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The "characterization" of Japan : from merchandising to identity

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Stellingen

Behorendebij het proefschrift

The “Characterization” of Japan: From Merchandising to Identity

1. Character merchandising has both a material and a symbolic importance. The former refers to the great variety of commodities that it produces, which also provide new forms and materials for consumption. The latter refers to the fact that it can transform those commodities into symbolic resources which consumers can use to construct their self-identity.
2. Character consumption provides a new means of self-expression and communication in contemporary Japan. This does not necessarily imply standardization, since character consumers are producers who can create meaning according to their own interpretations and emotions.
3. Japanese characters to some extent influence Chinese’s anti-Japanese sentiment: the Chinese like and consume Japanese characters not only because they are the important component of their childhood, adolescence and adulthood but also because they identify with Japanese characters.
4. The global popularity of Japanese characters lies in both the efforts of the Japanese government and the ever more intimate cultural connection built by them between Japan and other regions.
5. Although individuality and sensibility are important factors in understanding character consumption, we should maintain a critical attitude since both factors can create certain illusions that allow us to unconsciously indulge in the alienation of consumption.
6. The consumption of the body is not only a process of self-definition but a power struggle too, which is also reflected in the aestheticization of the “characterized body.”
7. In spite of Jean Baudrillard’s claims, the media have many benefits, for example, by providing vital information to people and counteracting tensions in reality with humanizing media images (characters).
8. Characters are one of the most powerful symbols of Japan today.
9. It does not matter that characters are not “real”; what matters is that consumers perceive them as real.
10. Characters function like a mirror in that they reflect who we are and what we need as well as the complexities of our lives and our society.