View metadata, citation and similar papers at core.ac.uk
brought to you by CORE
provided by Open Research Exeter

The Co-creation and Circulation of Brands and Cultures:

Historical Chinese Culture, Global Fashion Systems, and the Development of Chinese Global Brands

Submitted by Zhiyan, Wu to the University of Exeter

as a thesis for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in Management Studies in October 2010

This thesis is available for Library use on the understanding that it is copyright material and that no quotation from the thesis may be published without proper acknowledgement.

I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has been identified and that no material has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other University.

Signature: 吴志艳

Abstract

This dissertation is a study of the possibilities and processes of constructing strong Chinese brands in the global marketplace. It investigates conceptual and strategic relationships between brands and cultures, focusing specifically on the issue of the unprivileged position of Chinese brands vis-à-vis that of other famous global counterparts. Accordingly, it deploys three illustrative cases from the Chinese context – Jay Chou (a successful Chinese music artist), the 2008 Beijing Olympics opening ceremony, and Shanghai Tang (a global Chinese fashion brand). In so doing, it moves away from the general trend to study the managerial aspects of Western brand building in Chinese contexts, and instead examines how Chinese brands express cultural aspects of their own well-known brand development models in the global marketplace. In short, this study uses a Chinese vantage to examine the emergence of cultural branding (using historical culture and global fashion systems to develop global brands), and its capacity to function as a useful complement to existing models of brand globalisation and global brand culture.

The function of the three cases is illustrative and analytic. Collectively, they serve as a lens through which to study Chinese brand development in the global marketplace and examine global brand culture. Each case was fleshed out through various multi-sited ethnographic studies, which consisted of interviewing and observing consumers and managerial workers, the results of which shed light on several important but under-studied aspects of global brand culture. These include Chinese cultural branding in the global context, the cultural approach to branding among various brand actors, and relationships between brands and cultures across branding cultures. Drawing on these examinations, this study not only demonstrates ways in which brands and cultures circulate and construct each other in global brand culture. It also uses these insights to argue for the development of Chinese culture or Chinese-ness into a global brand resource by Chinese brand builders.

Contents

Chapter One: Introduction--A Cultural Approach to Chinese Branding across the Globe ----- 8-15

1. A Cultural Approach to Branding in the Global Marketplace ----- 8
2. The Problems of and Approaches to Chinese Brand Development in the Global Marketplace ----- 10
3. Thesis Organisation ----- 13

Chapter Two: the Representation of Historical Culture, Fashion Systems, and Global Brand Culture ----- 16 - 58

1. Managerial Perspective of Global Branding ----- 16
    - 1.1. The meanings of international or global branding ----- 17
    - 1.2. Global brand standardisation/adaptation ----- 18
    - 1.3. The managerial perspective of global branding in the Chinese context ----- 19

2. Brand Culture ----- 20
    - 2.1. The use of historical culture and mythmaking in global brand development -----20
        - 2.1.1. The use of historical culture in global brand development ----- 21
        - 2.1.2. Myth development in global brand development ----- 24
    - 2.2. Brand identity and consumer identity ----- 27
    - 2.3. Brand image, aesthetic branding, and the imagined community ----- 30
        - 2.3.1. Brand image and aesthetic branding ----- 31
        - 2.3.2. The imagined community ----- 32
    - 2.4. Brand culture in the Chinese context ----- 33

3. The Cultural Approach to Global Branding ----- 37

4. Global Consumer Culture and Fashion System ----- 40
    - 4.1. The history of consumer culture ----- 41
    - 4.2. Global consumer culture ----- 42
    - 4.3 The role of fashion in the development of global consumer culture ----- 43
        - 4.3.1. Fashion systems -----43
        - 4.3.2. Fashion discourse, symbolic production, and consumption of fashion goods ----- 45
        - 4.3.3. Fashion systems used in each case study ----- 50

    - 4.3.4. Global consumer culture in the Chinese context ----- 56

Chapter Three: The Multi-sited Ethnographic Study and the Interpretive Method ----- 59-83

1. Multi-sited Ethnographic Studies, Methodological Individualism, and Interpretive and Visual-analysis Method ----- 60
2. The Emergence of Three Cases and the Employment of the Multi-case study ----- 64
3. The Multi-sited Ethnographic Study for Each Case ----- 71
4. Methodological Individualism and the Interpretive Study Approach for Each Case ----- 72
5. An Interpretive Logic and Visual-Analysis Approach to Multi-sited Interviews with Observations on Each Case ----- 75

Chapter Four: A Case Study of Jay Chou, a Successful Chinese Music Artist ----- 84- 100

1. The Significance of Jay Chou ----- 84
2. Jay Chou, Chinese Music Artist and Marketing----- 85
3. The "Imagined China" as Modern-cultured Chinese Features----- 86
    - 3.1. The "Imagined China" via the representation of historical Chinese culture to represent sacred meaning----- 87
    - 3.2. The "Imagined China" via the representation of historical Chinese culture and the help of global fashion resources to develop a hybrid image ----- 89
        - 3.2.1. The sacred features of Jay Chou's hybrid image ----- 89
        - 3.2.2. The fashionable features of Jay Chou's hybrid image ----- 91
    - 3.3. The "Imagined China" via the representation of historical Chinese culture and the help of global fashion resources to develop brand mythology across the globe ----- 94
    - 3.4 The "Imagined China" via the role of global actors in the creation of Jay Chou's global hybrid image----- 97

Conclusion ----- 99

Chapter Five: A Case Study of the 2008 Beijing Olympics Opening Ceremony ----- 101 - 126

1. The Significance of the Beijing Olympics Opening Ceremony ----- 101

2. The "Imagined China" via International Narratives of the Beijing Olympics Opening Ceremony to Develop China's Identity ----- 102
    2.1 The "Imagined China" via the representation of historical Chinese culture and the help of global fashion systems to target myth markets -----103
        2.1.1. The "Imagined China" as authentic identity through the use of nostalgia ----103
        2.1.2. The "Imagined China" as a fashionable identity -----106
    2.2. The "Imagined China" via the representation of historical Chinese culture and the help of global fashion systems to create identity myths pertaining to Chinese identity anxiety -----107
        2.2.1. Chinese identity anxiety deriving from backward images of an old China (1840-present) -----107
        2.2.2. The "Imagined China" as a less-democratic entity ----- 108
    2.3. The "Imagined China” via the representation of historical Chinese culture and the help of global fashion systems to construct the new China's identity and address Chinese identity anxiety ----- 110
        2.3.1. The "Imagined China" as unique historical cultural identity ----- 110
        2.3.2. The "Imagined China" as a modern cultured Chinese identity ----- 112
3. The "Imagined China" via the Representation of Historical Chinese Culture and the Help of Global Fashion Systems to Extend the Global Myth Market----- 115
    3.1. The "Imagined China" through the use of Zhang Yimou to capture global myths----- 115
    3.2. The "Imagined China" as representative of global harmony and peace to express global myths----- 120
    3.3. The "Imagined China" in public discourses of the opening ceremony----- 121
    3.4. The "Imagined China" as a fashion community through the global attention of fashion discourse to express the global myth----- 123

Conclusion ----- 125

Chapter Six:：A Case Study of Shanghai Tang ----- 127 - 165

1. The Significance of Shanghai Tang ----- 127

2. The "Imagined China" via the Discourses of Fashion, Historical Chinese Cultural Codes, and Brand Culture from Consumer Viewpoints ----- 128

    2.1 Distinctive cosmopolitan identity projection through Chinese cultural codes and global fashion resources ----- 129

    2.2. Fashion and brand codes as a ladder for success ----- 134

    2.3. A function-seeker via anti-fashion and anti-brand activities ----- 137

    2.4. A reflective and authentic reservoir of historical Chinese references ----- 138

    2.5. The dialectic ambivalence of the erotic and the chaste ----- 140

    2.6. A reservoir of Chinese meanings ----- 143

3. The "Imagined China” via the Discourses of Fashion, Historical Chinese Cultural Codes, and Brand Culture from the Managerial perspective ----- 145

    3.1. Global high-end luxury position and global market-oriented creativities within Chinese-ness ----- 146

    3.2. Strategically satisfying global consumers for various occasions ----- 149

    3.3. Top-end global store and service cultures ----- 151

    3.4. Workers as consumers ----- 153

4. The "Imagined China" as a Global Brand via the Mythic and Stylistic Modern Chinese Lifestyle ----- 154

    4.1. The co-creation and circulation of brand meanings and culture via fashion systems ----- 154

    4.2. The "Imagined China" via Fashion as a System to Connote the Myth of Chinese Modern Life (or "Chinese-ness") ----- 158

    4.3. The "Imagined China" via fashion to express dynamic and stylistic modern Chinese life ----- 160

Conclusion ----- 164

Chapter Seven: the Co-creation and Circulation of Brands and Cultures ----- 166 - 180

1. Global Ethnic Diaspora Market Reach as a Strategic Global Branding Approach ----- 166
2. The "Imagined China" Reconstructing the Identity of Modern Chinese Lifestyle or Culture and Exploring the Myth of Historical Chinese Culture or the Myth of Modern Chinese Culture ----- 171
3. The Circulation and Co-creation of Brands and Cultures ----- 173
4. From an Aesthetics Perspective of Chinese-styled Global Branding using a Cultural Approach ----- 174
    4.1. Aesthetics in Chinese-styled global branding using a cultural approach ----- 174
    4.2. The authenticity of the Chinese-styled global brand or branding approach ----- 176
    4.3. The use of global fashion resources for brand fashioning through the three case studies ----- 176
5. Implications of the Culture Approach to Chinese-styled Global Branding ----- 176
6. Conclusion ----- 178
7. Further Research Orientations ----- 179

References ----- 180 - 205

Tables and Figures ----- 206 - 216

Table 1.1. Participant descriptions of the problems of Chinese brand globalisation---- the first stage of my study ----- 206
Table 1.2. Websites observed to examine the problems of Chinese brand globalization ----- 206
Table 2.1. Profiles of participants in the Jay Chou case study--the second stage of my study ----- 207
Table 2.2. Statistics of Jay Chou concerts attended--the second stage of my study ----- 207
Table 2.3. Description of Jay Chou websites that were observed ----- 207
Table 3.1. Profiles of participants in the Beijing Olympics opening ceremony case study—the third stage of my study ----- 208
Table 3.2. Material pertaining to the 2008 Beijing Olympics gathered from official websites—the third stage of my study ----- 208

Table 4.1. Profiles of managerial participants in the Shanghai Tang case study—the fourth stage of my study ----- 209
Table 4.2. Profiles of consumer participants in the Shanghai Tang case study ----- 209
Table 5.1. Consumer participant interpretations of Shanghai Tang ----- 210
Table 5.2. Managerial participant interpretations of Shanghai Tang ----- 211
Table 5.3. Signs used in Shanghai Tang products and their meanings ----- 212
Table 5.4. Brand literacy levels pertaining to Shanghai Tang gained from accounts by of Chinese consumer participants ----- 213
Figure 1: Nun-Chuks ----- 213
Figure 2: Chrysanthemums Terrace ----- 215
Figure 7. The first image shows the "*fou*" in the Beijing Olympics opening ceremony; the second image shows the *ding* from Zhang Yimou’s movie *Hero* ----- 216
Figure 8. The left image shows the Beijing Olympics opening ceremony; the right image shows a still from Zhang Yimou's movie *House of Flying Daggers* ----- 216

Chapter One: A Cultural Approach to Chinese Branding across the Globe

This chapter presents the cultural approach in studying brands in the global marketplace and the problems surrounding Chinese brand development. Thereafter, it situates the cultural approach to Chinese branding within a global context and specifies the objectives of this dissertation and its implications on marketing and consumer research discourse.

A Cultural Approach to Branding in the Global Marketplace

Brands are ubiquitous in everyday life. Companies painstakingly employ strategic and time-tested branding practices in generating brand myths to then deploy them in modes consistent with the brands they make available on the market. In their own way, consumers also invest brands with particular meanings by consuming them in socially-negotiated ways. Various arms of the media, by this I mean television programming, magazines, movies, books, labour unions, retailers, brand professionals, and brand researchers, also contribute to brand myths and branding activities. The sum total of these varied brand actor actions defines the cultural meanings of brands. It is for this reason that the cultural approach to branding necessarily includes the discourses of brand actors pertaining to the cultural meanings of brands. This correlation notwithstanding, most studies on international marketing and consumer culture have paid scant attention to precisely how brand development research adapts to market conditions and contributes to public discourse on branding practices. In contrast, this dissertation adopts a cultural approach to global branding in an effort to investigate the possibilities and processes of developing global brands through the discourses of brand actors across different groups.

In some scholars' work, the cultural analysis of brands takes the form of studies of the various discourses of brand actors (Bengtsson and Östberg, 2006; and Holt, 2004). Holt, for instance, who uses consumer subjects from varied cultural contexts (Holt, 2002), joins historical and cultural analysis to reveal the principles that account for brand success (Holt, 2004) and the problems faced by brands. Some other examples of the joint approach, specifically a recent examination of the Starbucks myth, also examine brand myth (Thompson and Arsel, 2004), though barring these and other exceptions, (Holt, 2002, 2004; and Thompson and Arsel, 2004), few researchers care to focus on the cultural analysis of brand development.

Arguably complex and difficult to define, culture might be understood as "the way of life of a group, including the meanings, the transmission, communication and alteration of those meanings, and the circuits of power by which the meanings are valorised or derogated" (Kendall and Wickham, 2001; p.14). In this definition, culture includes meanings embodied by symbols with "an historically transmitted structure", expressed by "a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life" (Geertz,1973; p.89). Because these symbolic meanings are subject to the actions of the human subject, they are necessarily susceptible to both change and stasis. Consequently, "culture is produced and reproduced by means of which he (the human subject) modifies his physical environment and bends nature to his will" (Berger, 1969; p.6). In other words, culture is a process by which "people try to make sense of their own lives and sense of the behaviour of other people with whom they have to deal" (Spindler *et al*., 1990, p.2). Not least, culture also refers to products that exist not merely in material cultural forms and artefacts, but also on artefacts in their capacity as texts with symbolic content, in this instance, on brands and through branding (Baldwin et al., 2005).

In the cultural analysis of brands, brands are treated as symbolic forms enabling companies to compete gainfully and consumers to achieve optimal identity projection. Ostensibly in an attempt to satisfy consumers, brand-owning firms create and execute systematic strategies aiming to convince consumers that brand consumption adds value to life, such that brand implementation has turned into a distinctive cultural form, which, for all intents and purposes, encapsulates brand builders' world views (Cayla and Arnould, 2008). True to form, branding activities contain brand myths that are meant to graft brand builders' world views onto consumers' unmet desires and needs.

That said, these means of creating brand meanings are able to enjoy only limited success, because the world in which they function is dominated by the power of consumers who, in turn, define brand meanings in ways that serve their own identity projections. In brand development, therefore, consumers become key brand actors and assume co-creative roles. The ways in which different groups of consumers develop meanings around brands vary, and these meanings have the potential to differ from what sponsors may have intended in branding activities (Bengtsson et al., 2005; Kates, 2004; Kozinets, 2001; and Muniz and O'Guinn, 2001).

The cultural approach towards brand development is aimed at framing the cultural richness of brand meanings and brand myths, and thereby revealing the diversity of brand cultures (Schroeder and Salzer-Mörling, 2006). A brand "is a culturally constructed symbol, created by various types of authors who furnish it with symbolic content" (Bengtsson and Östberg, 2006; p.83). In short, a brand is co-constructed by various authors, and its meanings are closely determined by context and time. In keeping with this paradigm, brand cultures develop gradually and dialectically through iterative interaction between various actors across time and space (Fournier, 1998; and Holt, 2002).

Although it is widely agreed upon that cultural resources provide potentially productive areas for brand development (Holt, 2004; Schroeder and Salzer-Mörling, 2006; and Schroeder, 2007, 2010), most marketing scholars have yet to sit up and take notice of culture's important role in brand development research. The exceptions are very few. Cayla and Arnould (2008), for instance, who advocate a cultural approach, but have yet to apply a cultural approach to branding, argue that the subject of how brands from non-Western cultures globalise has received more attention than it deserves. In contrast, Arnould and Thompson (2005) call for more non-Western studies to address gaps emerging from local differences and contingencies of global consumer culture. Taking the latter pair's lead, this study focuses on the Chinese context. It deploys a cultural approach and examines how Chinese brands globalise. While the study no doubt draws on existing notions of cultural branding (Holt, 2004), brand culture (Schroeder and Salzer-Mörling, 2006; and Schroeder, 2007, 2010), and brand actors' roles in brand development (Bengtsson and Östberg, 2006), it does so in order to define them specifically in terms of cultural forms. In so doing, this study seeks to emphasise the potential of brand culture in the global marketplace.

The Problems of and Approaches to Chinese Brand Development in the Global Marketplace

This study investigates the possibilities and processes of Chinese brand globalisation from a cultural perspective in an effort to address concerns surrounding Chinese brand development in the global context. Towards this aim, I have conducted multi-sited ethnographic studies using an interpretative method. My predisposition to this format is consistent with the significance of multi-sited ethnographic studies in the examination of the circulation of cultural meanings, objects, and identities across time, space, and cultures (Marcus, 1999). My methodology also has certain advantages. It enables a microscopic context, such as in-depth examination of participant experiences gathered through interviews and observation (Thompson et al., 1994), to offer macroscopic implications.

In the main, multi-sited ethnographic studies consist of multi-sited observation and interviews through which interviewers gather data (Moisander and Valtonen, 2006). I was able to find 8 willing interviewees from a total of 126 emails sent to major Chinese brand holders and global marketers in Wenzhou and Hangzhou and one telephone survey conducted in Birmingham, UK (see Table 1.1). Professionally, the respondents were brand managers and CEOs. Seven were Chinese and one was from Italy. Of the seven Chinese interviewees, two worked in the apparel industry, with companies located in Wenzhou; two in an automobile company located in Hangzhou; and three in the kitchen and bathroom appliance industry, with companies located in Shanghai, Gangzhou, and JiangSu. I was able to meet them at the International Trade Exhibition in Birmingham, UK (3-6 March, 2008), where their companies had exhibited bathroom-ware and related appliances. Regarding choice of location, I focused on conducting the first-stage interviews in Wenzhou, Hangzhou, Shanghai, and Gangzhou, as these cities are among the most developed in China.

In addition to the emails and the survey, I visited and followed four key websites, one international trading exhibition, and additional media resources. Information gathered from these locations and sources was particularly significant as these portals have pioneered the release of news and commentary on globally-relevant Chinese brands. Following Moisander and Valtonen (2006), I also gathered data through observation and by scrutiny of interview notes, journals, and photos. On the recommendation of Arnould and Wallendorf (1994), who encourage mining multiple sources, I ranged for information through tangible and intangible cultural products, such as brochures, flyers, business cards, newsletters, and newspapers, and/or online sources, some of which produced a wealth of information.

One example, in particular, stands out. In attempting to address Europe's concerns over the upsurge of Chinese products and competition in the textile industry, Bo Xilai, the ex-Minister of Commerce of the People's Republic of China (PRC), said:

"Because of the low profit margins of Chinese textile products, China needs to export 800 million shirts in order to buy one Airbus A380!" (ChinaDaily.com.cn, 2005)

Despite its hyperbolic tone, this comment accurately represents the general concerns in China surrounding the low profit margin of Chinese export products. At the Third Global Textile Business Forum (2006), Bo Xilai illustrated his point with figures. The average profit margin of Chinese textile exporters amounts to a mere 3-5%, and only 10% export their own brands, as most Chinese exports serve Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEM) or Original Design Manufacturers (ODM; Azhari, 2008). These figures of paltry profits should be compared with the astounding fact that 80% of prominent Western (mostly European) luxury brands (textile, clothing, and fashion goods) are located in the Chinese market, with China accounting for USD 9.4 billion of their annual revenue in 2009, (Gale and Kaur, 2002, 2004; KPMG, 2007; and Sina.com.cn, 2010). However elementary, these comparisons nonetheless serve to demonstrate two important features of the Chinese brand market — that the profit margin of China's exported products is extremely low and that Chinese export brands continue to languish far behind prominent global brands.

Interbrand's findings (2005, 2007, and 2008) on Chinese brand globalising close in on the bleak picture and isolate factors preventing Chinese brand development on a global scale. We learn that Chinese brand globalisation has yet to grasp the needs and desires of foreign consumers because it is deficient in marketing expertise and adequate communication skills, and consequently suffers from a low reputation. All in all, China lacks competitive advantage. Shelly Lazarus, chairman of Ogilvy & Mather Worldwide, was only putting a fine point on these issues when she made a correlation between the absence of authentic Chinese brands and the failure of Chinese brand builders to develop and maintain necessary emotional bonds with consumers (Tang, 2005).

Lazarus's point is well-taken, though a potentially valuable antidote appears in a markedly different comment made by an Italian respondent in my study during his interview at the International Trade Exhibition for kitchen and bathroom appliances in Birmingham, UK. His advice rounded on cultural specificity. He suggested investing Chinese products with Chinese culture was among the most feasible ways to begin to define and distinguish Chinese brands. He was not alone in sharing this perspective. At Wenzhou City, China, CEOs of two prominent Chinese brands, with aims to make their brands global, voiced their appreciation of musician, Jay Chou's branding success. One CEO pointed to the potential impact of the 2008 Beijing Olympics on enhancing the image of Chinese brands and products in the global context. Another subscriber of this view, a brand manager and vice-CEO in the Greely group, also posited the benefits of exploring ways to use historical Chinese culture as a global branding strategy.

My own selection of Jay Chou, the 2008 Beijing Olympics, and Shanghai Tang, a Chinese-styled global luxury brand, as illustrative cases, is fully consistent with this unwritten and unspoken consensus on exploiting Chinese cultural specificity towards the global development of Chinese brands.

Accordingly, this dissertation examines (1) how global brand building utilises Chinese historical culture; (2) ways to make Chinese historical culture fashionable; and (3) how various, relevant brand actors interpret the cultural meanings of brands.

Thesis Organisation

I begin with theoretical issues surrounding the managerial aspects of brand culture, consumer culture, fashion systems, and cultural and historical contexts in global brand cultures. Thereafter, I present three illustrative cases. Each case, which included ethnographic studies and case studies consisting of observation and multi-sited interviews of managerial workers, consumers, and the media, was examined and joined to the others through interpretative and conceptual analysis. Using notions of culture and branding as a point of departure, I explore Chinese cultural branding in its capacity as a complex of cultural forms, and analyse how brand authors construct brands and cultures around them. In conclusion, I state how my approach relates to and builds on cultural approach theories of branding. This dissertation thus integrates the multi-case studies method, which is typical in theory-building studies in the social sciences, with cultural analysis instrument practices, common in the humanities, and thereby demonstrates how current theories in two discrete areas of study might relate to one another and become mutually enriching.

Chapter Two reviews relevant literature, states the specific problems ailing Chinese enterprise, and outlines industry desires to establish Chinese brands globally. Each section is followed by a short discussion that maps the literature's strengths and lacunae, some of which this dissertation hopes to address. The chapter takes four parts, from a discussion of the managerial perspective and global branding to representations of historical culture and myth-making in global brand culture and brand identity (images and aesthetics). Concluding sections of the review of the literature summarise cultural perspectives of global branding.

Chapter Three treats methodology. It states the advantages of multi-sited ethnographic studies with methodological individualism, visual-analysis, and the interpretive method in examining case studies. Subsequent sections describe the three cases, the specific application of the multi-case study to each case, the interpretive case study with methodological individualism method used in data collection, the interpretive logic of multi-sited interviews, and the visual-analysis approach through observation.

Chapter Four highlights how a successful Chinese music artist, Jay Chou, developed into a global brand. The case study of Jay Chou sheds light on how certain Chinese historical cultural resources when combined with global music fashion systems have the potential to make a Chinese brand global. Here, I examine the strategic linking of consumer research and artistic and historical conventions of aural and visual representation (art, poetry, music, and martial arts) with popular music across the global fashion world, and argue that this network provides a useful model of brand development for Chinese brand builders.

Chapter Five uses the example of the 2008 Beijing Olympics opening ceremony to underscore that the 2008 Beijing Olympics facilitated the growth of China as an international brand through a culturally-specific model. Specifically, this case study looks at historical and mythical Chinese culture in the context of branding. It shows the convergence of the production and consumption of modern images and historical identity within global brand cultures. I take into account international accounts of "Imagined China" pertaining to the opening ceremony. I factor in myth markets created by mergers between historical Chinese culture and global fashion systems, and finally consider how the construction of the "new China's" identity throws light on cultural identity anxiety.

Chapter Six focuses on Shanghai Tang. It demonstrates how Shanghai Tang, a global fashion brand, currently controlled by a Swiss luxury brand maker, has used global resources to re-configure historical and traditional Chinese culture into a global Chinese brand. Consequently, the notion of the "Chinese" with respect to Shanghai Tang has come to represent a culture transcending local and regional boundaries. This case study forms the core of Chapter Six. Its main concerns are brand cultures and meanings; historical culture and fashion systems; and the symbolic consumption of historical codes, fashion, and brands, from a consumer vantage. I approach the global high-end luxury position of Shanghai Tang's Chinese-ness from a managerial perspective, and consider the myth of "Imagined China" as a global brand through the filter of Shanghai Tang.

Chapter Seven states conclusions that can be drawn from the three case studies. It elaborates how an ethnic diaspora market can be strategically targeted by a global branding approach. It addresses how the "Imagined China" myth has reconstructed the identity of modern Chinese lifestyle, and explores the selective use of historical Chinese culture towards the creation of the myth of modern China. It uses an aesthetics perspective to study the circulation and co-creation of brands and cultures in order to propose a Chinese-styled global branding model.

In total, the three case studies reveal processes that generate brand meaning formulation in different contexts. They also highlight the "Chinese" as both culture proper and cultural form. Furthermore, the case studies show that brands boasting the "Imagined China" myth can, by harnessing the very same myths that brought them success in local contexts, also circulate across the globe. Drawing on the above evidence and propositions thereof, this study argues for a radical re-conceptualisation of Chinese branding through the investment of "culture" into brand development.

Chapter Two: the Representation of Historical Culture, Fashion Systems, and Global Brand Culture

This study aims to address the concerns of Chinese companies desiring global development, and uses a cultural approach to examine the possibilities and processes of Chinese brand globalisation. To this end, the literature review contained in this chapter draws on the cultural role of brands (Cayla and Arnould, 2008) and concepts of brand culture in the global marketplace (Schroeder, 2009).

Global brand culture includes "the contention that culture and history can provide a necessary contextualizing counterpoint to managerial and information processing views of global branding's interaction with consumer society" (Schroeder, 2007; p.351). In other words, international marketing managers would need to pay more attention to both the cultural and historical context of brands and branding practices across the globe. In light of the fact that global brand culture derives in part from the impact of society and history on consumer culture, one could argue that the understanding of global branding would only benefit from perspectives that integrate managerial, social (consumer behaviour), and cultural (historical) perspectives. In a recent paper, Cayla and Eckhardt (2008) suggest that the Asian world could be understood as a brand that repackages historical culture to reveal a more modern and multi-cultural Asia, and advocate treating brands as cultural forms in marketing research.

Key concepts under consideration here include global brand and branding, the representation of historical culture, and fashion systems in global brand culture. These constitute the essential underpinning of my study. A brief review of the literature relevant to these issues provides an understanding of these terms and presents the foundation on which I build my propositions regarding Chinese brand globalisation. The following sections enumerate managerial and culture-historic perspectives, global branding, brand and consumer culture, and fashion systems.

1. Managerial Perspective of Global Branding

Here, I deal with managerial perspectives of global branding in international marketing literature. A review of the literature of international marketing shows that topics covered so far include the meaning of the term "global branding", global brand standardisation/adaptation (brand names and brand strategies), and the managerial perspective of global branding in the Chinese context. In addressing this literature, I pose two questions. Firstly, "to what does global branding actually refer?". Secondly, “how does global branding relate to international marketing?".

1.1. The meanings of international or global branding

It has been more than two decades since Ted Levitt isolated the notion of the globalisation of markets (1983). Yet, that the concept of "global brand" continues to remain ambiguous is demonstrated by discrepancies that exist between literature definitions and popular managerial rankings of global brands (Dimofte et al., 2008). Differences of opinion notwithstanding, common wisdom holds that global branding refers to global branding decisions that apply uniformly around the world, and is more or less a colloquialism for the older term "trademark" (Onkvisit and Shaw, 1987, p.22). In recent years, however, the concept of global branding has exceeded the traditional implications of trademark to obtain complex decisions that impact the development of a brand on a global scale. According to de Chernatony et al. (1995), global branding decisions are determined by the brand's "core essence" (brand personality and positioning) and by the brand’s "execution" (media and advertising). Global branding therefore refers to a complex process of enforcing these two elements collectively at an international level. My understanding of the term "global brand" derives from a position where two perspectives, namely the marketing standardisation approach and consumer perceptions, dovetail.

From the marketing standardisation vantage, the key objective of brand development is maximising economic profits (Özsomer and Altaras, 2008), achievable by standardising the brand globally and cutting concomitant costs of marketing, research and development, sourcing, and manufacturing (Buzzell, 1968; Craig and Douglas, 2000; Levitt, 1983; Porter, 1986; and Yip, 1995). Standardisation, which involves manifesting a unique image identically replicated across differing cultural, historical, and structural terrains, is a cost effective means to target and fulfil those consumer demands generally shared by affluent and youth markets across the world (Hassan et al., 2003; Hassan and Katsanis, 1991; Kjeldgaard and Askegaard, 2006; and Quelch,2007).

Although scholars typically agree on which features make a brand global – the use of same name worldwide and similar positioning strategies and marketing mixes in target markets – there exist some disagreements about the limits to which a brand must go before it can christened "global" (Özsomer and Altaras, 2008). Some studies (Levitt, 1983) argue that absolute, undiluted standardisation of brand strategy and marketing mix is essential for brand to be termed "global". A vast majority argues that absolute entire standardisation is impossible to put into practice, as firms that own global brands often vary in the levels of globalisation they aim to achieve and pursue. Specifically, brands vary on the level of strategy determined necessary by the owning firm, and this decision impacts how global their brands ultimately become (Aaker and Joachimsthaler, 1999; Hsieh, 2002; Johansson and Ronkainen, 2005; Kapferer, 2005; and Schuiling and Kapferer, 2004). The torchbearers of this position define a global brand in terms of the degree to which brands depend on standardised marketing strategies and programmes across the global markets.

The consumer perception vantage defines global brands in terms of the degree to which the brand is perceived as being global by consumers when it reaches foreign markets (Özsomer and Altaras, 2008). In other words, the "global" status of brands is constituted by their multi-market reach defined by "at least a minimum level of awareness, recognition and sales all over the world" (Quelch, 2007; p.560). For their part, research firms measure global brands and their values on the basis of economic benefits. Interbrand/Business Week, one such research institution gaining a sizeable reputation, issues annual awards, such as Best Global Brands and Best Chinese brands 2006, enabling the measurement of global brands using economic profits. Interbrand's selections suggest that a global brand must derive at least one third of its sale from foreign markets, be well-recognised by individuals who may or may not be purchasing consumers, and engage highly-recognisable marketing resources and publicly identified financial data. In this reckoning, global brand values are measured by sales volume, market leadership, sustainability, and global reach (Business Week, 2007).

Despite its well-rounded approach, consumer perspective literature does not account for multiple brand actors in the definition of a global brand. In my thesis, therefore, a global brand is one interpreted by brand actors worldwide, including managerial workers, consumers, and the media. Accordingly, global branding, I argue, refers to brand actors' discourses on a global scale.

1.2. Global brand standardisation/adaptation

In marketing literature, the main issues of international branding have so far developed through the debate between standardisation versus adaptation of global branding by exploiting global branding opportunities. The debate concentrates on the standardisation/adaptation of brand names and brand strategies at the international level, though more recent discussions of the topic suggest scholars have begun moving in newer directions. One recent study of international branding practices of US companies, for example, has begun by investigating the link between brand name standardisation and profitability (Alashban et al., 2002). Other studies consider standardisation of products, packaging, and communications at an international level (Holt et al. ,2004); adaptation of advertising strategy to local cultural contexts in keeping with brand characters (Winram, 1984); and adaptation to local cultural contexts by brand execution elements, which continue to retain their international marketing mix content (Pitcher,1985; and de Chernatony et al., 1995). The aforementioned studies have produced a rich corpus of necessary source material. What now remains to be done is to examine brand image strategies from alternative perspectives. Towards this end, I offer an analysis that examines brand images from the understudied vantage of brand actors.

Most studies of consumer perception of global branding have focused on interactions between brand globalness and localness. The indicated potential consumer segments provide the basis for constructing positioning strategies and valuing the depth versus the breadth of the effectiveness of brand image strategies (Roth, 1992), though some other studies have revealed contradictory findings (Steenkamp et al., 2003; Schuiling and Kapferer, 2004; and Holt et al., 2004). Steenkamp et al. (2003) and Holt et al. (2004) suggest that consumer preferences for global brands are often based on the fallacy that global brands not only offer prestige but also quality that exceeds that of local brands. In contrast, Schuiling and Kapferer's study (2004), which compared local brands and their features with those of global brands, found that while local brands enjoy a distinct advantage over global brands with regard to brand awareness and trust, there exist no differences in quality and/or prestige between them. The contradictory nature of these studies presents a valuable opportunity to further investigate specific differences between local and global brands as perceived by consumers, and how brands create value, and thereby influence consumer choice. Armed with a cultural approach, my study enters the fray in an attempt to examine brand globalisation through the discourses brand actors create around global brands.

1.3. The managerial perspective of global branding in the Chinese context

A great deal of research in the Chinese context has focused on the Chinese translation of global brand (Francis, Lam and Walls, 2002; Chan, 1989; and Zhang and Schimitt, 2002) and on how global brands have standardised, and adapted to China (Aaker and Williams, 1998). Other research has looked at Chinese consumer perceptions of global brands and at the appeal of global brand advertisements (Nan and Belk, 2002). Francis, Lam and Walls (2002), for example, examine brand name standardisation/adaptation strategies employed by consumer goods Fortune-500 companies in China and Hong Kong. They show how global brand firms successfully avoid unfortunate brand name errors and invest their brand names with distinctive features – cultural symbols, additional product benefits, and positive cultural associations – when entering the Chinese market. Nan and Belk (2002) investigate the presence of global images and the appeal of foreignness created through advertising on television and in print. Their findings revealed two different reactions among Chinese consumers. The group that aspires to international cosmopolitanism and its imagined prestige (mianzi) identifies with global advertisements. The other group, which is driven by nationalistic feelings and the desire to maintain local prestige, identifies with the representation of Chinese values. This dissertation builds on existing studies of consumer perception of global brands and branding by radically expanding the range of brand actors. It includes not only consumers, but also global managerial workers and the media, and investigates how their stories of brands contribute to a more comprehensive definition of global brands and branding.

2. Brand Culture

Cayla and Arnould (2008) state that marketing researchers should adopt a cultural approach when studying brands, in that brands should be seen as cultural forms that reflect people's ideologies and how they live. Like other cultural forms, brands also evolve in accordance with changes in the historical, geographical, and social context. In their study of brand culture, Schroeder and Salzer-Mörling (2006) state that "if brands exist as cultural, ideological, and political objects, then brand researchers require tools developed to understand culture, politics, and ideology, in conjunction with more typical branding concepts, such as equity, strategy and value" (2006; p.4). In their reckoning, therefore, the process of building brands, brand meanings and values is influenced by cultural, ideological and political environments. Based on this argument, Schroeder (2009) has subsequently defined brand culture in terms of "the cultural codes of brands - history, images, myths, art, and theatre - that influence brand meaning and value in the marketplace" (2009; p.124).

In addition to context, processes of brand development, brand meaning, and brand value are also determined by "various authors", such as brand owners, consumers, popular culture, and important stakeholders (Bengtsson and Östberg, 2006; and Holt, 2004). As some scholars have argued, branding is a specific way of speaking about the world and recounting the evolution of brands (Cayla and Arnould, 2008). "Different types of brands and ways of managing and consuming brands have also emerged in different places, which we call brand cultures" (2008; p.101). Brand cultures might thus refer to the fact of different cultural backgrounds producing different kinds of brands, as well as different ways of consuming and managing brands. Drawing on these accounts, I argue that brand culture refers not just to different elements of brand meanings but also to ways influencing meanings, and to meanings influenced by the marketplace. Brand cultures thus relate to diverse scenarios of cultural forms, not least of which are new co-created cultural forms. The subsequent section follows this line of thought by presenting typical branding concepts, such as cultural branding, brand identity and brand image, and brand culture in the Chinese context.

2.1. The use of historical culture and mythmaking in global brand development

Brand meanings and brand values could be understood as cultural, political and ideological forms. Accordingly, Schroeder and Salzer-Mörling (2006) have encouraged brand researchers to develop new ideological approaches to study and analyse brands along the lines of previous branding theories (Holt, 2004) that apply a cultural branding approach. More recently, Schroeder (2009), drawing on Holt (2006), has defined brand culture in terms of cultural codes – history, visual culture, and myth – that affect brand meanings and values. Some scholars (Cayla and Eckhardt, 2008) have encouraged the use of similar cultural recourses to develop Asia as a global brand.

2.1.1. The use of historical culture in global brand development

Historical culture is an important approach to understand cultural branding. The past two decades, in particular, show evidence of a growing tendency in marketing processes to mine the past through such means as reproduction, retro-servicing, retro-styling, retro retail stores, and heritage marketing hybrids (Brown et al., 2000). Specifically, some academics have argued that the presentation and consumption of the past in marketing is part and parcel of the much-heralded post-modern condition (Brown 1993, 1995). Some have examined the nostalgia for retroactivity (Belk, 1991; and Lowenthal, 1985), while others have interpreted retroactivity in terms of secularisation (Belk et al., 1989; and O'Guinn and Belk, 1989). More recently, Kapferer (2006) has used two models of luxury brand development in Europe and the US respectively to describe the importance of history and heritage in brand development.

Deploying history and heritage in brand development hardly requires a leap of faith given how deeply and extensively the past infiltrates everyday life. We have, as one scholar put it, more or less emerged from our antecedents (Lowenthal, 1985). Human experience is suffused by well-preserved relics and residues, pervasive histories and memories, and retro-styling in numerous product categories, such as coffee makers, radios, and watches (Brown, 1999). Retro retail stores ensure the past is never far behind (Alexander, 1999). Retroscapes, such as heritage villages, megabrand museums, corporate collections, Nike Town-style flagships, festival shopping malls, and entire geographic locations, such as Hawaii create instant blasts into various pasts (Borgerson and Schroeder, 2003; Boyer, 1992; Brown, 1999; Brown et al., 2000; Costa and Bamossy, 1995; Harrigan, 1998; Maclaran and Stevens, 1998; Penaloza, 1998; and Sherry, 1998).

Specifically, the impact of the infiltration by history assumes different forms, the cultural and historical texts and codes of iconic brands providing particularly useful insights into branding practices (Holt, 2004).The investment of historical culture into branding campaigns can invoke nostalgia, feelings of being re-connected with an authentic past, and tap latent religious affinities (Askegaard and Kjeldgaard, 2007; Belk et al., 1989; Holbrook, 1994; Holbrook and Schindler, 1996; O’Guinn and

Belk, 1989; and Stern, 1992). The consumer's search for authenticity, in particular, is such a deeply-ingrained desire that its study not only constitutes a central pursuit in contemporary marketing research. But some brand-firms also consider authenticity equivalent to brand essence, the very distillation of what their brand stands for and promises to offer the consumer (Brown et al., 2003).

If historical awareness is a central feature of brand development, it is equally important to recognise how implicitly filtered through the present the very same past really is (Lowenthal, 1985). Our compulsions to select and reject certain aspects of the past are heavily determined by our present-day proclivities, and my approach to branding and brand development is deeply indebted to this particular understanding of the past and the present as being mutually inclusive of each other.

Moving towards specifics, I begin with the sacred in brand development that Hirschman (1988) explains as an ideology focused on ruralness, natural imagery, communalism, manual labour, interpersonal cooperation, and the consumption of simple, self-produced/naturally-derived products and services. That is sacredness at work in brand development, but what precisely is the sacred?

Belk et al. (1989) state that "the sacred involves magic, shamanism, animism, and totemism in some societies. Such societies often accord sacred status to components of the natural environment that are revered, feared, worshiped, and treated with the utmost respect." (1989; p.2) The sacred is powerful, and can inflect people, times, places, experiences, and things it touches. Conversely, it can inspire reverence, awe, commitment, sacrifice, and mercurial extremes, such ecstasy, peak experience, flow, and liminality (Colpe, 1987; Csikszentmihalyi, 1975; Maslow, 1964; and Turner, 1977). In other words, elements related to religion, and historical and traditional cultural beliefs offer a reservoir of sacred source material. According to Belk et al. (1989), the properties of sacredness primarily reside in hierophany (the tendency to present the sacred as something of an entirely different order) and kratophany (strong aspects and avoidance reactions within the sacred), and can be evoked by forging emotional connections through profane acts, such as sacrifice. The authors argue that the sacred can be made specific through representation by means of an object; that the sacred emerges from ritual rules guiding the ordinary person's behaviour; and that the sacred develops from repetition of myth, which possesses occult features defying logical comprehension. Finally, the sacred has the potential to flatten social distinctions and enable participants to gain release from social straightjackets through fantasy (Belk et al., 1989; p.6-8). Beyond these general characterisations, the sacred in contemporary religious practices also refers specifically to "certain gods, shrines, clothing, days, relics, and songs" (Belk et al., 1989; p.2), and the quality of sacredness serves to define the most notable and identifiable features of religion (Durkheim, 1915; and Eliade, 1959).

Having outlined the concept of the sacred, I now address the issue of religion. Religion is not merely related to gods, but also includes "the idea of a sacred person, that one finds over again in any religion, it is the idea of the sacred in general" (Ferrarotti, 2007; p.182). Religion, therefore, constitutes a distinctive and extraordinary realm of experience with sacred features (Roberts, 1984). According to Shanddaramon (2007), religion has no single definition that "will suffice to encompass the varied sets of traditions, practices and ideas which constitute different religions" (Barnes and Noble's (Cambridge) Encyclopaedia, 1990). Webster's New World Dictionary (Third College Edition) defines religion as "any specific system of belief and worship, often involving a code of ethics and a philosophy" (2007; p.20). What is implied in these definitions is that religion evolves in step with history, and therefore necessarily encompasses ancestral or cultural traditions, and their historical and mythological texts, which are invested with varying degrees of personal and religious faith (Savage, 2008).

In contrast, the secular refers to those things lacking in religious significance, though the secular can sometimes become intertwined with the sacred following some manner of transformation, such as contamination. They may also continue to exist separately as profane entities (Belk et al., 1989). In other words, secular objects can gather or lose sacredness depending on the nature of their journeys through time and space (Belk et al., 1989). By this token, the historical past and its objects can gain a sacred quality on being consumed through specific channels in the present. The converse also holds true – that sacred things can lose their sacredness on being consumed through specific channels in the present.

Recently, Ostwalt (2003) has argued that "Love Valley" taps into a religious imagination to create a sacred place and the desire for sacred consumption. In his definition, sacred place includes notions of space and time, geography and temporality - sacred places can be located variously on a map, a time-line, or on a temporal circle. It must at the very least be "uncrowded" if not empty in order to allow for the projection of fantasy and the evolution of myth. A sacred place thus serves "as a void into which myth comes into being" (2003; p.79). Along these lines, one could argue that history and the spaces it connotes constitute a kind of sacred place, because history, as notioned generally, is both cyclical and temporally definite. It is as replete with characters and things as it is devoid of specifics that enable us to walk through it on a sure footing. It is, in fact, the perfect sacred place, that void, or cultural black hole, within which the projection of fantasies and myths first evolve.

2.1.2. Myth development in global brand development

Historical culture plays an important role in developing mythic brands. Accordingly, brand methodology develops from stories of history and its heroes, and from cultural contradictions and conflicts (Holt, 2004; and Maclaran et al., 2007). Brand myths, in particular, emerge from networks of stories about legendary persons, heroic individuals, and personified ideas that circulate and re-adapt to changing mores. All of these historical stories, part fiction and part fact, provide the raw material for the development of brand myths (Cayla and Arnould, 2008). Individuals in the British Royal Family as a mythic transnational brand (Maclaran et al., 2007), for example, arise in part from the legend of King Arthur, by which Diana becomes the "fairy-tale princess" or "People’s Princess", and Queen Victoria is the "Great White Goddess". Even the factual story of King George VI and the Queen Elizabeth's hikes through London after the blitz of WWII to raise money for the war effort is equal part myth and fact.

Cayla and Arnould's discussion of transnational brand mythology (2008) transcends national boundaries, and applies to global branding practices, in that brand mythology moves beyond national cultures and becomes part of global mythology (Askegaard, 2006), which, in turn, influences how brands develop (Strizhakova et al., 2008a). Mythmaking thrives on contradictions that emerge between what people think of the world and the facts of concrete reality. In Holt's outline of the development of iconic brands (2004), iconic brands must first be conceived with classic mythic features that address social concerns. Iconic brands tend to succeed when they adequately capture social contradictions and provide empathetic interpretations of prevalent social ideologies. Holt further suggests that a myth market is tantamount to a national conversation in which various contenders exemplifying a particular view of national ideology compete to offer the most persuasive myth through their cultural products. To succeed in such a market, brand myths must discover the structure of consumer choice-making ideology. From here, Holt goes on to argue that a cultural branding approach can "identify the most valuable type of myth for the brand to perform at a particular historical juncture, and then provide specific direction to creative partners on how to compose the myth" (2004; p.218). He draws on the model of American cultural branding to show how brand myths re-invent themselves by stretching and shifting focus to suit changing times. Carefully targeting appropriate myths not only engages the "knowledge of the country's key existing and emerging myth markets", but also becomes a means to subsequently claim political and cultural authority over these myths (Holt, 2004; p.218).

According to Holt (2004), identity myth develops from a multi-level process beginning with a synopsis. A synopsis of the myth "describes the identity anxieties the myth should address and the way in which the myth will resolve these anxieties" (2004; p.218). Secondly, an identity myth should acknowledge "the populist world in which the myth will be located, and the strategy for the brand to develop an authentic voice within this world". Finally, the identity myth should also develop "the brand's charismatic aesthetic, namely, an original communication code that is organic to the populist world" (2004; p.219). Once the right myth market is targeted, and the brand utilised by consumers to satisfy their identity desires, the market myth will require further development, including reinvention, in order to maintain its original relevance. Coke, for example, tapped varying cultural strains during different historical periods ––American patriotism during WWII, suburban-nuclear paranoia in the 1960s, and racial divide in the 1970s (Holt, 2004).

The significance of a cultural approach to brands and branding lies in its capacity to help researchers to acknowledge the formulation of cultural meanings by various authors and their contradictory strains. Consumer movements, for example, can become powerful catalysts in the development of brand myths. Anti-brand movements fighting for greater transparency can force companies to refresh their branding paradigms. Still, consumers are "revolutionary only insofar as they assist entrepreneurial firms to tear down the old branding paradigm and create opportunities for companies that understand emerging new principles" (Holt, 2002; p.89). The marketplace has been a mythic and symbolic reservoir to develop narratives of identities for various brand authors (Elliott and Wattanasuwan, 1998). Brands in their capacity as cultural forms in marketing research can illuminate the cultural dynamics of consumption and the formulation of cultural meanings, such as the cultural narratives and myths that various authors adopt in everyday life (Holt, 2002; Klein, 1999; and Thompson and Arsel, 2004). The Starbucks myth when circulated by a massive competitor not only accelerated the anti-global brand movement in the United States but also forwarded a different myth – the independent coffeehouse as an intimate space that supports private enterprise (Thompson and Arsel, 2004).

Thirdly, brand myth markets extend national boundaries and participate in global commercial "ideoscapes" (Appadurai, 1990; Arnould and Tissiers-Desbordes, 2005; and Askegaard, 2006). Cayla and Arnould's cultural approach to branding (2008) in the global marketplace is based on different attempts to develop an informed historical and cultural "analysis of brands" (p.13). Global brands arouse global myths, such as "the global myth of the independent, self-actualizing, decision-making consumer" who "is simultaneously a participant in and citizen of a modernizing world" (2008; p.102). Aspects of the mythic landscape are moving into the global brand landscape, and this global myth necessitates employing branded products to produce personal identity discourses. For example, Meneley (2007) shows how the notion of extra-virgin olive oil successfully draws upon mythic images of "the Mediterranean Diet" and the Mediterranean region's delicious and "real" gustatory discourses to capture a regional self-understanding of extra-virgin as both modern and authentic. Another similar case is found in Georgian beer, which captures mythic images of Caucasian peoples and Soviet-era "productionism" to frame Georgians as European and regional (Manning and Uplisashvili, 2007).

Strizhakova et al. (2008a) argue that the global myth of the independent, self-actualising, decision-making consumer who is simultaneously a participant in and citizen of a modernising world also entails having to consume branded goods to communicate personal identity in the United States and some former Eastern Bloc countries. This argument is a response to Askegaard's (2006) suggestion that a key metaphor in global brands explores modern identity and identity construction through consumer practices. Cayla and Arnould (2008) take a middle ground when they describe brands as metaphors that authenticate the modern, global, and self-actualising consumer. In the process of self-actualisation, consumers often have unstable desires and values that do not bridge the gap between perception and reality.

These gaps are central in the commercial success of brand myths in contemporary markets (Holt, 2004), and provide the requisite spaces for the creation of fantasy, nostalgia, and religious emotion via the representation of history and cultural legend.

2.2. Brand identity and consumer identity

Brand identity plays an important role in the branding marketplace,. Brand identity has been an essential concept in typical branding models since Wally Olin's (1989) differentiation of brand identity from corporate identity (Csaba and Bengtsson, 2006). Brand identity can be understood as a means to construct and strengthen corporate representation via brand names, logos, symbols, characters, spokespersons, and slogans (Csaba and Bengtsson, 2006). According to Csaba and Bengtsson, brand identity refers to the specific vantage from which brand builders intend consumers to perceive their brands, their company, and their brand-related products/services. Furthermore, they discuss brand identity not simply as the name of brand and/or its external visual appearance, but also as the values it expresses to consumers. Brand identity could therefore be pertinently discussed from a managerial perspective via a review of relevant studies in brand management literature, contemporary social theory, and cultural studies.

Using a managerial perspective, Kapferer (1992) conceptualises brand identity as a comprehensive entity that filters different qualities. It is, effectively, what he calls, a brand identity prism. Hence, brand identity is the sender and recipient. It contains internal and external features. It constitutes the combined features of a brand that are both implied and apparent. Along these lines, brand identity could be categorised in six ways: the physical facets of the brand; the relationship between the brand and its consumers; the consumers from the perspective of brand builders; brand personality; culture (values); and consumer conceptions of what the brand means (Kapferer, 1992). Kapferer argues that the six facets of brand identity prism are "interrelated", and that "the content of one facet echoes that of another", and in so doing, constructs, "a well-structured entity" (1997; p.105). This well-structured entity is often identified and targeted by brand managers in developing a strong brand (Kapferer, 1997). We should note that Kapferer's (1992) brand identity favours the significance of senders (brand builders) over the consumers. In other words, Kapferer (2008) employs the brand strategist's view, confirming that though the brand builders' dominant role in the construction of brand identity is what creates strong brand exclusion, it does not weaken the customer's relevance and value systems. According to him, brand strategists might draw upon consumer values, but ultimately interpret brand identity in ways that represent the organisation's strategy.

Aaker (1996) goes further in underscoring Kapferer's notion of brand identity (1992) as a core identity, which generates distinct associations in the minds of consumers. For consumers, brand identity hovers between core identity and extended identity, such as brand as product, organisation, person, and symbol. Core identity stands for the timeless and central essence of the brand. This refers to the soul of the brand that derives from the organisation's cardinal beliefs and core competencies adhering to the brand (Aaker, 1996). Extended identity refers to changing aspects of identity, such as slogans and brand personality, but these must be consistent with core identity. Aaker and Joachimsthaler's description (2000) updates the brand identity system (Aaker, 1996) with the concept of brand essence. These authors define brand essence in terms of "a single thought that captures the soul of the brand" (2000; p.45). Brand essence works as core thought, or what the brand stands for and what it could potentially express through new slogans, alterations in brand personality, and through the introduction of new products and improved advertising (Aaker and Joachimsthaler, 2000). Brand essence is thus a versatile identity bank of sorts from which various identities can be mined, combined, and re-invested with new meanings through brand communication (Aaker and Joachimsthaler, 2000), though always in keeping with the essence of brand identity.

In addition to brand essence, a brand could be managed as an identity system (de Chernatony and Dall' Olmo, 1998). Here, brand identity operates as a carrier that a brand employs to disseminate its individuality and distinctions across different groups of consumers. Multi-faceted brand identity derives from a company's vision, culture, positioning, personality, relationships, and self-presentation. De Chernatony (2001) elaborates that a brand employs the company as a centre where brand strategists gather various interpretations from different peoples. The interpretations would include: interpretations of the company's vision and culture; the people behind the brand; the positioning strategy; company personality, which conveys certain functional and emotional attributes; internal and external relationships with consumers and stakeholders; and finally ways of integrating these various facts in creating a comprehensive identity that enables consumers and stakeholders to easily grasp and happily digest the essence of brand. In a nutshell, brand strategists emphasise ways of inspiring corporate employees to commit themselves to the values the brand promotes, reinforce them, and adapt them to the needs of customers and stakeholders. It is from these combined, complex efforts that emerges the essence of the brand (de Chernatony, 2001).

The definition of brand identity by strategists is only one step in brand development. The subsequent one involves translating brand identity to marketers whose job it is to decode brand essence, separate out core and extended identity into various forms, and thereafter disseminate it in ways that both stimulate consumers and resonate with brand identity (Csaba and Bengtsson, 2006). However, the managerial perceptive of brand identity also suggests that brand strategists and marketers appear to want to educate consumers on how to live their lives, a strategy that has been known to backfire when consumers reject brands.

In contemporary consumer culture, people's consumption is increasingly becoming meaning-oriented, transcending merely functional attributes, as consumers are beginning to think of brands as symbolic resources for the construction and maintenance of identity (Elliott and Wattanasuwan, 1998; p.132). Stated in simple terms, the consumer performs identity beyond symbolic tangible objects and often uses brands to convey cultural meanings. In social and cultural theories, this kind of consumer has been termed "the performing self" by Featherstone (1991; p.187), and "a narrative of self-identity" by Thompson (1995; p.210). In these readings, consumer identities are reflective and dynamic. They are both changeable and essential, and are often understood through the notion of 'identification' (Hall, 1996), which is constituted discursively through narratives of the self or collective selfhood in acts of identification (Giddens, 1991). Identities are formulated through association with others or something outside (du Gay, 1996), and articulated through relations with particular people, places and material goods. They comprise multiple, conflicting and contested aspects and represent many cultural attributes at work, such as identity formation and the struggle for social standing (Miller et al., 1998).

