The Influence of Culture on Print Graphic Design: An Investigation / Research of Beijing 2008 and London 2012 Olympic Games Graphic Designs

Kang Sun

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of International Communication

Unitec New Zealand, March 2007
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<td>BOCOG</td>
<td>Beijing Organizing Committee of the Olympic Games</td>
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<td>IOC</td>
<td>International Olympic Committee</td>
</tr>
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<td>LOCOG</td>
<td>London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games</td>
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<td>OMSC</td>
<td>Olympic Museum and Studies Centre</td>
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ABSTRACT

This study examines the relationship between culture and graphic design in two Olympic Games host cities images—Beijing 2008 and London 2012—through an extended literature review approach. The focus of the research project is on the graphic images of two Olympic host cities, to explore the relationship between culture and graphic design. The analysis is based on the literature in culture, cultural identity, cultural variable theory, visual communication and cultural backgrounds of the two Olympic Games image. From the culture and graphic design perspectives, the two graphic images are analysed with cultural identity theory, cultural variable theory and the content analysis approach to investigate whether the effect of culture can be seen in graphic design, and what the effective elements are within the designs. Cultural identity analysis of the two graphic images indicates that graphic design does reflect culture, and secondly that culture can be represented through graphic design forms. Cultural variable theory shows the representation of the two graphic images is different, and cultures influence design as a communication medium. The Content analysis approach analysed the two images based on six graphic design elements. The analysis indicated that cultural meanings are formed and expressed by the elements including line, shape, colour, texture, motion, and scale. The findings suggest a link exists between culture and graphic design, and culture connects with graphic design by visual elements. The application of this research may help the audience to better
understand the representation of the two Olympic Games images from an academic perspective, especially for those unfamiliar with the two cultures.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Several people have been instrumental in allowing this research to be completed. I would like to thank especially my principle supervisor Dr. Linda Beamer, an Intercultural Communication expert at Unitec New Zealand, for her generous help, encouragement and patience throughout the duration of this project. I would also like thank to my associate supervisor Lydia Kiroff, who provided great advice and encouragement to make this study a visual impression; without her this research wouldn’t be so colourful. I want to acknowledge the Design scholar Sharon Spencer, and Kino design, the designers of London 2012 Logo, who shared their original resource and helpful information for this study. I would also like to thank Dr. Deepa Marat, the research consultant, Cynthia Almeida, and my friend Sandeep in the Post Graduate centre of Unitec New Zealand, who gave great help and encouragement to the research. Most of all, I would like to thank my family and friends, especially my partner Dun Yong Jin, who always supported me and encouraged me in completing this study.
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The aim of this research is to explore the relationship between culture and graphic design. Based on my background study experiences, hypothetically I thought that design forms visually convey specific cultural meanings through its content. During the process of researching on the literature of culture and design, I found not much research has clearly pointed out the relationship between the two subjects. Therefore, doing this research is important to build the nexus between the two study areas. As this research is a 60 credits study, the topic of the two study areas needs to be shaped specifically. The figure below shows the approach of defining the topic, and the relationship between culture and communication, visual communication, and graphic design.

![Diagram](image1)

*Figure 1. The approach of defining the topic for this research (the author’s drawing)*

The focus of the project is the graphic images of two Olympic host cities—Beijing 2008 and London 2012, to investigate whether the design reflects culture, and if
culture does influence design. Further, in this research, the focus is on national culture. The reasons these two images have been selected are: first, both are national capitals and could represent their dominant national cultures, and second, the two images could represent the typical historical Eastern and Western cultures. Therefore, the two designs can be appropriate examples to investigate the influence of culture on visual communication.

In order to answer the research questions, this dissertation reviews and analyses the literature in the related subject. It mainly focuses on reviewing the literature and studies about culture and visual communication, particularly in the areas of culture, cultural identity, cultural variable theory, the cultural backgrounds of the two host cities, content analysis and the way the two are related in the specific designs of the two Olympic Games images, which will provide the answer for this research’s questions. The reasons of this approach are appropriate for this research is: (a) the subject involves hypothetical, representative relationship between culture and graphic design from two different cultures of host cities graphic images, Beijing 2008 and London 2012; (b) a wide variety of study about culture, cultural identity, cultural backgrounds of the two host cities, visual communication, graphic design are available from highly qualified scholars, which makes possible to provide those secondary data for this research. Thus, the researcher thinks this approach is the most appropriate for this study.

The data of the study are from published and unpublished academic sources, including personal communication. For the purpose of this research, the literature
review is presented in two sections. In Chapter 2, the review starts with the definitions of culture. Under the definitions of culture, cultural backgrounds of the two countries are briefly reviewed. After that, definitions of cultural identity and cultural variable theory are discussed, which are important theoretical frameworks for analysing the two graphic images. In Chapter 3, the second section of the literature review covers the issues of visual communication, the chapter including a discussion of visual communication, graphic design, and the related issues of graphic design and images of Olympic host cities. The data analysis in Chapter 4 is divided into two parts. Part one interprets the literature of the relationship between culture and graphic design and presents the Sydney 2000 Olympic image as an example. Part two of data analysis starts with the cultural background of the two host cities. Following that, the two host cities’ images are analysed based on theories of cultural identity, cultural variables, and the content analysis approach in particular. As a conclusion, chapter 5 reviews the main points from the previous chapters with strengths and limitations of the research.
CHAPTER TWO: CULTURE, CULTURAL VARIABLES, AND THE INTRODUCTION OF THE HOST CITIES

Introduction

The aim of this research is to explore the influence of culture in the graphic designs of the Olympic Games. This chapter gives various definitions of culture presented by numerous researchers in previous academic studies, then addresses the cultural backgrounds of the two Olympic Games host cities—Beijing and London. Furthermore, the cultural identity theory and cultural variables theory are discussed to facilitate a cultural comparison of the two logos.

Definitions of Culture

The British social anthropologist E. B. Tylor (1871) was the first person who defined the concept of culture as “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society” (quoted in Hatch, 2006, p.203). This definition considers culture as a concept that combines human capabilities and habits that may have been regarded as a distinguished definition of culture in the later nineteenth and the twentieth century. However, this early definition by Tylor seems not cover all the aspects of culture completely for current research.

Later on, culture is defined by scholars as patterns of human ideas and notions, transmitted by symbols or symbolic systems that are shaped by human behaviour (Kroeber & Parsons, 1958; Kottak, 1987; Banks & McGee, 1989). Kroeber and Parsons...
(1958) state that culture is “transmitted and created content and patterns of values, ideas, and other symbolic-meaningful systems as factors in the shaping of human behaviour and the artefacts produced through behaviour” (p.583). The values-based definitions reveal that the researchers consider human behaviours can reflect and express human ideas, values, and symbolic meaningful systems within those cultural aspects. Banks and McGee (1989) state culture is “the values, symbols, interpretations, and perspectives that distinguish one people from another… it is not material objects and other tangible aspects of human societies. People within a culture, usually interpret the meaning of symbols, artefacts, and behaviours in the same or in similar ways” (p. 26). This definition of culture states people are distinguished by values, ideas, and viewpoints, which are a collection of invisible frameworks that are represented by visible materials, such as symbols, artefacts, and behaviours. People from the same culture normally use similar ways to present the meanings of those visible materials. From the behavioural perspective, Kottak (1987) states the definition of culture this way:

Culture encompasses rule-governed, shared, symbol-based, learned behaviour and beliefs transmitted across the generations... Culture rests on the human capacity for cultural learning, and use of language and symbols. Culture refers to customary beliefs and behaviour and to the rules for conduct internalized in human beings through education (p.35).

Kottak’s (1987) definition indicates that culture is based on the learned and shared language, symbols and behaviours that convey human beliefs and norms.
Before these behavioural perspective definitions had been stated, a well-known definition of culture by a famous American anthropologist, Clyde Kluckhohn (1951) was:

Culture consists in patterned ways of thinking, feeling and reacting, acquired and transmitted mainly by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artefacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values (p. 86).

Kluckhohn’s definition of culture has abstract and concrete concepts that are mainly transmitted by symbols and artefacts of specific human groups. The value of traditional ideas is the core element of culture. Based on earlier studies, Hofstede (1981, 2001) developed a definition of culture as “the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another” (p.9). He considers the concept of cognition, including mind, as thinking and feeling, which incorporates beliefs, attitudes, and skills. The group of people may consist of individuals within a nation, a region, an organization; moreover, a group of people can also mean a generation of people. Hofstede’s definition of culture includes all the factors in Kluckhohn’s (1951) definition, but in a more complete sense. Kluckhohn’s viewpoint of culture includes the idea that culture is formed by values. As stated by Hofstede in his definition, values are a core element of culture. Hofstede (1980, 2001) thinks that “values are invisible until they become evident in
behaviour, but culture manifests itself in visible elements too” (p.10). For this argument, Hofstede uses terms such as symbols, heroes, and rituals to explain the visible manifestations of culture. The figure below shows the three terms as the layers of an onion as concentric circles around the core of culture —values at different levels of cultural depth.

![Figure 2. Manifestations of culture (Hofstede, 2001, 11)](image)

Hofstede’s diagram of culture illustrates values as the core of culture, symbols at the most superficial level, and heroes and rituals between symbols and values levels. Hofstede (1980, 2001) explains the different levels of the diagram: “symbols are words, gestures, pictures, and objects that carry often complex meaning recognized as such only by those who share the culture” (2001, p.10). Hofstede mentions that because symbols of one cultural group are copied by others, the level of symbols represents the superficial layer of the diagram. For the level of heroes, Hofstede claims that “heroes are persons, alive or dead, real or imaginary, who possess characteristics that are highly prized in a culture and thus serve as models for behaviour” (p.10). Normally, heroes in the model transmit the cultural meanings by
their behaviour in the cultural groups. Hofstede explains that rituals are “collective activities that are technically unnecessary to the achievement of desired ends, but that within a culture are considered socially essential, keeping the individual bound within the norms of the collectivity” (p.10). The social and religious ceremonies are the examples to express the cultural meanings of rituals. Within a society, individuals usually follow the collective norms of their group cultures. In the diagram, Hofstede uses the term *practices* to interpret the three levels of culture. The layers of symbols, heroes and rituals are visible from the outside; however their cultural meanings are invisible and only conveyed by practices. The main three sectors of culture come from the core of culture—values; cultural meanings are conveyed through practices that relate to the various communication forms, which may include human behaviours, actions, and all other visible performances that people create and act in everyday life.

To sum up Hofstede’s theory, culture is inseparable from communication to express cultural meanings. The core of culture—values—is transmitted through symbols and systems of symbols by different communication behaviours.

Similar to Hofstede’s theory of culture, Collier and Thomas (1988) define culture in a concise sense, which is “a historically transmitted system of symbols and meanings, and norms” (p.102). More recent studies have similar definitions of culture that emphasise the transmission of values, attitudes, beliefs, norms, and behaviours from generation to generation (Prosser, 1978; Bates & Plog, 1990; Matsumoto, 2000).

In contrast to the previous definitions of culture, Kluckhohn and Kelly (1945), and Linton (1945) consider culture merely from the behavioural perspective. Kluckhohn and
Kelly (1945) state culture is “all those historically created designs for living, explicit and implicit, rational, irrational, and nonrational, which exist at any given time as potential guides for the behaviour of men” (p.97). Linton (1945) states, “A culture is a configuration of learned behaviours and results of behaviour whose component elements are shared and transmitted by the members of a particular society” (p. 32). By considering culture as a concept of shared knowledge, Lederach (1995) states culture is “the shared knowledge and schemes created by a set of people for perceiving, interpreting, expressing, and responding to the social realities around them” (p. 9).

Similarly, Damen (1987) defines culture as patterns and models that humans share for everyday living. Furthermore, these patterns and models play an essential role in humans’ social lives that react on all parts of social actions. Researchers Beamer and Varner (2008) define culture as “the coherent, learned, shared view of a group of people has about life’s concerns that ranks what is important, instills attitudes about what things are appropriate, and prescribes behavior, given that some things have more significance than others” (p.6). In other words, culture is the shared thoughts and criteria that shape people’s manners for the social life in a proper way according to a group of people.

Based on these definitions, culture invisibly exists in people’s lives and divides groups of people by their visible differences. Culture is always invisible for us until we encounter the differences in dealing with somebody from another culture. Furthermore, culture is an abstract concept that exists in people’s minds, as it affects and represents people’s behaviour, manners, actions and other communicative ways.
In conclusion, culture is defined in this research project as consisting of human values, attitudes and knowledge that are learned, shared and the transferred by groups of people from one generation to the next. Values are a core element of culture, and cultural meanings are transmitted through symbols and systems of symbols by various visible communicative forms such as behaviours, attitudes, actions, artefacts, social institutions, and other visible manifestations. Thus, by visible communication forms, culture is distinguished in one group of people from another.

Brief Cultural Backgrounds of the Two Host Cities of the Olympic Games

The purpose of this research is to evaluate whether the cultural influence on the two graphic designs of the Olympic Games host cities—Beijing 2008 and London 2012. The next discussion gives briefly the cultural backgrounds of the two graphic images of the Beijing and London Olympic Games. A specific depiction of the two host cities’ cultures backgrounds is associated with analysis in the section of Chapter 4.

Cultural Background of Beijing

Chinese culture, like every culture, is complex and multidimensional, and difficult to define in a comprehensive manner. For this research, the discussion of Chinese culture is mainly based on the components of the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games image—a red colour Chinese seal stamp with a transformed written character 京, meaning ‘the capital’ in Chinese, shown as the figure below.
To reflect on the cultural significance of the Beijing Olympic image, an analysis of the written Chinese language and the history of Beijing are presented briefly.

