judging committee in replying to the Chinese delegation's explanation on cultural differences. When Chinese representatives claimed that China did not win because foreign judges could not understand Chinese culture, the chairperson of the committee replied back: "Why is it that Chinese did not have a difficult time in making sense of foreign advertisements?" The issue brought out by this rhetorical question is that the impact of Western culture on Chinese society is much greater than vice versa. Therefore, although the discussion of whether or not to use traditional appeal may not be a cross-cultural issue and had been going on before Cannes, it was intensified after the failures at Cannes by China's awareness of its inferior position before Western forces. This discourse that

highlights the “Chineseness” in Chinese advertising is therefore a form of resistance in the confrontation between local culture and global forces.

Second, the discussion on the use of appeals to tradition in Chinese advertising is also a continuation of the discourse on cultural advertising. Although there is a divergence of views on the understanding of the nature of Chinese national culture, almost all arguments still suggest that cultural and aesthetic aspects are the deciding factors in the development of advertising in China.

The market perspective

Another view that is widely discussed criticized the discourse of cultural advertising. In contrast to the proponents of cultural advertising who would rather put social and cultural aspects of advertising in the first place, supporters of a market perspective see advertising as more of a marketing technique rather than a cultural representation.

A director of a Guangdong based advertising agency who was also a member of the Chinese delegation to Cannes, Hu Chuanni (1998) reflected that if China wanted to compete in the international market, it should use universal appeal instead of traditional appeal. She argued Lu Xun’s famous remark (“essence of a national culture belongs to the world”) was meant to refer to cultural representations such as arts and films. It was wrong for advertising professionals to interpret it as “things with more national characteristics would be better accepted by the world”. This misinterpretation has taken Lu Xun’s statement out of its context and applied it to advertising practice which is in fact limited and defined by the market.

Gao (1997) also questioned: “Is it so important for foreigners to judge Chinese advertising by their standard? What is more important: winning an award or establishing a brand image for Chinese products in Chinese market to cope with foreign competition? . . . What should Chinese advertising professionals study: How to make Chinese consumers purchase our products or how to make foreigners understand Chinese advertising?” (p. 15, translation)

Quoting one of the greatest characters in advertising, David Ogilvy, two advertising professionals--Ding and Kuang (1999) pointed out bluntly: “Advertising should not be regarded as an artistic representation nor entertainment, the only function of advertising is to sell. Our motto is: We sell, or else” (p. 35, translation). Ding and Kuang (1999) also argued that winning awards in Cannes was not directly related to the market effect that advertising should be achieving. According to them:

In Cannes, members of the Chinese advertising community did not realize their dream of becoming major players in the world; instead, they were discouraged year after year. The unnecessary excitement as well as disappointment over international contests had formed a trend among us that believed: award means success and award means winning a place in the international market. Many advertising professionals use the winning of an international award to benchmark their work. However, we observed an obvious drawback of this award-oriented mentality. That is, no award judges advertising on the base of market effect. How could we create successful campaigns to fulfill the real

goal of achieving sales if we are still under the award-winning principle that ignores such an important criteria (p. 34, translation)?

In fact, the profit-first mentality of the market perspective has already been under fire within the discourse of cultural advertising. Supporters of cultural advertising argued that the admiration for profit was a Western concept that was inappropriate for the Chinese market that promoted “a market economy with Chinese characteristics”. They believed that Confucius principles should be used as guidance in advertising activities to draw the line between “advertising with Chinese characteristics” and the concept of advertising that originates from the West. That is, to put social and cultural responsibilities of advertising communication over profit (Zhao, 1998). Proponents of cultural advertising also blamed low quality and bad taste in some advertisements on the profit-first mentality. Wu (1995) claimed that because of profit-first mentality, many advertisers tried to tell as much information as possible in the shortest time and consequently ignored creativity and cultural undertoning that were necessary in advertising communication.

Facing criticism from the discourse of cultural advertising, defenders of the market perspective argued that it was impossible to separate advertising from the product it promotes and the market in which it operates. It was equally impossible to produce advertising without being aware of its connection with other economic activities.

Wang (1998a), in an article named “Putting out the fire of cultural advertising”, stated that advertising should serve to provide information about a product. He asserted: “Cultural content in advertising is decided by product. We can of course use traditional appeal in advertising, however, it must be suitable to the product” (p. 41, translation).

Giving examples of the award winning ad for Michelin tire that depicted a baby embraced by a tire to indicate the comfort it offers, Wang concluded that successful appeals were those that connect consumers (their emotions, habits, etc.) to the product use value to create product exchange value. In another article, Wang (1998b) further asserted that Chinese advertising professionals should rethink the concept of “cultural taste”. Cultural taste does not mean revealing the essence of our traditional culture. According to Wang (1998b):

Advertising appeal with good cultural taste reveals the cultural underpinning of a product, traditional or not. It is the combination of commercial nature and cultural expression. It is not purely artistic, cultural, philosophical, ethical, or anything else (p. 17, translation).

Qiao (1998) criticized some of the appeals advocated by the cultural advertising approach. He asserted:

Popular approaches in creating advertising appeals today such as formalism, romanticism, and heroism are problematic. Formalists tend to regard the creative part of advertising as a process separate from commercial activities. Therefore, their creative appeals serve the form, not the product. . . . Romanticism is a mistake often made by scholar-turned advertising workers. This kind of appeal is based on the creator’s emotion, not on market or product. An example is the Chinese style “tenderness” in advertising in the 1980s. . . . Similarly, heroism and patriotism do not link product with consumers, but

depend on creating a sacred image which consumers are expected to admire (p. 64, translation).

Qiao (1998) suggested that good appeal strategy should be based on brand strategy and other marketing tactics.

Moreover, other advertising professionals remind us of the connection between advertising activity and the overall economic environment. In an editorial in Modern Advertising titled “What did Cannes tell us”, Tong (1996) asserted:

We must admit that advertising is not a form of art; unlike other cultural representation, it has its own rhythm and its own conditions that must be fulfilled first. Any advertisement is first and foremost an economic activity targeted at a specific market. Thus, it is limited by market not by artists. Although advertising borrows from means of artistic expression to reach commercial objectives, good artistic or cultural appeal is only one factor in the making of successful advertising. . . . From a broader perspective, advertising as an economic activity is also limited by the grand economic environment of a country. It can be observed that contenders in Cannes tend to be from developed countries or developing countries that had longer history and more experience with market economy. . . . Therefore, in order for advertising to accomplish *jiegui*, it is imperative that we put our emphasis on creating a better market environment and promote a market mentality among members of Chinese advertising community (p. 1, translation).