Postmodern consumer theory tends to question the dominance of brand identity in the construction of identity pertaining to class, gender, and generation gap (Fournier, 1998). It argues that consumers are, in fact, more than well-equipped to manipulate brand identity to articulate their own intended identities. Elliot and Wattanasuwan (1998) indicate that the consumer's self-identity constructed through brands does not affect brand identity. They argue that postmodern consumers often use brands as measures of virtue that convey consistency of meaning, that brands act as apotropaic paraphernalia against loss of individuality, discontinuity, and social decomposition, largely because consumer identity is less stable than brand identity. My study draws on the aforementioned theories of brand identity (Aaker and Joachimsthaler, 2000; de Chernatony, 2001; and Kapferer, 2008), and, consequently, refers to brand identity as the manner in which managerial workers and consumers reflect brands in their capacity as symbolic resources for identity construction (Elliott and Wattanasuwan, 1998; Thompson, 1995). Managers and consumers thus use brand identity not merely used to establish and communicate fundamental cultural categories, such as social status, gender, and age, but also to protect themselves behind the shield of brand consistency and dependability from postmodern fragmentation (Elliott and Wattanasuwan, 1998; Thompson, 1995). Brand identity is therefore defined in terms of cultural form by managers, and subsequently decoded by consumers deploying it as social and personal identity.

2.3. Brand image, aesthetic branding, and the imagined community

Brand identity and its attendant values are communicated to the consumer through strategic brand communication. Communication leaves a brand image in the mind of the consumer that enables the consumer to evaluate the virtue of purchasing the promoted products or services. Ideally, brand identity should be reflected in the brand image. In short, brand identity, for all intents and purposes, is identical to the brand image in the mind of the consumer. It is for this reason that both brand identity and brand image play almost equally important roles in the work of brand managers and in the choices consumers make.

2.3.1. Brand image and aesthetic branding

Brand image is a psychological concept,. It can be understood as a symbolic notion developing in the minds of people, comprised of information and expectations related to a product or service. A good expression of brand image is one that emerges through a cluster of attributes and associations that consumers connect to the brand name. These evoked associations can be categorised as 'hard' or 'soft' emotional attributes (Biel, 1991). Hard attributes are the specific perception of material or functional attributes, such as speed, premium price, user-friendliness, length of time in business, or the number of flights per day. Soft attributes refer to emotional feelings, such as excitement, trustworthiness, fun, dullness, masculinity, or innovation (Biel, 1991). Apple, for example, may evoke youthful ingenuity, while IBM may evoke efficiency. Prudential might be associated with stability, while Allstate might be consistent with care. As such, the softer features of a brand's image, such as brand personality, often suggest differentiated, enduring, and meaningful attributes to consumers. Hard attributes, on the other hand, are often associated with the brand's visual representation. Brand image, as it exists in the consumer's mind, is therefore defined in terms of a brand-related network. It involves details of brands that consumers contemplate, and how they ultimately perceive and mentally organise all texts associated with that brand (de Mooij, 2009). In this way, the blurring of boundaries between the customer's self-image and the company's brand image becomes a key motivational element in consumer culture (McLoughlin and Aaker, 2010). Schroeder (2010), for example, contends that the use of snapshots or 'snapshot-like' imagery is an important strategic branding resource in the branding process, in that consumers often perceive 'snapshot-like' images as authentic factors even for casual brands. In this study, I focus on particular differences between brand image as conceived by managerial workers and consumers.

Positive images of brands and emotional feelings of consumers towards brands straddle a number of different objects with varying aesthetic properties. Aesthetics is "the study of the feelings, concepts, and judgments arising from our appreciation of the arts of the wider class of objects considered moving, or beautiful, or sublime" (Blackburn, 2005; p.8). Dickie (1997) further defines what Blackburn means by the beautiful object, which is not merely its properties, but also the subjective experience which forms the existence of beauty. The sublime, on the other hand, refers to an experience that is "great, fearful, noble, calculated to arouse sentiments of pride", evoking awe through an awareness of what is majestic, fearful, or noble" (Blackburn, 2005; p.354). Aesthetics is therefore the study of the experience of objects, which are invested with elements of beauty, and which sometimes move us in emotion and/or spirit. Brand objects can be considered through aesthetics theory in that the consumption of brand objects produces powerful cognitive responses that harness sensory and affective feelings. Naturally, there are different kinds of consumption for different kinds of objects, and different varieties of aesthetic responses to the same object. Firstly, there are cultural products in which aesthetic function is a primary purpose. These, such as classical music, poetry, and high arts, are labelled aesthetic products, as their consumption is experiential and essentially "moving". It involves the consideration of "beauty. Secondly, there are non-aesthetic products, such as machines, the purpose of which is essentially utilitarian, though they do contain some ancillary aesthetic. Thirdly, there is the quasi-aesthetic product, such as food and drink, which despite being socially and culturally utilitarian have a substantial aesthetic effect, and are therefore measured by yardsticks of aesthetic appreciation (Charters, 2006). In one way or another, aesthetics impact every aspect of life, and appreciation of the same ranges "along a continuum between simple hedonic pleasure and profound" feeling (Holbrook and Zirlin, 1985; p.3) that does not always require consuming an artwork. It can equally apply to products with a high aesthetic component such as mainstream film (Holbrook, 1999) or music (Holbrook, 1982; and Holbrook and Schindler, 1989).

In accordance with the power of aesthetic effects in everyday life, branding also makes recourse to styling and promotional aesthetics. Brand aesthetics are "created through primary attributes (such as colour, shape, material, and symbols) that collectively constitute styles and themes" (Schmitt and Simonson, 1997; p.65). These can directly contribute to brand identity and brand image. But branding aesthetics also refer to the existing value of products even before the application of additional aesthetic manipulation through spatial design and modes of communication. Baumgarten's study of aesthetics (1954) examined direct perception where "particular representations are combined into a whole", and obscure and vague sensuous perceptions are translated into clear and vivid images (Lorand, 2000; p.66). When applied to branding practices, this concept of aesthetics can be deployed to enable consumers to undergo sensory perceptions that are tantamount to aesthetic experiences.

2.3.2. The imagined community

Different cultural backgrounds lay the ground for different aesthetic experiences, and for brand actors to imagine different communities of brands and discuss brands along varying lines of thought, and draw different conclusions. In Anderson's argument (1991), imagined community refers to a nation, or a community that is politically constructed and socially imagined by individuals who perceive themselves as belonging to a certain group. Imagined communities come in different shapes and sizes, and perform different functions. Printed matter, for example, such as newspapers and books, can be understood in terms of an imagined community, which sub-divides into smaller groups defined by the cultural, social, economic, and political features (Vierkant, 2007).

Likewise, a nation is also a culturally imagined community, and consists of "historical ethno-symbolism", which refers to "historical clusters, or heritages, of myths, memories, values and symbols for cultural community formation" (Leifer, 2000; p.12). Seeing as how populations migrate or shift cultural loyalties, latent political strains mobilise and become dominant, and economic revolutions necessitate pan-cultural investment, nationalism obtains intangible cultural features, and generally risks becoming uncertain in the future (Anderson, 1991).

Some scholars of branding practice have indicated the fragility of an imagined community limited by national boundaries. Cayla and Eckhardt (2008), for example, have pointed to the solutions employed in Asian branding. They discovered that Asian brand managers tend to highlight universal practices of globalisation that simulate "a generic, hyper-urban, and multicultural experience… infused with diverse cultural referents, and therefore contribute to the creation of an imagined Asia as urban, modern and multicultural" (2008; p.216). In other words, the "imagined Asia" as a global brand is characterised by modern, metropolitan, and multicultural forms. For instance, both, Singapore-based retail brand 77th Street and Hong Kong–based fashion brand Giordano emphasise Asian branding and Asia.

In the Chinese context, the concept of an "Imagined China" evokes different meanings depending on who is doing the imagining. Different brand actors imagine differently. I argue that the concept of an "Imagined China", while it connotes a certain cultural homogeneity, also has the potential to cross national boundaries and express a unique imaginary that belongs and appeals everywhere.

2.4. Brand culture in the Chinese context

In the Chinese context, cultural branding has been centered around the representation of historical Chinese cultural resources. Historical Chinese culture includes the representation of Chinese religion, history, tradition, and cultural myths. Although traditional religions have left their footprints everywhere in various Chinese landscapes, Taoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism are the three most predominant religious and philosophical systems (Hucker, 1995). These religions have exerted a tremendous impact on Chinese ideology, and have provided ethical guides for the proper behaviour of individuals for more than 2000 years (Thompson, 1996).

Taoism, which sought to promote the inner peace of individuals and harmony with surroundings, is characterised by the Three Jewels of Tao - compassion, moderation, and humility (Palls, 2008). The key belief is that every element has positive and negative energy (Yin or Yang, the two poles of primordial energy), which encourages the balance of life (Bidgoli, 2010). The principles of Tao influenced Chinese alchemy, astrology, cuisine, martial arts, traditional medicine, fengshui, and various styles of qigong breath training disciplines (Palls, 2008).

Confucianism, based on the teachings and writings of the philosophers Confucius and Mencius, is an ethical system that sought to cultivate good behaviour in individuals. In it, "filial piety" and "gentleness and sincerity" are considered among greatest of virtues (Dawson, 2003). Whereas "filial piety" must be shown towards the old, the living, and dead, including ancestors, (Dawson, 2003), and probably explains the widespread trope of nostalgia in Chinese cultural practices, "gentleness and sincerity" have been particularly influential in Chinese aesthetics.

Based on evidence in the Dunhuang manuscripts, Chinese Buddhism arrived from India with monks travelling on the Silk Road in the 2nd century. Although Chinese Buddhism advocates faith (Whitfield, 2004), Craig (1998) suggests that "polemical and political attacks from hostile Chinese quarters forced Buddhists to respond with apologia and ultimately reshape Buddhism into something the Chinese would find not only inoffensive, but attractive" (1998; p.81). This explains Buddhism's adaptation to existing Chinese religions, such as Taoism, and the advocacy of tolerance (Nan, 1998). The importance of Buddhism can be gauged by the status of the great teacher Xuan Zang's pilgrimage to India and his return to China armed with the tenets of Buddhism (Nan, 1998) that remains the single greatest event in Chinese cultural history.

Given the importance of historical cultures in Chinese history, one could argue for their introduction into brand development as a cogent means to succeed. That is to say, sacralising branding activities by investing brand development with aspects of Chinese Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism has the potential to refresh and re-invent patterns and styles of consumption.

Cayla and Eckhardt (2008) suggest that the creation of regional Asian brands and the construction of a transnational imagined Asian world could function as the best way to build Asian brands and shape a transnational imaged community in the ever-increasingly culture-globalised world. Synchronicity and the construction of cultural proximity, de-territorialisation (unmooring brands from specific places), the construction of multicultural collage, and the creation of a Mosaic Asian culture makes Asian branding culture notable in this culture-centralised world (Cayla and Eckhardt, 2008). However, how to deterritorialise and unmoor brands from the Chinese context in order to express a mosaic Asian branding culture will remain a key question for Chinese brand builders. It comes as no surprise that a number of academics in China and abroad have suggested that investing branding with the Chinese past is the proper way to facilitate the introduction of Chinese brands into a mosaic Asian branding culture.

Retrospective branding, or investing branding with the past, enjoys a long history in China. Eckhardt and Bengtsson (2007) have showed that although place names stamped on wares to mark their origin was common in China during the Han Dynasty (220 BC-AD 200), and the first documented sophisticated brand in the world was in the Song Dynasty period (960-1127), brands in imperial China have generally not developed solely as instruments of commerce. Rather, they have served a variety of social purposes ranging from signifying affiliation with the Imperial Palace to demonstrating the worth of a family name (Hamilton and Lai, 1989). However, some expressly commercial brands have emerged since the Qing Dynasty. For example, White Rabbit (a needle brand) and Tong Ren Tang (a traditional Chinese medicine brand that continues to thrive today) provide evidence of distinctive symbolic brands. White Rabbit refers to a well-known Chinese legend - Chang'e benyue (Chang'e's ascent to the moon). Tong Ren Tang literally means "to help people for good public order", which follows in the footsteps of the revered tradition in the Chinese medical industry, and exploits the character of "Ren" in Confucianism that means humaneness or gentleness (Cochran, 2006). Both these symbolic brands thus reinforce connections to the past.

Chinese aesthetics are dramatically influenced by Daoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism, all of which share common ground in the concept of harmony in nature (Ferroa, 2003). In Chinese ideology, nature, which is aligned with notions of self-creativity, includes heaven, earth, and the human world. All interact with one other harmoniously (Greenberg, 2007), because "the world is one continuous field of qi, Chinese qi, literally the breath of life, with each phenomenon not a separate thing but a temporary form within it, like a whirlpool in a stream." (Barnhill, 2005; p.1).

Even Chinese arts, "rather than the shallow description of surface reality", are "the evocation of the spirit of phenomena" (Barnhill, 2005; p.1). When the artist has seized the subtle qi, his works will vividly present the spirit of qi. In this way, the artist joins in the creation of nature. Anyone desiring the ability to capture qi must assiduously follow these principles. The practice of attainment comprises ridding oneself of the illusion of a separate self and urging oneself to succeed. It also involves focusing on the subject until direct communion is achieved (Barnhill, 2005). Transformation and communication are described through metaphorical actions, such as "entering into" the rock or tree, or allowing the phenomenon to enter into the artist, resulting in the "complete bamboo in the breast" (Barnhill, 2005; p.1).

Consequently, the key concern in historical Chinese aesthetics consisted in achieving balance between the self and nature, or between inner and outer (Dale, 2004). Nature was conceived as "an ongoing dynamics of stimulus and response among all things", encompassing human activities (Barnhill, 2005; p.1). Emotions grew from interactions with environments (Barnhill, 2005). In such early accounts of poetics as "Great Preface" to the *Book of Song* (Shi jing; 1st century B.C), for example, poetry was considered to be a voicing of responses. There was a strong correlation between the outer "scene" (jing) and inner feelings or emotional response (qing). A great poet was able to harmoniously blend the two (Barnhill, 2005; and Bush and Murck, 1983). In painting, qualities that distinguished the painter involved self-cultivation and self-expression (Craig, 1998; p.68).

Because nature includes humans, human culture corresponds with nature, an understanding that is emphasised in *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons* (Barnhill, 2005). It was this correlation that led to the development of the Chinese "wen", which means both literature and culture. The wen of humans is an expression of human culture, especially Chinese traditional literature and art. Accordingly, words written by a poet are equivalent to the tracks a bird makes in sand. The notion of "wen" gradually evolved, becoming "a semantically multivalent term" that now refers to "physical markings, patterns on coloured woven silk and painted designs of carriages as well as writing, literature and culture" (Craig, 1998; p.69). Consequently, in Chinese aesthetics, culture is natural, though this naturalness can be achieved only if the doer behaves in accordance with nature's patterns, spontaneously, and in keeping with his or her real inner nature, rather than following the ego's desires (Barnhill, 2005). Accordingly, Chinese aesthetic appreciation focuses mainly on harmony and "wen", both of which are experiential and essentially "moving".

Despite the importance of the aforementioned concepts in Chinese historical culture, there has been little research conducted on how to employ them towards the global development of Chinese brands. Historical culture, which includes imagined communities, aesthetic principles, and sacred concepts, can play a key role in the development of global brands, because history offers a kind of *tabula rasa* for people to imagine and re-imagine, and myth offers them the means of exploring this space. This thesis identifies gaps in which the representation of historical Chinese culture can develop and take root. It presents how people think of China through the concept of the "imagined community", and how this can contribute to the myths used in brand development. The next section elaborates the cultural approach to global branding and refers to how the certain brand actors interpret three Chinese brands.

3. The Cultural Approach to Global Branding

Cayla and Arnould (2008) argue that brands, like music, movies, sports, fashion, and folktales, are also cultural forms. Like these other cultural forms, brands also represent the world, and therefore necessitate discussion. A cultural approach to branding advocates taking brands and branding as cultural forms, and viewing through them the representation of symbolic cultural forms. This argues that branding no longer merely represents manipulative and hegemonic corporate intentions, but also the development of complex cultural forms.

Global brand strategists who advocate marketing standardisation view culture from the outside, as they consider it as ectogenous variable marketers can adapt or neglect at their discretion. Cayla and Arnould (2008) instead argue that global strategies should migrate into culture, and that branding practices should become cultural forms that stand on equal footing with other cultural forms. The study of such branding practices is of three types, including (1) how global brands come from different cultural contexts; (2) how branding practices influence cultural systems; and (3) how brands are created and interpreted in a multi-centred world (Cayla and Arnould, 2009).

Firstly, a cultural approach to marketing research investigates different models of brand globalisation in brand cultures, such as how Levi's strongly links itself to people's concepts of what constitutes "American style", while Japanese global brands do little to express "Japanese lifestyle" (Iwabuchi, 2006). Holt (2004) attributes the success of iconic American brands to their suffusion with culturally charged myths that provide instant resolution to social and cultural contradictions, and that of Chinese brand success in Eastern Europe to their ability to satisfy the need for safety and authenticity in these regions (Feick et al., 2003; Manning and Uplisashvili, 2007). A cultural approach to marketing research enables researchers and students to address brand globalisation through this prism of culture.

Secondly, as demonstrated by research (Dong and Tian, 2009) on Western brands' impact on global culture, global branding practices influence local culture. The growing market for literature on branding, academic seminars related to the subject, and the proliferation of business schools that specialise in the diffusion of brand involvement and materialist individualism (Feick et al., 2003), collectively demonstrate that culture does matter in branding practices.

Thirdly, the analysis of brand meaning derives not only from networks of users, producers, and other agents (Schroeder, 2009), but also from other events, such as the boycotting of foreign brands (Gerth, 2003; Klein et al., 1998; and Witkowski, 1989) and anti-globalisation movements (Holt, 2002).

Friedman has indicated "the production of local difference on a global scale" (1995; p.135), specifically advancing concerns about the status of the local within the global. In particular, Freidman is concerned with whether the production of local culture is actually a newly radical transformation, and whether the new cultural world order is moving toward creolised commodification crossing national borders. He asks questions about "how these objectified and politicised phenomena" relate "to everyday social practice in a place" (1995; p.135). Friedman is ultimately dealing with how deeply objectified and politicised issues actually relate to daily social activities; whether they enjoy an exclusive position in lived identity; whether models of habitual living conserve the global, and whether or not everyday identity draws on the public rhetoric of group identity. How do objectified and politicised issues translate in a small, stable localised social group? In other words, Friedman's production of local difference on a global scale refers to the sustaining of local cultural exclusivity but in keeping with the pace of up-to-date global production.

Ger (1999) and Askegaard and Kjeldgaard (2007) further state that local companies or governments could strengthen the perceived, appreciated, and available cultural resources for "outlocal" global competition in the global brand development process. Ger (1999) contends that local resources first need time and energy to discover latent local resources before they can appreciate their value. She claims that local governments need to develop foresight and use innovative thinking, deploy appropriate strategies, exploit available skills, further refine existing expertise, and build supportive political environments in order for local companies to be able to outlocalise. In so doing, local cultural recourses can become alternatives in global markets. In specific terms, local firms could begin to design products to satisfy consumer needs in local conditions similar to their own – that is with economic or social cousins in different parts of the world (Ger, 1999).

Ger's (1999) local-to-global branding approach is not without certain implications. Firstly, the consolidation of local perceived cultural capital in the production of branded culture-oriented products for alternative, foreign markets is worthwhile only if the potential volume of those foreign markets exceeds the needs of local markets. For example, although the taste and demand for Vietnamese restaurants, Reggae music, Egyptian novels, Chinese films, Indian clothes, and Afghan jewellery in the US and Europe are growing, the desired volume cannot compete with the vastly more ingrained needs of American and European consumers for things like bread, beer, and wine. Secondly, stressing local cultural capital to produce user-centred, low-price products and services to meet the needs of similar markets elsewhere might be a losing battle, as alternative markets are really a euphemism for low-income foreign markets, the profit margins of which are generally low, a fact that compels local firms to resort to a low-price strategy. The current unhappy predicament of Chinese exporters provides ample evidence of the negative impact of such strategies on company profits.

Nonetheless, Askegaard and Kjeldgaard (2007) advocate using "reputational capital" and product-place imagery to make local products global through local branding activities. By their account, reputed local resources are the basis of high-standard quality of local products. They have the capacity to invest their products with the high quality that derives from the responsible production ideology of sustainable small-scale production. In short, reputed local capital has the potential to create iconic-authentic or quasi-authentic value, which, in itself, can discharge its own variety of social and/or utilitarian function. Both, Ger (1999) and Askegaard and Kjeldgaard's (2007), approaches are linked, in that both draw attention to the latent value of local culture authenticity in the creation of distinction leading to greater consumption.

For their part, Cayla and Eckhardt (2008) look at how certain brand managers attempt to spin new webs of interconnectedness by establishing a transnational imagined Asia. These brand managers focus on the common experience of globalisation and diverse cultural referents of local differences to stimulate an all-encompassing, urban, and multicultural experience. In their development, Asia and Asian are a global brand that is modern, urban, and multicultural. Their brand globalisation model uses global systems to combine ubiquitous instances of local difference towards a new image of Asia. In their model, modern and urban features frame the Asian past.

In China, the emergence of an objectified national culture (Chinese cultural branding invested with historical Chinese culture) defines what Friedman (1990) calls "the production of local difference on a global scale". But what does this say about the position of Chinese cultural branding within a global context?

Chinese cultural branding is something new and still transforming. Despite the rapidly incremental export output with low added-values and increasing appreciation of Chinese RMB, and the rise of consumerism in contemporary Chinese society (Zhao and Belk, 2008), the number of academics researching this area is still low, perhaps indicating that Chinese global branding still has a way to go before it can really take off. Regardless, China has a long and weighty history, which is to say that Chinese cultural branding, under the unavoidable impact of Chinese history, will almost inevitably creolise and transnationalise.

On the one hand, historical Chinese culture, to some degree, is exclusive. Popular models of lived identity typically preserve Chinese habits and mores. On the other hand, Chinese cultural branding also relates to modern realities that absorb and co-opt group identities that borrow from larger global identities. Therefore, although Chinese cultural branding derives from a stable and continuous regime of local meanings grounded in local social groups, it also draws upon international ideologies and meanings. This is to say that in keeping with Friedman's theories of local culture in the global marketplace, Chinese cultural branding is an achievable goal. Historical culture and social contradictions can become the basis to develop new commercial myths. However, more research needs to be done on this subject, particularly on the Chinese context.

4. Global Consumer Culture and Fashion System

The close links that global consumer culture shares with the fashion system can be understood through a brief review of the origins and development of global consumer culture. The following section presents the history of consumer culture and fashion's role in it, global consumer culture internationally, and global culture in the Chinese context.

4.1. The history of consumer culture

Scholars have said great a deal about the origins and development of global consumer culture, and about its role in the history of the modern West. After McCracken's influential *Culture and Consumption* (1988a), the most provocative arguments occur in consumer culture studies of 18th century England (McKendrick, 1982), 19th century France (Williams 1982), and of England in the 15th and 16th centuries (Mukerji, 1983). These studies show that consumer culture, in England and France, underwent changes in tastes, preferences, and buying habits that were as revolutionary as those of the modern world. The consumer revolution has made a fundamental shift in Western concepts of time, space, society, the individual, the family, and the state. Such changes have introduced new categories of goods, new patterns and sites of purchase, new marketing techniques, new ideas about possessions and materialism, changed points of reference, class mobility, new diffusion patterns, new symbols, and new patterns of decision-making. The aforementioned studies of the history of consumption have not only explored these changes and analysed their meaning, but have also shown that consumer culture and various fashion systems have collectively contributed to the rise of the modern West.

China has also contributed to the formation of global consumer culture through such products as chinaware, silk, furniture, and tea. Since the Song Dynasty (960–1127 AD), Chinese pottery replete with text and symbolic images has enjoyed wide consumption (Wang, 2008; and Zuo, 1999). "China has pioneered a rich, consumption-focused material culture since the Song Dynasty (960-1127)" (Eckhardt and Bengensson, 2010; p.212). Already in late imperial China (1368-1911), consumerist society was well-established, and Chinese imperial consumer culture subsequently reached its peak in the Ming Dynasty (1426-1566). During this time, people's drive to consume was fuelled by the desire to achieve mantan status (Hamilton and Lai, 1989). For example, the symbolic function of Gongpin, which encompassed items as diverse as clothes, shoes, combs, medicines, and food, was so high that it was considered suitable tribute to and by emperors (Yang, 1987). The dispatch of such items to relatives and friends by emperors represented the privileges of high status office. This was the life of Chinese products within China. Beyond the imperial and aristocratic realms, Chinese products also infiltrated world markets. During the imperial period Chinese businesses traded extensively with Western countries, often exchanging tea, Chinaware, and silk clothing, for Western goods and other trading favours, and it was through such longterm historical trading patterns that Chinese products gained a foothold in the culture of global consumption.

4.2. Global consumer culture

If the industrial revolution, in tandem with the history of conquest, slavery, and colonialism, was responsible for the emergence of modern consumption, globalisation over the last decades has produced its own revolution no less significant in the history of postmodern consumption. The issue of global standardisation or local adaptation has been debated in the social sciences. Specifically, scholars argue about the meaning of standardisation, whether it constitutes the homogenisation or heterogenisation of social life (see Askegaard and Kjelgaard, 2002), whether it constitutes resisting people or assisting them.

Globalisation, according to Malcolm Waters (1995), refers to "a social process in which the constraints of geography on social and cultural arrangement recede and in which people become increasingly aware that they are receding and in which people act accordingly" (1995; p.3). Waters's description reveals the reflexive features of individuals, that people are increasingly positioning themselves vis-à-vis the world, as both "locals" and "cosmopolitans". This is no different from the desires of institutional players who also position themselves vis-à-vis certain economic, political and cultural goals. Giddens (1991) asserts that "reflective modernity" is where we, as individuals or institutional actors, reproduce the global in our daily lives in keeping with the increasing flow of people, information, images, symbols, and purchasable, lifestyle identities. Appadurai (1990) has claimed that economy, polity, and culture function more abstractly than localities and nation states. They perform cultural movements in five 'scapes: ethnoscapes (the flow of people); technoscapes (the flow of technology and expertise, such as managerial concepts and dogmas); finanscapes (the flow of money); mediascapes (the flow of images, such as representations of highly diversified imagined lives); ideoscapes (the flow of ideas); and in Ger and Belk's (1996) consumptionscapes (the flow of consumption).

In marketing and consumer research, consumer products are increasingly centralised in individuals (Fitzgerald, 1997), though individuals are nonetheless defined by global marketing. They are "heteroconsumers", a concept that refers to "people who have become increasingly alike and indistinct from one another, and yet have simultaneously varied and multiple preferences" (Levitt, 1988; p.8). In other words, global consumer culture despite heterogeneity in numbers, is largely homogenous in form and style. It is for this reason that global consumer culture constructs "global systems of common difference" (Wilk, 1995; p.110). For example, global and local consumer cultures are often deployed together to steer and situate the individual's local identity hierarchies (Ger and Belk, 1996), such that ethnic culture continues to consume (Askegaard et al., 2005). The globalisation of consumer culture is, like an AT&T advertisement says, "What makes us all the same is that we're all different" (Wilk, 1995; p110). In other words, global consumer discourses of the cultural meanings of global consumer products have similarities and differences, which have been diffused by cross-border population mobility (Quelch, 2007; and Spring, 2006), international retailing popularity (Bruce et al., 2004; Cox and Brittain, 2004; and Floor, 2006), and by global and regional mass media accessibility (Gelder, 2005; and Johnson and Lee, 2008).

4.3. The role of fashion in the development of global consumer culture

That fashion is a key player not only behind the origins of global consumer culture, but also behind contemporary diffusions of consumer culture around the world, is widely demonstrated in the history of consumer culture. According to Mukerji (1983), consumer goods bear symbolic and cultural meanings in the process of production and consumption. Diversified commercial mythmaking strategies produce new commercial myths and new cultural forms through the construction of new popular memories and counter-memories (Thompson and Tian, 2004). This section draws on this idea, and presents those concepts and theories of fashion and fashion systems that offer insight into the aesthetics, culture, and values of (local) brand globalisation.

Because fashion has "several connotations, some specific, others far wider" (Barnard, 2002; p.2), fashion culture has received various levels of attention from scholars in such vastly different academic disciplines as cultural studies, management, and psychology (Abrahamson, 1991; Bruzzi and Gibson, 2000; Davis, 1992; and Moore and Birtwistle, 2004). Issues thrown up by fashion span the gamut, from brand legacy and costume and adornments to tastes and public appearances. All these issues, and more, have been deciphered using theories of folk motifs, ethics and morals, self-esteem and identity projection, psychological and cognitive dissonance, social mobility, gender construction, and mass-media influence (Davis, 1992). This section explores the main literature of various fashion systems, fashion discourse, symbolic production and consumption of fashion branded products, the representation of the past in fashion, and fashion systems that apply in each of the three case studies.

4.3.1. Fashion systems

Fashion refers to a social value or a "universal" criterion of taste that includes the singularity and subjectivity of individual tastes (Gronow, 1997). Fashion actually functions as two opposing needs, social identification and distinction (Gronow 1997; p.77). More specifically, this means fashion should be a socially acceptable and appreciated means of both distinguishing oneself from others and yet adapting oneself to social needs (Gronow, 1997; p.84).The process of making decisions for social identification and distinction through fashion, or through other cultural forms, brings about what Murray (2002) calls "sign domination" and "sign experimentation". Reputed scholars such as Diana Crane (2000) and Yuniya Kawamura (2005) have examined the social nature of fashion from a cultural perspective, nature referring to the people, the networks, and the institutions that constitute the "fashion system".

Fashion, in its capacity as a social phenomenon that has influenced various fields, including music, sports, and clothing, is understood as a kind of symbolic mode of production and consumption (Kawamura, 2005). Kawamura describes fashion as an "institutionally constructed and culturally diffused" feature (2005; p.44), in that fashion is conclusively a process in two senses - "it is a market-driven cycle of consumer desire and demand; and it is a modern mechanism for the fabrication of the self. It is in this respect that fashion operates as a fulcrum for negotiating the meeting of internal and external worlds" (Evans and Breward, 2005; p.2). Blaszczyk (2007) categorises fashion into four Ms: mode, or how to dress; manners, or how to express oneself; mores, or how to live; and markets, or how to gain demographic and psychological definition. Cholachatpinyo et al.'s (2002) four-fold description of fashion systems uses fashion's interactions with individuals and society, and its linkage of macro and micro continuums. Firstly, at a macro-subjective level, fashion is an existential global phenomenon that reflects lifestyle trends and social needs. Secondly, in a macro-objective realm, fashion trends become tangible concepts that symbolise the lifestyles of individuals and organisations, including fashion investors, designers, manufacturers, and marketing people. Thirdly, at the micro-objective level, individuals interact with fashion, in the marketplace, selecting the products of fashion in order to develop their looks and fit into certain contexts. Fourthly, in a micro-subjective field, individuals cultivate certain looks in order to fulfil their social and cultural aspirations. In all the above accounts, fashion constitutes creativity and innovation, and represents the spirit of the time, or *zeitgeist*, reflecting existential social concerns and needs (Blaszczyk, 2007; Cholachatpinyo et al., 2002; and Evans and Breward, 2005).

The fashion system, in turn, involves all the people, networks and institutions involved in the creation, transformation, and recreation of symbolic meanings of cultural objects (Solomon et al., 2006). Cultural objects, in this case, are constituted by branded products (Cayla and Arnould, 2008). In this sense, fashion operates as a social and symbolic system that involves people, networks, and institutions, all of which, through production and consumption, convey certain meanings (Blaszczyk, 2007; Cholachatpinyo et al., 2002; Crane, 2000; and Kawamura, 2004). Meaning flows through branded products that circulate as consumer goods bought and sold by individuals in various rituals and social activities (McCracken, 1986; and Thompson and Haytko, 1997). Therefore, the term "fashion systems" refers to the comprehensive material and commercial discourse in which fashion products are produced, marketed, consumed, manipulated, appreciated, and discussed by makers, marketers, buyers, and observers.

4.3.2. Fashion discourse, symbolic production, and consumption of fashion goods

Over the past decade, there have been fierce debates about the fashion process, fashion imagery, fashion consumption, and body expression. Facets of fashion that exist in music, art, movies, museums, public events, and clothing have been investigated from managerial and cultural perspectives. For instance, in *The Arcades Project,* Benjamin (1999) examined fashion as part of cultural creation. More recently, using a managerial aspect, fashion scholar Bruno Remaury has argued that "fashion is based on creating a need where, in reality, there is none. Fashion is a factory that manufactures desire." (Tungate, 2008; p.8). The vantage of consumer behaviour provides a number of debates about fashion. Crewe and Goodrum (2000), for example, demonstrate how Paul Smith designs its consumption imaginations and employs designing desires to transform consumption. The idea that consumers explore their identities through fashion has been around for at least twenty years. Davis (1992), for instance, articulates how fashion and clothing express consumer identity, which might include certainty and ambivalence through social status, gender, and sexuality.

Some critics disagree. They argue that the fashion discourse as described above seldom empowers consumer perception, that fashion research typically favours the dominant ideologies of fashion creators and marketers, and that consumer perception gets shunted off into a narrow, homogenous category. In an effort to correct this bias, some scholars, such as Thompson and Haytko (1997), have begun applying folk theories to open up the understanding of fashion systems. Specifically, folk theory enables discussions about the nature of self and society, and provides room for consumers to freely describe their perceptions and experiences of fashion. Such research produces hermeneutic readings that countervail prevalent notions of fashion systems from the producer's and marketer's vantage. We learn how consumers adjust to and modify fashion systems perceptually and concretely to match their everyday environment. In other words, consumers are able to re-interpret fashion by countervailing dominant fashion meanings and intentions.

Murray (2002) confirms Thompson and Haytko's (1997) theories through findings in a white collar, middle-class context. His participants were, on average eight and a half years older, and straddled a wider range of cultural roles than those who participated in Thompson and Haytko's study. In Thompson and Haytko's (1997) study, consumers were predominantly college-age individuals. They used cultural roles to mediate everyday tensions arising from the struggle between individual agency and social prescription (Thompson and Haytko, 1997; p.15). In contrast, Murray's study (2002), which selected middle-class professionals as subjects, revealed that individuals forge identity in consultation with the dominant fashion norms of their social milieu. Murray's findings are naturally consistent with the tendency of older adults to cleave to social norms much more so than college-age individuals who thrive on notions of independence and autonomy.

Brands are symbolic and cultural forms (Cayla and Arnould, 2008) that express varying symbolic capabilities (Griswold, 1987). The construction of fashion in brands is also of equally varied origin. It involves not just manufacturing the material object, such as the branded fashion garment, but also creating ideas of fashion around the object, regardless of whether it is high street fashion or elite fashion wear. In the process of producing cultural objects, the key aspect is symbolic production, which refers to "the production of the value of the work or, which amounts to the same thing, of belief in the value of the work" (Bourdieu, 1993; p.37).

Thompson and Tian (2004) offer the American South myth to explain the cultural production process: "When different commercial mythmakers draw from a cultural mythology, they are also vying for identity value through the strategic and ideological framing of popular memories. Commercial mythmakers' strategic transfigurations of popular memory are structured by an awareness of the counter-memories that are invoked by competing representations that circulate in the mass-mediated myth market. Their diversified strategies to manage these competitive quandaries, in turn, generate new commercial myths and new configurations of popular memories and counter-memories that are projected forward toward changing cultural and marketplace conditions".

In other words, commercial mythmaking strategies generate new cultural forms through many organisations, which join in the symbolic production of cultural objects within a single "universe of belief" (Bourdieu, 1993; p.15). These institutions often disseminate symbolic meanings to the public through the media, namely through newspapers, magazines, television channels, and product-placement in television shows. In the fashion arena, institutions articulate fashion in different ways, such as high fashion and popular, everyday fashion. Fashion artefacts that inspire belief in the symbolic value of fashion are considered to be high fashion among elite consumers, equivalent to the status of high art in intellectual circles. These artefacts contribute to the "ideology of creation", and consolidate the magical aura of high fashion even among non-consumers of high fashion (Bourdieu, 1993). McRobbie (1998) maintains that French and European fashion are interpreted by "the rigidity and elitism of the fine art world" (1998; p.36). It belongs to the realm of "specialists in symbolic production" or "elitism" (Featherstone, 1994; p.10). In the UK, however, "fashion is a 'popular thing'" (McRobbie, 1998; p.8). "Popular thing" and "elitism" are the two halves of the "full reality" of fashion (Bourdieu, 1993; p.36). In addition, there also exists another kind pairing in the fashion world, of people, or people brands, with corporate brand names, such as Hennes and Mauritz's collaboration with Karl Lagerfeld and Stella McCartney, and Adidas's with Yohji Yamamoto (Hines and Bruce, 2006).

The process of symbolic production depends on two basic factors - the display of the symbol and people with the appropriate mentality that will capture it (Hirschman and Holbrook, 1980; and Ligas and Cotte, 1998). Product and brand symbolism literature provides certain insights into the consumption process (Grubb and Grathwahl, 1967), that consumers use consumption to satisfy certain psychological needs and desires (Escalas, 1997). Branded clothing and popular music, for example, which function largely through visual and aural presence, suggest that people consuming these products are satisfied and concerned with surface appeal. They seek these products because they seek no more than what the surface provides, and for what it suggests about them to observers. The symbolic quality of branded clothing materialises through styles, brands, retailer outlets, uniforms, and through membership of particular subcultures (Banister and Hogg, 2006). Music, on the other hand, impacts consumers through lyrics and what the words sound like against the musical background. Tran (2008, p.127) accurately indicates that "the value which these industries bring about does not go directly to the fashion product, but it enhances the recognition and attraction of the products. In fashion, branding plays a crucial role in driving consumers to keep purchasing". In other words, branding facilitates the expression of fashion and the enhancement of brand value. Tungate (2008) puts a fine point on branding when he suggests that fashion functions through various independent and intersecting channels, such as advertising, store design, fashion blogging, and celebrity photo shoots in popular magazines, all of which collectively mobilise the symbolic value of fashion and brand image in branded products.

Symbolic consumption refers not simply to consuming fashion items, but also to social practices, such as purchasing newspapers and magazines, visiting museums, watching films, and eating the food that we eat (Hines and Bruce, 2006). All these activities express symbolic meanings that help consumers express their identities in positive and negative fashion, that is who they are and what they stand for, as much as who they are not and what they reject (Hines and Bruce, 2006). Products sell when consumers begin to perceive compatibility between symbolic meanings and values and their personal identities. Notions of brand symbolism develops through interaction with people and groups, connections made through them, and through interaction with stereotypical images of brands disseminated by groups and learned through hearsay (Erickson, 1996). It is common for consumer judgements about brands to depend inordinately on opinions aired by 'typical consumers' of those brands and products (Hines and Bruce, 2006). Accordingly, Kawamura's description of "consuming fashion as symbolic strategy" (2005; p.94) contains three components - public consumption, communication, and image. In his reading, symbolic meanings and values are extremely visible and noticeable to the consumers of brand products, and these same meanings and values are subsequently conveyed in an equally visible fashion to others, though all consumers are unlikely to swallow brand meanings in the same way and with equal ease.

In summarising previous research on the subject, Arnould and Thompson (2005) indicate that previous studies of symbolic consumption mainly "draw from semiotic and literary critical theories to analyse the symbolic meanings, cultural ideals, and ideological inducements encoded in popular culture texts and the rhetorical tactics that are used to make these ideological appeals compelling" (2005; p.875). Studies on symbolic consumption mainly focused on "sign domination" and "sign experimentation" (Murray, 2002), the first approach relying on social structure, the second on consumers. "Sign domination" provides a structuralist perspective whereas "sign experimentation" depends on a psychological vantage.

Many theorists (Murray 2002; Thompson and Haytko, 1997) attach great importance to the agency-structure dialectic. I agree with Murray's general conclusions (2002) about Thompson and Haytko's project (1997), which, he argues, contributes more to a psychological perspective, and less so to a structuralist analysis, though it is unclear what he means to imply by the statement "the tension between sign experimentation and sign domination was used as an orienting standpoint for the analyses of the verbatim text" (Murray, 2002; p.482). In response, I propose a socio-cognitive approach. This is essentially to combine structure and agency in an effort to examine transformation within fashion systems, and thereby explore the tension between sign-domination and sign-experimentation using the Chinese context of brand development and symbolic consumption as my primary lens.

From a socio-cognitive perspective, symbolic consumption refers to the use of goods and services in their capacity as symbols, through which consumers express status, group membership, and self-esteem (Heffetz, 2009). According to Heffetz, the shared symbolic value expressed in consumption postulates "some form of social coordination on what are valid, approved symbols" (Witt, 2009; p.2). Material objects often act as a social means of "communication between the individual and his significant references" (Grubb and Grathwohl, 1967; p.24), and their meanings are socially shareable and reproducible through social interactions (Banister and Hogg, 2006). The fashion discourse is precisely this complex process of symbolic and concrete production and consumption.

Moreover, fashion discourses also involve an interpretation of historical themes and current social concerns. Most global fashion images embrace metaphorical references, which are effectively condensed and constructed from current social concerns or historical themes (Cholachatpinyo et al., 2002; and Evans, 2000). Various historical cultures have been distinctively referenced in fashion products, such as the citation of the Renaissance and Baroque periods in modern fashion (Evans, 2000). These periods have become emblems via their relocation and/or dislocation by means of abbreviated images (Evans, 2000). However, modern fashion images with historical references are subject to the contemporary perspectives of their makers and users who tend to retrace links and rethink history through selective subjective lenses. Evans (2000) suggests that fashion images with historical references illuminate the present with refined images combining complex and contradictory meanings.

Benjamin (1999) has termed such images, which ostensibly reference the past but do so selectively, and often in contradiction to their sources, 'dialectic images'. The "dialectical image" is not grounded in simple comparisons between the past and the present. Rather, it produces new meanings that may conflict radically with the historic meaning (Buck-Morss, 1991). In Benjamin's (1999) notion of history, present vision destroys the past to reconstruct it. This process creates a dialectic image. Dialectic images in global branding refer to brand images with some historical reference that is re-tooled with new meanings, which might contradict the original historical source. Good or bad, global fashion systems thus create a multitude of distinctive brand images that use a historical touch to address social desires. Although various studies (McCracken, 1986; Murray 2002; and Thompson and Haytko, 1997) have addressed the contribution of fashion within global culture, it now remains to contemporary scholars to produce a comparable body of knowledge for similar processes at work in the Chinese context.

4.3.3. Fashion systems used in each case study

Music fashion, particularly hip-hop, has exerted a tremendous impact on global branding. Potter (1995) sees hip-hop music's popularity in terms of a spectacularly-resistant political practice. In the main, hip-hop music demonstrates a resistant politics comparable to the effects of older rap lyrics, some of which were intended to convey the harshness of the ghetto and gun and drug-related violence. Rap lyrics, however, went too far, in that they cast young, black males in the image of unreal hysteria (Kelly, 1994; Keyes, 2002; Potter, 1995; and Rose, 1994). Hip-hop and rap culture were no doubt successful in bringing black culture onto a mainstream stage, though it remains debatable whether they served to liberate the black community, or further ghettoise it by freezing black life into stereotypes defined by the ghetto (Kolubinski, 2004). It is precisely this constructed ambiguity in hop-hop culture that has enabled it to achieve pop status, an area that was traditionally white, and even become fashionable in the last two decades (Cholachatpinyo et al., 2002; Kolubinski, 2004; and Ratneshwar and Mick, 2005).

The case study of music artist Jay Chou reveals similar possibilities of using history and social concerns as a brand strategy (Brown et al., 2000; Eckhardt and Bengtsson, 2007; and Tungate, 2008). Generally, in the fields of music, fashion, arts, and branding, aesthetics involve innovation, creativity, and experience (Schroeder, 2005b), all of which characterise fashion and modernity (Evan and Breward, 2005). These features are fully expressed in Jay Chou's work, which makes him an exemplary subject for consumer research in my study (Schroeder, 1997). His work (albums, concerts, shows, prints, films, books, and sales volume) sheds light on contemporary and global production, consumption, and marketing. Such a case study is of great interest not only to Chinese entrepreneurs, concerned about Chinese brand internationalisation and retail strategy, but also to Western producers intending to market their products in China.

Evans and Breward (2005) explain "modernisation" as "the processes of scientific, technological, industrial, economic and political innovation that also become urban, social and artistic in their impact". In their words, modernisation refers to the experience of modern life (2005; p.1). Fashion is a powerful mechanism of modernisation that catalyses subjective perspectives of modern life, which Giddens (1991) argues, is defined by reflexivity or self-scrutiny. Fashion and modernity, which represent *zeitgeist*, reveal social contradictions and the advances of science and technology, and highlight a new wave of avant-garde artistic movement replete with creativity and innovation (Wilson, 2005). As a system, fashion expresses a market-fuelled circulation of consumer desire and demand. A fashion system operates to convert clothing, music, and sports events into a fashion world with symbolic value, and manifest in such events as the Olympics (Evans and Breward, 2005). The wide dissemination of sports culture has changed people's habits and ways of life around the world (Schaffer and Smith, 2000). Fashion is a way to express changes in modern life infused with innovation and creativity (Blaszczyk, 2007; Evans and Breward, 2005). The fashion industry therefore produces more than just adequate and pleasant clothing, music, sport, and other cultural forms. It also produces new fashion images (Kawamura, 2005). In this sense, this case study of the Beijing Olympics opening ceremony investigates how global fashion systems helped develop "China" into a global brand.

Fashion works as a powerful mechanism to catalyse subjective perspectives in modern life. As such, fashion manifests a market-driven circulation of consumer desire and demand, and mechanical formulation of the modern self (Wilson, 2005). Fashion constructs modern life or modern feeling through daily products and through their stylisation (Simmel, 1971). Fashion is "the style and custom prevalent at a time, which is expressed by the popular clothing style" (Davis, 1992; p.14) as well as a styled phenomenon that contributes to various industries, such as entertainment and media in particular (Tran, 2008). "Styled" or "fashionable" not only refer to the fact that someone or something fits in with the current popular mode of expression. But it also subtly includes the sense of "in fashion" (Solomon et al., 2006). Fashion as a system thus transforms clothing, music, and sports events into a social lifestyle that obtains symbolic production and consumption (Evans and Breward, 2005; Kawamura, 2005; and Tran, 2008). Fashion as a social system joins people, networks, and institutions. It is a symbolic system that interprets the meanings of branded products through production and consumption (Blaszczyk, 2007; Crane, 2000; and Kawamura, 2005). The meanings of consumer products first circulate through fashion systems, and subsequently through social rituals and activities via individuals (McCracken, 1986). In contrast, the countervailing of cultural meaning embedded in those very same consumer products begins not in fashion systems but in the actions of consumers and their interventions (Thompson and Haytko, 1997).

This case study examines the processes and possibilities of the co-creation of brand and brand culture by managerial workers, consumers, and the media through the lens of global fashion systems and historical Chinese resources. The case of Shanghai Tang facilitates an examination of the flow of cultural meaning of brands in which the interpretation of brands by consumers, managerial workers, and the media generates new cultural meanings.

Fashion discourse and cultural discourse refer to the interpretation of the meanings of fashion and other cultural signs, such as historical and brand signs, and to the act of recognising that brand meanings are co-developed. Specifically, co-development refers to the social negotiation of brands by consumers and managerial workers, and to the consequent production of cultural meaning (Cova and Dalli, 2009; Schroedler, 2009; and Zwick et al., 2008). Brand meanings are also generated by popular culture, such as the media, the film industry, music, sports, fashion, television programmes, magazines, books, and the internet (Arvidsson, 2005), and by other important stakeholders who often use marketing communication to make statements (Bengtsson and Östberg, 2006; Holt, 2004). This study is an examination of the production of brand meaning by brand authors, which I limit to managerial workers, (inductive consumers), regular consumers, and popular culture.

Managerial workers convey brand identity. Consumers express themselves through brand image. Brand identity and personal identity coincide in the consumer's mind when brands facilitate the realisation of consumer goals. This coincidence is a crucial moment in the construction of the symbolic meaning of brands. Therefore, it is important for managerial workers to generate meanings prior to consumption that will programmatically appeal to consumers and potentially satisfy aspirations aligned with brand consumption. Congruency of brand identity, from a managerial standpoint, and brand image, from the consumer perspective, will automatically increase the possibility of consumption.

Such a congruency is the foundation McCracken’s conceptualisation (1986) of the cultural meaning transfer model. Firstly, managerial workers use fashion systems to convey the meaning of branded products to consumers. Secondly, consumers develop the cultural meanings of brand products through social rituals or other social activities. However, in a consumer-dominated world, consumers might reject brand meanings constructed by the managerial workers. This potential act of rejection represents the tension identified between the sign-experimentation and the sign-domination dialectic model. Arnould and Thompson (2005) state that studies of symbolic consumption "draw from semiotic and literary critical theories to analyse the symbolic meanings, cultural ideals, and ideological inducements encoded in popular culture texts and the rhetorical tactics that are used to make these ideological appeals compelling" (2005; p.875); that notions of symbolic consumption have mainly focused on the contest between "sign domination" and "sign experimentation".

In a study published over two decades ago, McCracken (1986) claimed that consumers accept meanings created by the managerial workers that refer to sign-domination symbolic consumption. Two decades later, a different model seems to have gained ground. These days, if consumers are likely to reject the given meanings of brands, they are equally likely to construct their own meanings for those brands. This process represents the dominance of the sign experimentation model of symbolic consumption (Murray, 2002), which is to say that McCracken's (1986) sign domination-defined cultural meaning transfer model does not always hold true. In their study, Thompson and Haytko (1997) developed a model that accommodates the dialogical process of consumer appropriation of cultural meanings. In this model, meanings developed by fashion authorities are rejected by consumers. This process pertaining to symbolic consumption is called "sign experimentation" (Murray, 2002). In contrast, the "sign domination" approach relies on social structure or historical tradition and derives from a structuralist perspective (Firat and Venkatesh, 1993, 1995). Thompson and Haytko's "countervailing meanings" (1997, p.15) are employed by consumers in their daily lives to mediate social anxiety and work pressures to construct a sense of individual agency and resist social prescription. Murray (2002) has argued that Thompson and Haytko's (1997) model is much too sign-experimentation oriented, and that some career workers need structure to convey their social positions. In short, they need the domination of sign to be successful in their tasks.

One resolution to the contest between these two models can be found in a socio-cognitive approach, which accommodates aspects of both models. If consumers accept meanings created by the managerial workers in the fashion industry, this is fashion conformism or sign-domination. Conversely, consumers’ rejecting constructed meanings constitutes anti-conformism or sign-experimentation. Here, a quick digression to Benjamin's definition of history helps clarify the complexities of the two aforementioned models. Specifically, with respect to the construction of historical meaning, Benjamin argued that "the past is not a unified entity to be seen as [an] intact whole or a well-written narrative" because "to see the past within the present, it is necessary to fragment it and have it offer itself up as isolated images, which can be perpetually rearranged and resituated within the present" (Evans, 2000; p.99). According to Benjamin, history should be understood through a process of deconstructing the past followed by reconstructing it in the present. He argued that the past can be re-actualised only if one eschews the unifying ideology of myth. Reconstruction does not always result in new signs differing from those of the past, though in the event of difference, they become, what Benjamin calls, 'dialectic images' (Benjamin, 1999). 'Dialectic images' are not simply a comparative picture of the past and the present. Rather, they should result in the creation of new meanings that may contrast with the historic meaning, a process that depends on individual perspective. Different people deconstruct and reconstruct differently (Buck-Morss, 1991). It is in this sense that Benjamin's model of history as a set of dialectic images shares ground with the "sign experimentation" model.

Benjamin's definition of history is particularly useful in brand development because it demonstrates that history is not something dead and far away. History is alive. It has the capacity to move people in ways that are familiar and concrete. Applying history to branding practices is a way to reconcile past with present, and generate new meanings that belong both here and there. History, or the dialectic image, can thus become a means to both develop brand authenticity and maintain contemporary values, because dialectic images, though they are both old and new, are ultimately neither one nor the other (O'Guinn et al., 2008; and Pensky, 2004).

A third kind variety of symbolic consumption is constituted by ignoring the existence of commercial signs altogether. This is the basis of the anti-brand movement, which was first concretely identified in the book *No Logo*. *No Logo* challenged the concept of branding and rigorously interrogated the value of iconic brands, their intention to deliver real value, and their capacity to keep promises (Klein, 1999). Along with Naomi Klein, *No Logo*'s author, Kalle Lasn, the founder of Adbusters, an anti-brand movement, advocated for the un-cooling, un-swooshing, and de-marketing of America. He claimed that culture was no longer significantly created by people, but by corporate America and global brand corporations, that life was no longer authentic (1999). Adbusters therefore advocated cultural jamming (deforming commercial symbols and agents) by encouraging people to participate in buy-nothing days and TV turnoff weeks. The idea was that people can transform pre-determined cultural meanings forced upon society through patterns of consumption, or non-consumption, and thereby become social watchdogs compelling corporate culture to become more responsible and transparent.

Whether they are dominated by signs or subject to experimentation, meanings are constantly moving through different spaces and across different fields of brand actors. In keeping with this given, this study emphasises the importance of the cultural dynamics of production and consumption, and the significance of cultural narratives and myths that brand actors harness to make sense of everyday life.

The study of Shanghai Tang is a means to examine the processes and possibilities of managerial workers, consumers, and the media co-creating brands and brand cultures. It investigates the flow of brand meaning in a culturally-constituted world across consumers, managerial workers, and the media, and examines the new cultural meanings arising from brand actors' interpretations. My discussion of fashion discourse and other culture systems focuses on sign-experimentation and sign-domination models of consumption, on the historical sign, and on fashion and brand. Results appear in Table 5.

Table 5	Summaries of fashion, brand, and historical discourses from the sign-domination approach and the sign-experimentation approach		
Symbolic discourse approaches	The sign-domination approach	The sign-experimentation approach	A socio - cognitive approach
Definition	Relying on social structure to decode meanings	Feeling free to decode meanings	The structure-agency dialectic approach, which used in this paper
	From a structuralism vantage to social prescriptiosocial integration)	From a psychological perspective (poststructuralism or behaviourism) to show individual agency (distinction)	
	Conformism	Anti-conformism	
Fashion discourse		Thompson and Haytko's (1997) dialogical cultural meaning of consumer transfer model	
Historical signs discourse		Benjamin's 'dialectic images' — the conflicts of the past and present; images and meanings, creating authenticity	
Brand discourse	The congruency of managerial brand meanings and consumer brand meanings, as evident in McCracken's cultural meaning transfer model (1986)	Consumers reject meanings determined by managerial workers, as evident in the anti-brand movement (Lasn,1999; and Klein, 1999)	

4.3.4. Global consumer culture in the Chinese context

Regarding China, most research has concentrated on how Western brands influence Chinese consumers and producers, and develop in the Chinese market. Studies have investigated the appeal of Western advertisements for Chinese consumers and the government (Tse et al., 1989; Zhao and Belk, 2008; and Zhou and Belk, 2004), how Chinese consumers consume Western brands (Dong and Tian, 2009; Hooper, 2000; KPMG, 2007; and Wang, 2000 and 2008), and how Chinese consumers consume gifts in the gift-giving process (Joy, 2001). Specifically, studies focus on examining how consumers "read" advertising that uses global and local appeal. China is considered to be the most populous market in the world, and companies attach great importance to its enormous, yet untapped commercial potential reflected in the size of its advertising industry, which, by all the accounts, is the world's fastest-growing example (Hong, 1994; Wang, 1997, 2000). China is now inundated with foreign and local goods, images, advertising, and consumption ideas (Davis, 2000; Lu and He, 2003a, 2003b; and Yang, 2002).

