

ASIA PROGRAMME

CHINA, A NEW CULTURAL STRENGTH? SOFT POWER AND SHARP POWER

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“The People’s Republic is engaged with us in an ideological war that dare not speak its name.”¹ – Jean Pierre Cabestan

THE REINFORCED HEGEMONY OF XI JINPING

Hybrid political system or “democracy”², China has endorsed the double use of “hard” and “soft” power by directing its priorities on the necessary establishment of a “cultural safety” (*wenhua anquan*). Not suffering from any type of dissidence, China responds to the need of creating its proper cultural industries in the audiovisual and the digital domains but also for the purpose of building a speech allowing the reinterpretation of the history in support of the power, Chinese, of course. In this context, the New Road of Silk’s policy - also called OBOR (“*One Belt One Road*”; « *Yi dai yi lu*” in Chinese) - initiated in 2013 by Xi Jinping is both a commercial type of strategy and a worldwide cultural project. It aims to exploit deposits in potentialities offered, for example, by the superior education for the African or Central Asian elites. It is based on the culturalist postulate according to which China has its own values, neo-Confucians in particular. These values have a universal aim that the Party-State wants to promote thanks to a large spectral cultural diplomacy. Understanding the challenges of this is one of the keys of our century.

The perspectives of Xi Jinping staying in power beyond the two mandates imposed by the constitution are becoming highly probable. Despite Chinese society’s evolving trends towards further liberalization, the determination of the actual president to avoid uncontrollable reforms is real. It expresses, particularly in the cultural area, by device control that systematically calls to order every artist considered as deviant. According to the web portal of information sina.com, orders are given to TV antennas to prohibit the “*artists with tattoos, the hip-hop music*” and musicians “*in conflict with essential values and morality of the Party*” to get on-air³. The control of cultural content has considerably reinforced since the arrival at the head of the state of Xi Jinping in 2012. The political

This title is that of a book written in French to appear in the collection “Les médiatiques” published by Mkf in May 2019. This introduction was translated in English by Marion Majourau.

¹Jean-Pierre Cabestan, *Tomorrow China: democracy or dictatorship?* Paris, Gallimard, 2018

²Emmanuel Lincot, “*The Chinese model is a democracy*”, “Strategic Talk”, Le Figaro - October 2017

³ Cyrille Pluyette, « *Le rap dans le collimateur des autorités chinoises* », Le Figaro - March 2018

system accelerates its tracking of contents judged politically sensible. If this return to orthodoxy is recurrent in the Party's history⁴, it remains nonetheless concerning in its capacity to deploy by means of technology mass surveillance and a put to the norms of society. The progress of China in the sectors of Artificial Intelligence⁵ and the capacity of the authorities to control the individual data banks are likely to dominate all of the country's activities, either by letting pierced a moralizer background, or by pretexting of having to prevent any type of "spiritual pollution" or even terrorist project, as in the Turkish-speaking province of Xinjiang⁶.

This surveillance is facilitated by the lack of American giants on the net, forbidden to exert their activities on the Chinese territory. Alibaba Vs Amazon or iQiyi Vs Netflix make safer the Chinese market and hold at a safe distance the Californian giants of the net. An antitrust law passed in 2007 by the authorities, ensure therefore that the competition between big Chinese groups stays respected. And it is in fact tireless⁷. From an ideological point of view, Marxism stays the breadcrumb of every thought both in the cultural and social sciences domains. Constitutional democracy, neoliberalism or democratic socialism conveys, according to the State Party, erroneous values. As relevantly remarked by François Bougon, *"This straight in its shoes, Marxism has to achieve its synthesis with the Chinese tradition illustrated by Confucius or Mencius, but also by Han Fei (dead in 223 bf. J.-C.). This rehabilitation of the favourite Xi Jinping's philosopher thought, designer of the legalism, advocates the fear, strength and control primacy to serve authority. As a result, some says that we are assisting to the establishment of "new totalitarianism of the market", a totalitarianism adapted to the 21st century – the price to pay for the "Chinese dream"*⁸. In other words: the possible comeback to ideological self-sufficiency but not to a Mao Zedong era comeback. The proof is that the Confucianism, banned under the Cultural Revolution, is, in its most authoritarian interpretation⁹, an essential reference to the regime, but also

⁴ Chen Yan, *L'éveil de la Chine*, Paris, L'Aube, 2003

⁵ Aurélien Chalifour, *L'intelligence artificielle, un terrain de collaboration entre la France et la Chine ? – Asia Focus* (IRIS) n° 64 – mars 2018 : <http://www.iris-france.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Asia-focus-64.pdf>