**Chinese Written Language: A Salient Cultural Element**

Chinese culture has fascinated or interested non-Chinese throughout the world and has a long and enriched history. The striking feature of Chinese culture is that it has a very long and continuous history of written characters, and the use of one writing system throughout the large country. Language and written characters are the most essential communication medium for people to communicate. Scholars consider that the Chinese written language is one of the most significant forms of Chinese culture (Pickle, 2001; Gunde, 2001; Blunden & Elvin, 1998). Chinese written language from earliest time has used pictures to represent the objects. The earliest Chinese written language—the calligraphic figures called *jia gu wen* were engraved such as pictures on the tortoises’ shells and ox’ bones about 3,000-3,500 years ago during the Shang dynasty (Pickle, 2001; LaFleur, 2003).
As the earliest known samples of Chinese writing, the writing on the bones is important for the study of Chinese writing systems (Smits, 2006). According to LaFleur (2003), each symbol on the shells and bones resembles an image that represents actual meanings such as animal, tree, mountain, and others. This primitive written language indicated that objects can be expressed by symbols or images with few or many strokes. Since then, the Chinese written characters have been images to represent objects (Blunden & Elvin, 1998). After centuries of development, some simple written characters still can be seen as pictorial symbols to represent the meanings of objects. Some examples are shown as below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sheep</th>
<th>羊 羊 羊 羊</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>水 水 水 水</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mouth</td>
<td>口 口 口 口</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dawn</td>
<td>旦 旦 旦 旦</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 5. The development of the written characters (the author’s drawing)*
The image shows the different forms of written characters to represent objects in pictorial ways from ancient forms until the current ones (from left to right). The character for *sheep* is like the sheep horns, the character for *water* looks like the running water, the character for *mouth* is like the shape of the human being’s mouth, the character for *dawn* is like the meaning of the word— the sun rising above the horizon. These examples simply show how the Chinese written characters use pictures to portray objects and concepts. As examples, these characters related to pictorial graphics; also the present written characters are still quite similar to the earliest style.

The writing on bones also had an important role of divination in the ancient China (Adler, 2005; Smits, 2006). In the Shang Dynasty (1176 BC-1127BC), the divine revelations of the characters appeared on the patterns after heating the bones and within cracks. The divinations normally include practical issues, such as weather, warfare, harvest, illness and others (Adler, 2005; Smits, 2006) and the writing character was the important key to decoding the spiritual power of Chinese culture many millennia ago.

The system of Chinese written characters was unified by the First Emperor of the Qin dynasty in 221 B.C., in a style called Small Seal script (LaFleur, 2003; Blunden & Elvin, 1998). Instead of an alphabet, Chinese written characters are ideograms that are written with strokes (LaFleur, 2003; Gunde, 2001). Writing characters in the right stroke order and according to aesthetic principles has been very important for Chinese people since early time. According to Pickle (2001), the purpose of learning to write in China has been considered more than the usage of
communication for over two thousand years. Pickle (2001) explains the importance Chinese people give to thinking and projecting the written script in an appropriate way, as well as how to shape their characters. Chinese learn writing in correct ways from their childhood; children have to be concentrated, determined, and persevering with their writing exercises. As Pickle (2001) says, Chinese think that fundamental qualities of individuals can be identified from their writing. A Chinese common saying can reflect this idea, which is “Seeing the written characters is just like seeing the person” (Pickle, 2001, p.12). In traditional Chinese society, scholars were at the highest status in a hierarchy (Mohrman, 2003; Fitzpatrick, 2006). More specifically, scholars were appointed as the local government officers who passed the provincial exams; and, the scholars who passed highest exams by civil service examination system were conferred the top scholarship and given the highest positions of government throughout China (Fitzpatrick, 2006). Those scholars who got the scholarships went to become the members of the gentry and had powers in both politics and economics (Fitzpatrick, 2006). In addition, Bodde (1991) says “the three of China’s greatest inventions—paper, block printing, and movable type—are all closely associated with writing” (p. 27). Thus, to put into practice the above mentioned inventions and gain the status of scholars by rigorous study reveal that the written language has been a very important to Chinese for many millennia.

*Brief History of Beijing*

To appreciate the significance of the host city Beijing, it is necessary to interpret the historical background of the capital city of China. According to Mackerras (1998),
Beijing with its long, rich history and culture has been the capital of China for about 400 years. The name of the city of Beijing means Northern Capital in Chinese (Mackerras, 1998). Beijing is also named Yanjing which means the capital of ancient kingdom Yan (LaFleur, 2003). Beijing had been a capital of a kingdom of Yan from 770 BC to 226 BC. After Yan, during Qin, Han, Tang and Song dynasties, Beijing wasn’t regarded as a capital (LaFleur, 2003; Murowchick, 1994). Scholars state that Beijing was rebuilt in the year 1216 AD when Yuan Dynasty was founded by Genghis Khan, and since then Beijing was a capital during Yuan, Ming, Qing Dynasties until 1911 (LaFleur, 2003; Murowchick, 1994; Hook, 1998). Beijing has been the capital of the People’s Republic of China since 1949 (LaFleur, 2003).

According to Mackerras (1998), Beijing is geographically located in such a way that it was often seen by armies and rulers as a gateway to Mongolia and Manchuria. Therefore, the whole city was constructed to be a square castle in order to fulfil the requirement during any war to defeat the enemy (Hook, 1998). The square shape means defence; while the round shape indicates the flexibility, the square expresses reliability and stability. This concept may also apply to the shape of the seal in the design of Beijing image, and also the shape of the component “口” within the jing 巾 character. The shape of the seal in the image and the “口” component of the image are both rectangles, which may signify stability.

To conclude, Chinese written characters have a significant role within Chinese culture. Writing in an appropriate way has had an important meaning to Chinese people for many centuries, with the Chinese calligraphy considered the greatest of
arts. With the long history, today, Beijing is not only the capital of China and the seat of government, being the symbol of concentration of power, but also the centre of Chinese culture.

*Cultural Background of London*

The English culture, on similar lines to the Chinese culture, was integrated by the enriched and complicated long history. With a focus on this research, the historical and cultural background of London is reviewed concisely, as the London 2012 logo illustrates a multicoloured ribbon that characterizing the River Thames weaving through the words ‘London 2012’ (as shown below).

![Image of London 2012 Olympic Games](LOCOG, 2005)

*Figure 6. The image of London 2012 Olympic Games (LOCOG, 2005)*

*Brief History of London*

According to Hall (1994) and Eames (1998), London has a long history, a combination of the Celts, Romans, Angles, Saxons, Jutes, Danes, and Vikings. London was invaded by Romans in 43 AD; and the Romans created the city of London around 50 AD as a trading base (Hall, 1994; Ackroyd, 2001). In the Roman times, the River Thames was an important trading and communicative centre
throughout Britain and towards Europe and the route of the Rhine (Ackroyd, 2001).

As the Romans traded through the docks of the Thames, the maritime traffic between Rome and London quickly grew; the palaces, castles, country houses, abbeys, water mills, villages and inns grew significantly alongside the Thames and in Britain (Libero, 1997). Thus, in the Roman rule, the River Thames played a major role of the economic life line, and brought along the social development and progress to London. As Hall (1994) and Ackroyd (2001) maintain, the boundary of London was formed by the Roman wall in about 200 AD, and the public buildings and streets were surrounded by the walls over many years. The image below shows the Roman London wall in the Roman times.

![Figure 7. The Roman wall of London in Roman times (Libero, 1997)](image)

At present, the area surrounded by the walls has become London’s famous financial district, known as the City, and merely a few trace of the wall still can be found in London (Ackroyd, 2001). London was expanded more by the traders of the Thames and in the seventh and the ninth century, and became a very prosperous trading centre (Hall, 1994). By the ninth century, Danes came for the wealth through
the sails of the Danish timber barques and vessels on the Thames, and London became stronger and more prosperous under the Danish King’s power in 1017 AD (Eames, 1998; Hall, 1994). London was returned to Anglo-Saxon control after the Danes’ power ended, and since then London has turned into the largest and most prosperous city in Britain (Hall, 1994).

As Nutt (2004) and Briggs (2006) assert, London has developed dramatically since the eighteenth century, with London’s docks being the busiest trading area in the world. The trade on the River Thames was greatly increased. As a central transit point, it served as a port of the river transacting the commodities from outside of Britain and to the areas within the country (Briggs, 2006). At the end of the eighteenth century, the Industrial Revolution made the canal system of the Thames that was built in Roman times into more accessible and modern to the industrial areas, where the river linked the south and the industrial North and Midlands of the England (Ackroyd, 2001; Briggs, 2006). London had become the political capital by the fourteenth century, but in the nineteenth century, the Victorian era, with the enormous economic increase, London became the trading centre of the British Empire and the centre of trade in the world (Libero, 1997; Briggs, 2006).

Important Historical Significance of the River Thames

According to Libero (1997) and Nutt (2004), the river divided the city of London in two sections from the Celtic age and the river has been a principal artery of communication throughout the long history of London. The British poet John Burns in 1929 considered the River Thames as liquid history as it has been there many
centuries (Nutt, 2004). The River Thames has experienced many important historical moments in the English annals, such as the attacks by the Danish Vikings’ and Norwegian Vikings’ long ships that sailed up the River Thames between the ninth and eleventh centuries (Ackroyd, 2001). The agreement of the Magna Carta, signed by King John at Runnymede by the Thames in 1215 had a major effect on the subsequent rules of the constitutional law of today (Libero, 1997). Queen Elizabeth I also made a famous speech at the bank side of the Thames along the fort built by Henry VIII, to encourage her soldiers to defend England from the attack by the Spanish in 1588 (Ackroyd, 2001). Based on the above, like the “liquid history” (Nutt, 2004) the Thames River symbolizes the historic line of invasions, battles, wars, and defences in the long British history.

*Immigration and Multiculturalism*

Following the Second World War, the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s was a period of rebuilding and reconstruction of the city of London (Libero, 1997; Ackroyd, 2001). With an influx of immigrants and business from various countries, the ethnic influence has changed London into one of the most culturally diverse cities in Europe (Ackroyd, 2001, et. al). This is in contrast with Beijing. As Spencer (2003), a design scholar, asserts in her study of Englishness in the graphic design, immigration has continually shaped England since eight hundred years to today’s modern England. Immigrants from France, Bangladesh, Ukraine, Caribbean Islands, Balkan States to China, and other parts of the world have largely influenced the language, food, place names, fashion, class system, and the emergence of a new generation of mixed
ethnicities (Spencer, 2003; Ackroyd, 2001). According to Rees and Butt (2004), the ethnic change and diversity in England have quickly grown since 1981 to 2001, especially some groups like Black Africans and Bangladeshis, other groups include Indians, and other Asians have extended moderately. London is the main city that remaining and centralising more than 50 per cent of Ethnic Minority populations (Rees & Butt 2004). Thus, the consequence of the growth and expansion of ethnic groups has largely influenced on the ethnic diversity for England, the effect may reflect in many social aspects, especially on culture area. Modern England is one of the most multicultural countries of the world, visible in its social life, and also manifest in various visible communicative forms.

To conclude, the history of London can also be seen as the history of the River Thames. The river Thames stands testimony to the historic progress and growth of London, and helped the evolution of London into a thriving and prosperous city both in the United Kingdom and in the world. English culture has evolved around the river. Probably without the River Thames, London would not be as much influential and as famous a city as she is today. Moreover, the wave of immigrants into England has woven the image of England as a vibrant multicultural city.

*Cultural Identity and Cultural Variable Theory*

*Cultural Identity Theory*

Researchers Mathews (2000), and Martin and Nakayama (2005) propose identity in a concise sense, the way that individuals consider and form themselves. More
specifically, identity is defined as an individual’s conception that is formed by the certain contexts, such as family, social, ethnic, cultural, geographic, and political (Yep, 2002; Ting-Toomey, 2005). De Vos and Ross (1975, cited in Collier & Thomas, 1988) argue that identities are negotiated by a comparison process of one to another, and of the group to other groups. Based on De Vos and Ross’s argument, Collier and Thomas (1988) indicate individual and group identities are complex. The original theory of cultural identity is defined by Collier and Thomas (1988), which is “identification with and perceived acceptance into a group that has shared systems of symbols and meanings as well as norms/rules for conduct” (p.113). To explain Collier and Thomas’ definition, individuals’ cultural identity is formed by the system of symbols and norms in their cultural groups; they operate and understand the system of symbols and beliefs, behave and follow their norms and rules culturally and appropriately, share their meaning of symbols and beliefs within their groups. Wieder and Pratt (1990) state that cultural identities exist in everyday life; the members of a cultural identity group use and understand the same views, ideas, language codes, symbolic forms, and interpretations. Fong (2004) defines cultural identity more specifically as:

The identification of communications of a shared system of symbolic verbal and nonverbal behaviour that is meaningful to group members who have a sense of belonging and who share traditions, heritage, language, and similar norms of appropriate behaviour. Cultural identity is a social construction (p. 6).
Fong’s (2004) definition of cultural identity develops the earlier scholars’ ideas more completely. By contrast, other scholars state cultural identity in a broader sense, which is the sense of an individual that he or she belongs to a particular large cultural group (Lustig & Koester, 2003; Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2005).

From all the above statements by scholars, to sum up, cultural identity is a combination of ideas and beliefs that relate to the people’s understanding of themselves as members of a certain culture; while norms and rules relate to people’s appropriate behaviours. Moreover, cultural identities distinguish human beings by their cultural groups, to tell who they are and why they act in a particular manner. Therefore, the core of cultural identity is the ideas, beliefs, norms and rules that direct, confirm, modify and influence individuals and their groups. Meanwhile individuals are shaped and formed by their cultural identities that share the same system of symbols, meanings, beliefs, and rules, and values with their groups.

*Dimensions of Cultural Identity*

According to Collier and Thomas (1988), identity varies in three interdependent dimensions: scope, salience, and intensity. Collier and Thomas (1988) use a comparison between nationality and personality to interpret the different scope of identities. Nationality as a quite broad scope can apply to a large number of people, while personality as the narrow scope applies to specific persons. Collier and Thomas (1988) indicate that cultural identity relates to a broad scope because of the system of cultural meanings and norms transmitted historically, which is beyond the identity of a family or
an individual. Moreover, based on the previous scholars’ definitions, cultural identity is
the sense of an individual of belonging to a particular large cultural group. Thus, in the
scope dimension, cultural identity may refer to size of population of people who share
same identity in culture (Lustig & Koester, 2003; Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2005). The
numbers of people may be a state or a nation; meanwhile, the cultural identity they share
does relate to a broad scope.