The study of advertising, in particular, is on its way to becoming an important sub-field of consumer research. Many scholars have analysed the appeal of Western advertising in China (Cheng, 1997; Cheng and Schweitzer, 1996; Tse, Belk, and Zhou 1989; Ye, 2003); adaptation by foreign advertisers to the Chinese context (Tai 1997; Weng 2002; Yin 1999; B. Zhang 2001; and Y Zhang 2003); and the benefits that could be reaped by global brands using local names in advertising along with the disadvantages of using non-Chinese names in advertising by local brands (Cui 1997; Lei 2000; Liu 2001; Qiu 2003; Wan 2001a; Wu 2001; and Zhang 2001). Recent research has shown that foreign brands are increasingly less appealing to Chinese consumers as compared with the growing appeal of Chinese brands and prices (Cui 1997; Li 2004; Weng 2002; Zhou and Hui 2003; and Zhou and Belk, 2004). Zhou and Belk (2004), for example, in examining how Chinese consumers read global and local television and print advertising, discovered two very different responses. One group's preference for global cosmopolitan was reflected in its desire for mianzi (prestige face). The other group, driven by nationalist desires, preferred advertising stimulated by recognisably Chinese values. Individualism and collectivism constitute another important area of study in global consumer research pertinent to China. Aaker and Williams's study (1998) showed that the collectivism-oriented Chinese ideology resulted in Chinese consumers paying less attention to the individualism-themed American advertisements. Yin (1999), who studied foreign company advertising in China, discovered that more than three-quarters of them favoured combining the global with the local.

Although these findings reveal a local and national emphasis in Chinese consumer culture, there also exists a growing strain of hybridisation that is already impacting Chinese consumption practices. Joy and Sherry (2004), who describe art as "a knowledge-based cultural product", argue that hybridisation underlies the emergence of knowledge in the People's Republic of China. Hybridisation conveys "the transformative engagement of the artist and the art world through outside (primarily Western) influences. It also underscores "the present- and future-oriented process of invention through complex cultural borrowing from abroad" (Joy and Sherry, 2004; p.310). Influenced by Hollywood's model, the state of the Chinese film industry from the mid to the late 1990s has undergone "institutional restructuring, reprising Hollywood's model of vertical and horizontal integration as well as the industry's concomitant, commercially-oriented film trends" (Zhu, 2010; p.187). In other words, the marketisation and decentralisation of the film industry directly impact the growth of entertainment. Greater imports of Hollywood popular culture into cinemas as compared to the earlier emphasis on propaganda, the market orientation of erstwhile anarchic-writers like Wang Shuo, the taming of Fifth Generation filmmakers, and the gradual commercialisation of Sixth Generation filmmakers, all these changes clearly indicate that global brand culture, heavily defined by Western culture, is on its way to conquering Chinese consumption patterns.

Recent research on contemporary Chinese society has increasingly paid attention to Chinese brand development and its relationship to Western branding models (Temporal, 2001, 2006; and Wang, 2008). Temporal and Wang use a managerial approach in advocating the application of Western branding models and frameworks in Asian markets. Cayla and Arnould (2008), however, argue against this. They claim that Western branding models and principles may not work effectively due to vast cultural differences between Western and non-Western contexts, and instead argue for the utility and effectiveness of a cultural approach. They drew on Georgia (Manning and Uplisashvili, 2007), Chanel and Yves Saint Laurent, and Ralph Lauren and Tommy Hilfiger to demonstrate the extent to which cultural references can fortify brand development and (Kapferer, 2006). Specifically, with respect to China, they firmly advocated the cultural approach based on the successful example of Georgia. The exceptional instances provided by Cayla and Arnould (2008) also demonstrate the degree to which Chinese brand globalisation is wanting in basic theatrical principles necessary for brand success. This study steps in to contribute a research-based examination of Chinese brand development using a cultural approach.

Chapter Three: The Multi-sited Ethnographic Study and the Interpretive Method

This chapter outlines the methodology behind my project, namely the rationale for using an ethnographic focus. The multi-sited ethnographic study is among the most widely used method to study global and local contexts (Kjeldgaard et al., 2006), with some scholars specifically asserting its value in the study of brand development (Bengtsson and Östberg, 2006), and others (Moisander and Valtonen, 2006) homing in on the centrality of interview and observation in the stage of data collection. My choice of a multi-sited ethnographic method accordingly combined interview and observation in an effort to examine the problems surrounding Chinese brand globalisation.

Moving into the frame of this approach, we encounter the emphatic contention (Hodgson, 2007) that methodological individualism constitutes an apposite method to investigate a society because it begins by examining individual behaviour rather than collective groups. The logic here is that since it is individuals, prior to their membership of groups, who constitute society, the examination of contexts must begin with them in their capacity as basic units. In conjunction with methodological individualism, the interpretive case study method provides the added advantage of examining micro practices, a measure that has implications for macro contexts (Thompson and Haytko, 1997). For these reasons, I have conducted each interview and observation individually, and to my findings employed, in each case, an interpretive case study method, from which three distinctive cases emerged.

As per one recent observer (Wiebe et al., 2010), the multi-case study can offer a holistic understanding of cultural formulation processes through interactions between cultural forms and varied contexts. In my study, the multi-case method also reflects a process of exploration providing insights and asking questions that lead to a better understanding of brand development in my chosen context. My thesis emerges from three case studies, the methodology of which is organised by two methods: the thesis-level method and the case-level method. The thesis-level method employs the multi-sited ethnographic approach and the multi-case study combines elements of methodological individualism with the interpretive case study method.

Each case study involves using the multi-sited ethnographic case study approach, methodological individualism, and the interpretive case study method collectively. This combination strategy, on the one hand, enables consumers, producers, marketers, consumer advocates, and various authorities to come to terms with the varied nature of their experiences, and, on the other, enables the researcher to extrapolate conclusions from the micro context for the macro context (Ekström, 2006; Hodgson, 2007; and Thompson and Haytko, 1997).

This chapter, which takes five parts, puts this strategy into practice. The sections are as follows: multi-sited ethnographic studies combined with methodological individualism and interpretive and visual-analysis method; the emergence of three cases and the deployment of the multi-case study; the multi-sited ethnographic study for each case; methodological individualism and visual analysis and interpretive study approach for each case; an interpretive logic and visual-analysis approach to multi-sited interviews, followed by observations on each case.

1. Multi-sited Ethnographic Studies, Methodological Individualism, and Visual-analysis and Interpretive Method

In order to explore the predicament of Chinese brand globalisation in the global context, this thesis first adopts the multi-sited ethnographic method. The main objective of this thesis is to investigate the impact of local, Chinese cultures on global markets.

Despite its upsides, the cross-cultural method, which is widely used in cultural marketing and consumer research, is inherently self-contradictory. Adapting research instruments to individual domestic cultures is necessary to ensure cross-cultural comparability and external validity. But, keeping tests applicable to several nations can also imperil reliability and internal validity (Douglas and Craig, 1997; and Usunier, 2000). Specifically, a confined set of so-called universal traits are used to measure and compare cultures and arrive at conclusions (Kjeldgaard et al., 2006), the application of which can sometimes cause the loss of essence of cultural meanings, of cultural difference, and consequently a loss of new meanings. In a nutshell, the cross-cultural method is torn between acknowledging local specifics and abiding by non-specific, international values applicable to more than one country.

Fortunately, cultural and marketing consumer research is a wide field and provides ample checks and balances. One of them is the ethnographic method of study, which can equalize the effects of cross-cultural analysis. The ethnographic method enables the study of the circulation of meanings and the formulation of cultural forms. The one-sited ethnographic method is typically used to examine the impact of global culture on local cultures, and is particularly valuable in assessing the erosion of local cultures as well as their resistance to Western, neo-colonialism and global capitalism (Gupta and Ferguson, 1997). Ethnographic study is advantageous, in that the ethnographer need only stay in one place in order to study the formulation of cultural forms. However, as this thesis investigates the global influence of Chinese brands, I have necessarily adopted the multi-sited ethnographic method in my research.

The concept of multi-sited ethnography was concretely conceptualised in anthropology under the term "multi-locale" by Marcus (1986, 1989) in the late 1980s. Later in the 1990s, the term underwent conversion to "multi-sited" (Marcus, 1995, 1999), and was subsequently embraced by others around the world. Marcus advocates multi-sited ethnography in interdisciplinary work, or cultural studies, where analyses are not limited to "a clearly bounded object of study," but where "distinct disciplinary perspectives that participate in them tend to be challenged" (1995, p.97). According to him, 'multi-sited' ethnography is particularly useful in examining the circulation of cultural meanings, objects, and identities across time and space (1999). Beginning in the 1990s, the multi-sited ethnographic method increasingly propelled media studies and social and cultural studies of science and technology, though it was only recently introduced into marketing research.

Ekström (2006) describes the multi-sited ethnographic method as a way to understand "micro–macro relationships", (2006; p.505), particularly to study global and local contexts. Recently, Canniford's study (2005) of global culture experiences, for instance, looked at global surfing scenes in Indonesia. He interviewed surfers in various Indonesian surfing locations, reviewed surfing films, media, and historical archives, in an effort to examine how local sovereignty manifests on a global stage. Earlier, Belk et al.'s study on desire (2003) in the United States, Turkey, and Denmark, and Belk and Costa's case studies (1998) on the mountain-man myth in various locations lasting several years also employed the multi-sited ethnographic approach.

Ekström (2006) has provided a detailed summary of cultural research applying Marcus's method of multi-sited ethnographic study. It includes migration studies (Czarniawska, 1998); generational migration of things (Curasi et al., 2004); the body's immune system (Martin, 1994); plot and story (Czarniawska, 2004); history of food consumption among the elderly (Brembeck et al., 2005); and anti-caste activists in India and England (Hardtmann, 2001). A similar summary pertaining to the impact of Marcus's method in marketing and consumer research has been provided by Kjeldgaard et al. (2006). The studies thereof include marketers' structuring of global markets through transnational activities (Applbaum, 2000); unknown brand meanings of the commodification of Nike shoes (Klein, 1999); the construction and production of transnational brand identities (Cayla and Eckhardt, 2008); the history of iconic brands and their impact on popular culture (Holt, 2004); and Doppelgänger's brands (Thompson et al., 2006).

The aforementioned cultural and marketing research examples follow the rise of globalisation from a local vantage, or the structuring of the global 'from within' (Kjeldgaard et al., 2006). Arnould and Thompson (2005) suggest that 'consumer culture theory' (CCT) calls for the development of alternative concepts of culture that explore "the heterogeneous distribution of meanings and the multiplicity of overlapping cultural groupings that exist within the broader socio-historic frame of globalisation and market capitalism" (2005, p.869).

My decision to use a multi-sited ethnographic approach to study Chinese brand globalisation follows the above studies' lead (Ekström, 2006; Kjeldgaard et al., 2006). I adopted a multi-sited ethnographic method to investigate the way in which Chinese branding structures global markets, or formulates Chinese-styled cultural forms, which impact global culture. This approach enables analysis of diverse experiences that influence different groups, and investigation of relevant networks, their mobility, and their reach within the economic infrastructure of globalisation (Kjeldgaard et al., 2006).

My study naturally occurred in phases. Firstly, I sent emails to fifty-three prominent Chinese brand holders that included two important questions: did they wish to develop global brands?, and what were their opinions of Chinese brand globalization? Out of the eight people who agreed to be interviewed, one suggested that I conduct the interview at an international exhibition where I was able to interview an additional four participants. I visited Wenzhou, Hangzhou, and

Birmingham (UK), all three major industrial cities in China and England respectively, where I interviewed eight brand managers and CEOs from China and abroad (see Table 1.1.). I gained access to business networks with nodes in different contexts, Chinese and Western. All participants in the study were assured of anonymity. Table 1.1. provides a list of participant pseudonyms and a brief description of their backgrounds. Seven participants were male and one was female. All were either brand managers or CEOs, ranging from thirty-five to forty-five years of age. All, except one participant, who was Italian, were Chinese.

I also followed information on three key websites, visited one international exhibition, and observed various media resources to study Chinese brand globalisation in the global context (see Table 1.2.) Whereas the websites were absolutely essential source material as they provide up-to-date information on Chinese brand development, the international trading exhibition provided me the opportunity to view Chinese brand development in a Western context. In studying the websites, I employed the visual anthropology method, in which "the analysis of visual records of human experience is a search for pattern and meaning complicated and enriched by our inescapable role as participants in that experience" (Collier, 2001; p.35). Such an approach offers "thoughts on processes of analysis that may build on both the tangible character of visual records and on our varied lenses of personal and cultural identity and experience" (Collier, 2001; p.35).

Methodological individualism is a philosophical method. It explains and comprehends "broad society-wide developments as the aggregation of decisions by individuals" (Cooper and Finklestein, 2008; p.55). Methodological individualism grasps a society-wide situation where the individual constructs society and the aggregation of individual behaviours constitutes society. Methodological individualism is also known as methodological reductionism, which refers to a reduction of the description of all larger entities by reference to smaller ones (Schumpeter, 1909).

The market-system approach (Giesler, 2008), which studies individuals rather than society as a whole, certainly has its detractors. Udehn (2001) views society as established by the sum total actions of individuals in it. In Heath's "holism" perspective (2005), society is greater than the sum of individual action. However, I see society as structured by the actions of individuals, the brand builders, the media, and consumers who constitute society. I interviewed participants who despite being brand builders are also consumers. They function as individuals even though they represent larger corporate entities. By observing websites and on visiting the trading exhibition, I gathered a great deal of information about consumer viewpoints, brand builders, and about governments. This is to suggest that the study of individual participants does in fact provide a dependable picture of the larger, macro context of Chinese brand globalisation.

Ethnographers gather data including the transcription of interviews, notes, journals, and photos from observation (Moisander and Valtonen, 2006). In addition to the interview and observation data, ethnographers also collect data from material cultural artefacts, such as brochures, flyers, business cards, newsletters, and newspapers relevant to the case (Arnould and Wallendorf, 1994; p.485). In order to interpret my data, I employed the interpretive case study method because it provides tools to generate macro implications from interpretations of participant experiences (Thompson et al., 1994). In other words, the interpretation of the multi-sited interviews and observation data from managers, consumers, websites, the exhibition, and from other related resources using an interpretive case study approach can provide insights into the global context of Chinese brand development. The following section provides specific details regarding how the multi-sited ethnographic study was conducted.

2. The Emergence of Three Cases and the Employment of the Multi-case Study

Over a period of three years, from 2007 to 2010, I observed three websites — globrand.com, brandcn.com, and interbrand.com that release information on Chinese branding and export (see Table 1.2.). Globalbrand, along with Join the Portal, is the earliest and most professional media source that showcases the views of thousands of leading industry-experts and opinionists from business, marketing, the management industry, and the chain sector, as well as those of independent entrepreneurs, on issues related to Chinese and foreign branding. Brandcn.com, which is the official website of Brand China Industrial Alliance, is one of the most important Chinese brand communication platforms for experts, brand owners, academicians, and brand managers in China and abroad. Interbrand.com, a leading world brand consultancy, specialises in a vast number of brand services and activities, including brand analytics, brand engagement, brand strategy, brand valuation, corporate identity, digital brand management, and pharmaceutical branding. Most of the reports I followed regularly indicated the existence of problems in Chinese brand development, and showed concern over the relatively low standing of Chinese brand development among world brand builders, professionals, governments, and other related authorities.

For example, Interbrand/Business Week's findings from on-line surveys (2005, 2007, and 2008) of global consumers and brand professionals on "Chinese brand impression" revealed the negative repute of Chinese brands and products in international markets. It was no coincidence that Shelly Lazarus, Chairman of Ogilvy & Mather Worldwide, in Business Week attributed China's lack of authentic brands to Chinese brand builders' lack of stamina in sustainably developing long-term intellectual and emotional bonds between brands and consumers abroad (Peterson, 2004). Lazarus further argued that brands like Lenovo and Haier only offer safety to consumers, rather than moving beyond trust and developing strong emotional connections with consumers.

While visiting the International Trade Exhibition for Kitchens, Bathrooms and Appliances at Birmingham's NEC (2-5 March, 2008), I found that all the Chinese exhibition stands were arranged at the farthest end of the exhibition hall, and that the only exhibitors forbidden to take photos of Western display areas were Chinese. Moreover, the decoration, space layout, and general ambient appeal of the Western brand display areas were far superior to that in the Chinese display areas. When asked for an explanation of these features, one exhibitor, Mr Chen, the manager of a Chinese sanitary-ware company in Shanghai, China (this company closed down in July 2009), responded with the following:

"Of course, the arrangement is unfair, but we are used to it. They do not allow us (Chinese exhibitors) taking photos! I know they worry that we will copy their (Western) new designs. If this exhibition were held in Shanghai, our stands would be more beautiful and larger than theirs (the Western ones). You know, here [the exhibition location] we are far away, so we are limited by how many products we can bring." (Mr Chen, Shanghai)

On the morning of 4 March, 2008, the manager of Kohler visited the stand of Mr Chen's company with a complaint. The multi-functional computerised shower cabin exhibited by Mr Chen's company was apparently a counterfeit of a Kohler original. Mr Chen was asked to remove his example immediately. Later, in private, Mr Chen informed me of the following: "Actually this product is genuine (Kohler). It is the latest style and I have bought it for this exhibition. It is very easy to reproduce!" Mr Li, the manager of a Chinese sanitary ware company in Changzhou, China, also at the show, confirmed Mr Chen's claim. He said, "It is not difficult to produce these kinds of products. You know, the parts are all available in the Chinese market. We just buy it and assemble it. So we can produce every product the clients require!", he declared proudly.

Jason, from a well-known Chinese sanitary ware corporation in Guangzhou, China, disagreed with Mr Chen's and Mr Li's claims:

"That day isn't far when these companies (the two companies mentioned above) will be shut down, if they continue to copy the others. They are not producers, but assemblers. Profit margins of Chinese manufacturing industry are decreasing rapidly in recent years. They will be closed down if they don't care to develop their own designs. This is my third visit, and after visiting their stands (he points to the Western stands), I have to say: we (Chinese exhibitors) are producing goods while they (Western exhibitors) are producing art. For example, I was attracted by Axiom, the premium worktop and accessories range with honed and etched textures. Their stand is really like a kitchen art gallery. I love their slogan: 'kitchen studios'!", he said admiringly.

A sales manager from a well-known Italian sanitary-ware corporation agreed with Jason, and added that, "Chinese companies should recognise that design is the way companies improve their competitiveness. They should invest more time and money in design and R&D. After I look around, there is a big surprise. Some Chinese stool designs look like Chinese traditional porcelain in different colours, such as blue and white. It is brilliant!" (Niki, Italy)

The narratives of the four managers, foreign and Chinese reveal the low stature of Chinese products from the vantage of the Western managers, and the lack of care lavished by Chinese producers on the design of their products. Niki's proposition, that styling Chinese sanitary ware with traditional, culturally-specific motifs is a good way to make Chinese sanitary wares more attractive in the global markets, provides at least one response to this predicament. How to make Chinese products superficially Chinese-styled should, he seemed to imply, become a priority for Chinese producers.

During the interview process, I interviewed two brand builders attached to prominent Chinese brand apparel companies for their opinions on Chinese brand globalisation. These interviews were conducted in person with Mr Wu, and Mr Peng, a CEO, in Wenzhou city, Zhejiang province, in December 2007.

Wu: We have been the men's-suit supplier of Marks & Spencer for several years. You know, the profit is diminishing yearly, though our products' quality has improved and is competitive worldwide. Our brands, like Baoxinaio, are well-known in China and in other Asian countries, but we want to reach more countries, such as the UK and the US. But we really know little about this. (He paused before continuing.)

Interviewer: Yes! Very few companies actually do. But do you have any detailed plans or ideas about it?

Wu: Actually, I think my company could look for high-standard retailers like Marks & Spencer and Wal-Mart to carry our brand in Western markets. We discussed this possibility with Marks & Spencer, but nothing came of it. Actually, we know little about high-level Western markets. We want to change the bad image of Chinese products and brands in Western consumers' eyes. (At this time, this conversation was interrupted by his daughter's call. He answered the phone. Ten minutes later, we continued our conversation.)

Wu: Sorry. My daughter asked me to pay for a Jay Chou concert ticket. 880 Yuan [US$ 130]! I really do not know why young kids love him! Do you like him too?

Interviewer: Yes! I love him too. I am going to attend this concert too!

Wu: Oh! How delighted I would be if my brand would be as famous as Jay Chou! (He blurted out) I heard that Jay Chou is popular not only in China but overseas as well.

According to Mr Wu, his company wants to develop into a global brand, but lacks a positive image and the support of successful international retailers. However, he demonstrated his awareness of what a successful brand is, meaning Jay Chou, who is loved by multitudes of people willing to shell out extremely high amounts of money to consume his products. Mr Peng added a few words to this discussion:

Peng: I think the main problem in our brand development is the lack of professional experts. There are professionals who work for global markets. If we had them, they would bring their professional skills and knowledge to our process of brand development. Further, at the government level, I think the Chinese government should enhance the export of Chinese culture through movies, songs, art, and traditional events."

Interviewer: Could you explain this in greater detail?

Peng: For example, South Korea is one of the world's top ten cultural exporters. The Korean government made a great effort to export Korean culture through the 1988 Seoul Olympic Games and the 2002 Seoul World Cup. After that, exports of Korean TV dramas, movies, and pop music songs burgeoned in the past decade and forged the emergence of a Korean wave. Simultaneously, Korean brands Samsung, LG and Hyundai-Kia emerged as strong brands in global markets.

Interviewer: Do you mean Korean cultural exports enabled the rise of Korean global brands such as Samsung, LG and Hyundai-Kia?

Peng: Yes! I think so. When foreign audiences watch Korean dramas, they gradually learn about Korean culture and appreciate Korean values. This enhances the positive images of Korean brands and increases their openness to consuming Korean products.

Interviewer: In your opinion, the government should hold more exhibitions and international events?

Peng: Yes! Of course! Although the Chinese government did a great effort in hosting the 2008 Beijing Olympics and the 2010 Shanghai Expo, it did little to boost the export of Chinese movies, and music. Jay Chou is popular in Asia, and the Chinese government should offer some support to make him more popular in the West, or support more singers like Jay Chou.

Mr Peng's narrative revealed a common handicap among Chinese producers and marketers, namely their lack of professional skills and expert knowledge in developing global brands. Mr Peng asserted that the export of Chinese culture was likely to help the global brand development of Chinese products, and expressed hopes that the Chinese government would do its part to help out. His and Mr Wu's comments about Jay Chou demonstrated the degree to which Jay Chou represents what a successful Chinese brand looks like from the perspective of Chinese consumers and producers.

Accordingly, my first case study examines Jay Chou, and investigates his success through the lens of theories of symbolic production and consumption, fashion systems, and global and local brand development. My multi-sited ethnographic study involved on-site observation at Jay Chou's concerts, visiting websites, browsing various types of related media, and conducting interviews. For many non-Chinese readers, as well as for the editors from the CTT 2008 conference, Jay Chou does not count as a global brand because he is popular and mainly known only in China. But as China is an economic giant impacting the economies of other countries, one could treat Jay Chou as an established Asian brand now emerging globally.

I leaned to the example of the 2008 Beijing Olympics opening ceremony as my second case study partly because I was a volunteer at this opening ceremony, and also because of Mr Peng's implication that the potential impact of the games offered a clear picture of what such international events can do for a country's global image, including that of its commercial products. In this case study, I make various observations on the opening ceremony after having visited websites, examined relevant media materials, and interviewed brand holders, managers, and consumers.

After the Beijing Olympics, I interviewed Mr Liu, the CEO of a prominent automobile manufacturer, and Mrs Chen, the brand manager for the firm:

"I think this opening ceremony is a good example for our brand owners to note carefully. It blends the past with modern technologies. As for the international branding of our brand, we used elements of the Chinese past to market our brands them overseas. For example, we named one of our sports cars China Dragon. In China, the dragon's symbolic meanings are myriad, and most of them are positive. This car also contains some facial makeup elements drawn from the Beijing Opera in the design of its hood …but the question remains, how does one make these kinds of products and branding activities popular?" (Mr Liu, Hangzhou)

Mrs Chen said: "We used some elements of facial mask-like makeup drawn from the Chinese Opera in the design of 'China’s Dragon', though our colleagues find this somewhat unfashionable." Mr Liu's and Mrs Chen's narratives suggest they are looking for successful ways to invest their products with historical Chinese features, specifically how to re-fashion historical features into trendy product traits. Following Liu and Chen's question, I posted an English and Chinese notice on my MSN account (97 Chinese and foreign friends): "how to make products with historical Chinese cultural elements fashionable in the global markets (please use an example)?" I also emailed this question to 123 brand managers and marketers, in China and abroad. Twelve out of the 69 respondents used Shanghai Tang's example. I invited 8 respondents who actually consume Shanghai Tang products to feature as interviewees. Three agreed to be interviewed. These were Mr Wu, J., Miss Jiang, and Mr Gu). This is how I came to employ Shanghai Tang as the subject of my third case study.

To sum up, my multi-sited ethnographic study, which consisted of methodological individualism, the interpretive case study method, and observation of four key websites, indicated that the problems of Chinese brands' globalisation included the following: low-price, low-quality images, lack of international marketing skills, and a poor understanding of the needs of foreign consumers.

Secondly, interviews of two CEOs (see Table 1.1.) of well-known Chinese brands, revealed concerns about their brands' globalisation resulting from poor knowledge of global marketing, branding, export culture, and the negative image of Chinese products across the globe. However, both interviewees implied Jay Chou provided a model of successful Chinese brand development, and the Beijing Olympics proved similar events in the future could enhance the image of Chinese brands worldwide.

Thirdly, all four participants at the International Trade Exhibition for Kitchens, Bathrooms and Appliances in Birmingham (UK) pointed out that the poor repute of Chinese brands could be improved by applying new paradigms, particularly drawing on Chinese-styling to improve and distinguish contemporary Chinese products.

Although the case study method is the most common approach to examine brand management (Carson et al., 2001), there are some limitations to its application, mainly that a few cases become the basis for making general statements about the issues under examination (Bengtsson and Östberg, 2006). I chose the multi-case study approach in an effort to minimise the potential narrowness of the case study approach and maximise its implications.

The multi-case study approach is particularly valuable in that it provides the opportunity to discover paradigmatic parallels and thereby integrate varied viewpoints under a common umbrella of conceptual hypothesis and theoretical proposition. It, in effect, is a way to acknowledge the limitations of case studies and expand their applications as much as possible (Eisenhardt, 1989). Having indicated the limitations of the case study approach it is only fair to engage frankly with its positive applications. Case studies are based on the value of empirical examination. The multi-case study is a means to mine multiple sources and voices and develop a holistic inquiry of empirical data. It is a complex method that is capable of dealing with the complex intricacies and broad strokes of cultural and social phenomena (Merriam, 1998; Miles and Huberman, 1994; and Yin, 1994). Multi-case studies are particularly useful to investigate interplays between a specific mechanism and diverse aspects of varied contexts, and gain solid configurations and clear temporal sequences that avoid quasi findings (Mills et al., 2009). In other words, the multi-case study can develop a holistic understanding of cultural formulation by addressing precisely how uniqueness intersects with generalities. My study is based on the value of applying a multi-case study approach to the issue of cultural formation in Chinese brand development. Using three unique and representative cases, I will investigate the processes and possibilities of Chinese brand globalisation. My research is grounded in interviews, observations, concrete data, and reasoned analysis. The study itself is divided into four stages. Stage 1 introduces the problems of Chinese brand globalisation (Table 1.1, 1.2.). Stage 2 introduces and describes the case of Jay Chou (Table 2.1., 2.2., 2.3.). The third stage is devoted to the Beijing Olympics opening ceremony (Table 3.1., 3.2.). The fourth and final stage deals with Shanghai Tang (Table 4.1., 4.2.). All individual participants in the study were assured of anonymity and provided pseudonyms. Tables provide a list of participant pseudonyms, brief profiles, and source material for Chinese globalisation and the participants. The next section describes methodology.

3. The Multi-sited Ethnographic Study for Each Case

Bengtsson and Östberg (2006) have suggested that the managerial approach to study brand development suffers from certain limitations, such as the use of unique situations rather than general ones, and intentionality, personal and professional, behind informant narratives. They therefore advocate the use of the multi-ethnographic method to study brand development. Marcus (1998) has emphasised that multi-sited ethnography, which is interdisciplinary and expressive of the diffusion and circulation of cultural meanings across time and space, constitutes a reliable way to acknowledge micro–macro relationships. Multi-sited ethnography reconciles the implied antagonism between consumers and marketers by re-conceiving them as limited actors in global markets. This kind of study conceives consumers and marketers as linked and interdependent entities, with extended links with producers, consumer advocates, and various authorities (Ekström, 2006).

The multi-sited ethnographic study approach compels researchers to acknowledge the existence of differing experiences and varying relationships between different brand actors and use micro perspectives to throw light on the macro context. Researchers thereby gain a better understanding of the wider principles of cultural formation by learning precisely how meanings, objects, and identities circulate in contemporary society (Ekström, 2006). We, as researchers, learn how different groups of brand actors are able to contribute to brand formation and brand development, and it comes as no surprise that numerous researchers have applied the multi-sited ethnographic method to study brand development. Klein (1999), for example, used this method to examine the links in Nike's chain of commodification. Her method took her to sweat factories in China, Indonesia, and other Asian countries, which led her to reveal why Asia swelters and sweats — because it has various suns like Nike.

Multi-sited ethnography thus shows how brand meanings and brands are co-creatively developed and come to include positive and negative meanings (Bengtsson and Östberg, 2006; and Holt, 2004). That brand meaning is a product of co-creation is not a new concept. Many observers have recorded this phenomenon (Bengtsson and Östberg, 2006; Borgerson, 2009; Boyle, 2007; Holt, 2002; and Schroeder, 2009). Bengtsson and Östberg (2006) state that the cultural meaning of a brand is often developed by "various authors" such as the brand owner, consumers, popular culture, and other important stakeholders. The consumers and managerial workers of brands contribute to the cultural meanings of brands through social negotiation (Cova and Dalli, 2009; Schroeder, 2009; and Zwick et al., 2008). Moreover, brand meanings are also produced by popular culture, which includes film, music, sports, fashion, television programmes, magazines, books, and the internet (Arvidsson, 2005). Stakeholders, competitors, labour unions, and retailers used in marketing are also responsible for the production of brand meaning (Bengtsson and Östberg, 2006; Cayla and Arnould, 2008; and Holt, 2004).

In my case studies, all brand actors, and this includes consumers, managerial workers, and the media, were given the opportunity to have their say. They described experiences, narrated stories, and opined on various issues related to brand development. These studies resulted in an in-depth understanding of the cultural formation of each of my selected brands, in that how brand meanings circulate, what kind of objects brands consist of, and what brand identities signify. Following recommendations in the literature (Gupta and Ferguson, 1997; and Kjeldgaard et al., 2006), managerial perspectives, consumer vantages, their networks, and interactions between these participants were all examined in full, to come to an understanding of how Chinese brand development crosses national boundaries and intersects with a global context.

4. Methodological Individualism and the Interpretive Study Approach for Each Case Study

In my study, methodological individualism in cultural and marketing research involved face-to-face interviews with each participant, note-taking, data collection, analysis, observing individual websites, attending concerts and events, and visiting stores related to each case. Hodgson (2007) states that methodological individualism can offer a better understanding of the relations between individuals, who, because they are the stuff of society and social structure, are also the builders of society. Indeed, methodological individualism is the analytical method of choice of most sociological individualists, who argue that studying individual behaviour is the best way to study a society.

Having said that, it is evident that individual behaviour and intentions are varied. They cannot represent the whole phenomenon that is society. This is where a holistic approach becomes relevant. Heath’s "holism" perspective of methodological individualism (2005) implies that society is greater than the sum of individuals and their actions. Still, as individuals, first and foremost, are social units before they constitute interactions, and relationships, groups, and communities, I favour the multi-sited ethnographic approach, which considers individual action before it looks at general roles. Individual interviews and observations made thereof reflect individuals influenced by brand, brand culture, and culture in society. Moisander and Valtonen (2006) state that individuals construct society through discursive, cultural, and material practices. Drawing on experiences narrated by participants, I gathered that consumers, managerial workers, and media reporters all engage with brands and negotiate brand culture. Borgerson (2005) argues that individuals construct identities as much through material objects and practices as they do through human relationships, which is to say that material practice can be as important as human relationships in the construction of social identity.

This study examines brand development by examining perceptions of brand identity and brand image. It is therefore fair to state that this study is based on material facts about individual relationships with material objects. In examining symbolic consumption, this study is examining how consumers, managerial workers, and the media define things that, for all intents and purposes, are grounded in materiality. It is in this sense that the study calls for a materiality-oriented and materially-sensitive approach.

With respect to consumers, a theory of materiality "helps map agency and effects in relations between consumers, objects/relations of consumption, and identity construction" (Borgerson, 2005; p.440). Borgerson's definition of materiality does not simply point to the use of objects by consumers, but also to managerial workers and the media defining brand meanings through working practices. In keeping with this definition, I have organised my case studies with data gathered from consumers, media reporters, and from managerial workers, all of whom told stories and provided observations relevant to the global potential of Chinese-styled brand development.

Methodological individualism cannot live alone. It needs to be processed through the mill of interpretive logic. After conducting interviews, making observations, and gathering data, the next step involved interpretation. Interpretive logic operates as a framework guiding ethnographers to determine whether individual descriptions can adequately contribute to the complex whole of the research subject. Interpretation enables data and observation to become functional by offering specific analyses of complicated systems of meaning. It also functions as a way for the researcher to fruitfully second guess herself and begins to re-read cultural practices that were previously taken for granted. In short, interpretive logic facilitates the emergence of new meanings and new understanding (Moisander and Valtonen, 2006).

Specifically with respect to cultural and marketing research, Thompson and Haytko (1997) argue that interpretive logic provides an in-depth explanation of individual consumer culture as opposed to mass consumer culture (1997, p.451). Moving deeper, the main function of an interpretive method in cultural marketing and consumer culture research is to examine brand development, namely the circulation and accumulation of brand meanings, as demonstrated by studies of Harley-Davidson through activities related to its products (Schouten and McAlexander, 1995), of Star Trek through its enthusiasts (Kozinets, 2001), and of Apple through its users (Muniz and O'Guinn, 2001).

The ramifications of interpretive logic for my study involve gaining in-depth insights into the perceptions of individual consumers, the vantage of managerial workers, the intentions of the media regarding brand cultures, global and local. The approach also reveals which brands influence which individuals, and why, how brands are constructed according to them, and what brand culture is. Interpretive logic thus becomes a means to get to the heart of questions that are central to my project, namely what is brand formulation and how does it occur, and how can Chinese brand builders begin to reformulate their approach to global branding.

Brand meanings are not fixed. They might be appointed by text in advertising, direct mail, and other printed brand stimuli, but unintended meanings appear between the lines through intervention by consumer perception and aspiration. The cultural knowledge of consumers filters brand meanings and sometimes reconstitutes it into forms that are not fully consistent with brand builders' intentions (Eco, 1972; and Scott, 1994). This suggests that brand meaning and brand culture are a complex bundle of personal and socio-cultural meanings (Kates, 2006). Having stated that, brand authors can understand and reconstitute brand meanings only if they possess a minimal level of competency or brand literacy, which facilitates the reading and digesting of brand messages. Competency is desirable as it determines how authors will conduct themselves vis-à-vis brands in commercial and social situations (Peñaloza and Gilly, 1999; and Scott, 1994). Constructing meanings from brands and brand messages operates through flexible socio-cultural codes written by and decoded between varied authors, namely consumers, whose interpretation of brand messages exerts a powerful effect on brand development and brand success. Market interpreters focus on reading and decoding consumer codes, partially accessed through consumer activities and choices, and through messages relayed by mass media and shareholders (Kates, 2006).

In my study, these meanings can decoded from results gathered from multi-sited ethnographic studies combining methodological individualism with interpretive logic. Accordingly, the next section comprises data collection and an explanation of methodological individualism and interpretive logic used in each case study.

5. An Interpretive Logic and Visual-analysis Approach to Multi-sited Interviews with Observations on Each Case

The multi-sited approach enables the researcher to gain in-depth insights provided by different managerial contexts, consumer networks, and their interaction in different contexts. In my study, the multi-sited approach applies to an examination of the development of global brands that by definition cross national boundaries and intersect foreign contexts (Gupta and Ferguson, 1997; and Kjeldgaard et al., 2006). I conducted multi-sited interviews in three urban and commercial centres, two in China and one in the UK, venues that were determined by the location of interviewees.

The results of each interview were subject to observation and interpretive logic. Textual data derived from interviews conducted in varied contexts, such as personal face-to-face interviews, attendance at events (concerts), visiting and studying websites, and reading printed matter. My methods operated on existing models of case study research (Thompson et al., 1989). The tone of the interviews was largely casual, with questions sometimes improvised on-site based on answers provided by participants. Sometimes, participants were asked to elaborate on points included in their responses to acquire detailed reflections. Questions were designed to glean as complete descriptions of specific experiences as possible, with breathing room for participants to introduce unsolicited stories and narratives, which ultimately proved enriching. Therefore, although the design of the interviews was fixed by my desire to gain a full understanding of brand author perspectives, the questions themselves did not follow a preordained format.

Prior to each interview, I apprised participants of what they should expect in the interviews, as they were involved with at least one of the three brands under consideration. I also explained to them the objective of the study, that it was intended to acquire an understanding of their experiences and perceptions pertaining to my three case study subjects, and through these examples, to gain a better understanding of Chinese brand globalisation. The length of the interviews lasted anywhere between 26 minutes to nearly two hours. As suggested by McCracken (1988b) and Thompson et al. (1989), I aimed to create a relaxed interview environment in which the participants experienced ease and comfort by requesting participants to suggest a context and location of their choice. To maintain privacy, no one apart from the interviewer and the interviewee was present during these meetings.

As for the format of the interviews, they typically began with the grand tour, as McCracken calls it (1988b, p.35). This involved inquiries regarding background, such as age, gender, occupation, citizenship, and personal interests. Ensuing questions developed along the following lines: When and why were you involved with these three case study subjects? What was your experience with them? How did you feel about them? The general flow of these questions was determined in keeping with Thompson et al.'s recommendations (1989) regarding the face-face interview.

Following these questions, participants were encouraged to provide details about specific experiences relating to their general perceptions. This measure minimised digressions and maintained the dialogue on an even, concrete keel that was relatively free of abstractions. After these initial responses, the subsequent portions of the conversations spanned various topics including perceptions of their experiences related to relevant social and managerial circles. The concluding questions factored in their opinions, suggestions, and recommendations for Chinese brand builders desiring brand globalisation.

As for events related to my case studies, I attended concerts, visited stores, and took pictures, on each occasion taking notes and transcribing them at the earliest date. Data gathered from these contexts provided an authentic grounding in surface and ambient details.

I employed interpretive analysis to study my transcriptions. My analysis followed the logic of respondent observations, gleaning macro-level implications from micro-level situations (Burawoy, 1991; and Geertz, 1983). These instances of specific personal experiences, social practices, and cultural texts can be understood as interpretive stations for authorising, negotiating, and conveying the cultural meanings of social value systems. Following (Thompson et al., 1994), I used interpretation to discover the cultural meanings in and beliefs behind participant descriptions

(Thompson et al., 1994). The next task involved situating the discovered meanings in relation to existential research theories on brand globalisation in order to develop an understanding of conflicts and paradoxes as perceived by the participants, and of strategies implied in their descriptions and observations of the case study subjects. To these results, I added the results of visual analysis of websites, store location events, and photos, as the analysis of visual records provides pattern and meaning to the differing experiences of participants (Collier, 2001). Details about data collection, transcription, and analysis pertaining to each case study appear in the following section.

In discussing his concerns about the global visibility of his company's brands and using enhanced retailing strategy, one of the two participants working for a prominent Chinese apparel manufacturer invoked Jay Chou, which is one more reason why my study uses Jay Chou as a case study subject.

This case study applies the multi-sited ethnographic method. I visited Beijing, Shanghai, and Wenzhou to interview three consumers from China and France aged between 24 and 36 years (see Table 2.1.). Two were male and one was female. Their profiles spanned the gamut between student and vice general manger. The general background data showed that Jay Chou was popular among various groups. The interviews were conducted in relatively private places selected by participants, such as participants' offices and coffee shops. The interviews typically began with general background questions. Subsequent questions migrated to relaxed areas: do you know Jay Chou held a fan concert in Wuhan last week? Questions thereafter focused on perceptions, such as what do you think of Jay Chou? Do you like him and why? Interviews lasted 26, 31 and 50 minutes respectively. Two were conducted in Chinese and one was conducted in English. I translated the Chinese ones into English. Fifteen months later, in March 2010, I re-interviewed the two Jay Chou consumers (Miss Wu and Mr Wu). I asked them the following question: What do you think of Jay Chou now?. These interviews lasted 27 minutes and 44 minutes respectively. We spoke in Chinese. I translated the transcriptions into English.

Between 2005 and 2008, I attended four Jay Chou concerts, one each in Beijing, Shanghai, Hangzhou, and Wenzhou (see Table 2.2.). These concerts lasted two to four hours. The number of the participants ranged between 10,000 and 80,000. In addition to concerts, I also visited websites. I observed five Jay Chou-related websites for a period of more than three years. Three of the five websites (see Table 2.3.) were fan-related, and two were official. Three of the five were in English. I had also followed other online data, watched television shows, read printed materials on Jay Chou for a period of seven years, and listened to eight of his albums. I took notes on website observations of important new releases, interviews, lyrics, album and song names, and music instruments. I used one picture I shot at one of the concerts and one interview of Jay Chou's business partner Vincent Fang featured in *Southern Metropolis Weekly*. I also used secondary data from Fung (2008) who has studied Jay Chou's fan bases and related information for three years. All these sources and instances of data provided varied interpretations of Jay Chou, namely how Jay Chou's cultural meanings circulate, and how he, in his capacity as a cultural form, has developed.

Using interpretive data analysis, and following recommendations in the literature (Kates, 2006), I extrapolated macro implications from the micro meanings of participant interpretations, narratives, and descriptions. Jointly, the interview and observation data, in conjunction with secondary data from Fung (2008), made possible a theoretical framework that cuts across geopolitical spaces and crosses cultural barriers. Such a framework provides insights into existing marketing strategies in the global marketplace, and into ideologies of evolving Chinese culture.

To investigate how the Beijing Olympics opening ceremony has enabled "China" to grow as a global brand, I interviewed international consumers, CEOs, and brand managers from universities, corporations, and market research firms located in the UK and China. Following a multi-sited study, I conducted interviews online, telephonically, and in person, corresponded over email, visually analysed taped recordings of the opening ceremony, drawing upon textual data gathered over the previous eight months divided between on-site locations in China and the UK. All these steps and measures followed the logic of the interpretive approach (Kates, 2006), which focuses on the activities of consumers and other brand authors to understand how authors construct brand meanings.

Some stages in my case study of the Beijing Olympics opening ceremony began as early as 10 August, 2008, only two days after the ceremony. I began by posting a bilingual English and Chinese notice on my MSN account (which included 82 Chinese and foreign friends) asking "did you watch the Beijing Olympics opening ceremony?" and "what do you think of it?". I requested my MSN friends to write back with examples. I also sent 112 emails, with these questions attached, to marketing executives, managers, and CEOs of prominent Chinese brand firms, including but not limited to Lenovo, Lining, Haier, Geely, Quanjude, Maotai, and Tingdao Beer. The list of email recipients produced three interviewees for the Jay Chou case and six interviewees for the Chinese brand globalisation focus. I acquired 52 respondents, 37 of whom answered the questions with replies ranging from 17 words to 113 words, though most provided rather casual answers with few details and many abstractions. I sent more emails to the corps of 52 respondents requesting them to agree to in-depth interviews. 13 agreed to participate (see Table 3.1.). Later that same August (2008), I interviewed 6 participants in Beijing, Jinan, Shenzhen, and Shanghai.

Subsequently in October 2008, I posted a notice to recruit participants from Exeter University. I was looking for answers to the following questions: "did you watch the Beijing Olympics opening ceremony?" and "what do you think of it?". Participants were offered £10 per hour. There were 57 respondents, out of which I selected one, and conducted the interview in my office. Later, in December 2008, I interviewed two participants in Hangzhou. Both worked for a top Chinese automobile corporation. Thereafter, during the Shanghai Tang study, I interviewed two participants employed with the company. I asked them for their opinions on the Beijing Olympics opening ceremony. More recently, in 2010, I interviewed four participants, previously interviewed in December 2007 for their views on Chinese brand globalisation, this time to discuss the 2008 Beijing Olympics opening ceremony.

I gathered a convenience sample of people who had seen the opening ceremony and were willing to be interviewed. A total of 16 informants, including CEOs, brand managers, and consumers were involved in semi-structured interviews over a period of eight months (see Table 3.1.). The interviews lasted between 60 and 75 minutes and were conducted in English and Chinese, the latter translated into English. After the grand tour questions, I asked for participants' opinions of the Beijing Olympics opening ceremony and about CEOs' and brand managers' current business situations. These were followed by detailed questions about the use of advanced technology to stage Chinese historical culture in the opening ceremony, and its implication for Chinese cultural branding.

Empirical data was also collected from Chinese print media, on-line and televised advertisements, and from newscasts on the Beijing Olympics opening ceremony. Five useful interviews conducted by CRI (China Radio International), Financial Times, The New York Times, beijing2008.cn (the official website of the Beijing Olympics), Movie View (Kan Dianying), and China's most popular film magazines were also selected (see Table 3.2.). By examining these different sources, I constructed careful descriptions of informant opinions of China's branding through the Beijing Olympics opening ceremony, and their perceptions of Chinese international branding. While interpreting informant responses and the media archive, the opening ceremony was placed within the larger context of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, Chinese branding, and global cultural branding. In doing so, I double-checked quotes and observations, and tried to link these to theories in Consumer Culture Theory and international marketing, in an effort to conceptualise an alternative framework that sheds light on Chinese branding contexts.

The case study of the Beijing 2008 summer Olympics opening ceremony left one important question unanswered: how to make historical Chinese culture in branding and branded products fashionable? The CEO (Mr Liu) and brand manager (Mrs Chen) from a prominent Chinese automobile corporation stated that, "We used historical Chinese elements in our brands and products to market them overseas … but how do we make these kinds of products and branding activities popular?"

Seeking answers to Liu and Chen's question, I posted an English and Chinese notice on my MSN account (97 Chinese and foreign friends) asking people for their thoughts on how to make products with historical Chinese cultural elements fashionable in global markets. I requested people to send answers with examples. I also sent 123 emails with this question to brand managers and marketers in China and abroad. Out of 69 respondents, 12 mentioned the example of Shanghai Tang, which topped the list. Seven informants consumed Shanghai Tang products, and three of these agreed to in-depth interviews. Through this case study, I investigated how a sample of Shanghai Tang consumers, including managerial workers, perceived the metaphorical and emotional meanings of historical Chinese culture, which they associated with branding activities and found fashionable.

In the process of conducting this study, I interviewed Shanghai Tang's international consumers and managers from universities, corporations, and market research firms in the UK and China. A multi-sited research approach was applied including online contact, phone calls, and face-to-face interviews, followed by email correspondence, and visual analysis of the Shanghai Tang image. I interviewed 11 managerial participants and 12 consumer participants, personally observed activities in 10 stores in China and the UK, and used three media interviews from websites (See Table 4.1., 4.2.). This multi-sited ethnographic study method deployed methodological individualism and drew upon interpretive logic to discover the brand meanings of Shanghai Tang.

In order to investigate the possibilities and processes of Chinese global branding, I take Shanghai Tang as an illustrative case and study phenomena arising from it. These include practices pertaining to managerial branding and consumer consumption. The multi-sited ethnographic method is a widely used method to study principles and relationships in local and global contexts. Ekström (2006) and Kjeldgaard et al. (2006) state that the multi-sited ethnographic study enables ethnographers to learn about different experiences and relationships among consumers, producers, marketers, and consumer advocates, and thereby use micro practices to shed light on the macro context. Researchers can thus appreciate and gauge the process of cultural formation by understanding the circulation of meanings, objects, and identities in contemporary society.

In order to conduct individual observations and interviews in different locations, this case study used methodological individualism, which helps the researcher acknowledge relations between individuals, brands, brand culture, and what they co-construct (Hodgson, 2007). Moreover, in the interpretive case study method, specific personal experiences, social practices, and cultural texts offer interpretative locations for authorising, negotiating and conveying cultural traditions, meanings, and social value systems in relation to existential research theories on macro phenomena (Thompson et al., 1994). Accordingly, the micro-level data collected for Shanghai Tang from managerial workers, consumers, and the media was employed to interpret the macro-level concepts and then understand the circulation of meanings between brands and brand authors. In interviewing global consumers and marketers of Shanghai Tang in different locations and by observing its stores, related consumer consumption behaviour, relevant websites, and other media resources, the case study reveals the possibilities and processes of understanding and engaging Chinese cultural resources through fashion codes in Chinese global branding strategy.

The ten Shanghai Tang stores I visited are located in Shanghai (three stores), Beijing (four stores), Hangzhou (one store), Guangzhou (one store), and London (one store). I interviewed eleven store managers and sale associates (see Table 4.1.). All the Shanghai Tang stores I visited were located on main thoroughfares, luxurious hotels, or centrally-located shopping malls. Shop designs were similar and fashionable, luxurious, and glamorous.

In the first interview with the store manager of the Shanghai Tang store in the Shangri-La Hotel, Shanghai, the participant suggested that it would make more sense if I posed as just another consumer in future interviews with Shanghai Tang employees. I followed her advice and withheld my identity and intentions from subsequent Shanghai Tang interviewees. In this way, I interviewed 11 Shanghai Tang store managers and sales associates (see Table 4.1.). These interviews lasted 60 to 120 minutes. On leaving the stores, I noted down every detail of what the store managers and sales associates had said. All the participants spoke in Chinese, which I translated into English. As required by their jobs, each participant introduced the products in a competent fashion and even helped me to pick out certain items, which I tried on in the stores.

After noting down my experiences and the employee statements, I returned to the locations to take pictures of the stores and looked for a suitable method to observe the consumers and their consumption practices unnoticed. I was able to interview seven customers who had completed their shopping at the stores (see Table 4.2.). These interviews lasted 25 to 45 minutes, typically taking place at coffee shops located near the stores. Later, I e-mailed 8 Shanghai Tang consumers for follow-up interviews, out of which three respondents (Mr Wu, J., Miss Jiang, and Mr Gu) accepted my requests. These interviews were conducted in their offices in China, and lasted between 45 and 67 minutes. Thereafter, I sent 203 e-mails to staff and students at Exeter University and received four responses. I selected two informants, one from the UK, and another from Singapore. The latter, who was over 35 years of age and well-educated, was a Shanghai Tang consumer. This interview took place in my office and lasted 60 minutes. I recorded both interviews, which were conducted in English, and transcribed them verbatim. Six of the managerial participants were current Shanghai Tang consumers and five were potential consumers. Each one provided reasons for his/her keenness to patronise Shanghai Tang. In total, there were 22 consumer participants, including 11 managerial workers as consumers.

The consumers among the participants raged between 25 and 52 years, of which 4 were male, and 7 female. Three of the women, diasporic Chinese, favoured the accessories. Their Western female counterparts also expressed the same preference, and added that the Chinese cufflinks would make good gifts for male friends. Most of the male consumers expressed their interest in the Chinese Tang suit, and generally admired Shanghai Tang designs. Interviews with the Chinese participants were conducted in Chinese, subsequently translated into English. The rest of the interviews were conducted in English. Barring Mrs Guo, none of the interviewees wanted to be recorded. They said being taped would prevent them from speaking freely.

The interviews began with general questions about the participant's background and working experience. Thereafter, I asked participants why they purchased Shanghai Tang products. They responded with stories and narratives expressing emotional bonds with the brand. These interviews were supplemented with data gathered from electronic media, such as online and televised ads, newscasts, and online academic articles about Shanghai Tang. I also sourced interviews conducted by Media TV (2009), Fast Company (2006), and Shanghai Tang.com, and one article from Harvard Business Review (Chua and Eccles, 2009). By examining different sources, I was able to construct detailed descriptions of respondent opinions of Shanghai Tang's brand development across the globe and attitudes to Chinese historical citation in international branding.

Chapter Four: A Case Study of Jay Chou, a Successful Chinese Music Artist

1. The Significance of Jay Chou

Jay Chou, Chinese name Zhou Jielun, is undeniably the most popular Chinese music artist of the past ten years. There is ample evidence to prove this. Chou enjoys high record sales, a massive fan base, and packed concerts. Despite rampant piracy in China, which typically causes a 90-95% decrease in the sales volume of the Chinese recording industry, Jay Chou seems especially resistant. Each of his records has exceeded 2 million in sales (www.baidu.com, 2010; and Fung, 2008). No doubt it is hard to measure the exact number of Chou fans. But, in 2004, Chou was the most popular music idol among young Chinese adults aged 9 to 14 across at least five urban centres (www.baidu.com, 2010). In 2006, he was a number one favourite among people aged 8 to 25 across seven East and Southeast Asian countries (www.baidu.com, 2010). Chou has held about 70 concerts across more than 30 Chinese cities, more than 10 concerts in the East and Southeast Asian world, and 10 concerts in America, Canada, and Australia. In 2005, Jay Chou was also the first singer to mount a show at Shanghai Stadium, which accommodates an audience of 80,000. Tickets sold out in a matter of days. According to a report on jay-chou.net posted in 2010, Chou has once more been crowned the top money-making singer in Taiwan with an annual income of NTD 852 million (about USD 27.64 million). These figures reflect revenue earned from 31 shows in a world concert tour, 20 paid performances, and numerous endorsement deals, all in one year (www.baidu.com, 2010).

As suggested in the literature (Schroeder, 2007), it is through the study of a number of factors, including aesthetic and cultural economy, that the researcher can fully examine precisely how a brand, in this case Jay Chou, generates an entire market, including endorsements, sponsored concerts, and advertising contracts marketing products specifically through his music. In Chou's case, support from the Chinese government has been key. His work cites historical sources so strategically that many consider the sum total of his career so far to be no less than a manifest renaissance of Chinese traditional culture, one that adequately suits dominant political ideology and its goals. A good example of the strength of Jay Chou's political endorsement is his frequent appearance singing Chinese-themed and styled music for New Year Galas on CCTV (China Central Television), the mouthpiece of China's Central Propaganda Department.

Specifically, Chou's Chinese-styled music showcases "Zhongguo feng" (literally "China Wind" in Chinese), a new genre of Chinese music fusing traditional Chinese instruments and musical styles with western R&B and rock that reached its peak in Chou. Zhongguo feng in Chou transcends style to encompass lyrics and content. Chou's lyrics are pointedly cultural, imagistic, and emotionally-poignant. They emulate well-known forms from ancient Chinese poetry, incorporating history, folklore, and common social and political themes, such as war, violence, and drug abuse. In his concerts, state of the art technology is used to produce spectacular stage design in which Chou dressed in trendy Western clothing and singing his fusion sets creates an unforgettable image of modern China. Chou is also very good at adapting to context. At a recent show in Los Angeles (December 2007), Chou was dressed in a shiny American-style waistcoat while performing *Faraway* and *Nun-Chuks*, songs containing a plethora of Chinese cultural references. Chou's public image is also built in this mould of hybrid Chinese, where Western individuality meets Chinese filial piety, which Chou avows is "the most important thing" in his life. Though he is reported to be a hardworking perfectionist and self-directed music artist, Chou describes himself as a shy and modest young man who feels no shame admitting he's actually "a mama's boy".

How did Jay Chou, a 31-year-old singer of modest background and barely any connections to speak of, become such hugely successful Chinese star with a sizeable global reach? What cultural strategies did the managerial team behind Chou deploy to propel him onto an international stage despite the political, economic, and cultural constraints of the Chinese market? In the context of global branding, Jay Chou, whose career is like a shooting star that only goes higher and higher, sheds light on some of the mechanisms required to create global brands.