Liu (1998) reminded us that in the midst of the calls for *jiegui* after the double defeat in Cannes, we should first do a situation analysis for Chinese advertising industry and find out if Chinese advertising is on the same level with those in other countries. He asserted that:

China only has five or six years of experience in running a market economy. Commercial culture and market mechanisms are still immature. Hence, Chinese advertising cannot possibly be on the same level with other countries. There is still a long way to go to achieve *jiegui* and the key is improving the market environment (1998, p. 157, translation).

In a similar vein, W. Sun (1998) argued that blaming the lack of creative appeal for the defeats in Cannes was quite superficial. What we should really examine and improve is the economic conditions for the advertising industry. W. Sun (1998) stated that:

China's unsuccessful performance in Cannes resulted from China's poor economic conditions. Advertising production limited by such conditions naturally would not be accepted by the Western advertising community that operates under modernized economic background. We should admit that Chinese advertising has not reached modernity, only close to modernity (p. 12, translation)

W. Sun (1998) also warned members of the Chinese advertising community against claiming that Chinese advertising is ready to compete in the world market as they did before leaving for Cannes. He elaborated:

Chinese advertising is not ready yet for the world because of political, economic, historical and social factors. . . . Western advertising industry has more than a hundred years of history and was established on the base of a mature market economy. In comparison, Chinese advertising industry has only twenty years of experience, it was originated from a planned economy and developed along with a new market economy. We should not and could not violate the law of the development of market and ignore the effect economy has on advertising in order to push advertising above and out of its historical context (p. 20, translation).

This section presented the concerns of many advertising researchers and professionals on China's defeats in Cannes from a market perspective. They do not oppose the use of traditional appeal; instead, they question the intentions of using such appeal. They affirmed that the ultimate goal of an effective advertising is making profit, not winning awards. In a pragmatic fashion, they criticize the discourse of cultural advertising for isolating advertising communication media, especially the moment of encounter (reflected in the discussion of appeal) from many limiting conditions in an immature market.

Summary

In summary, there are contradictory views on several issues regarding the defeat of Chinese advertising in Cannes. These issues include: 1) the use of traditional appeal in advertising; 2) elements that constitute "Chinese characteristics" in "advertising with

Chinese characteristics; 3) the importance of winning international contests; 4) the purpose of advertising. At last, arguments all come down to what ends advertising should serve or the positioning of advertising media: as a tool of cultural communication or as a market mechanism. In the following chapter, I will further explore the context and rationale for each side of the argument in connection with the on-going debate on the Chinese modernity and the problems of domestic and international hegemony.

Chapter 4. Discussion and Conclusion

Two main discourses arose from the discussion of China's participation in Cannes. One is the official discourse of cultural advertising that appropriates cultural tradition as a new way of defending the bonds unities of the nation-state. The other is the criticism of the official discourse in which professional solidarity overrode the former boundaries of ideology. In this chapter, I will further explore the implications of these two discourses for changes in the Chinese cultural and ideological landscapes in the late 20th century by drawing connections to social and ideological circumstances during this period as well as relevant academic literatures.

Ideological communication and “advertising with Chinese characteristics”

China's ruling regime the CCP understands perfectly the power of mass communication for creating and maintaining a national identity since revolution in print culture represented by the May fourth movement helped to first spur the imagination of a Communist nation-state. Before the reform in the late 1970s, the Chinese government had exerted a firm control over China's mass media by reducing it to an instrument of political indoctrination and mass mobilization. In the post-Mao era, Deng's focus on economy instead of ideology, which led to reform in media structure, allowed a variety of non-ideological contents to flourish⁸. Thus, many scholars have noted a trend of “de-ideologization” (Huang, 1994; Chu, 1994). However, Y. Zhao (1999) pointed out that it was dangerous to romanticize the outcome of the on-going media reform. She noted that

the change was more on the focus of the content, rather than the nature of news.

According to her, “while Marxism, Leninism, and Mao Zedong Thought have lost their grip on the population, the ideology of national and personal development through the market has replaced them. While this powerful ideology is more implicit, its grip on the people is no less totalistic” (p. 6).

From a cross-cultural perspective, the power of the nation-state is also being challenged by transnational imaginaries introduced by increased exchange of images with other countries. To combat these transnational forces, nationalism has become the main theme in the less explicit ideological communication of CCP. Cultural identity and the center mentality (characterized now by a desire to be distinct rather than superior) are singled out as the means to promote the new ideology noted by Zhao. An example would be Deng’s slogan of “socialist market economy with Chinese characteristics”. Nonetheless, pro-official scholars found it difficult to construct a discourse surrounding this vague and paradoxical phrase. For example, in the official campaign to resurrect advertising in China, noted Stross (1990),

the Chinese public was told again and again in the 1980s that China needed advertising to be scientific and modern, to operate the economy efficiently, to catch up with the capitalist countries. But the frequent references to the benefits that advertising brought to capitalist society made it difficult for Chinese writers and lecturers to maintain that China’s use of advertising would remain significantly different from capitalist practice (p. 489).

Many efforts made to assert such distinctions at that time were futile and unpersuasive.

For instance, Stross observed: “China’s *Jingji Ribao* (Economic Daily) attempted in 1987 to show the non-commercial importance of advertising in a socialist society, but used examples of what should be done (promoting ‘healthy, uplifting recreational activities and a positive tone for studies) rather than what had been done” (p. 497). The 1990’s saw a continuation of emphasis on the non-commercial aspects of advertising especially in depicting advertising as a cultural medium and appropriation of cultural tradition as the new device for national identity in the discourse of cultural advertising.

Indeed, cultural tradition provides the source and legitimacy in the construction of “Chineseness” that was much emphasized in the state-projected modernity. Traditional symbols previously vilified as the “four olds” of Chinese feudalism were reconstructed as the representations of the “essence” of Chinese culture. Besides the use of symbols, the discourse of cultural advertising also employed a kind of state Confucianism (with emphasis on authority and collective wellness rather than individual wellness) among other levels of Confucianism to explain the Chinese way of doing business. The case of cultural advertising further affirmed Ong (1998)’s observation that the “Confucian renaissance” assured the official message of “a venerable Chinese way of making money that is specific to the historical and cultural boundedness of the nation” (p. 179).

Revitalization of traditional culture also enables the official discourse to explore “Chineseness” to its fullest, not only in the ways that advertisements are made, but also in the appeal and content that advertising should use. From the debate on traditional appeals, it is also notable that official discourse tried to reinforce the imaginary of nation

by interpolating the Chinese nationals as the subject of a set of fixed ideas and values.