Ting-Toomey (1986, cited in Collier & Thomas (1988) states the salience of
identity is the importance of a particular aspect of identity in specific contexts. For
example, for a designer, his or her well-known design works are the salience of his or her
personal identity; similarly, the academic honours or the academic research are the
important/ salient aspects of a scholar’s personal identity. Thus, the salience of cultural
identity is the most important aspects of it in a specific context or situation. The intensity
of identity relates to the strength that an aspect of identity is communicated with (Collier
& Thomas, 1988; Collier, 1989). Moreover, Collier (2003) says that “identities are
enacted with different intensities at different time” (p.420). For instance, during a
conversation between an American and Japanese, the American may show more facial
expression and gestures to represent emotions and moods than the Japanese. Hence, the
expression and emotions that the Americans show are the intensities of the personal
identity specifically presented during their conversation. In relation to cultural identity,
the intensity may also vary in the objective of communication. Cupach and Imahori
(1993) consider that in addition to scope, salience, and intensity, other useful dimensions
of identity can be considered in research. Based on the discussions by scholars, Cupach and Imahori (1993) suggest that salience is the most potent dimension of cultural identity.

Value Content and Cultural Identity Salience

Ting-Toomey (2005) states two issues need to be discussed in order to understand cultural identity: value content and cultural identity salience. Ting-Toomey (2005) states value content is the standard that exists in people’s minds and helps them to make evaluations. She suggests the way of understanding the content of cultural identity is to evaluate the value dimensions of the individual’s behaviour. Numbers of value content dimensions exist in intercultural communication research (Hofstede, 1981, 2001; Schwartz, 1992; Beamer & Varner, 2008; Laurent, 1983). For the purpose of this research, as an approach, the value content dimensions are used for visual communication. For example, Hall’s (1976) high- and low-context communication theory will be used in this research to evaluate the value content of the two host cities’ cultural identities.

Ting-Toomey (2005) states cultural identity salience refers to the strength of connection to a large culture that individuals belong to. She explains that individuals are influenced by their large cultural value patterns, and they tend to obviously reflect and represent their values, norms and other cultural aspects through communication forms. Thus, salience of cultural identity means the stronger the cultural influence, the more visible the salience of culture becomes. In relation to this research, to evaluate whether the two host cities’ images represent their own salience of cultures, the concept of salience in cultural identity will be used in the analysis in Chapter 4.
Based on the above, cultural identity salience is helpful for better understanding cultural identities for the analysis of the two Olympic Games’ graphic images in this research. Cultural identity theory in this research is a theoretical lens, which is used to examine whether culture has a discernible influence on graphic design through an analysis of the components of the two Olympic Games graphic images. Salience of cultural identity is the most potent dimension, and an important element of this research analysis.

_Cultural Variables Theory_

_Hall’s High- and Low-context Dimensions_

The anthropologist Edward Hall (1976) presents high- and low-context orientation as a variable to examine the cultural differences and similarities in communication. Hall (1976) states that a high-context communication is “one in which most of the information is already in the person, while very little is in the coded, explicitly transmitted part of the message” (p. 91). A low-context communication is “just the opposite; i.e., the mass of the information is vested in the explicit code” (p. 91). Based on Hall’s statement, Gudykunst and Kim (1997) further add “high-context communication can be characterized as being indirect, ambiguous and understated, with speakers being reserved and sensitive to listeners. Low-context communication, in contrast, can be characterized as being direct, explicit, open, precise, and consistent with one’s feelings” (p. 68). Thus, Hall’s dimension can mainly distinguish people who belong to various cultures by their communication style. Basically, they communicate
in two opposite ways, indirect or direct, ambiguous or distinct, unclear or explicit. Here, the term *context* is defined as “the information that surrounds an event; it is inextricably bound up with the meaning of the event” (Hall, & Hall, 1990, p. 6). Context is the information that interrelates and correlates with the meanings of events.

*High-context cultures.* High-context cultures are based on older traditional cultures, and because of tradition and history, those high-context cultures merely change a little over time (Hofstede, 2001; Samovar, Porter & McDaniel, 2007). Samovar, Porter & McDaniel (2007) give a further discussion of high-context cultures, stating that the meanings of information are not necessarily communicated by words. Moreover, the meanings and information of high-context cultures can be represented and interpreted without verbal forms. Gudykunst (2001) clarifies that the messages of high-context cultures are normally communicated indirectly. In relation to this research, high-context cultures may be applied to one of the Beijing Olympic Games graphic images.

*Low-context cultures.* According to Samovar, Porter & McDaniel (2007) in low-context cultures, “the verbal message contains most of the information and very little is embedded in the context or the participants” (p.160). Gudykunst (2001) found during communicative processes that people from low-context cultures tend to demand background information in a more detailed manner. Thus, by contrast with high-context cultures, in low-context cultural groups, the way people express
meanings and messages is fully detailed with complete information, and often in
direct communicative way compared to high-context communication.

Based on Hall’s high- and low-context categories of cultures, Samovar, Porter &
McDaniel (2007) rank various cultures along a continuum that clearly indicates the
difference between the two dimensions. The figure below shows the various ranking of
cultures arranged along the high and low-context dimension (Samovar, Porter &
McDaniel, 2007).
The figure above expressing the culture dimension of the importance of communication context shows various cultures arranged along a scale, with the two host cities’ cultures, Chinese and English, highlighted. From the scale, the distance between the two cultures is obvious. Chinese culture is among high-context cultures, whereas English culture is close to the low-context cultures. This culture flowchart
proposed by Hall will contribute to the analysis of the two host cities’ images in Chapter 4.

To conclude, cultural variables can help with understanding cultural differences in intercultural and cross-cultural communication object. High- and low-context communication theory provides a major pattern to explain the differences. To explore how the cultural differences display in communication processes, Hall’s high- and low-context cultures approach along with the Samovar et al.’s cultural figure will provide the distinct frameworks for interpreting the purpose Chapter 4.

Hofstede’s Dimension of Individualism and Collectivism

Hofstede’s five dimensions of cultural variability are the major dimensions that are used to demonstrate the differences and similarities of national culture in intercultural and cross-cultural communication studies. Hofstede (1981, 2001) identifies the following five dimensions of cultural variability: 1. Individualism and collectivism; 2. Uncertainty avoidance; 3. Power distance; 4. Masculinity and femininity; 5. Long-term versus short-term orientation. For the purposes of this study, merely the dimensions of individualism and collectivism and power distance are used for analysing the two graphic images in Chapter 4.

According to Hofstede’s (1981, 2001), individualism is the individual’s goal emphasized in individualistic cultures; in contrast, in collectivistic cultures, groups’ goals are emphasized. Hofstede and Bond (1984) state that in individualistic cultures, “people are supposed to look after themselves and their immediate family only”
In collectivistic cultures, “people belong to groups or communities that are supposed to look after them in exchange for loyalty” (p.419). This definition implies that individualist cultures focus more on individuals’ goals, needs, and views than groups, whereas collectivist cultures focus more on groups’ goals than individuals. Gudykunst (1994) claims that individualism and collectivism dimension is a major aspect of cultural variability that manifests in the cultural differences in human behavior. Gudykunst and Kim (1997) argue that individualism-collectivism dimension “is expected to affect communication mainly through its influence on group identities and the differentiation between in-group and out-group communication. While cultures tend to be predominantly either individualistic or collectivistic, both individualism and collectivism exist in all cultures” (p.57). Based on Hofstede’s (1981, 2001) research, for the two host cities of the research, Great Britain belongs to the individualism dimension, whilst China is close to the collectivism. With relation to the research, Hofstede’ individualism and collectivism dimensions will be used for analysing whether there is cultural impact on the two host cities’ graphic images.

To conclude, the definition of culture has an important basic role for the analysis of the two host cities’ images. Cultural identity and cultural variable theory is the theoretical framework for analyzing the two Olympic Games graphic images in Chapter 4.
CHAPTER THREE: VISUAL COMMUNICATION

Introduction

This chapter covers the issues of visual communication, the main literature component of this research. The chapter starts with a description of a framework that details a model of visual communication, then explains various definitions in relation to visual communication, and then concentrates on graphic design. The definition and the basic graphic elements of graphic design are stated. In addition, the functions and types of graphic design are discussed. Following, typography, an essential component of graphic design, is reviewed. Finally, the communication purpose of the Olympic Graphic designs is discussed.

Pettersson (1993) uses a model, as shown in Figure 9 below, to interpret the various forms of language representation combinations.

![Figure 9. Language model based on the form of representation (Pettersson, 1993)
The use of the model here is to illustrate the relations and connections between verbal communication, visual communication and graphic design. From a linguistic perspective, in Pettersson’s model, there are two major groups of languages—verbal and nonverbal languages. According to Pettersson, verbal language includes the spoken, written and tactile categories. Nonverbal language comprises the audial and visual types. Under the visual language, symbols, pictures and paralinguistic forms are included. Researchers consider language as the use of a combinative system that performs a meaningful communication from one to another and conveys messages, ideas, and information among people (Lotman, 1973; Cochran, 1987; Thompson, 2003). As visual language incorporating visual communication belongs to nonverbal communication, symbols and pictures (graphic design) are the important components within the visual communication field.

**Definition of Visual Communication**

Visual communication is a process that conveys messages, meanings, and information by visual materials (Berger, 1989; Kindborg, 1991; Mestre, Stainer, Stainer & Strom, 2000). According to Mestre, Stainer, Stainer & Strom (2000), in the broadest sense “visual communications relate to the process by which messages are created and conveyed through visual means” (p.19). In this definition, visual communication includes verbal material (words), whether printed or electronically presented comprising primarily nonverbal or non-linguistic images and practices. Examples of visual communication can be
referred to and/or represented in the form of printed media, books, newspapers, magazines, and the electronic media such as film, TV, video, and computers.

Similarly, Kindborg (1991) defines visual communication as “communication by presenting information in a visual form. There exist a variety of ways to present information visually, like gestures, body languages, video, TV, pictures, diagrams, photos, et cetera” (p.9). Berger (1989) views visual communication from a symbolic angle. He says visual communication is a central aspect of people’s lives, and most of this communication is “through the symbolic means by words and signs and symbols of all kinds” (p.1). Moreover, Berger (1989) says people’s emotions, feelings, ideas and notions are reflected, represented, changed, and developed through visual and symbolic expressions. In other words, Berger does view visual communication as a representation of the minds of individuals in a symbolic manner. Based on these definitions, people experience visual communication in their daily life through both platforms of verbal or nonverbal communication, in the form of printed material and other media such as film, TV, video, and computers and three-dimensional models. Thus, with the development of technology, visual communication may not only be two-dimensional, but also three-dimensional (3 D), which can be behavioural and not limited to flat plane media.

In contrast to the above, from a physical perspective, Lester (2000) states “a visual communication relies both on eyes that function and a brain that makes sense of all the sensory information received” (p.1). Audience and respondents
need the basic physical attributes such as eyes and brain to receive the transmitted outside information or messages from outside and comprehend them.

Furthermore, Lester (2000) states the goal of visual communication “is to produce powerful pictures so that the viewer will remember their content” (p.5). Therefore, a design of visual communication can create a powerful visual impact and an everlasting impression to audiences, a goal for most visual designers.

To conclude, visual communication conveys and represents messages, information, ideas and minds of individuals in visual forms of printed media, books, newspapers, magazines and electronic media film, TV, video, and computers and three-dimensional models. An efficient work at visual communication gives an audience a powerful impact and an everlasting impression.

**Graphic Design**

*Definition of Graphic Design*

The term of graphic design was first used by designer W. A. Dwiggins in 1922 for his work on book designs (Lester, 2000). Graphic design is generally defined as a form of visual communication (Moore, & Dwyer 1994; Hollis, 1994). Hollis is a very well known historian of design, and his book (1994) *Graphic design: A concise history* is very famous. According to designer Hollis (1994), graphic design is a form of visual communication, and it is “the business of making or choosing marks and arranging them on a surface to convey an idea” (p.7). Graphic design conveys ideas by the creative image working with words.
and other pictorial elements. Moreover Hollis (1994) points out that, graphic design is “a kind of language with an uncertain grammar and a continuously expanding vocabulary” (p. 10). This idea illustrates graphic design as an endless language that still keeps developing and has creative features that are not conventional.

Similarly, Newark (2002) considers graphic design “as the most universal of all arts. It is all around us, explaining, decorating, and identifying: imposing meaning on the world” (p. 6). Furthermore, according to the author, graphic design performs a number of functions that sort, inform, differentiate and act on people’s emotions. Newark (2002) states “graphic design can distinguish one company or organization or nation from another” (p. 6). For example, in advertising, it distinguishes one company from another, and informs the features of its productions through images. From a broad perspective, Lester (2000) says graphic design is “the art and craft of bringing organized structure to a group of diverse elements; both verbal and visual…it has expanded to include the use of words, pictures, and even sounds in motion pictures, on TV, and through computers” (p. 132). This definition depicts the idea of graphic design that exists in people’s life through the forms of plain materials and striking three dimensional models that include both sounds and movements; such as cartoon movies shown on the TV, the flash movies on the internet, and also the computer 3D games that have emotional sounds displayed with motion pictures. Lester’s three dimensional ideas with emotions represent large entities, and give meaning to diverse elements that
are brought together in a design. Thus, Lester’s idea is not applicable for this research as it is in striking contrast to the general viewpoint of graphic design that normally refers to two-dimensional materials.

In contrast to Hollis (1994), Lester (2000) and Newark (2002), designer Kalman (1991) gives a definition of graphic design in a very broad scope, stating that it “is a medium…a means of communication consisting of the use of words and images on more or less everything, more or less everywhere” (p.51). Kalman’s broad definition seems inappropriate for the study of specific patterns of graphic designs; he just gives a total freedom for graphic designing; however, the author’s definition does not express explicitly components a professional graphic design should include. Ellen Lupton and J. Abbott Miller (1999) try to give a functional definition of graphic design: “graphic design can critically engage the mechanics of representation, exposing and revising its ideological biases; design also can remake the grammar of communication by discovering structures and patterns within the material media of visual and verbal writing” (p.18). Lupton and Miller’s idea is more inclined towards both visual and verbal forms of graphic design affecting the functions of communication.

In conclusion, graphic design with particular reference to this research can be defined as a form of visual communication that conveys ideas, meanings and emotions with words and other pictorial elements that are effectively communicated within a two-dimensional setting. Functionally, graphic design can
identify and distinguish one entity from another by using visually represented striking special features and patterns.