2. Jay Chou, Chinese Music Art and Marketing

Although Jay Chou has managed to carve himself the image of a successful brand with an exceptional music style, the tensions between music and business have not been kind to other artists with similar aspirations. Some Chinese researchers, cultural critics, and consumers state that the arts should not become more commercial than they have already done (Cui and Zhou, 2001). Music, they claim should be separated from commerce, and that "good" art does not call for marketing. It sells on the basis of quality alone. Cui, Jian, the founder of Chinese rock music, for instance, was vehemently against the commercialisation of art and music. He claims commerce makes art and music vulgar, and instead advocates authenticity (Cui and Zhou, 2001).

Despite its naysayers, the Chinese music market has grown significantly since the early 1990s, its commercial boom neatly coinciding with the recent history of economic liberalisation in China (Kloet, 2010). Most Chinese music artists support commercialisation. They argue that commercial mechanisms are inherent in the music and art market due to branding's prominent role in cultural practices (Bradshaw et al., 2006; Joy and Sherry, 2003; Maclaran et al., 2009; Schroeder and Borgerson, 2002; and Schroeder, 2005a, 2007, 2009). Their view expresses the idea that successful music artists who manage to record, perform, and sell widely are a kind of twin engine, equal parts knowledge and branding, a consummate entity combining art and image making (Schroeder, 2005a). Jay Chou's fan base is good proof that most Chinese consumers approve of commercialisation. It also suggests that holding back on marketing and branding is a sure-fire means to limiting an artist's career. Modestly-run marketing campaigns simply do not work in a world where individuals are accustomed to consuming cultural forms through commercial networks defined by marketing. Marketing is as much of a cultural code as is the style of a music artist. In Chou's case, however, the code is not just marketing but also his foundation in Chinese-styled music. Marketing that grasps these cultural codes succeeds, because it is the cultural code, and not just the marketer or brand manager, that sustains meaning (Schroeder and Salzer- Mörling, 2006). This case study therefore examines how cultural codes control and sustain the brand meanings of Jay Chou.

3. The "Imagined China" as Modern-Cultured Chinese Features

The imagined China manifest in Jay Chou's music, lyrics, and branding activities has a distinct style reflecting the reality of contemporary China infused with tradition and modernness. The following sections present this imagined China complete with traditional and modern features defined by myth, history, and contemporary culture, and fuelled by global fashion mechanisms.

Joy and Sherry (2004), who describe art as "a knowledge-based cultural product", argue that art in the context of the People's Republic of China is a hybrid entity. Its hybridisation conveys "the transformative engagement of the artist and the art world through outside (primarily Western) influences". It also underscores "the present- and future-oriented process of invention through complex cultural borrowing from abroad" (Joy and Sherry, 2004; p.310). That Jay Chou exemplifies this definition of hybridisation will be demonstrated below.

Jay Chou expresses traditional and fashionable brand images through his songs, concerts, and activities. He is also an artist whose work is grounded in contemporary social contradictions, or concrete reality. This is something brand strategists, advertisers, tourist promoters, and marketing agents actively promote to ensure his work reverberates more deeply across his fan base. Chou's marketers are not unique in their deployment of this mechanism. Marketers frequently make recourse to images expressing social anxieties to make stories reverberate, a tactic intended to give the impression of social relevance (Holt, 2004), and facilitate the formation of groups and group images in which people can claim membership (Thompson, 2004). Jay Chou's example proves that the creation of group membership is absolutely key in brand development. The group image that his case expresses is patently that of the "Imagined China".

3.1. The "Imagined China" via the representation of historical Chinese culture to develop sacred meaning

The representation of historical culture in brands is a natural magnet for feelings of reverence and pride in consumers. Although the stimulus itself might not be sacred, feelings evoked by historical representation could be understood as sacred emotion. Belk et al. (1989) posit, that while sacred meanings develop from religious associations, sacredness is also dependent on spatial and temporal context, secular consumption being one such context. In Jay Chou's case, some of the interviewees suggested that Chou develops sacred or sacred-like meanings by absorbing historical Chinese culture into his work. This includes using Chinese classical instruments, music styles, martial arts, and classical poetry. Miss Wu, for example, said, "Jay's work is very sacred to me. His works and performances vividly and creatively reproduce Chinese historical culture, such as martial arts and traditional Chinese poems. A lot of young people find this very holy".

In Wu's narrative, "sacred" seems to refer to feelings of veneration, which typically pertain to divinity or divine things, or, in this case, to historical culture. Chou's work frequently cites martial artists and Chinese poetry, entities that are widely venerated in Chinese culture. For example, one of Jay Chou's songs entitled

Fearless in English, or Huo Yuan Jia in Chinese, immediately evokes reverence as Huo Yuanjia was a real life hero. He was a martial artist whose name became synonymous with patriotism after his widely-chronicled feats employing martial arts (Huo family-style martial art "Mizongquan" or literally "Hidden Trace Boxing") in attacks on foreign invaders at the turn of the 20th Century. Huo Yuanjia thus became associated with the protection of Chinese sovereignty at a time when China was corroded by colonization and foreign concessions (Lee, 2005). The song after his name is basically a patriotic tear-jerker that invokes feats of the swashbuckling national hero, and consequently pride in Chinese sovereignty. The chain of associations extends even further. Huo Yuanjia is also a mnemonic for a range of historical Chinese practices and belief systems beginning with martial arts and ending in religion and philosophy.

In Chinese martial arts, the value of bodies and weapons includes and transcends utilitarian concerns such as self-defense. Martial arts represent various ideologies, such as the cultivation of health and the search for virtue. No doubt they are an aesthetic of bodily control and physical skill but they also refer to the aesthetics of mind, or qi as the inner gong (qigong; Xu, 1999). Qi is also important in Chinese religions, such as Confucianism, Daoism, and Chanzong, that advocate the cultivation of body and mind through qi, or vital energy (Xu, 1999). Qi nurtures virtuous behaviour in Confucian rituals and Taoist's mythic knowledge about "spiritual transcendence and immortality". Qi encompasses bodily movement and quiet-sitting meditation to achieve union with the occult and the all-permeating Tao, which is a means to liberate the ego-centered self and Chan Buddhism's dharma body (Xu, 1999; p.967). Qi, which requires dedication and stamina, is no ordinary activity. Its practice evokes esteem and admiration. Citation of it, practices aligned with it, and historical individuals associated with it, in a pop song by a good-looking superstar in trendy clothing is consequently a recipe for the instant creation of awe, and perhaps even envy, which is perhaps what Wu was referring to in stating that Jay Chou's work was very sacred to her.

Historical musical instruments, their sounds, the associations and images they immediately invoke, and historical poetry, are also central to Chou's work. In China, classical poems and prose were typically performed by court musicians during ritual celebrations. Solo instruments in small ensembles of plucked and bowed stringed instruments, such as the pipa guzheng, the guqin, and the erhu, combined with flutes, cymbals, gongs, and drums, were used in traditional holiday celebrations (Lee and Shen, 1999). In the song *Fearless*, Chou employs Chinese drums and cymbals to express the strength and determination of the hero Huo YuanJia. But he also uses the erhu, the dizi, and the pipa while singing parts of the song in a thin, falsetto voice, all of which collectively express sadness at the hero's assassination by Japanese attackers. The song, thus, becomes a cleverly choreographed chronicle of history manipulated by acoustic stimuli that generate nostalgia and feelings of loss that transcend time and place. This, in effect, is also the "Imagined China" in full steam and full colour, an abstract and concrete world of the past and present fused into an indivisible entity.

3.2. The imagined China via the representation of historical Chinese culture and the help of global fashion resources to develop a hybrid image

De-localisation, or glocalization, caused by global forces and the mobility of population leads to the cultural form of "hybridization" through television, the internet,, advertising, trade, and travel (Pieterse, 1995). With respect to China, Chinese entrepreneurs gained access to Western ideas, forms, and discourses through the filter of the Chinese intelligentsia, members of which manoeuvred localization, in that they freely added Chinese ideas, forms, and discourses to Western imports, concrete and abstract, with little or no regard for contradiction. This process led to the development of hybrid representations of what it meant to be "Chinese" (Cochran, 2006).

Jay Chou exemplifies this kind of hybridisation propelled by global fashion systems. He is modern, traditional, historically-rooted, and internationally-bound. His hybrid image, like other hybrid images, which combine two originals to produce two new originals (Papadopoulos and Heslop, 1993), is a combination of traditional culture and global fashion. Brand images are nourished by consumer emotions, such as excitement, trustworthiness, fun, dullness, and innovation (Biel, 1991). Jay Chou's brand image is no different.

3.2.1. The sacred feature of Jay Chou’s hybrid image

Beyond classical Chinese references, Jay Chou is a master of borrowing and re-imagining popular culture. Specifically, his mechanism relates to wulitou subculture (nonsensical humour), which was popular in the 1980s and represented by Stephen Chou through surreal visual expressions on Music Television (MTV; Davis, 2004).

Like tropes of humour and comedy elsewhere, wulitou subculture is distinguished by the flattening of social boundaries through fantasy. If Chou's landscape is that hybrid of old and new, contemporary and future, its population is joined by a common trope of nonsensical, light-hearted humour, which provides release from normative social roles and the impression of equal status.

Chou's song, *Nun-Chuks*, (Figure 1) is a good example of this process at work. The song uses Chinese-style compositions including the powerful, explosive sound of a traditional drum, the graceful relaxing sound of the piano, and the refreshing catharsis provided by the sorrowful sound of the erhu, a traditional Chinese instrument. Collectively, this instrumental backdrop elicits reminiscences and nostalgia. Strategically included martial arts expressions in the lyrics instantly produce the impression of stoicism. We hear such symbolic phrases as "practicing the Iron Palm", "playing with the Tang family spear", "the 'qi' flows to the public region and opens palm of hand", "running a thousand miles in a day with sandbags tied to one's ankles", and "running on leaves and walking on walls" (Jay Chou Stadio.com, 2010a). These citations are responsible for the distinctive expressiveness and imagist richness of Jay Chou's songs. According to Shiva (2005), these carefully combined musical gestures and themes, which enable identification with Nun-Chuks's heroes and heroines, facilitate the dis-estrangement of listeners' inner feelings, or re-acquaintance of previously-suppressed emotions.

Furthermore, in the *Nun-Chuks* music video (MV), seemingly surreal visual expressions unify classical themes, such as martial arts, and modern vulgar street violence, which elicits humour. To some extent, these paradoxical meetings are historically-accurate, and capture the thrilling subculture of wulitou, the seemingly irreverent expressions of which contribute to the creation of an atmosphere of absurd nonsensical humour (Davis, 2004). The employment of wulitou is clever and opportune, in that it appeals to young audiences and reminds older ones of their youth. It evokes images of schooldays. To me personally, the song evokes an experience from my youth, when on being bullied by older students while on my way to school, I confronted the situation by imagining myself as the son of a martial artist on his way to Shaolin Temple or Wu Dang Mountain to learn martial arts to fight violence. Likewise, young people influenced by traditional Chinese culture are likely to associate the historical aspects of Chou's songs with some part of their youth. Moreover, on a general level, the songs' themes evoke heroism, which most people are likely to enjoy. Against the backdrop of urban violence and crime, many of Chou's songs offer a fantasy world of heroes and heroines fighting for justice, following a virtuous path, and conquering evil, all through the system of pop music, bright lights, great costumes, and a general sense of levity and fun.

Chou might have captured the pulse of young people through wulitou, but he is not without introspective features that appeal equally to young listeners and audiences His song *Chrysanthemums Terrace* (Figure 2) draws upon some elements of Chinese vocal music, which has traditionally been sung in a thin, non-resonant voice, or in falsetto, typically with a solo accompaniment of the guzheng and the erhu (traditional stringed instruments). This song, like others, treats audiences to a somewhat authentic slice of older Chinese music aesthetics (Kartomi, 1990). Lyrics from classical Chinese poems also make such songs notably nostalgic in feeling. They describe how an ancient Chinese general and his wife desperately long for each other while the general is away at war. Their mutual passion though strong is expressed through restrained and mournful, feelings, which indirectly touch upon the foulness of war through vivid expressions like "Your tears…glisten, laced with pain. The crescent moon hangs in the past…pale with sickness. Cool night, too long… turns to frost. Who is on the tower…frozen in despair?" (Jay-Chou Stadio.com, 2010b).

The lyrics are peppered with numerous classical expressions, such as "Distant dreams... rise like incense", in which metaphor generates an open-ended image (Jay Chou Studio.com, 2010b). The distant dream could be the general's war ambition, though endless war also makes glory in war a distant dream, a castle in the air. Or, it could be the couple's reunion, or peace. This song pinpoints the importance of brand essence, which is open-ended and abstract, and all the more fascinating for this reason.

If some expressions, such as "Chrysanthemums fall... weeping to the ground and Traces of your smile on a yellowing scroll..." indulge in non-specifics, the title of the song and repeated reference to the title flower evokes a very specific image.

In ancient China, chrysanthemums represented loneliness and unhappy things. Even today, they evoke melancholic feeling (Reckert, 1993). The lines quoted above use the common rhetorical device of synaesthesia from Chinese poetics (Cohen and Harrison, 2001). This manifests in the "yellow" of the chrysanthemums and the "yellowish" smile of the woman, suggesting that the wife's bright and warm smile is turning yellowish from absence and longing, which, in turn, evokes the image of the husband at war.

The songs' lyrics and their devices thus collectively create a sensorium of history and times past that is nonetheless familiar in the feelings it evokes. The Chinese-styling of these songs, through references to history, traditional motifs, poetic symbols and their emotive landscapes, against traditional acoustic-scenarios, are all designed to attract listeners but also maintain a historical distance from the present. This distance is key, in that it alone sustains the particular relationship between the song and the listener — that of veneration and awe.

3.2.2. The fashionable features of Jay Chou's hybrid image

Jay Chou's music is indebted to the past, though it lives very much in the present. It knows its audience and responds to their needs. The emotional feeling of Jay Chou's music is also fashionable. It rides on Western rhythms. The hybrid styling is now so distinctive that it has its own name. The "Chou Style" describes Jay Chou's trademark cross-cultural migrations, into history, across the globe, into art and myth, and philosophy. It also refers to his uninhibited traverse of musical genres, such as R&B, hip-hop, rock, blues, western classical music, and country.

Price (2006; p.41) states that "Hip Hop assembled energetic music, passionate graffiti artists, acrobatic dancers, and skilled wordsmiths into a unified aesthetics, each in its own way representing passion for life and a commitment to individual and collective expression". Jay Chou is also a practitioner of unified aesthetics. Many of Chou's songs are written in the pentatonic scale (five-note scale) with bright colour, energetic movements, and dramatic effects that set his work apart from the typical preference in contemporary pop music for the diatonic scale (seven-note scale). In his famous song *Blue-and-White Porcelain*, for instance, Chou combines the guzheng (a traditional Chinese instrument) and the Western acoustic guitar using the pentatonic scale to make the sound passionate.

Chou also incorporates a smorgasbord of world music elements into his music, such as Spanish guitar in *Red Imitation* ("Hong Mofang" in Chinese), American techno/electronica in *Herbalist’s Manual* ("Ben Cao Gang Mu" in Chinese), Western classical music undertones in *Reverse Scales* ("Ni Lin" in Chinese), and Bossanova in *Rosemar*y ("Midei Xiang" in Chinese). He also cleverly Westernises the song titles, and, on many occasions, his lyrics contain classic Western storylines, a decision that seems to have paid off. Mr Wu, a 36-year-old Chou fan said:

> "I have to say, I really like the names of his [Chou's] songs and albums! He names a lot of Western places, activities, and heroes and heroines. They sound interesting, maybe very imaginative. For example, I always think of power when I listen to *Bull Fight* (one of his songs). Spain has a long history of them. They say that bullfighting is a form of worship and sacrifice in ancient Spanish rituals. (Mr Wu from Shanghai)

Mr Wu's description indicates that the title *Bull Fight* functions like a mnemonic invoking European culture, history, and aesthetics. Indeed, bullfighting embraces contradictory aesthetics — the wilderness of a cruel cultural practice living on in civilised life. Bullfighting is a violent, cruel, and bloody game played between man and beast. Alain Renaut states that "Bull fighting symbolises man's combat with nature - a nature that is constantly threatening to engulf him from without and from within while he attempts to breaks away from it countering violence and aggressively with reason and calculation" (Calarco and Alterton, 2004; p.152). In this description, bullfighting represents man "breaking away" from a natural state in contrast to the animal staying imprisoned. This contrast underwrites the foundation of modern humanism, and bullfighting is one of the most tangible, visible examples of the humanistic idea par excellence (Calarco and Atterton, 2004). In scarcely twenty minutes, man gains control of the beast. He manages to slow, channel, direct, and attract the bull. He plays with the bull's savage force, which becomes subject to the will of man, and thereby elicits emotion from the spectator. The submission of brute nature, or violence, to man's will, the victory of freedom over nature, makes for a heady mix of feeling and spectacle. It also underlines that man conquers nature through intellect. As they watch, the spectators enjoy fine food, wine, and cigars. The game is a consummate performance of the elegantly and successfully- executed manoeuvres of modern life.

The sacred in culture refers to the attribution of the divine to things produced and consumed by people (Belk et al., 1989). In Spain, bullfighting has a atavistic function, newly translated into a spectator sport in keeping with modern forms of ritualised social worship (Baskett and Fisher, 2004) common in sport culture. Bullfighting evokes a sense of empathy with how primitive ancestors confronted nature, and becomes a means to commemorate this distant past. Although, it is not atavism at work in Chou's work, there is a profound sense of connection with the past and a desire to hold on to it in various ways. Holding on to the past also appears in other songs. *Rosemary*, for instance, represents love and remembrance (Babusci and Nonfiction, 1991; Huston, 2006; and Webster, 2008). *Ninja* (shinobi) commemorates the art of stealth and invisibility as practiced in feudal Japan (Adam, 1970). *Red Imitation* ("Hong Mo Fang" in Chinese), which is about the Moulin Rouge in Montmartre, Paris, traces conspiracy, madness, and the decay of the Belle Epoque (Mirambeau, 2004).

Songs with Western styling are particularly admired and equated with Chou's fashionable sensibility. According to Miss Wu (24, hospital doctor), Chou's "songs sound good, pretty good! [There] is a Western taste (Yangqi in Chinese) running through all his work, such as *William II Castle*, *Fantasy*, *Red Imitation,* and so on".

Miss Wu adds:

"Some of his lyrics are really, really funny and odd! (She is laughing). For example, like this one (she is pointing to the lyrics of *William II Castle* in her hand) -- the black cat's smile likes crying; the pig elegantly speaking French; when smiling is like crying, you can imagine how hard it is; then when I read the pig elegantly speaking French, a pig wears a black suit with a bow tie, You can imagine! How funny it is! (She continues laughing; Miss Wu, from China)

To Chou fans, the unrestrained, vigorous, and sometimes parodic style of his music makes him an artist brimming with talent, an impression illustrated by Miss Wu's description of the lyrics in *William II Castle*.

Figure 3: *William II Castle*
The witch is so fat that she cannot ride the broomstick;
Smiling likes crying for the black cat;
The pig often is little elegant, but becomes a French-speaking housekeeper;
The sucking blood is contrast to think of John's gospel to make up for his sins;
The beautiful Princess Katherine particularly eats the AB-typed rats.

Some scholars (Foster, 2008) view parody and pastiche as postmodern features of cultural production that others would argue appear in Chou's work. Postmodern or not, Chou's work is widely viewed as modern and fashionable, though equally proficient in evoking agreeable doses of sentimentality and nostalgia. Replete with Chinese and Western icons, and styles that cross cultural boundaries and express musical versatility, Jay Chou represents what modern China is and can become. His uniqueness, nonetheless anchored in Chinese history and tradition, has the distinct advantage of representing cultural fact and cultural potential.

3.3. The "Imagined China" via the representation of historical Chinese culture and the help of global fashion resources to develop brand mythology across the globe

Cayla and Arnould (2008) have stated that brands can come globalised by developing brand mythology, which derives from creating myth markets around the world. Myth markets, in turn, derive from grasping social contradictions (Holt, 2004), or apprehending mythic stories, including historical figures and events (Cayla and Arnould, 2008). In Jay Chou's case, his music expresses social concerns and meets social needs, such as the desire to be heard and comprehended. Specifically, Chou's lyrics express the complex and paradoxical nature of contemporary generations, which consume brands to distinguish their identities, yet continue to seek the approval of society, parents, and other respected figures. This is because, on the one hand, they have to deal with social relationships with colleagues, bosses, clients, parents, classmates, and teachers. On the other hand, they crave a psychological space where they can escape societal control and express inner anxiety and anger. Many of Chou's lyrics address these issues. *Second Class of Year 3* deals with street and school violence. *Dad, I'm Back* deals with domestic violence. *Chrysanthemum Terrace* is about war, love, and longing. *Coward* addresses drug abuse. *Rice Fields* confronts the loss of rural countryside to urbanisation.

Cholachatpinyo et al. (2002) state that from a macro-subjective perspective, fashion emerges from and changes due to socio-political and economic forces, historical context, the innovation of science and technology, and other special events. It is expressed in ambiguous and ambivalent ways to meet social needs, and represents *zeitgeist*, or the spirit of the time. Jay Chou's work appeals precisely because its themes address social issues arising from social and political contexts. More specifically, Jay Chou's work provides a psychological habitat for his audiences to release their anxieties through his Chinese-style compositions, traditional plaintive numbers, poetic lyrics, and traditional martial arts themes spiced with Western elements. As noted by Fung (2008), the lyrics and MV of *Second Class of Year 3* (2003; Figure 4) represent the enormous pressures people face in today's environment, with endless examinations, competition, comparison, and expectations. In the *Name of Father* (Figure 5) reflects how people's stubbornness and refusal to abide by rules results in rejection and isolation. It also shows that what they truly desire is not a direct resistance, but rather the forgiveness of parents. This reveals people's hidden desires to maintain relationships with parents, colleagues, and bosses, and to develop intimacy in friendships. Consumption of popular products, such as Jay Chou's work, is a way for people to crystallise their peer network — a phenomenon also seen in the West (Skelton and Valentine, 1997).

Figure 4: Second Class of Year 3
How strong is the champion?
How many stages I have to go through?
Can't I let go this award?
I want to be my own judge

Figure 5: In the Name of Father
The Merciful Father,-
I have already fallen in the abyss of sin.
Please forgive my obstinacy,
That designates my loneliness.

Jay Chou not only adds martial arts to his songs, which helps audiences release anxiety, but he also takes a critical view of the past by showing that martial arts should not be used for street violence, or for that matter, for any kind of violence. The lyrics of *Nun-chuks* (2001), for instance, provide correctives. They express Chinese tradition and values including conscientiousness, tolerance, and self-reserve ("The virtuous one has no enemies; I would be frank and upright for people; A body full of righteousness"). These songs thus despite the martial arts trope ultimately represent rebellion against war and violence.

The vast popularity and publicity of Chou's work can be attributed to a variety of factors, not least of which is the media, including state-owned TV and mobile company (Cholachatpinyo et al., 2002), which generally plays an essential role in fashion (Blaszczyk, 2007). Beyond appearing on state TV, Chou has also been a longstanding endorser of the state's commercial ventures, such as M-Zone: the mobile site, which is a youth marketing programme run by the state-owned China Mobile Company. *It's My Site; It's My Command* (wo de dipan, wo zuo zhu in Chinese), which is the company's ad-line, was marketed by Chou, whose fan base was naturally a primary target (Fung, 2008). Chou's impact on marketing under the aegis of state media, which holds the bulk of the market share, thus extended to a new generation of people who are willing to spend money on messaging (SMS) and other special features such as Mobile QQ (equivalent to ICQ in mobile form) to maintain their network (Fung, 2008). These ventures marketed more than just access to media. They also marketed the official spokesperson — Jay Chou.

Hybridisation in Chou is a comprehensive phenomenon, in sync with the idea that global branding calls for the participation of differentiated local culture (Askegaard and Kjeldgaard, 2007; Cayla and Arnould, 2008; and Kjeldgaard et al., 2006). His musical styles, which transcend cultural boundaries, cross Chinese melodies and themes with Western rhythms from blues and rock. For example, in *Dong Feng Po* (East Wind), he performed a typical Chinese melody in an R&B style with Chinese traditional instruments –- the pipa and erhu. *Dong Feng Po* is the set title of *Song Ci* (the poem style of Song Dynasty). The song's lyrics (Figure 6) subtly express sorrow and solitariness ("Pipa, my childhood, paint peels from the wall, the old days") in a way similar to traditional Chinese poetry (Fung, 2008).

Figure 6. Dong Feng Po

Who uses Pipa to perform Dong Feng Po
I can see my childhood when paint peels from the wall
And remembering those were the old days when we were young
But now you still haven't heard of the melancholy in my Pipa music

The semiotics of Chou's music are thus anchored in sentiment, which creates a sense of community by crystallising imaginary identities into a sentimental adventure (McClary and Walser, 1990). Still, sentiment does not operate merely through feeling but is also grounded in social, economic, and cultural contexts, which Chou seems to have grasped well. Chou has exploited these contexts fully. He has used state mechanisms, rejuvenated Chinese history, roused patriotic feeling, paid homage to

Chinese art and traditional culture, and harnessed global fashion systems to create a hugely successful brand image and product that knows its consumers.

3.4. The "Imagined China" via the role of global actors in the creation of Jay Chou's global hybrid image

Jay Chou has worked extensively with international movie stars and directors who enjoy international exposure. In 2006, he collaborated with Jet Li, the international marital artist and film star, composing and singing the theme song for *Fearless,* a movie released in many English-speaking countries. Later that year, Chou worked with Zhang Yimou, a Chinese film director and the creative director of the 2008 Beijing Olympics opening and closing ceremonies. Chou has even worked with veterans Chow Yun-Fat and Gong Li in the film *Curse of the Golden Flower*, also singing the film's theme song. This film marked Chou's acting debut in North America and brought him international exposure. It was hardly a coincidence that both *Fearless* and *Curse of the Golden Flower* were about Chinese historical figures, involved Chinese martial arts, and depended on the pop appeal of Chinese fusion music, another example of Chou's preference for involvement in projects that present modern China through a hybrid aesthetics.

Other expressly Western ventures have also added to Chou's considerable CV. In 2010, he teamed up with Seth Rogen (a Canadian actor, comedian, and film producer) and Christoph Waltz (an Austrian-German actor) in a new Hollywood version of *The Green Hornet* directed by maverick French auteur-director and music video director, Michel Gondry. The film will be released in North America, Australia, and the UK in January 2011. In this new film version, Chou has reprised the part of Kato, previously played in the television series by the legendary Bruce Lee, who continues to be perceived as a cultural icon across the world, and especially in China for his portrayal of nationalistic and righteous characters. Stepping into Bruce Lee's shoes is hardly a job for the ordinary actor. Chou's task is tremendous but his own musical career, which is based on notions of hybridisation, cultural fusion, and the globalisation of Chinese cultural traits, is bound to ensure he'll have no trouble filling Lee's shoes. Chou's well-knows modesty has served him well in this regard. Chou promised that although it would be "an overwhelming experience to take on a role made famous by Bruce Lee", he wouldn't try to be Bruce Lee's Kato. "I will try to bring my own interpretation to the part" (www.Reuters.com, 2009). Chou's ability to negotiate Lee's historical weight in films and still come out shining is illustrated in Gondry's comments: "Jay is incredibly unique and charming and fights like a wild dog! When I filmed him next to Seth, they had such great chemistry." (www.Reuters.com, 2009). Chou's success has received kudos from various quarters including Western peers like Craig David who has commented that Chou has the potential to rule, and maybe even transform the Asian pop world. To summarise: The construct of the "Imagined China" resides in every aspect of Chou's musical branding. From his lyrics and endorsements to his choice of musical instruments, styles, and cultural and historical citations, Chou has insightfully fused myriad worlds to create a globally successful brand anchored in the construct of the "Imagined China".

Although the concept of "imagined community" has been used in various instances of historical nation-building, nation is only one instance of imagined community because "communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined" (Anderson, 1991; p.43). Barker (2004) goes further when he defines imagined community in terms of forms of collective identity. "Just as national identity takes the form of identification with representations of the nation, so can ethic groups, feminists, classes, new social movements and other communities of action and identity be understood as imagined" (Barker, 2004; p.99). The imagined community also includes "the process of social modernity — secular rationalism, a calendrical perception of time, capitalist-driven technological development, mass literacy and mass communications, political democratization, the modern nation-state" (Tomlinson, 2001; p.83).

Jay Chou's interpretations of the "Imagined China" demonstrate similar processes of social modernity in the Chinese context. Music, fashion, media, film, and advertising, have collectively forged this imaginary in which the imagined community is both modern and culturally Chinese.

Conclusion

The study of mechanisms driving Jay Chou's success sheds light on at least some of the reasons behind the under-privileged position of Chinese export brands in the global market. Specifically, the strategic use of Chinese culture and ideology seems to be a key factor lacking in the brand development of Chinese brands. Chinese brands builders have a lot to learn from Chou's development of a distinctly Chinese-styled aesthetic, which draws from history, religion, philosophy, and folk traditions but also redefines them through global fashion resources that respond to consumer needs and aspirations.

Arnould and Thompson (2005) have argued that "consumer culture theory has its historical roots in calls for consumer researchers to broaden their focus to investigate the neglected experiential, social, and cultural dimensions of consumption in context" (2005, p.869). My study responds to this call. In studying Jay Chou, I argue that an international dimension in Chinese branding practices can turn the tide. Jay Chou exemplifies this process. His ideology of global Chinese consumer culture shows the success of a Chinese branding strategy that is grounded in history and culture and in contemporary life and technology. It is an attractive mix of here and there and everywhere filtered through a Chinese perspective of the world. Here lies Chou's success, and here might also lie the success of Chinese brand builders.

Most contemporary Chinese music artists recognise the need to expediently rejuvenate and refresh their strategies towards branding. Many have taken steps towards this end. This is all to say that Jay Chou is no exception to the rule of thumb dictating the general tendency to rapidly commercialise and live with the times. But Chou's results have been exceptionally successful. He is a star beyond all pop music stars in China. Moreover, he might be the first most commercially successful Chinese pop star to express a reverent interest in the past. His music extends the definition of what it means to return to the past for inspiration. He has found the most attractive mix of fashionable nationalism and culturally-sensitive cosmopolitanism. This recipe applies to all his products, from his recorded music and concerts to his endorsements and films. Unlike other Chinese pop stars, he has managed to redefine the myth of the imagined community through the lens of a China that is young, growing, fashionable, and still rooted in its ancient, venerable past. As much as this recipe reimagines China, it also reiterates that Chou and his music are effectively the very icon of the imagined China.

Chapter Five: A Case Study of the 2008 Beijing Olympics Opening Ceremony

1. The Significance of the Beijing Olympics Opening Ceremony

Although sport and sporting was the focus of the 2008 Beijing Olympics, many viewers also sought a window on contemporary China, so far hidden behind the veil of the past. The Olympics are an inherently iconic brand of sorts that gains from the stature of state of the art athletic presence and its own four-year hiatus, the infrequency of which builds anticipation and enhances the preciousness of these games. Olympic events have frequently served as vehicles to express world unity, national pride, national growth, and unified sentiments regarding hard work, ambition, and commitment to success (Greyser, 2008). That the event is hugely popular is a huge understatement. NBC paid nearly $900 million for broadcast rights of the 2008 Olympic Games, a move that paid off. On an average, NBC had 30 million viewers glued to the screens each night. Millions more watched the events on NBC cable channels. 30 million unique users visited NBC's Olympics' Website and 6.3 million shared videos from the coverage streamed on the site (Carter and Sandomir, 2008).

Various past Olympics, such as the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, the 1988 Seoul Olympics, and the 2000 Sydney Olympics, have boosted national stature. The 2008 Beijing Olympics did much more than that. It was effectively China's "coming out party" (Greyser, 2008; p.1), reflecting the magnitude of China's economy and ascendant power in global politics". Arguably, China itself is the most evident and notable brand product of the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games, as it effectively and efficiently employed the Olympics to enhance "the country's visibility and the salience of its marketplace on the world stage" (Greyser, 2008; p.1).

The Beijing Olympics also generated its own marketplace replete with its own fashion brand products. It became an institutionalised fashion system that involved the fashion world and created new fashion trends, such as Olympics-themed fashion shows, Olympics-themed advertisements in fashion magazines, Olympics-themed clothing, and entertainment paraphernalia. Even the opening ceremony constituted a unique fashion product showcasing various trends and traits. Accordingly, this part of the study examines the opening ceremony to explore how the Olympics contributed to the international branding of China by using culturally-specific and internationally-familiar fashion mechanisms.

2. The "Imagined China" via International Narratives of the Beijing Olympics Opening Ceremony to Develop China's Identity

The 2008 Beijing Olympics opening ceremony was a spectacular event that generated attention and controversy throughout the world. For many, it was magnificent entertainment offering a glimpse of a mysterious country. For others, it represented crass propaganda in a global battle of power. In China, and to some external observers, it represented a concerted effort to position "China" as a global brand. This case study looks at the opening ceremony in the context of China's global image and examines aspects of international responses from a cultural and social perspective. I aim to reveal how viewers, organising workers, and the media developed the concept of the "Imagined China" into a global brand through the Beijing Olympics opening ceremony, and through this how the "Imagined China" might be understood in coming decades by global consumers, politicians, academics, and managers in China and abroad.

Specifically, I challenge the popular notion of the Beijing Olympics opening ceremony as a singularly positive communication of Chinese national pride. Towards this end, I borrowed Anderson's theory of "imagined community" (Cayla and Eckhardt, 2008) to conceptualise the "Imagined China" as a means to interpret China as a global brand. To be clear, the term "Imagined China" derives from Benedict Anderson's (1991) concept of "imagined community", in which a nation is a community that is socially constructed and imagined by those who perceive themselves as part of that group. In this case study, "Imagined China" refers to global audience discourses about China as represented by the Beijing Olympics opening ceremony.

The Beijing Olympics opening ceremony gave rise to multiple categories of interpretations, two of which are discussed here. The first category comprises viewers whose vantages are defined less by politics than by culture. These include Chinese people and some non-Chinese participants. The second type of consumer interpretation emerges globally from a phenomenological vantage impacted by notions of history and politics. This category includes Western narratives that seek to sustain China's image as non-democratic and backward society lacking in human rights.

Brand meanings are both negative and positive (Cayla and Arnould, 2008), and those of the Beijing Olympic opening ceremony, created by various discourses, are no different. Following Holt's view of the strength of American branding (2004) and Cayla and Arnould's notion of culturally-developed global branding, I re-examined how the opening ceremony's myth of "Imagined China" targeted myth markets by rejuvenating Chinese history and myth with the help of global fashion resources.

2.1. The imagined China via the representation of historical Chinese culture and the help of global fashion systems to target myth markets

It is important to note that the 2008 Beijing Olympics opening ceremony had many target markets, such as Chinese home viewers, Olympic guests, in-situ viewers, and a global audience. As only fragments of the entire ceremony were broadcast on global television, different audiences had access to different fragments. In short, the opening ceremony necessarily resulted in different stories depending on who and where you were.

2.1.1. The "Imagined China" as authentic identity through the use of nostalgia

Citing historical culture in branding campaigns can evoke nostalgic and authentic emotions (Brown et al., 2003; Holbrook, 1994; Holbrook and Schindler, 1996; and Stern, 1992). Jameson (1991) indicates that nostalgia is an authentic aesthetic response to the evocation of the past. The representation of "Imagined China" in the Beijing Olympics opening ceremony was a evocation of the past par excellence, as it evoked nostalgia and feelings of authenticity grounded in thousands of years of accumulated history and cultural pride. Responses to the opening ceremony reflect the success of the imagined China myth, particularly its authentic evocation of a real China by means of technology. For example, Joycee from Hong Kong said:

"It grew dark in the stadium. I could only see red drumsticks. Then I heard the sounds of the drum [fou] beating - like 'rat-a-tat thump'. Then, suddenly there were many drum beaters on the stage! My friends and I were deeply struck by what we saw.

We tried to keep our eyes on everything! What a vivid imagination he (Zhang Yimou) has. It [fou] is very much like the real thing" (Joycee, from Hong Kong now living in the UK).

Joycee's use of words like "authentic" and "vivid" indicates that in her view the "fou" performance's evocation of authenticity was more than adequate. Marketing literature has a long history of examining the role of authenticity in consumption (Brown et al., 2003; and Cohen, 1988). Grayson and Marfinec (2004) proposed two types of authenticity in marketing practices: indexical authenticity and iconic authenticity. Indexical authenticity refers to an object that has a factual and spatio-temporal link to history (Grayson and Schulman, 2000), while iconic authenticity refers to an object that is similar to the original physicality by recourse to reproduction or quasi-authenticity (Bruner, 1994; and Crang, 1996).

The success of the opening ceremony was implicitly dependent on the masterly production of authenticity through modern technology. The fou is a Chinese percussion instrument with a 3000 year history. The phrase "beating fou" (ji fou in Chinese) appears in the Lian Po and Lin Xiangru sections from the *Records of the Grand Historian* by Sima Qian in the Han Dynasty. In this story, the fou is not only a variety of wine ware, but it is also a musical instrument. The distinctiveness of the fou goes hand in hand with an idiomatic phrase sung in tandem with the beating of the drum. The phrase, Ji fou er ge in Chinese, which refers to having fun, expresses the notion of friendliness and happiness that defines public participation in China.

Although the performance of the fou during the opening ceremony pays homage to the past, it does so with a twist. Traditionally, fou beating, which accompanied death ceremonies among ordinary people, is associated with folk life and its mourning practices. In the opening ceremony fou-playing occurs in tandem with the playing of the ding, a three-legged traditional Chinese cooking vessel, an instrument that signifies elite power. In this rendition, the folk and the elite join hands. The sound of mourning joins the sound of triumph and power. In this new context, both the fou and the ding emerge renewed through the other's presence, consequently renewing the notion of authenticity, or the "Imagined China".

This revival of the fou during the opening ceremony is an excellent example of what some scholars have called fantasy consumption (Grayson and Marfinec, 2004). This particular rejuvenation of historical Chinese culture in the opening ceremony promotes sentiment and is vivid precisely because the image of the past is quasi-authentic, or dialectic.

Evans (2000, p.108) has suggested that Benjamin's conception of dialectic images applies to fashion, in that fashion contains "examples of how the traces of the past can be woven into the fabric of a new story to illuminate the present" whereby yesterday's emblems becomes tomorrow's commodities. A good illustration of this mechanism at work in the opening ceremony is contained in the official emblem 'Chinese Seal, Dancing Beijing'. The emblem represents a dancing/sporty figure, suggesting the wriggling movements of a dragon, the icon of Chinese civilisation. The formal qualities of the image resemble the stamp of a seal. So what we have is a contemporary dancing/sporty figure ensconced in the past, or the past and the present contained in one indivisible entity.

It is this new version of the past that truly stimulates nostalgia and evokes pleasure. It is because the past is no longer distant but here and new that it appeals. The contemporary version of the past serves various functions. It invokes nationalistic and cultural pride, but it also responds to cultural and social dissatisfaction in the present. The new version of the past offers resolutions to an unhappy present. Some participant narratives illustrate this point:

"They gave a very good performance. I am very, very proud of them (Zhang's teams). This show makes me miss everyone and everything about my hometown. I haven't been there for fifty years. My favourites were the old Silk Road performance and the Chinese Opera performance. I strongly feel that I had better visit the Mainland [China] as soon as possible". (Wu, Jinghunag, from Taiwan; speaking in Chinese by telephone)

Mr Wu's nostalgia for his hometown was evoked by idealised and romantic representations of the Silk Road in the opening ceremony. Nostalgia becomes a particularly strong feeling within contexts that might have involved desertion, illness or death (Holden and Ruppel, 2003). Mr Wu is an ex-military officer from Kuomintang (KMT) who left for Taiwan in 1949 with Chiang Kai-shek, the ex-president of Taiwan. His narrative suggests that old people yearn for certain aspects of the past that can never be made whole. Leaving one's hometown under duress of war, potential death, or incarceration is a strong foundation of nostalgia (Holden and

Ruppel, 2003). In Chinese terms, nostalgia mines a range of traditional values, such as respecting the old and the hometown, one's country and one's locale. This is captured in the set Chinese phrase of the leaves that fell into the root of the tree (luo ye gui gen) that describes the old returning to their origins.

Patina and nostalgia constitute selling points in many cultural products, such as Nike town, period films, retro and vintage clothing, vinyl records, old-fashioned recipes, and revivals in architecture and visual art. Nostalgia is also a common trope of human behaviour and psychology, whether it is schoolchildren delving into local history, grandparents recollecting the good old days, or steam-punk fiction flooding the publishing industry (Lowenthal, 1985). Nostalgia transcends yearning for lost childhoods and scenes of early life, and embraces imagined pasts never experienced by its devotees or, for that matter, by anyone (Goldman and Papson, 1995). Nostalgia can be understood as the power of uncontrollable faith in truth and reincarnation, and in the value of regressing into past life at work. The audience for it is massive because nostalgia is one of those rare devices by which consumption of the past enables individuals to self-reflect without the taint of narcissism.

2.1.2. The "Imagined China" as fashionable identity

Holt (2004) asserts that certain myths and markets thereof derive from existing social concerns and contradictions. Sometimes, fashion is the mechanism that addresses these contradictions under the guise of interrogating the subjective experience of modern life (Evans and Breward, 2005). One could argue that fashion's resolution of these contradictions, however abstract, develops the myth market. Like other fashions, sporting event fashions, such as the Olympics, can also address social concerns. The Beijing Olympics, for instance, transmuted the common concern for harmony among nations into the five circles of Olympics spirit, the motto of which is *Citius, Altius, Fortius,* a Latin expression meaning "Faster, Higher, Stronger". These Olympics themes were newly represented in the Beijing Olympics opening ceremony, claimed Wang Ning, the deputy director of the Opening & Closing Ceremonies Department of BOCOG, on Beijing2008.cn:

"For the first time, the shape of the Olympics Rings will be formed in the sky, in addition to that Olympic symbols and elements will be part of fireworks' designs with an aim to promote Olympic ideals. To reflect the "Green Olympics" concept, some of the fireworks will use less smoking powder to minimise smoke and dust pollution." (Beijing2008.cn, 2008a; p.1)

In Wang's account, the "sky-flying Beijing Olympic Rings" and fireworks' modelled after "Olympic symbols and elements" collectively represent peaceful co-existence and the Olympics ideal of "Faster, Higher, Stronger". This motto represents Olympism in the Olympic Charter, which expresses a philosophy extolling virtues such as harmony, and strength of body, will, and spirit, all of which restore dignity to human life (Corral et al., 2010). Wang's comments suggest that the opening ceremony's rendition of the Olympics spirit is a response to contemporary strife, violence, disease, and discriminations, and an attempt to educate people to embrace "non-discrimination, peace, and the psycho-physical improvement of the human being" (Corral et al., 2010, p.4). It is in this sense that the Olympics opening ceremony might be understood as a myth and as the market around it, namely the games, its products, its activities, and all its commercial ventures promoting the good of mankind through Chinese-inflected resolutions.

2.2. The "Imagined China" via the representation of historical Chinese culture and the help of global fashion systems to create identity myths pertaining to Chinese identity anxiety

Constructing the identity myth depends upon a complex process. It involves preparing a synopsis of identity anxieties, stating the means by which resolutions will occur, acknowledging the contextual statistics of the locale in which the myth will be located, outlining tactics used in developing an authentic voice for the myth, or brand, and developing a code of communication, or an original aesthetic, which is organically linked to the world (Holt, 2004; pp.218-19). In short, myths must express concrete connections with contemporary values and contexts in order to communicate well.

2.2.1. Chinese identity anxiety deriving from backward images of an old China (1840-present)

Chinese identity anxiety derives from a number of places, not least of which is the notion of a backward and poor China. Some respondents have indicated that the

Beijing Olympics, especially the opening ceremony, shook off this old perception of China. Frank from Shenzhen, China, said:

"----- In the eyes of some Western people, China is poor, backward, and uncivilized, and does not merit a big event such as the Olympics. But China does not merely make things. It also does things very well, such as the opening ceremony. It has helped to correct China's image that people had wrongly maintained before this ceremony."

Frank's comments suggest that the old "Imagined China" identity is biased, outdated, and even malicious, images that no doubt derive from the history of China's humiliation by Western imperialists and Japan (Gries, 2005). Specifically, these views derive from victimisation accounts referring to luohou aida explained as "the backward will be beaten" (Gries, 2005, pp.50-51), grounded in turn of the century (1894-95) events during the (Sino-Japanese War), and in the British return of Hong Kong "to the Motherland" (1997). China's humiliation occurred at different moments in history, beginning with the first Opium War of 1840 (Gries, 2005). Various bestsellers focus on these moments. *The Rape of Nanking*, for instance, chronicled Chinese suffering during the Sino-Japanese War (Chang, 1997). After WWII, in the 1950s and 1960s, China experienced further humiliations when the US blocked its entry to the United Nations, delayed until 1971 (Gries, 2005). More recently, China's humiliations have been in the realm of market production. It has been accused of producing cheap and inferior quality goods for export (Latham, 2009).

2.2.2. The "Imagined China" as a less-democratic entity

Western political critics link China's backwardness after 1949 to the absence of democracy, a political context from which China attempts to deflect attention by referring to its history of humiliation at the hands of the West (Yahuda, 2000; p.21). Critics argue that the term "backward China" refers less to economic issues than to political ideology, and that no amount of Olympics "fakery" can take away from the fact that the country's media and political freedoms continue to be undermined by the absence of democratic process. Mrs Liao, who was born in Nanjing, China, is the director of the Washington DC based Laogai Research Foundation. She serves as editor-in-chief of a biography series of political prisoners in China, and is openly critical about China's fakery.

"Behind the grand and scripted stage of these Summer Games - so carefully planned for the cameras by a Chinese government eager for its close-up - is a very different, far uglier backstage. It is rife with pollution, corruption, poverty, bureaucracy and repression. The people of China know that world. They know it intimately. The government of China knows that world too, and tries with all its might to whitewash it out of existence. And here's the sad, funny part. The people are not only used to the deception; they are, by and large, okay with it. In Beijing now, the air is cleaner, the traffic is lighter, the city is beautifully decorated with flowers, and all the nasty beggars and migrant workers have disappeared. So too have the protesters. If you catch a few out of the corner of your eye, just wait - they'll disappear soon enough. Is it live or is it Memorex? The cute little girl in the red dress who sang at the opening ceremonies was only a puppet. The real one was hidden away somewhere because of her "uneven teeth" and poor appearance, all for the sake of "national interest." You see, China could lose face if such an unattractive kid sang "Hymn to the Motherland" in front of all its international friends. Well, at least the glittering chain of brilliant fireworks that lit the sky from Tiananmen Square to the Bird's Nest showed how glorious the great nation of China is. What? Those were fake, too? ------ I suppose whoever revealed this news will be lucky enough not to join the 44 Chinese journalists imprisoned by the government, accused of revealing state secrets and disrupting social order."

Mrs Liao is obviously angry at the lack of democracy in China. But she too has an agenda. Mrs Liao was born in Nanjing, China, graduated in the Taiwan National University, and now works for the Washington DC based Laogai Research Foundation where she serves as editor-in-chief of a biography series of political prisoners in China. Given her affiliation with Taiwan and her current life in the US, it might be useful to take her comments with a grain of salt.

Mrs Liao might be right to a certain extent, though the Beijing Olympics did facilitate social development. Deng Xiaoping's gaige kaifang (reform and opening up) spurred Chinese economic development and created a wealthy leisure class. Some people argue that The Deng era has witnessed a profound shift, from ideological politics to commerce and patriotism. Emphasis on reform and freer markets has enabled China to focus on at least one of the two goals — modernisation and democratisation — set out in the May Fourth Movement. However, achieving modernisation, or 'Mr Science', has only highlighted the continued absence of political reform, or 'Mr Democracy'. This is also the implication of Liao's words — that although the Beijing Olympics might make life look pretty in China, political restrictions continue to hamper the country's development into a truly modern nation.

Liao refers specifically to restrictions on media coverage during the Beijing Olympics to illustrate the unpleasant side of Chinese politics "all the nasty beggars and migrant workers have disappeared. So too have the protesters; I suppose whoever revealed this news will be lucky enough not to join the 44 Chinese journalists imprisoned by the government, accused of revealing state secrets and disrupting social order". Her comments match other reports of restrictions on what was worth covering and what was worth covering up. Many have claimed that media reporters were instructed to follow official statements and stay silent about pro-Tibet protests and other civil unrest that took place during the Beijing Olympic Games. On that score, Liao continues:

> "The government makes the myths, and the people eat them up. In China, it seems, it has always been this way. For example: No one died at Tiananmen Square in 1989, except for one brave People's Liberation Army soldier who was killed by the violent mob. The evil foreigners only want to tell us fairy tales in order to split our beloved motherland. -- Our school textbooks said so. Truth? What does it matter? The 21st century belongs to the Chinese. China will be big and strong. Untroubled by ugly reality. Look forward. Be optimistic. Put on a great show."

These, in effect, constitute the broad strokes of Chinese identity anxiety. As much as China's image is defined by its history before 1949, it is also more pertinently defined by its more recent history of absent democracy and cheap and inferior mass production.

2.3. The imagined China via the representation of historical Chinese culture and the help of global fashion systems to construct the new China's identity and address Chinese identity anxiety

Holt (2004) states that addressing common social anxieties is an important step in the creation of myth identity, which, in turn, is a key step in strong brand development. Participant impressions of the Beijing Olympics and its opening ceremony suggest that the event was able to develop a modern cultural identity for China because it addressed various issues pertaining to the anxieties of Chinese identity. Identity often develops discursively across various dynamics, social and historical. Identity develops narratives of the self or collective selfhood in multiple, conflicting ways, which also affect identity formation (Hall, 1996; Giddens, 1991; and Miller et al., 1998). The following section traces the formation of various Chinese identities through the narrative discourse surrounding the Beijing Olympics opening ceremony.

2.3.1. The "Imagined China" as a unique historical cultural identity

Some informants discussed the formation of identity through the representation of historical culture in the opening ceremony. For them, China emerged a new and different historical community through the performances of the opening ceremony. For example, Miss Xie said:

" ---- this ceremony cleverly portrays five thousand years of unique Chinese history by tracing remarkable achievements in art, music, and science in such shows as The Silk Road, Movable-Type Printing, and the compass. These achievements are truly different from those of other countries ----" (Miss Xie from Shanghai)

In Xie's narrative, it is the historical aspects of Chinese culture that serve to differentiate China from other countries, and define its identity. Identity is 'identification' (Hall, 1996), or is discursively constituted through narratives of the self or collective selfhood in acts of identification (Giddens, 1991). By these lights, China can be identified by the four great poles of innovation that took place in ancient times: paper-making, printing, gunpowder, and the compass, in conjunction with the achievements of the old Silk Road. These features of Chinese history not only appealed to Miss Xie but clearly they represent for many people the pinnacle of Chinese achievement, hence their inclusion in the opening ceremony. At the same time, the construction of identity takes place through difference. Identity formation is contingent upon what it differs from, and is constructed in relation to others or to something outside (du Gay, 1996). The showcasing of China's unique features in the opening ceremony is based on the notion that difference highlights and creates identity.

Lowenthal (1985) suggests that the reason people yearn for the past is because identity thrives on the past. "The sureness of I was" serves as the basis for the sureness of "I am". The act of recollecting and identifying the past provides meaning and purpose to life (Wyatt, 1964, p.319). Informants in this study suggested that the ceremony demonstrated China's sincerity, romance, friendliness, and innovation. Identity develops through relations with people, places, and material goods. It is polyvalent, conflicting, and contested because there are various cultural attributes at work in identity formation, such as the struggle for social position, and the processes this entails (Miller et al., 1998). Mr Sun from Beijing stated:

"The drum-beaters then began a thunderous welcoming ceremony, chanting the Confucian saying 'Friends have come from afar, how happy we are!' Then an image with the text in Liu-style calligraphy appears around the stadium - at that time, it seems as if I am in a Chinese art gallery or museum. This idiom shows the friendliness and hospitality of Chinese people, and indicates the sincerity of the city!" (Mr Sun from Beijing).

Mr Sun's narrative of the Beijing Olympics opening ceremony indicates that China's identity is constructed through various cultural forms, such as the Confucian saying, Liu-styled calligraphy, and the fou drum. Mr Sun's appreciation of Chinese identity as represented in the ceremony might sound simplistic but it parallels the process of identity of construction stated in Miller et al. (1998), that many cultural attributes influence identity construction. In this case, we have a variety of attributes influencing the perception of Chinese culture, including drum beating, which is an indispensable part of Chinese welcoming ceremonies, the Confucian saying - "Friends have come from afar, how happy we are!", and the visual of the saying circling the stadium creating the appearance of being in a precious environment, such as an art museum.

2.3.2. The "Imagined China" as a modern cultured Chinese identity

Discourses about the imagined China from the opening ceremony reflect the motif of a Humanistic Olympics, which aimed at achieving the objective of 'New Beijing, Great Olympics. The BOCOG stated that Green Olympics, High-tech Olympics, and Humanistic Olympics were the major themes of the Beijing Games. Humanistic Olympics, in particular, provided China with an opportunity to re-image the value system of Chinese civilization and project a new image of a China shaped by internationalism and enduring cultural harmony.

The Beijing Olympics opening ceremony's combination of top-order performers and luminous lighting showcased the marriage of cultural achievement with modern technology. This marriage, so to speak, was a point of pride among those responsible for the show. Zhang Yimou, for instance, said:

"I am very proud of myself. Everyone knew they were going to get a show about traditional Chinese culture, but ... I was able to find a way to also use multimedia to demonstrate the new, modern China."

Zhang's use of the term "multimedia" represents advanced technology while "demonstrates" suggests the resoluteness to harness this resource and reveal the new modern China. This also suggests that the Beijing Olympics was not a 'deceptive Olympics' and the Chinese did not mislead the audience. Also, Zhang's syntactical construction "the new modern China" implies that China is not merely modern. Rather, China is an advanced modern nation.

Cayla and Eckhardt (2008) have suggested that Asian brands demonstrate the modernity of Asian cultures. In keeping with this understanding, the opening ceremony did not merely represent China's historical culture. It also showed viewers Chinese modern life, where advanced technology thrives in a nation with long-standing traditions. This point, of advanced technology, is underlined in comments made by Wang Ning and Cai Guoqiang, managerial staff at the opening ceremony:

"The technology and equipment used in this opening ceremony is very complicated. More than 2,000 tons of equipment was used in the opening ceremony. An LED screen 147 metres long and 22 metres wide at the centre of the stadium. Beijing used a smokeless powder to reduce pollution from the 40,000 explosions".

(Wang Ning, the deputy director of the Opening & Closing Ceremonies Department of BOCOG, told Chinese Radio International, or CRI; Tu, 2008; p.1)

"This opening scene is considered the highlight of the opening ceremony. It was executed by means of a very complicated digital control system. The system can control the fireworks, the music, the lights, and the videos. It can launch all these at the same time. It is a very advanced system, and it was a success." (Cai Guoqiang, the visual creative director of the Opening & Closing ceremonies Department of BOCOG, told CRI; Tu, 2008; p.1)

Not only did the ceremony showcase advanced technology in the performance of the brightly-lit fou drum, the huge movable scroll, the "athletic footsteps painting", the movable printing, and the Silk Road map. But it also showcased historical Chinese culture as an integral part of modern life, as expressed in the "Glorious Time" section of the opening ceremony.

