Interpreting Another Culture:

An Ethnographic Study of How Western-educated Women Make Sense of Chinese Culture in Shanghai

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements

for the PhD

Department of English Studies

University of Strathclyde

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July 2007

PAGE NUMBERING AS ORIGINAL

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis is concerned with ways of making sense of another culture and is based on ethnographic fieldwork with a small group of elite Western-educated women, mostly Westerners, in Shanghai in 2005. The post-colonial theory of Edward Said and others formed the theoretical foundation and the research had two aims:

1) to discover whether Said's theory might usefully inform an ethnographic study
2) to draw an ethnographic picture of the group of women in collaboration with them.

Data was collected through interviews and photographs provided by the participants with written comments and it was found that the women did use some of the linguistic strategies employed by the Orientalist scholars criticised by Said but that they also used many others as well. Their ethnocentric attitudes were on the whole quite different from those of the Orientalists. Whereas, according to Said, the Orientalists misrepresented and denied the reality of the Orient, the participants, especially as they used narratives, examples and comparisons, provided many details of their life in Shanghai and of their attempts to interpret Chinese culture as they searched for the `real' China.

My argument is that the process of making sense of another culture is long and difficult but that most important of all is one's intention and attitude. An awareness of the power of the West is necessary, especially on the part of Westerners who are in contact with the East. The whole thesis is written from the point of view of a Westerner who has lived in Shanghai for more than forty-two years, including semi-colonial times in the 1930s and 1940s and from 1984 up to the present.

For the Chinese Culture Study Group of Shanghai

and

for George Wang

who has lived all his 80 years in China

with two (consecutive) British wives

Acknowledgements

Many people have helped me during the course of this research project and I should like to acknowledge them here:

Martin Montgomery, my Supervisor at the University of Strathclyde, for his wise guidance and immense patience

The Chinese Culture Study Group of Shanghai in 2005, the participants in this research, and especially the `gatekeeper', the Chair, and `Lois', who read and commented on two long chapters

Steve Kulich, my teacher and colleague at Shanghai International Studies University, for great help with advice and materials, especially at the beginning of the research

James Farrer, of Sophia University in Tokyo, for helpful comments near the beginning of the project

Leah Stickley, for reading several chapters and giving much helpful academic advice

The following for helpful conversations:

Barbara Koscia
Cathy Wang Haiping
Chiu Lai Har
Chris Hampton
Jill Griffiths
Julie Lim
Law Man Wah
Robyn Collins
Stine Ronquist
Wang Huang

For technical assistance:

Leah Stickley
Norman Hodges
Pan Zhigang

For help with materials:

Lee Ching Chee
Sarah Pink

George Wang, for daily encouragement and support

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Oh, East is East, and West is West, and
Never the twain shall meet,
Till Earth and Sky stand presently at
God's great Judgment Seat;
But there is neither East nor West, Border,
Nor Breed, nor Birth,
When two strong men stand face to face,
Though they come from the ends of earth!

The Ballad of East and West
Rudyard Kipling 1865 - 1936

He loves countries and leaves them. (Is the impossible remote?) He loves to migrate towards everything. Travelling freely between cultures, there is room for all who seek the essence of man.

A margin moves forward and a centre retreats. The East is not completely the East, nor the West, the West. Identity is multifaceted.

It is neither a citadel nor is it absolute.

Counterpoint
Homage to Edward Said 1935 - 2003
Mahmoud Darwich
Le Monde diplomatique January 2005, p. 15

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Statement of focus

Having lived in Shanghai for a total of more than 42 years, the issue of how we make sense of another culture has been central to my life. In particular, I am interested in how Westerners construct and represent China.

From my own experience, I know that attitudes are changing. It seems that the ways in which most Westerners view China in the early 21st century are different from the views expressed in the 1930s and even in the 1980s. I wanted to investigate the present ways and therefore the central research issue of this dissertation is whether there are habitual ways of making sense of another culture. Since this is too large a question, the focus has been narrowed to the ways in which Westerners in China, specifically in Shanghai, make sense of Chinese culture.

Believing that the context of such a study is important, a phenomenological approach was chosen and I decided to carry out an ethnographic case study of a small group of Western-educated women in Shanghai in 2005. Most of them were Westerners but two were of ethnic Asian origin, one South Asian and one East Asian. Both were educated in the West, however, and their social status is the same as that of the Caucasians in this study. Some differences between these two and the other participants are noted in the findings.

All except one of the participants were *taitais*, the exception being a Western Sinologist. The Chinese word *taitai* here means the wife of a taipan, a wealthy Western businessman, and in this study the women were all wives of international businessmen or diplomats. In Appendix 5 there are dictionary definitions of the word *taitai* and in Chapter 5 will be found the participants' own use of the term as a simplified way of referring to themselves.

Having learned that auto-ethnography is a valid tool, I began with self-observation, developing on this basis and on the reading of the literature a set of questions to ask

the women. One question was about language learning and others were based on mundane cultural practices connected with food and medicine. I hoped that by probing more deeply into such topics I could find the answer to the central issue as to the ways in which Westerners make sense of Chinese culture, or at least the culture of Chinese people in Shanghai. These questions were asked in interviews carried out in four Focus Groups and also separately with three individuals. Besides interviews, another tool suggested in the literature was the use of photographs taken by the participants in the research. There are, therefore, two types of data in this study: the transcripts of the interviews and photographs taken by the women along with their written comments. Additional data were provided by one of the participants who read the first versions of Chapters 5 and 6.