Basic Visual Elements of Graphic Design

Out of the eleven basic visual elements in visual design study, the following six elements relevant to graphic design within this research are discussed below: line, shape, direction, hue, scale, and motion.

Line. The line is a fundamental but important element for graphic images. Moore and Dwyer (1994) state that a line is composed by coterminous dots; also visual components can be separated one from others by lines. In other words, lines shaped by dots; also lines build up graphic shapes. The On-Line Visual Literacy Project (1998) states that the line as a simple but powerful visual tool, lines are formed by dots and give direction to shape graphics in order to gain audiences’ attention. According to designer Berger (1989), the nature of lines represents the world in real shapes and appearance. Based on above, the line is a basic and powerful element within graphic images as it forms from dots and informs shapes. Furthermore, the line can have a certain purpose in its direction for audiences, which also transmits a variety of emotions and meanings through its boldness, sharpness, and looseness.

Shape. In graphic design, shape is a basic and necessary element that illustrates the appearance of the objects. According to Berger (1989), lines can be generated from shapes, as well shapes are created by the lines, and the two elements connect to each other and cannot be separated. Moore and Dwyer (1994) state
shapes normally have two dimensions, length and width, which can appear as regular or irregular. According to Dondis (1973), there are three basic shapes that include the triangle, the square, and the circle. Dondis states the three basic shapes have their own character and meanings through association, attached meaning, and also by people’s psychological perceptions. She says, “The square is associated with dullness, honesty, straightness, and workmanlike meaning; the triangle has action, conflict, tension; the circle has endlessness, warmth, and protection” (1973, p.44). Similarly, Bonnici (1999) states graphic design shapes can create different meanings when they combine with information; and also different colours filled within shapes express different emotions and feelings. Thus, a shape has an ability to represent certain meanings and feelings by it self or in combination with information and colours to audiences. The meanings that shapes transmit may have various outputs based on the individual’s perceptions and understandings of the information.

Moreover, from the two dimensional perspective, Moore and Dwyer (1994) state shapes can be a simple graphic technique to describe and symbolise the world into plain forms visually.

Texture. Texture is a design element that visually representing various material impressions. Moore and Dwyer (1994) state texture can visually make audiences feel and sense the objects of graphic image without real touching. The sense that graphic images deliver to audience is an optical perceiving process; individuals’ understanding and sense of texture of images are based on their eyes. The On-Line Visual Literacy Project (1998) explains as the visual element, texture
is the sense of touch cooperates with the eyes to give one a better understanding of the surroundings. Bonnici (1999) says texture can create different visual senses with different material forms, which based on various technical methods such as an illustration, photography, and digital manipulation. To sum up, texture is the element that makes audience derives a visual sense of the material of the objects in graphic design. Viewers perceive and are able to recognize the characteristics material of objects in various forms, including paper, metal, stone, wood, plastics, fabrics and others, which appear soft or hard, sharp or flat, smooth or rough of the objects.

_Hue._ Hue exists in the world of everywhere; and people cannot imagine the world without hue. According to The On-Line Visual Literacy Project (1998), red, yellow and blue are the primary colours as it is easy to get very saturated versions of the three hues in paint; the three primary colours can create any numerous colours by mixing with other hues. In terms of visual literacy, the different hues are divided into two categories: warm and cool colours. From the optical perspective, Berger (1989) considers hues are formed by various electromagnetic waves that are an optical process for people receiving and experiencing them. In a simple sense, Bonnici (1999) stresses that colour is an intrinsic element of the visual images and has their own meanings to deliver through different contents. Similarly, Pettersson (1993) states that the hue can enhance and impact communication visually; and hues can represent various meaning in different cultures. Therefore, the hue is an essential element of graphic design that can enhance visual expression effectively. Various hues can
transmit different meaning to audiences through different contents and different cultures.

Scale. Scale normally is used as the measurement concept for objects. Berger (1989) states scale deals with the size of an object in the graphic image, and transmitting emotional impact to audiences. In same sense, The On-Line Visual Literacy Project (1998) asserts that by manipulating the apparent size of objects, scale can be used to produce a number of effects, give greater meaning to the basic content and add new information to the image. As stated in above, a shape can represents an object symbolically. Therefore, in a graphic image, the audiences hardly are able to imagine or sense the real size of a symbolised shape of the object unless audiences are familiar with that object or there are some other objects within the image that can be compared with.

Motion. As an effective element Motion is used in most visual forms today. Written from Moore and Dwyer (1994), motion is perceived by audiences as the movement or position of objects when observed visually. In other words, in graphic designs, motion can lead the audiences’ eye and attention through a moving path of an object in a graphic image. Dondis (1973) states the true motion only exists in the physical world and in visual images motion is always represented by illustrated graphics. Thus, in graphic design, motion attracts the audiences’ attention in a visual way by illustration that makes audiences’ eyes follow a moving object naturally.

In conclusion, with respect to this research project, line, shape, direction, hue, scale, and motion are the essential and indispensable elements that are constituents
of a graphic design. Moreover, those elements can compose and create meaningful and proper images to audiences.

**Functions of Graphic Design**

According to Barnard (2005), there are three functions of graphic design: social, cultural and economic. For the purposes of this dissertation, the cultural function is the critical one. Barnard points out that the cultural function of graphic design is reproducing and communicating the values and beliefs of a particular group. Barnard (2005) asserts the social function of graphic design in general is supporting the interest of the different social classes, and enhancing the power and status of society politically. The economic function of graphic design is that it is part of a design industry; it belongs to products and encourages consumption. From the three functions Barnard points out, it can be seen that graphic design is a form of reproducing and communicating social, cultural and economic value; furthermore, the three functions are interrelated and cannot be separated. Hollis (1994) also states three basic functions of graphic design; these are different from Barnard’s view. The first is identification, which is the role of graphic design, which means “to say what something is or where it came from” (p.9). To develop this point, the identification of graphic expressions may also indicate an idea or culture. Hollis’s second function is “information and instruction” of graphic design to “indicate the relationship of one thing to another in direction, position and scale” (p.10). The third function of graphic design is presentation and promotion. Hollis’s three functions of graphic
design are proposed from the various usages of graphic design, which are applied to identification, information, presentation and promotion categories.

Types of graphic images

Aumont (1997) states that the three types of graphic images are symbolic, epistemological and aesthetic. The symbolic image can stand for or represent something; it might be an idea or a cultural value. For example, the images of a religion symbolically represent the concepts of a specific religion; the symbol of a cross represents death, sin, guilt, and rebirth in the Christian ideology. According to Aumont (1997), epistemological images convey messages of the world and its contents; those images may be both religious and secular. The images of road maps or landscapes can be examples of epistemological images. Aumont (1997) says that the aesthetic images are intended to produce specific impressions for the audiences or to please audiences. For example, the oil painting called the Mona Lisa makes a specific aesthetic impression many; whereas people may have various opinions about Picasso’s paintings; few think his works are aesthetic and attractive; some may have no idea about his paintings.
Therefore, aesthetic images attempt to produce specific and appropriate impressions and feelings for audiences, but the audiences may have various perceptions based on their different knowledge, values and cultural backgrounds. In that sense, to draw a conclusion about whether an image is aesthetic or not and in unison with the set general standards of aesthetics, really depends on individuals.

Typography

According to Berger (1989), typography belongs to graphic design, and it is the art of using and arranging type in various graphic designs to create particular effects for audiences. For this research, typography plays an important role and contributes significantly towards each and every Olympic Games graphic image. According to Goodman (2001), typography operates in a fundamental role in graphic design. Lupton (1996) defines typography as the designing of letterforms and organising them in a space, and is the basic grammar of graphic design. Nearly all modes of visual communications such as books, magazines, films, television, and electronic media depend upon typography. Lupton says in order to attract the audiences’ attention,
designers use a particular style of type to present the content or motion. According to Lupton (1999), the features of typography include the style of typeface, the space of letters, words, lines, columns, and the pattern formed through the body of content. Newark (2002) states typography is writing or printing in standard forms along both horizontal and/or vertical dimensions depending on the modes or patterns. Typography is an important and essential sector within graphic designs; it is also applied in most of visual forms. Typography can be considered as a hidden art to create various effects for audiences through the particular style of letter type.

Newark (2002) argues that designers cannot use a typeface without employing typography, since “typeface is handwritten or a mechanical font...typeface and typography are inseparable: language must be written with a typeface, and using a typeface necessitates typography” (p.76). According to Berger (1989), typefaces have various looks and have different meanings for audiences. Moreover, certain typefaces are “very formal and elegant, others are casual and relaxed” (p.129). Lupton (1996) states that a typeface and the way it is used can declare the identity of an institution, the interests of an audience, or the personal sensibility of a designer. Based on the definitions and statements by designers and researchers above, typeface is the fundamental form of writing and printing that can make graphic images more meaningful and attractive. Typefaces can represent and express various meanings to audiences with different appearance of shapes. Moreover, typefaces are the necessary elements in the composition of typography.
What the Communication Purpose Is of the Olympic Graphic Designs

The communication purpose of the Olympic graphic designs is to express the identity of the host cities to the world audience appropriately. According to the OMSC, the Olympic graphic design is an important method of announcing the Olympic Games (Olympic Games posters, 2003). Based on the Olympic Museum and Studies Centre, the role of an Olympic graphic design is to inform and promote (Olympic Games posters, 2003). More specifically, in order to attract the audience, the Olympic graphic designers try to inform the salience of the identity of the host city and promote itself to the entire world. Audiences from all over the world may or may not be familiar with the host city. Therefore, the Olympic graphic image plays a very important visual and nonverbal role for the world. The graphic image should represent meaningful identity to present the host city with the help of graphic elements such as symbols, logos, and colours.

Symbol and Logo

With regard to the Olympic Games graphic designs, it is useful to define the terms of symbol and logo. According to Jung (1990), a symbol can be a term, name or a picture that people are familiar within their daily life. Symbols present the conventional and obvious meaning with its specific denotation; also symbols convey very clear, known and explicit meanings. In contrast Morgan and Welton (1992) stress that a symbol is “a sign that implies more than its obvious and intended meaning, and which derives force from the subconscious” (p.112). Therefore, in that
sense, a symbol transmits more accurate implications than its superficial and obvious meaning.

The Logo is a part of an organization’s identity. The full name of the term logo is logotype, from the Greek words *logos* and *tupos*, which mean impression (Newark, 2002). Logo is a word that is of common usage. Newark (2002) says logo has become the core of modern design; and “can be a piece of type, a symbol, a picture, or a combination of any or all of these” (p.120). As designers Chermayeff, Geismar and Geisbuhler say, “Logo is both form and substance, image and idea…it must be recognizable, unusual enough to be memorable… and rich enough in detail or meaning to be interesting” (cited in Newark, 2002, p.120). Thus, a logo is describing an organisation’s main characters or features; it must be memorable and represents appropriate ideas or meanings of the organisations or purposes that the logo tries to transmit.

*Image Requirements of International Olympic Community*

According to the IOC rules of conduct applicable to the Olympic Games graphic image, the requirements for candidate cities are: “the logo shall not use a well-known international or universal connotation / message…and shall reproduce fully, accurately and without embellishment; the Olympic symbol must not occupy more than a third of the total surface of the image”; moreover, the word “Olympic” shall not be used in the image (IOC, 2005, p.3). Based on the requirements, the result of the designation of the graphic image will be displayed with the logo, name and the year of the Olympic Games candidate city.
The Five Rings—the Olympic Symbol

In relation to the graphic image requirements by the IOC above, as a part of components of the Olympic graphic image, the interpretation of the five rings is indicated as follows. According to the Olympic Museum and Studies Centre (2002), the Olympic symbols—the five rings, the motto and the flame represent the meanings and the values of Olympic Games. The Olympic symbols “transmit a message in a simple and direct manner”; moreover, the symbols “give the Olympic Movement and the Games an identity” (OMSC, 2002. p. 2). Particularly, the narration merely focuses on the five rings; as they are the only one Olympic symbol allowed to be used in the Olympic graphic image. The first time the logo of the five rings was used as the official Olympic symbol was in the 1928 St. Moritz Games graphic image (OMSC, 2003). Based on the Olympic museum and studies centre (2002), the five rings represent “the five continents”, and “they are interlaced to show the universality of Olympism and the meeting of the athletes of the whole world during the Olympic Games” (p. 3). The colours of the five rings are strictly followed as certain position for each ring (OMSC, 2002). The standard position of colours for the five rings are: from left of the first level is blue, black, and red; from left of the second level is yellow, and green. The Olympic symbol of the five rings is shown as below.
To sum up, based on the image requirements by IOC and the interpretation of
the five rings by OMSC, the Olympic graphic images of the host cities need to follow
the rules to reach the IOC applicable standards. Based on the requirements, the
graphic designers can have ample freedom and room to create appropriate logos to
represent the host city’s identity and messages through the graphic design elements
like shapes, colours and others.
CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS OF CULTURE AND GRAPHIC DESIGN

USING LITERATURE ON CULTURAL IDENTITY, CONTENT ANALYSIS, AND CULTURAL VARIABLE THEORY

Introduction

In this chapter, the two graphic images of Beijing 2008 and London 2012 are analysed by cultural identity, content analysis and cultural variable theory. The purpose of this chapter is to analyse the relationship between culture and graphic design by using the two Olympic Games’ images. Prior to this analysis, the literature of the relationship between culture and graphic design in studies is reviewed. As a good example for the Beijing and London 2012 graphic images, the Sydney 2000 Olympic image is analysed.

The Relationship of Culture and Graphic Design

As defined in chapter 3, graphic design is a form of visual communication that conveys ideas, meanings and emotions with words and other pictorial elements that are effectively communicated within a two-dimensional setting. Therefore, to review the relationship between graphic design, culture and communication, and the relationship between culture and visual communication needs to be discussed first.