Here, the persuasive model of interpolation in advertising (speaking in the subjective voice of the audience rather than telling audiences what they want) was used to communicate a nationalistic ideology. In marketing, however, nationality and culture are not the only criteria to define a market. Thus the intent of the official discourse was exposed in a rather professional manner by the criticism of appeals emphasizing relationships within social and cultural boundaries such as Confucian ethics and heroism (Li 1996; Qiao, 1998). Marketing professionals, not intentionally as a counter-official force, called for more appeals, traditional or not, that would invoke natural feelings and emotions that are more individual than nationalistic in nature.

In fact, the Party's understanding and advertising professionals' understanding of their common audience are fundamentally different. The Party regards the audience as no more than the subject of propaganda while true commercialism allows space for its audience to construe individuality as a consumer. A similar discussion of humanism in advertising—"debates about unique human value, the status of abstract individuality and the nature of the imposed Party constructions of the self—which "engaged the attention of some intellectuals" was denounced in 1983 by the launch of an Anti-Spiritual Pollution Campaign (Barmé 1999, p. 3). However, as we note from this recent debate in rethinking Cannes, there was also substantial emphasis on humanism, its connection with product use value, and the changing nature of the audience. That such discussion is allowed this time may be either because the pace of the de-ideologization process in the market place is accelerated by *jiegui* or because the Party has become less sensitive to

discourses constructed with a great amount of professionalism in the economic realm, compared to those brought more explicitly to the ideological realm by intellectuals. In other words, Chinese policy makers still believe in the *ti-yong* formula that the Western “*yong*” represented by marketing techniques can only be used for the promotion of the Chinese “*ti*”—a new nationalistic ideology. Therefore, the government allows professional learning from the West by which Chinese advertising can catch up with the West and present itself as a winner on the international stage, which is crucial for the government to secure its power in the process of internationalization.

Award winning and official Occidentalism

To present the uniqueness of a Chinese modernity internationally, award winning is very important in the construction of what Xiaomei Chen (1992) called “official Occidentalism” by which she meant domestic domination by the construction of self against the Western other.

As discussed in Chapter 2, throughout the history of China, political regimes had been trying to instill a kind of center mentality that regarded Chinese culture as the greatest in the world to such an extent that they twice isolated the country from the outside world: once in the Qing Dynasty and the other during the Cultural Revolution (Ci, 1994; Wu, 1992). Twice was China’s door knocked open, the first time by Western imperialists and the second time by China’s own reformers. In the first case, China resolved the disjunction caused by the loss of center mentality by embracing Marxism whose teleology was able to put China ahead of the West, though only in theory. In the

second instance, while the socialist identity can not hold anymore, official discourse tries to project a more traditional image of Chinese identity that relies on difference rather than superiority.

Furthermore, the nation has to establish its subjectivity against the others and one of the excellent occasions to do this with dramatic effect is to participate in international contests. It is quite effective in a way that patriotism experienced a boost every time when China's official media reports a win by Team China in sports, arts, and other international events. Those events where China failed, on the other hand, never received attention on the national media. For example, Cannes Film Festival, reported many times by Chinese major media because of China's successful performance, enjoyed much greater popularity than Cannes Advertising Festival, which never appeared in the general national news media. Furthermore, personal efforts were often neglected in these reports, "Chineseness" was highlighted instead (i.e. a national triumph, or the triumph of Chinese cultural sensibility).

Even when the attempt at winning failed, cultural difference serves as a ready explanation (Z. Sun 1998; Li 1998). Paradoxically, in calls for better cross-cultural communication in advertising selected to participate in international festivals, the use of traditional appeal was still backed by official discourse despite the conclusion on cultural difference. It was articulated that the conflict caused by cultural difference can be resolved by using symbols and images better known to the world and more essential to the Chinese culture. Examples used to illustrate this point are Chinese Kong Fu and Peking Opera that are representations of a Western construction of the "Chineseness".

Thus, the official discourse seems to bear a similarity to the discourse of official Occidentalism “marked by a particular combination of the Western construction of China with the Chinese construction of the West” (Chen, 1992, p. 688). The difference though is that Chen’s Maoist Occidentalism “seeks to construe its other by asserting a distorted and ultimately anxious image of its own uniqueness” (p. 692), while the appropriation of traditional symbols in advertising showed a projection of the uniqueness of China with the use of the Western construction of China⁹. The purpose of self-Orientalization, however, is not so much to show off China’s cultural tradition to the world as to strengthen domestic domination of its own people and resolve China’s own internal disjunction.

North, south and beyond

One disjunction that occurred within China according to Edward Friedman (1995) is the tension between northern and southern identities due to the influence of transnational imaginaries from southeast Asian countries. However, I would argue that such tension could be neutralized by the revival of traditional culture and self-Orientalization in official discourse.

Friedman (1995) observed that in post-Mao China, a southern based nationalism inspired by cultures of the Chinese diaspora in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and other southeast Asian countries is challenging the dictatorial identity of the North with Beijing as the center. This new southern identity is characterized by openness and individuality and is moving to the north in various forms of popular culture such as Canto-pop music and

Cantonese food. According to Friedman (1995), such freedom was allowed largely because the north depended on the foreign exchange earnings from the south and the ties to Chinese diaspora that had brought in more foreign investments than those from the West¹⁰. Friedman (1995) also noted the revival of Confucian culture by the northern regime to strengthen its dictatorship and to suppress democracy. However, he regarded the effort as futile because “social science data suggest that in this struggle over China’s future national culture, young Chinese are embracing the southern-oriented open identity and rejecting the new Confucian nationalism”(1995, p. 14).

Nevertheless, Friedman’s reference to the southern style remained vague. He did not mention that although southern style indeed had been a predominant influence on the mainstream culture in Chinese mainland, it stemmed from China’s own Confucian past and anti-West pan-Asianism in southeast Asia.