The reading of post-colonial theorist Edward Said – and his critics – and others, including Ien Ang, an ethnic Chinese scholar, formed the theoretical foundation of this study. After some consideration, it seemed to me that three themes emerged from the literature and this thesis is therefore structured around these themes. The themes are based on the post-colonial concept of `the Other', the first two consisting of linguistic strategies employed by those who speak of another culture:

1) Generalisation – the use of such phrases as `the Chinese are X' or `they always do Y'
2) The Use of `We'/`They' and `East'/`West'

The third theme identified was that of attitudes, in particular ethnocentric attitudes. I was interested to find out whether the attitudes of, for example, the Orientalist scholars criticised by Edward Said could still be found in Shanghai in 2005.

In analysing the findings, I did not intend to prove or verify any existing theories or hypotheses. Instead, my aim was to answer the question stated in the research issue above, whether there are habitual ways of making sense of another culture, and to generate a picture of the complexity of the issues surrounding it.

Chapter 1 gives the rationale for the study, my autobiography, and a description of the context, Shanghai in 2005. Chapter 2 comprises the Literature Review. Chapter 3

discusses my reading about the methodology and describes the actual process of the research. In Chapter 4 I describe the Chinese Culture Study Group, the group of women of which I have been a member and an observer-participant for the past few years. The results of the interviews are presented in Chapter 5 and those from the participants' photographs and written comments in Chapter 6. Chapter 7, consisting of a discussion of the results and of the impact and importance of the study, forms the conclusion.

1.2 Rationale - Autobiography

Why have I, in my seventies, undertaken this study and why is it autobiographical? The answer to the first part of the question is easy: it is because I care deeply about the issues discussed. As to why it is autobiographical, it would seem that autobiography has an important role to play in ethnography since the subjectivity of the researcher is now seen to be a central part of the investigation in the social sciences. Therefore, in a sense, the more that is known about the researcher, the better.

The use of autobiography is not a claim to be an authority on the subject under discussion or of authenticity over and against the subjectivity of the participants in the research but an attempt to allow the readers to understand where the researcher is `coming from'. Ang (2001: 23) quotes Stuart Hall (1992: 277) who said: `Autobiography is usually thought of as seizing the authority of authenticity. But in order not to be authoritative, I've got to speak autobiographically'. Ang herself says that

> what is at stake in autobiographical discourse is not a question of the subject's authentic `me', but one of the subject's location in a world through an active interpretation of experiences that one calls one's own in particular, `worldly' contexts, that is to say, a reflexive positioning of oneself in history and culture. (2001: 23-24)

Before I attempt an active interpretation of my own experiences chronologically, I should like first to try to answer the questions raised in the research issue about habitual Western ways of constructing China. Are there habitual ways? If so, what are they? That is what this research project will attempt to investigate but, as an

introduction, I will list some below, drawing on my own experiences and on my reading.

In 1984, when George Wang in Shanghai wrote to me in Fife to ask me to marry him, he sent me some photographs. When my Scottish friends saw them, they exclaimed, 'But he's a hunk of a man!' They had evidently expected him to be a small, thin man – perhaps wearing a conical hat. When George and I were in Cambridge in 1985 we saw on the side of a bus an advertisement for tours to China. George was amazed to see that the images were a panda and a farmer wearing a pointed hat and carrying a shoulder pole with two baskets.

When George went to Scotland for the first time with me in 1985 my Scottish friends were surprised by his personality. `But he's humorous!' they said. Perhaps they had only met stiff Chinese officials before that.

These two examples show, I believe, that many Westerners who have not had the opportunity to meet ordinary Chinese people personally have the wrong image of Chinese people in general. Where do their images come from? Books, films, TV series – or the side of a bus?

In August, 2005, on a Chinese Central Television (CCTV) programme, three Western Sinologists from Oxford, Durham and Lund, Sweden, were discussing the images of China in the West now. They thought that the ubiquitous Chinese restaurants in the cities and in most small towns, museums displaying Chinese art and artifacts, and contemporary Chinese goods, `Made in China', were the most potent images.

Another way of looking, or not looking, at China is more serious. I will provide three examples:

1) A few years ago, when George asked a Western Consul in Shanghai what the people in his country knew about China, his answer was brief and to the point: `The Cultural Revolution and Communism.'

2) Wellesley College, the famous liberal arts college for women which I attended in the USA, issues a directory of its alumnae every four years. In 2000 I looked in vain

for myself in the Geographical listings. Finally, I found it: M. Elizabeth Barr, Shanghai, Taiwan. (By 2004 they had a section for China.)

3) Iris Chang, in her searing book, The Rape of Nanking, (1997) gives one chapter the heading `The Forgotten Holocaust: A Second Rape'. In discussing the ignorance of Americans about World War II, she says: `A Princeton-educated lawyer told me sheepishly that she was not even aware that China and Japan had been at war; her knowledge of the Pacific conflict of World War II had been limited to Pearl Harbor and Hiroshima'. (Chang, 1997: 200)

These are examples of the shallowness of the knowledge of many Westerners about China. I say this not with any intention to point the finger or to cast blame. It is just a matter of fact. I myself know very little about China though I have been living here for more than 42 years, not to mention being very ignorant about the continents of Africa and Latin America.

A third way of looking at China has even more serious repercussions. It is what I would call a slanted or biased or prejudiced way of expressing one's opinions about a country. Here are but two examples of the many I could quote, a letter printed in an influential newspaper and a remark from an influential cardinal, enough to influence the ways of looking at China of vast numbers of people:

1) A letter to the Guardian Weekly (Oct. 7-13,2005, Vol. 173/No.16, p.14) states, without any substantiating evidence: `Behind the flashy shops on the Bund, China is a sweatshop economy run – brutally – for the benefit of a few hundred bureaucrat families and their cronies.'