Culture and Communication, and Visual Communication

Edward Hall (1961) makes an argument that “culture is communication and communication is culture” in his book The silent language (p. 186). Later on,
Barnlund (1989) interprets Hall’s opinion by saying, “It is through communication that we acquire a culture; it is in our manner of communication that we display our cultural uniqueness” (p. xiv). In other words, people receive culture through the communication forms; meanwhile, people represent their cultures by the various communication ways. Nakanishi and Johnson (1993) state, “Culture is inherently manifested in individuals and their communication patterns” (p.204). With regard to the points expressed by other scholars, culture is represented by the way of communication from individuals. More recently, the scholar Barnard (2005) has expressed that the relationship between culture and communication from a graphic perspective is that “culture consists in groups of people who communicate with each other, who talk to each other, show each other pictures, read and understand each other’s books, magazines, newspapers” (p.67). Barnard considers culture is represented by various visual forms that communicate with people in visual ways.

In relation to this research, a graphic image is one of the forms in which people communicate and understand each others culture. Based on the relationship of culture and visual communication, furthermore, Barnard (2005) points out that “the study of communication is the study of culture, and that culture is the creation and use of meaningful forms, which would clearly include graphic design” (p.67). As has been defined in Chapter 2, a culture transmits cultural meanings through symbols and systems of symbols by various visible communicative forms. Graphic design is one of those communicative forms that can transmit cultural meanings.
An unpublished project by Spencer (2003) on graphic design reflects British culture in a symbolic manner. Her project is about the visual representation of “Englishness” and English identity. In Spencer’s project, she uses graphic symbols as revealers of the English cultural identity and explores British cultural characteristics, which include conventional and innovative public symbols.

Drucker (1999) says that graphic design refers to “ideological values and cultural attitudes” (p.42). The author’s idea indicates that graphic design reproduces and expresses cultural attitudes and meanings consisting of image contents. Hollis (1994) and Newark (2000) consider the relationship of graphic design and culture from the social perspective. While graphic design has been important throughout human history, Hollis (1994) states graphic design is a part of the culture and the economy of industrialized societies. In a continuously developing society, graphic design is a form of communication that has an impact on the economic and cultural aspects within growing societies. Graphic design can be used for business as a valid implement to commercial purposes. Moreover, graphic design can identify, inform, and represent individuals and organizations’ identities culturally.

In addition, “in graphic design, whatever the information transmitted, it must ethically and culturally reflect its responsibility to society” (Newark, 2002). The ethical responsibility of graphic design is to transmit various messages into consumer friendly pictorial forms in an effective way. The information and messages that are delivered by graphic design must include valuable meanings to audiences and society at large. Based on this argument, Barnard (2005) clearly
points out the relationship between graphic design and culture. The author states there are “two possible relationships: the first is culture exists as a background for graphic design; the second is graphic design points to or reflects the culture it is found in” (p. 58). Barnard’s demonstration of graphic design and culture comes from the relation between communication and culture and states that graphic design is one of the forms of communication, which indicates that graphic design can visually identify cultural meanings and inform cultural identities.

Therefore, following Barnard’s opinion, the relationship of culture and graphic design can be considered as follows: culture exists in graphic design; meanwhile graphic design reproduces and interprets the ideas, values, beliefs, and identities of culture. As one form of communication, graphic design represents and expresses cultural attitudes and meanings through the graphic content within the images. Moreover, graphic design may have a role of impacting, influencing, and affecting visual communication by its function of culture identity. In order to analyze the significance of the cultural elements in graphic design, scholars need to understand the cultural meanings behind graphic images and discover the meanings embodied within the images.

Analysis of the Image Sydney 2000 Olympic Games

Based on the information from the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the design of the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games used typical Australian symbols and colours to represent the figure of an athlete (IOC, 2005).
The online source IOC (2005) describes the image:

The boomerangs and suggestions of sun and rocks, together with the colours of the harbour, beaches and red interior invoke the unique Australian landscape and its original inhabitants. The flash which transforms the silhouette of Sydney Opera House into a trail of smoke from an Olympic torch recalls the emblem of Sydney’s Olympic candidature (http://www.olympic.org/uk/games/past/index_uk.asp?OLGT=1&OLGY=2000).

Design Week (1999) reports that in order to address the best features of Sydney, the graphic images of Sydney 2000 “used the key cultural icons such as the boomerang and the Sydney Opera House to represent their famous Australian appeals” (p.23).
From the design, it can be seen that the organizers of the Sydney Games created a strong positive visual awareness of the Australian way of life; they tried to give people around the world a feeling of what Sydney is all about. Wileman (1993) asserts that “The representation of one object by another object is a symbol. Objects, actions, or processes can be represented by a symbol or a series of symbols” (p.11). Writing from a design perspective, Wileman (1993) uses pictorial symbols, graphic symbols and verbal symbols as three major ways to explain the process of representing objects in symbolic way. The figure below shows the process of the shoe as an object from a real world example to become a symbol.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pictorial symbols</th>
<th>Graphic symbols</th>
<th>Verbal symbols</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1" alt="Shoe" /></td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="Shoe" /></td>
<td><img src="image3" alt="Shoe" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>photograph</td>
<td>illustration/drawing</td>
<td>concept-related graphic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image4" alt="Shoe" /></td>
<td><img src="image5" alt="Shoe" /></td>
<td>arbitrary graphic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image6" alt="Shoe" /></td>
<td><img src="image7" alt="Shoe" /></td>
<td>verbal description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image8" alt="Shoe" /></td>
<td><img src="image9" alt="Shoe" /></td>
<td>noun/label</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 13. Ways to represent an object (Wileman, 1993, p. 12)*

Similarly, in relation to the graphic image of Sydney, the Australian symbols— the Sydney Opera House and the boomerang are represented from the real objects that have become symbols. The two figures below show the process of the Sydney Opera House and the boomerang by the representation based on Wileman’s concept.
Therefore, based on the interpretation of the Sydney design, it can be seen clearly that the design used cultural features to characterize the Australians’ famous icons in a visual communication.
Cultural Analyses of the Two Images

The definition of culture as stated by Hofestede (1981, 2001) in Chapter, culture exists in people’s minds and is visually represented by symbols, heroes, and rituals. The cultural backgrounds of the two graphic images have been briefly discussed in Chapter 2. In this section, the analysis of Chinese and English cultures will be focused from the particular components of the two Olympic images.

*Chinese Culture and the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games Image*

The Beijing Olympic Games image has at its core a red Chinese seal stamp with a written Chinese character 京, meaning capital city.

*Written Characters*

The discussion of Chinese culture in Chapter 2 begins with a focus on the Chinese written characters. All languages can be seen as symbols to represent certain meanings of objects. As discussed in Chapter 2, Chinese culture has valued writing for millennia. Written characters have the role of graphic art as well as a symbolic language tool for communication. Based on the early Chinese written calligraphy, an example of the pictograms of Beijing 2008 Olympic Games is shown in Figure 16 below.
The image shows each sporting figures representing one kind of sport included in the list of sports at the Olympics. The shape and style of these figures do “integrate the pictographic charm of inscriptions on bones and bronze objects in ancient China with simplified embodiment of modern graphics (sic)” (BOCOG, 2006).

Not all the Chinese characters can be pictorially represented with objects, and during the development and reformation for centuries, the written characters were “extended by phonetic loan” (Blunden & Elvin, 1998, p. 180). According to Blunden and Elvin, (1998), characters that could not be drawn as obvious pictures were represented by the characters that have the same or similar sound, which are homophones. Those scholars’ opinions imply that Chinese written characters have various meanings in oral and written expressions with the same or close sound related to the contexts. Here are some graphic images as examples to illustrate how the Chinese written characters represent the various meanings by the homophones. For example, in the Spring Festival, Chinese people like to buy the New Year’s print pictures (nian hua) to stick on walls or the doors. Nian hua is a special
colourful print that has auspicious and favourable blessing meanings for the Chinese New Year. Chinese like to use the character *yu 魚* (fish), which is a homophone with the character *yu 裕* (abundance) to represent abundance in the New Year. The *Nian Hua of Lian Nian You Yu* (every year have fish) below symbolizes the good wishes that people will be abundant and rich in the New Year and throughout the year.

*Figure 17. Chinese traditional Nian Hua ‘Lian Nian You Yu’ (Yangliuqing New Year Pictures, 2007)*

In the above picture, the chubby little child holds a big fat fish with a full bloom lotus flower as the background. The fish and the lotus flower are the theme of the *Nian Hua*. In the image, the fish *yu* is a homophone for abundance; and the Lotus flower *lian 莲* is a homophone with the character 连, which means continuous. The meaning of the image is a wish to be abundant and rich in the New Year and successive years. In the picture, the fish, the little boy and the lotus are all big and fat to mean rich; and the colour of them all is in red—a traditional colour that means lucky and auspicious in Chinese culture. All the subjects in the picture and the red colour symbolize and represent Chinese traditional cultural meanings and implications in a visual sense.

Another homophonic example is the written character for the creature called in English a bat, which means good fortune in Chinese culture. Chinese use the written character *fu蝠* (bat), a homophone with the character *fu 福* (blessing) to symbolize blessing and good fortune in contrast
with the Western cultures, where the bat normally has unpleasant meanings. Thus, in Chinese
culture, people like to use the symbol bat to represent good fortune and luck in the New Year as the
image shows below.

![Figure 18. The symbol of bat in Chinese culture (the author's drawing)](image)

In the image, the bat represents blessing and good fortune; the red colours of the two circles are the
Chinese antique money, which mean richness and affluence. Thus, with the symbols of bat and
money, this image conveys a positive meaning—a wish with happiness, wealth and good fortune for
the New Year.

Another example of a homophone is the meaning of love for Chinese people. The print image
below is used by Chinese people in the traditional wedding ceremony to express their fine wishes to
the new married couple.
The two characters in the figure above are immortal and pronounced heh in Chinese, which represent harmonious meanings (Xinhuanet, April 6, 2005). The water lily with one character and the box in another character both are pronounced he, which have same the pronunciation as the word harmony in Chinese (Xinhuanet, April 5, 2005). This indicates that the water lily flower and the box are both homophonic words for harmony, and hence the two immortal characters represent the meanings of harmonious, happily married, and love forever. Based on the above examples, in Chinese culture a homophone is not merely used in oral or writing forms, but also represented in visual ways.

The Chinese written characters are also elaborated into decorative patterns or forms or images that stand for the specific cultural meanings (Blunden & Elvin, 1998). The images of characters Shou (long life), Ji (auspiciousness), Qing (celebration), Xi (happiness) below represent positive connotations in the Chinese culture. The first image shows the original forms of the four characters, the second image shows the decorative forms.
The decorative characters express the traditional cultural meanings of good fortune. The first image on the left, *shou*, represents longevity. Next from left to right, *Ji, Qing, and Xi* represent auspiciousness, celebration, and happiness. All those characters have auspicious meanings; and those characters may reflect Chinese people’s expressions and expectations that are deeply rooted in the minds of people of Chinese origin. With relation to the Beijing Olympic Games image, the logo is a visual pun illustrating the dancing figure and character *jing* 京. Moreover, the dancing figure logo as a character alone is a decorative pattern that vividly transmits messages to the audience.

Therefore, as shown in the examples and images above, Chinese written characters as one of the visual communication forms may represent and symbolize various meanings in a homophonic manner. The meanings of the written characters stand for, and also may relate to, Chinese culture with the various contexts. In addition, Chinese written characters also may be elaborated into decorative patterns or images with different forms that represent positive cultural meanings and implications.
Seals and Calligraphy

The red and white representation in the Beijing Olympic Games image is based on a Chinese seal stamp that has been inked with red paste and applied to a white surface. The figure logo in the seal is a character jīng 京, and it is written in a particular style of calligraphy called seal script. Thus, the history of the Chinese seal and styles of calligraphy need to be discussed in details. According to Cotterell (1995), the seal prints were the first printings used in China in the Zhou dynasty (1022-256 B.C). Seals were used for the official documents and personal identities, and also for the art works to authenticate documents (Cotterell, 1995; Gunde, 2002). Seals used to identify the author or artist of a work in traditional Chinese art. Moreover, seals were often used as signatures (Cotterell, 1995; Gunde, 2002). According to Cotterell(1995) and Meggs(2006), normally the seals are carved from stone, wood, bronze, jade, gold, ivory, or ceramics, with calligraphic characters on a flat surface; the seal impressions are always printed in red ink or a red shape with white characters or in a red background on a white paper (shown in the image below).

Figure 22. The images of seals and stamps (Beguin & Morel, 1997; Ho & Bronson, 2004)

The image above shows the seals that are carved with different materials and the impressions with different forms of written characters. In the image, the top and left show the seals are carved from stone, metal, and jade in the different animal shapes that have auspicious meaning. The image
on the bottom of the right hand side shows the seal impressions in red colour, which were printed in different written forms. As Gunde (2002) says, seals have different shapes, which can be square, rectangular, round, and oval. Seals also can be carved with various calligraphy styles. In addition, a seal cannot be one without excellent skills in both carving and calligraphy. Therefore, imprints from seals are also a form of art that appears in Chinese traditional paintings and calligraphy scripts.

With regard to the calligraphic character Jing in the Beijing Olympic Games’ image, according to Meggs (2006), “Chinese calligraphy is a purely visual language. It is not alphabetical, and every symbol is composed of a number of differently shaped lines within an imaginary square” (p.17). As mentioned previously in page 11, the earliest Chinese calligraphy is jia gu wen, which was a language written on bones and shells. Based on the earliest studies, Chinese calligraphy was developed into different writing styles by artists since 259-210 B.C. (Meggs, 2006). The four main styles of writing are seal script, regular brush script, running scripts, and grass script (Blunden & Elvin, 1998; Meggs, 2006). An example of character jing 京 with the four writing styles is shown in the Figure 23 below.

![Figure 23. The different calligraphy forms of the character jing (the author's drawing)](image)

Blunden and Elvin (1998) say that as an art, Chinese calligraphy has its own rules in traditional aesthetic theory, and every character must be drawn very carefully. A fine piece of Chinese calligraphy is like a living person with the strokes resembling the bone, flesh, muscle, and blood (Blunden & Elvin, 1998; Gunde, 2002; Meggs, 2006). With all the sectors, writing can have
balance and appear lively, which make the writing have a feeling like a dancer swaying, walking, and gliding. Associated with writing, the brush, paper, ink, and ink stone used for calligraphy have become well-known as the ‘four treasures’ of the scholar’s studio since the tenth century (Cotterell, 1995). Thus, calligraphy means the skill of handwriting, which refers not only to Chinese characters, but to any system of writing in which the hand written characters are valued. This is true with all old manuscripts in English, Arabic scrolls, and Greek classic texts that have survived over centuries—and are examples of calligraphy.