⁶Trevor Alexander, The surveillance of the Uighurs: the future for China? *Foreign Brief*, January the 18th: <https://www.foreignbrief.com/asia-pacific/china/surveillance-uighurs-future-china/>

⁷« *Les nouvelles batailles culturelles. Face à Netflix, l'Europe en résistance* », Cultures Monde (Emission de radio sur France Culture - Radio France), 27 novembre 2018 : <https://www.franceculture.fr/emissions/cultures-monde/culturesmonde-du-mardi-27-novembre-2018>

⁸ François Bougon, *Dans la tête de Xi Jinping (résumé en quatrième de couverture)*, Paris, Actes Sud, 2017

⁹Anne Cheng, *Confucianisme, post-modernisme et valeurs asiatiques*, in : Yves Michaud (éd.), *Université de tous les savoirs*, vol. 6 : *Qu'est-ce que la culture ?*, Paris, Editions Odile Jacob, 2001, p. 80-90

for a very large number of intellectuals in favour of the “conservatism revolution”¹⁰ that Xi Jinping wants to lead.

The rallying point between the Party-State and the intellectuals is nationalism; anti-occidental partly, it nourishes the official rhetoric. It insists on the return of a strong and powerful China on the international scene, a place it had left to the Western world since the 19th century.

SPEECHES AND CULTURAL TRENDS

Thus, we can speak about “rebirth” (*fixing*) of the Chinese nation. Great figures, as the explorer Zheng He who carried out seven expeditions (1405-1433) to Africa under the Ming Dynasty are exalted along with the virtues of traditional medicine¹¹ that is promoted in the South in Third-World stories from the Mao’s years. This rebirth goes through the systematic glorification of the country’s history. On average, one museum is created per day¹². And an untold number of historical sites, situated on the Silk Roads, such as Dunhuang¹³, are arranged to facilitate the visits of national tourists¹⁴. This “Chinese pride” comes in every domain. For example, the sport’s one – with the consecration of international rank players – or in the cinema industry with a recognition, since the eighties, at the Cannes Film Festival particularly, of the movies of Zhang Yimou, Tian Zhangzhuang or Chen Kaige¹⁵. Often orientalist in his speaking and engaged in a memorial approach¹⁶, this production said to be the Fifth Generation, has made many followers in the West as still recently showed by *The forbidden portrait* (2017), realized by Charles de Meaux and the beautiful Fan Bing Bing that the actual regime, pretexting a fight against

¹⁰ Emmanuel Lincot, *Le pouvoir chinois face à de nouveaux défis* », - *Asia Focus* (IRIS) n° 34 - juin 2017 : <http://www.iris-france.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/ASIA-FOCUS-34.pdf>.

¹¹ Hilaire De Prince Pokam, *La médecine chinoise au Cameroun*, Hong Kong, CEFC, Perspectives Chinoises, 2011/03 : <https://journals.openedition.org/perspectiveschinoises/6293> Lire également: Pierre-Henry De Bruyn et Éric Marié, *La médecine chinoise, Diffusion mondiale d'un patrimoine en mutation*, Hong Kong, CEFC, Perspectives Chinoises, 2011/03 : <https://journals.openedition.org/perspectiveschinoises/5892>

¹² David Baverez, 2017, *l'année du numérique – Digitaltrends*, January the 5th: <https://www.lavillanumeris.com/digitaltrends-avec-david-baverez-le-compte-rendu>

¹³ Emmanuel Lincot, - « *Dunhuang. Des peintres surgis du désert* » (avec Christophe Comentale), *La Gazette Drouot*, n° 29, juillet-juillet 2017, pp. 184-187.

¹⁴ Benjamin Taunay, *Le tourisme intérieur chinois. Préface de Philippe Violier*, Rennes, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2011

¹⁵ Jean-Michel Frodon, *Le cinéma chinois*, Paris, Les Cahiers du cinéma, 2006

¹⁶ Deng Wenjun, *La mémoire collective de la Révolution culturelle dans le cinéma chinois contemporain (1979-2009)*. Université Paris III, 2013 (non publiée).

corruption, decay for being too close to foreigners. However, the young Chinese public prefers, for its part and from far, *The Great Wall* (2016) with Matt Damon and especially *Wolf Warrior 2* (2017).