On one hand, Kong-Tai style (shorthand for Hong Kong and Taiwan style that inspired the new southern identity) is featured by both the “evocation of hip, modernized Shanghai decadence, and worldly petit-bourgeois patina”, noted by Barm   (1999, p. 6) and by nostalgia and idealization of Chineseness—an “idealist preoccupation with authentic origins, stereotypes which endow present reality with, to borrow a phrase from Jameson, ‘the spell and distance of a glossy mirage’” (Lilley, 1993, p. 267). I believed that it is not only the sophisticated consumer culture, but also its reconstruction of China’s past that attracted mainlanders. Thus, Barme (1999) observed: “Kong-Tai in many ways has provided the mainland with the means to bridge the gaps with both China’s own past and its possible future” (p. 5). The popularity of Kong-Tai style is

more ubiquitous in mainstream culture now in the Chinese mainland, from Hong Kong designer Tian Ai fashion that revives traditional apparel to Kongfu novelist Jin Yong who highlights the traditional concept of *Yi* (trust and loyalty) in almost every one of his bestsellers. Influential mainland writers such as Wang Shuo (2000) have also started to notice such trends and launched a criticism of the Kong-Tai influenced popular culture, especially the nostalgic aspect of it. He argued that Kong-Tai culture was modern in its form but carried on a traditional Confucian worldview that was discontinued by the Marxist movement in China and now is being revitalized. In fact, it is fair to say that the craze for the “Chinese-style” was first brought in by the Kong-Tai culture from the south. For example, the traditional appeal was first used in advertising with an ad imitating Kong-Tai style in the 1980’s featuring ancient terracotta warriors discovered in a Qin tomb in Shanxi province turning to look at an Air China jet flying by (Barmé, 1999).

Thus, the revitalization of traditional culture is not a novel creation of the official discourse. It is part of the trend from the south. In a way, official discourse only appropriated Kong-Tai culture as an example to legitimize their version of an indigenous modernity.

On the other hand, the official discourse on the revival of tradition also bears similarity with the anti-west identity constructed by other Confucian-culture-based countries. Ong (1997) elaborated such a model by drawing examples from the constructions of modernities in Malaysia and Singapore where Chinese diasporic identity was appropriated by local official discourse to proclaim that in the newly industrializing Asian countries, “in the words of an official, ‘We’re not saying that we’re culturally

superior. We're just saying we're not inferior'" (p. 187). According to Ong, the claim was based on "nationalistic claims of an indigenous spiritual domain that is independent of Western domination deriving in part from "defining Chinese business activities as a kind of moral economy based on Confucian ideals" (p. 187, p. 182). She further explained:

One may ask how Confucian, indeed, are the everyday practices of the majority of overseas Chinese, if we go beyond the narrow definitions of discipline and diligence and remember that Confucianism also means a turning-away from materialism and narrow concerns with the family (Ong, 1997, p. 192).

This discourse echoes in the recent debate on the nature of advertising activity where official discourse criticized the profit-first mentality advocated by many advertising professionals. The discourse of cultural advertising reiterates that a Chinese market order should be based on Confucian moral values of *yi* (trust and loyalty) over *li* (profit) and that cultural communication is a more important function of advertising than making profit out of the sale of a product. In this respect, the pro-official discourse of cultural advertising shares the same purpose as the argument of moral economies in the Asia Pacific, which is "to stitch together the inherently divergent tendencies of the state and market logics, and tensions between an organic conservatism and individual desires" (Ong, 1997, p. 186).

Hence, although Friedman's assertion of increased tension between the north and the south due to the reification of traditional values by the official discourse is possible, it is arguable, given the similarities of China's official discourse with that of Kong-Tai and

Asian Pacific discourses, that the revival of tradition seems to be working for now to balance and neutralize the ideologically contradictory narratives of the market in the south and the state in the north. However, there is also a danger for the imaginary of state to be threatened by the transnational imaginary of the Greater China which is already present in the thesis of Chinese advertising having a transnational market of Chinese-speaking population (Chen 1997). Nonetheless, according to Ong (1997), official discourse is already differentiating itself from that of the Greater China by defining Chineseness “narrowly as a singular cultural formation deeply rooted in the heartland and history of the continent” (p. 179). It is still unclear, however, whether mainlanders will accept the official version of traditional culture as they identify with traditional forms of popular culture by embracing the Kong-Tai style nostalgia—more of a hybrid than the totalizing official version.

Turning right with the left turn signal

As made clear in Chapter 3, there were two themes that emerged from the debate on Cannes disappointment. One was the debate on the use of traditional appeal that tied in with the revival of traditional culture by official discourse and ideological communication as discussed in previous sections of this chapter. The other was the criticism of the award driven mentality in making advertising, which in my opinion does not directly contradict the revival of traditional culture; rather, it challenged the elitism prevalent in the Chinese society.

In the contemporary scene in China, there are many contradictory dichotomies that interact and manage to coexist. There are the dichotomies of the Chinese nation-state and Greater China, state ideology and market commercialism, continuous economic development and staggered political reform, *ti* and *yong*, or as in the case of the Cannes debate, the market mentality with sales as the major goal for advertising and the culture mentality with communicating cultural and social messages for the authority as the major goal. I believe that one reason for these contradictory dualities to exist is the ambiguous dual character of an elite culture which always looks for answers in the spiritual domain for problems in the material world as if ideology is the cure for everything. For example, when speaking of the solution for the chaotic market order for domestic advertising agencies, official discourse blamed bad cultural taste and immoral Western market mentality not suitable for the moral economy of China instead of the unsophisticated market system and lack of legislation. The preference for the ideological function of advertising is also evident in the drive for winning awards that could “win glory for motherland” and boost patriotic spirit. Indeed, as a popular writer wrote, in Chinese society, rigidity of rules is one thing, the most unbearable are the reiteration of spiritual role models, deliberate ignorance of the negative and the real problem while praising the positive, and doing one thing while saying another (Wang, 2000).

While I was in Beijing collecting data for this research, a high ranking official in charge of the “ideological work” (a title in many government institutions to insure that government employees are in sync with the official policy) in the Foreign Ministry told me a popular joke about Chinese, Russian and American presidents. It was said that the

three presidents had a meeting after which each drove away in his car. At the first intersection, Clinton turned right without hesitation and did not even bother to turn on the right turn signal. The Russian, on the other hand, pulled the car to a full stop, signaled a right turn and turned right following the American. When it was the turn for President Jiang of China, he stopped the car first. Without knowing which way to go, he called his mentor Deng and asked for direction. Over the phone, Deng told him impatiently, “how many times do I have to tell you this, just turn right with the left turn signal”.

Many scholars have also observed the dual character of the Chinese political culture. In fact, throughout Chinese history, the political culture of China is always characterized by a weak administrative system and a strong ideology. Various ways were developed to get around the insufficient system such as a strong *guanxi* network. Smart (1999) observed that “the idioms and practices of social interaction provide a variety of ways in which inappropriate rules and institutions can be sidestepped” (p. 172). However, the question is what made possible such a dual character and what is its purpose.