2) On May 13, 2006, in the New York Times online, Jim Yardley and Keith Bradsher wrote a long article entitled `A Bitter Game: Beijing Battles with Vatican'. In the course of it they described the longtime bishop of Hong Kong, Joseph Zen Ze-kiun, who, when chosen as a cardinal in February, 2006, said that China was not a `normal' country and needed to respect religious freedom.

More helpful, I think, is a conversation published in the June 2006 issue of the National Geographic. Todd Carrel, the ABC News bureau chief in China in 1992 who had an unhappy experience in China at that time, interviews Peter Hessler, author

of River Town, an account of his experiences while teaching for two years with the Peace Corps in an inland town on the *Chang Jiang* (Yangtze River):

> Carrel: I'm wondering about the triumphs, the agony, or the problems these people [rural migrants working in cities] face. They pluck themselves out of the countryside, go so far to a new city, then try to establish themselves. And figure out a future. What are they really going through?
> Hessler: My former student Emily was a young woman – I believe 21 – when she went to Shenzhen....Everything she went through....Then she did find a job. She was in a factory that was basically set up illegally....She had a huge number of issues to deal with....Sometimes there's not all that much energy to put into things we would consider to be very basic.
> (Carrel, 2006: 38)

Whereas Carrel uses somewhat sensational language, `agony' and `pluck themselves out of...', Hessler answers with an individual example of someone he knows, does not deny that there are problems – `set up illegally' – but comments calmly on the difference in viewpoint between `us' and `them'.

A white Westerner born in Shanghai in 1933

Having discussed some habitual Western ways of looking at China from the outside, I now proceed with my own autobiography, the story of an `outsider' born `inside'. I am a white Westerner born in Shanghai in 1933.

Is whiteness, i.e. skin colour, still important? Ang (2001: 49) says that while `scientific racism has long been discarded...the notion of race continues to thrive in everyday life.' The key `racial' markers for Chineseness in the West are `yellow skin' and `slanty eyes'. (I insert here the comment that over many years I have asked my Chinese students in Shanghai whether they knew that they have `slanty eyes'. None did. Instead, they were concerned about `single lids' and `double lids' and some girls had operations on their eyes to acquire `double lids'.) The key `racial' markers for Westernness in China are white skin, round eyes and big noses.

Although, in the words of Ang, 'scientific racism has long been discarded', it does seem to be a fact that skin colour plays a significant role in daily life. Frantz Fanon, quoted in Ang, (2001: 28), speaks of the `corporeal malediction' of the fact of his

blackness and Ang says that the `corporeal malediction' of Chineseness refers to the `fact of yellowness'. Whiteness, on the other hand, does appear to be seen in many (perhaps not all?) parts of the world not as a malediction but a benediction.

The key point is that to be white and Western signifies power, a fact that is perhaps sometimes overlooked by the Western `man in the street' and even in cross-cultural studies. Ang stresses that she uses `White' and `Western' as

> generalizing categories which describe *a position in a structural, hierarchical interrelationship* rather than a precise set of cultural identities....Whiteness does not acquire meaning outside of a distinctive and over-determined network of concrete social relations within which it is embedded.... Whiteness...is not a biological category but a political one: to be `white' signifies a position of power and respectability, of belonging and entitlement. (2001: 188)

I have begun by discussing `whiteness' because it is a concept I rarely think of in daily life. Perhaps I should. A few of the participants in this study described themselves as `white'. A more common concept among Westerners in Shanghai is that of `foreignness'. Ang speaks of those who `are condemned always to be positioned as "different" or "foreign"...as belonging to an idealised home elsewhere.' (2001: 54) In China the most common term for a foreigner is *waiguoren* (outside country person), a matter-of-fact term which means that the person has come from a country outside China. In the 19th and 20th centuries, the derogatory term *yangguizi* (foreign devil) was used and in Hong Kong in the 1960s my Chinese friends jokingly referred to Westerners as *gwai* (the Cantonese pronunciation of *gui* or devil). They continued the joke by referring to themselves as *yan* (people). In other words, in their minds they (the Chinese) were the only real people and everyone else was a ghost or devil.

Once, in Hong Kong, an Indian friend phoned my school, asking for me as a *hungmoyan* (red-haired person). This caused great hilarity among the staff as they considered it an out-of-date term. In China, now, the most common appellation for a foreigner is *laowai* (old outsider). Personally, I take no offence and consider it a somewhat friendly term since Chinese people address close friends older than

themselves as *Lao X*. I have even adapted this term for my own purposes and sometimes address my husband as *Lao Wang* (Old Wang).

A white Westerner born in Shanghai in 1933. I will have much to say about Shanghai in 2005 in the following chapter but I would now like to mention 1933, i.e. the past. Ang says that `people remember – and therefore construct – the past in ways that reflect their present need for meaning.' (2001: 28) This idea is echoed in an interesting article written by a Japanese scholar about wartime memories of Japan:

> [We] reconstitute the past in a way that suits our needs today. We imagine the future in a way that suits our known experiences, so we remember the future. We are supposed to remember the past, but we are not really interested in objectively studying the past. Rather, we extract useful bits of the past in order to prove in the present that something `actually happened before'. Thus, we imagine the past and remember the future.
> (Fujiwara, 2005: 53)

It is quite likely that this whole study is written in a way that suits my needs today. I am greatly indebted to two good, frank friends. One, a participant in the study, said to me, `You are totally different from us because you grew up here.' The other, a young American sociologist, said, `You are stuck in the past.' I can only speak from my own experience and viewpoint, not claiming any authority.