Directed by Wu Jing, this super production tells the story of a Chinese vigilante fighting - sign of the times - against evil Western mercenaries in Africa. To this day, it is the biggest box office in China. Movies that are very critics against the dysfunction of Chinese society as seen in *A touch of sin* (2013) by Jia Zhangke or *Black coal* (2014) by Diao Yi'nan are then meeting a lot more mixed success. This creation, in the domain of visual arts also¹⁷, is associated to the accumulation of a considerable financial mass and to the very conditions of its reception, which coincide with the emerging of the upper middle classes wanting to invest their savings in consumer goods. The range of potentialities of their investments is very large. It extends from the luxury industry¹⁸ - first example - to the universe of comics¹⁹ - second example - and it doesn't seem conditioned by any social presupposition in definition, very evasive, of the taste notion. Another social category rapidly expanding, although, more discreet since the launch of anti-corruption campaigns, doesn't hesitate to exhibit its purchasing power. They are named the "hyper-wealthy".

Social, historical, individual or collective revenge, but also the desire to rise to the rank of the wealthiest Western nations seems to be the most shared ambitions. The Beijing Olympics (2008), the Shanghai World Expo (2010) and then the allocation, in 2012, to the architect Wang Shu of the Pritzker Prize and the Nobel price of Literature for the writer - former military and member of the Party - Mo Yan, doesn't significate an opening of the country to the Western world. On the contrary, the general indifference in which has been greeted the loss of the dissident intellectual Liu Xiaobo²⁰ in China shows that liberal ideas, of which he was one of the best advocates, and which have been bitterly discussed by the Tiananmen generation (1989), are today marginalized. Only the sulphurous artist Ai Weiwei - despite the libertarian claims confronting the ideology of the regime - seems to encounter sincere popularity both in China and in the West²¹. What to say? Regardless of

¹⁷Emmanuel Lincot, *Peinture et pouvoir en Chine (1979-2009) : une histoire culturelle*, Paris, You Feng, 2010

¹⁸Barthélémy Courmont, Emmanuel Lincot (dir.) « *Le luxe en Chine* », Monde Chinois Nouvelle Asie, n° 29, avril 2012.

¹⁹Emmanuel Lincot, « *Histoire et mythologies à travers la bande dessinée chinoise et taiwanaise* », in : Yves Vadé (éd.), *Traditions en devenir. Coutumes et croyances d'Europe et d'Asie face au monde moderne*, coll. « Eurasie », Paris, L'Harmattan, 2014, pp. 151-159

²⁰ Liu Xiaobo, *La philosophie du porc*, Paris, Gallimard, 2011

²¹ Emmanuel Lincot, « *Ai Weiwei : entre engagement et mémoire* », Etudes Chinoises, tome XXXI, n° 2, février 2013, pp. 221-241.

the repression, the Chinese cultural scene stays, in fact, extremely perennial. It is *glocal* for more than thirty years now; neologism which refers to the double capacity for creators of this country to invest in the global and local scene at the same time. The regime is showing very high adaptability in its cultural initiatives, for the international or the Chinese opinion²².

“SOFT POWER” OR “RUANSHILI”: WHAT IS THE MEANING OF CULTURAL DIPLOMACY?

The *Chinese soft power*, we can translate by “*ruanshili*”, is actually based on a strong sovereign tradition. The latter is wildly anterior to the establishment of the communist regime. However, it was at the Bandung Conference (1955) that China defended principles that immediately posed it as an alternative model. In the context of the Cold War bipolarity, its voice is heard by the African elites. From the integration of Beijing and its representatives at the UN Security Council, at the expense of those supported by Taiwan (1971) to the blacklisting of the Chinese regime by the Western powers in the aftermath of the repression of Tiananmen (1989), these elites coming from the Third World have always brought a constant support. After the Deng Xiaoping years, which saw China focus its cultural forces on the domestic propaganda, the mandates of Hu Jintao and Xi Jinping have marked an offensive by creating an institutional network: the Confucius Institutes. In 2016 they were 510; the first one was created twelve years earlier in Samarkand. A memory of the Silk Roads, situated at the centre of the Uzbekistan territory, the choice of Samarkand reminds that Central Asia, since the collapse of the USSR (1991), stays one of the major diplomatic priorities of the Chinese authorities. The evocation of this gorgeous oasis reminds the adventures of the pilgrim monk Xuan Zang (VII century) whose fictionalized story, sometimes even brought to the screen, is one of the most famous in China. It is not a coincidence, that Xi Jinping not only celebrated the prestige of Chinese imperial culture of the Chinese Communist party, but also affirmed that the

²² Emmanuel Lincot, François Bougon et Carole Gomez, « *Chine : la grande expansion. Du « soft power » au « ruanshili » : la diplomatie culturelle selon Pékin* », Cultures Monde (Emission de radio sur France Culture – Radio France), 16 novembre 2017 : <https://www.franceculture.fr/emissions/cultures-monde/cultures-monde-jeudi-16-novembre-2017>

broadcast of the culture of his country was an essential component in the development of its program.