Rulers of China have a long history of reliance on the elite class of the country. The elite class, on the other hand, relies on ideology to counterbalance its administrative weakness. In Ray Huang’s review (1981) of one historical period in Ming Dynasty, he observed an unprecedented reliance on ideology that I found similar to that of the more contemporary periods. As Huang observed, the government of the Ming Dynasty’s early years set high moral standards but provided the lowest income for educated elites, government officials or civil servants as the government insisted on calling them at the time. As the economy grew and while the gap between “individual’s inner urge for self

gain and his professed moral standard” (p. 88) became larger and larger, many state officials had to look for extra money to compensate for their unreasonably low income. These practices resulted in the ignoring of rules and legislation and “numerous business proceedings that should have been carried out according to organizational principles were actually handled by the personal touch” (p. 89). Huang further noted that “the system therefore forced officials to find remedies in personal exertion and moral value. . . . The demand for ideology thus tended to spiral upward in an age when technical and organizational solutions to problems should have been sought and provided” (p. 90). This situation, Huang concluded, caused the dual character of the bureaucracy and the polarization of moral and material needs. In fact, the dual pattern is evident in many periods in Chinese history since many rulers had relied on doctrines of Confucianism and upon the elite who practice it to control the country. Then, it could well be possible that such a pattern is reapplied by the elite culture in China to insure its domination today during the transition period when the market system is still weak.

Then, why is it necessary to signal left while turning right? The ideological worker who told me the story explained that if the government did not insist on its authority by confirming its acclaimed socialist identity or ideological distinction from the West, China would have fallen into the same kind of chaos as Russia. In fact, for a long time, feudal regimes of China had conditioned Chinese into believing that “only recognized authority stands between order and chaos, that . . . when leadership has failed, *luan*—chaos—the situation most feared by Chinese has followed, [with] the society . . . disintegrating into . . . violent, bloody, and terrifying civil war” (quoted in Friedman, 1995, p. 7). The

recent effort to revitalize Confucianism by the official discourse, especially the state Confucianism featuring the rules of personal conducts and doctrine of names further reinforced such thesis. Articulated as a cultural trait of Confucian-culture-based countries, the fear for *luan* let to willingness to comply is also observed in other similar narratives. While comparing countries assumed to possess Confucian values with those that do not, Lee Kuan Yew, the former President of Singapore, commented that the American-style democracy in the Philippines undermined social discipline and stability. He believed that “the exuberance of democracy lead advertisements to undisciplined and disorderly conditions which are inimical to development” (quoted in Ong, 1997, p. 184).

Are Chinese people still thinking that *luan* would occur when the Communist Party fails? Or would *luan* really happen when the traditional form of authority is replaced by democracy in a country conditioned to respect authority? We do not know these answers yet. However, what we do know is that through a more subtle ideological communication as shown in the case of cultural advertising, the CCP regime reified the Confucian values (that of rules for one to know his/her position in a hierarchical social structure) for the purpose of maintaining its control of social and territorial integrity. Furthermore, they made it look as if it is what the audience wants through the interpolation of audience as the subject in advertising. This appropriation of advertising tactics is evident in the narrow definition of the Chinese audience as Chinese speaking and Confucian-culture-based by the official discourse when arguing that using traditional appeal is telling the story in the language of the audience.

Therefore, the political culture in China featured an emphasis on the spiritual domain instead of practical means as the remedy for the administrative and organizational weakness and interpolation of audience as a way to resolving conflicts caused by the contradictory dual character. Such influences also prevail in the economic culture of China since the state still exerts a less explicit interference in economic activities as shown by the advertising case. However, the status quo does not go unchallenged.

This can be demonstrated with a review of the criticism of the official discourse from advertising professionals. First, advertising professionals pointed out that the discourse of cultural advertising had spoken about advertising—first and foremost a promotional tool—too much in cultural terms (i.e. applying Lu Xun’s remark on arts). According to these critiques, unlike films and other artistic expressions, advertising is limited by the product it promotes and not all products are suitable for using a traditional appeals. One critique of cultural advertising even protested against bringing the hypocritical manner of the elite culture to advertising production by criticizing formalism, heroism and romanticism in advertising. Second, advertising professionals criticized the mentality that regards winning awards as the benchmark and goal in the production of advertising. Third, there was also criticism about ignoring the changes in audience due to new economic circumstances. Fourth, by comparing economic conditions with countries that had won the award, some advertising professionals recognized the inferior position of the Chinese economy which official discourse was reluctant to admit. Finally, almost all criticism talked about market effects and profit as the basic criteria to judge advertising.

Although these criticisms were composed in a rather professional manner, they have significant social and ideological implications as well. By criticizing the discourse of cultural advertising, these advertising professionals refused to be assimilated to the hypocritical elite culture by simply admitting to the fact that the purpose of any economic activity is to earn a profit and that there is no shame to it. Admitting the desire for personal gain or profit—an act that counters the official definition of Chinese philosophy—thus becomes a way to challenge the hypocritical dual character of bureaucracy represented by the official discourse and deconstruct the official notion of “market economy with Chinese characteristics”. Furthermore, they articulated in many ways that it was dangerous to pursue the so called “Ah Q Spirit” (a pursuit of spiritual victory regardless of practical conditions –footnote¹¹) so typical of Chinese elitism in the practical world of economic development. Too much emphasis on the victory in the spiritual domain instead of investigating into the real problems may misrepresent the current stage of the advertising industry or any industry. Another danger is that such attitude also provides wrong criteria for benchmarking economic development. Last but not least, they also reminded us that the audience, more informed than ever before, might also change whether as consumers or as citizens. To go back to my early point on audience interpolation, this criticism somehow exposed the official discourse for its subtle ideological communication in which a set of traditional traits was imposed onto the audience. The audience, to the official discourse, is more passive receiver than active subject as they appear to be in advertising. Although the same accusation of interpolation has been made of advertising professionals in the West, the difference is that in the

Chinese case, the audience is interpolated as a group of nationals possessing a set of national characters not as individual consumers.

Conclusion

While I was reading materials for this research, I was often confused by the blurry boundary between culture and economy represented by the advertising media.

Commenting on the creativity and aesthetic of advertising appeals, these articles seem to be talking about advertising as popular art at one time and marketing techniques at another. It became clear to me later that it is exactly the cross-boundariness of the advertising media that made possible appropriation from both the official discourse and that of the professionals for their political or commercial ends. What resulted from the examination of such a cross-boundary media is how discourse in the ideological sphere can be carried over to the economic sphere and vice versa.