Chronology

My father, John Snodgrass Barr, was sent from Glasgow to China as a teacher in 1924 by the London Missionary Society (LMS). He was given a year of language study in Suzhou (Soochow) where the Wu dialect from which the Shanghai dialect developed is spoken. He then taught for many years – until 1952 when he was the last LMS missionary to leave China – in Medhurst College, a secondary school for boys in the Hongkou (Hongkew) District of Shanghai.

The LMS had been founded in 1795 as The Missionary Society and was the first Protestant missionary society to send missionaries to China. Robert Morrison arrived in Guangzhou (Canton) in 1807 and the first LMS missionary in Shanghai was Walter Henry Medhurst in 1843. This history impinged on my own life because the LMS

was ahead of its time in being ecumenical. When I went to the West I had to join a particular denomination of the Protestant Church whereas in Shanghai I had attended Community Church and Union Church, both interdenominational. The LMS was also ahead of its time in appointing, for example, a Chinese Headmaster at Medhurst College, not long after its foundation. Most other churches and missionary societies had `white Westerners' as the heads of their institutions. Finally, the LMS dissolved itself and became the Council for World Mission in 1977 because it was realized that it was no longer appropriate for only `the West' to preach to `the Rest'. While the Headquarters was still in London, the leaders of the Council were from many parts of the world and missionaries were sent *to* the West as well as vice versa. It could be said that it was a precursor of `interculturality' – and even that it was the inspiration for this study. The LMS was certainly the ethos in which I grew up.

My mother arrived in Shanghai from Dallas, Texas, in 1930 as Ruth Hill, a Y.W.C.A. Secretary. Like my father, she was given a year's language study but she was sent to Beijing (then Peiping) where she learned Mandarin. They were married in 1932 in Community Church, which at that time had both foreigners and English-speaking Chinese in its congregation. (It is still a very active church in Shanghai today, with hundreds attending Sunday services in *putonghua* - Mandarin.) Both my parents had a strong influence on me in many ways but I will mention only one here: they had many Chinese friends. I am still in touch with a 97-year-old former Y.W.C.A. Secretary and with the second generation of two Chinese families who were their friends.

Our family of four (I had an elder brother) were interned by the Japanese during World War II in Lunghwa Civil Assembly Centre, later made famous by J.G. Ballard in his novel Empire of the Sun and by Stephen Spielberg in his film by the same name. I have spent the years since the novel and film appeared explaining many times that neither of them represent the reality, which was, of course, less sensational. After the war my mother took me to Dallas, Texas, where I had my Freshman year in high school. That year was my first great culture shock as I was a short, skinny, twelve-year-old pig-tailed girl with glasses surrounded by tall, beautiful, suave, sophisticated Texan girls who went out with boys on `dates'.

On our return to Shanghai in 1946 it was decided that I should attend Shanghai American School to avoid switching back and forth between the British and American education systems. Thus, a third culture was added to the British and Chinese worlds in which I was growing up. As a teenager, I was immersed in the usual extra-curricular activities of an American high school such as the Glee Club, the Drama Club and field hockey. Ang refers to these as `seemingly mundane cultural practices.' (2001: 53)

> It was during those two years that I became more and more American, although not entirely so. When the American flag was raised in the Assembly Hall and everyone stood at attention, saying, `I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America....'. I put my hand on my heart and, still feeling British, said loudly, `I pledge *respect* to the flag....'.
> (Wang & Barr, 2002: 256-257)

At Wellesley College, mentioned above, although I enjoyed the years in the Boston area, I still felt British and decided to go to the UK to train as a teacher. My original idea was to go to London but my wise Scottish father suggested gently that since I had never lived in Scotland it might be a good idea to go there. I have been grateful to him ever since because, having trained at Jordanhill College of Education and taught for two years in Glasgow for my `parchment', I acquired, somewhat belatedly, Scottish roots.

The influence of my father and the ethos of the LMS, however, led me to offer myself as a missionary to that same missionary society in 1957. They might have sent me to Africa, India or any other of their `mission fields' but, in fact, they sent me to Hong Kong, where I taught at Ying Wa Girls' School from 1959-1972. The LMS still offered language study to its missionaries and I therefore studied Cantonese, the main dialect spoken in Hong Kong, at the University of Hong Kong for one year full time and two years part time. Furthermore, the LMS arranged for me to live for the first six months with a family who spoke only Cantonese and my language skills improved rapidly, for example, when I found a spider in the wardrobe! The textbook at the University was called `1200 Chinese Basic Characters' and by the time I finished the course I could indeed read and write them.

Unfortunately, that language study in Hong Kong, though it did give me the basics, is not of much help to me in Shanghai now. The characters I learned there were the `complicated' characters, used in Hong Kong and Taiwan, not the simplified characters used on the mainland. Also, the nine tones in Cantonese are different from the four tones in *putonghua* (Mandarin).

During the 13 years I spent in Hong Kong I made many good Chinese friends among the staff of the school and I still return to Hong Kong often to visit them and attend anniversary celebrations at the school. But it was not home.

> A kind friend often drove us out to the New Territories where, near the border, there was a small hill from the top of which we could look over the barbed wire into mainland China. All that could be seen were some paddy fields and occasionally a few farmers but I loved to go there because much further to the north was my birthplace – Shanghai. In those days Shanghai might have been on a different planet, so little news did we have from there.
> (Wang & Barr, 2004: 421)

Avtar Brah (1996: 193), quoted in Ang, (2001: 55) speaks of `the problematic of "home" and belonging' in her book Cartographies of Diaspora. It seems that `diaspora', the scattered ones, is a term used mainly for Asians and Africans in the West. Can it be used of Whites in Asia and Africa? Why are they, instead, usually called `expatriates', those who have left their fatherland?