The Party is equipping, since then, with classical instruments of the political communication: language, culture, art and Medias, every means of persuasion are now used and projected abroad. On the national territory as abroad the frontiers, it is about promoting the “Chinese dream” (*zhongguo meng*), a political slogan forged by Wang Huning, gray eminence of the current Chinese leader. It is the cement of the new nationalism and an alternative to the American hegemony. These choices of redeployment of the Chinese Culture respond to precise economic objectives. The multimedia and cultural industries market is, in fact, rapidly growing²³. These new needs must register in the “One Belt One Road” project (OBOR – “*Yi dai yi lu*” in Chinese) which is the most ambitious global strategy ever led by China in its history. Already, some people see this as a nationalist affirmation of Chinese power. It certainly is if we consider that China evolves in a world deeply hostile to it. Should we be concerned about it? Yes, if the European Union doesn’t find an alternative to the rivalry opposing China to the United States. No, if we consider, on the contrary, that democracy is not a priority value for Beijing, its *Soft Power* is not a threat to the values defended by the liberal Western democracies.

Nevertheless, the challenges facing China are huge. Its future will depend on the capacity of the Communist Party and Xi Jinping to accompany this enormous transition which consists in deploying, at the international level, a strength which has always been tempted to curl up on itself. Since the first writings of Joseph Nye²⁴, the works are abundant on the Soft Power subject, Chinese particularly. But it’s only very recently that searchers have screened this expression. After all, can democracies and dictatorships, in their choices of cultural diplomacy, be evenly called *Soft Powers*? And in which aim and with what means? Paradoxically, and of all the occidental democracies, France with its sovereign tradition inherited from monarchy could, without a doubt, be the state where its prerogatives are exercised in the domain of culture, more than in every other domain; to the point of creating an eponymous ministry, which doesn’t exist in the United States. From there to say with Paul Valéry that France would be this “little cape of Eurasia” or the extension of

²³ Emmanuel Lincot, - « *Les industries culturelles en Chine. Enjeux et perspectives* », *Monde Chinois Nouvelle Asie*, n° 41, avril-mai 2015, pp. 56-63.

²⁴ Joseph Nye *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, Public Affairs, 2004

a China where a whole part of history, aesthetics or philosophy has played a leading role in the imagination of the French elite, there is only one step that one would be tempted to cross. It is true that from Blaise Pascal, before, passing by Voltaire²⁵, a true lover of China, to the Maoists of the Sorbonne in May 68²⁶, has imposed a Chinese tropism in France, on the very long-term and this, for every political orientation.

Of the most leftists like have been Philippe Sollers and Alain Badiou to the neo-Gaullists like Alain Peyrefitte yesterday or Jean-Pierre Raffarin today, all have subscribed to a form of beatific love for China, born from an exotic passion or a schizophrenia that the very lucid Simon Leys has more than once denounced²⁷. French passion which can explain, thanks or due to ideological mistakes, the fact that one is a lot less swift than in the countries of the South to participate to this infatuation for a China whose idea is, simply, not new in France. Add to this observation a presence of the Chinese diaspora in our country which is the oldest and the largest (between 600 000 and 1 million people) to this day in Europe. In addition, the number of Chinese attending the French universities is almost the same as the community of Moroccan students, first in France. France doesn't welcome fewer than 17 Confucius Institutes on its territory. Finally, it is the predilection destination of Chinese tourists²⁸. Between these signs, creating an *a priori* favourable empathy to China (its culture and representatives) remains therefore, an offset. In fact, one can see that the French youth is more favourable nowadays to the Japanese manga and Korean K-pop than to the austerity of a Chinese culture promoted by a Communist Party which yesterday still contributed to its collapsing. The surveys of the Pew Center show that this applies to every young people from Western Countries²⁹.

PARADOX: IS CHINA ONLY SPEAKING TO CHINESE PEOPLE?