Connections between culture and technology were further inflected by connections demonstrated between culture and nature, represented by a performance by a famous Tai Chi artist. In two acts, the artist performed "he" (literally, harmony in Chinese) to express the harmony between nature and humans, and "feng seng shui qi" (literally, the sound of wind and water rising in tandem, following which 2008 Chinese actors collectively performed a number of Tai Chi movements.

The principles of Tai Chi derive from Daoism, which asserts that all things, animate and inanimate, have vitality. This vitality is called qi, or breath of life. In the main, Tai Chi is a practice of breath and movement. Every morning and evening millions of Chinese perform this activity to build up the body. The collective visual of 2008 actors performing Tai Chi showed this ancient practice writ large on modern life, a practice in which nature is as embedded in culture as culture is in modern technology.

The use of modern technology was absolutely central to the success of the opening ceremony. Various performances attest to this. In 'Magnificent Civilisation', intense drumming gave way to whimsy as dozens of actors dressed as "Flying Apsaras" (mythical Buddhist goddesses) soared across the stadium and created an illuminated replica of the Olympic rings raised above the arena. In "Glorious Times", space-age "Flying Apsaras" decked out in spacesuits soared through the air. The configuration of "Flying Apsaras" is a common tableau appearing in Chinese murals inside Chinese temples and grottos, specifically at Yuangang, Longmen, and Dunhung Grottos. Chinese Buddhist scripture describes "Flying Apsaras" as gods of heaven, and as deities associated with song, music, and fragrance. They are typically depicted as young slim women with plump faces, elegant manners, and gentle moods. The opening ceremony performances recreate these scenes in three dimensions, in keeping with the traditional version of suitably dressed actors and others in space-age suits. The point is both simple and effective, that the mythic Apsaras of the past have transmuted into space-age creatures, the new Apsaras of a space-age modern China. The inclusion of Li Ning in the lighting of the cauldron was a nice touch in these performances. Li Ning is a legendary Chinese gymnast and Olympic athlete who made his career in the 1980s. His appearance in the ceremony, which included the lighting of the cauldron, was extremely dramatic given his suspension on cables that made him air borne. He was seen soaring through the air in a manner similar to that of the Apsaras.

Li Ning's appearance in the opening ceremony was as strategic as the inclusion of various other celebrities, including Zhang Yimou, director of the opening and closing ceremonies. Despite the frequent criticism of Chinese state control on artistic freedoms, Zhang's comments to the Financial Times (2009) provide a different picture:

> "I am still an independent artist. I am not a member of the Chinese Communist Party or the Communist Youth League," says Zhang. "I am still working hard to make one new film after another. My life has not changed at all." (Xie, 2009; p.1)

Here, Zhang underlines his independent status despite being responsible for the opening and closing ceremonies. His comments seem to emphasise the importance of autonomy in artistic creativity and uniqueness. In one sense Zhang's comments cannot be picked apart for contradiction as his work in the opening ceremony was pointedly lacking in sensitive politicking. The image of the new China was resplendent, modern, and positive, and it's hardly surprising that references to political issues, such as the Taiwan Strait, Tibet, human rights in China, and the Xizang and Xinjiang issues that give China a bad name, were markedly absent. If anything, the opening ceremony was a site of celebration, commemoration, and fantasy that though it might have provided a skewed representation of the real China was perhaps no different from what is commonly expected at such events. The opening ceremony was an opportunity to unveil a brand, the new China, that has long been in the making, and that is precisely what it did..

3. The Imagined China via the representation of historical Chinese culture and the help of global fashion systems to extend the global myth market

Cayla and Arnould (2008) state that global brand mythologies depend on targeting global cultural myths. Global brand mythologies develop when the mythic landscape is absorbed into the global brand landscape. In this landscape, branded products represent identity myths in ways that seemingly unite global consumers ranging across diverse contexts. A global myth thus appeals regardless of cultural anchors. Its myth status applies to cultures both within and without its origins. Coke, for instance, enjoys a mythic status both within the US and beyond, which is to say for all its mythic associations elsewhere in the world, it is no less, and perhaps even all the more, mythic in the US. It represents unity, cultural strength, and refreshing taste everywhere.

A Chinese global myth should function no differently. It should be as mythic in China as it might be elsewhere in the world. This kind of myth can create a successful market when its narratives involve not only the past and the distant past, namely the origins of things, (Segal 2004, p.5), but also social realities regarding the gap between what is and what can be (Holt, 2004). It must be retrospective and forward-looking. It must live simultaneously in the past, the present, and the future. By these definitions, a myth becomes global when it applies almost uniformly across time and space.

3.1. The "Imagined China" through the use of Zhang Yimou to capture global myths

Every myth needs a hero, whether it is a person, a force, or a place. Scholars are clear about the necessary relationship between myth and hero, and some even argue equivalence. Cayla and Arnould (2008, p.100) state that "archetypal heroes that control powerful forces" function as myth. In other words, they are myth itself. Accordingly, the 2008 Beijing Olympics also had a hero. His name is Zhang Yimou.

Zhang Yimou is a veteran Chinese director with scores of films to his name. This history of filmmaking secured his hire as creative and art director of the Olympics opening ceremony. The employment of Zhang satisfied two criteria. His involvement in the games aroused nationalistic pride and formally endorsed a particular brand of Chineseness already familiar amongst global audiences of Chinese films. Zhang's visual styling and tactical recreation of a glorious and resplendent China replete with determined human spirit and ancient culture has won kudos from various quarters (Xu, 2007). He is well-known for various films. *Yellow Earth* (*Huang Tudi* in Chinese, 1984), for which he was cinematographer, represented the contest between human revolution and the earth's unassuming antiquity. *Raise the Red Lantern* (1991) criticised patriarchal repression during the early Republican period. *Ju Dou* (1990) tackled patricidal urge and sexual transgressions. *Not One Less* (1999) dealt with modernisation and rural education during the reform era. *Hero* (2002) was explicitly about its title, heroism and the first emperor of a unified China.

Magazine writer Xu (2007) has described Zhang's recent film, *House of Flying Daggers* (2004) at great length in ways that challenge the notion of China's backwardness, such as it exists within some Western perspectives. Xu draws parallels between the "romantic, passionate and dream-like" visual spectacles of the opening ceremony and movies such as *Hero* and *House of Flying Daggers*. In addition to similarities between the musical and dance numbers of the opening ceremony and those in *Hero* (Figure 7) and *House of Flying Daggers* (Figure 8) respectively, Zhang also managed to create a thematic continuation between cinematic imagination and contemporary reality, between fictional representation and a concrete sporting event. He thus effectively relocated the historical retrospection and dream imagery of *Hero* and *House of Flying Daggers* that audiences identify with Chineseness onto a veritable world stage, that of the Olympics opening ceremony. This masterly citation of a somewhat fictionalised account of a non-fictional nation not only constitutes, in itself, the concretization of the myth, that of China and Chinese creativity, but also represents the confidence of a cultural aesthetic on top of its game.

Interviews Zhang gave in *Movie View* (Kan Dianying), China's most popular film magazine, and beijing2008.cn, clearly state the two-fold goal of his recent filmmaking: selling a particular brand of Chinese culture and teaching the world that China has finally arrived.

"I was clearly aware that I made *Hero* for foreign viewers. As soon as Americans heard that Jet Li, Tony Leung, Maggie Chemung, Ziyi Zhang, and Donnie Yen were to appear together in a martial arts film, they'd want to see the film. We would easily open on 2,000 screens, but I decided not to cater exclusively to their tastes. If I were to satisfy their tastes, I would have focused more on direct physical contact in the fight scenes. Instead, I decided to focus more on spiritual communication and less on physical contact. In fact, I wanted to lure those foreigners into the theatre before exposing them to ideas of genuine Chinese arts. Impress them a little. Give them some information. This is only the first step. There are things in Chinese culture that cannot be easily understood. It would be a great achievement if a foreigner can figure out the meaning of "yijing" (ideascape) after living in China for ten years. I don't expect them to understand. All I want is gradual influence, bit by bit. What I have to sell is Chinese culture through a martial arts genre." (*Movie View*; Xu, 2007; p.36)

Below is the transcript of one of Zhang's first interviews after the Opening Ceremony (www.beijing2008.cn, 2008b):

Interviewer: Hello, Director Zhang! Thank you for your first interview after the opening ceremony. Mr Zhang, do you think the terms "passionate, romantic and dream-like" describe the ceremony and express "yijing" [Ideascape]?

Zhang: Yes, I think so. I think the words passionate, romantic and dream-like are accurate.

Interviewer: I think the success of this opening ceremony lies in foreign audiences grasping the beauty of the Chinese story that we have narrated.

Zhang: This is an important point. Had foreign audiences not understood this, the ceremony would have been a failure. So, we should enable foreigners to understand and enjoy watching what we have to offer, and then feel its passion, romance, and dream-like qualities. I don't think foreigners unfamiliar with Chinese culture could have understood Chinese culture as represented by the ceremony in the limited 50 minutes we had. Still, I think they would have at least grasped the meaning of the three words you just used. Culture can only be revealed gradually, bit by bit. It would be great if foreign audiences were able to recognise that the Chinese are fully capable of creating aesthetics just through those words — passionate, romantic, and dream-like — because those three words define the spirit of Olympics.

Zhang continues:

> "[In order to enable foreign and Chinese audiences to feel it] we should identify the most basic and direct way to express [our culture, our feeling]. As you mentioned, the thousands of smiling faces of the children around the world, I think, that is a most direct and simply way to express [our culture, our feelings] and every one can understand what we express, including the children representing the future of the world. In fact, what we have done in this ceremony is the biggest performance art in the world. Only the Olympics has the ability to bring together athletes from 204 countries. The athletes and our shows make up a whole painting. This painting is simple and easy to understand, no matter what style it is. I think this painting itself is a very direct performance. Further, the painting is very simple because there are only mountains, a river and a smiling sun and smiling faces of children. These all directly express an idea that is one world, one dream." (Zhang Yimou told the official website of the Beijing Olympics, beijing2008.cn, 2008b; p.1)

These two narratives clearly indicate that Zhang favours directness, constructed authenticity, and a romantic aesthetic defined by beauty and grace. The last aspect, of romance, is a central principle in Zhang's recent work. Even the action-packed and spiritually-bound potentials of martial arts and Tai Chi in *Hero* are filtered through romance. People, places, and things — everyone and everything, whether they are heroes and heroines, or historical figures such as Confucius and emperors, are uniformly treated by emphasising physical beauty. This mode applies in Zhang's work and in the opening ceremony.

Zhang's notion of Chinese culture is summed up by the phrase yijing, or "ideascape" (Xu, 2007; p.40). Yijing, or ideascape, is an abstract notion implying "a poetic sense of harmony between the human mind and surrounding nature" that is "already tinged with human emotions and is thus not subject to codes of verisimilitude" (p.40). *Hero*, in particular, showcases this concept through Zong Baidhua (the master and pioneer of modern Chinese aesthetics), represented by means of analogy, through an empty pavilion in the middle of mountains and lakes (Xu, 2007). The pavilion's emptiness, which implies human practice in nature, becomes "the converging point for the breathing and spiritual movement of the mountains and lakes." (Xu, 2007; p.40). This, in essence, is the notion of Chinese culture in Zhang's view.

Central protagonists in *Hero*, such as the historical Qin Shihuang, and associated concepts, such as *tian xia* (political sovereignty), are used as a kind of shorthand for abstract notions of civilisation and the end of the barbaric fringe. Qin Shihuang was the first emperor of unified China. It was under his rule that the notion of *tian xia*, which literally means "under heaven", initially understood as the entire geographical and metaphysical realm of mortals, subsequently came to be equated with political sovereignty. In China, Qin Shihuang, therefore, constitutes a model, an archetype even, of unity and harmony, concepts that translated easily to the opening ceremony.

In one performance, Chinese schoolchildren paint a simple picture with mountains, a river, and a smiling sun. In another, thousands of Tai Chi performers hold up umbrellas picturing the faces of smiling children. Here, the rather abstract equivalence between Chinese unity and world harmony is both hard to miss and contest. The vignette of children drawing a picture frames the opening ceremony at either end, and defines its basic structure in storytelling, by which Zhang means to achieve yet another act of substitution — that not only is painting (stories) an old art form but it is also *the* art form of the one of the oldest and longest civilisations in history. Consequently, all that follows this initial vignette, namely the rest of the opening ceremony and the weeks of games thereafter, constitute the different chapters of the story. In other words, the Olympics are absorbed into this great Chinese story, which began in ancient times and continues through the present.

The theatrical features of Zhang Yimou's visual style were in demand well before the Beijing Olympics. Already ten years previously, Zhang was seen as China's cultural ambassador and the new world power's artistic voice (Xu, 2007). In 1997, Zhang was invited to stage Puccini's *Turandot* conducted by Zubin Mehta in Florence. A year later, he staged the same opera in the Forbidden City, though with a newly inflected Chinese focus via "authentic", quasi historically-accurate costumes and tableaux aimed at fully exploring the opera's Orientalist content. The original story is set in the Forbidden City. Although, Zhang, at the time, lacked experience in theatrical production, some observers resort to the Naïve or Primitivist innovation argument to suggest he deftly turned the handicap to his advantage. It was precisely because he was untrained in the basics of operatic theatre that he was able to lend the story and the staging authenticity. Nobody else, Xu implies, had the wherewithal, or imaginative potential, to get at the heart of this opera, in which Western fascinations with the orient are woven "into a colourful tapestry of exotic material culture and unfamiliar emotive expressions" (Xu, 2007; p.43). Unfettered by prior experience, Zhang's operatic innocence, as it were, his insistence on cultural authenticity, and "his uncanny ability to arrange crowds in a spacious setting" are precisely "what makes Zhang's amateurish opera career unique", attracting "attention from all over the world" (p.39). Since the Olympics, Zhang's *Turandot* has toured widely. It was staged in Seoul in 2003 and at Olympics stadiums in Paris, Berlin, and Barcelona in 2005 (Xu, 2007).

Zhang's operatic ventures seem to have paid off, in that they provided grist for the opening ceremony. Specifically, various musical devices in the opening ceremony establish a highly operatic ambience of melodramatic opulence of feeling. Sonorous sounds of the gong and the drum played by the Peking Opera Orchestra and the melodious sounds of the huqin fiddle kick off a performance of Chinese traditional opera, followed by a concert of traditional percussion instruments interpolated by sounds of drum-beating in conjunction with a dance accompaniment by actors dressed as Xian terracotta warriors (attributed to Qin Shinhuang and excavated from the environs of his tomb) dancing with red flags in their hands. These performances successively represent Chinese history across space and time, both of which are filled with diverse folk traditions, dialects, and art forms, all of which consummately immerse the viewer in the authenticity of Chinese culture.

Zhang's work in the opening ceremony demonstrated his acute grasp of the importance of siting, a faculty that is everywhere in evidence in *Hero*, which perhaps provided Zhang a model for thinking about how to frame, introduce, and stage historical settings and places in the opening ceremony. *Hero* was shot in tourist destinations popular for their historical riches. The spectacular scenes of the formidable Qin army's attack on the Zhao capital, for instance, were shot in the sandstorms of Dunhuang city in Gansu province. Dunhuang, which is located in the Gobi desert and known as a jewel on the Silk Road, is famous for its numerous caves, once home to tens of thousands of Buddhist canons and murals. Depictions of the Silk Road and the "Flying Apsparas" in the opening ceremony are modelled on images and things found in these caves.

The employment of Zhang Yimou as creative and art director of the opening ceremony was a strategic move. Zhang's previous creation of a historic-mythic China in his films, his considerable success in the opera world, and his repute cumulatively made him the best candidate for creating the right kind of global image for China. The image was a hybrid of Chinese essence, represented by yijing, or ideascape, and modern technological spectacle that had the immediacy necessitated by an event such as the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games

3.2. The "Imagined China" as representative of global harmony and peace to express global myths

In this opening ceremony, the presentation of "harmony" via the movable print performance, the gigantic elevating globe called "Dream", the scroll with the footprints of all the participants, and the theme song *You and Me* represented a vision of peaceful, friendly people living in harmony. This theme is an aspiration among many people across the world. By representing this theme through a Chinese focus, the opening ceremony enabled China, namely its government and its creative personnel, to target a global myth.

3.3. The "Imagined China" in public discourses of the opening ceremony

After the games, various debates opened around the issue of whether the Beijing Olympics opening ceremony represented the real China. Steven Spielberg, for instance, who had withdrawn from his position as adviser for the opening ceremony, called it "the grandest spectacle of the new millennium" (Dyer, 2010). Other audiences and media staff continued to see China as a less-developed nation both in the past and the present. Some people still think of China as an isolated and less-developed nation, partly because of the later Qing dynasty's closed-door policy between 1724 (ban on Christianity) and 1842 (the first Opium War) and Mao's policy of economic self-sufficiency from 1949 to 1976 (Grasso et al., 2004; and Xing and Xin, 1998). During the 18th century and the early 19th century, Europe was changing under the impact of rationalism, nationalism, colonialism, and the industrial revolution. Meanwhile, the Qing court had adopted a virtual closed-door policy toward the Western world (Xing and Xin, 1998). Later, between 1949 and 1976, Mao stressed the need for ideological remodelling. He espoused class struggle and advocated economic self-sufficiency hoping that progress could be achieved through ideological motivation (Grasso et al., 2004). Since the 1989 anti-bourgeois liberalism and pro-democracy movement, the Chinese government has promoted a four-fold strategy of modernisation and democratisation (Grasso et al., 2004). This strategy refers to modernisation in four quarters: agriculture, industry, national defense, and science and technology.

The opening ceremony opened the floodgates to questions about political and social freedoms. Some pointed to the revelation that the 9-year old singing the Chinese national anthem was actually lip-syncing the national anthem sung by a 7-year old with buck teeth deemed too unsightly to appear on stage. They implied the fakery was a metaphor for the various restrictions imposed on the media before, during, and after the games. Many in the foreign media wanted to reveal the unseen and unreported sides of China: air pollution, forced evictions, human rights violations, suppression of dissidents, corruption, heavy-handed security, political crackdowns in Beijing, Xinjiang, Tibet, and the forced disappearance of beggars and migrant workers.

Initially, everyone loved the opening ceremony. It received praise from everywhere. The lavish display of cultural history by Zhang Yimou impressed viewers across the globe (Latham, 2009) and silenced naysayers. But within days after ceremony, the shine wore off. Several concerns emerged for discussion, mainly whether the opening ceremony was a representation of the real China or a mostly fictional creation by a hugely-talented film director. One of the first blows arrived on 9 August, 2008 when Beijing Times (Jing hua shi bao) revealed that the giant fireworks showing footprints were, in fact, digital images. News of the little girl's fake singing twisted the knife further (Latham, 2009). These scandals fuelled fierce debates about Olympic fakery, reasons why the opening ceremony could not reveal the "real China", reasons why Chinese authorities were concerned about face value, and about the lengths to which they were willing to go to ensure the portrayal of a perfect China (Latham, 2009). Many concluded that the "real China" was too unpleasant to be revealed, and that the "Imagined China" was an unreal China. Others argued that reporting on the fakery did not constitute reporting on ground realities, but rather only negated an image that was already widely contested.

Before The MSNBC News Division President Steve Capus set out to cover the Games, he said that "if there was news, in whatever form, they would be covering it." (New York Times; Stelter, 2008; p.1). Later, during the games, Capus revised his earlier statement. He said "the desire to cover the Olympic Games" conflicted with the desire to cover news (New York Times; Stelter, 2008; p.1), though opportunities to cover protests, arrests, and civil unrest were severely limited due to restrictions on media coverage during the games. Brian Stelter of MSNBC reported that "a meeting had taken place between the major right-holders to broadcast the games internationally and Olympic officials requesting that the restrictions imposed upon them be lessened in order to provide 'decent coverage'"” (New York Times; 2008; p.1). Restricting reports of pro-Tibet protest activity and internet censorship is also mentioned here. All reports were expected to take the official line and stay away from the reality of China, though Steve Capus insisted that all manner of news deserved to be covered.

Some observers have chosen to remain positive, and view the problems of the opening ceremony as an opportunity for cultural interpretation. Latham argues that the "fake" giant firework footprints actually reveal a great deal about the pursuit of authenticity in both the games and within cultural practice at large. According to information shared by an Olympic official with a Beijing newspaper, the fireworks footprints were filmed a year prior to the games, and subsequently manipulated to produce digital images for use in the event of bad weather conditions. This information suggests that while the means were deceptive, the intent was laudable. The Chinese officials had planned for all eventualities, and, when they came, used the solutions they had had the foresight to arrange. From here, one could argue that the desire to create and sustain an authentic vision of reality was a profound concern. It applied not only to the representation of history. But rather, it was comprehensive in conception, and therefore fuelled various aspects of the opening ceremony, including ensuring that the fireworks display was not impeded by uncooperative weather conditions.

3.4. The "Imagined China" as a fashion community through the global attention of fashion discourse to express global myth

Fashion works as a system that reflects the spirit of the times and creatively reveals social concerns, scientific, and aesthetic progress (Wilson, 2005). Fashion, fuelled by urbanisation, organises modern life through the intervention of stylised, everyday products (Simmel, 1971). As stated by Cholachatpinyo et al. (2002), fashion manifests social concerns across the globe and is driven by socio-political and economic forces, historical context, innovations in science and technology, and other special events. Sporting events fashion, such as the Olympics, reveals social concerns and scientific, technological and aesthetic progress in modern life. The 2008 Beijing

Olympics employed high technology and historical culture to create it own fashion identity. As the artist Guoqiang suggests (see below), the opening ceremony used global fashion systems to represent social concerns. These include the concern for environmental pollution through the concept of a green Olympics, the pursuit of romantic ideals through storytelling, and the expression of peace and equality across thousands of smiling faces:

> "Gunpowder is a Chinese invention, but the fireworks in this event are not merely for the sake of pumping the atmosphere with particles. They also perform the role of storyteller. [For example], along the dragon-shaped landscape water system of the Green Olympics, the fireworks will be fired up into yellow and red peonies. The computer ignition system will control the fireworks, and within seconds, the fireworks will span two to three kilometres following the flag raising process. During the climax of the art performances, the firing squad will display thousands of pictures of smiling faces collected from around the world. At that moment, the fireworks will create 2008 smiling faces in the sky." (Cai Guoqiang, the visual creative director of the Opening & Closing Ceremonies Department of BOCOG, told the Beijing2008.cn, 2008a; p.1)

The fashion industry does not merely produce pleasant clothing, music, sport, and other cultural forms. It also produces stylistic innovations and creative visions (Kawamura, 2005). A sporting event, in its capacity as fashion, can reconstruct people into icons who consequently generate new styles of playing, dressing, behaving, and appearance. It is their game and personality, on and off the sports fields, that brings sports as fashion to high-street counters. If athletes are driven by the game, audiences are driven by what athletes wear in attitude and clothing.

Themed clothing becomes fashionable before, during, and after any big sporting event. An event as big and widely-publicised as the Olympics, which is its own cultural institution, is bound to produce its own corps of fashion images. People wearing themed clothing generate their own culture club. These include sponsors, officials, workers, athletes, in-situ viewers, and viewers across the world.

Atkinson (2008; p.1) informs us that "many countries sent out sailors and private school students with crests and heraldry adorning the breast of their sports jackets." The Japanese team, for example, was dressed in white trousers and navy jackets printed with brass admiral buttons that derived from a country-club sporting lifestyle. The Polish team had dark navy jackets with contrasting cream buttons. The American team wore black suits with tied cravats and ascots by Polo Ralph Lauren, evoking *Chariots of Fire* and a genteel Gatsby aesthetic. Its members sported an array of knit sweater vests and clean-cut Polos with flag patches or Chinese characters reading "Beijing" (Olympics fashion, 2008).

Off the field, the fashion industry around the Olympics boomed. The Chinese American actress Lucy Liu, for example, in more than ten photos for Harper's Bazaar, showcased get-ups by Chanel, Alexander McQueen, Christian Lacroix, Giorgio Armani, Versace, Givenchy, Dior, Dolce & Gabbana, and Carolina Herrera that referenced all things sporty (www.harpersbazaar.com, 2008). Other events attempted to establish a more meaningful connection with the games. High-end high street brand Shanghai Tang used the number 8 in its giveaway scheduled for 8:08 PM on 8 August, 2008. Eight women dressed in Shanghai Tang's signature red silk qipao outfits, standing at the corner of 57th Street and Madison Avenue in Manhattan, gave away 888 red envelopes containing a lucky Chinese dollar. Participants had the option to either retain the lucky dollar or chance winning an $888 shopping spree at the Shanghai Tang boutique located in Midtown Manhattan (Hruska, 2008).

All these events and activities represent the creation of an institutionalised fashion system, which seems to express a unified concern for the games, and consequently for ideals associated with it. Styles of clothing, fashion shoots, advertising, and even the verbal discourse of the fashion world in the media, all constitute a consummate fashion brand that propagates its own myth and that of the games. If the opening ceremony re-imagined China, the fashion system constructed around the games also generated its own vision of the already re-imagined China, and thereby contributed to the global myth of the "Imagined China".

.

The global myth of the 2008 Olympic Games as represented in the opening ceremony derived from a number of features, such as Chinese culture and history, contemporary Chinese film, Chinese art and philosophy, and the economic wherewithal of the Chinese government's resources. All this was brought together by Zhang Yimou, a film director with a mythical status and global reputation not unlike the "archetypal heroes that control powerful forces" in his films (Xu, 2007; p.100). Worldwide fashion systems also constituted a significant partner in this collective enterprise directed by Zhang under the aegis of the Chinese government. Not least was the role of the media, which focused on China's economic strength, its historical antiquity, and the reality behind the mask of progress. In short, the "Imagined China" was constructed out of positive and negative factors, all of which collectively produced a complex and comprehensive global myth market.

Conclusion

This case study used the "Imagined China" myth of the 2008 Beijing Olympics opening ceremony to examine the development of a global myth through the discourses of managerial workers, viewers, and the media. In this case, the myth market develops from historical Chinese culture and global fashion system, where historical culture evokes nostalgia and authentic feeling, and fashion systems reflect social contradictions. Most myth markets typically involve an identity myth. In this sense, the identity myth is defined by anxiety. Specifically, China's identity anxiety derives from narratives of economic and technological backwardness, scant democracy, the taint of cheap and inferior mass production, widely-publicised media restrictions during the games, and the various "lies" of the opening ceremony performances. Still, many would argue that all these anxieties amounted to little in the face of the opening ceremony's cumulative achievements in creating a vision of a modern, beautiful, and less politically-stunted society.

Cayla and Arnould (2008) state that extending the global myth market is the last and most important way to make a local brand global. In China's case, specifically with respect to the games, the global myth market developed from the blurring of boundaries between Zhang's globally-familiar filmic repertoire and selective rejuvenations of Chinese history and culture that generated a Chinese-inflected view of global concerns regarding harmony, unity, peace, and war. The global market of this myth expanded and extended through the mediation of media, which aired positive and negative discourses. This platform created by the media is a central feature of the myth market. The black and white of media discourse lends an external authenticity to the drama of the myth. It suggests that the represented myth is so real that it can withstand and survive the negative discourse with flying colours. Negative discourse thus solidifies brand authenticity. All these mechanisms collectively extend and expand the myth market. The 2008 Beijing Olympics opening ceremony adopted a historical and mythical approach towards Chinese culture using global fashion resources to establish the myth of the "Imagined China". This enhanced the perception and consumption of a new Chinese way of life through which new cultural forms become possible.

Chapter Six:：A Case Study of Shanghai Tang

1. The Significance of Shanghai Tang

So far, Shanghai Tang is the first and only luxury brand to have emerged from China. It fuses the best of Chinese culture with the most stylish elements of fashion for the current globe-trotting shopper (Chua and Eccles, 2009). The brand includes a range of goods from wearable and affordable luxury goods to bespoke tailoring for suits and dresses, all of which convey the image of modern Chinese lifestyle. Shanghai Tang was started in 1994 by David Tang, a wealthy Hong Kong tycoon, who decided to offer high-quality eccentric products made in mainland China. Specifically, the product line included tourist products, bespoke tailoring, Chairman Mao wrist watches, qipao, silver chopsticks, Chinese-designed silk panamas, and leather items. Tang expanded Shanghai Tang's presence by taking it abroad to New York, London, and Pairs, making it China's first global luxury brand. Tang's entrepreneurial acuity ensured profits within one year of expansion, though the Asian financial crisis of 1997 was not so kind. Shanghai Tang's fortunes turned. In 2001, Tang sold the majority of his stake to Richemont Group, a Switzerland-based luxury retailer that counts prominent luxury brands such as Cartier, Alfred Dunhill, Piaget, and Mont Blanc among its clients. Currently, the CEO of Richemont group is Raphael Le Masne.

Raphael Le Masne, who is now Shanghai Tang's executive chairman, had previously headed the Richemont Group's other luxury brands serving key markets in Europe and Asia. On taking over the helm at Shanghai Tang, Le Masne hired Joanne Ooi, an American-Chinese fashion talent, as creative director. Although Ooi had only two years of fashion-area experience, having worked with Stephane Kelain (a French shoe designer) in Asia, she quickly grasped the problems holding back Shanghai Tang. At the time of her hire, Shanghai Tang offered expensive and fashion-insensitive Chinese emporium goods to local Chinese people. Its high-end market was naturally very narrow, and most tourists were likely to patronise it only as a once-in-lifetime shopping opportunity explored for a lark. Raphael le Masne and Ooi re-strategised Shanghai Tang into a Chinese-styled modern establishment offering highly wearable clothes with some eccentric features. This team jointly aimed to recast Shanghai Tang as a lifestyle brand encompassing clothes, home accessories, and curiosities. The lifestyle motif was also further expanded by opening the Shanghai Tang coffee shop. These drastic measures paid off. The brand's sales increased rapidly. In 2005, its New York store's sale revenue jumped 50%, and by the end of 2010, Shanghai Tang had 43 stores in 11 countries, 15 of which are in China. Today, Shanghai Tang tops the fashion brand list.

This case study examines the success of Shanghai Tang after its re-configuration by means of a hybrid model of Chinese style and global fashion. Specifically, this case examines the voices of global consumers, managers, and the media, all of whom interpret Shanghai Tang as a culturally and historically-specific China re-imagined through fashion resources.

The "Chinese" represents a culture beyond local and regional boundaries. It represents a modern Chinese lifestyle. The discourses of Shanghai Tang elaborate this particular vision and incarnation of China, and how the Richemont group, a Western fashion maker, redefined Shanghai Tang's branding through a modern aesthetic with Chinese leanings. The case study of Shanghai Tang demonstrates how the selective definition of historical and traditional Chinese cultural resources through global fashion systems has the potential to transform a local and regional brand into a global presence. In so doing, this study examines how a modern vision can be used to strategically select symbolic elements and repackage them in ways that satisfy consumption desires and fulfil identity projections across varied global contexts.

In-depth interviews in different locations and interpretive analysis of narratives revealed two major areas of study: the managerial and the consumer perspectives. Each perspective is further sub-divided, the consumer perspective into six parts, the managerial into five. These smaller sections treat common storylines and overarching themes. The aforementioned perspectives or stories encompass various interpretations of Shanghai Tang, including consumption patterns, working experience, and tensions between consumer agency and brand aim. This suggests that there are equally various meanings of the brand depending on who is speaking.

2. The "Imagined China" via the Discourses of Fashion, Historical Chinese Cultural Codes, and Brand Culture from Consumer Viewpoints

Combining the sign-experimentation and sign-dominant approaches, this section explores how consumers using notions of fashion interpret Shanghai Tang, Chinese cultural codes, and brand meaning. On working with the consumer groups, six major themes were recognised and interpreted. Following the lead of Williams (1994) who emphasises "the historical legacy of an ongoing social dialogue over the societal consequences of fashion phenomena" (1994; p.15), my interpretation of historical culture in fashion focuses on consumer experience as ongoing social dialogue. Social dialogues express, or negotiate, individual identity, which is mediated by brands, and constituted by personal and social identity. I contend that the consumption of Shanghai Tang is a means by which some consumers might be able to construct a distinctive cosmopolitan identity. Wearing Shanghai Tang might smarten someone's look and improve their job prospects, provide someone else the superficial impression of cultural immersion, and help others to enhance their sex appeal. Conversely, looking at Shanghai Tang might repel someone else and motivate them to assume an anti-fashion stance, itself an alternative variety of fashion trendiness. In short, fashion stimulates a variety of effects and responses. I will study some.

2.1. Distinctive cosmopolitan identity projection through Chinese cultural codes and global fashion resources

For some global citizens, cosmopolitan identity manifests by use of products that construct the notion of "Who I am" in conjunction with others' perceptions of "who you are". Along these lines, I present the narratives of Mr Luo (Chinese) and Miss. Jiang (Singaporean-Chinese) who use Shanghai Tang to express their cosmopolitan identities (see Table 8).

Mr Luo (name changed) from Beijing, China is a 40 year old CEO in the entertainment industry who runs an international business. Mr Luo is a "red consumer". "Red consumer" refers to people whose parents or relatives had either worked for the Mao administration, or were highly influenced by Mao-age culture.

I met Mr Luo at the Shanghai Tang store in the Grand Hyatt Hotel, Beijing. He was dressed in a black Tang jacket and beige trousers. The interview was conducted in a tea bar next door to the Shanghai Tang store. Mr Luo's comments express his convictions about the construction of personal identities and social roles as highly transitory in nature. His narrative reveals that being perceived as a cosmopolitan citizen is extremely important to him from a professional standpoint. Shanghai Tang's high-level functionality facilitates this desired look in international and Chinese social contexts. He said:

"Yes. My years as marketing director gave me the opportunity to meet lots of foreign clients. The first impression is very important when meeting people. To make a good first impression, I often wear Shanghai Tang's Tang suit or jacket. It makes me feel good in social and professional conversation. But I do not mean that I follow fashion. The word fashion sounds very "Shi shi de" (pretending to do something, or pseudo).The thing about my view of fashion is that we were never meant to look like someone else or be someone else. I think I feel confident, when I wear [Shanghai Tang's] Tang suit or jacket. For instance, if someone looks elegant and has good taste, I think I would like to talk more with them. Haha (he is laughing). I think they are healthy [positive], well-educated and disciplined. They get new friends easily." (Mr Luo, Beijing)

Specifically, Mr Luo is stating that fashion enables him to wear a cosmopolitan look, attract people, and thereby meet more people potentially useful for his business. His use of Shi shi de (pseudo, or pretending to do something) suggests that although he does not think of himself as a fashionista, he believes that good fashion can only do him good. Mr Luo's comments about fashion are an example of sign-experimentation, by which I mean Mr Luo interprets his relationship to fashion through a set of psychological codes (Murray, 2002). Fashion makes him feel good. It expresses good taste, education, and polite manners, and Shanghai Tang specifically helps him achieve the above. He goes on to say:

"On formal occasions, people often wear Western suits (Xi zhuang). I wear [Shanghai Tang's] Tang suit or shirt. Its style looks Western, but doesn't require a tie. So you can imagine, everyone is in a suit and tie, and I am not. Also, its quality is very good. It has a neatly pressed design and the material has enough give. It takes to my body. And its colours and design are very smart and stylish. Shanghai Tang often uses bright green or bright pink in the collar or wristband or lining. This sets Shanghai Tang clothes apart from competitors. I think that the traditional Chinese collar, buttons, and cufflinks give the clothes a unique, meaningful touch. When my foreign friends see me in this kind of suit or shirt, they often say: "Oh! Nice suit! I love this colour! Or collar!" and then they often ask me about the meaning of the traditional Chinese collar, or of the Chinese character "Shou" on the cufflinks. I am happy to explain the meanings to them. The clothes are a great conversation-starter. Moving into business is very easy after that." (Mr Luo, Beijing)

Mr Luo's more detailed description explains the appeal of Shanghai Tang for him. The Western-orientation but Chinese-detailing, high-quality material, flattering cuts, and vibrant, selective colouration collectively suit his tastes and satisfy his needs. China gave the world mandarin collars, frogged fastenings, and butterfly buttons. Mr Luo claims that Shanghai Tang's strategic citation of these Chinese features is among the most appreciated features by people who compliment him. If, on the one hand, flattering cuts and quality materials add to up to cosmopolitan style, the colour detailing, collars, buttons, and cufflinks seal the deal with a Chinese kiss. This is to say, Shanghai Tang has clearly figured out the right combination that offers enough of both worlds to customers like Mr Luo who seek to enhance their person towards professional ends.

Shanghai Tang gives Mr Luo confidence and facilitates the construction of a cosmopolitan identity that straddles international and Chinese contexts. In Chinese contexts, Mr Luo's cosmopolitan identity looks international. He has a talent for looking good, and his friends often seek his advice on fashion and dressing. "I wear it (the Tang suit) to Chinese weddings and to other Chinese formal occasions." Mr Luo defines his cosmopolitan identity not through money but through taste, refinement, and quiet fashion. He explains this point by reference to an example that patently does not apply to him:

"I do not want to be labelled 'a Shanxi mine boss'. (He explains this term). Last year, in a much-publicised event, a group of mine owners in Beijing from northern Shanxi paid cash for 10 Hummers at 1.3 million Yuan each, or USD $170,000, and flamboyantly drove them back to Shanxi in a convoy! Then about six months ago, a coal-mine boss from the Shanxi province brought 20 hummer jeeps in one deal for cash!" (When I asked him: 'Wow! Why do they like Hummers and paying in cash?. Mr Luo explains). "They really like to “burn money" and show off. The hummer jeep is powerful and safe. Maybe it protects their nerves, which must be weak from having made so much blood money so quickly!" (Mr Luo, Beijing)

This social contrast differentiates Mr Luo from those groups that blindly follow fashion, or seek Westernised fashion trends that some consumers equate with liberty (Dong and Tian, 2009). But Mr Luo's refusal to consume well-recognised international fashion brands implies his disapproval of fashion conformity and shameless spending. It also implies his resistance to embracing a sedentary and vulgar lifestyle.

I would argue that Mr Luo's comments about fashion, Shanghai Tang, and personal identity as it relates to dress, express the attitude of a Confucian businessman (Ru shang in Chinese), which refers to rich and knowledgeable businessmen who maintain a strong sense of social responsibility. The notion of the Confucian businessman shares parallels with the notion of the Western gentleman, and stands in sharp contrast to ostentatious parvenus (Bao fa hu in Chinese), such as nouveau riche "mine bosses from northern Shanxi province" (Shanxi Mei Laoban in Chinese). One could say, that Mr Luo's resemblance to the modern, international "Confucian businessman" probably derives from good taste, good education, professional savvy, positive attitude, and international travel. His preference for the traditional Chinese collar (mandarin collar) is consistent with the “Confucian businessman" identity, in that the mandarin collar was typically favoured by Chinese intellectuals and nobility. Achieving this status was a common ambition among people from all walks of life in ancient times. Present times are probably no different.

Beyond his own variety of consumer, Mr Luo’s comments explicitly point to another group of conspicuous consumers of luxury goods in China, namely Shanxi Coal-mine bosses. Their extravagant displays of money are so notoriously frequent and high that common practice now deems anyone displaying ostentatious spending worthy of the title, "Shanxi coal mine boss". Despite the humourous undertone, this is no ordinary expression, for it programmatically demeans the recipient, as Shanxi coal mine have flourished from running some of the most dangerous working spaces in China that have caused massive deaths among miners. Mr Luo's almost facetious comments thus seem to reveal the ugly side of fashion and brand consumption rampant in modern Chinese society.

In conclusion, I would argue that Mr Luo's cosmopolitan identity, deriving in part from his choice of Shanghai Tang clothing, which combines functionality with modern and traditional codes, that while it does not express an anti-conformist position, is nonetheless more than aware of fashion's downsides. To him, fashion is a number of appreciable things, from appearance and positive psychological feeling to good business sense and social conversation. It is also, when expressive of venal acquisition and arrogant display, an ugly phenomenon that does little credit to the positive aspects of modern Chinese society, and therefore merits censure.

That was Mr Luo. Miss Jiang, a different Shanghai Tang customer, puts a fine point on cosmopolitan identity by means of different views of fashion, brand meaning, and brand consumption. Miss Jiang is Malaysian-Chinese. She is a well-educated, young lawyer in the intellectual property rights industry in Shanghai. She explains her cosmopolitan identity and interest in Shanghai Tang by reference to old Shanghai (1920s-1930s):

"Shanghai Tang captures the essence of old Shanghai - freedom, fashion, multi-cultures - mmm… metropolis, and civilisation. Lots of movies, dramas, and novels are set in Shanghai of that time. They showcase dazzling neon lights, sexy and elegant female curves sheathed in exquisite cheongsam (or qipao in Chinese), and seductive melodies!" (Miss Jiang, Shanghai)

Like Mr Luo, Miss Jiang suggests that Shanghai Tang provides a picture of the modern, though her notion of modern is a modernness from the past. It is glamorous, sensual, and reminiscent of movie stars.

"I don’t want to attract too much attention by dressing oddly, like a gallery line-up at the zoo! I only like to be noticed by people I like (hehe—she laughs slightly). I think Shanghai Tang not only attracts the right people's attention, it also makes me feel good about myself. For example, this black jacket, it never goes out of style, even with its bright pink lining and traditional Chinese patterns. It looks good even at parties. You know, the most noticeable person should not be the guest, but the host of the party, though it would be fine if some people said 'I like the bright pink lining or the metaphorical Chinese pattern on my jacket! I love this kind of feeling! I only need for some people to understand me, not everyone!" (Miss Jiang, Shanghai)

Miss Jiang's insistence that fashion should not make her a curiosity suggests that she wants to stand out without standing out, that there exists a fine line between attractive distinction and unappealing oddness. Her inclination, it seems, is to small details picked out by colour and design that are still generalised enough to be in sync with the crowd. Her aesthetic might be called subtle distinction, which is a kind of reserved and defined taste.

Self-driven consumption value negotiates the tension between being distinctive and resembling groups. This is also Miss Jiang's fashion line, which specifically comprises wearability, part fantasy and identity projection, and selective distinctiveness. This combination appeal, in which the fantasy ingredient of identity construction plays a central part, has been a longstanding strategy in the promotion of mass-standardised fashion products (Emberley, 1987; and Forty, 1986). Superficially anti-conformist signifiers in such products make it possible for consumers to negotiate desires to fit in and stand out, maintain acceptability and flirt with incomparability. Miss Liang's comments about wearing Shanghai Tang clothing imply that the brand facilitates such identity manoeuvres within social contexts.

It is in this sense that Shanghai Tang represents the happy marriage of two differing vantages of consumption, namely sign-domination and sign-experimentation, whereby the weft of identity aspirations smoothly interweaves the warp of fixed brand meanings. The result is an identity fabric with distinctive features that speak in the common language of social acceptability, an end that both Miss Liang and Mr Luo seem to seek in wearing Shanghai Tang. In other words, Shanghai Tang's Chinese-detailing crossed with a modern aesthetic means different things to different people. Whereas Miss Liang perceives retro glamour, Mr Luo, seeks a Confucian businessman sensibility, differences of meaning that eloquently express the notion that "brands are more like discussions than they are like monologues" (Schroeder and Salzer-Mörling, 2005; p.747).

2.2. Fashion and brand codes as a ladder for success

Miss Liu is a slim Chinese model aged 27. We had met only a day prior to the interview. She had just finished shopping at Shanghai Tang. I intercepted her on her way out. She said she was happy to be interviewed but it would have to wait a day. As scheduled, we met at her office, which was located in a top-end Beijing shopping mall. Unlike Mr Luo and Miss Liang, Miss Liu's fashion tastes are aligned with her professional choices. She likes fashion because she has to. She follows fashion trends because nothing else cuts it. She expressed a desire to purchase more fashion products but pled a budget. "There are a lot of beautiful, up-to-date clothes, and designs, and they will help me shine in a crowd, but I cannot afford them." She expressed pride in being a devoted follower of trends and in her preference for Western brands:

"This spring season, 3D and masculinity are a big deal. Like this. (She points to a print-out) 3D camellia in D&G’s skirts, 3D peach blossom in Alexander McQueen's clothing, 3D rose in Fendi’s dress, and bold geometric prints with leather and canvas to make women look tougher, more masculine even." (Miss Liu, Beijing)

Miss Liu affirmed that she consumed fashion to stand out. Her preference for the qipao (Chinese cheongsam), for example, is, from her perspective, a means to achieving that goal, and thereby climbing to the top of the social ladder. She claimed she was seeking social mobility and found Chinese apparel and fashion products too local (tu, in Chinese), which means out-of-date in comparison with Western fashion. She used the phrase "country bumpkin", implying her dislike of the "raw" look of Chinese products, that they seemed to lack a contemporary feel, though she did claim to have a selective preference for the qipao (cheongsam), which helps her to stand out at a Western party. Wearing Shanghai Tang, which crosses Western with Chinese, and appearing fashionable at parties seemed for her to constitute climbing the social ladder of success:

"The only thing I bought was a traditional qipao [from Shanghai Tang's store]. One of my friends, who's a foreigner, is having a big party tomorrow night and I'm going to be there. I had nothing to wear but now I have the qipao I bought yesterday. Maybe wearing it will make me stand out. This dress's style is so different from Western clothing, don't you think? … I don't like the traditional qipao because it's too Chinese! I don't want to look like a country bumpkin at tomorrow's party. I don't want to be excluded because I'm not fashionable. I buy Shanghai Tang because it's a global brand. Its designers are Western. I think this dress appeals to Westerners, and its distinctive Chinese features will make me stand out!" (Miss Liu, Beijing)

Miss Liu's comments suggest she deploys fashion to the strategic end of competing successfully in social life. "Standing out" seems to enable Mis Liu to harvest appreciation among her social peers, snag career opportunities, and enhance her personal life. Her comments offer a cogent example of the extent to which dress can denote a consumer's self-worth, which, on gaining the lineaments of "symbolic capital" (Bourdieu, 1984; Featherstone, 1991), can bring economic and social rewards. Miss Liu prefers Shanghai Tang's qipao (cheongsam) in Western contexts because it kills two birds. It functions as a symbol of individuality and suggests cosmopolitanism because of its international feel. However, beyond such contexts Miss Liu prefers to patronise Western brands signifying difference within Chinese social contexts.

Miss Liu's comments might raise eyebrows but nonetheless represent the patterns and compulsions of a vast majority of contemporary Chinese consumers who blindly pursue Western branding, though they seem to suffer from brand illiteracy and a mismanaged sense of identity construction. In others words, the fashion choices of consumers like Miss Liu are driven largely by how others perceive them, and not self-directed by having a sense of what kind of identity they wish to carve out for themselves.

I now present Mrs Li. Mrs Li is a plump woman of about thirty-five from Yiwu city, Zhejiang province, China. She is a stationery manufacturer. I met her at the Shanghai Tang store in Hangzhou. She had accompanied a friend on a shopping trip to Shanghai Tang where she bought two black Tang jackets (one was short with light green colour cuffs and the other one was long with light pink cuffs). Mrs Li was open and talkative.

Once inside the store, I told the sales associate I wanted to buy gifts for foreign female friends. The sales associate showed me the gifts section and said, "a lot of people overseas like these products, such as the dumpling bags" (she points to the red leather bag).

When I was trying on the bag, Mrs Li looked me smiling and said: "looks good, very good! This kind of item will express your taste. It is a big international brand, isn’t it?" (She turned to the sales associate, waiting for her answer. Once the sales associate agreed with Mrs Li, I said: "Sorry, what I want to buy is not for me, but for my friends."). She went on to inform me that "This kind of product is high-end (Shang dang ci, in Chinese), which means it is presentable and valuable enough (Na de chu shou, in Chinese) for gifting to a boss or friends." (I then asked her what she had bought) She answered: "I only bought two jackets to have a try. Looks very modern! My friend loves Shanghai Tang. She finds their (Shanghai Tang) products very cultured. So [I] look like a well-educated person." (She laughs in front of the mirror with the Tang Jacket)

Her complimentary words and comments about Shanghai Tang products impressed me deeply: "This kind of product (Shanghai Tang) is a big international brand, high-class (Shang dang ci, in Chinese), and is presentable and valuable enough (Na de chu shou, in Chinese) for gifting to a boss or friends." Her comments that Shanghai Tang could serve as a shortcut for success had a touch of snobbery. They seemed to suggest her avid consumption of brand products things was determined by fashion trends and superficial notions of social status, and that Shanghai Tang was an easy means to provide the impression of being a well-educated person.

Both Miss Liu and Mrs Lee represent a class of consumers who conform to fashion trends in order to sustain an impression of personal distinctiveness, a practice that is common enough in the current climate of relatively de-personalized social life (Simmel [1904] 1971). In these patterns of consumption, fashion functions as a kind of "symbolic capital" (Bourdieu 1984; and Featherstone 1991) or social capital (Putman, 2000) which users deploy in keeping with the common, though fallacious, ideology that fashion sets one apart, and sets things in motion. Fashion on one's person thus resembles money in the pocket that enables one to buy a variety of things — attention, pleasure, conversation, and professional networks — as one migrates across contexts. Its power is enormous because its signifying potential is highly flexible, not only because perceptions of fashion differ, but also because individual expectations of fashion are in constant flux.

2.3. A function-seeker via anti-fashion and anti-brand activities

A number of anti-conformist participant narratives in my study reveal consumer autonomy with regards to fashion and brand discourses. Mr Wu is a good example of this kind of consumer. Mr Wu is vice general manger in a consulting company. In college he majored in art history. He is a "red consumer". We met in his office in Shanghai. He was wearing a dark blue mandarin collar shirt.

Wu: I buy Shanghai Tang products, but that does not mean that I like following so-called fashion and marketing. In my opinion, fashion and brand is just some bamboo pole someone set up in an open and vacant ground that has many monkeys around it. With the sound of the gong beating, the monkeys begin scrambling up the pole. I am not this kind of monkey that follows fashion trends and brand meanings. I just like beautiful things!

Interviewer: What do you think of Shanghai Tang?

Wu: There are too many details! Too many! They look flimsy. Honestly, I do not like some of Shanghai Tang's colour combinations, especially on the jackets. They show a much too strong colour contrast, between the bright pink and black or the bright green and black, which hurts my eyes. In the Chinese mind, we generally tend to harmonious colour combinations."

Interviewer: So, why then do you buy Shanghai Tang?

Wu: I like some unique designs, such as the mandarin collar, and harmonious colour combinations. The pattern of this collar is similar to the traditional mandarin collar, but the height is lower than the traditional one, which runs up nearly half the neck and feels clumsy and stiff. But this is more comfortable and looks more beautiful. The slits in the two sides make this shirt more strikingly vivid and more wrinkle-proof than the general shirt without slits.

Interviewer: Why do you like the mandarin collar?

Wu: I am used to it, so like it!

(Mr Wu, in Shanghai)

Mr Wu’s narrative expresses his strong anti-fashion and anti-brand position. His metaphor, of fashion being a bamboo pole for monkeys to scale, indicates that he views fashion and brands as encouraging blind imitation. The description plays with a common Chinese proverb about "monkey tricks", which refers to someone "playing tricks" on someone or "making a fool" of someone. This suggests that Mr Wu thinks of fashion and brands as tricks that marketers use to make fools of consumers.

Mr Wu's impressions of Shanghai Tang describe his disapproval of pseudo-aesthetics and superficial authenticity. He loves Shanghai Tang for its design and functional features. He reveals his preference for Chinese styles when he criticises Shanghai Tang for having what he thinks are too many details. Although he does not go so far as to correlate fashion and identity, what he does say expresses a great deal of self-confidence. That he wears mandarin collars because he likes them suggests that he does not shy away from Chinese styles because they are Chinese. In fact, he likes how the collar, which was popular during the Mao era, makes reference to his "red" background.

2.4. A reflective and authentic reservoir of historical Chinese references

Shanghai Tang products often express subtle meanings, in that their dialectic images, or the collusion of conflicting meanings or associations, create complex meanings. Almost all the Shanghai Tang consumer participants in my study appreciated the brand's introduction of isolated Chinese style elements into more normative styles to make them fashionable. They found it appealing that only isolated Chinese features were picked out in colour and by strategic location on cuffs and collars. Evans has stated that fashion has the ability to turn yesterday's emblems into tomorrow's commodities (2000). Shanghai Tang does precisely that. Even a quick perusal of the products, whether in stores, or online, shows that the brand depends on yesterday's emblems for its fashion statements. Chinese-styling is the key to its success. This is particularly evident in the brand's seasonal collections, in which designers focus on small, distinctive details that provide immediacy to cultural citations. It's almost as if Shanghai Tang seems to have taken recommendations from Evans (2000), who argues that re-actualising the past is a way to refine the overwhelming ideology of myth, though expressing it suitably is equally important for the myth to exert the desired impact. Mrs Wang from Beijing has something to say on these lines:

"I like Shanghai Tang. I am fascinated by its citation of Chinese traditions. For example, Chinese gold and silver ingots (yuanbao) were an important medium to exchange expensive goods in ancient China. They sometimes took the form of a smiling face to represent happiness and wealth. They were typically owned by high ranking officials, emperors, and tycoons, and used as money. Today, we see them at Chinese New Year parties. Shanghai Tang has cleverly introduced gold and silver ingots in its patterns. They look very stylish, up-to-date, attractive, distinctive, and meaningful. Images of the ingots are light brown and white or silver and golden, and there are many of them together on shining silk. I love Shanghai Tang's unique style!--" (Mrs Wang, Beijing)

Shanghai Tang's citations of Chinese cultural symbols are typically positive, though slightly anarchic images sometimes appear in certain products, as pointed out by Kelly Huang, who is originally from Shanghai but now lives in Europe:

"I was really attracted by this bag (she points to the 'old Shanghai' message bag she has purchased) with old Shanghai images of social upheaval. I like the grey and white colour combination, which makes me think of old Shanghai life - lots of opportunity and danger, rogues and heroes, luxury and poverty. This bag's design is fashionable, don't you think?" (Kelly Huang, Shanghai)

Regardless of whether it is ingots or images of social upheaval in old Shanghai, Shanghai Tang's strategy consists in first isolating then re-introducing isolated features into novel arrangements that defamiliarize the old and the new. Once-precious ingots become more commonly available and wearable if you buy a Shanghai Tang dress, as does a blast into a socially complicated past if you buy a Shanghai Tang bag. In both cases, you get the right bits of history that suit your temperament and the occasion. This fashion strategy, which engages the cultural interest of consumers by re-engaging the old within the new, does not elaborate citations but rather represents them figuratively across designs. Clearly, the tactic, of developing a "dialectical theatre of fashion" (Benjamin, 1973), has been very successful, for Shanghai Tang is a strong luxury brand that is only growing in size and profits. Backed by strong marketing at fashion shows and through advertising, Shanghai Tang has created a brand identity that is equal parts glamorous and sexy *and* aloof and interesting.

Fashion can stimulate people's memory of fashion history. It can re-construct for them the remembered and the forgotten. "In fashion, quotation is sartorial remembrance", and "fashion activates the past in the present by rewriting its own themes and motifs through historical quotation" (Leslie, 1999; p.308). Mrs Wang's account of Shanghai Tang's representation of ingots, for example, confirms that cultural codes expressed through fashion products carry subtle connotations, which conjure memories, remembered in whole or in part. On the other hand, Kelly Huang's account reveals that historical quotation in fashion can produce dialectic images. Her account related to images on a bag. The images cited the 1920s and 1930s when Shanghai was brimming with economic speculation, crime and its adventurers, poverty and disease. In harnessing this image, the bag's design aims for the effect of cinematic montage, in which juxtaposed images enable a chain of associations that may not occur in an ordinary plot-driven narrative. Accordingly, various images of the Old Shanghai appearing side by side on a new substrate, or bag, redefine the old, though precisely how is up to the viewer.