It was the pull of `home' that led me to go to the Chinese Embassy in London in 1972 to ask if I could go to teach English in China. I had heard in Hong Kong that a few teachers of English were being recruited and thought I might be sent to Guangzhou (Canton), where Cantonese is spoken but in September, 1973, I found myself on a plane to Shanghai. The story of my two years in Shanghai towards the end of the Cultural Revolution is told in Between Two Worlds – Lessons in Shanghai (2004), which George Wang and I wrote as a personal micro-record of that period of history. Here, I would only note that my experiences then, working on a People's Commune, a large collective farm, and in a watch factory with my teacher-students, and being criticised for the `wrong' political point of view in my teaching materials, left an indelible impression on me. I hope those experiences also gave me greater understanding of Shanghai today. After all, that was only 30 years ago.

There followed nine happy years in my other `home', Scotland, when I was a peripatetic teacher of English as a Second Language in Fife. My ability to speak Cantonese was what garnered me the job and I became something of a social worker among the Hong Kong families in the take-away restaurants (or `carry-outs') in all the small towns. I was, therefore, still in touch with Chinese culture or, more specifically, the Hong Kong form of Chinese culture. I also became the Secretary of the Scotland-China Association, a small group which promotes understanding between the two countries.

Sadly, George Wang's first British wife, Margaret, who had been my only British colleague in Shanghai in 1973-1975, died in 1983 but, happily, I again found myself on a plane to Shanghai in August, 1984, on my way to marry him. Since 1984, then, I have been living in Shanghai, my birthplace, married to a Shanghainese man, Wang Zhengwen (George), and his son by his first marriage, Wang Minpu.

For ten years I worked on British Council teacher training projects at Shanghai International Studies University, the same institution where I had worked during the Cultural Revolution. For the first four years my students were college teachers of English from all over China and for the next six years the students were secondary school teachers of English from remote areas in the Northeast and Northwest of the country. They loved to organise end-of-term parties during which we ate and sang and danced together. During the last three years there was a Follow-up Research project in the course of which I visited, with George Wang, many of these former students in remote and poor areas. I discovered that although their living standard is low and they are economically far behind Shanghai, the people there were straightforward and warm-hearted. After the British Council projects ended I continued teaching at the same university for another eight years, four years still with middle school teacher students and four with young Shanghainese.

I now live in one of my `homes'. Stuart Hall (1996c: 399), quoted in Ang (2001: 54) speaks of diasporic intellectuals, usually born in the `Third' World but educated and working in the `First', who occupy a `double space' and `are deeply embedded in both worlds, both universes'. Clifford (1997: 255), also quoted in Ang (2001: 54), points out, however, that it is just as important to stress

> the profound *dis*embeddedness from the worlds in which [the diasporic intellectual] finds herself biographically enmeshed. It is the articulation of embeddedness and disembeddedness, the `lived tension' between `the experiences of separation and entanglement' that marks the construction of diasporic subjectivities.

The concept of embeddedness and disembeddedness exactly describes a person like myself. In the last twenty years I have had the opportunity to travel widely in China, I have seen the beauty of this vast and ancient country and I have experienced the warmth and hospitality of its people. I love it dearly and I feel at home in Shanghai - but at the same time I feel not only British, but Scottish. The skirl of the bagpipes fills me with nostalgia for my other `home'.

It is in this sense that I am basically different from the participants in my study, most of whom are sojourners in Shanghai for longer or shorter periods of time, but who will return to their Western homes with their Western husbands. I, albeit a white Westerner looking the same as them (only older), was not only born here and spent the formative years of my childhood here until I was 17 but I was here for two years during the traumatic Cultural Revolution and now live here permanently with a Shanghainese husband and stepson. I was one of the first group of about 20 foreigners in Shanghai to be given a Chinese `green card' in 2005.

It might be thought that my total of 42 years spent living in Shanghai plus 13 years in Hong Kong would mean that I am deeply embedded in Chinese culture but I find that not to be the case. To what extent can anyone know / understand / access / cope with / interpret / make sense of another culture? As I pondered this, it struck me that it is in daily life, in the "seemingly mundane cultural practices" that clues can be found.

Language is, to me, one of the greatest, if not <u>the</u> greatest, barrier to understanding Chinese culture. My husband and stepson speak to each other in *putonghua* (Mandarin) every day and the three of us watch the television news in *putonghua* every evening but my level of understanding is still, astoundingly, minimal. Another linguistic difficulty is that the Shanghai dialect is used on the street and in shops. I often joke that I speak a hotch-potch of Cantonese, *putonghua* and Shanghai dialect – and nobody understands me!

Another daily practice is the matter of cooking and eating. Fortunately, perhaps because of having grown up in Shanghai, I like many types of Chinese food and fortunately George Wang is a good cook. We three eat Chinese food together at most meals but there are certain foods, such as shrimps with their shells on, which I cannot get used to and certain ways of eating, such as slurping the soup, which are different from the ways in which my Western parents brought me up. And, of course, there is the matter of the implements used for eating – the chopsticks – which are so different from the `normal' Western way of eating.

George Wang has lived in Shanghai all his life and he is a great believer in Traditional Chinese Medicine. At the beginning of every winter he goes to a TCM doctor who prescribes a tonic especially for him and he buys Chinese medicines of various kinds for minor ailments. I was brought up to believe in Western medicine and although my mother in her later life was interested in `alternative medicine' I was never very impressed and remain to this day somewhat of a sceptic. I can see, though, that the Chinese way of dealing with the body stems from a wholly different philosophy or point of view.

Arising from my own self-observation, therefore, I chose language, food and health as topics for this study, hoping that by probing more deeply into them I might find an answer to the question as to the ways in which anyone can make sense of another culture.