On one hand, from the 1990 onward, the ideological propaganda from the government became less overt. Advertising media is appropriated for more subtle ideological communication of a nationalistic discourse based on Chinese traditional values. Interestingly enough, ideological communication is what advertising is often accused of in the West for its overflowing materialism. Chinese authority, however, believes that it could not only use advertising content to achieve a smoother alliance of state and capital with a novel appropriation of tradition but also distinguish advertising from the Western model by defining it to be more of a cultural representation than a marketing strategy. The government also attempted to further strengthen the notion of

“advertising with Chinese characteristics” by stirring up patriotism and national pride with more participation in international contests which later proved to be unsuccessful. The appropriation of Confucian values and the anti-West discourse by self-orientalization advocated by the official discourse evident from the Cannes case seem to indicate similarities with the East Asian Model of development. Yet, these similarities do not mean that Chinese authority is following the East Asian Model because the former is based on national and territorial sovereignty while the latter is based on transnationalism. Also, differently from the East Asian model, Chinese government does not admit to a Chinese capitalism as other Confucian-culture-based countries do, although it is in fact moving towards it. It is a lie that everyone knows but goes unchallenged for many years. The reason for the deception I believe is an orientation of the elite culture with its reliance on ideology and the dual character of bureaucracy that had for a long time occupied the center stage in managing every aspect of life in China.

The discourse, which I would call professional discourse, also emerged from the Cannes case, on the other hand, serving as a new form of counter-official discourse to challenge the elitism rather than the official ideology. Unlike other counter-official discourses before (i.e. that of May Fourth movement, June Fourth movement and He Shang), this discourse does not arise from within the Chinese intelligentsia itself but from a professional community. Their criticism is not directed at official ideology. Rather, armed with a new sense of professionalism, it shows annoyance with the official status quo. Such professionalism that overrides party logic is evident in other reforms brought

by commercialization. For example, Y. Zhao (1999) observed a similar scenario in China's media reform. She noted that:

Although some have argued that the Party principle and the market are not incompatible, arguments for further commercialization contain a potential challenge to Party logic. While few have held that editorial freedom is necessary for market success, many have begun to maintain that if the media are to be run as business, they should have relative autonomy in editorial policy. When commercial logic is carried to its conclusion, as some have done, it means that just as factory managers have autonomy in determining what to produce, editors should have the right to determine what to report; and just as factory products are manufactured to meet the needs of consumers, news should be produced to meet the needs of readers and audiences, not just the propaganda imperatives of the Party (p. 181).

As a departure from the old debate on traditionalist and anti-traditionalist models among Chinese intellectuals, the contradiction now is between party control and market forces. On a micro level, when the *ti-yong* formula has fallen to be just a context of the domestic hegemony to maintain a nationalistic discourse, this is a case that explains how *ti* is now affected by *yong*. While none of these official and anti-official forces are Western, they are shaped by the forces of modernity that the West first launched. Therefore, on a macro level, the Cannes disappointment also shows the interplay among local, regional, and international hegemonic forces. As Smart (1999) observed

Global hegemonic institutions are offering one main mechanism for ensuring consistency: local societies must adopt the general ground rules and practices of capitalism as practiced in the United States, the European Union and, to a lesser extent, Japan if they are to be successful in attracting foreign investment or in being permitted equal access to world market (p. 161).

If *jiegui* is China's compromise to these rules, the revitalization of traditional culture is China's way of maintaining its control and the imaginary of a Chinese nation-state. However, the elitist approach of the Chinese authority becomes problematic when it is blinded by its own creation of a lie legitimized by the *ti-yong* formula. The case of Cannes shows a trend in the Chinese economic culture where business professionalism is gradually replacing elitism represented by the official discourse.

The only unknown throughout the case is the audience. Will the audience be convinced of the reification of traditional culture as their new identity? What is the influence of transnational forces on the audience and their reaction to softer ideological communication from the government? These questions await further studies on audience reception.

Endnotes

¹ China's economic reform involved shifts from a planned economy to a market economy, state ownership to private ownership, and no exchange with the international community to increasing participation in global economy.

² A more detailed account of the *He Shang* debate can be found in Chapter 2.

³ There will be a detailed review of commercial advertising in Chapter 2.

⁴ It should be noted that the media and publication system in China is still under control of the Chinese Communist party. According to Zhao (1999): "News media in post-Mao China, in short, are in the paradoxical situation of at once being changed and remaining the same. Economic reforms and an open-door policy introduced market logic into the Party-controlled news media system and led to a fledgling journalism reform movement and the emergence of discourse on media democratization in the mid-1980s, which threatened to challenge the Party's monopolistic control. While the crackdown on the democracy movement in 1989 suppressed democratic discourses and re-imposed tight political control, market forces gained momentum after the Party's unreserved embrace of a market economy in 1992. These developments produced the current mix of Party logic and market logic—the defining feature of the news media system "(p. 2). In other words, in China, you are free to publish almost everything except what threaten the dominating position of the Chinese Communist Party. Chinese journalists seldom write about ideological issues in a straightforward fashion, while the Chinese readers have learned for a long time to read between lines. Therefore, among the arguments of the debate, no direct contradiction with the official discourse can be found, only negotiated or implied.

⁵ Neo-modernizationists recognize this trend of convergence since they see culture as a resource rather than determining factor in the path of development. According to Smart (1999): "The neo-modernizationist approach to the role of culture in the contemporary world economy, then, is to see it as something that inhibits or facilitates development. If development is to result, certain universal problems have to be resolved, and there are only a limited number of ways in which the solutions can be found" (p. 2).

⁶ China has been sending training delegations to the United States to learn marketing techniques each year since 1995. Reports by members of the delegation (upper-level managers of domestic advertising firms) on their study tour can be found in China Advertising Yearbook.

⁷ In 1990, University of International Business and Economics in Beijing began to offer a marketing course with an American professor from the University of Washington with untranslated teaching materials directly from American programs.

⁸ Media reform is a structural reform that releases media from complete financial control by the government. Apart from national network and publications, local media now depends on self-generated circulation and advertising revenue.

⁹ To illustrate the notion of official Occidentalism where China constructed the other by asserting a construction of self, Xiaomei Chen (1992) gave the example of Mao's rural strategy which was presented as products of a specifically Chinese experience. However, she noted: "Yet obviously this supposedly uniquely Chinese Maoist anti-urbanism shared 'certain similarities with a strain in the Western intellectual tradition...' In this regard Maoist Occidentalism seems dependent on the very Western predecessors with which it disavows any connection. Like its Orientalist counterpart, it seeks to construe its other by asserting a distorted and ultimately anxious image of its own uniqueness (p. 692).

¹⁰ In fact, the largest investment in East Asian region is from the region itself. According to Tu Wei-ming: "the Four Dragon [South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore] are providing thirty-one percent of all foreign investment in the countries of ASEAN ... they are now responsible for the largest capital transfer in the region, exceeding that of both Japan and United States" (quoted in Frith 1996, p. 188).