Huang's comments about the bag express nostalgia for a bygone era, the glamour of which lies in its being firmly in an inaccessible past, and precisely for that reason all the more attractive, because utopia looks good partly because it is not within reach. This is the point fashion observers advance to demonstrate fashion's facility with grappling with contemporary social contradictions through retrospection. Fashion responds to fantasist desires for escape from the present by relocating the past into new surroundings (Evans, 2007). Dialectic branding, which is founded on montage and quotation, and on thesis and anti-thesis (Evans, 2000; p.33), creates an aura of authenticity, or "the quality of being perceived as genuine and natural" (O'Guinn et al., 2008; p.610), which, in turn, can become the central strategy for brand development.

2.5. The dialectic ambivalence of the erotic and the chaste

Intense desire remains all the more intense when unrequited. This is sometimes true for desire between people, and almost always true in the case of fashion. Piecemeal quotation of the past serves to maintain a necessary distance from the past, which defines the success of the dialectic image, one that is both erotic and chaste, or desirable because it cannot be fully had. This psychological aesthetic matches nicely with the formal aesthetics of Chinese dress, in which ambiguity of meaning is a central aim, in that it is both sensual and unsullied. The latter aspect, of incorruption in Chinese dress, was influenced by communist party politics during Mao's reign, and by an earlier era of Chinese feudalism. Concealment, denial, and calculated ambivalence of intention thus became the central poles of Chinese sartorial aesthetics.

Having said that, Chinese fashion has been courting the enemy for quite a while. The formal penetration of Western fashion in China began around 1981, when French designer Pierre Cardin mounted shows of his work in Beijing and Shanghai. Further influenced by Western thoughts of individualism, identity expression has become increasingly popular in China. Shanghai Tang, in particular, has been able to successfully marry Chinese ambivalence with the emphasis on direct allure, which is a defining feature of Western dress (Davis, 1992). The collective semiosis, or means by which "messages, or texts, interact with people in order to produce meanings" (Fiske, 1990; p.2), derives from the dialectic ambivalence of the erotic and the chaste that manage one another, and thereby encapsulate Chinese sartorial ideology. Davis (1992) has argued that "allusiveness and ambiguity are endemic in clothing" and that fashion communicates "because of its semantic incapacities to encourage creativity in the delineation and expression of ambivalence" (p.22). However, identity development and projection are founded on tensions and ambiguities in Western clothing discourse, and Shanghai Tang's obvious resolution of the contrast between traditional Chinese and modern Western is only in keeping with the aforementioned identity paradigm.

Fashion advocates have found various ways to frame the erotic in fashion. But, according to some, theories only deflect from the obvious love affair with lust that lies at the heart of the erotic in women's fashion. Davis states (1992; p.86) that it is "to the credit and clear vision of the proponents of one or another erotically based theory of fashion, including certainly Flugel and Laver" that fashion advocates "are extremely loath to claim it is wholly some raw concupiscent impulse that women's clothing means to address." In light of such views, Shanghai Tang's retro references to Old Shanghai can be better appreciated by first acknowledging what they are. They are juxtapositions of very selective quotations that eschew discomfiting aspects of the past. In stores stocked with sexy qipao and shiny, silky dresses with images of gold and silver ingots, the bag with the image of old, struggling Shanghai is more likely to evoke nostalgia than it is a sense of activism or social concern. The insistent appeal of retro glamour is a quality Shanghai Tang designers have grasped more than well. The most obvious result of their understanding is Shanghai Tang's women's qipao, which is both chaste-looking and sexy, its shiny fabrics and side slits evoking the retro glamour of erstwhile nightclubs and cabarets, and the attendant eros of rubbing elbows with the likes of respectable elite, wealthy rogues, and well-heeled prostitutes. This piece of clothing is a melting pot of associations that more or less fit the notion Davis advances — that, at heart, fashion is going for a good time, and what's the harm in that?

Sexiness is a lonely quality. It needs the company of the chaste to become erotically-charged. The chaste is an apparel-receptive value, which develops through a set of linked aesthetic features. In fashion, this could be the slightly misaligned blouse button, the fastening tugs of which fetchingly reveal the bosom, or the facility of translucent fabric to both veil and expose (Davis, 1992). According to Morris (1989; p.87), "clothing is sexy when is not too revealing" when "it is body-conscious dressing - showing some skin and shape but not too much!" Broadly speaking, chasteness and sexiness are highly subjective impressions, though Shanghai Tang designs, according to some customers, address this point with appealing results. Mrs Guo is a Singaporean-Chinese Shanghai Tang enthusiast in the UK:

"I love Shanghai Tang's jackets and scarves. The colours are simple and common. They will not draw too much attention in public. But they create designs that make people look sexy and shapely. I also like the embroidered flowers on this jacket. They stand for chastity and purity in China. I absolutely love it, and as if the sexy design and chaste flowers weren't enough, there is also a cerise pink lining, which stole my heart. The loose black jacket slightly reveals the cerise pink lining. It makes me look very sexy and attractive. We call this quality of the Chinese woman's personality "Man Show", which refers to simmering sex appeal never exceeding the surface. The jacket is slightly split on the side. I love this split too! Shanghai Tang products look very, very erotic and exotic!" (Mrs Guo, UK)

Mrs Guo's account , which implies that Chinese women can be both chaste and erotic, parallels Miss Jiang's statement of selective reserve in Shanghai Tang clothing. Both women are referring to the brand's varied features, connoting diverse associations and impressions. The Chinese love dark colours with bright detailing that draws attention, the combined effect of which is encapsulated by the Chinese buzzword "Menshao" or "Manshow". It is used to describe people who are ostensibly reserved but actually volatile, something along the lines of an active volcano at rest. The term can also be used to describe duplicity, though without malice. So, "Menshao" or "Manshow" describes a kind of hide and seek, which Shanghai Tang represents through bright linings, collars, and cuffs, and skirt slits at strategic locations, which lend a sensual edge to the latent bubble under the surface of restraint.

2.6. A reservoir of Chinese lexicon meanings

Shanghai Tang showcases various units from the vast lexicon of Chinese historical and traditional symbols pertaining to values and beliefs relating to social relations, social groups, and social orders, which collectively constitute culture. Sets of values, beliefs, and ideas about the world are known as ideology. Shanghai Tang's symbols or signs represent Chinese ideology. Volosinov (1973) argues that "the domain of ideology coincides with the domain of signs - whenever a sign is present, ideology is present too" (1973; p.10). According to Saussure (1974), signs are made up of the signifier and the signified. The signifier refers to the physical part of the sign, such as the sound and shape of the words in language. The signified refers to the mental concept to which the signifier refers, the meaning of the signifier (1974: pp.65-67). Barthes further defined signified meaning in terms of denotational meanings and connotational meanings. Denotational meaning refers to "the literal meaning of a word or image", or what Fiske (1990) suggests is the "common-sense, obvious meaning". Connotational meaning is, "a second order of signification or meaning where a word or an image makes a person think or feel, or the associations that a word or an image has for someone" (Fiske, 1990; pp.85-86). Both denotational and connotations meanings are firmly located in social ideology. Barthes further explains that ideology mostly serves to advance connotation (Fiske, 1990).

For its part, Shanghai Tang employs diverse Chinese symbols to interpret the lexicon of luck through its store design, clothing, and accessories. It is hardly a new concept that retail environments affect consumer shopping experiences and decisions. Kotler (1973) states that store "atmosphere" refers to the creation of those purchasing environments which could generate particular emotional effects that enhance purchase possibility. Based on the Mehrabrian-Russell environmental psychology model (1974), Donovan and Rossiter (1982) elaborate that the store's environmental stimuli can affect the consumer's emotional states relating to pleasure, and these can impact purchasing behaviour. Here, pleasure refers to the extent to which the store environment impacts consumer happiness and satisfaction. Arousal refers to the extent to which the store environment facilitates the impression of the consumers being in control of themselves, and free to act according to their will. Baker et al. (1992) have argued that the interplay of ambient cues and social cues, which affect arousal in the store environment, impact consumer pleasure levels. In other words, the more social cues manifest in the store environment, the more the subject is aroused. In Shanghai Tang's case, numerous Chinese symbols in its stores evoke emotional effects and hence enhance purchase possibility, as attested by one participant, a dancer from Shanghai:

> "I like its (Shanghai Tang's) Xin Tiandi store. The store's exterior details, such as the antique walls and tiles, resemble traditional Shikumen buildings of old Shanghai, while the interior combines 1930's Shanghai with 21st century urban spaces. I love it. (Interviewer asked: "What impressed you in this store?". The participant explains: I was impressed by a lot of things. I like the vibrant pink and green colour, the sexy mannequins in the shop windows, the bright pink and green old Shanghai logo, the grey patina of the store address plaque, the Chinese "Lu" handles, and so on. Oh! I also like the China-inspired designs, such as the pink and light green wall decor, the high light-green ceiling decorated with square patterns, traditional Chinese "double happiness" paper cutout patterns. I think it is wonderful! What's more, there are many Chinese symbols in the apparel, such as the endless knots, gold fish cups, and the spider-jade bag. (Susan, Shanghai)

Susan clearly enjoys the many citations of historical symbols in the store and in the products. Her comments about Shikumen building refer to the "stone gate" or "strong gateway" that is a unique architectural feature of Shanghai residences, a style that developed during the Taiping (Heavenly peace) Rebellion, or China's civil war (1850-1864). At that time, many rich businessmen in Shanghai and surrounding areas took refuge in the city's foreign compounds, known as concessions. These buildings are essentially two or three-story townhouses enclosed within high, heavy brick peripheries. The residences are linked on straight alleys called long-dang in Shanghainese marked by stylish stone arches commonly seen in Anglo-American nations. The residences contain interior courtyards that are common in traditional Chinese domestic architecture. Shikumen residences thus combined Western and Chinese architectural features, a hybrid style on which one Shanghai Tang store, referred to above by Susan, is modelled.

Another customer, a Mrs Wang admits to a fondness for Chinese symbolism in Shanghai Tang while her husband favours the red "star" symbols, which correspond to his "red" family background. His parents worked for the Mao regime. Mrs Wang says:

"I like the Shanghai Tang store at the Beijing Grand Hyatt Hotel. The shiny gold of Shanghai Tang embedded in the white gate, the traditional Chinese red, sky blue, and light green on the walls, all make it look very luxurious and glamorous. I love the "double fish" cap sleeve qipao, "dumpling or Jiao zi" bags, the "firecracker" silver resin earrings, and the coin cufflinks. They appear very meaningful to me, though my husband doesn't like them. He only likes the simple red "star" symbols in the leather collection and in the hats. At first I couldn't understand why he liked the red stars, but now I think it has to do with the background of his military family. His parents were members of the Red Army, and he was very present in the Cultural Revolution". (Mrs Wang, Beijing)

In conclusion, the Chinese symbols of Shanghai Tang describe a particular way of life from the past and the present, and represent the ideas, values, and beliefs of Chinese people. In this way, Shanghai Tang expresses Chinese ideology and other smaller, local group ideologies that reflect Chinese identity. For example, Shanghai Tang's quotation of luck symbols from the Chinese cultural lexicon not only provides the literal meanings (denotation) of distinctive Chinese symbols, such as longevity, symbolised by the Chinese character Shou, or love, harmony, and abundance associated with the Chinese double fish symbol, but it also provides the second order of signification (connotation) by which a word or a symbol elicits memories, such as the red "star" symbol that Mrs Wang's husband seems to like, possibly because it reminds him of a bygone era and his own childhood. Chinese cultural symbols and their meanings in Shanghai Tang products and store design appear in Table 10.

3. The "Imagined China" via the Discourses of Fashion, Historical Chinese Cultural Codes, and Brand Culture from the Managerial Perspective

This section presents the impressions and testimonies of Shanghai Tang managerial workers. I examine their interpretations of historical Chinese culture as it appears in Shanghai Tang products and their brand meanings. Specifically, the interviews and my subsequent interpretation of them dealt with how global high-end luxury position and global market-oriented creativity strategically satisfy global consumers.

3.1. Global high-end luxury position and Global market-oriented creativity within Chinese-ness

According to Tischler's report (2006), Raphael le Masne de Chermont, the executive chairman and French CEO of Shanghai Tang has suggested that Shanghai Tang is a peer of Gucci, the high-end luxury global brand (Fast Company, 2006). This reveals Shanghai Tang's high-end luxury position. For his team, Le Masne hired top-class creative employees, such as David Tang (the brand founder of Shanghai Tang who is from Hong Kong, educated at Cambridge University, and with work experience at Beijing University); Joanne Ooi (the American-Chinese creative director of Shanghai Tang (2001-2009), born in Singapore, raised in Cincinnati, with on the job training at the Garment Trading Office). Le Masne de Chermont himself is highly trained. Before working at Richemont, which runs Mont Blanc, Chloe, Dunhill, and Cartier (see Table 9), he gained on the job brand development training at Piaget.

Le Masne de Chermont told Fast Company: "It's no surprise that the company's principals have been recruited from the carpet-bagging global creative class. We're a melting pot of multicultural people who work on the same vision: a Chinese lifestyle brand that has relevant ambivalence" (Tischler, 2006; p.3). These global and cosmopolitan manager/employees reflect Shanghai Tang's Chinese-ness, for example, through Tang and Ooi's Chinese background and through Le Masne de Chermont who has lived in Hong Kong since 1994 (Chua and Eccles, 2009). In an interview during MediaTV's series on luxury brands' marketing strategies, Le Masne de Chermont stated: "The rise of China as a luxury powerhouse, not only as a market of consumers, but also as a breeding ground, will produce high-end brands of its own. Rising costs of production in China means it is losing its competitive edge to other Asian markets, so it will begin to develop its own luxury labels to fill the needs of this new upmarket culture …You see China is doing it with telephones and computers, like Lenovo and Haier, but you haven't seen China yet doing it with fashion and lifestyle … there will be some emerging, and it is good news" (Davis, 2009; p.1). As part of its resolution to create a fashion and brand culture of Chinese-ness across the globe, Shanghai Tang also launched a mandarin collar society in 2009.

Shanghai Tang's business is mainly divided across its core collection and seasonal collection. The core collection is key to the business, as this comprises a stable collection of bestsellers, including cashmere and silk sweaters, hard goods, pens, home furnishings, and other gift goods, all of which amount to 50% of the total business (Chua and Eccles, 2009). But according to Shanghai Tang, the seasonal collection keeps Shanghai Tang fresh, up-to-date, and abreast of global fashion trends, with changes introduced every six months

Shanghai Tang employs seven in-house designers who renew, renovate and upgrade products (Chua and Eccles, 2009). Within this corps, 5 are of Chinese extraction (See Figure 11), a number that indicates Shanghai Tang's commitment to Chinese-ness, which is basically the brand's DNA (Chua and Eccles, 2009). Based on this cultural DNA principle, designers are expected to factor in sales and costs when creating new designs or introducing changes. The most challenging aspect of the designer's work might reside in the "open to buy" principle. By the "open to buy" principle, Shanghai Tang retailers and franchisers have the freedom to create their own sales inventory each time a final collection is made available in a viewing (Chua and Eccles, 2009). The aims of this strategy are simple. It is to optimise sales by enabling retailers and franchisers to select the best mix of products suitable for their respective stores and clienteles. Naturally, there are implicit downsides to this principle. Despite their creative features, some designs might not sell well. Orders will be cancelled. This suggests a strong market orientation in brand philosophy, which probably helps Shanghai Tang stay on top of market changes, consumer inclinations, and international fashion demands.

Figure 11. **Key In-house Designers**

Name	Title	Brief Biography
Joseph Li	Chief designer	Li is a Hong Kong-born Chinese who grew up in Canada. He was educated in the UK and worked in Paris for a year before returning to Hong Kong. He worked with Blanc de Chine, another fashion brand, and focused on Chinese designs before joining Shanghai Tang in late 2007.
Millicent Lai	Chief designer	Lai is a Hong Kong- born Chinese. She joined Shanghai Tang about the same

	-Home	time as creative director Jonne Ooi did. Her work at Shanghai Tang focused on home accessories. Her design strategy was to create designs that were timeless rather than fashionable. She felt that her job at Shanghai Tang allowed her to connect with Chinese culture.
Peter Wong	Graphic designer	Wong is a Burma-born Chinese but left Burma at age 5. He then lived in Macau and the UK. He studied graphic design, focusing on film and photography. At Shanghai Tang, his work involved helping the other designers with their graphic design needs. He also worked on advertisements and designed products such as pens and T-shirts.
The above three designers at Shanghai Tang are of Chinese extraction.		
Valerie van Damme	Knitwear designer	Van Damme is Belgian, originally from Brussels. She first came to Hong Kong with her father, who worked in Asia. She was a fitting model for Hong Kong-based Belgian designer when she developed an interest in fashion and design. She has a degree in business, and graduated from a fashion school in Belgium
Stephanie Andeae	Accessories designer	Andeae was born and raised in Germany, and moved to the UK at 16. She studied women's wear design in London and worked with various designers. She moved to Asia because many luxury brands were moving their production to the region. Prior to joining Shanghai Tang, she worked for a year in a Beijing fashion company.
The above two designers had either worked or lived in Chinese contexts before starting at Shanghai Tang.		
Armele Barbier	Men's wear designer	Barbier is a French national who started her career as a designer focusing on women's wear. She was educated at a French fashion school and trained with leading Japanese designer, Issey Miyake. Her design focus at Shanghai Tang was men's wear and she travelled regularly to Paris to network and follow trends in men's fashion there.
Fabien Blachier	Head Textile Designer	Blachier is a French national who used to work for Kenzo, a Japanese fashion brand. His focus at Shanghai Tang was on print design for women's wear and he worked closely with Joseph Li. His job profile required him to monitor trends in Europe.

The above two designers had either worked or trained in Japanese contexts before starting at Shanghai Tang.

(Sourced from Chua and Eccles, 2009; p.15)

3.2. Strategically satisfying global consumers for various occasions

Interviews with six store managers, store supervisors, and sales associates suggest that Shanghai Tang helps its consumers address contradictions between self-identity and social dependencies (see Table 9). In this sense, Shanghai Tang's particular styles satisfy its consumers' diverse identity expression needs for various social occasions. Mrs Gao, about 30 years old, is store manager at the Shanghai Tang store in Shangri-la Hotel. She explained the reasons behind Shanghai Tang's popularity among customers. Her account revealed the success of Shanghai Tang's strategic marketing practices, which help consumers construct distinctive cosmopolitan identities:

"We (Shanghai Tang) have a range of products with fashionable styles, designs, and colours that fit all occasions. For example, last week one of my friends (Chinese) wore this black Cashmere turtle neck sweater (she points to the item) for her Spanish conference. She was very happy with that. I think the clothes she picked up here were suitable for that occasion. The cashmere turtle neck sweater is one of our top ten items for its fashionable and best-sale features. The turtle neck suggests Chinese tradition while the whole design is fashionable. This product is also popular with foreign customers, though they prefer the red version. It's pretty common for Western customers to go for the bright colours." (Mrs Gao, Shanghai)

Gao's account implies that Shanghai Tang enables its Chinese and foreign customers to build distinctive cosmopolitan identities and meet their social appearance needs. Shanghai Tang's Chinese details seem to be appreciated in international contexts by both Chinese and foreign customers. She emphasises that the Chinese like dark colours while Western customers prefer light and bright colours. Her words might suggest that Chinese tastes are more conservative than Western ones.

Another participant, Mrs Zhao, the store manager of the Shanghai Tang store in Xin Tian Di, Shanghai, points to Shanghai Tang's international fashion status using examples of the brand's fashion shows. She states that well-defined Chinese elements in Shanghai Tang goods enable consumers to express their Chinese individuality and adapt to Chinese contexts:

"Our customers love our products. I think our products are fashionable in style and colour, use high-quality materials, and well-defined Chinese symbols. Every season, Shanghai Tang has a fashion show. It introduces new fashion trends to its customers. For example, the shiny colours are central elements in the current fashion season [winter 2008]. You'll find that many of our products have bright, shiny colours, like this dress [ingot dress]. You know, we always use exquisite designs and materials to showcase Chinese details in our products, such the images of ingots (yuanbao), traditional Chinese buttons and collars, golden fish, and so on. It's for this reason that Chinese and foreign customers like buying our products to show their international or fashionable taste with Chinese-ness." (Mrs Zhao, Shanghai)

Tina, the sales associate at the Yintai store, Beijing, describes an exceptional aspect of Shanghai Tang. Tina, a 27 year old, open and talkative woman, has been working at Shanghai Tang for six months:

"I think our products satisfy the needs of both foreign and Chinese consumers. For example, when foreigners visit China, they prefer to buy Chinese-styled goods, but they are often disappointed by the low quality and functionality of Chinese goods. That's why these consumers prefer the Tang suit to the traditional Chinese suit, which is high, and the tight mandarin collar makes breathing difficult. What's more, the traditional Chinese red maybe makes people feel a little bit stiff, don't you think? (Interviewer: yeah!) Even though our products only have one or two Chinese codes, they look very fashionable and modern in design, colour, and material. You feel comfortable in them. For instance, this black jacket has a fashionable design. Without this Chinese embroidery, it looks like a Western brand jacket. But with the Chinese embroidery, the whole jacket looks very vivid and attractive, don't you think? (Interviewer: Mmm!) The Chinese, especially successful and well-educated Chinese elites who work in an international environment, want to express their Chinese identity. A lot of Chinese goods are not fashionable and suitable for international occasions. The one or two Chinese details in our products satisfy their Chinese needs." (Tina, Beijing)

Tina's words reveal that Shanghai Tang helps foreigners in China to resolve the tension between social dependency and personal autonomy. In the past, foreigners who wanted to purchase Chinese-styled products to express their social roles in China were disappointed by the quality and styling of local products. Shanghai Tang succeeded where others failed. Moreover, Shanghai Tang also helps the Chinese to address tensions between personal identity, aspiration, and suitable social roles in the international arena.

In its capacity as a world-class luxury brand, Shanghai Tang attracts top-order global employees with Chinese backgrounds, including creative designers. Creativity and innovation is central in any brand's development, but Shanghai Tang's success is hugely dependent on the exceptional negotiation of Chinese-ness across international styling. Its designs must be culturally clever and market-sensitive. That Shanghai Tang has figured out the right formula is evident in its international presence and growing base of consumers who find the brand styling suitable for all occasions.

3.3. Top-end global store and service cultures

Shanghai Tang has 43 stores worldwide (Shanghai Tang.com, 2010a). All the stores are located on top-end fashion streets (Shanghai Xin Tian Di and Sloane Street in London), in first-class shopping malls (BurJuman Shopping Centre, Dubai), in top-end luxury hotels (Beijing Ritz-Carlton Hotel, Beijing and Hangzhou Grand Hyatt Hotels, and the Shanghai Shangri-La Hotel), and airport shopping centres. Its store interiors and facades are also modelled on the brand principle of crossing Chinese and Western styles. Mrs Gu's account illustrates the significance of location and Shanghai Tang store design:

"I like the locations of Shanghai Tang stores. I have visited a lot of them and they are often located on important business streets with distinctive characteristics. For example, Shanghai Tang's Xin Tian Di store is located in Shanghai Xin Tian Di plaza. The plaza is a major tourist attraction in Shanghai and a fashionable pedestrian street due to the historical and cultural legacies of the city. There you can enjoy the antique grounds, walls, tiles, windows, and architecture of old Shanghai's Shikumen culture. The Shanghai Tang name plaque is bronze. The English lettering – SHANGHAI TANG – is in capital letters. The Chinese lettering - 灘海上 - has been rendered from right to left in traditional, Kai-style calligraphy. Below the signage, is an image of a fashionable model wearing Shanghai Tang. The brand logo appears in pink and green logo on the shop window. When you walk into the Shanghai Tang's corridors with traditional black-brick flooring, you'll find the rusty address mark and the Shanghai Tang logo, followed by stylish mannequins against the bright green background. You will be surprised by the modern decoration and fashionable products with distinctive Chinese details. For example, the ceiling is decorated in bright green, but with the traditional Chinese paper-cutout pattern. The shelves are black outside, but bright green, pink, and blue colours on the inside. When you move around the shelves, the sale associates in purplish red clothes and black trousers slowly follow you and then smilingly explain the products in your hands, even if you're just looking at them. When you find a dress you like, she or he will suggest that you try it on . They are nice and polite even if you decide not to buy anything. You know they will not push you to buy something. I like this kind of environment, no pushing!" (Mrs Gu, Shanghai)

Mrs Gu's comments about the store's location, design, and service underscore that Shanghai Tang has cast itself in the mould of a top-end establishment. The enduring axiom "location, location, location" has taken on new meaning in the retail race. The Shanghai Tang store in Shanghai Xin Tian Di is located in a shopping and tourist heavy area with added historical interest. Securing a prime location through a large, semi-permanent commitment of resources is one way to begin to ensure the store's future growth and profitability. Location sometimes cancels out losses that would be sustained during an economic slump, and trumps competition when the economy is good and growth-potential is high (Lamb et al., 2008).

Other Shanghai Tang stores in luxury shopping malls or hotels partake of the unique glamour of their locations. One of its stores is located in the Ritz-Carlton Hotel at 83A Jian Guo Road, which is close to Hua Mao Shopping Mall, one of Beijing's top-level shopping malls. The Ritz-Carlton Hotel is a top luxury hotel, which itself is enough to entice consumers to visit. The Shanghai Tang experience there is programmatically exciting because of the store's location, a luxurious hotel replete with lights, colour, and lots of action. The store also enjoys osmotic visits by customers wandering over from the nearby Hua Mao Shopping Mall, which attracts thousands of customers to the many top-end stores contained within.

The Shanghai Tang store in the Grand Hyatt Beijing provides another example of how location works to a brand's advantage. Nearby is the Dongfang Xintiandi shopping mall from where customers can conveniently pop over to the Shanghai Tang store in the hotel. As they're walking through the main Wang fu jing thoroughfare, consumers would have to be blind to miss the Grand Hyatt Beijing. Once inside the hotel, you're in for a treat. The ambience exudes grandeur, luxury, and glamour. The first sight in the lobby of Grand Hyatt Beijing is the shiny signage of the Shanghai Tang store. The lettering is embedded in a white gate against a ground of light yellow-marble illuminated by soft yellow light. The second sight is the gold Shanghai Tang store name set in the black gate opposite the white marble stairs with golden handrails. The wall décor's colour combination is traditional Chinese red, sky blue, and light green.

Above, Mrs Gu's words indicate that the ambience at Shanghai Tang exudes harmony. The friendly, non-pushy service culture makes customers feel relaxed. Shanghai Tang is aimed at a wealthy slice of the mass market that demands such felicities as excellent service, pleasant ambience, and glamourous locations. Shanghai Tang workers are well trained and encouraged to control their eagerness, reduce customer stress, be helpful but not overly pushy, and charitably assist customers in the trial process, which involves looking for products in different colours and locating the right size. At Shanghai Tang, customer service also involves micro-interactions, such as offering friendly advice, being friendly, contacting other stores, and providing requisite re-tailoring assistance.

3.4. Workers as consumers

Nearly all of the Shanghai Tang's workers are either longstanding consumers or potential consumers (see Table 7). When asked whether they buy Shanghai Tang clothes, most responded in the positive. Eva, a store employee, explained:

"I can afford to buy them when they are on sale. That's when it's really worthwhile to have them. Now, I have the brown double-fish scarf that I bought last year. I also bought one men's scarf to gift to a friend. It has yellow tiles on silk stain. This year I am going to buy that kind of polo T-shirt (she points to the polo T-shirt section). But right now the classic ones are not on sale. So I'm saving up." (Eva, Shanghai)

Although Shanghai Tang store employees intend to please customers and promote their products, their explanations are no less reasonable and persuasive for that reason. Their answers suggest that they too think like customers, and buy Shanghai Tang products when they are on sale. This suggests that even the employees really do appreciate Shanghai Tang products. They might be loyal to the brand but they are not foolish in their purchases, a natural extension of the fact that worker consumption behaviour is going to differ from that of the brand's regular consumer with the means to shop often and widely. Beyond the aforementioned worker testimonies, I failed to identity special marketing strategies that individual stores might employ. For the large part, most of the stores I visited shared a common aesthetic of glamour, luxury, and comfort.

Shanghai Tang's CEO and creative director are also known to wear Shanghai Tang clothes in public, an obvious branding strategy, as they would hardly know their brand if they didn't wear it. It is in these ways, in their capacity as temporary consumers, that managerial workers can become better acquainted with consumer perspectives, which ultimately impact brand consumption. One is able to take managerial workers' eulogistic accounts of Shanghai Tang seriously precisely because their testimonies are based in actual consumption, and not just in marketing-speak.

4. The "Imagined China" as a Global Brand via Mythic and Stylistic Modern Chinese Lifestyle

In interpreting Shanghai Tang, one is able to trace the broad contours of the "Imagined China", a myth in which modern life is a heady mix of history, style, and culture (Vierkant, 2007), a myth that is defined not by falsity but by the authentic pursuit of the style distinguishing it. Still, regardless of how authentic an imagined myth might be, it is necessarily incomplete and fragmented, because no myth can adequately represent all the voices it contains. This incompleteness, however, is precisely what makes a myth authentic.

4.1. The co-creation and circulation of brand meanings and culture via fashion systems

Fashion systems can co-create, convey, and circulate brand meanings among various brand actors, who, in turn, co-develop the imagined myth. In my study, the myth is that of modern Chinese lifestyle as a global brand. This modern Chinese lifestyle can be grafted onto cultural products and develop new brand meanings. Fashion as a system demonstrates creativity and innovation (Wilson, 2005), and inflects modern everyday life with aesthetic features (Simmel, 1971). In Shanghai Tang's case, fashion co-creates and circulates cultural meanings pertaining to Chinese culture and history through brand products via the activities and narratives of brand actors (see Figure 9).

Shanghai Tang brand actors project individual identities through brand consumption in social situations and professional contexts, and within personal relationships. Through their experiences of meaning appropriation, brand actors interact with various folk and regional theories in an attempt to interpret the brand's version of the imagined China. For its part, in its capacity as "the pioneering China luxury lifestyle brand" with global presence, Shanghai Tang has the onerous task of acting as "the global ambassador of contemporary Chinese Chic". It has become responsible for developing the Chinese blueprint of "contemporary luxury lifestyle products", ranging from ready-to-wear (for women, men, and children) and accessories to home ware and lifestyle items, such as lounge music collections (Shanghai Tang.com, 2010d; p.1).

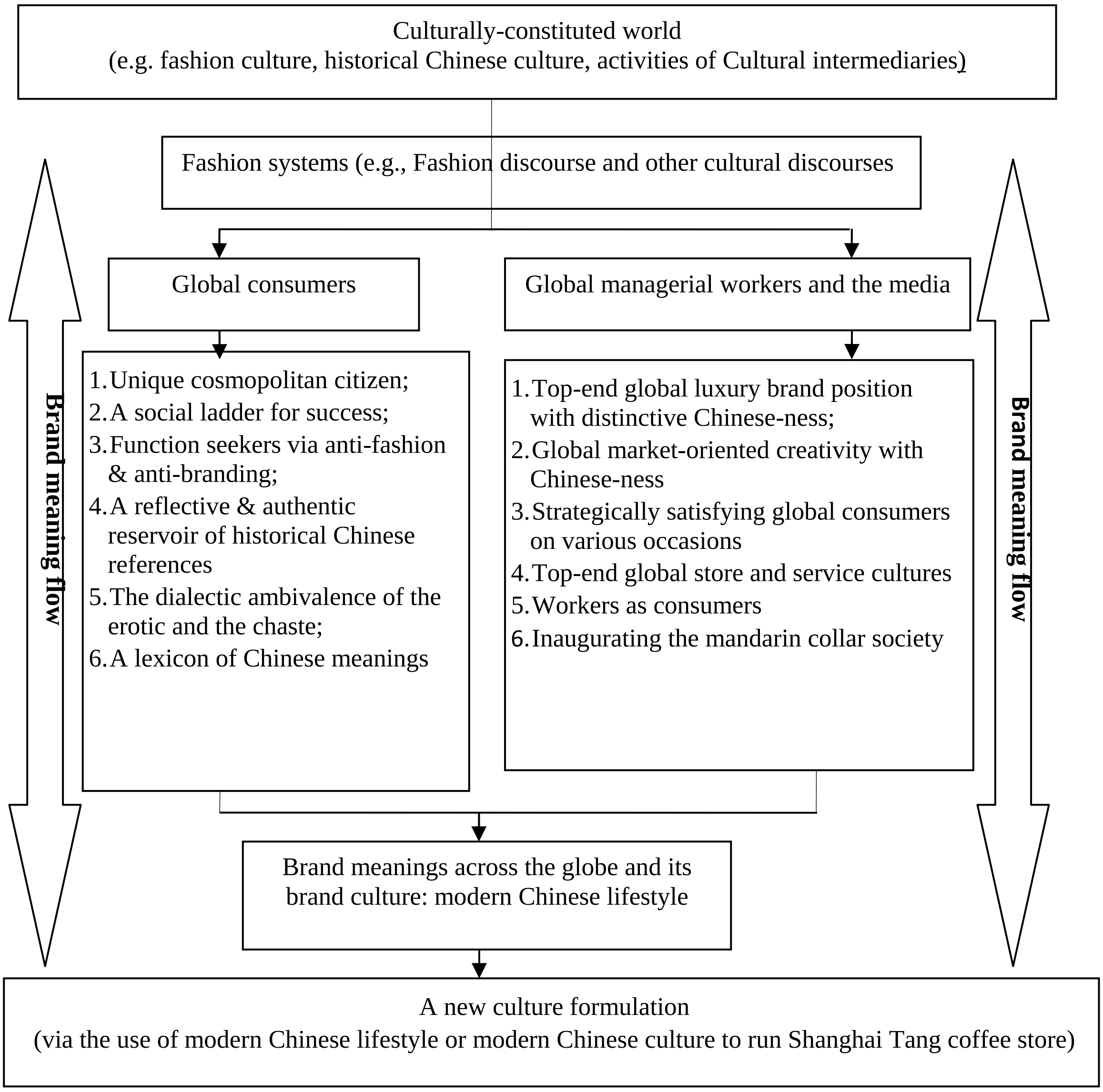
One example of the task at hand for Shanghai Tang, if it wants to continue to be a leader in the world of Chinese global fashion, was provided by Sally, the sales associate supervisor at the Shanghai Tang store in the Beijing Ritz-Carlton Hotel, and by Mrs Wang, a consumer in Beijing. Both respondents stated that Shanghai Tang had started a Chinese Cultural Revolution worldwide. They used the inauguration of the mandarin collar society in 2007 that abolished the necktie in illustration of the point. What this suggests is that in order to stay on top of the market, Shanghai Tang needs to continue to develop and redefine its brand ideology — to promote Chinese cultural symbols through distinctive styles.

The mandarin club was the brainchild of various opinion leaders, including Le Masne de Chermont, who called it "a club with the goal to promote an elegant Chinese-inspired style for men. It's an alternative that allows you to reorient yourself, to be stylish while being yourself". (Shanghai Tang.com, 2010b). The Mandarin Collar Society bans Western neckties, and instead champions the modern, chic alternative of the mandarin collar as a means to explore modern Chinese lifestyle. Below is a related comment from ShanghaiTang.com:

"The timely, compelling and slightly cheeky initiative unites men who are shaping the world in diverse fields, such as sports, business, politics and the arts. To spearhead the effort, Shanghai Tang has appointed MCS Ambassadors, including British sprint champion Linford Christie, Michelin star chef Pierre Gagnaire, world renowned pianist Lang Lang, and Gavin Newsom, Mayor of San Francisco". (ShanghaiTang.com, 2010b; p.1).

Beyond the formation of the club, Shanghai Tang has further honed its brand identity through the lifestyle product of the café. The Shanghai Tang Café is an extension of the brand's mission to convey a lifestyle vision of modern Chinese chic. The cafe "extends the distinctive Shanghai Tang vibrant, witty multi-sensory retail experience with an oriental sense of service into a full service cafe restaurant and bar that will please the most discerning taste palates" through its sophisticated take on contemporary Chinese cuisine and creative cocktails that demonstrates "Shanghai Tang's unique, vibrant energy, bold colours, witty humour and cultural richness". This venture is essentially one more way to underscore that modern Chinese lifestyle is culture reinvented. The Shanghai Tang Café is headed by Jereme Leung, an award-winning chef famous for his creative and innovative 'New Chinese Cuisine' style of cooking, which stretches the envelope in the styling and presentation of traditions of regional Chinese cuisine. Beyond its culinary achievements, the café also offers the brand's "signature colours in vivid accents, Chinese cultural motifs, rich textures & Chinese craftsmanship such as silk, embroidery, lacquer, as well as other Shanghai Tang home products, enveloping the guests in a multi-sensory world of Shanghai Tang". (ShanghaiTang.com, 2010c; p.1).

Figure 9 **The co-creation and circulation of brand meanings and culture via fashion systems**


Culturally-constituted world
(e.g. fashion culture, historical Chinese culture, activities of Cultural intermediaries)
Fashion systems (e.g., Fashion discourse and other cultural discourses
Global consumers
Global managerial workers and the media
1. Unique cosmopolitan citizen;
2. A social ladder for success;
3. Function seekers via anti-fashion & anti-branding;
4. A reflective & authentic reservoir of historical Chinese references
5. The dialectic ambivalence of the erotic and the chaste;
6. A lexicon of Chinese meanings
1. Top-end global luxury brand position with distinctive Chinese-ness;
2. Global market-oriented creativity with Chinese-ness
3. Strategically satisfying global consumers on various occasions
4. Top-end global store and service cultures
5. Workers as consumers
6. Inaugurating the mandarin collar society
Brand meaning flow
Brand meaning flow
Brand meanings across the globe and its brand culture: modern Chinese lifestyle
A new culture formulation
(via the use of modern Chinese lifestyle or modern Chinese culture to run Shanghai Tang coffee store)

That fashion represents creativity and innovation reveals itself through Shanghai Tang's logo, store decor and location, and range of products and their designs. It exemplifies a successful meaning transfer model, by which brands redefine and reinvent meanings from a culturally-constituted world for consumer consumption. In Shanghai Tang's case, various testimonials and the brand's history demonstrate that Shanghai Tang has found various ways to re-substantiate meanings drawn from the world in a highly contrived context (McCracken, 1986).

We can start at the beginning, with the name. Many interview participants seemed to appreciate the innovative rendition of the brand name 上海滩 (Shanghai Tang in Chinese), which draws familiar readers or viewers close to fantasy scenarios of old Shanghai. The Chinese name 上海滩, or Shanghai Tang, reminds some participants of the well-known Chinese drama 上海滩, and of Shanghai's best attractions, such as Shanghai Bund, both of which represent for the average consumer what Shanghai was in its pre WWII heydey. The formal qualities of the brand's logo are also equally evocative. Shanghai Tang's logo follows the traditional direction of right to left, a small detail that enhances authentic effect. Finally, the gold colour of the logo closes in on the brand's retro glamour, which, going by most consumer accounts, has a significant part to play in the brand's identity. If retro is the theme Shanghai Tang is going for, the store décor really amps the feel. Here, I am referring to the choice of the eclectic colour combination of light pink and green in the store design that lends the gold logo and the traditional logo an element of play.

Location matters, and Shanghai Tang knows this. The Xin Tian Di outlet evokes old Shanghai's heritage. The JinJiang Hotel store appeals to official Chinese governors and other consumers interested in the age of Mao Zedong. The Beijing Ritz Carlton Hotel store exudes luxury and pleasure. As for product designs, Shanghai Tang draws on a number of significant icons and symbols from the vast lexicon of Chinese cultural and historical meanings, which evoke a variety of associations. From nostalgia and historical pride to cultural curiosity and sensual confidence, Shanghai Tang straddles the gamut.

Jonathan Schroeder (2005a), a leading researcher in visual consumption, has indicated the importance of creative visual expression in contemporary production and consumption, something at which Shanghai Tang excels through its logo, its traditional calligraphy, and its palette. The brand exploits common and uncommon visual and verbal conventions to imply an essential equivalence between Chinese historical conventions (Lu) and contemporary fashion. This flattening of difference between old and new suggests that mutually exclusive elements are potentially inclusive of one another, and give rise to metaphoric codes that potential consumers of Shanghai Tang will recognise. Through frequent exposure to these codes, Chinese-ness eventually appears to be integral to Shanghai Tang. It is in this sense that visual images and verbal icons create meaning around Shanghai Tang.

In turn, consumers interpret and define Shanghai Tang's brand meanings through consumption, and through the filter of their own backgrounds. The fashion system is thus shaped through active and passive consumption, which, as much as it functions at the behest of fashion, also helps to shape it, and thereby reform its principles. Consumption, interpretation, and identity projection are equal part flattery and correction, and constitute a central factor in the development of brand meanings, pertaining to apparel, logo design, and lifestyles spaces, such as the Shanghai Tang coffee store.

4.2. The "Imagined China" via fashion as a system to connote the myth of Chinese modern life (or "Chinese-ness")

Fashion as a system represents modernity and the self-reflexivity of modern life. It not only helps people develop metropolitan identity, or cosmopolitan identity, but also reflects the growth of metropolitan culture and the progress of democracy, a system that facilitates and encourages contemplation and criticism (Lipovetsky and Sennett, 2002; and Simmel, 1971). I argue that Shanghai Tang, in its capacity as a fashion system, enables the construction of cosmopolitan and Chinese identity for the consumers and managerial workers in my study.

Nye and Donahue (2000) contend that in contrast to those who identify with nationalist signifiers, "cosmopolitans can be understood as those who identify more broadly with their continent or with the world as a whole, and who have a greater faith in the institutions of global governance" (2000; p.386). The process by which individuals construct cosmopolitan identity is constituted by "codes", by which I mean signs and symbols that both communicate and ask to be interpreted. I argue that Shanghai Tang provides one set of codes by which consumers can begin to identify a set of identity traits, which they might embrace or reject in identity construction.

Specifically, non-Chinese consumers of Shanghai Tang establish cosmopolitan identity by consuming Chinese culture through the Shanghai Tang international filter. On the other hand, foreign consumers or those unfamiliar with the specifics of Chinese codes sustain their global identity, now inflected with distinctive Chinese features, which provide a touch of the exotic and international flair. On the managerial side, designers, store managers, and sales associates are also collectively responsible for generating cosmopolitan identity through their designs, strategies, and marketing tactics. They occupy a key position in brand meaning because they produce the products, spaces, and commercial habitat that meet consumer demands for brand cosmopolitanism.

Cayla and Eckhardt (2008) state that Asia is a transnational brand that has repackaged historical culture to reveal a new Asian image of modern, multi-cultured lifestyles. Shanghai Tang, which is Swiss-controlled, currently deploys global fashion to repackage historical Chinese cultures and showcase a modern Chinese lifestyle, nonetheless enriched by multiple traditional cultural codes. Many codes are re-defined and reconfigured in Shanghai Tang through new images of modernity. The participant responses revealed that Shanghai Tang's cultural meanings encompass anti-trendiness and anti-brand worship. What this suggests is that Shanghai Tang has already entered the realm of modern style and fashion, which allows for the kind of self-scrutiny and self-reflexivity that scholars argue modern life obtains (Giddens, 1991). Evans and Breward (2005) claim that fashion is a powerful mechanism catechising the subjectivity of modern life. It enables interrogation of modern life, including brands and branding practices, and integrates social desires. If Shanghai Tang is a modern take on Chinese cultural codes, it is also a modern assessment of culture itself, repackaged as a multi-dimensional, multi-cultured lifestyle.

Various interview participants in my study of Shanghai Tang illustrated this point. Some stated that fashion, and Shanghai Tang, was a ladder for professional and personal success. Some admitted to enjoying the pseudo-authenticity of the cultural symbols. Others perceived the brand as a way to reflect education and good background. Fashion, one participant said, was also a means to flaunt wealth, as in the case of the Shanxi coal mine bosses described by Mr Luo as spenders of blood money.

Shanxi mines are among the most dangerous working place in the world. Six thousand mine workers died in 2005 alone (Zheng and Fewsmith, 2008; p.106). Mr Luo's censure of the coal mine bosses suggests that fashion, along with beauty, grace, and glamour, can also provide a space for interrogation and scrutiny.

One might further consider how fashion interrogates myth by reconsidering Shanghai Tang's quotation of old Shanghai, when the city was brimming with growth, speculation, glamour, adventurer-seekers, and poverty. The name Shanghai Tang is associated with Shanghai Bund, one of the city's most famous attractions, and with the play after it. The Bund is an urban icon. It represents the best of both worlds, skyscrapers and colonial heritage. In the late 19th century and the early 20th century, the Bund served as the financial centre of East Asia and was a political hub of the international community in China. The Bund was witness to chaotic politics, a vigorous economy, a society fragmented by vicious class divides, crime, extravagance, and urban waste. For this reason, the Bund represents everything that was mysterious, seductive, and exciting about old Shanghai, and was widely featured in various Chinese movies and dramas, such as *Shanghai Bund*, *Shanghai Triad*, *Jasmine Women*, and *In the Mood for Love*, and novels such as *Fate of Half a Life* and *Love in a Fallen City*. Shanghai Tang's product references mine all these associations of the Bund, thereby throwing up a whole panorama of cultural possibilities and meanings with which consumers can align depending on their cultural and political predilections.

The red star in Shanghai Tang is another symbol that interrogates myth and history. The red star and Mao Zedong's portrait, both of which appear on Shanghai Tang products, are associated with the age of Mao. In China, Mao remains a controversial figure to this day. Supporters believe Mao helped China grow powerful, that he transformed the country from an agrarian society into a major world power. Others think of him as a villain who damaged China through the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution, as a result of which millions were subject to famine, and died from it. Despite the contradictions, Mao's portrait hangs in Tiananmen Square and is still featured on all Renminbi bills. Shanghai Tang's use of Mao's portrait is a controversial gesture in light of the reference to Puyi, the last Chinese emperor who reigned right up to the period before the rise of Old Shanghai. Puyi is a tragic figure in Chinese history. He ended the monarchy, brought China to ruin with poor governance, became a puppet of imperial Japan, and eventually a "model citizen" who was successfully "reformed" from his old, evil ways during Mao's time. Shanghai Tang's employment of three key “moments” from modern Chinese history — Puyi’s image, images of Old Shanghai, and Mao’s portrait—suggests that history is multi-layered and has polyvalent meanings. Cayla and Arnould (2008) state that "a narrative analysis of popular songs, films, literature, theatre, the Internet, and other media forms generates a repertoire of mythic resources that can be linked to commercial brands" (2008; p.101). The case of Shanghai Tang reveals precisely such a linkage. Specifically with respect to quotation of Chinese sources, Shanghai Tang's fashion provides a collection of mythic archetypes, moral conflicts, and resolutions, all or some of which can be potential myth markets for brand positioning. These are the meanings it enables consumers to ponder.

4.3. The imagined China via fashion as a system to express dynamic and stylistic modern Chinese life

Brands, fashion products and advertisements constitute central elements in the scenery of modern life. Shanghai Tang, which is part of the scenery, expresses the dynamics, stylistics, and aesthetics of modern life through fashion. Fashion, for its part, some argue, connotes an emancipated lifestyle and pursues the democratic dynamics of time and space with the volatility of modern life (Lipovetsky and Sennett, 2002; and Simmel, 1971). In modern life, fashion inflects everyday objects with stylistic and aesthetic colour and bears common opinions with democratic flair. In Shanghai Tang, differences between the Chinese and Western consumers become evident through brand consumption.

Shanghai Tang's designers and marketers pursue up-to-date international fashion. In 2008, they favoured shine and silk. They used appropriate symbols, such as ingots on qipao, as pointed out by Mrs Zhao (manager at the Xin Tian Di store) and Shan Ni (sales associate at the London store). But most Shanghai Tang consumers are not likely to follow the latest fashion trends. For example, the Chinese consumers of Shanghai Tang state that they don't care whether Shanghai Tang products are fashionable or seasonally appropriate. They insist they don't follow fashion trends.

This is especially applicable to Mr Luo, Mrs Wang's husband, and Mr Wu, all of whom are red consumers. 'Red consumers' refers to persons whose parents worked for the Chinese military army or other important national departments in Chairman Mao's era. Mr Luo grew up in the PLA Navy while Mr Wu's parents worked in the PRC Ministry of Ordnance Industry. Their childhood and teenage years were spent listening to Chinese revolutionary songs (red songs). They experienced remarkable freedom growing up as their parents were barely around given the heavy work load during the Cultural Revolution. Mr Wu's father went away for long periods during Mr Wu's childhood. Once, on his father's return home, Mr Wu was unable to recognise his father immediately. He mistakenly called him "uncle". According to Mr Luo, a childhood spent entertaining themselves resulted in a high regard for independent thinking and secured personal wherewithal. They were programmatically unlikely to become blind followers of fashion trends.

Another red consumer with strong views on Chinese fashion is Hong Huang, the CEO of China Interactive Media Group. Hong Huang's grandfather on her mother's side was a pioneer of the Chinese Communist Party, her mother was an outstanding diplomat, and her stepfather was an ex-Minister of PRC Foreign Affairs in Mao's era. In her fashion magazine - i-Look - Hong Huang criticised the managers of global luxury brands in China for acting like Hong Wei Bing (the special group that blindly safeguards what Chair Mao said) to safeguard their brand images in China. She disapproved of their decisions to use only celebrities to endorse their brands. She argued that such brands paid little attention to separating brand image from celebrity image, and expected the media to slavishly cover all their activities. She also revealed that such brands refused to advertise with media that did not cover their activities.

At the time, Chinese fashion media was in its infancy, and could therefore be easily led to become a puppet of global brands. In contrast, Hong Huang was reluctant to have such brands dictating her and Chinese consumers. Her response was to encourage Chinese brands that focused on Chinese-ness. She accomplished this by introducing new Chinese designers, brands, and brand cultures in her magazine -- i-Look. All this suggests that while there are consumers who will blindly latch on to fashion trends, other consumers will not. This implies that brand meanings can be constructed in various ways, conventionally and alternatively, by those who follow freely, by those who do so with caution, and by others who simply walk in the opposite direction.

Consumers typically have one of two responses to historical codes employed by Shanghai Tang. One kind of consumer appreciates the cultural quotations, even finds them fashionable. They believe that Shanghai Tang defines these codes well and deploys them in practical ways. Mr Luo, Mr Wu, and Miss Jiang were of this view. The second kind of consumer finds Shanghai Tang's cultural quotations out-of-date or much too folksy to be truly appealing. The Shanghai Tang interviews thus demonstrate the complexity of interpretations obtained by Chinese cultural quotations.

With regards to Chinese aesthetics, it has been suggested that the Chinese favour perceptual thinking based on ethics over logical thought based on science, which is preferred in Western society; and that the Chinese are more concerned with the whole structure and the total expression of harmony rather than details expressing individual identity or personality, commonly favoured by Western thinking. Even in matters of human beauty, the Chinese tend to harmony. They appreciate faces with porcelain smoothness and eyes that are in keeping with the subtlety of the whole. In contrast, Westerners like strong faces with well-defined contours, large eyes, and sensuous lips. As regards the body, Westerners express sensuality and beauty by exposing the body rather than covering it up. These cultural differences in notions of bodily beauty appear in Shanghai Tang designs, which use subtle details, such as translucent fabric or slightly misaligned buttons, to expose body parts. Mr Wu's comment about Shanghai Tang products underscores this emphasis on subtlety in Chinese aesthetics. Grandness, when it is expressed in Chinese aesthetics, appears in representations of landscape, which exemplifies the harmonious convergence of diverse formal patterns and designs. Grandness, for all intents and purposes, resides in nature, and not in individual things. This contrasts with the broad strokes of Western aesthetics that focuses on details, which might explain the mastery of close looking in Western art criticism (Wang, 2001). In particular, grandness in Chinese aesthetics develops from abstract symbols and icons that merely point to the essence of truth and beauty, rather than representing it directly. These aesthetic preferences have a longstanding history in China as testified by one of the founders of Taoism. Says Lao Tze (1891; p.42): "Tao bears one, one bears two, two bears three and three bears all in the universe".

For the large part, Shanghai Tang products are aligned with notions of harmony. The designs, colours, fabric quality, and cuts are uniformly subtle and pleasing in aspect. When details do stand out they do so without disturbing the peace of the whole. They are meant to capture the eye but ultimately enhance the effect of the harmonious whole. This aesthetic contributes to the meaning of the brand, and frequent consumers, active and passive, would be able to read the various aesthetic codes that make up the lexicon of Shanghai Tang designs.

Reading codes in a lexicon refers to brand literacy. Specifically, brand literacy constitutes "the ability of the consumer to make sense of and compose the signs of a brand culture and to understand the meaning systems that are at play" (Bengtsson and Firat, 2006; p.377). Brand literacy typically divides into three groups. In the first case, the consumer's understanding of the brand scantly extends the immediate surface meanings of words and symbols associated with the brand. In some cases, having little or no knowledge of symbolic brand meanings, these consumers might be considered brand illiterate. The second case includes consumers who know the brand name. They also know that symbols associated with it do not merely function to distinguish one manufacturer from another, but bear additional cultural meanings. This group of consumers has the ability to read and understand the cultural meanings and strategies underlying brands. They are termed brand knowers. The third group includes consumers and cultural intermediaries who contribute to the life and meaning of the brand. Their role is reformative and transformative. These consumers fully participate in the culture of brands, in that they do not merely follow the brand's cultural meanings, but are able to play with and redefine brands through their activities. This kind of consumer is known as a brand professional.

Going by these definitions, it might be argued that the coal-mine owners of Shanxi province may be brand illiterate while red consumers, such as Mr Luo, Mr Wu, and Mrs Wang's husband, might be brand professionals. It may also be the case that participants who had grown up and worked in Beijing for a long time are more brand literate than those from Shanghai, as red consumers were typically based in Beijing.

As this simple analysis of brand literacy reveals, the study of brands and brand cultures, such as Shanghai Tang, can shed light on cultural perceptions, cultural history, and the formation of identity. Brand culture refers to the different elements of brand meanings and brand values, to ways of influencing these, and to these being influenced by the marketplace. In its cumulative capacity as such a brand culture carved from diverse groups, variously self-reflexive, innovative, dynamic, and slavish, Shanghai Tang represents the perceptions and interpretations of a hybrid multi-cultured Chinese lifestyle.

Conclusion

The discourses of Shanghai Tang, constituted by producers, consumers, and the consumption of Shanghai Tang, can be seen as one example of the "Imagined China" at work. This "Imagined China" develops from traditional and mythic elements interweaving a modern framework of production, commerce, and consumption. Shanghai Tang thus represents how historical Chinese cultural codes with the support of global fashion resources can develop cosmopolitan consumer identity. For some, Shanghai Tang is a ladder for success. For some, it is authentic and nostalgic emotion. For others, it expresses a hybrid aesthetic of international style and know-how. All these differences emerge across various interpretations of sex appeal, hide-and-seek, sophistication, and social responsibility. The interviews of Shanghai Tang managerial workers also reveal how the brand's use of global personnel, market-oriented creative designs, diverse product ranges for various occasions, top-end store locations, and service cultures can impact consumer interpretations. Collectively, these processes convey how the new meaning transfer model works, and demonstrates the co-creation and circulation of brand meanings and culture (the "Imagined China") among various brand actors.