Just as I was becoming depressed about the shallowness of my knowledge of Chinese culture after 42 years of living here, George Wang and I received from an unknown British reader of our two books, Shanghai Boy Shanghai Girl – Lives in Parallel and Between Two Worlds – Lessons in Shanghai, an email which heartened me:

I am an avid reader, but I cannot remember the last time any book had such an impact on me. I've been in Shanghai for three years already, and thought I understood many things, but your works have given me entirely new insight into the city.

There are, then, different levels of insight and I hope through the help of the participants in this study of ways of making sense of another culture in Shanghai in 2005 to understand them more fully.

As a conclusion to this autobiography, a photograph taken of George Wang and me in 1989 is provided here. Since photography is used in this research project, it seemed appropriate to include this photograph here as part of my own self-revelation. Pink (2007: 67) states that photographs have no single meaning and that they can be re-appropriated and given new significance and uses in each context. This photograph was taken by a professional photographer from *Life* magazine to accompany an article written by a *Life* reporter who was in Shanghai to cover the 40th anniversary of the Chinese Revolution. The reporter, like George and me, had been in Shanghai in 1949. The photograph was first used in *Life* magazine and has since then sat on our piano at home, been used in an annual letter and on the cover of our first book. Now it becomes part of an autobiography in a dissertation.

A further meaning of the photograph has to do with the red Yamaha motorbike on which we are sitting. We had imported it from Hong Kong in 1985 because at that time it was almost impossible to buy a motor vehicle in Shanghai. The motorbike can serve as a bridge to the next section of this chapter which deals with the context of Shanghai. In 2005, as can be seen from the statistics, there are hundreds of new cars on the road every month.

1.3 The Context – Shanghai

Why did the *New York Times* have a six-page article on Shanghai in its Travel Section on 15 October, 2005? Why did the BBC produce `Question Time' in Shanghai in November, 2005? And why did the *Guardian* send a whole group of reporters to Shanghai for a week in the same month?

The fact that the Western media paid so much attention to Shanghai in 2005, the year in which this study is based, and that they continue to do so means that Shanghai has special significance in the world today. It is the largest city in the world's fastest developing country, China, and in 2010 the largest ever World Expo will be held here. On 18 October, 2005, David Barboza wrote in *The New York Times* (p. A1):

> This year alone, Shanghai will complete towers with more space for living and working than there is in all the office buildings in New York City. That is in a city that already has 4,000 skyscrapers, almost double the number in New York. And there are designs to build 1,000 more by the end of this decade.

More statistics can be found in Appendix 6 but the superlatives and numbers hide the fact that it is also a city of great contrasts, contrasts especially between the ancient and modern, `the East' and `the West' and the rich and the poor. Some of these contrasts will be found in the data provided by the participants in this study.

The history of the city is, perhaps, well known in the West since it has the dubious distinction of having given its name to a verb, `to shanghai', meaning to trick or force someone into doing something unwillingly. The origin of this term is the practice in Shanghai in the 1920s and 1930s of drugging a man or making him drunk and then shipping him off as a sailor. This was in the heyday of the Western (mainly British) imperialists who, after defeating the Chinese in the First Opium War (1839-42), forced China to sign ten unequal treaties and to allow a system called `extra-territoriality', i.e. foreign concessions in which the foreigners were allowed to govern themselves.

Shanghai had another unusual distinction in that it had more than one foreign concession. In 1863 Great Britain and the United States merged their Concessions

into an International Settlement but the French wanted to keep their own piece of territory which became known as the French Concession or, unofficially, Frenchtown. Although Japan did not have an official concession, there were thousands of Japanese living in one district, Hongkew. Like Britain, France and the United States, they also had soldiers stationed in Shanghai.

The ways in which the foreign concessions impinged on the lives of ordinary citizens in the 1930s have been vividly described by George Wang. For example, there were three different waterworks, run by three different owners, and three power companies, using different voltages. To cross the city by tram one had to take three different trams, British, French and Chinese and during the trip one could see policemen of different nationalities: British, White Russians and Sikhs in the International Settlement; French, White Russians and Vietnamese in the French Concession; and Chinese in Nanshih (a Chinese part of the city). (Wang & Barr, 2002: 9-10)

The stratification of society in Shanghai in the 1930s was explained by Rena Krasno, author of That Last Glorious Summer – 1939 – Shanghai / Japan (2001), when she took part in a recent Canadian Broadcasting Corporation television documentary series entitled `Sin Cities', featuring Shanghai in the 1930s along with Paris and Berlin of the same era. Rena said, `There was definitely a social structure where the British, the Americans, and the French were the top. They were the masters, they were the lords, they were the powerful ones. And then came the Germans, who had lost World War I, then you had the mixed-bloods, then you had the Chinese.' The narrator of the series made the same point: `Everything was for sale, everything except, perhaps, power. For in this city in China it was not the Chinese who could claim to be masters in their own home. It was the foreigners.'

Since this dissertation is mainly about the way in which Westerners make sense of the East, it seems only right that a small part of the history of Shanghai should be given here as it is written (in English) from the Chinese point of view. This was seen in a `Preface' at the Shanghai History Museum, which is located at the foot of the ultra-modern TV Tower, the `Pearl of the Orient', pictured in Chapter 6.

After the Opium War, the big foreign powers invaded China one after another,

> and Shanghai was forced to open further to the outside world. As a result, the city's urban development took on a deep semi-colonial complexion. Shanghai people went on to promote the development of modern industry and commerce as well as the construction of municipal works and the import of modern civilization *with a sea-like broadmindedness* [italics added]. Shanghai leapt to a position as an economic, financial and cultural center of modern China and a well-known international metropolis.