*English Culture and the London 2012 Olympic Games Image*

One design scholar who successfully accomplished research on Englishness, the abstract notion in graphic design, states “Englishness is embedded within the fabric of society and is evident within social prejudices, customs, etiquette and value systems, [sic] hybridisation and commonalities in western culture make Englishness seem intangible” (Spencer, 2003, p. 35). For English culture, Spencer includes attitudes, customs, behavior, value systems, and culture is values, which gives rise to attitudes and behavior. The discussion of English values in this research is focused on class significance, which is also one important element for Spencer’s research. The approach that Spencer uses in her research, which includes food like fish and chips, cricket and football, heritage, music, poems, and art—all the artifacts of culture, which are visibly created things, made by humans within English culture and which express the values of English culture. Chapter 2 has discussed the river Thames as a key element in English culture, and the River Thames represents a significant in the London Olympic Games image. As an important natural waterway of London, the River Thames does visually carry the meanings of English culture and is a particular object of the London logo to be analysed. Specifically, the approach for this analysis is similar to Spencer’s, which focuses on the elements of literature, arts, sports, famous buildings and landmarks of the River Thames.
The River Thames

As Eames (1998) mentions, the River Thames is just like a ribbon that is associated with both the history of London city and Great Britain. The River Thames, the most important river of England, is supposed to have originated around 350,000 years ago. Roman writers mentioned the river’s name as the Tamesis, and it was probably a Celtic word that means broad river (Nutt, 2004). It originates from the Cotswold Hills, and the 215 mile river flows across southern England and through London to the North Sea at the Nore (Hebbert, 1998). The image below shows the present course of the River Thames within London.

Figure 24. The image of the River Thames (Eames, 1998. p.27)

Literature and Arts

The River Thames has been a favourite subject in the English literary and artistic works since the seventeenth century. English literary productions can often see the Thames as the main theme or the story context for the novels. From Jerome K. Jerome, and Charles Dickens to Conan Doyle, as a symbol of English culture, the Thames has been frequently indicated in their writings (Ackroyd, 2001; Nutt, 2004). Jerome K. Jerome’s book Three Men in a Boat, Charles Dickens’s novels Oliver Twist, Our Mutual Friend, and other his novels, and Conan Doyle’s detective story The Sign of Four, the Thames river and people who live on as the story background have been vividly illustrated and deeply impressed to the readers. Others authors like Kenneth Grahame, Daniel Defoe,
and Philip Pullman were also elaborating the Thames as a major role in their stories (Libero, 1997; Eames, 1998).

Poetry

The River Thames also is praised in many British poems. From Alexander Pope, Edmund Spenser, and T.S. Eliot, these famous British poets all considered the river as the main subject in their poetry. The Thames refers to a spiritual reverent theme shown in poems of Edmund Spenser’s *Prothalamio*, Alexander Pope’s *Windsor Forest, the Rape of the Lock*, and T.S. Eliot’s *The Waste Land*, (Ackroyd, 200; Lynch, 2006). Other poems like the famous poem *London* written by William Blake in 1794 and the poem *Lines Written near Richmond* by William Wordsworth in 1798 are also presented the Thames significantly (Ackroyd, 2001; Lynch, 2006).

Visual Arts

The River Thames not only appears in the British literary and poetic works, but the artists have also had inspiration from the attractive scenery of the river, especially the paintings of the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries. The Thames became an interesting topic for paintings in the late seventeenth century, such as in the paintings by the Dutch artists Peter Tillemans and Jan Griffier, which show the Thames was a means of principal communication for London in between the seventeenth to the eighteenth centuries (Libero, 1997; PortCities, 2006).
The famous Venetian landscape artist Antonio Canaletto’s series of paintings of the views of London largely influenced the popularity of the Thames as a subject for landscape painting in the eighteenth century (PortCities, 2006). Productions from Samuel Scott, James Barry, John Boydell, the Cleveley family, Robert Dodd and other artist’s are showing the river as a significant business centre for British in the eighteenth century (Libero, 1997; PortCities, 2006). The image below show the importance of trade by the busy shipping views on the Thames in the eighteenth century.

Among those artists, the famous artist Claude Monet is a typical impressionist artist that uniquely featured the atmosphere of the buildings and bridges alongside the River Thames (Libero, 1997;
Lempel, 2005). The images below show the views of the River Thames by Monet in the late
nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries.

Figure 27. Left: the Thames and Westminster, 1870 (Libero, 1997). Right: Houses of Parliament,
Effect of Sunlight, 1904 (Lempel, 2005)

The River Thames inspires artistic creativity. The paintings above reveal the various scenes of the
river from different angles in the past, the busy shipping views or the peaceful dissolving
atmosphere not only reflect the historic views of the river, but also prove the important status of the
Thames in British artistic history.

Celebrations and Sports Events

English celebrations and sport events have held on the Thames in the past and present. The
winter celebrations were popular as the River Thames usually froze every winter during the
seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Hall, 1994). Frost fairs had been held on the ice of the river
every year until in 1814, when the embankment of the Thames was built, which made the river stop
freezing (Hall, 1994; Nutt, 2004). At present, rowing and sailing are the main sports events that take
place on the River Thames, such as the traditional Doggett’s Coat and Badge Race, still held on the river in July every year (Hall, 1994). This oldest race first took place in 1716, established by the actor Thomas Doggett. This event is a rowing race among London’s watermen. The winner of the race is honoured with a red coat and a silver badge, which is the cause for the race’s name (Hall, 1994; Libero, 1997). Another famous competitive event is the boat race between Oxford and Cambridge on the Thames rowing about Easter each year (Nutt, 2004).

Famous Buildings and Landmarks

Numbers of famous buildings and landmarks such as palaces, docks, cathedrals, churches and bridges that are standing on the banks of the River Thames also demonstrate London’s rich history (Hall, 1994). The river flows past the Houses of Parliament, Westminster Abbey and Westminster Bridge, the Tower of London, and Tower Bridge, Globe Theatre and many other famous buildings (Libero, 1997, Eames, 1998). The painting and images below show the sceneries of the Westminster Abbey, the Tower of London, and Tower Bridge, Globe Theatre from past to the present.

![Painting of Westminster Abbey]

*Figure 28. London: Westminster Abbey with a procession of Knights of the bath, by Antonio Canaletto 1794 (Libero, 1997)*
As Libero (1997) asserts, the symbols of power can be found by visual means in everywhere of London. The sculptures on the banks, the coat of arms of the royal family on the gates of Buckingham Palace, the famous building like Westminster Whitehall, even the banners on the standards of the Royal Cavalry members, those are all signified the hierarchy of English culture,
which has been important in the past and the present. The images below vividly indicate the power meaningful symbols of London.

![Images of symbols of London]

**Figure 31.** The sculpture, the royal family coat, and the Royal banners (Libero, 1997)

As a salient symbol of London and English culture, the Thames has generated memories that are built across the Thames and that cover many scenes of battles and moments of those who have shaped the liquid line of history and culture. As the definition of culture states in Chapter 2, cultural meanings are transmitted through symbols and systems of symbols by various visible communicative forms such as behaviors, attitudes, actions, artifacts, social institutions, and other visible manifestations. Based on the definition, those visible forms display the cultural meanings of the English.
Analyses of the Two Olympic Games Images

In this section, the theories of cultural identity, cultural variable and content analysis are used to analyze of the two Olympic Games graphic images.

*Cultural Identity Analysis of the Two Olympic Games Images*

Cultural identity theory plays a significant role in the intercultural communication studies (Collier & Thomas, 1988). Specifically, cultural identity is used for interpersonal communication, the one to one communication experiences in daily life. In the same way, the theory of cultural identity can be best suited for analysis of visual communication in this research. Cultural identity theory that has been discussed in Chapter 2 is used in this section as a theoretical construction to view whether culture is reflected in graphic images, and if so, in what ways. As summarised from the discussions in Chapter 2, cultural identity exists in a group of people, who operate and understand the system of symbols and beliefs, behave and follow their norms and rules culturally and appropriately, share their meaning of symbols and beliefs within their groups (Collier & Thomas, 1988). Based on the discussion of culture in Chapter 2, culture does distinguish itself by values, ideas, and viewpoints, which are a collection of invisible frameworks that are represented by visible objects, such as symbols, artefacts, behaviours, and other visible manifestations (Hofstede, 1980, 2001). Collier (2003) considers culture as group identity. Thus, cultural identity is an approach to review how culture, the abstract concept as the group identity, can be visually represented by the graphic components of the two graphic images.

*The Analysis of the Beijing Graphic Image*

This part analyzes what cultural identity may be expressed through the two Olympic Games images. The graphic image of Beijing is again shown here.
The Beijing Olympic Games image mainly is composed of a red coloured Chinese seal stamp with a calligraphic word *jing*, and a calligraphic written title “Beijing 2008” that gives the host city’s name and the year in which the Games will be held. According to the Beijing Organizing Committee of the Olympic Games (BOCOG, 2005), the calligraphic written character *jing*, is both the word for capital city, and also as the logo called ‘Dancing Beijing’, which conveys the way of Chinese thoughts and values. The words “Beijing 2008” are also inscribed with a Chinese calligraphic handwriting style. According to the designers Guo and Zhang of the Beijing Olympic image, the words “Beijing 2008” should also match the calligraphic style of the dancing figure logo (The seal, 2003). A print font to represent brush calligraphy exists, but was inapplicable to the English words, so the designers created the specific calligraphic style for the words Beijing 2008 (The conversation with designers, 2004).

The way the culture of China affects the design of the image runs parallel to the two aspects of Chinese cultural identity: the logo of the symbol of the Chinese seal and the symbolic character *jing*. These symbols, beliefs and ways of thinking about the seal (see page 72 in Chapter 2) and about *jing* are understood and appreciated by people belonging to Chinese cultural groups, and may also serve
as an external platform to express Chinese culture to the people of the world through the medium of
The Games to be held in Beijing in 2008.

The Cultural Identity Salience of the Beijing Olympic Image

As discussed on pages 72, in this study, cultural identity theory is being applied not to individuals
but to the expression on behalf of a nation. Salience of cultural identity means the stronger the
cultural influence, the more visible the salience of culture becomes. Hence, cultural identity salience
might potentially emphasize the cultural values in a particular context. In this research, cultural
identity salience is the strength of the national cultures that the two Olympic images belong to. In a
detailed sense, the cultural identity salience is seen in an analysis focusing on the written character
jing 京津, the double meanings of the dancing figure, and the Chinese seal.

The Written Character Jing 京津

According to the designers of Beijing Olympic image, Guo and Zhang, the original idea of the
logo design was based on Chinese calligraphy, the art of written characters to represent Chinese
culture (The Chinese seal, 2003; The seal, 2003). Designer Guo explains at the beginning, designers
thought the logo of the Beijing Olympic Games should visually represent the rich Chinese culture to
the entire world (The conversation with designers, 2004). Based on that idea, designers tried to show
the traditional and striking elements of Chinese traditional culture through the logo, and make the
logo look indigenous to China. In final, designers chose Chinese written characters, which still keep
the characteristics of Chinese early pictographs for the Beijing logo (The Chinese seal, 2003;
conversation with designers, 2004). As a unique language, Chinese written characters can represent
the features of Chinese culture. People from Chinese origin based outside China may recognize it is
the Chinese logo when they see the character jing even though they may not understand the meaning
of word. The designer Guo says, the group of the designers chose the character jīng 京 as the main part of the logo because the meaning of the word in the Chinese contemporary dictionary (2005) specifically relates to the city of Beijing (The seal, 2003; The Chinese seal, 2003). Moreover, Guo says that as the structure of the word 京 is graphically like a shape of person, so the word can easily be changed (The seal, 2003; The Chinese seal, 2003). The image below shows the transformation process of from jīng 京 to the dancing figure can explain Guo’s idea of the design.

Figure 33. The process transformation from jīng 京 to the dancing figure (the author’s drawing)

The meaning of the character jīng 京 in the Chinese dictionaries is the capital of a county, contemporarily meaning Beijing (Comprehensive Chinese Character Dictionary, 2000; Contemporary Chinese Dictionary, 2005). Chinese written characters have been used as images to represent objects (Blunden & Elvin, 1998), and some are still pictographs (see Chapter 2).

According to the early dictionary of Analyzing the Components and Etymology of the Characters by Xu Shen (2nd CE/1981), based on the tortoise shells script, the character jīng 京 can be categorised as a pictograph, and pictographically resembles the tall building with a high top. The original meaning of the word jīng 京 is the high man-made building or construction (Xu, 2nd CE/1981).

One of the pictographic meanings of the component ‘口’ of the character 京 is the access or entrance or mouth of a building or a construction (Comprehensive Chinese Character Dictionary, 2000;
Contemporary Chinese Dictionary, 2005). With the references and the interpretation above, the character *jing* 京 may pictographically be considered as a kind of man-made tall building with the high top and entrance. In ancient China, the idea of *jing* pictographically related to the Palace of the Emperor. Thus, the character 京 may symbolise the meaning of the capital, a city with the Palace of the Emperor. With reference to the Beijing Olympic image specifically, the character *jing* stands for the host city Beijing, the capital of China. Furthermore, in a broad sense, *jing* also is for the whole China.

Furthermore, the designer Zhang asserts for Chinese people, the Olympic Games is a grand festival that people like to celebrate (The Chinese seal, 2003). As a visual symbol of Chinese culture, the *jing* figure also means a dancing person is opening his arms to welcome people from all over the world to celebrate this grand event. As discussed on pages 74, Chinese characters also can be elaborated into decorative patterns or images with different written forms that represent specific positive cultural meanings and implications (Blunden & Elvin, 1998). Thus, the dancing figure embodies the two specific meanings of sport and celebration of the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games.