Brand actors constitute the very plank on which global brands depend for support and growth. Whether they are brand illiterates (Shanxi coal mine bosses, Mrs Li, and Miss Liu), brand knowers (Susan, Mrs Wang, Miss Jiang, and Mr Gu), or brand professionals (Mr Luo, Mr Wu, and Mrs Wang's husband), brand actors are absolutely essential to the creation and development of brand meanings. They are the engine of brand growth. They provide the rationale for potential myth markets, which includes mythic archetypes, moral conflicts, and their resolutions, all of which are represented in Shanghai Tang designs, marketing, and consumption patterns. In total, Shanghai Tang provides a model of conceptualising a culturally-conceived branding system based on principles of global branding, specifically, in its case, by marrying global fashion systems with a Chinese imaginary.

Chapter Seven: the Co-creation and Circulation of Brands and Cultures

This chapter deals with Chinese-styled branding as a theoretical space located between managerial strategy and consumer interpretation, with implications for brand management and research. Framing this space sheds light on the barrier between managerial intention and marketing response. What this means is that Chinese-styled branding should not be conceived merely as a mode of communication, but rather as a process that generates cultural meaning. In this chapter, I analyse the implications of Chinese branding and elaborate on the co-creation and circulation between brands and cultures. Towards this aim, I first briefly introduce the concept of global ethnic diaspora reach as a strategic global branding approach that can contribute to current managerial perspectives in research pertaining to brand development. Thereafter, I explore the construct of the "Imagined China", and its reconstructions of the identity of modern Chinese lifestyle or culture. I follow how this myth derives from selected use of historical Chinese culture, and becomes a way to conceptualise China as a global brand. In this reading, I am indebted to Anderson's theory of "imagined community" (1991), Thompson and Tian's argument (2008) pertaining to the development of cultural myths deriving from non-Western contexts, and Schroeder and Salzer-Morling's brand culture theory (2006). Ultimately, my study constitutes an attempt to put into practice the cultural approach to international branding (Cayla and Arnould, 2008), and thereby show that Chinese cultural branding can both reduce the limitations of the managerial approach to brand development and enhance the existing meanings of brand culture.

1. A Global Ethnic Diaspora Market Reach as a Global Branding Approach

These three case studies demonstrate the definition of global brand. Specifically, they show that a global brand is one marketed not just to a Western audience but also to a worldwide ethnic diaspora, notably targeted by tourism industries through signifiers pertaining to nation, place, destination, and national identity (Morgan, Pritchard, and Pride, 2002). In my study, global ethnic diaspora refers to the movement of people, forced or voluntary, from one or more nation-states to others. Jacobsen and Pratap (2004) have stated that "diaspora results from movements of people in space and refers to their relationship to two or more locations, a place of origin and a place of living, diaspora refers to a situation in which a religious or ethnic group lives outside of original places" (2004; p.513). Likewise, in this paper, diaspora includes people who reside outside their origin country and away from its citizens.

In international marketing and consumer culture research, scholars have been focused on global branding, namely on examining global brand meanings, analysing the advantages and pitfalls, and exploring conditions that ensure success in global brand development (Roth, 1995a,b; and Quelch, 1999). As stated in Chapter Two, my study is based on the definition of global brand as one that reaches multiple markets around the world, even if those markets are explicitly diasporic and not domestic consumers overseas. The three case studies in this project show how three Chinese global brands have used the reach and extent of diaspora to develop brand meaning and image.

Anholt (2003) states that brands can gain a strong foothold in global markets by targeting diaspora markets worldwide because diasporic consumers programmatically eliminate the need to translate a foreign brand. Jollibee, the Philippine fast-food brand, markets successfully in Hong Kong, the Middle East, and the United States because there is a vast Philippine diaspora in those regions. Gelder (2005) calls such brands pedigree brands, those which are "strongly influenced by the brand's internal legacy and internal conventions" (2005, pp.111). The strength of a pedigree brand derives from outstanding people, such as a legendary founder, or place rooted in myth, and from being able to meet social needs pertaining to belonging among diaspora (Gelder, 2005). Another example comes in the way of Welsh whisky brand Penderyn, which is the first genuine Welsh whisky to have emerged in the past century and done well among expatriate Welsh across the globe (Gelder, 2005), though not all brands enjoy the advantage of an expatriate consumer base

Fortunately, the three case studies do enjoy that advantage. They show that images of modern Chinese life with the help of global fashion resources can be used as leverage in appealing to Chinese expatriate populations. In other words, cultural similarities, such as abstract Confucian values and common cultural symbols that exist among ethnic Chinese who constitute a vast untapped market across the globe can become the basis for developing Chinese brands globally.

Getting down to specifics, the three cases reveal that the symbolic value of global brands functions as a substantial bait to satisfy cultural needs that exist among ethnic groups for the diaspora (Gelder, 2005). For instance, four global tour concerts (see Table 1) adequately demonstrate the immense appeal of Jay Chou, his brand of music, and his cultural affiliations among young expatriate Chinese in the US, Canada, and European countries. In his capacity as a Chinese music artist, Chou expands the symbolic value of his origins through his quotation of Chinese poetry, martial arts, and myths, and through his hybridisation of traditional Chinese music and various Western pop genres (Brown et.al, 2000). These strategies of multi-dimensional cultural mining not only establish Chou's authentic credentials for a Chinese fan base in China, but also augment perceptions of him as a highly desirable icon of modern China amongst fans overseas (Belk et.al, 1989; and Eckhardt and Cayla, 2008).

The second case, the Beijing Olympics opening ceremony, shows how addressing national identity anxiety can create a new identity. The two narratives of participants Frank and Mrs Liao revealed the specifics of China's identity anxiety. Frank, who now lives in Shenzhen, China, once lived in England for more than six years. Mrs Liao, a Chinese-American is the director of the Washington DC based Laogai Research Foundation where she serves as editor-in-chief of a biography series of political prisoners in China. She was born in Nanjing, China. Both of them stated that China's identity anxiety has to do with its economic and technological backwardness before 1949, the absence of political democracy, the reputation for manufacturing cheap and inferior quality export items, media restrictions during the Olympics, and fakery during the opening ceremony performances.

Barring the two accusations of media restrictions and fake performances, the 2008 Beijing Olympics opening ceremony successfully tackled with the issue of China's identity anxiety. Specifically, it banished the notion of China as a backward nation by presenting a new China strengthened by economic success, technological growth, and modernisation, but nonetheless grounded in the values of its rich and proud cultural past. The opening ceremony tapped into the emotions of domestic Chinese and Chinese diaspora worldwide through performances that evoked nostalgia and authenticity, and elicited pride in national and cultural identity. These emotive effects of the opening ceremony were absolutely essential to re-vitalise the notion of China through the imaginary of a new China. Emotional attributes are a vital part of brand image (Biel, 1991), and this correlation was acutely grasped and dealt by various performances, such as the old Silk Road tableaux, the Beijing opera vignette, and the expansive gesture of thousands of performers playing the fou. The positive impact of the opening ceremony on the image of China was confirmed by various participants, such as Joycee from Hong Kong, now residing in the UK; Miss Xie; Mr

Sun, who is Chinese and had been living in England for two years at the time of the interview; the Taiwanese participant, and the British-Chinese participants.

The third case, that of Shanghai Tang, shows that using Chinese cultural symbols, old and new, positive and controversial, can successfully launch a brand onto a global stage. Although some scholars have stated that the cosmopolitan image is very important in catering to the expatriate Chinese population (Roll, 2006), I argue that Shanghai Tang proves much more. It shows that cosmopolitanism is simply not enough, and that it is more the use of traditional Chinese images filtered through contemporary design that really speaks to Chinese communities worldwide.

Global brand success also depends on the cultural wherewithal of the brains behind the brand. There are various examples of diasporic talent who have succeeded in overseas markets. Pandit (2005) offers the example of Indian companies Infosys and Wipro that have successfully developed Indian software brands worldwide. Shanghai Tang is no different.

Here, I present three members of its staff as examples. Shanghai Tang's founder, David Tang, was born in Hong Kong and sent to Perse school, Cambridge when he was only 13 years old. In 1994, he developed Shanghai Tang. Next in line is Joanne Ooi, the creative director of Shanghai Tang (2001-2009). Ooi is an ethnic Chinese woman born in Singapore and raised in Cincinnati. After graduating with a law degree from the University of Pennsylvania, she subsequently gained work experience in design at the Garment Trading Office, Hong Kong. Third, is Raphael le Masne, the CEO of Shanghai Tang. Le Masne had worked in executive positions running international luxury brands, such as Piaget, Baume & Mercier, and Cartier, at the Richemont group. At the time of this study, he had been living in Hong Kong for 16 years. Raphael le Masne and Ooi re-conceptualised Shanghai Tang into a Chinese-themed, modern, wearable clothing brand. They expanded Shanghai Tang's consumer base by introducing lifestyle products such as home accessories and coffee stores in their repertoire. It was thus the combined impact of a multi-cultural and Chinese-heavy or Chinese-based top brass that really transformed the fortunes of Shanghai Tang, such that the brand now occupies a powerful slice of the luxury market and competes with longstanding brands such as Gucci.

Shanghai Tang competes with existing brands, but with a difference. Its cosmopolitan image is Chinese-styled and themed, a hybrid effect that enjoys high appeal among consumers. Kelly Huang, from Shanghai who now lives in Europe, likes the old Shanghai references in the brand products. Mrs Guo who grew up in China and went to advanced schooling in England likes the Chinese-styled sexiness and well-designed clothing that connotes a world-class fashion sense. Shan Ni, the sales associate at Shanghai Tang's London store, who is an ethic Chinese born in Malaysia, states that Shanghai Tang's cosmopolitan image is nicely forged by crossing Chinese symbols such as ingots and clothing conventions such as the qipao with modern design and quality fabrics. Finally, Miss Jiang, a Malaysian Chinese, suggested that Shanghai Tang was able to create a cosmopolitan image in its products through references to Old Shanghai, which, in the pre WWII period, was one of the biggest financial hubs in east Asia.

The success of the three aforementioned brands demonstrates the economic and technological strength of Chinese diaspora in Southeast Asia and other regions. Jay Chou's case shows the economic wherewithal of Chinese diaspora in Singapore that generates 81 percent of Singapore's GNP (Roll, 2006). Jay Chou World Tour Live in Singapore 2010 was presented by Mobile One Limited and its key partners are the Overseas Chinese Banking Corporation (OCBC) and Pure-Flo limited. The Chairman and CEO of Mobile One Limited are Teo Soon Hoe and Karen Kooi Lee Wah, both Chinese-Singaporeans. The founder of OCBC is from Fujian Province, China, and the CEO of Hyflux responsible for developing Pure-Flo is Olivia Lum, who is Chinese-Singaporean. In other words, these Chinese diaspora-run companies in Singapore help promote Chinese brands in Singapore, and some important Chinese brands worldwide.

Similarly, the case of the Beijing Olympics opening ceremony reveals the contribution of Chinese diaspora in Hong Kong. Hong Kong is a special administrative region of China and is home to substantial numbers of Chinese diaspora. For example, Li Ning, the 6-time Olympic medallist who ignited the cauldron at the Beijing Olympics opening ceremony, was born in China but has lived in Hong Kong for many years. He is the founder of the Li Ning brand, which offers footwear and sporting apparel in China and abroad, and the chair of the Li-Ning Company Limited's board of directors. Another example is the current chief executive of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), Sir Donald Tsang Yam-Kuen, whose father is from Foshan City, Guang Dong province, mainland China.

Among the Hong Kong organisers, Donald Tsang provides the example of an exceptional case of expatriate initiative. Tsang strove hard to ensure that Hong Kong was the site of the opening relay route ceremony (held at the Hong Kong Cultural

Centre), the torch relay, and the equestrian events. The torch relay of the 2008 Olympic Games travelled across four regions worldwide, namely through Greece, Hong Kong, Macau, and mainland China. The equestrian events were held in two locations. The Jumping and Dressage events took place at the Hong Kong Olympic Equestrian Venue (Shatin) and the Cross-Country test of the Eventing competition took place at the Hong Kong Olympic Equestrian Venue (Beas River). Hong Kong also organised 13 training arenas for jumping and dressage at the Hong Kong Sports Arena and Penfold Park. Prior to these events, Tsang was responsible for inspecting the preparation work for the Olympic Equestrian competition, especially for the security check procedure at the Hong Kong Olympic Equestrian Venue (beijing2008.cn, 2008c). His example and those of the above very clearly demonstrate the economic heft of Chinese diaspora in Hong Kong, and the impact of their outstanding entrepreneurial, marketing, and leadership acumen on the success of the Olympics.

Shanghai Tang's case shows the impact of Chinese diaspora in Malaysia. The Chinese diaspora in Malaysia produces some US $ 40 billion, which amounts for more than 40 percent of Malaysia's GNP (Roll, 2006). To harness the potential of this diaspora, Shanghai Tang employed a marketing campaign immersed in Asian cultural traditions to promote its 2009-2010 Autumn-Winter seasons. This campaign was showcased at the historical Cheong Fatt Tze Mansion in Penang, Malaysia, considered to be the pinnacle of the Chinese country home (ShanghaiTang.com, 2009). Such an strategic location naturally attracted scores of Chinese diaspora. Furthermore, almost all the key in-house designers at Shanghai Tang are ethnic Chinese. Along with Joseph Li, Millicent Lai, and Peter Wong, Valerie Van Damme and Stephanie Andeae, have also either lived or worked in Chinese contexts for long periods of time before starting at Shanghai Tang (see Figure 11). This background suggests that Chinese diaspora is a key ingredient in the global success of the brand.

2. The "Imagined China" Reconstructing the Identity of Modern Chinese Lifestyle or Culture and Exploring the Myth of Modern Chinese Culture

Although Anderson (1991) has explored the concept of "imagined community" in terms of nation building, nation is only one instance of "imagined community". "Communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined" (Anderson, 1991; p.43). Barker (2004) has further defined imagined community in terms of collective identity, in that "just as national identity takes the form of identification with representations of the nation, so can ethic groups, feminists, classes, new social movements and other communities of action and identity be understood as imagined" (2004; p.99). My three case studies draw upon these definitions of imagined community and collective identity to suggest that China as a brand represents, both, the nation and a pan-national Chinese identity that crosses domestic borders and encompasses the world.

Jay Chou's case tackles the issue of cultural hybridity. The 2008 Beijing Olympics opening ceremony posits a China that is old, new, and forward-looking. Shanghai Tang presents a world of cultural anachronisms and historical simultaneity. In all these cases, China becomes a complex, polyvalent imaginary that necessarily demands complex and polyvalent mechanisms of expression. With Jay Chou, we see musical mixing, verbal citation, and metaphoric imagining. In the opening ceremony, we see China re-imagined through the classic trope of storytelling by which China is recreated as a picture with ancient roots and a brilliant, almost infinite future. Shanghai Tang triangulates popular memories and counter memories, contemporary fashion, and identity aspirations by means of icons, palette, and design that collectively evoke but do not pinpoint cultural memories, enabling its products to reside in a fascinating realm of ambiguity and suggestiveness. Despite the differing strategies, all three brands occupy common ground. They all are implicitly dependent on a real, concrete, and historical China, which they imaginatively, innovatively, and always selectively mine towards their respective aims.

The representation of historical Chinese culture refers to the representation of Chinese religion, history, tradition and cultural myths. Culture and history can offer important contextualised contrasts to managerial and information processing perspectives of global branding's interaction with consumer society (Schroeder, 2007). Intricate and diversified ways of involving social, cultural, and historical resources, no matter local or distant, provide an opportunity for the productive grounding of brand development. The next section details how historical Chinese culture represents the myth through the Competition for Identity Value along with the Ideological Shaping of Popular Memories and Counter, and thus reconstructs the "Imagined China" or modern Chinese culture as a global brand.

History offers a free, mythic space into which people can introduce myriad narratives, indicating utopian idiosyncrasy and the desire to reconfigure history through modern approaches (Brown et al., 2000; pp.57-59)., Thompson and Tian (2008) suggest that cultural myths emerge from "the creative and conflictual ferment of collective memories and countermemories" because "different social groups ideologically struggle to maintain or change their relative positions in the socioeconomic and cultural order". They go further to argue that the resulting myth often derives from genealogical lines and its roots can be traced to deep history. In other words, cultural myths lack a definitive point of historical origin, a fact that the three case studies deploy in positive ways to re-imagine China.

Although some myths might lack a definite point of origin, the origins of pivotal historical moments can be identified by re-tracing genealogical threads until they coalesce into a form that is consistent with the popular memory of that myth. The three cases studies suggest that these are critical and controversial times for the re-germination of the myth of the "Imagined China", which is still variously rooted in images of imperial glory, colonial-era political humiliations, and the age of Mao despite more than 30 years of a market-oriented economy. This might be precisely because the modern commercial entity of China is deeply indebted to narratives about the magnificent imperial China prior to the 19th century, the controversial period between the end of the monarchy and the age of Mao, and to subsequent politics and policies implemented by Mao until his death in 1976. By drawing on such a heterogeneous mythology of old and recent, brand builders set themselves up to compete, through ideological framing, for the identity value of popular memories.

Until very recently, the mass media in China circulated a variety of products, such as music, art, movies, television series, and consumer goods, from Japan, South Korea, and Western countries. Jay Chou went against the grain and introduced pride in national cultural production. He was responsible for popularising Chinese music, ancient poetry, martial arts myths and icons, and war myths. Likewise, Zhang Yimou did for Chinese culture and history what Jay Chou did for its musical landscape. He unfolded the vast cultural riches of a historical China for the world to see as one long, unbroken cultural story, still moving, now into the future. Shanghai Tang also performed what is no less than a sleight of hand in renewing interest in old, modern China by focusing on a Shanghai aesthetic. Its products project a flattering picture of a period during which Shanghai was a veritable sin city, thriving at a time when the

Western world was suffering in the throes of the Great Depression. The strategy here could be counter-memory awareness, which develops from challenging popular notions of an old myth. In this way, Shanghai Tang's products re-configured old Shanghai, and the beginnings of modern China in the pre WWII period, into an object of cultural desire.

3. The Circulation and Co-creation of Brands and Cultures

Culture refers to the products and representations of a culture, expressed not merely by cultural forms and artefacts, but also by artefacts in their capacity as texts with symbolic content (Baldwin et al., 2005). Specifically, brands can be thought of as such texts, which express both symbolic content and the everyday meanings of different brand actors (Cayla and Arnould, 2008). Culture can be used to develop brands and brands can develop new brands or new cultures, and the new cultures can be reintegrated into developing other new brands.

It is this particular, aforementioned network that my dissertation has aimed to demonstrate through the example of the circulation and co-creation of Chinese brands and Chinese cultures. This section examines the Chinese-styled branding concept in its capacity as a theoretical space that exists between strategic and consumer concepts of brands and cultures, and in so doing indicates certain implications for brand management and research. While this approach sheds light on the barrier that exists between managerial intentions and marketing response, it also emphasises that Chinese-styled branding should not be under-valued merely as a mode of communication, but newly considered as both a process of cultural production and a creation of cultural meaning. The multi-case study can become a means to holistically understand the process of cultural formulation through interactions between cultural forms and varied contexts (Wiebe et al., 2010). Accordingly, the three case studies have revealed brand meaning formulation in different contexts and highlighted the "Chinese" as culture and cultural forms. They have further shown how new Chinese culture can circulate globally and construct new global meanings worldwide.

4. From an Aesthetics Perspective of Chinese-styled Global Branding using a Cultural Approach

The term aesthetics applies not merely to general art theory and art history. Properly speaking, aesthetics is "a specific regime for identifying and thinking about the arts or the aesthetic regime of art" (Ranciere and Rockhill, 2002; p.82). I argue that Chinese-styled global branding can be treated as a specific aesthetic regime of cultural forms or arts in order to examine the creative aspects of authenticity, retrospection, and re-invention deployed in brand building.

4.1. Aesthetics in Chinese-styled global branding using a Cultural Approach

Chinese-styled global branding aesthetics are expressed by habits of Chinese life practices, such as conventions of salutation and social interactions, food preparation, and principles organising space and religious rituals (Leuthold, 1998). A Chinese-styled global branding approach can reveal the cultural perspectives of various brand actors towards brand development. Holt (2004) applies a social-cultural lens to branding in his historical study of iconic brands, revealing how iconic brands generate cultural conversations in relevant ways and take on added meanings. Drawing on Holt's example (2004), this study presents how three brands – Jay Chou, the "Imagined China" in the 2008 Beijing Opening Ceremony, and Shanghai Tang – are valued by customers, managerial workers, and the media more for their symbolic content rather than what they actually achieve. I examine how such brands are more than just brands. They are also cultural icons and aesthetic objects.

The aesthetics of a Chinese-styled branding approach can be examined by looking at how brands address social concerns, such as identity myths and/or anxieties. Identity myths are subjective, but sometimes brands succeed because they are able to pry out and grapple with the objective qualities of identity myths (Eco and Bredin, 1988; and Mandoki, 2007). One solution to tackle identity myths is to create your own myth, which can be grafted onto the objective aspects of an existing identity myth. Using powerful symbolism, such created myths can appease collective anxieties resulting from acute social and economic changes. The current era in China is such that masses of urban and rural Chinese want to escape from the negative images of China that derive from its political history and manufacturing reality. Brands, such as Jay Chou, the opening ceremony performances, and Shanghai Tang, have created their own identity myths that show a heightened awareness of what people need from brands. Their myths have crafted new identities that share common ground in history and locally-perceived available culture that are clearly visible within their branding practices (Ger, 1999; and Askegaard and Kjeldgaard, 2007). They have used what some scholars have termed reputational capital (Askegaard and Kjeldgaard, 2007), resources that are locally-available, to unveil the meanings of historical Chinese culture through the use of modern fashion resources.

Identity myth and their aesthetics are not value-free. They have their upsides and their pitfalls. They have their truths and their lies. Brand aesthetics can solve targeted problems by choosing the right moral codes. In other words the morality of aesthetics plays a key role in brand development. Each of my three cases presents a common morality, which primarily derives its strength and convictions from historical myths, historical truth, and cultural exemplars. The morality of brand aesthetics in this case is intertwined in the references it selects and the contexts within which they are re-engaged. The stories of managerial workers in my case studies provide ample evidence of this choice of brand aesthetics morality. In all three cases, we have testimonies that suggest a profound conviction in the authenticity of the imaginary, that the nostalgia is not gratuitous, but rather genuinely involved in creating a new image of and for China, and rejuvenating the best of the China of old. The morality of aesthetics in this case can be understood as the morality that history makes possible.

4.2. The authenticity of the Chinese-styled global brand or branding approach

According to Berger (1973), "authenticity" refers to identifying what is real in our lives. Accordingly, one could argue that brand authenticity refers to the search for the real behind brand development. In other words, in Chinese-styled brand development, the democratic and free discourses of brand meanings of brand actors manifest real desires. The employment of historical Chinese culture, for example, reflects the desire for authentic Chinese culture. At the same time, the use of global fashion mechanisms suggests that consumers and managers are not just searching for the authentic but also for the authentic as it is possible today. Authentic in the present must reflect modern realities, such as the desire for cosmopolitanism, social mobility, professional success, and physical beauty, as Shanghai Tang demonstrates through its product line, club ventures, and lifestyle enterprise.

4.3. The use of global fashion resources for brand fashioning through the three case studies

Fashion is a driving force that frames the way we live. It has impacted apparel, hairstyles, art, food, cosmetics, cars, music, toys, furniture, and many other aspects of our daily lives that we often take for granted. The various conquests of fashion have compelled scholars to take it seriously. From social scientists and economists to marketing experts and consumer behaviourists, everyone seems to be interested in how fashion is changing our world. In this dissertation, global fashion systems represent systems that express a market-fuelled circulation of consumer desire and demand and facilitate the interrogation of modern life. Brand fashioning in the three case studies shows how consumers create new brand mythologies, interrogate history, engage with authentically re-imagining the past, and deal with social concerns about status, appearance, education, and national pride.

5. Implications of the Culture Approach to Chinese-styled Global Branding

Although marketing research has generated vast amounts of literature, it has yet to produce adequate theoretical frameworks based on a cultural perspective to study branding in the global marketplace, and in emerging markets, such as Chinese markets (Cayla and Arnould, 2008). My research represents an effort to fill the gap between brand development studies focusing expressly on Western brands and their markets and culture-specific global brand development in emerging markets, such as India and China. My approach to global brand development in China integrates a number of research techniques and concepts, such as observation, methodological individualism, multi-sited ethnographic study, brand actor perspectives, and the all-important interpretation. My interest lies in studying how brands actors co-create, circulate, and re-configure existing meanings of brands and their cultures, as identified by (Schroeder and Salzer-Morling, 2006). My research has been peripatetic and culturally-diverse, exposing me to a variety of voices and cultural vantages such as anti-fashion, anti-conformism, brand-devotees, and brand illiterates. It has revealed that brand culture is a complex field of meanings, people, and ways that both influence the market and are influenced by it. In other words, brand cultures encompass the diverse scenarios of emerging and established cultural forms, including new co-created cultural forms.

.

Beyond illuminating brand culture, the cultural approach to Chinese branding in global markets also helps to address the problem of the low repute of Chinese export brands as compared to prominent global brands. A cultural approach to Chinese branding demonstrates that a global ethnic diaspora reach strategy can develop global brands. Beyond China, a global ethnic diaspora reach strategy is particularly valuable to brand builders and marketers in other developing countries, which, like China, have large expatriated populations. This approach also demonstrates the weaknesses of branding approaches that focus too narrowly on locally appreciated and available resources (Ger, 1999; and Askegaard and Kjeldgaard, 2007)

The cultural approach to global branding, in this case that of the "Imagined China", takes the concept of the imagined community (Anderson, 1991) out of the political field into a global cultural field. It takes branding beyond nation-building to address a variety of concerns stemming from questions of identity, belonging, and social status. It takes in accounts that identity myths arise from various sources, which share common ground across the world, especially among diasporic communities. Brands can become a vehicle for meanings to be co-created and re-configured across national boundaries through the free discourses of production and consumption. What this does is to bring brands out into the social and cultural arena. The "Imagined China" myth, extends Thompson and Tian's (2008) cultural myth creation to non-Western contexts with social implications. Commercial culture has moved into the identity politics field (Holt, 2002) via conflicts between the public and private sphere. The "Imagined China" myth negotiates the ideological parameters of popular memory and the socio-political significance of counter-memories. It helps to address the shortages of brand development in non-Western countries and adds to the growing evidence of evolution in global brand culture. The "Imagined China" myth, revealed through the cultural branding approach, is essentially a wake-up call to Chinese brand builders, producers, managers, and marketers, recommending that they pay more attention to the complexities and potentials of brand culture. The Chinese-styled branding approach offers workable hybridisation models of Chinese-styled aesthetics and global fashion resources that can come together usefully in the various stages of brand development, such as production and consumption, images and stories, design and communication, and art and business. Global branding implies that brand builders are not merely promoting individual brands, but also certain cultures or lifestyles. For example, Starbucks offers the American lifestyle of coffee drinking while McDonald's sells the American lifestyle of fast-food eating.

The three case studies show that repackaged historical Chinese culture has become a global brand. This provides impetus to both other Chinese brand builders and brand builders overseas to rethink their brand development strategies in terms of culturally-conditioned brand strategies, that local cultures can be used to develop recognisable global brands. However, brand builders must also factor in the potential negative impact of such brand building, as it can have repercussions on local culture. Excessive cultural reproductions and representations can lead to a vogue for inauthentic and meaningless versions of local cultures. Despite having suggested some implications for brand managers and builders, my study is not content to offer only managerial advice. Rather, it examines the open discourses of brands by managerial workers, consumers and the media in an effort to analyse the negative and positive cultural meanings of brands. It blends theory-building research from the social sciences with cultural analysis tools common in the humanities, and thereby draws the study of brands and branding into the social sciences and into cultural studies.

6. Conclusion

Firstly, the study of Jay Chou examined the strategic use of historical Chinese culture and global music fashion (hip-hop fashion) in the global branding context. This case study offers a Chinese-styled sacred branding model that applies in music branding and in other Chinese-ideology consumption models. It provides a viable model for local music marketers in China and aboard to develop music brands in Chinese and global markets. Secondly, the case study of the Beijing Olympics opening ceremony presents the use of historical Chinese sources and global fashion resources in the creation of the myth of the "Imagined China" as a global brand. This case study demonstrates the intersection of Holt's theoretical principles pertaining to cultural branding (2004) and the concept of the imagined community (Anderson, 1991), and the creation thereof. The branding approach of this case study transcends the Chinese context with wide implications for event branding in the global context. It suggests that event organisers can develop global events by marrying historical culture with global fashion resources. It shows the vast market for consumption models based on nostalgia, authenticity, and retrospection. Thirdly, the case study of Shanghai Tang looks at how Shanghai Tang revives historical culture through fashion. This suggests that both Chinese and non-Chinese brands builders can repackage historical culture using global fashion resources and insights to develop global brands. This kind of branding offers diverse brand meanings, generates open discourses, and creates new myths about the value of authenticity.

All three cases demonstrate that modern Chinese lifestyle or modern Chinese-ness has become a global brand. It is no ordinary brand but rather one that attracts millions of consumers worldwide and thousands of managerial workers both within and outside China. The enormous market success of Jay Chou, the 2008 Beijing Olympics opening ceremony, and Shanghai Tang proves that the brand landscapes of Chinese brand development are vast and growing, with huge untapped potential. Brand literacy is growing as is the appeal of brand identity for a growing band of brand conscious consumers. Brand builders should sit up and take notice of these changes in the Chinese brand panorama.

7. Further Research Orientations

Other studies could extend the research generated in this dissertation by detailing different models of Chinese-styled brand globalisation and studying the impact of these branding activities on cultural systems. Further research may also focus on brands and cultures' interactions in different groups of participants, including typical consumers, such as Chinese "red consumers", and brand illiterate consumers, such as the "Shanxi coal mine bosses".

References

Aaker, D.A., 1996. *Building strong brands*. NJ: Free Press.

Aaker, D.A. and Joachimsthaler, E., 1999. The lure of global branding. *Harvard Business Review*, 77(6), pp. 137-44.

Aaker, D.A. and Joachimsthaler, E., 2000. *Brand leadership*. New York: Free Press.

Aaker, J. and Williams, P., 1998. Empathy versus pride: the influence of emotional appeals across cultures. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 25(December), pp. 241-61.

Abrahamson, E., 1991. Managerial fad and fashion: the diffusion and rejection of innovations. *Academy of Management Review*, 16(3), pp. 586-612.

Adams, A., 1970. *Ninja: the invisible assassins*. Black Belt Communications.

Alashban, A. A, Hayes, L.A., Zinkhan, G. M. and Balazs, A. L., 2002. International brand-name standardization/adaptation: Antecedents and consequences. *Journal of International Marketing*, 10 (3), pp 22-48.

Anderson, B., 1991. *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism.* Verso.

Anholt, S., 2003. *Brand new justice: the upside of global branding*. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.

Appadurai, A., 1990. *Disjuncture and difference in the global economy*. In: M. Featherstone, ed. Global culture: nationalism, globalization and modernity. London: Sage, pp. 295-310.

Applbaum, K., 2000. Crossing borders: globalization as myth and charter in American transnational consumer marketing. *American Ethnologist*, 27(2), May, pp. 257-82.

Arnould, E.J. and Thompson, C.J., 2005. Consumer culture theory (CCT): twenty years of research. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 31(4), pp. 868-82.

Arnould, E.J. and Tissiers-Desbordes, E., 2005. *Hypermodernity and the new millennium: scientific language as a tool for marketing communications*. In: A. J. Kimmel, ed. Marketing communication: emerging trends and developments. Cambridge: Oxford University Press, pp. 236-55.

Arnould, E.J. and Wallendorf, M., 1994. Market-oriented ethnography: interpretation building and marketing strategy formulation. *Journal of Marketing Research,* 31(4), pp. 484-504.

Arvidsson, A., 2005. Brands: a critical perspective. *Journal of Consumer Culture,* 5(2), pp. 235-58.

Askegaard, S. and Kjeldgaard, D., 2002. *The water fish swim in: relations between marketing and culture in the age of globalization.* In S. Askegaard, N. Jøgensen and T. Kaudson, eds. Perspectives on marketing relations. Copenhagen: Thomson, pp. 13-35.

Askegaard, S., Arnould, E.J. and Kjeldgaard, D., 2005. Post-assimilationist ethnic consumer research: qualifications and extensions. *Journal of Consumer Research,* 32(1), June, pp. 160-71.

Askegaard, S., 2006. *Brands as a global ideoscape*. In J. Schroeder and M. Salzer-Mörling, eds. Brand culture. London: Routledge, pp. 91-102.

Askegaard, S. and Kjeldgaard, D., 2007. Here, there, and everywhere: place branding and gastronomical globalization in a macro-marketing perspective. *Journal of Macromarketing,* 27(2), pp. 138-47.

Atkinson, N., 2008. *The Olympics of fashion: opening ceremony.* Available at http://network.nationalpost.com/np/blogs/theampersand/archive/2008/08/08/the-olympics-of-fashion-opening-ceremonies.aspx [Accessed 20 May, 2010].

Azhari, N., 2008. *Textiles and clothing trade post-agreement on textiles and clothing: Can trade facilitation helps?* In: M. Mikic, ed. Unveiling protectionism -regional responses to remaining barriers in the textiles and clothing trade. New York: United Nations publication, pp. 171-83.

Babusci, R. and Nonfiction, J., 1991. *Prentice hall literature: platinum*. Pearson Prentice Hall.

Baidu.com, 2010. *Zhou, Jielun* (in Chinese) or *Jay Chou*. Available at http://baike.baidu.com/view/2632.htm

Baker, J., Grewal, D. and Levy, M., 1992. An experimental approach to making retail store environmental decisions. *Journal of Retailing*, 68(4), pp. 445-60.

Baldwin, J.R., Faulkner, S.L., Hecht, M.L. and Lindsley, S. L., 2005. *Redefining culture: perspectives across disciplines*. Routledge.

Banister, E.N. and Hogg, M.K., 2006. *Consumers and their negative selves, and the implications for fashion marketing*. In: T. Hines and M. Bruce, eds. Fashion marketing: contemporary issues. A Butterworth-Heinemann Title, pp. 217-29.

Barker, C., 2004.*The sage dictionary of cultural studies,* Sage Publications Ltd.

Barnard, M., 2002. *Fashion as communication*. 2nd edition. Routledge.

Barnhill, D. L., 2005. *East Asian aesthetics and nature: the encyclopedia of religion and nature.* Continuum.

Baumgarten, A., 1954. *Reflections on poetry*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Beijing2008.cn, 2008a. *Press conference: fireworks for opening & closing ceremonies.* Available at http://en.beijing2008.cn/live/pressconference/mpc/n214469220.shtml

Beijing2008.cn, 2008b. *Chief Director Zhang Yimou reflects on the success of the Opening Ceremony* (in Chinese). Available at http://www.beijing2008.cn/live/zoujinaoyun/mpc/n214519585.shtml

Beijing2008.cn, 2008c. *Hong Kong.* Available at http://en.beijing2008.cn/news/olympiccities/hongkong/n214486735.shtml.

Belk, R.W., Wallendorf, M. and Sherry, J.F. Jr., 1989. The sacred and the profane in consumer behavior: Theodicy on the Odyssey. *Journal of Consumer Research,* 16(June), pp. 1-38.

Belk, R.W., 1991. *Possessions and the sense of past*. In: R.W. Belk, eds. Highways and buy ways: naturalistic research from the consumer behavior Odyssey. Provo, UT: Association for Consumer Research, pp. 114-30.

Belk, R.W. and Costa, J.A., 1998. The mountain man myth: a contemporary consuming fantasy. *Journal of Consumer Research,* 25(December), pp. 218-40.

Belk, R.W., Ger, G. and Askegaard, S., 2003. The fire of desire: a multi-sited inquiry into consumer passion. *Journal of consumer research*, 30 (December), pp 326-51.

Bengtsson, A. and Firat, A. F., 2006. Brand literacy: consumers' sense-making of brand management. *Advances in Consumer Research*, 33, pp 375-80

Bengtsson A., Östberg J. and Kjeldgaard, D., 2005. Prisoners in paradise: Subcultural resistance to the marketization of tattooing. *Consumption, Markets and Culture,* 8(3), pp. 261-74.

Bengtsson, A. and Ostberg, J., 2006. *Researching the cultures of brands*. In: R.W. Belk, ed. Handbook of qualitative research methods in marketing. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, pp. 83-93.

Benjamin, W., 1973. Thesis on the philosophy of history. *Illuminations*. Translated by H. Zohn. London: Fontana/Collins, pp. 257-63.

Benjamin, W., 1999. *The arcades project.* Translated by H. Eiland and K. McLaughlin. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Berger, P.L., 1969. *The sacred canopy: elements of a sociological theory of religion.* New York: Anchor Books.

Berger, P., 1973. Sincerity' and 'authenticity' in modern society. *The Public Interest,* 31, pp. 81-8.

Bidgoli, H., 2010. *The handbook of technology management: supply chain management, marketing and advertising, and global management* (Volume 2). Wiley.

Biel, A., 1991. The brandscape-converting image into equity. *Admap,* October, pp. 41-6.

Blackburn, S., 2005. *Dictionary of philosophy.* 2nd, edition. Oxford University Press.

Blaszczyk, R., 2007. *Producing fashion: commerce, culture, and consumers: Hagley perspectives on business and culture*. University of Pennsylvania Press.

BOCOG, 2008. *The emblem of Beijing 2008 Olympic Games and its cultural connotation,* December 12. Available at http://en.beijing-2008.org/13/59/article211615913.shtml

Borgerson, J.L. and Schroeder, J. E., 2003. *The lure of paradise: marketing the retro-escape of Hawaii.* In: S. Brown and J. Sherry, eds. Time, space and the market: retroscapes rising. New York: M.E. Sharp.

Borgerson, J.L., 2005. Materiality, agency, and the constitution of consuming subjects: insights for consumer research. *Advances in Consumer Research*, 32, pp. 439-43.

Borgerson, J. L., 2009. Materiality and the comfort of things: drinks, dining and discussion with Daniel Miller. *Consumption Markets and Culture,* 12(2), pp. 155-70.

Bourdieu, P., 1993. *The field of cultural production*. London: Polity.

Boyer, M., 1992. *Cities for sale: merchandising history at South Street Seaport.* In: M. Sorkin, ed. Variations on a theme park: the new American city and the end of public space. New York: Hill and Wang, pp. 181-204.

Bradshaw, A., McDonagh, P. and Marshall, D., 2006. No space: New blood and the production of brand culture colonies. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 22(5), pp. 579-99.

Brembeck, H., Karlsson, M. A., Ossianson, E., Shanahan, H., Jonsson, L. and Brown, S., 1993. Post-modern marketing. *European Journal of Marketing,* 27(4), pp. 9-34.

Brown, S., 1993. Postmodern marketing?, *European Journal of Marketing,* 27 (4), pp. 19-34.

Brown, S., 1995. *Post-modern marketing*. London: Routledge.

Brown, S., 1999. Retro-marketing: yesterday’s tomorrow, today. *Marketing Intelligence and Planning,* 17(7), pp. 363-76.

Brown, S., Hirschman, E. and Maclaran, P., 2000. *Presenting the past: on marketing’s re-production orientation.* In: S. Brown and A. Patterson, eds. Imagining marketing: art, aesthetics, and the avant-garde. London: Routledge.

Brown, S., Kozinets, R. and Sherry, J., 2003. Teaching old brands new tricks: retro branding and the revival of brand meaning. *Journal of Marketing,* 67(July), pp 9-33.

Bruce, M., Moore, C. and Birtwistle, G., 2004. *International retail marketing: a case study approach*. Butterworth-Heinemann

Bruner, E., 1994. Abraham Lincoln as authentic reproduction: a critique of post-modernism. *American Anthropologist*, 96(2), pp. 397-415.

Bruzzi, S. and Gibson, P.C., 2000. *Fashion cultures: theories, explorations and analysis.* Routledge.

Buck-Morss, S., 1991. *The dialectics of seeing: Walter Benjamin and the arcades project*. Cambridge, Mass and London MIT.

Burawoy, M., 1991. *The extended case method*. In: M. Burawoy, ed. Ethnography unbound. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, pp. 271-86.

Bush, S. and Murck, C., 1983. *Theories of the arts in China*, eds. Princeton: Princeton University press.

Business Week, 2007. *100 top brands*. [pdf] Available at http://www.businessweek.com/pdfs/2007/0732_globalbrands.pdf

Buzzell, R. D., 1968. Can you standardize multinational marketing? *Harvard Business Review*, 46(November–December), pp.102-13.

Calarco, M. and Atterton, P., 2004. *Animal philosophy: essential readings in continental thought.* NY: Continuum.

Canniford, R., 2005. Moving shadows: suggestions for ethnography in globalized cultures. *Qualitative Market Research: an International Journal*, 8(2), pp. 204-18.

Carson, D., Gilmore, A., Perry, C. and Gronhaug, K., 2001. *Qualitative market research.* London: Sage.

Carter, B. and Sandomir, R., 2008. *A surprise winner at the Olympic Games in Beijing: NBC.* Available at http://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/18/sports/olympics/18nbc.html

Cayla, J. and Eckhardt, G.M., 2008. Asian brands and the shaping of a transnational imagined community. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 35, pp. 216-30.

Cayla, J. and Arnould, E.J., 2008. A cultural approach to branding in the global marketplace. *Journal of International Marketing*, 16(4), pp. 86-112.

Chan, A.K.K., 1990. Localization in international branding: a preliminary investigation on Chinese names of foreign brands in Hong Kong. *International Journal of Advertising*, 9(1), pp. 81-91.

Chan, A.K.K. and Huang, Y., 1997. Brand naming in China: a linguistic approach.

Marketing Intelligence and Planning 15 (5), pp 227–34.

Chang, I., 1997, *The Rape of Nanking*, Penguin.

Charters, S., 2006. Aesthetic products and aesthetic consumption: a review. *Consumption Markets and Culture*, 9(3), pp. 235-55.

Cheng, H., 1997. Toward an understanding of cultural values manifest in advertising: a content analysis of Chinese television commercials in 1990 and 1995. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly,* 74 (4), pp 773-796.

Cheng, H. and Schweitzer, J.C., 1996. Cultural values reflected in Chinese and U.S. television commercials. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 36 (3), pp 8-35.

China Daily, 2005. *Bo: 800 million shirts for one Airbus A380*. Available at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2005-05/05/content_439584.htm

Cholachatpinyo, A., Padgett, I., Crocker, M. and Fletcher, B., 2002. A conceptual model of the fashion process - part 1: The fashion transformation process model. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management*, 6(1), pp. 11-23.

Chua, R. Y. and Eccles, R. J., 2009. *Managing creativity at Shanghai Tang*. October 22. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Publishing. Available at: http://ssrn.com/abstract=1467615 [Accessed 8 August, 2009]

Cochran, S., 2006. *Chinese medicine men: consumer culture in China and Southeast Asia.* Harvard University Press.

Cohen, E. 1988. Authenticity and commoditization in tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research,* 15(3), pp. 371-86.

Colpe, C., 1987. *The sacred and the profane*. In: M. Eliade, eds. The encyclopedia of religion. New York: Collier Macmillan, pp. 511-26.

Collier, M., 2001. *Approaches to analysis in visual anthropology*. In T. van Leeuwen & C. Jewitt (Eds.). Handbook of visual analysis, pp. 35-60

Cooper, C. L. and Finklestein, S., 2008. *Advances in mergers and acquisitions,* volume 7. Emerald Group Publishing.

Corral, C.D., Pérez-Turpin, J.A., Vidal, A.M., Padorno, C.M., Patiño, J.M. and Molina, A.G., 2010. Principles of the Olympic movement. *Journal of Human Sport & Exercise,* 5(1), January, pp. 3-14.

Costa, J. and Bamossy, G., 1995. Culture and marketing of culture: the museum retail context. In: J. Costa and G. Bamossy, eds. *Marketing in a multicultural world: ethnicity, nationalism, and cultural identity,* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 299-328.

Cova, B. and Dalli, D., 2009. Working consumers: the next step in marketing theory? *Marketing Theory*, 9(3), pp. 315-39.

Cox, R. and Brittain, P., 2004. *Retailing: an introduction*. 5th edition. Financial Times/ Prentice Hall.

Craig, E., 1998. *Encyclopedia of philosophy*, Routledge.

Craig, S. C. and Douglas, S. P., 2000. Configural advantage in global markets. *Journal of International Marketing,* 8(1), pp. 6-21.

Crane, D., 2000. *Fashion and its social agendas: class, gender, and identity in clothing*. University of Chicago Press.

Crang, M. 1996. Magic kingdom or a quixotic quest for authenticity? *Annals of Tourism Research,* 23(2), pp. 415-31.

Crewe, L., and Goodrum, A., 2000. *Fashioning new forms of consumption: the case of Paul Smith.* In: S. Bruzzi, and P. Church-Gibson, eds. Fashion cultures. London: Routledge, pp. 25-48.

Csaba, F. and Bengtsson, A., 2006. *Rethinking identity in brand management*. In: J. Schroeder and M. Salzer-Mörling, eds. Brand culture. London: Routledge, pp.15-45.

Csikszentmihalyi, M., 1975. *Beyond boredom and anxiety.* San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.

Cui, G., 1997. The name game: foreign and PRC brands race to build their reputation and market shares in China. *China Business Review*, 24(6), pp 40-3.

Cui, J. and Zhou, G., 2001. *Freestyle (in Chinese).* Guangxi Normal University Press.

Curasi, C.F., Price, L.L. and Arnould, E.J., 2004. How individuals' cherished possessions become families' inalienable wealth. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 31(December), pp. 609-22.

Czarniawska, B., 1998. *A narrative approach to organization studies, qualitative research methods*. Thousand Oaks, London and New Delhi: Sage Publications.

Czarniawska, B., 2004. *The uses of narrative in social science research*. In: M. Hardy and A. Bryman, eds. Handbook of data analysis. London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Dale, C., 2004. *Chinese aesthetics and literature: A reader.* SUNY Series in Asian Studies Development. State University of New York Press.

Davis, 1992. *Fashion, culture and identity*. Chicago University Press.

Davis, D. S., 2000. *Introduction: a revolution in consumption*, in Deborah S. Davis, ed. The consumer revolution in china, Berkeley: university of California press, pp 1-22.

Davis, E.L., 2004. *Encyclopedia of contemporary Chinese culture*. Routledge.

Davis, A., 2009. *MediaTV: Shanghai Tang's luxury strategy.* Available at: http://www.cei.asia/searcharticle/2009_09/MediaTV-Shanghai-Tangs-luxury-strategy/37282

Dawson, M.M., Ed., 2003. *Ethics of Confucius*. Kessinger Publishing.

de Chernatony, L., Halliburton, C. and Bernath, R., 1995. International branding: demand- or supply-driven opportunity? *International Marketing Review*, 12(2), pp. 9-21.

de Chernatony, L. and Dall'Olmo Riley, F., 1998. Defining a 'brand': beyond the literature with experts' interpretations. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 14, pp: 417-43.

de Chernatony, L., 2001. *From brand vision to brand evaluation: strategically building and sustaining brand*. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.

de Mooij, M., 2009. *Global marketing and advertising: understanding cultural paradoxes.* 3rd edition. Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA.

Dickie, G.L., 1997. *Introduction to aesthetics: an analytic approach*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dimofte, C., Johansson, J. and Ronkainen, I., 2008. Cognitive and affective reactions of U.S. consumers to global brands. *Journal of International Marketing*, 16(4), pp. 113-35.

Dong, L. and Tian, K., 2009. The use of Western brands in asserting Chinese national identity. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 36(3), pp. 504-23.

Donovan, R.J. and Rossiter, J.R., 1982. Store atmosphere: An experimental psychology approach. *Journal of Retailing,* 58, pp 34-57.

Douglas, S. P. and Craig, C.S., 1997. The changing dynamics of consumer behavior: implications for cross-cultural research. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 14, pp. 379-95.

Du Gay, P., 1996. *Consumption and identity at work*. London: Sage.

Durkheim, E., 1915. *The elementary forms of religious life*. London: Allen and Unwin.

Dyer, G., 2009. Zhang Yimou on his creative independence. *Financial Times*, December 11. Available at: http://www.ft.com/cms/s/2/793b3406-e523-11de-9a25-00144feab49a.html

Eckhardt, G.M and Bengtsson, A., 2007. *Pulling the white rabbit out of the hat: consuming brands in imperial Chin*a. The Association for Consumer Research, European Conference, 10-14 July, in Milan, Italy.

Eckhardt, G.M and Bengtsson, A., 2010. A brief history of branding in China. Journal of Macromarketing, 30(3), pp 210-21

Eco, U., 1972. *Towards a semiotic enquiry into the television message*. Paper presented at University of Birmingham, U.K.

Eco, U., and Bredin, H., 1988. *The aesthetics of Thomas Aquinas*. Harvard University Press.

Eisenhardt, K.M. 1989. Building theories from case study research. *Academy of Management Review*, 14(4), pp. 532-50.

Ekström, K. M., 2006. *The emergence of multi-sited ethnography in anthropology and marketing.* In: R.W. Belk, ed. Handbook of qualitative research methods in marketing. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited, pp.497-508.

Eliade, M., 1959. *The sacred and the profane: The nature of religion*. Translated by W.R. Trask. New York: Harper & Row.

Elliott, R. and Wattanasuwan, K., 1998. Brands as resources for the symbolic construction of identity. *International Journal of Advertising*, 17(2), pp. 131-44.

Emberley, J., 1987. *The fashion apparatus and the deconstruction of postmodern subjectivity*. In Arthur and Marilouise Kroker, ed. Body Invaders. Montreal: New World Perspectives.

Erickson, M. K., 1996. Using self-congruity and ideal congruity to predict purchase intention: a European perspective. *Journal of Euromarketing*, 6(1), pp. 41-56.

Escalas, J. E., 1997. *Meaningful self-brand connections: the incorporation of brands into consumers' self concepts*. Unpublished paper.

Evans, C., 2000. *Yesterday's emblem and tomorrow's commodities: the return of the repressed in fashion imagery today*. In: S. Bruzzi and P. C. Gibson, eds. Fashion cultures: theories, explorations, and analysis. Routledge, pp. 93-113.

Evans, C. and Breward, C., 2005. *Fashion and modernity*. Berg Publishers.

Evans, C., 2007. Fashion at the edge: spectacle, modernity and deathliness. Yale University Press.

Fan, Y., 2006. The globalisation of Chinese brands. *Marketing Intelligence and Planning*, 24(4), pp. 365-79.

Fashion Olympics, 2008. *Athletic style from Beijing you can wear right here at home* Available at http://fab4online.com/blog/?p=160

Featherstone, M., 1994. *Consumer culture and postmodernism*. London: Sage.

Feick, L., Robin A.C. and Price, L.L., 2003. Rethinking the origins of involvement and brand commitment: insights from post-socialist central Europe. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 30(September), pp. 151-69.

Ferroa, P., 2003. *China* (Cultures of the World, Second). 2nd edition. Marshall Cavendish Children's Books.

Ferrarotti, F., 2007. *Social theory for old and new modernities: essays on society and culture, 1976-2005.* Lexington Books

Fiske, J., 1990. *Introduction to communication studies*. Routledge: Taylor & Francis Group.

Fitzgerald, S., 1997. *Is Australia an Asian country? can Australia survive in an East Asian future?* St. Leonards, N.S.W.: Allen & Unwin.

Floor, K., 2006. *Branding a store: how to build successful retail brands in a changing marketplace.* Kogan Page.

Forty, A., 1986. *Objects of Desire,* New York: Pantheon.

Foster, J. B., 2008. *Parody, Pastiche and Periodization*: nabokov/Jameson, paru dans *Cycnos*. 12 (2), mis en ligne le 25 juin: URL. Available at http://revel.unice.fr/cycnos/index.html?id=1466

Fournier, S., 1998. Consumers and their brands: developing relationship theory in consumer research. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 24(March), pp. 343-73.

Friedman, J., 1990. Being in the World: Globalization and Localization. *Theory Culture Society*, 7(2), pp. 311-28.

Francis, J. N. P., Lam, J.P., and Walls, J., 2002. The impact of linguistic differences on international brand name standardization: a comparison of English and Chinese brand names of fortune-500 companies. *Journal of International Marketing* 10 (1), pp 98–116.

Frankel, S., 2008. *Who won gold in the fashion Olympics?* Available at http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/fashion/features/who-won-gold-in-the-fashion-olympics-889295.html

Friedman, J., 1995. *Global system, globalization and the parameters of modernity*. In: M. Featherstone, S. Lash and R. Robertson, eds. Global modernities. London: Sage, pp. 69-90.

Fung, A. Y., 2008. Western style, Chinese pop: Jay Chou’s rap and hip-hop in China. *Asian Music*, 39(1), Winter/Spring, pp. 70-80.

Gale, C. and Kaur, J., 2002. *The textile book*. Berg Publishers;

Gale, C. and Kaur, J., 2004. *Fashion and textiles: an overview*. Berg Publishers.

Geertz, C., 1973. The interpretation of cultures, New York: Basic Books.

Geertz, C., 1983. *Local Knowledge*. New York: Basic.

Gelder, S., 2005. *Branding cluster sheet: global brand strategy: unlocking branding potential across countries, cultures and markets*. New edition. Kogan Page.

Gelder, S. V., 2005. *Global brand strategy: unlocking brand potential across countries, cultures and markets.* Kogan Page.

Ger, G. and Belk, R.B., 1996. I’d like to buy the world a Coke: consumptionscapes of the “less affluent world”. *Journal of Consumer Policy*, 19(3), pp. 271-304.

Ger, G., 1999. Localizing in the global village: Local firms competing in global markets. *California Management Review*, 41(4), pp. 64-83.

Gerth, K., 2003. *China made: consumer culture and the creation of the nation*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Giddens, A., 1991. *Modernity and self-Identity: self and society in the late modern age*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Giesler, M., 2008. Conflict and compromise: drama in marketplace evolution. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 34(April), pp. 739-53.

Gillespie, K., Krishna, K. and Jarvis, S., 2002. Protecting global brands: toward a global norm. *Journal of International Marketing*, 10(2), pp. 99-112.

Gold, A.R., Leibowitz, G. and Perkins, A., 2001. A computer legend in the making. *McKinsey Quarterly*, 3, pp. 73-83.

Godwell, D. 1999. The Olympic branding of aborigines: the 2000 Olympic Games. In: K. Schaffer and S. Smith, eds. *The Olympics at the millennium: power, politics and the Olympic Games.* Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick.

Gold, R. and Gold, M. 2008. Olympic cities: regeneration, city re-branding and changing urban agendas. *Geography Compass*, 2/1, pp. 300-18.

Goldman, R. and Papson, S., 1995. *Sign wars: the cluttered landscape of advertising.* New York: The Guilford Press.

Gordon, W., 1991. *Democracy and economic reform in China*. Brighton, England: Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex.

Grasso, J.M., Corrin, J.P. and Kort, M., 2004. M*odernization and revolution in China from the opium wars to world power.* 3rd edition. East Gate Book.

Grayson, K. and Shulman, D 2000. Indexicality and the verification function of irreplaceable possessions: a semiotic analysis. *Journal of Consumer Research,* 27(June), pp. 17-30.

Grayson, K. and Marfinec, R. 2004. Consumer perceptions of iconicity and indexicality and their influence on assessments of authentic market offerings. *Journal of Consumer Research,* 31(September), pp. 296-312.

Greenberg, Y. K., 2007. *Encyclopaedia of love in world religions*. ABC-CLIO Ltd.

Greyser, A. 2008, *The three levels of branding at Beijing*. Harvard Business School Publishing.