The italics were added to point up the Shanghainese image of themselves and to show the appropriateness of using `sea-like broadmindedness' since the name `Shanghai' means `on the sea' or `above the sea'.

`Shanghai meant opportunity in the most modern city in China,' the narrator in the CBC documentary continued. This was true not only for the foreigners who came to this `Paradise for Adventurers', the subtitle for the Shanghai section of `Sin Cities', but also for millions of poor Chinese peasants who fled from the famines which ravaged the countryside. Unlike Beijing or even nearby Suzhou, both of which are ancient cities with long histories, Shanghai, though not a mere fishing village before the arrival of the imperialists, became an immigrant city for the Chinese in the 19th and 20th centuries.

In 1932 and again in 1937 the Japanese bombed Shanghai but the foreign residents carried on with their lives inside their concessions as if nothing had happened. Another interviewee in the Canadian documentary, Ken Cuthbertson, author of Nobody Said Not to Go (1998) even says, `Foreign journalists...sat in the Cathay Hotel, had drinks and watched the Japanese gunboats in the harbour bombarding the Chinese area off behind. It was like a fireworks display.' The decadent lifestyle of the powerful foreigners came to an abrupt end on the morning of Dec. 8, 1941, when Japanese marines, who had been surrounding the concessions, marched in on the same day as the Japanese Air Force was bombing Pearl Harbour on Dec. 7 in Hawaii many miles away.

The story of Shanghai's history from 1941-1949 has been told many times and need not be repeated here. During the war, many Westerners, like my family, were interned by the Japanese and the Chinese, too, whose country was being invaded, suffered many atrocities, privations and indignities. After World War II the

Westerners came flooding back to Shanghai, thinking that they would pick up from where they had left off but it was not to be. The Civil War was raging in China and in May, 1949, the People's Liberation Army marched into Shanghai.

From the Western point of view, the period in China from 1949 to roughly 1980 is least known or understood. China was `closed', as one participant in this research project says, and it was difficult to find out any information at all, let alone to have a deep understanding of the situation. Space does not permit discussion of this period here but it may be pointed out that most of the books written in English about this era are either by Westerners from `outside' or by Chinese who have `escaped' to the `outside' and therefore write for an `outside', e.g. Western, audience. It might even be suggested that all these writers belong to a `guild'. I hope it will not be considered immodest if I mention a mini-record of that period, Between Two Worlds – Lessons in Shanghai (2004), written by my husband, George Wang, his first British wife, Margaret Schofield Wang, who lived in China continuously from 1947-1983, and myself. Written in English, it is, like the books mentioned above, also written for a Western audience but it is an attempt by George, in particular, to explain from his own point of view some of the reasons why Shanghai became such a radicalised city during the Cultural Revolution, even the home of the `Gang of Four'.

The modern history described above makes Shanghai different from other Asian cities in which some of the participants in this research project have lived – Hong Kong, Singapore and Taipei, for example. In those cities there have been expatriate communities for decades, if not longer. In Shanghai, however, it was only after the `opening up' in the late 1980s and early 1990s that foreigners returned in any numbers to live here and at that time the standard of living in China was still very low. This explains why walled compounds enclosing villas with gardens and guarded day and night by security guards at the gates were built for the CEOs of large multinational companies and diplomats who arrived in large numbers. The majority of the participants in this research project live in such compounds, described in Chapter 4 below.

In 2005, for both Chinese and foreigners, `Shanghai meant opportunity in the most modern city in China' once again just as it had in the 1930s. The big difference, of

course, is that in post-revolutionary China it is the Chinese who now have political power, not the foreigners. There is great pride in the country's rapid economic development and in the fact that it will soon be staging two huge world events – the 2008 Beijing Olympics and the 2010 Shanghai Expo. However, economic power is still associated with the wealthy West and many Chinese assume that all Westerners are rich. Also, because of Shanghai's long association with `the West', many Shanghainese still admire, if not worship, `the West' and Westerners have a special status. In comparison to the 1930s, there are many more Western iconic eateries such as Macdonald's, KFC, Starbucks and even Pizza Hut - though `the Chinese' are said not to like cheese. The models in the thousands of fashion boutiques are all blonde. George Wang and I could give countless examples of situations in which my Western face is `helpful'; there are, of course, other situations, such as bargaining a price down, in which his Chinese face, not to mention his Chinese language, `help'.

The most noteworthy feature of Shanghai in 2005 is its rapid pace of development, mentioned in the excerpt from the *New York Times* above. This can be seen in the stark contrast of the buildings on either side of the Huangpu River which winds its way through the city much like the Thames in London. On one side are the stately 19th century buildings such as the former Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank with its large dome, the Customs House with its Big Ben-like clock and the Peace Hotel (formerly Cathay Hotel) with its sloping roof, built by Sir Victor Sassoon in 1929. On the other side, Pudong (East of the Huangpu River), are the gleaming glass towers of the 21st century. What is extraordinary is the speed at which these skyscrapers have appeared since the area in which they now stand was, as recently as 1992, paddy fields. Five of China's tallest buildings have been built in Shanghai in the last eight years. (See Appendix 6.)

The speed of development in Shanghai can be seen not only in the buildings but in the transportation. Whereas China is known in the West as a `kingdom of bicycles', (as will be seen in the data in Ch. 6), on Dec. 31, 2004, the German Chancellor and Chinese Prime Minister rode on the world's first commercially viable Maglev train in Shanghai. More prosaically, most of Shanghai's taxis are Volkswagens produced in Shanghai and the streets are now full of countless vehicles, most produced in China – a contrast to 1985 when we had to import a Yamaha motorcycle.