Methodologically speaking, the approach of these surveys, very trendy in the American university system, reveals the only quantitative sociology. Useful in an assessment of

²⁵ Etienne, *L'Europe chinoise, I : De l'Empire romain à Leibniz*, Gallimard, 1988

²⁶ Miao Chi, Olivier Dard, Béatrice Fleury, Jacques Walter (dir°), *La Révolution culturelle en Chine et en France*, Paris, Riveneuve, 2017

²⁷ Emmanuel Lincot, *Les relations culturelles depuis 1949* dans : Jacques Dumasy (dir°), *La France et la Chine. De la méconnaissance à la reconnaissance (1248-2014)*, Paris, Fondation Charles De Gaulle, 2014, pp. 312-357

²⁸ François Godement et Abigaël Vasselier, *La Chine à nos portes. Une stratégie pour l'Europe*, Paris, Odile Jacob, 2018, p. 175

²⁹ Claude Meyer, *L'Occident face à la renaissance de la Chine. Défis économiques, géopolitiques et culturels*, Paris, Odile Jacob, 2018

collective statistics, with the aim of confirmation or refutation of hypotheses feeding so many prospective, however, it lets the searcher on his hunger. Ultimately, it explains nothing about the supposed efficacy of the Chinese foreign policy and its capacity to seduce foreign populations. Even if this decision taken by the Chinese authorities at the turn of the 2000s, to want to project in all-out initiatives, including cultural, and beyond its frontiers, is a turning point, nothing forbids us to think that they are aimed first and foremost to the diaspora and the Chinese nationals from abroad. One number: less than 300,000 at the beginning of the eighties, these nationals were more than 125 million in 2015. The phenomenon, which is the reason for the non-territorial-based relationship to Chinese culture, that we called, in an anterior work, the *sinitude*³⁰. It induces a distanced relationship to the Chinese continent and the recognition of a community as plural as fragmented. In the name of national cohesion and challenge still asked by singularities represented by Taiwan, Hong Kong or the acting Sino-American (in California particularly...) or Sino-Australian minorities fascinated by the “American way of life”, Beijing will always be tempted, near or far, to seduce and control them. Chinese TV channel and satellite relay stations from all over the world are going in this direction.

To understand the challenges and configurations showing up, we have to begin with a story, always changing, which is the one of representations. These latest are numerous. They are going from the cultural objects (the book, the movies, the art object...) to the actors, passing by the languages prism and the symbolic norms. In this approach, reduced, of course, to the format of a work which couldn't pretend to the completeness, the event and diplomatic driven history have a determinant place. In their formal aspects first because every diplomacy, and especially cultural, translate by exchanges which one could study from an institutional and so proactive point of view or even on the transfer or de-acculturation mode. The functional aspects falling within the mechanism maintained by actors (scientists, ideologue, diplomats, academics, artists...) in the game of international relationships will also be considered. These latest here are decrypted in the context of a lecture resolutely geopolitical, and in its worldwide dimension. The problematic of this work has encountered, therefore, a more theoretical difficulty. Firstly, let say that: China

³⁰ Emmanuel Lincot, *Peinture et pouvoir en Chine (1979-2009) : une histoire culturelle*, Paris, You Feng, 2010

is foiling a lot of categories that theorists and analysts have accustomed us to in terms of international relations.

A NON-STANDARD STRENGTH

First, we can recall that the use of the world culture, which can be defined by a norm, values, and community of appearance system, has, in its Chinese conception, multiple acceptations; one of them – and not the least – entering into resonance with the notion of “strategy”³¹. This one is associated with an interpretation subordinating the culture to the power of a restricted state, since the establishment of the communist regime, by a Leninist organization. In this context, the Soft power in its appellation as in the reality that it covers, barely corresponds to the objectives animated by the deeply authoritarian nature of the Chinese regime. The political culture of the Party-State, as understood, doesn’t let a lot of initiatives. In this, the official Chinese speech is, as we will see, consistent with the illiberal regimes. It is because of the different approach of China about the culture and its use, that two American searchers of the think tank of the National Foundation for Democracy, Christopher Walker and Jessica Ludwig, designate now what is, according to them, the best in terms of *sharp power*³².