¹¹ Ah Q is a character in Lu Xun's famous short story of the same name.

Bibliography

- Abbas, Ackbar (1996). Hong Kong: Culture and the Politics of Disappearance. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Anderson, Michael H. (1984). Madison Avenue in Asia: Politics and Transnational Advertising. London: Associated Press.
- Ang, Ien (1996). Living Room Wars: Rethinking Media Audiences for a Postmodern World. New York: Routledge.
- Appadurai, Arjun (1996). Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Berger, Peter (1988). An East Asian development model? In Peter Berger & Hsin-Huang Michael Hsiao (Eds.) In Search of an East Asian Development Model. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 3-11.
- Cang, Zhenhua (1996). Thoughts after Cannes International Advertising Festival. Chinese Advertising, 6: 41-42.
- Chen, Liang (1997). Audience reception and traditional culture in advertising. China Advertising Yearbook. Beijing: Xinhua Publications, 115-116.
- Chen, Xiaomei (1992). Occidentalism as counterdiscourse: 'He Shang' in Post-Mao China. Critical Inquiry, 18, 686-712.
- Cheng, Hang-sheng (1989). Historical factors affecting China's economic underdevelopment. In Huang-chao Tai (Ed.) Confucianism and Economic Development: An Oriental Alternative?, Washington D. C.: The Washington Institute Press, 53-69.
- Ci, Jiwei (1994). The detour on the road to capitalism. Dialectic of the Chinese Revolution: From Utopianism to Hedonism. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 25-61.
- Cui, Dequn (1999). A reinvestigation of the national characteristic in advertising. Chinese Advertising 3, 21-24.
- Dijk, Teun A. van (1991). News as discourse. A Handbook of Qualitative Methodologies for Mass Communication Research. London: Routledge, 108-119.
- Ding, Bangqing and Kuang Yirong (1999). Decoding "Gray box"—practical approach to make effective advertising. The Quest for the Truth in Advertising. Beijing: People's Daily Press, 34-43.

- Donald Nonini, Donald and Aihwa Ong (1997). Chinese transnationalism as an alternative modernity. In Ong, Aihwa and Donald Nonini (Eds.) Ungrounded Empires: The Cultural Politics of Modern Chinese Transnationalism, London: Routledge, 3-33.
- Featherstone, Mike (1995). Undoing Culture: Globalization, Postmodernism, and Identity. London: Sage Publications.
- Featherstone, M. , Lash, S. , Robertson, R. (Eds.). (1996). Global Modernities, London: Sage Publications.
- Fowles, Jib (1996). Advertising and Popular Culture. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Friedman, Edward (1992). New Nationalist Identities in Post-Leninist Transformations: The Implications for China. Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong.
- Friedman, Edward (1995). National Identity and Democratic Prospects in Socialist China. Armonk, N. Y. : ME. Sharpe.
- Frith, Katherine Toland (1996). The century of the dragon. Media Asia, 23 (4), 188-192.
- Frith, Katherine T. & Frith, M. (1989). Advertising as cultural invasion. Media Asia, 16 (4), 50-52.
- Gao, Rui (1997). Don't be misled—Is internationalization the best way for the development of Chinese advertising? Chinese Advertising 3, 15.
- Geremie R. Barmé (1999). CPP & ADCULT PRC. The China Journal , 41, 1-22.
- Grossberg, Lawrence (1996). The space of power, the power of space. In Stuart Hall and Paul Du Gay (Eds.) Questions of Cultural Identity, London: Sage Publications, 87-107.
- Hong, Junhuo (1994). The resurrection of advertising in China. Asian Survey, 34 (4), 326.
- King, Anthony (1995). The times and spaces of modernity: Who Needs Postmodernism. In Mike Featherstone, Scott Lash, and Roland Robertson (Eds.) Global Modernities. London: Sage Publications, 110-126.
- Leiss, W. , Kline, S. , & Jhally, S. (Eds.). (1986). Social Communication in Advertising. New York: Mehtuen.
- Li, Hong (1999). Misunderstandings on cross cultural advertising communication.

Chinese Advertising, 2, 83-84.

Li, Liangyu (1992). On radicalism, conservatism and intellectual responsibility. The Twenty First Century, 12, 132-134.

Li, Mou (1996). Traditional and modern approaches in advertising. Chinese Advertising, 6, 42-44.

Li, Xin (1998). How did Chinese advertising become a winner in International Outdoor Advertising Contest. Advertising Panorama, 47, 22.

Liang, Zhiping (1992). The cost of modernity. The Twenty First Century, 14, 53-58.

Liao, Junqun (1999). Be aware of the negative influence from advertising. Modern Advertising, 4: 18-19.

Lilley, R. (1993). Claiming identity: film and television in Hong Kong. History and Anthropology, 6 (2-3), 261-292.

Liu, Baofu (1995). Strategic directions for the further development of Chinese advertising industry. China Advertising Yearbook. Beijing : Xinhua Publication, 24-26.

Luo, Rongqu (1992). The rise of East Asia-a challenge for the theory of modernity. The Twenty First Century, 13, 146-152.

Luo, Zhishang (1998). National culture in advertising. Advertising World, 3, 22-23.

Nava, M. , Blake, A. , MacRury, I. , & Richards B. (Eds.). (1997). Buy This Book: Studies in Advertising and Consumption. London, Routeledge.

Ong, Aihwa (1997). Chinese modernities: narratives of nation and of capitalism. In Ong, Aihwa and Donald Nonini (Eds.) Ungrounded Empires: The Cultural Politics of Modern Chinese Transnationalism, London: Routeledge, 171-202.

Pollay, Richard W., Tse, D. K. , & Wang, Z. Y. (1990). Advertising, propaganda, and value change in economic development: the new cultural revolution in China and attitudes toward advertising. Journal of Business Research, 20, 83-95.

Qiao, Yunsheng (1998). 1997, a tough year for creativity. 1998 China Advertising Yearbook. Beijing: Xinhua Publications, 64-67.

Robertson, Roland (1992). Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture. CA: Sage Publications.