**The Chinese seal**

The logo of the red Chinese seal, as the concentrated visual symbol, signifies the unique element of Chinese traditional culture. According to the designer Guo, since the character *jing* was chosen for the logo, designer Guo naturally got the idea to use the Chinese seal, as a conveyor to display the character *jing* (The conversation with designers, 2004). Designer Guo also asserts the Chinese seal is like a kind of symbol that may embody many cultural meanings and significations (The seal, 2003). Therefore, the combination of the Chinese seal and calligraphy may, as the concentrated visual symbols, greatly represent the significance of the Chinese traditional culture.
According to the BOCOG (2005), the logo of the seal conveys how “complete sincerity can affect even metal and stone”, which is a Chinese saying that means absolute sincerity; may go towards success. As discussed on page 75, the Chinese seal normally is made of metal, stone or other solid materials (Cotterell, 1995; Meggs, 2006). The hardness of the material of the stone or metal seal connotes the Chinese people’s strength of mind and purpose of endurance for the success in winning Olympic gold. In addition, designer Guo says the Chinese seal traditionally has the meanings of promises and good faith (The Chinese seal, 2003). As mentioned, the seals were used for the identification of officials and personal documents (Cotterell, 1995; Gunde, 2002). Therefore, the logo of the Chinese seal visually transmits the significance and identification of beliefs, aspirations, hopes, confidences. Furthermore, the logo of the seal also characterizes the meanings of promises and good faith of the Olympic Games by Chinese people.

*The red colour of the Beijing Olympic logo*

As previously discussed, the red coloured ink was always used for the seal stamps. Following the traditions, the red colour is used in the Chinese dancing figure seal logo, and is the major colour of the Beijing Olympic logo. According to the BOCOG (2005), the red Dancing Beijing shows the favourite colour of the Chinese people, which represents good luck and happiness. Designer Guo considers that the red colour expresses rich meanings of celebration, jubilation, and auspiciousness in Chinese culture (The seal, 2003; The Chinese seal, 2003). In addition, red has been associated with celebrations for many centuries, long before China had a communist government.

With the discussion above, the analysis clearly shows the salience of the Chinese cultural identity through the elements of the Beijing Olympic image. The joyful red Chinese seal, the doubly meaningful dancing figure *jing*, and the calligraphic characters in seal style are all visually indicating the Chinese cultural salience. Therefore, this analysis leads to the conclusion that the Beijing Olympic image is
strongly affected by the elements of Chinese culture. The opinion of the design director of the 1994 Lillehammer Olympic Winter Games about the Beijing 2008 logo is that is a pattern that he was always looking for, associated with modernist style to represent the long Chinese history and culture; and giving distinct visual characteristics Chinese identity to people from another part of the world (The seal, 2003).

The Analysis of the London Graphic Image

The graphic image of the London 2012 Olympic Games is again shown below.

![Figure 34. The London 2012 Olympic Games graphic image (LOCOG, 2005)](image)

In the London image, the shape of the River Thames is abstractly symbolized as a five-coloured celebration ribbon weaving through the words London 2012, which clearly indicate the location and the year of the Olympic Games. The analysis of the London 2012 image is mainly in two parts—the river and the ribbon — based on the early discussion of the River Thames, the resource of the London Organizing Committee of the Olympic Games (LOCOG), and the explanations put forward by the designers of the London 2012 image.
According to Andy Stanfield, the manager of Kino Design and one of the designers of the London 2012 logo, the idea of the London Olympic logo briefly is to represent London and the Olympic Games (Bignell, & Stanfield, 2005). More specifically, Mr. Stanfield asserts that the LOCOG Logo of London 2012 should primarily capture and reflect the traits and spirits of London and the London Olympic Games (LOCOG, Nov 17th, 2003). According the LOCOG, the River Thames is the most recognizable and timeless landmark of London, and the integration of many London’s famous cultural and historic icons (LOCOG, Nov 17th, 2003). Along with the London history (in the Chapter 2) and the discussion of the River Thames, many of the world’s well-known buildings and landmarks stand alongside the Thames and depict the English culture associated with their historical stories. Through the heart of London, the River Thames running from Hampton Court to the Tower of London, buildings and landmarks that are alongside or across the river, all depict the English culture with their long histories in the past and present.

The London 2012 logo also has the meaning of the Olympic ribbon. According to LOCOG (2005), the River Thames is represented as a multicolored Olympic ribbon in the London 2012 image, which symbolizes the key minds of the London Olympic Games—achievement and harmony. The five colored ribbon of the London 2012 image not only represents the River Thames, but also signifies the spirit of the Olympic Games, the honors of the competition. The colourful ribbon is just like a medal ribbon of the Olympic Games that reminds the Olympics.

In brief, the London 2012 Olympic image is the representation of the River Thames and the Olympic ribbon, which are the historical significance of the London and the signification of the Olympic Games.
The Cultural Identity Salience of the London 2012 Olympic Image

The cultural identity salience of the London 2012 Image mainly focuses on the particular details of the doubly meaningful logo—the River Thames and the Olympic ribbon, and the design style of the logo.

London 2012 Logo – A Dual Meaning

The River Thames

As a symbol of the city, the River Thames has strong associated meanings with the buildings and events that have occurred on its banks, which are the sets of important symbols that express the values, attitudes, beliefs, behaviours of English culture. As LOCOG (2005) asserts, London is a cultural capital that has created, staged and maintained culture for centuries; the artistic and historic heritage can be seen everywhere in the city. Particularly, the artistic and historic legacy can be represented by many iconic buildings and landmarks along the banks of the Thames, which shaped and influenced the characteristics of the city (LOCOG, 2005).

The designers of the London 2012 logo are Kino Design, who won the open competition that attracted over 1,100 entries, and was judged by the LOCOG Bid marking team—a panel of design experts, Olympians, future athletes and Londoners. As LOCOG say, Kino’s design best meets the ideas and demands of the bid making team, which was capturing the strength of London and London Olympic Games (LOCOG, Nov 17th, 2003). Mr. Stanfield, the designer of Kino Design, states the reason why they chose the River Thames was that it represents London’s strength, which flows through the centre of London, and is the focus of communications in waterways. Specifically Mr. Stanfield asserts that Kino Design decided not choose any buildings to represent London, as the city is unlike others, that might only have one celebrated monument or landmark such as the Sydney Opera House, the Paris Eiffel Tower and others (Personal communication, Nov 9th, 2006).
addition, the designers selected the Thames to represent national identity because the river has always been a permanent natural feature for London, and has never been used for the large scale identity in previous designs (Personal communication, Nov 9th, 2006).

The Olympic ribbon

The London 2012 logo has a ribbon flowing through that has the meanings of Olympic Games—striving, achievement, and harmony (LOCOG, 2005)—shown by the five colours and the fluid style of the design. The LOCOG (2005) assert the five colour ribbon and the flowing style of the London 2012 logo as an Olympic Games ribbon that brings to mind the Olympic Games medal, which is the aspiration of every athlete participating in the London Olympic Games, however small the participant’s role may be. Mr. Stanfield and the London 2012 Chairman Cassani claim that the designers chose different colours as also representing the multicultural aspects of London and the five continents of the world to portray their dynamic varieties (Personal communication, Nov 9th, 2006; LOCOG, Nov 17th, 2003).

The Olympic Park

Mr. Stanfield indicates that the reason for choosing the Thames as the ribbon / link which runs through the Olympic logo is also to signify its centrality to the country and the Games. The Olympic Games Park is geographically centred in east London. More specifically, the Bid team of LOCOG (2003, 2004) scheduled most of the Olympic sports in the Olympic Village. The rest of the Olympic sport actions will be held in the existing venues and other historic locations, such as the London Dome, Greenwich Arena, Hyde Park, Royal Artillery Barracks, and other facilities located along the Thames and around central London (LOCOG, 2004). The figure below shows the map of the London 2012 Olympic Village, the venues, and the reference that is the river.
The ribbon thus not only has dual meaning of the river and the medal ribbon, but also geographically emphasises the importance of the Olympic Village and venues for the Games. Moreover, The Thames symbolises the strength of the city that flows through the bold letters of ‘London 2012’; and the medal-like Olympic ribbon characterizes the achievement of the movement, strive and progress (LOCOG, 2005).

**Modernist Design of the Ribbon Logo**

From a design perspective, the analysis of the London 2012 image is viewed as the creative extension of the river into the ribbon logo. The design genre of the London 2012 Games may be influenced by the modernist design. The analysis of the modernist design features of the London 2012 river logo starts with definitions of modernist design. Scholars consider that modernist design affected graphic design during the first half of the twentieth century (Hollis, 1994; Livingston, 2003; Barnard, 2005). The consensus of the features of the modernist graphic design is outlined by graphic designers as three main themes: clean, simple and non-decorated (Walker, 1989; Aynsley, 1987; Loos, 1997; Barnard, 2005). Modernist graphic design reduces the redundant ornamentation and makes the image into clarity (Aynsley, 1987; Loos, 1997). Thus, according to Barnard (2005), a modernist graphic design should directly represent the subject or topic of the design, and release it
from the unnecessary decoration. The London 2012 image can be seen influenced by the modernist graphic design style. The ribbon logo clearly shows the subject of the London 2012 Olympic Games with the simple decorated design style. The images below show the posters of London Olympic Games in the years 1908, 1948, and 2012, which can reveal the design taste and style during that time.

*Figure 36. The graphic images of London 1908, 1948 and 2012 Olympic Games (LOCOG, 2005)*

Compared with the London 2012 graphic design, the images above distinctly show the changes of the ideas for the representation of London, and the transformation of the design style due to the different times. The London 1908 image shows an elaborated athletic figure in the Great Stadium, and the 1948 London image used a famous landmark, the Houses of Parliament, for the logo, whilst the London 2012 logo illustrates abstract representation of the ideas.
For the modernist London 2012 image, the designers simplified the River Thames shape into a vivid, meaningful ribbon logo, which expresses the ideas that the LOCOG want to communicate to the world. Figure 37 below indicates the transition process from view of the River Thames, river map and to the ribbon logo.

*Figure 37. The design process from the Thames shape to the ribbon (the author’s drawing)*
Moreover, according to Mr. Stanfield, the written typography font form of the *London 2012* was specifically created for the London 2012 image, has been revised many times, and does not have specific meanings (Personal communication, Nov 9th, 2006).

To conclude, the London 2012 ribbon logo vibrantly features and conveys the salience of London and reflection of the London Olympic Games that are about to happen. The design might be familiar to the people who belong to the English culture. However, people who are unfamiliar with the Thames also might have ideas of Olympics based on the Olympic styled ribbon logo.

### Analysis of Cultural Variables of the Two Images

*Hall’s High- and Low-context Dimensions of the Two Images*

The analysis here is to review of the two host cities logos with Hall’s dimension in a visual communication way. The purpose is to evaluate whether the way the two logos adhere to Hall’s definition of the two cultures. Hall’s high- and low-context dimensions distinguish people who belong to various cultures by their communication style. Based on scholars’ (Hall, 1976; Gudykunst & Kim, 1997) views, people belong to high- and low-context culture communicate in two opposite ways, indirect or direct, ambiguous or distinct, unclear or explicit. Briefly, high-context cultures such as Chinese culture are based on older traditional cultures, and because of the tradition and history, those high-context cultures changed little over time (Hofstede, 2001; Samovar, Porter & McDaniel, 2007). Low-context cultural groups, like English culture, which express meanings in messages that are fully detailed with complete information, and often in direct communicative ways (Hall, 1976; Gudykunst, 2001). Hall’s idea of the role of context in communication in cultures is clearly indicated by Samovar, Porter & McDaniel’s (2007) culture flowchart (on page38).
Based on the cultural identity analysis, the two host cities’ logos do represent cultural meanings but in different ways. According to the cultural identity discussion of the two images, the cultural meanings and messages are enriched in the Beijing logo. As discussed, the logo is based on the character *jing* 京, which means capital city and represents the important position of the host in China. As the designers claimed, the reason they chose a character and the seal stamp are because the two elements convey the salience of Chinese culture. The logo is also a dancing and running figure, which represents the ideas of Olympic Games. As belongs to high-context culture, the Beijing logo emphasizes Chinese traditional culture, and indicates that the concerns of traditions and history still are important elements in Chinese culture. The representation of the Beijing logo is indirect and ambiguous as the logo has deep cultural meaning. People who belong to Chinese cultural groups might understand the meaningful logo, whilst people out of Chinese cultural groups may recognize the dancing and running meaning of the logo, but might not get the cultural meanings of the writing character and seal stamp.

In reference to the cultural identity analysis of the London image, the ribbon logo represents the River Thames and all it means to Londoners. The London logo is also used as a celebration ribbon to symbolise the fluid path of the Thames. The colours and motion of the logo as an Olympic medal ribbon visually illustrate the multicultural features of London and the spirit of the Olympic Games weaving out the title *London 2012*. People belonging to the English cultural groups familiar with the shape of the Thames will notice the same in the logo. Residents of England and others around the world who have experienced the image as the opening to the extremely popular television programme *EastEnders*, which has been aired for over 20 years on the BBC, will know the river logo. However, the River Thames may be ambiguous for non-English groups, and they may merely trace the impression of the celebration ribbon.
To conclude, the representation of the Beijing image indirectly transmits the profound cultural meanings; the communicative way of the London image is quite direct to deliver the concepts of the logo.

**Hofstede’s Individualism and Collectivism of the Two Images**

Hofstede’s individualism and collectivism can also illuminate the effect of culture in the two host cities’ images. Based on Hofstede’s (1981, 2001) research, Chinese culture is collectivistic, and English culture is individualistic. According to Hofstede (1986), “the cultural groups of collectivism have a positive association in society with whatever is rooted in tradition; whilst the groups of individualism hold a positive association in society with whatever is new” (p.312). This idea may also be applied to visual communication for this research to see how culture impacts graphic design.

As has been discussed in the cultural identity analysis, the Beijing logo tends more to use the visual entities of the Chinese traditional culture, to represent the salience of the culture. To explain Hofstede’s opinion, from the Beijing logo, it can be found that the Chinese society holds positive beliefs for the elements that represent traditions. The Beijing logo reflects the important position of traditional culture in Chinese society by the Olympic Games, the most important international opportunity to represent the most salient issues of China to the world. Based on the London image, the cultural identity analysis reveals the Thames is symbolised as an Olympic colours ribbon. Moreover, compared with other two London Olympic Games image on 1908 and 1948, the London 2012 image indicates the design is largely influenced by modernist design and is a simple, clean and clarity featured. Thus, related to Hofstede’s (1986) idea of individualist groups, London logo vividly displays the positive attitude of “new” idea considered and agreed in British society by the style of design. Moreover, based on the design processing images of the two logos (on page 75 and 84),
Chinese people use traditional elements to transform into new style; while English may like the use of “new” ideas to represent historical elements.