Sharp means pointed, spiky, cutting. And both searchers in question spin the metaphor to evaluate this new type of influence. The *Sharp power* is the “*power piercing, penetrating, and perforating the political and informational environment of the targeted countries*”. These are the victims of propaganda qualified as “*subversive and corrosive*”. Even if the authors of the report are right to compare the initiatives of China in this domain to the one conducted by its Russian ally, they are also different. On one side, because the use of “fake news” never took an institutional, diplomatic or military extent as the one initiated by Moscow and one of its “brains”, Valéry Guerasimov, in Crimea or in Syria. On the other side, because the prestige initiatives of China to/from abroad aim to flatter the national pride and secure spaces it wants to be loyal. Nevertheless, this securing is one of the main principles defended by the regime. The “cultural security” (*wenhua anquan*) goes in the

³¹ François Jullien, *Le Détour et l’Accès. Stratégies du sens en Chine, en Grèce*, Grasset, 1995

³² *Sharp power: rising authoritarian influence: new reform report* (2017), 1st ed. [ebook] National Endowment for Democracy, p.3. Available at: <https://www.ned.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Sharp-Power-Rising-Authoritarian-Influence-Full-Report.pdf>

direction of the designing of a policy shaped by the traumatizing history the country undergoes for more than a century (since the opium wars until 1949). Christopher Walker and Jessica Ludwig do not believe so well in using this term *Sharp*. Because, in a sense that these two authors probably didn't think, it also means "to cut" and, in the Chinese context, the allegory of the chiselled jade whose ribs must be wedged, following the conformities offered by Nature, is one of the greatest topics of Chinese philosophy. It is also illustrated by the *Zhuangzi* (IV^o century) which reporting the harmonious practice of the Ding butcher deduces that this one has always known how to save its blade edge³³. This dialectic reversed in the perception often unequivocal that we have from China's culture and policy is a recurrent fact.

Other significant example: the Deng Xiaoping one. Since the eighties, the father of the reform calls his fellow citizen, in imaged terms, to rebuild the Great Wall. A paradox that few western observers had noted, and which remains relevant: every opening of China – to the foreign investors among others – involves a closing dispositive. In a society where the allusive speech is privileged, it was obvious to no one that the symbolic restoration of the Great Wall was a harbinger of regime resistance while pointing to them and calling them "spiritual pollution" to the values of democracy and human rights. The failure of Gorbachev to reform, from the inside, the Soviet system made the Beijing leaders comfortable in their choices. Decades after the long parenthesis of the disastrous experience of the Maoism and the First Republic, they seem to have returned to the legacy of a policy advocated, more than a century ago, by a senior official of the Manchu Court, Zhang Zhidong. His aphorism sums it all up: "the Chinese learning of the fundamental principles and the western studies for practical applications" (*Zhongxue Weiti Xixue Wei Yong*). It is to this principle that today subscribes Xi Jinping.

In that respect, the Chinese Sharp Power is a necessary instrument to what takes the place of mantra: catch-up for the country of its technological delay and paradigm change; China is no longer – according to the formula already dated – the "world's workshop". In conjunction, this priority engages both social and cultural mobilization, and so political.

³³ Anne Cheng, *Histoire de la pensée chinoise*, Paris, Seuil, 1997

Every activity of the country is subordinated to it; whether in the field of educational policy, industrial or digital innovation, cultural industries, heritage enhancement or thought. The OBOR project, described earlier, is the main vector of this strategy. Global, it creates the conditions necessary for the securing of Chinese objectives in the world. Despite the apparent opacity of its finality, it leaves no doubt about its hegemonic perspectives. On the long term, in another context and with a speed as for the execution of means put in place, much lower than today it's true, the deployment of this power is reminiscent of the strategies deployed before by the Qin Principality. From the 3rd century before our era, it arranged roads for then invaded its neighbours and imposed as a normative strength. From this conquest was born the First Empire³⁴. The following dynasties were inspired by the establishment of garrison towns according to a tactic not of containment, but of circumvention and neutralization of the adversary. Retractable according to the opportunities seized by its merchants and its military, and characterized by the development of counters, this tactic is rediscovered by China and its leaders in the light of current considerations and this, wherever it is through the world. In this context, culture is a mean. Fundamentally hybrid in its referents as in the possibilities, in sum, granted to its actors to flourish and create the culture freely, as conceived by the Chinese authorities, is symptomatic of what this country has become: a “disconcerting” power³⁵. ■

³⁴ Mark Edward Lewis, *The Early Chinese Empires. Qin and Han. History of imperial China (Vol. 1)*, Harvard, Harvard University Press, 2010

³⁵ Jean-Marie Holtzinger (dir°), *La Chine puissance déconcertante*, Revue de la Défense Nationale (RDN), été 2011

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