- Rofel, Lisa (1999). Other Modernities: Gendered Yearnings in China after Socialism. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Schudson, M. (1984). Advertising, the Uneasy Persuasion: Its Dubious Impact on American Society. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Smart, Alan (1999). Getting things done across the Hong Kong border: economic culture in theory and practice. Qiaoxiang Ties: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Cultural Capitalism in South China. London: Kegan Paul International, 159-186.
- Song, Wenjing (1996). Cannes, a place full of enticement: An interview with the chairperson of Cannes International Advertising Festival. Modern Advertising, 1: 8-13.
- Stross, Randall (1990). The return of advertising in China: a survey of the ideological reversal. The China Quarterly 123, 485-502.
- Sun, Fengguo (1999). Rationality behind the difference of Chinese and Western advertising appeals. Chinese Advertising, 5, 79-81.
- Sun, Wenqing (1998). Quasi modernity, positioning Chinese advertising. Chinese Advertising, 4, 12-13.
- Sun, Xiaobing (1998). Thoughts on Chinese Advertising Market. Advertising Panorama, 50: 22-23.
- Sun, Zhiqiang (1998). Chinese advertising—creating its own path. Advertising Panorama, 46: 12-14.
- Tai, Hung-chao (1989). The oriental alternative: an hypothesis on culture and economy. Confucianism and Economic Development: An Oriental Alternative?, Huang-chao Tai (Ed.), Washington D. C.: The Washington Institute Press, 6-37.
- Tao, Ran (1999). Comment on contemporary Chinese Rock'n Roll community. Modern Sky, 1, 24-25.
- Therborn, Goran (1995). Routes to/through modernity. In Mike Featherstone, Scott Lash, and Roland Robertson (Eds.) Global Modernities. London: Sage Publications, 124-139.
- Tian, Jianyun (1992). Talking About Advertising in Chinese. China Advertising Yearbook. Beijing: Xinhua Publications, 252-255.
- Tomlinson, John (1991). Cultural Imperialism. London: Pinter Publishers.

- Tong, Yan (1996). What did Cannes teach us? Modern Advertising, 4, 1.
- Tu, W. , Hejtmanek, M. , & Wachman, A. (Eds.). (1992). Confucian World Observed: Contemporary Discussion of Confucian Humansm in East Asia. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- Wang, Luchang (1998a). Putting out the fire of cultural advertising. Modern Advertising, 4, 40-41.
- Wang, Luchang (1998b). On cultural taste in advertising. Chinese Advertising, 5, 16-17.
- Wang, Shuo (2000). My opinion on Chinese popular culture, Kong-Tai style and other. Wuzhi Zhe Wuwei. Beijing, Chunfeng Wenyi Chubanshe, 2-46.
- Weber, Max (1930). The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (T. Parsons, trans.). London: Allen and Unwin.
- Wilson, R. , & Dissanayake, W. (Eds.) (1996). Global/Local: Cultural Production and the Transnational Imaginary. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Wu, Xiaoming (1992). Self-identification of Chinese culture in face of the West in the twentieth century. The Twenty First Century, 14, 102-112.
- Wu, Yan and Gao Wei (1998). National psychological characteristic and advertising reception. Chinese Advertising, 3, 53-55.
- Yang, Mayfair Mei-hui Yang (1997). Mass media and transnational subjectivity in Shanghai: notes of (re)cosmopolitanism in a Chinese metropolis. In Ong, Aihwa and Donald Nonini (Eds.) Ungrounded Empires: The Cultural Politics of Modern Chinese Transnationalism, London: Routledge, 287-319.
- Yang, Peiqing (1996). Speech to the Chinese Advertising Association. China Advertising Yearbook. Beijing, Xinhua Publications, 198-199.
- Yin, Robert K. (1994). Case Study Research: Design and Method. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Yuan, Shang (1998). Inside the advertising business. Chinese Advertising At the End of the 20th Century. Beijing: Gaige Chubanshe (Reform Publications), 118-153.
- Zhang, Heqing (1999). Culture in advertising appeals. Advertising Pointer, 33/34: 36-37.
- Zhang, Jikang (1998). International competition in Chinese advertising market and domestic protection. Advertising Panorama, 44, 8-9 .

- Zhao, Chengzai (1997). Basic characteristics of advertising and advertising management. China Advertising Yearbook. Beijing: Xinhua Publications, 136-140.
- Zhao, Enfang (1998). Modern Advertising Culture in China. Ji'nan: Shangdong Renmin Chubanshe (Shangdong People's Publication).
- Zhao, Guihong (1999). On the development of domestic advertising market. Chinese Advertising, 1, 23-24.
- Zhao, Xinshu, & Shen F. (1995). Audience reaction to commercial advertising in China in the 1980s. International Journal of Advertising, 14, 374-390.
- Zhao, Yuezhi (1999). Media, Market, and Democracy in China: Between the Party Line and Bottom Line. Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
- Zheng, Jian (1998). On "TV advertising with Chinese characteristics". Advertising World, 3, 18-20.
- Zhu, Jinyu (1999). Cultural undertoning of advertising. Advertising World, 5, 28-29.
- Zhu, Yuechang (1996). Thoughts on regulating advertising market in China. China Advertising Yearbook. Beijing: Xinhua Publications, 233-237.

Appendix: Examples of advertisements showcasing traditional appeals

Weili Washing Machine Ad (TV)

A daughter who went to live in the city presented her mother with a Weili washing machine to replace the old washing board her mother was still using. Background shows the yard of a typical north China countryside with dried fruits, garlic, and red chili peppers hanging from the window. Ad copy reads: “Weili washing machine, love for mother”. The emotional appeal highlights the traditional value of *xiao* (filial piety).

Kongfu Liquor (TV)

A family welcomed an overseas Chinese student’s home coming with a bottle of Kongfu Liquor (or Liquor from the Home of Confucius). Background gave a traditional festive atmosphere with the red color and the traditional décor of Chinese lantern. Ad copy reads: “Liquor from the Home of Confucius make you want to come home”. Music features a song from a popular TV series about a group of Chinese living in New York that goes: “I will be coming home although we are thousand miles apart”. The appeal highlights the traditional value of *zhong* (loyalty). One’s loyalty to his/her family also symbolizes in this ad one’s loyalty to his home country.

Advertising copy for the Audi-Chrysler Red Flag car (Newspaper)

All Chinese celebrated the birth of the original “Red Flag” limousine. All Chinese have been proud of the brilliant glories of the “Red Flag”. . . . “Red Flag” is a product that really belongs to the Chinese people. . . . In 1958, designers at the Number One Automobile Manufacturing Plant combined their extraordinary talents to create the first generation of Chinese luxury limousine, the “Red Flag”. They wrote the first page in the history of China’s automotive industry. . . . As the paramount Chinese vehicle, the “Red Flag” is not merely a legend in motoring history. She crystallizes the ceaseless faith, the tireless struggles, and the fiery emotion of the whole country over a period of dozens of years and a number of generations. She symbolizes the eternal glories of the wisdom and the spirit of the Chinese nation. . . . (Barne, 1999)