Therefore, Hofstede’s idea about collectivism and individualism may also be appropriate for analysing visual communication forms.
Content Analysis of the Two Olympic Games Logos

The researcher conducted a content analysis of the Beijing 2008 and the London 2012 Olympic Games graphic logos to review to find out—what do the images communicate? From a graphic design perspective, the purpose of the content analysis is to reveal the themes, meanings, and key ideas through the graphic components of the two host cities’ logos. Specifically, the graphic components are the visual elements of the graphic design. In Chapter 3, the emphasis has been visual communication and the six visual elements that related to this research. As the analysis categories, the six visual elements include the following:

- Line
- Shape
- Texture
- Colour
- Scale
- Motion

The analysis of the two Olympic Games logos refers to the two original images, which are from the web pages of the BOCOG (2005) and LOCOG (2006). The analyses of the two logos are each divided into two units, which are the logos and the typographic elements of the two host cities’ names. The two small logos and the two written titles within the following tables are merely identified visually by the subjects. In the decoding process, the sizes of the two logos are predefined by the Olympic Games committee in centimetres and analysed separately.
The Analysis of Beijing 2008 Olympic Games Logo

In the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games image, the graphic components play an important role as the image is meaningful through the visual elements. Table 1 below briefly shows the appearances and meanings of the visual elements such as line, shape texture, colour, scale, and motion in the Beijing 2008 logo.

Table 1 The Beijing 2008 Olympic Games graphic logo

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Appearance</th>
<th>Brief meanings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Line</td>
<td>Unconnected and unsmooth edge</td>
<td>Associated with lines, represents the importance of Chinese calligraphy and seal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shape</td>
<td>Seal print and dancing figure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texture</td>
<td>Irregular and rough seal print impression</td>
<td>Significance of Chinese cultural heritage—the seal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colour</td>
<td>Red colour</td>
<td>Festive and auspicious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scale</td>
<td>2.83 x 1.81 cm; 1/2 of the image</td>
<td>Conceptualises the meaning of the character jing as a dancing figure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motion</td>
<td>The dancing and running direction path</td>
<td>Line and shape of the figure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In reference to the discussion of the visual elements in chapter 3, the box surrounding the Beijing 2008 image forms the Chinese seal print shape and the dancing figure. The box of the Chinese seal print appears as a broken edge, and the rough border of the dancing figure. Associated with the lines, the shape element basically illustrates the subjects of the Beijing 2008 logo. The Chinese seal and the dancing figure combined with red colour have the ability to represent the Chinese calligraphy, and seal, which are salient objects in Chinese culture from past.

Associated with an unsmooth and unconnected edge, the Chinese seal print appears as a rough textured impression. Without a touch, the audiences might get a sense of the seal’s material that is a hard and solid stone or metal just by their visual perception. The texture enhances the appearance and the characteristics of the Chinese seal print, which can better communicate the meanings of the object to the Chinese audience.

Red is the main colour of the Beijing 2008 logo. As a warm colour, generally red delivers the meanings of stimulation, enthusiasm, and excitement, tension. According to BOCOG (2005) and designer Guo, red is the traditional colour that characterizes the meanings of joy that is both auspicious and celebratory in Chinese culture (The Chinese seal, 2003). Red is an important colour for Chinese people in traditional and historical customs. The colour red is seen at the Forbidden City walls, in the red lanterns and in the red couplets in the Chinese spring festival, the main colour in the wedding ceremony, and even the red coloured eggs for the celebration of the new born. All those visible objects indicate the significance of red colour in Chinese culture.

The size of the Chinese seal logo is approximate 2.83 x 1.81 centimetres, half the size of the whole Beijing 2008 image. As discussed previously, the visual scale conveys effective meanings and emotional impact to a Chinese audience by the apparent relative size of the objects. Combined with the dancing figure, the scale of the Chinese seal connotes doubly meaningful logo within an
apparent relative size of a seal print. The visual scale emphases the importance of the Chinese seal logo in by visual measurement to the audiences.

The motion of the Beijing 2008 logo appears as a dancing or running figure path. As stated in the previous discussion of graphic motion, the motion attracts audience attention and interest in the logo. And the motion leads the audience eyes flowing through the path of the dancing figure. The dancing figure logo represents the significance through the illustrated motion path, which naturally makes the audience focus on the subject of the design.

The Analysis of the Written Title of the Beijing 2008 Logo

The ‘Beijing 2008’ written title is an important part of the image that appears in a Chinese calligraphic style. From the graphic design perspective, Table 2 shows the review of the written title by the same visual elements.

Table 2: The written title of the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games logo

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Appearance</th>
<th>Brief meanings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Line</td>
<td>Uneven and irregular lines</td>
<td>Associated with lines, shows the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>name and year of the host city</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shape</td>
<td>Unsymmetrical and non-uniform font</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texture</td>
<td>Irregular and soft brush script pattern</td>
<td>The Chinese traditional calligraphy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colour</td>
<td>Black colour</td>
<td>The calligraphy ink script</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The appearance of the written title ‘Beijing 2008’ is like an uneven and irregular bold line forming the shapes. Associated with the featured lines, the shapes of the title display an unsymmetrical and non-uniform written font pattern, which fundamentally indicates the name of the host city and the year of the Olympic Games. Along with the lines, the texture of the written title visualizes a soft brush-like textural impression. The appearances of the texture signify the writing is Chinese traditional calligraphic font, which represents the importance of the Chinese traditional culture. The non-normative appearance of the Chinese calligraphic writing reveals the features of the calligraphy are a skilled handwriting of the inconsistent strokes with the brush pens, and is not the technical print font. The texture here enhances the appearance of the handwriting, and visually transmits a sense of the writing by a soft brush used in Chinese calligraphy. The texture of the writing makes the title look like a soft and irregular written pattern. The colour of the written title is black, which is the usual colour of the Chinese ink used in calligraphy. As an intrinsic element of the graphic image, the black colour intensifies the appearance and the calligraphic style intensifies the meanings of the written words. The measurement of the Beijing 2008 title is 3.64 x 0.7 centimetres, which has a quite distinct scale in the image. The effect of the written title scale stresses the name of the host and the time for the Olympic Games. The motion of the Beijing 2008 title gives a direction that naturally indicates the information to the viewers. The scale and motion
emphasize the information that the title tries to express, and give visual effect to the audiences. The audiences perceive the messages of the title by the visual way through written language symbols.

*The Analysis of London 2012 Olympic Games Logo*

In the London 2012 image, a ribbon-like logo artfully waving through the title words ‘London 2012’ represents the path of the River Thames. Composed with visual elements, the meanings of the ribbon logo are shown in the table 3 below.

Table 3 *The London 2012 Olympic Games graphic logo*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Appearance</th>
<th>Brief meanings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Line</td>
<td>Fluent and smooth</td>
<td>Ribbon edge and the river’s path</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shape</td>
<td>Irregular, undulating line</td>
<td>The river Thames and the Olympic ribbon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texture</td>
<td>Light and soft ribbon impression</td>
<td>Celebration ribbon and the movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colour</td>
<td>Olympic five rings colour</td>
<td>Achievement, competition and honour; multi-culture element of London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scale</td>
<td>15.77x 4.23 cm; 3/4 of the image</td>
<td>Symbolize the river part that running through London city</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motion</td>
<td>Flowing and fluid path</td>
<td>The river flowing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The ribbon logo appears a smooth line fluidly flowing through the title words. From the graphic design perspective, the line informs and gives direction in order to shape the appearance of the ribbon logo. Through its smooth sides, the line of the ribbon transmits the ribbon-like, soft and flexible feelings to the audience. Along with the lines, the shape fundamentally presents a doubly meaningful celebration ribbon and river united in the illustration. As stated in the cultural identity analysis of the London 2012 image, with the five colours, the ribbon logo signifies the Thames and the ideas of the London Olympic Games. Thus, as a basic graphic element, the shape describes and symbolises the River Thames and the celebration ribbon of the real world in the visual plane form.

The London 2012 logo shows an impression of a lightweight and soft ribbon winding through the title words. The texture illustrates the material and enhances the appearance of the ribbon, which reflects the characteristics of the objects. During an optical perceiving process, viewers receive a visual sense of the material of the coloured lines like fabric, based on the soft and flexible features.

As the intrinsic element of the logo, the colours of the ribbon vividly deliver meanings. The meanings of the ribbon colours have been discussed briefly in the cultural identity analysis of the London 2012 image. More specifically, according to Mr. Stanfield, who is the designer of London logo, the specific colours of the logo are taken from the Olympic five rings design (Personal communication, Nov 9th, 2006). The colours of the ribbon logo correspond with the five of Olympic five rings, which are blue, black, green, red, and yellow. Thus, the London 2012 logo uses the five Olympic symbolic colours to display the significance and ideas of the London Olympic Games.

The measurement of the ribbon logo is 15.77x 4.23 centimetres, and covers almost three-fourths of the London 2012 image, which distinctly emphasises the focus of the logo. As previously discussed, the visual scale signals importance because of the difference between the appearances of the object in the image compared with the real object. From the design angle, the logo symbolises the River Thames into a 15.77 centimetres ribbon, which is hard for viewers to sense the real extent.
of the river. The shape of the river might be familiar to the audiences who are residents of England and others around the world who have experienced the image as the opening to the popular television programme *EastEnders*, which has been shown for over 20 years on the BBC. Moreover, the scale clearly and distinctly indicates the ribbon as the main role of the image, which effectively represents the meanings of the logo, and delivers the visual impact to audiences.

The motion of the London 2012 logo shows a fluid and winding celebration ribbon course. As been discussed, the motion element visually directs the audiences’ view of flowing through the moving path of the ribbon logo. As LOCOG says, the flowing style of the ribbon logo illustrates the concept of the London Olympic Games—achievement, movement and competition of the Games (LOCOG, 2005). Thus, the motion of ribbon indicates the minds of the London Olympic Games by a natural visual way.

*The analysis of the written title of the London 2012 logo*

The London 2012 written title plays a significant role in the image, integrated with the ribbon totally into the logo. Table 4 below depicts the appearances and the brief meanings of the title by viewing the visual elements.

**Table 4 The written title of the London 2012 Olympic Games logo**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Appearance</th>
<th>Brief meanings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Line</td>
<td>Smooth and regular lines</td>
<td>The name and year of the host city</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shape</td>
<td>Ordered and uniform font</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texture</td>
<td>Typography impression</td>
<td>The print technical font</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colour</td>
<td>Black colour</td>
<td>Standard print colour; one of the Olympic five colours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scale</td>
<td>12.95 x 6.49 cm</td>
<td>Distinctly shows the year and location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motion</td>
<td>The London 2012 written title path</td>
<td>Indicates the city name and year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The London 2012 title shows a regular line, which has informed the shape of the title. Along with the line, and black colour, the texture of the London 2012 title displays a consistent typography. The texture strengthens the regular and flat characteristics of the words, which delivers the title as a technical font. The black colour is the standard print colour, and also might represent one of the five Olympic ring colours. The black colour distinctly demonstrates the content of the title to the audiences. The size of the written title is 12.95 x 6.49 centimetres, which largely covers the scale of the image. Combined with the black colour, the scale of the written title is clear and attractive to communicate the name of London and the year, which delivers emotional impact to the audiences. The motion of the title leads the viewers’ eyes to the content and the ribbon logo together. As the title connects with the ribbon logo, the motion directs viewers’ attentions to naturally look through the path of the words, and also the ribbon logo.
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

This research explored the relationship between culture and graphic design. The investigative process of the research used cultural identity, cultural variable theory and content analysis approach to answer the research questions and verify the assumptions. The cultural identity analysis of the two Olympic Games images mainly focused on exploring whether the effect of culture can be seen in the two images, and what the effective elements are within the images. Based on the data analyses, it can be concluded firstly that graphic design does reflect culture, and secondly that culture can be represented through the graphic design forms. Specifically, from the analyses of the two images, it can be concluded that cultural meanings are represented by visual elements. Meanwhile, the significance of culture is embodied in the graphic images, and culture is important to enhance the meanings of images. The audience may visually get the cultural meanings by their awareness of the culture. The communication of the two images is different, and the Beijing logo has more of the strong cultural meanings to transmit, as compared to the London logo.

The evaluation based on Hall’s cultural variable of context (1976) showed the representations of the two graphic images are different. Beijing image indirectly represents the profound cultural meanings; whilst the way of expression of the London image is quite direct. The discussion of Hofstede’s theory (1981, 2001) suggests that collectivistic and individualistic cultures influence design as a communication medium. Content analysis approach analysed the two images based on six graphic design elements. The analysis indicated that cultural meanings are formed and expressed by the elements including line, shape, colour, texture, motion, and scale.
Strengths and Limitations of the Research

This research explored the relationship between culture and graphic design as depicted in the graphic images of two Olympic Games Beijing and London. The nexus between culture and design is highlighted. From the culture and graphic design perspectives, the approaches to reveal the cultural meanings through visual components of the two images are shown. Moreover, this research might help the audience to better understand the representation of the two Olympic Games images from an academic perspective, especially for those unfamiliar with the two cultures.

The focus of the research has been on the graphic images of two Olympic host cities, to explore the link between culture and graphic design. As an approved official logo, the design information of Beijing 2008 logo is offered on the BOCOG official web pages. However, the London 2012 logo was developed for bidding as a host city, and a new logo will replace the ribbon logo this year. Hence not much design information of the London logo is presented on the BOCOG’s web sites. However, the relevance of the choice of the London logo for the purpose of this research is justified based on the successful bid of London as an Olympic host city. Ms Cassani, the Bid chairman of London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games (LOCOG, 2005) said, “London is the most diverse and vibrant city in the world, bringing the Olympic Games here would inspire not just sporting accomplishments but would showcase London’s globally acclaimed strong and rich Culture. I believe we have a versatile logo that is vibrant, rich and strong”.
REFERENCE LIST