Gries, P. H., 2005. *China's new nationalism: pride, politics, and diplomacy*. University of California Press.

Grimaldi, V., 2006. Getting beyond ‘made in China’. *Brand Channel*. Available at http://66.102.9.132/search?q=cache:3Af-gsdWMt4J:www.brandcameo.org/features_effect.asp%3Fpf_id%3D338+chinese+brands+situation+in+1990s&cd=5&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=uk

Griswold, W., 1987. The fabrication of meaning: literary interpretation in the United States, Great Britain, and the West Indies. *American Journal of Sociology,* 92(5), pp. 1077-117.

Gronow, J., 1997. *The sociology of taste*. London and New York: Routledge.

Grubb, E.L. and Grathwohl, H.L., 1967. Consumer self-concept, symbolism and market behaviour: a theoretical approach. *Journal of Marketing,* 31, pp. 22-7.

Gulati, A. and Lee, D., Ed., 2004. *Kellogg on China: strategies for success.* Northwestern University Press.

Gupta, A. and Ferguson, J., 1997. *Anthropological locations: boundaries and grounds of a field science*. Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Guyer, P., 1996. *Kant and the experience of freedom: essays on aesthetics and morality.* Cambridge University Press.

Hall, S., 1996. *Introduction: who needs identity?* In: S. Hall and P. du Gay, eds. Questions of cultural identity. London: Sage, pp. 1-17.

Hamilton, G. and Lai, C., 1989. *Consumerism without capitalism: Consumption and brand names in late imperial China.* In: H. Rutz and B. Orlove, eds. The social economy of consumption. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, pp. 253-80.

Hardtmann, E., 2001. *Motståndsrörelse mot kastväsendet: glimtar från Indien och England, (Resistance movement against the caste system: glimpses from India and England).* In: Ulf Hannerz, ed. *Flera fält i ett, socialantropologer om translokala fältstudier* (Several fields in one, social anthropologists about translocale field studies). Stockholm: Carlssons.

www. harpersbazaar.com, 2008. *Fashion Olympics.* Available at http://www.harpersbazaar.com/fashion/fashion-articles/lucy-liu-fashion-olympics-0808

Harrigan, K. 1998. Fantasy city: pleasure and profit in the postmodern metropolis. New York: Routledge.

Hassan, S.S and Katsanis, L.P., 1991. Identification of global consumer segments: a behavioural framework. *Journal of International Consumer Marketing*, 3(2), pp. 11-29.

Hassan, S. S., Craft, S. and Kortam, W., 2003. Understanding the new bases for global market segmentation. *Journal of Consumer Marketing,* 20(5), pp. 446-62.

He, H., 2000. *Dictionary of the political thought of the People's Republic of China* (Studies on Contemporary China). M.E. Sharpe.

Heath, J., 2005. *Methodological individualism*. In: E.N. Zalta, ed. Stanford encyclopedia of philosophy. Available at http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2005/entries/methodological-individualism/

Heffetz, O., 2009. *Symbolic consumption in economics: applications and implications*. Mimeo.

Henning, S. E., 1999. Academic encounters the Chinese martial arts. *China Review International,* 6(2), pp. 319-32.

Hines, T. and Bruce, M., 2006. *Fashion marketing: contemporary issues*. 2nd edition. Butterworth-Heinemann .

Hirschman, E. C. and Holbrook, M. B., 1980. *Symbolic consumer behaviour*. Association for Consumer Research. The Conference on Consumer Esthetics and Symbolic Consumption. May. New York:

Hirschman, E.C 1988.The Ideology of consumption: a structural-syntactical analysis of Dallas and Dynasty. *Journal of Consumer Research, 15* (December), pp 344-59.

Hodgson, G. M., 2007. Meanings of methodological individualism. *Journal of Economic Methodology,* 14(2), June, pp. 211-26.

Holbrook, M. B., 1982. Mapping the retail market for esthetic products: the case of jazz records. *Journal of Retailing,* 58(1), pp. 114-31.

Holbrook, M.B. and Zirlin, R.B, 1985. *Artistic creation, artworks and aesthetic appreciation.* In: R. Belk., ed. Advances in non-profit marketing. London: JAI Press.

Holbrook, M.B. and Schindler, R., 1989. Some exploratory findings on the development of musical tastes. *Journal of Consumer Research,* 16(June), pp. 119-24.

Holbrook, M. B., 1993. Nostalgia and consumption preferences: some emerging patterns of consumer tastes. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 20, pp. 245-56.

Holbrook, M. B., 1994. *Nostalgia proneness and consumer tastes.* In: J. A. Howard, ed. Buyer behavior in marketing strategy. 2nd ed. NJ: Prentice-Hall. pp. 348-64.

Holbrook, M.B. and Schindler, R.M., 1996. Market segmentation based on age and attitude towards the past: concepts, methods and findings concerning nostalgic influences on consumer taste. *Journal of Business Research*, 37(1), pp. 27-39.

Holden, P. and Ruppel, R.J., 2003. *Imperial desire: dissident sexualities and colonial literature.* University Of Minnesota Press.

Holt, D. B., 2002. Why do brands cause trouble? a dialectical theory of consumer culture and branding. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 29(June), pp. 70-90

Holt, D. B., 2004. *How brands become Icons: the principles of cultural branding.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard Business School Press.

Holt, D.B, Quelch, J.A. and Taylor, E.L., 2004. How global brands compete. *Harvard Business Review,* 82(9), pp. 1-9.

Hong, J., 1994. The resurrection of advertising in China. *Asian Survey,* 34 (4), pp328

Hooper, 2000. Globalisation and resistance in post-Mao China: the case of foreign consumer products. *Asian Studies Review,* 24(4), pp. 439-70.

Hruska, R. J., 2008. *888 red envelopes from Shanghai Tang.* Available at http://guestofaguest.com/from-our-inbox/888-red-envelopes-from-shanghai-tan/

Hsieh, M., 2002. Identifying brand image dimensionality and measuring the degree of brand globalization: A cross-national study, *Journal of International Marketing*, 10(2), pp. 46-67.

Hucker, C., 1995. *China's imperial past: an introduction to Chinese history and culture*. 1st edition. Stanford University Press.

Huston, E., 2006. Sacred - *New Orleans funerary grounds*. Lulu.com.

Lamb, C.W., Hair, J.F. and McDaniel, C., 2008. *Essentials of marketing*. 6th edition. South-Western College Publishing.

Lao-tzu, 1891. *Tao Te Ching.* Translated by J. Legge. Available at http://www.sacred-texts.com/tao/taote.htm [Accessed 8 August, 2009]

Lasn, K., 1999. *Culture Jam; How to reverse America's suicidal consumer binge and why we must.* New York: Harper Collins.

Latham, K., 2009. Media, the Olympics and the search for the 'real' China. *The China Quarterly*, 197(March), pp. 25-43.

Lee, Y. and Shen, S., 1999. *Chinese musical instruments* (Chinese music monograph series. Chinese Music Society of North America Press.

Lehman, U., 1999. *Tigersprung: Fashion and modernity*. MIT Press, Cambridge, mass and London: xx.

Lei, M., 2000. *Dingjian cehua: Zhongguo qiye zhuming cehua quan'an* (A collection of the best corporate strategic plans implemented in China), Beijing: Enterprise Management Publishing House.

Leifer, M., 2000. *Asian nationalism* , New York and London: Routledge

Leslie, E., 1999. *Souvenirs and forgetting Walter Benjamin's memory-work*. In: M. Kwint, C. Breward, and J. Aynsley, eds. Material memories: design and evocation. Oxford and New York: Berg, pp. 107-22.

Leuthold, S., 1998. *Indigenous aesthetics: native art, media, and identity*. University of Texas Press.

Levitt, T., 1983. The globalization of markets. *Harvard Business Review*, 61(3), pp. 91-102.

Levitt, T., 1988. The pluralization of consumption. *Harvard Business Review,* 66, pp.7-8.

Li, G., 2004. *The competitiveness of brand.* Beijing: People's University of China Press.

Ligas, M. and Cotte, J., 1999. *The process of negotiating brand meaning: a symbolic* *interactions perspective.* ACR Competitive Paper, Proceedings.

Lipovetsky,G. and Sennett, R., 2002; *The empire of fashion: dressing modern democracy*. Princeton University Press

Liu, Y., 2001. *Zhongguo shichang yingxiao wuqu* (Fallacies in marketing in China), Beijing: Enterprise Management Publishing House.

Lorand, R., 2000. *Aesthetic order: a philosophy of beauty and art* (Routledge Studies in Twentieth Century Philosophy). Routledge.

Lowenthal, D. 1985. *The past is a foreign country*. Cambridge University Press.

Lu, T. and He, H., 2003. *Marketing in China--Report 2003, no. 1.* Hangzhou: Zhejiang People's Publishing House.

Maclaran, P. and Stevens, L. 1998. *Romancing the utopian marketplace: dallying with Bakhtin in the Powerscourt Town house centre.* In S. Brown, A.M. Doherty and W. Clarke, eds. Romancing the market. London: Routledge, pp. 172-86.

Maclaran, P., Otnes, C. and Fischer, E., 2007. *Maintaining the myth of the monarchy: how producers shape consumers' experiences of the British royal family.* A.Y. Lee and D. Somon, eds. *Advances in Consumer Research,* Vol. 35, Dunluth, MN: Association for Consumer Research.

Maclaran, P., Saren, M. and Stern, B., 2009. *Handbook of marketing theory*. Sage Publications Ltd.

Mandoki, K., 2007. *Everyday aesthetics*. Ashgate Pub Co.

Manning, P. and Uplisashvili, A., 2007. *'Our Beer': ethnographic brands in post socialist Georgia.* American Anthropologist, 109(4), pp. 626-41.

Marcus, G. E., 1986. *Contemporary problems in ethnography and in the modern world system.* In: J. Clifford and G.E. Marcus, eds. Writing culture. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 165-93.

Marcus, G. E., 1989. Imagining the whole: ethnography's contemporary efforts to situate itself. *Critical Anthropology*, 9, pp. 7-30.

Marcus, G. E., 1995. Ethnography in/of the world system: the emergence of multi-sited ethnography. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 24, pp. 95-117.

Marcus, G. E., 1998. *Ethnography through thick and thin.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Marcus, G. E., 1999. What is at stake–and is not–in the idea and practice of multi-sited ethnography. *Canberra Anthropology*, 22(2), pp. 6-14.

Martin, E., 1994. *Flexible bodies: tracing immunity in American culture from the days* *of polio to the age of AIDS*. Boston: Beacon

McClary, S. and Walser, R., 1990. *Start making sense! Musicology wrestles with rock*. In: S. Frith and A. Goodwin, Eds. On record: rock, pop, and the written word. New York, Pantheon, pp. 277-92.

McCracken, G., 1986. Culture and consumption: a theoretical account of the structure and movement of the cultural meaning of consumer goods. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 13(June), pp. 71-84.

McCracken, G., 1988a. *Culture and Consumption*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

McCracken, G., 1988b. *The long interview*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage

McKendrick, N., 1982. *The consumer revolution of eighteenth century England*. In Neil McKendrick, John Brewer and John Harold Plumb, ed. The birth of a consumer society: The commercialization of eighteenth-century England. London: Europa, 3-33.

McLoughlin, D. and Aaker, D.A., 2010. *Strategic market management: global perspectives*. John Wiley & Sons.

McRobbie, A., 1998. *British fashion design: rag trade or image industry?* London: Routledge.

Mehrabrian, A. and Russell,J.A., 1974. *An approach to environmental psychology*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Meneley, A., 2007. Like an extra virgin. *American Anthropologist*, 109 (4), pp. 678–87.

Merriam, S.B., 1988. *Case study research in education: A qualitative approach*. San Francisco: Josey-Bass, pp. 19-20.

Miles, M.B., and Huberman, A.M., 1994. *Qualitative data analysis*. 2nd edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Miller, D., Jackson, P. and Rowlands, M., 1998. *Shopping, place, and identity*. New York: Routledge.

Mills, A.J., Durepos, G. and Wiebe, E., 2009. *Encyclopedia of case study research*. Sage Publications

Mirambeau, C., 2004. *Moulin Rouge*. Assouline.

Moisander, J. and Valtonen, A., 2006. *Qualitative marketing research: a cultural approach*. London: Sage Publications.

Moore, C.M. and Birtwistle, G., 2004. The Burberry business model – understanding a brand renaissance. *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, 32(8), pp. 412-22.

Morgan, N., Pritchard, A. and Pride, R. 2004. *Destination branding: creating the unique destination proposition*. Butterworth Heinemann, Oxford.

Morris, B., 1989. *Style.* The New York Times. November 21. Available at http://www.nytimes.com/1989/11/21/style/for-spring-patches-of-strategically-sited-bare-skin.html [Accessed 8 August, 2009]

Muniz, A. and O'Guinn, T., C., 2001. Brand community. *Journal of Consumer Research.* 27(4), pp. 412-32.

Mukerji, C., 1983. *From graven images: patterns of modern materialism*. New York: Columbia University.

Murray, J., 2002. The politics of consumption: a re-inquiry on Thompson and Haytko's 1997 speaking of fashion. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 29(3), pp. 427-40.

Nan, H., 1998. *Basic Buddhism: exploring Buddhism and Zen.* Weiser Books.

Nye, J.S., Nye, J.S. and Donahue, J.D., 2000. *Governance in a globalizing world*. Brookings Institution Press.

O'Guinn, T.C. and Belk, R.W., 1989. Heaven on earth: consumption at heritage village, USA. *Journal of Consumer Research, 1*6(2), September, pp. 227-38.

O'Guinn, T., Allen, C. and Semenik, R.J., 2008. *Advertising and integrated brand promotion.* South-Western College Pub.

Olins, W., (1989). *Corporate identity: making business strategy visible through design.* London: Thames & Hudson.

Onkvisit, S. and Shaw, J., 1987. Standardized international advertising: a review and critical evaluation of the theoretical and empirical evidence. *Columbia Journal of World Business,* 22(3), pp. 43-55.

Ostwalt , C., 2003. *Secular steeples: popular culture and the religious imagination*. Continuum International Publishing Group – Trinity

Özsomer, A. and Altaras, S., 2008. Global brand purchase likelihood: a critical synthesis and an integrated conceptual framework. *Journal of International Marketing,* 16, pp. 1-28.

Palls, B.P., 2008. *Cultural portraits: a synoptic guide*. Author House.

Pandit, S., 2005, *Exemplary CEOs: insights on organizational transformation*, TATA McGraw-Hill Publishing Company

Papadopoulos, N. & Heslop, L. 1993, *Product-country images: impact and role in international marketing,* Haworth Press

Peñaloza, L. and Gilly, M.C., 1999. Marketer acculturation: the changer and the changed. *Journal of Marketing,* 63(3), pp. 84-104.

Peñaloza, L., 1998, Just doing it: a visual ethnographic study of spectacular consumption behavior at Nike Town', *Consumption, Markets & Culture,* 2 (4), pp337-400.

Pensky, M., 2004. *Method and time: Benjamin's dialectical images*. In: David S. Ferris, ed. The Cambridge companion to Walter Benjamin. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp 177-98.

People's daily, 2010. *Commerce minister: Chinese exporters average profit margin only 1.8%.* Available at http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90001/90778/90861/6936424.html

Peterson, T., 2004. The branding of China. *Business Week.* Available at http://www.businessweek.com/bwdaily/dnflash/nov2004/nf20041110_0338_db053.htm

Pieterse, N., 1995, Globalization as hybridization, in M. Featherstone, S. Lash and R. Robertson (eds) global modernities, pp 45-68, London: sage

Pitcher, A.E., 1985, The role of branding in international advertising, *International Journal of Advertising,* 4(3), pp 241-46.

Porter, M. E., 1986. *Competition in global industries: a conceptual framework.* Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

Potter, R. A., 1995. Spectacular vernaculars. Hip-hop and the politics of postmodernism. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Price, E.G., 2006. *Hip hop culture* . ABC-CLIO Lt

Putnam, R., 2000, *Bowling alone: the collapse and revival of American community,* New York: Simon and Schuster.

Qiu, S., 2003, *Success from brands,* Beijing: Central Compilation and Translation Press.

Quelch, J. A., 1999, Global brands: taking stock, *Business Strategy Review*, 10(spring), pp 1-14.

Quelch, J. A., 2007. *Readings in modern marketing*. Chinese University Press.

Ranciere, J. and Rockhill,G., 2006. *The politics of aesthetics.* Continuum: Pbk.

Ratneshwar, D. and Mick, G., 2005. *Inside consumption: consumer motives, goals, and desires*. Routledge.

Reckert, S. 1993. *Beyond chrysanthemums: perspectives on poetry East and West*. London: Oxford University Press.

www.Reuters.com, 2009, *Jay Chou As Kato in "the Green Hornet"*. Available at http://www.filmofilia.com/2009/08/09/jay-chou-as-kato-in-the-green-hornet/

www. Reuters.com, 2010, *China industry profit margins back to pre-crisis level,* Available at http://in.reuters.com/article/idINIndia-47234520100326

Roberts, K.A., 1984. *Religion in sociological perspective*. Homewood: Dorsey Press.

Roll, M., 2006*, Asian brand strategy: how Asian builds strong brands*, Palgrave Macmillan.

Rose, T., 1994. *Black noise: rap music and black culture in contemporary America*. London: Wesleyan University Press.

Roth, M. S., 1992. Depth versus breadth strategies for global brand image management, *Journal of Advertising*, 21 (June), pp 23-36

Roth, M. S., 1995a. Effect of global market conditions on brand image customization and brand performance, *Journal of Advertising*, 24 (4), pp 55-72.

Roth, M. S., 1995b. The effects of culture and socioeconomics on the performance of global brand image strategies, *Journal of Marketing Research*, 32 (May), pp 163-75.

Savage, A., 2008. *The ecology: a "new to you" view: an orthodox theological ecology.* Juvenile Non-fiction.

Saussure, F., [1916] 1974. *Course in general linguistics*. Translated by W. Baskin. London: Fontana/Collins.

Schaffer, K. and Smith, S., 2000.*The Olympics at the millennium: power, politics, and the games*. Rutgers University Press.

Schouten, J. and McAlexander, J., 1995. Ethnography of the new bikers. *Journal of Consumer Research,* 22(1), pp. 43-61.

Schroeder, J.E., 1997. *Andy Warhol: consumer researcher*. In: M. Brucks and D. MacInnis, eds. Advances in Consumer Research, 24, pp. 476-82.

Schroeder, J.E. and Borgerson, J.L., 2002. Innovations in information technology: insights into consumer culture from Italian renaissance art. *Consumption, Markets, and Culture,* 5(2), pp. 154-69.

Schroeder, J. E., 2005a. *Visual consumption*. Routledge

Schroeder, J. E., 2005b. The artist and the brand. *European Journal of Marketing*, 39(11), pp. 1291-305.

Schroeder, J. E. and Salzer-Morling, M. (eds), 2006. *Brand culture*. New York: Routledge.

Schroeder, J. E., 2007. *Brand culture*. In: G. Ritzer, ed. Encyclopedia of sociology 1. Oxford: Blackwell, pp 351-53.

Schroeder, J.E., 2009. The cultural codes of branding. *Marketing theory*, 9, pp. 123-26.

Schroeder, J.E., 2010. *Style and strategy: snapshot aesthetics in brand culture*. In: C. McLean, P., Quattrone, F-R. Puyou, and N. Thrift, eds. Imagining business. London: Routledge.

Schumpeter, J.A., 1909. On the concept of social value. *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 23 (2), February, pp. 213-32.

Schuiling, I. and Kapferer, J.N., 2004. Real differences between local and international brands: strategic implications for international marketers. *Journal of International Marketing*, 12(4), pp. 97-112.

Schmitt, B., and Simonson, A., 1997. *Marketing aesthetics: the strategic management of brands, identity and image.* New York: The Free Press

Scott, L., 1994. Images in advertising: the need for a theory of visual rhetoric. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 2, pp. 252-73.

Segal, R. 2004. A. *myth: a very short introduction*. Oxford: Oxford UP.

Shanddaramon, 2009. *Paganism: a religion for the 21st century.* Astor Press.

Shanghai Tang.com, 2009. *Catalog.* Available at http://www.shanghaitang.com/pdf/AW09%20Catalogue%20PDF%20-%20FINAL.pdf

Shanghai Tang.com, 2010a. *Store locations*. Available at http://www.shanghaitang.com/find-a-shanghai-tang-store

Shanghai Tang.com, 2010b. *Mandarin collar society.* Available at http://www.shanghaitang.com/mcs

Shanghai Tang.com, 2010c. *Shanghai Tang cafe.* Available at http://www.shanghaitang.com/shanghai-tang-dining-destination

Shanghai Tang.com, 2010d. *About us.* Available at http://www.shanghaitang.com/shanghaitang-modern-chinese-chic-ambassador

Sherry, J.1998. *The soul of the company store: Nike town Chicago and the emplaced brandscape*. In J.F. Sherry, ed. Servicescapes: the concept of place in contemporary markets. Chicago: NTC Books, pp. 109-46.

Shiva, N., 2005. An exploration of the brand identity-brand image linkage: a communications perspective. *The Journal of Brand Management*, 12(4), April, pp. 264-78.

Simmel, G., 1904/1971. *Fashion.* In: D. Levine and G. Simmel, ed. Individuality and social forms. Chicago: Chicago University Press, pp. 294-323.

Skelton, T and Valentine, G.(eds),1997. *Cool places: geographies of youth culture.* London: Routledge.

Solomon, M., Bamossy, G., Askegaard, S. and Hogg, M., 2006. *Consumer behaviour: A European perspective*. 3rd edition. Financial Times/ Prentice Hall.

Spencer, R., 2008. Beijing Olympics: Chinese tanks watch over media center. *Telegraph.co.uk.* Available at *http://www.telegraph.co.uk/sport/othersports/olympics/2546537/Beijing-Olympics-Chinese-tanks-watch-over-media-centre.html*

Spindler, G., Spindler, L., Trueba, H., and Williams, M., 1990. *The American cultural dialogue and its transmission*. New York: Falmer.

Spring, J., 2006. *The intersection of cultures: multicultural education in the United States and the global economy*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Steenkamp, J-B E.M., Batra, R. and Alden, D., 2003. How perceived brand globalness creates brand value. *Journal of International Business Studies*,
34 (1), pp 53–65.

Stelter, B., 2008. Networks fight shorter Olympic leash. *The New York Times.* July 21. Available at http://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/21/sports/olympics/21nbc.html?pagewanted=2

Stern, B.B., 1992. Historical and personal nostalgia in advertising text: the Fin de siecle effect. *Journal of Advertising*, 21(4), pp. 11-32.

Strizhakova, Y., Coulter, R. and Price, L., 2008a. Branded products as a passport to global citizenship: perspectives from developed and developing countries. *Journal of International Marketing,* 16(4), pp. 59-87.

Tai, Susan H. C. (1997), "Advertising in Asia: Localize or Regionalize?" International Journal of Advertising, 16 (1), 48-61.

Tang, Y., 2005. I never said that Haier and Lenovo are not *brands*. *People's Daily Washington Bureau.* Available at http://english1.people.com.cn/200502/27/eng20050227_174878.html

Temporal, P., 2001. *Branding in Asia: the creation, development and management of Asian brands for the global market*. Singapore: John Wiley & Sons (Asia).

Temporal, P., 2006. *Asia's star brands*. Wiley.

Tischler, L., 2006. The Gucci Killers. Fast Company, 102, pp1-4. Available athttp://www.fastcompany.com/magazine/102/shanghai.html?page=0%2C3

Thompson, C.J., Locander, W.B. and Pollio, H.R., 1989. Putting consumer experience back into consumer research: the philosophy and method of existential phenomenology. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 16(September), pp. 133-47.

Thompson, C.J., Pollio, H.R. and Locander, W.B., 1994. The spoken and the unspoken: a hermeneutic approach to understanding the cultural viewpoints that underlie consumers' expressed meanings. *Journal of Consumer Research,* 21(December), pp. 432-52.

Thompson, C.J. and Haytko, D.L., 1997. Speaking of fashion: consumers' uses of fashion discourses and the appropriation of countervailing cultural meanings. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 24(June), pp. 15-42.

Thompson, C.J. and Arsel, Z., 2004. The Starbucks brandscape and consumers’ (Anti-corporate) experiences of glocalization. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 31(3), pp. 631-42.

Thompson, C.J., Rindfleisch, A. and Arsel, Z., 2006. Emotional branding and the strategic value of the doppelgänger brand image. *Journal of Marketing*, 70(1), pp. 50-64.

Thompson, J.B., 1995. *The media and modernity: a social theory of the media.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Thompson, L.G., 1996. *Chinese religion*. 5th edition. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Thompson, Craig J. (2004), “Marketplace Mythology and Discourses of Power,” *Journal of Consumer Research*, 31 (June), 162–80.

Thompson, Craig and Kelly Tian (2008), “Reconstructing the South: How Commercial Myths Compete for Identity Value through the Ideological Shaping of Popular Memories and Countermemories,” *Journal of Consumer Research*, 34 (5), 595–613.

Thrasher, A.R., 1989. Chinese music theory. *Asian music*, 20(2), Spring - Summer, pp. 67-106.

Tomlinson, J., 2001. *Cultural imperialism: a critical introduction*, Continuum International Publishing Group.

Tran, Y., 2008. *Fashion in the Danish experience economy: challenge for growth*. DK: Narayana press.

Tse, D. K., Belk, R. W. and Zhou, N., 1989. Becoming a consumer society: a longitudinal and cross-cultural content of analysis of print Ads from Hong Kong, the People’s Republic of China, and Taiwan. *Journal of Consumer Research,* 15(September), pp. 457-72.

Tu, Y., 2008. Beijing Olympic Opening demonstrates high-tech Olympics. *CRI,* August 13, available at http://english.cri.cn/4026/2008/08/13/1881s393182.htm[Accessed 12 October, 2008]

Tungate, M., 2008. *Fashion brands: branding style from Armani to Zara*. 2nd edition. Kogan Page.

Udehn, L., 2001. *Methodological individualism: background, history and meaning*. New York: Routledge.

Usunier, J., 2000. *Marketing across cultures*. 3rd edition. London: Pearson Education.

Veblen, T., 1899/1994. *The theory of leisure class*. New York: Dover Publications

Vierkant, P., 2007; *Imagined communities - What makes a readership share a certain idea of newspapers*,GRIN Verlag

Voloshinov, V. N., 1973. *Marxism and the philosophy of language*. Translated by L. Matejka and I.R. Titunik. New York: Seminar Press.

Wan, L., 2001. *Zhongguo mingpai zhanlue* (Strategies of thirty-five well-known Chinese brands). Beijing: Chinese Commerce Publishing House.

Weng, X., 2002. *Branding strategy in China*. Hangzhou: Zhejiang People's Publishing House.

Wang, J., 1997. From four hundred million to more than one billion consumers: a brief history of the foreign advertising industry in China. *International Journal of Advertising*, 16 (4), pp 241-60.

Wang, J., 2000. *Foreign advertising in China: becoming global, becoming local*. Ames: Iowa State University Press.

Wang, J., 2008. *Brand new China.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Wang, Y., 2001. *A paradise last: the imperial garden Yuanming Yuan*. University of Hawaii Press.

Waters, M., 1995. *Globalization.* London: Routledge.

Webster, R., 2008. *Flower and tree magic: discover the natural enchantment around you*. Llewellyn Publications.

Whitelock, J. and Fastoso, F., 2007. Understanding international branding: defining the domain and reviewing the literature. *International Marketing Review,* 24(3), pp. 252-70.

Whitfield,S., 2004. *The Silk Road: trade, travel, war and faith*. Serindia Publications Inc.

Wiebe, E., Durepos, G. and Mills, A.J., 2010. *Encyclopaedia of case study research*. Sage Publications.

Wilk, R., 1995. *Learning to be local in Belize: global systems of common difference*. In: D. Miller, ed. Worlds apart: modernity through the prism of the local. London: Routledge, pp. 110-33.

Williams, R. H., 1982. *Dream worlds, mass consumption in late nineteenth century. France*, Berkeley: University of California Press

Williams, R., 1994. *Selections from 'Marxism and literature*. In N. Dirk *et a*l., ed. Culture/power/history. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, pp. 585-608.

Wilson, E., 2005. Fashion and modernity. In: C. Evans and C. Breward, eds. Fashion and modernity. Berg Publishers, pp. 9-17.

Winram, S ., 1984, The opportunity for world brands, *International Journal of Advertising,* 3 (7), pp. 17–26.

Witkowski, T. H., 1989. Colonial consumers in revolt: buyer values and behavior during the Nonimportation movement, 1764-1776. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 16(September), pp. 216-26.

Wu X., 2001. *Da baiju* (Big failures), Hangzhou: Zhejiang People's Publishing House.

Wyatt, F. 1964 The Reconstruction of the Individual and of the Collective Past. *The Study of Lives.* New York: Atherton, pp. 304-20.

Xie, D.F., 2009. *Beijing Games will further boost China's opening-up drive: Belgian scholar.* Available at http://big5.cri.cn/gate/big5/english.cri.cn/6066/2008/08/21/1821s397196.htm

[Accessed 20 February, 2010]

Xing, Z.Y. and Xin, W.J., 1998. *Republic of China yearbook*. Routledge; 1 edition

Xu, G. G. 2007. *Sinascape: contemporary Chinese cinema.* Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

Xu, J., 1999. Body, discourse, and the cultural politics of contemporary Chinese Qigong. *The Journal of Asian Studies,* 58(4), pp. 961-91

Yahuda, M. 2000. *The Changing faces of Chinese nationalism*. In: M. Leifer, ed. Asian Nationalism. Routledge, pp. 21-37.

Yang, B., 1987. *Qingdai Guandong Gongpin: Tributes from Guangdong to the Qing court.* Hong Kong: Art Museum, City University of Hong Kong.

Yang, M., 2002. *Chenggong yingxiao guoji zhiming pinpai zai Zhongguo* (Successfully marketing well-known international brands in China). Shanghai: East China University of Science and Technology Press.

Ye, M., 2003. *The power of ideas*, Beijing: China Machine Press.

Yin, J.,1999. International advertising strategies in China: a worldwide survey of foreign advertisers. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 39 (6), pp 25-35.

Yin, R.K., 1994. *Case study research: Design and methods.* Rev. Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications

Yip, G.S., 1995. *Total global strategy: managing for world-wide competitive advantage.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Zhang, B., 2001. *Branding no more?* Guangzhou: Guangdong Economy Publishing House.

Zhang, S. and Schmitt, B. H., 2001. Creating local brands in multilingual international markets. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 38 (3), pp 313-25.

Zhang, S. and Schmitt, B. H., 2002. Activating Sound and Meaning in B rand Name Evaluations: The Role of Language Proficiency In bi-lingual’s Differential Processing', Working paper, UCLA Marketing Studies Center.

Zhang, Y., 2003. *Variability conjuncture.* Beijing: China Workers' Publishing House.

Zhao, X. and Belk, R.W., 2008. Politicizing consumer culture: advertising’s appropriation of political ideology in China’s social transition. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 35(2), pp. 231-44.

Zhou, N. and Belk, R.W., 2004. Chinese consumer readings of global and local advertising appeals. *Journal of Advertising,* 22(3), fall, pp. 63-76

Zhou, L. and Hui, M., 2003. Symbolic value of foreign products in the People's

Republic of China. *Journal of International Marketing*, 11 (2), pp 36-48.

Zhu, Y., 2002. Chinese cinema’s economic reform from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s. *Journal of Communication*, 52(4), pp. 905-21.

Zuo, X., 1999. *Old trademarks (English Translation).* Shanghai:Shanghai Pictorial House.

Zwick, D., Bonsu, S. and Darmody, A., 2008. Putting consumers to work’s co-creation’ and new marketing govern-mentality. *Journal of Consumer Culture,* 8(2), pp. 163-96.

Table 1.1. Participant descriptions of the problems of Chinese brand globalisation----the first stage of my study

Name	Gender/age	Background description	Interview location/date
Mr Chen	Male/30	Chinese/the general manager of a Chinese sanitary ware company in Shanghai, China	Birmingham/03/2008
Mr Li	Male/38	Chinese/the manager of a Chinese sanitary ware company in Changzhou, China	Birmingham/03/2008
Jason	Male/41	Chinese/the manager of a well-known Chinese sanitary ware company in Guangzhou, China	Birmingham/03/2008/ Wenzhou/04/2010(re-interview)
Niki	Male/35	Italian/the sales manager at a well-known Italian sanitary ware corporation	Birmingham/ 03/2008
Mr Wu	Male/45	Chinese/the CEO of a famous Chinese brand in the garment industry	Wenzhou/12/2007/ 04/2010(re-interview)
Mr Peng,	Male/37	Chinese/the CEO of a famous Chinese brand in garment industry	Wenzhou/12/2007/ 04/2010(re-interview)
Mr Liu	Male/45	Chinese/the vice-CEO of a famous Chinese automobile corporation	Hangzhou/12/2008
Mrs Chen	Female/40	Chinese/the brand manager of a famous Chinese automobile corporation	Hangzhou/12/2008

Table 1.2. Websites observed to examine the problems of Chinese brand globalization

Website	Description
www.globrand.com	Join the Portal is the earliest and most professional media pertaining to brands and branding. It has brought together thousands of leading industry experts and opinion leaders from business, the marketing and management industry, and the chain sector, as well as entrepreneurs to discuss issues around brand or branding in China and abroad.
www.brandcn.com	Brandcn.com is the official website of Brand China Industrial Alliance, which is one of the most important Chinese brand communication platforms for experts, brand owners, academicians, and brand managers in China and abroad.
www.interbrand.com	Interbrand.com is the world's leading brand consultancy, specialising in brand services such as brand analytics, brand engagement, brand strategy, brand valuation, corporate identity, digital brand management, and pharmaceutical branding.

Table 2.1. Profiles of participants in the Jay Chou case study--the second stage of my study

Name	Gender/ age	Background description	Interview location/date
Miss Wu	Female/24	Chinese/a hospital doctor	Wenzhou (China)/12/2007/ Shanghai /04/2010 (re-interview)
Mr Wu, J.	Male/36	Chinese, a vice-GM in legal services	Shanghai/12/2007/ Beijing /03/2010 (re-interview)
Mathieu	Male/26	A long-term French resident in China/a student in language studies	Beijing/12/2007

Table 2.2. Statistics of Jay Chou concerts attended--the second stage of my study

Concert name	Place/time	Description of the concerts
Jay Chou's Global tour concert	Wenzhou/ July 2008	This concert lasted three hours. There were about 20,000 people in the audience.
Jay Chou's Fans concert	Shanghai/ December 2007	This concert lasted two hours. There were about 10,000 people in the audience.
Jay Chou's Fans concert	Hangzhou/December 2006	This concert lasted two and a half hours. There were about 12,000 people in the audience.
Jay Chou's Incomparable concert	Beijing/ July 2005	This concert lasted four hours. There were 80,000 people in the audience.

Table 2.3. Description of Jay Chou websites that were observed

Website name	Description
www.Jay-Chou net.com	An international fan forum in English and Chinese.
www.Jay Chou studio.com	Provides all of Chou's English-language/pinyin lyrics, the latest news, wallpapers, and profiles in English and Chinese.
www.Jay Chou Secret.com	A Chou fan site created in 2000 in English and Chinese.
www.jay2u.com.	A fan-created website promoting Chou's music and movies, creating a positive image of his music and identity, and unifying global fans.
www.Jaycn.com	This is the biggest Chou website. It was founded in 2001. It provides professional information about Chou, including news, profiles, pictures, music, and movies.

Table 3.1. Profiles of participants in the Beijing Olympics opening ceremony case study—the third stage of my study

Name	Gender /age	Background description	Interview location/ date
Mr Sun	Male/26	Chinese/used to be a marketing executive in a top global automobile corporation in China. He had been living in the UK for a year at the time of the interview.	Beijing/08/2008
Frank	Male/25	Chinese/marketing executive in a top Chinese bank corporation. He had been living in the UK for six years at the time of the interview.	Shenzhen/08/2008
Mr Wu, J-H.	Male/65	Taiwanese/used to work at a Taiwanese entertainment company. Retired.	Beijing/08/2008 by phone
Ms. Xie	Female/24	Chinese/employed as a marketing executive in a top Chinese steel corporation. He had been in the UK for a year at the time of the interview.	Shanghai/ 08/2008
Mr Wu, J.	Male/37	Chinese/Vice CEO in a Chinese law firm	Shanghai/ 08/2008 Beijing/03/2010
Mr Zhang	Male/31	Chinese/sales manager in a top Chinese global corporation	Jinan/08/2008
Joycee	Female/26	HK/used to be a marketing supervisor in a Hong Kong wholesale company. Resides in the UK.	UK/10/2008
Mrs Chen	Female/45	Chinese/brand manager of a famous Chinese automobile corporation	Hangzhou/ 12/2008
Mr Liu	Male/45	Chinese/vice-CEO of a famous Chinese automobile corporation	Hangzhou/ 12/2008
Miss Gao	Female/32	Chinese/store manager for a Chinese global luxury brand	Shanghai/12/2008/
Sally	Female/30	Chinese/store manager for a Chinese global luxury brand	Beijing/01/2009
Jason	Male/43	Chinese/manager at a famous Chinese sanitary corporation, China	Wenzhou/04/2010
Mr Wu.	Male/48	Chinese/CEO of famous Chinese brand in the garment industry	Wenzhou/04/2010
Mr Peng	Male/40	Chinese/CEO of famous Chinese brand in the garment industry	Wenzhou /04/2010

Table 3.2. Material pertaining to the 2008 Beijing Olympics gathered from official websites—the third stage of my study

Name	Gender	Background description	Interview source from
Wang Ning	Male	The executive deputy director of the opening and closing ceremonies of the Beijing Olympics	China Radio International/ beijing2008.cn
Cai Guoqiang	Male	Director of visual and special effects of the ceremonies for the Beijing Olympics and Paralympics	China Radio International/ beijing2008.cn
Zhang Yimou	Male	Director of the Beijing Olympics opening ceremony/Film director	China Radio International/ Financial Times/ Movie View/ beijing2008.cn
Mrs Liao	Female	American-Chinese/Director of the Washington DC based Laogai Research Foundation	The New York Times

Table 4.1. Profiles of managerial participants in the Shanghai Tang case study—the fourth stage of my study

Name	Gender/age	Background description	Interview location/source from
Miss Gao	Female/30+	Chinese/Store manager	Shangri-la Hotel/Shanghai
Mrs Zhao	Female/30+	Chinese/Store manager	Xin Tian Di/Shanghai
Eva	Female/25	Chinese/Sales associate	Jin Jiang Hotel/Shanghai
Tina	Female/27	Chinese/Sales associate	Beijing Yintai store/Beijing
Mia	Female/28	Chinese/Sales associate	Beijing Hyatt Hotel store/Beijing
Sally	Female/30	Chinese/Store manager	Ritz-Carlton Hotel store/ Beijing
Lucy Liu	Female/29	Chinese/Sales associate	Beijing International Airport store
Miss Liu	Female/26	Chinese/Sales associate	Hangzhou store/Zhejiang
Mr Li	Male/25+	Chinese/Sales associate	Hangzhou store/Zhejiang
Mrs Zhang	Female/30+	Chinese/Sales associate	Guangzhou store/Guangdong
Shan Ni	Female/about 25	Malaysian-British/ Sales associate	London store/UK
David Tsang	Male	Hong Kong/Founder	www.ShanghaiTang.com
Joanne Ooi	Female	American Chinese/Creative Director	Fast company
Raphael le Masne	Male	French, and has lived in Hong Kong since 1994/CEO	Fast company/ www.ShanghaiTang.com/ MediaTV

Table 4.2. Profiles of consumer participants in the Shanghai Tang case study

Name	Gender/age	Background description	Interview location
Susan	Female/29	Chinese/Dancer	Shanghai/12/2008
Mrs Wang	Female/30+	Chinese/Teacher	Beijing/01/2009
Miss Liu	Female/27	Chinese/Model	Beijing/01/2009
Mrs Li	Female/35	Chinese/Manufacturing boss	Hangzhou/01/2009
Mr Luo	Male/40+	Chinese/CEO	Beijing/01/2009
Miss Jiang	Female/27	Singaporean-Chinese/Lawyer	Shanghai/12/2008
Mr Gu	Male/31	Chinese/Manager	Shanghai/12/2008
Mrs Wang’s husband	Male/35+	Chinese/Manager	Beijing/01/2009
Mr Wu. J	Male/38	Chinese/Vice-GM	Beijing/01/2009
Kelly Huang	Female/40+	French-Chinese/Editor	Shanghai/12/2008
Mrs Guo	Female/30+	**Singaporean-Chinese/Lecturer**	UK/02/2009

Table 5.1. Consumer participant interpretations of Shanghai Tang

Names	Fashion	Historical Chinese culture	Themes and theories about their consumption
Susan	Conformist/follows international fashion trend	Enjoys Chinese-ness	Chinese-inflected international fashion for status/interpretation of Shanghai Tang's lexicon Shikumen buildings/ "Lu"/“double happiness” paper-cutout patterns endless knot on the bag, gold fish cups, spider-jade bag
Mrs Wang	Anti-Conformist	Enjoys Chinese-ness	Dialectic images/lexicon interpretation; Chinese cultural revolution worldwide - mandarin collar society Gold Yuan Bao; "double fish" cap sleeve QiPao, "Jiao zi" bag, "firecracker" silver resin earrings, coin cufflinks
Miss Liu	Conformist	Only enjoys strong Western brands	Fashion as a ladder to success; Chinese-ness as the mark of a bumpkin/too local
Mrs Li	Conformist	Only enjoys famous, fashionable brands	Ladder to success/ fashion as status/only loves "Big brand/(strong brand); high-end (Shang dang ci in Chinese)/presentable and valuable enough (Na de chu shou in Chinese)
Mr Luo	Anti-Conformist	Enjoys Chinese-ness	Chinese-inflected cosmopolitan identity/ Confucian businessman/loves mandarin collar and Mao suit Stylish taste with-Chinese-ness/Pretence and appearance (Shi shi de); new rich upstart (Bao Fa Hu); Shaanxi coal boss purchase Hummer Jeeps (Shaanxi meilao ban)
Miss Jiang	Anti-Conformist	Enjoys Chinese-ness	Chinese-inflected cosmopolitan identity Old Shanghai metropolitan life/metaphoric sexuality
Mr Gu	Conformist	Enjoys Chinese-ness	International fashion represents social status, but also loves Chinese-ness/References to Shanghai Bund movie
Mrs Wang’s husband	Anti-Conformist	Enjoys Chinese-ness	Distinctive Chinese identity/＊Red consumer/Enjoys consuming Mao-related goods
Mr Wu. J	Anti-Conformist; Anti-branding	Enjoys Chinese aesthetics: harmony and glamour	Function-seeker/well–defined consumption, Enjoys Mao-era featured goods Fashion and brand followers are like monkeys climbing a pole
Kelly Huang	Anti-Conformist	Enjoys Chinese-ness	Nostalgia/authenticity in bag with images of Old Shanghai
Mrs Guo	Slightly Conformist	Enjoys Westernized Chinese-ness	Sexuality with distinctive details/fashion as a status Symbol Menshao or Man Show - metaphoric sexiness
Note: ＊Red consumer refers to the people whose parents or relatives had either worked for the Mao administration or were highly influenced by Mao-age culture			

Table 5.2 Managerial participant interpretations of Shanghai Tang

Name	Fashion	Historical culture	Function	Special terms
Miss Gao	The cashmere turtle neck sweater is one of the top ten items in the brand's inventory	The turtle neck suggests Chinese Tradition	Strategically satisfies consumers for various occasions/ Westerners like bright colours	Suitable for various occasions, looks fashionable/the Chinese like black while the Westerners like red
Mrs Zhao	Shiny colours were the vogue in the winter of 2008	Loves Chinese-ness	Strategically satisfy consumers for various occasions	Yuan Bao, Chinese buttons and collar, golden fish
Tina	International fashion trend	High-quality; functional Chinese-ness	Strategically satisfies consumers for various occasions	Well-educated international elites show off their Chinese identity
Eva	International fashion trend	Loves Chinese-ness	Nostalgia	
Mia	International fashion trend	Loves Chinese-ness	Being cultured/ fashionable	
Sally	International fashion trend	Loves Chinese-ness	Mandarin collar society	Chinese cultural revolution worldwide
Miss Liu	International fashion trend	Loves Chinese-ness	Mandarin collar society	
Mr Lin	International fashion trend	Loves Chinese-ness	Mandarin collar society	
Shan Ni	International fashion trend	Loves Chinese-ness	Maintaining original culture	
Raphael le Masne	Fashion creator	Loves Chinese-ness A resident of 16 years in Hong Kong	Employs top creative staff/ locates Shanghai Tang among top-end luxury brands	(Fast company 2006)/ TVmeida/ Promotes modern Chinese lifestyle/ China will be a luxury powerhouse
David Tsang	Fashion creator	Loves Chinese-ness	Promotes Chinese-ness using top creative staff- top-end luxury brand	(Fast company 2006)
Joanne Ooi	Fashion creator	Loves Chinese-ness	Chinese-ness as DNA of Shanghai Tang/	(Chua and Eccles, 2009)

Table 5.3. Signs used in Shanghai Tang products and their meanings

Signs in Shanghai Tang	The meanings of these signs
"Double Fish" cap sleeve Qi Pao	A pair of fish, typically carp, symbolises love, harmony and abundance. In addition, the symbol evokes fertility because carp eggs are abundant.
"Dumplings or Jiao Zi" bag	Dumplings are served at midnight on New Year's Eve in certain parts of China. They symbolise good fortune because they take the shape of ancient gold ingots - the Jin Yuan Bao. Sometimes dumplings contain an actual coin. Whoever gets this dumpling has extra good luck.
The "firecracker" silver resin earrings	The "firecracker" symbolises a legend. Nian, a ferocious, mythical creature, used to terrorise ordinary people every New Year, until one day people realised that Nian was afraid of noise, light, and the colour red. Bamboo placed in the fire pops and cracks loudly, scaring away the beast. It also explains why firecrackers are always red.
Coin cufflinks	Qian - the circular shape represents heaven, while the square centre represents the earth. Necklaces of coins strung together on red thread - lian qian - represent a succession of wealth, bringing luck to the wearer and protection from evil spirits. In a rebus, an image of a coin can mean "before one’s eyes" because the hole in the centre represents an eye. For example, a magpie shown with a coin would mean happiness (represented by the magpie) before one's eyes (represented by the coin)
Red "star" goods	Chinese Red Army/Mao-age culture
“Lu” handle or “Lu” metal enamel bangle	In mandarin, the character for six, "liu 六", sounds like lu 禄, the word for "prosperity". Thus, “liu 六” often represents the God of Prosperity in rebuses (visual word puns)
"double happiness" paper-cut out patterns	Double happiness originated in the legend of a scholar who attained the dual honour of securing the highest score in the imperial examination and the hand of a maiden in marriage on the same day; the two happy events are represented by two "xi" (happiness) characters. Since then, double happiness is inextricably associated with matrimony. Traditionally, the bridal chamber is decorated with large, red double happiness characters.
The "endless knot" on bag	One of the "eight auspicious signs" of Buddhism, the endless knot symbolises the eight-fold paths of the religion. Also known as the "mystic dragon", it represents eternity and unity.
Gold fish cups	Gold fish, like the hue of its namesake fish, symbolise an abundance of gold.
Spider-jade bag	Spider, Xi in Chinese, is identical in sound to the word happiness, "Xi", spiders signify joy. The word spider, (xi zi), inspired the phrase "xi cong tian jiang" or "happiness dropping from the sky", the "jade" symbolises purity, beauty, nobility, perfection, constancy, power, and immortality in Chinese culture.

Table 5.4. Brand literacy levels pertaining to Shanghai Tang gained from accounts by of Chinese consumer participants

Three levels of brand literacy:

1. Low level brand literacy refers to the consumer who may buy and consume brands but has little or no knowledge of the symbolic meanings brands have acquired in culture". I call these consumers brand illiterate.

2. Medium level brand literacy refers to the consumer who has the "ability to read and understand the cultural meanings and strategies underlying brands". I call these consumers brand knowers.

3. High level brand literacy refers to the consumer who has the "ability to fully participate in the culture of brands. The consumer does not just follow the cultural meanings, but is able to reformulate and play with them". I call these consumers brand professionals. (Bengtsson and Fırat, 2006; p378)

Notes: "defining why they are grouped due to their interpretation of fashion and brand meanings"

Brand illiterate	Miss Liu--- fashion as a ladder to success, Chinese-ness is too local Mrs Li--- fashion as a ladder to success/fashion as social status/exclusively favours “Big brands” (strong brands)
Brand knower	Susan--- interpretation of signs used by Shanghai Tang Mrs Wang--- interpretation of signs pertaining to a worldwide Chinese cultural revolution Miss Jiang--- Chinese-inflected cosmopolitan identity/Old Shanghai metropolitan life/metaphoric sexuality Kelly Huang--- Nostalgia/authenticity Mr Gu-- References to Shanghai Bund movie
Brand professional	Mrs Wang’s husband---red consumer/ distinctive Chinese-ness Mr Luo--red consumer/Chinese-inflected cosmopolitan identity /Confucian businessman/fashion as appearance (Shi Shi De) Mr Wu, J--- red consumer/Fashion and brands followers like monkeys following the pole/ Mrs Guo---Enjoys Westernised Chinese-ness/

Figure 1: Nun-Chuks

The grill shop's hazy smoke flavor
Next-door is a martial arts shop
Inside the shop, granny's
Tea ceremony
Has three sections

The shop owner who teaches Chinese boxing

Practices the 'Iron Palm
Plays with the Tang family spear
Firm kung-fu foundation master
Will also be gold-bell iron overall

Their son, I am used to
From my childhood I was thoroughly imbued with
what I frequently hear and see
Any sword, spear, rod or stick
I can master with perfection
What weapon do I like the most?
The Nun-chuks, gentle yet firm

I want to go to Henan Sung Mountain
To learn Shao-lin and Wu Tang
(Doing what Doing what)
Hakka breathing frees heart
(Doing what Doing what)
The 'qi' flows to the public region and opens palm of hand
(Doing what Doing what)
Run a thousand miles in a day with sandbags tied to my ankles
Running on leaves and walking on walls is nothing unusual
Coming and going One step forward
A note, left fist out right fist out
One word to provoke, my people will be in danger

A cigarette that I do not smoke
Untouched for many years
It is constantly by my side

I open the doors to the marshal post
(Doing what Doing what)
East Asia sick man's shop sign
(Doing what Doing what)
Has already been kicked out of the way by me
(Quickly use Nun-Chuks 'He he ha hei'
Quickly use Nun-Chuks 'He he ha hei')

A martial artist should keep in mind,
The virtuous one has no enemies

It is whom who is practicing Tai'chi,
Waves rumble through the ocean
If I had the ability to levitate,
Running on leaves and walking on walls
I would be frank and upright for people,
A body full of righteousness
I use a pocket-knife for defense,
A beautiful back kick

Figure 2: Chrysanthemums Terrace
Your tears... glisten, laced with pain
The crescent moon hangs in the past... Pale with sickness
Cool night, too long... turns to frost
Who is on the tower... frozen in despair?

The rain drums lightly... on a crimson pane
My destiny is written on paper... fluttering in the wind
Distant dreams... rise like incense
Melting into night is... your image
Chrysanthemums fall... weeping to the ground
Traces of your smile on a yellowing scroll...
Your heart now empty,
My thoughts quietly rest...

The north wind blows. Not yet dawn...
Your shadow, clear and close
Only companion of my soul...
on the lake, a couple mirrored

Blossoms of evening air... beauty undimmed...
Scatter everywhere, A fate hard to swallow
Sadness, do not cross the river... your autumn heart will sink
Drowning in longing... you will not reach the other shore

Whose hills and rivers... echo with the clamour of hooves?
My armour is shredded... by the dividing hour
The sky slowly brightens. Your sighs, silk soft...
Weave a night of sorrow. So fragile, so spare

Figure 7. The first image shows the "*fou*" in the Beijing Olympics opening ceremony; the second image shows the *ding* from Zhang Yimou’s movie *Hero*

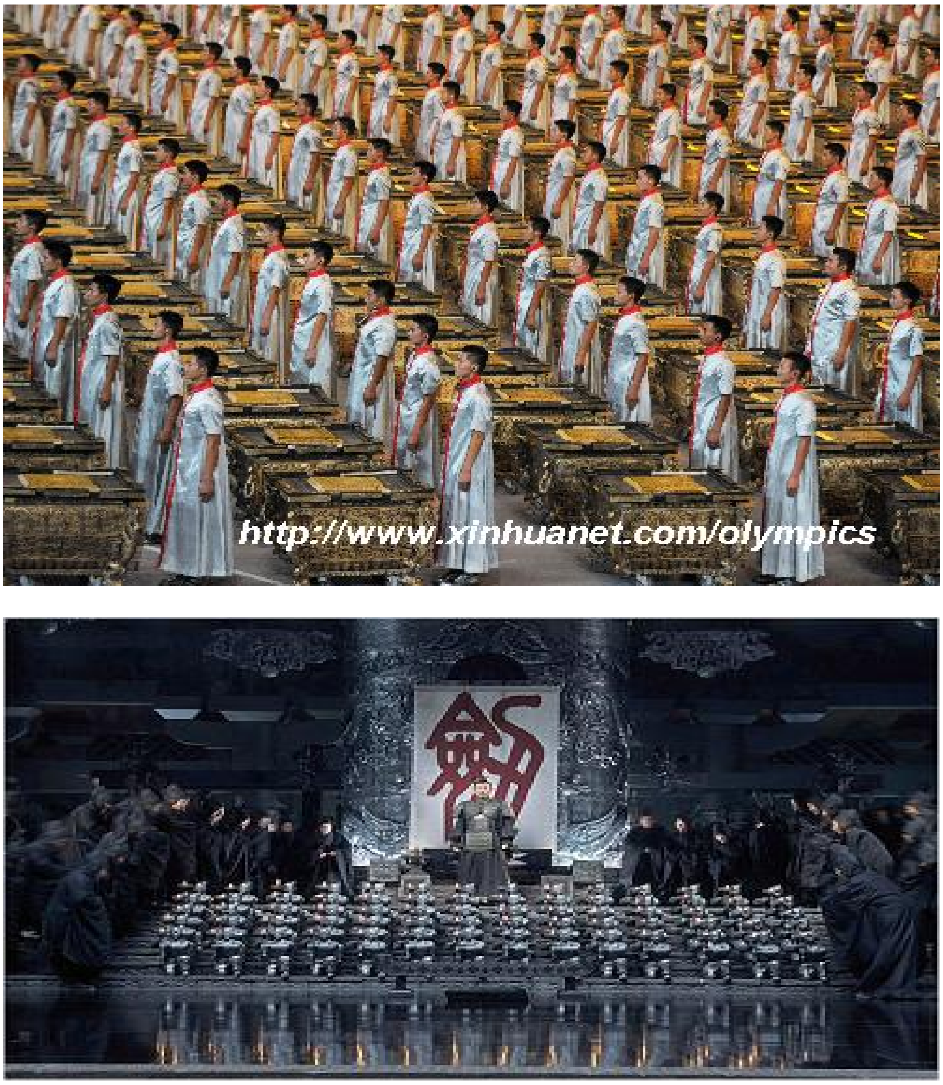

http://www.xinhuanet.com/olympics

Figure 8. The left image shows the Beijing Olympics opening ceremony; the right image shows a still from Zhang Yimou's movie *House of Flying Daggers*