The final special feature of Shanghai which must be mentioned is its size in terms of population and especially density of population. Needless to say, this brings immense problems such as shortage of housing, water and air pollution, traffic congestion and a rise in crime. Statistics can be found in Appendix 6 but, in rough terms, there are more than 17 million permanent Chinese residents, 3–4 million transient migrant workers from poor neighbouring provinces who work on the ubiquitous construction sites, and around 50,000 foreigners working in the city. The area of the city has expanded tremendously in recent years (there is even a suburb called `Thames Town') but the former International Settlement and French Concession still exert a pull in terms of excitement and glamour. It is there that innumerable upmarket shopping malls as well as thousands of small stores can be found and the night life is said to be comparable to Shanghai's `glory days' in the 1930s. No wonder `buzz' and `zest' are words often associated with Shanghai in 2005.

This brief description of the context in which my research was carried out concludes with a list of events which were reported in the English language newspaper, *Shanghai Daily*, in July, 2005:

July 11 – Celebration of 600th Anniversary of Admiral Zheng He (Ming Dynasty) setting out to explore the world
July 15 – `The Year of Yao' – a documentary about Yao Ming, Shanghai's basketball superstar, who plays with the Houston Rockets in Texas, opens [but on 25 July it is announced that it is a flop, perhaps because Yao did not come to the premiere]
July 16 – President of European Commission, Jose Manuel Barroso, makes a speech in Shanghai
July 17 – Children's musicals presented by Denmark Shell Opera Troupe to mark the 200th anniversary of the birth of Hans Christian Andersen
July 18 – Shanghai-based private budget carrier Spring Airlines makes its maiden flight to Yantai
July 23 – Great Heat, according to the Chinese lunar calendar, lives up to its name
July 25 – First approved Chinese tour group takes off for the UK

These events perhaps give some idea of the contrasts mentioned above: ancient and modern, West and East and rich and poor. For example, the visit of one of many VIP Westerners, the President of the European Commission, Jose Manuel Barroso, was reported but only the first approved Chinese tour group was taking off for the UK. In other words, not as many Shanghainese as might have been expected have travelled to Europe. The `opening up' of a poor country takes time.

Chapter 1 has comprised the Introduction to this thesis, the Statement of Focus having given my aims, the Autobiography my rationale and the description of Shanghai the context for this research project. In Chapter 2 I turn to the Literature Review in which I discuss more theoretical considerations.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This literature review begins with a consideration of what happens when two cultures come into contact and a brief discussion of the most famous traveller to China, Marco Polo. It then centres on Orientalism, a seminal text in post-colonial theory written in 1978 by Edward Said, the late Palestinian professor of English and Comparative Literature at Columbia University. First, his basic argument is rehearsed and it is shown that it has relevance for China, the context of this study.

In the main part of the review, there is a discussion of the concept of `the Other' which is found not only in Said but also in Fabian (1983, re-published in 2002), another post-colonial theorist. This is followed by an exploration of three salient themes discovered in the literature which seemed to be helpful in explaining how `the Other' is constructed. I thought that these themes might usefully inform an ethnographic study since I was studying what the participants said in interviews and wrote in comments accompanying photographs as well as observing their behaviour.

The first theme is that of generalisation, the common linguistic technique which, according to Said, the Orientalist scholars of the 19th and 20th centuries used to describe Orientals. In the literature, especially in Fabian, it was found that in making generalisations the ethnographic present tense is generally used. This tense will be discussed in detail in 2.2.2.2 but, as an introduction, it can be defined as the use of the present tense as an observer's language, e.g. `the Chinese do X'. In addition to the present tense, absolutes such as `All' and `Always' are commonly used to strengthen generalisations about another culture. Two other linguistic practices mentioned in the literature in connection with generalisations are modifications and narratives. All these linguistic techniques are considered below under the heading of Theme 1 – Generalisation.

Theme 2 deals with the use of `We'/`They' and `East'/`West', the artificial dichotomy of the world which Said found in the writings of the Orientalists. This phenomenon is

discussed also by Pratt and Ang, two other post-colonial theorists. The topic of Theme 3 is that of ethnocentric attitudes or world views which are found in the writing of Westerners when they construct `the East'. The term used by Said for this phenomenon was `latent Orientalism' but this theme was found in the writing of several other scholars as well. Said claims that the influence of the world view of the Orientalist scholars was still in existence in the year when he wrote, 1978; the title of his last chapter is `Orientalism Now'.

While the literature review centres on Said and his arguments, it must be acknowledged that, although Orientalism is an important text, there are also many criticisms of it and some of these are considered at the end of the chapter. Finally, the question is raised as to whether Said's thesis has relevance for the present ethnographic study of a small group of Western women in Shanghai in 2005. If it does, what can be learned about the process of making sense of another culture?

2.1.1 Cultures in contact

When two different cultures come into contact there can be a variety of reactions - from complete rejection at one end of the continuum to intense admiration at the other. As Ang notes, there is an asymmetrical relationship between the West and the Rest (2001: 4) and therefore an important factor that must be taken into account is power. A culture which thinks of itself as dominant and self-sufficient has no need of, does not wish to deal with and certainly does not want to be judged by another.

> The emperor was the final arbiter in all matters relating to Confucian thought and the papal ambassador spoke not a word of Mandarin. How could someone so unfamiliar with China presume to make judgments about things Chinese?
> (Brockey, 2006: np) – a description of the visit of the papal envoy, Carlo Tommaso Maillard de Tournon, to the Kangxi Emperor of China in 1706

In addition to power, the pull of the unusual and exotic and the very `idea' of another culture is another factor involved when two cultures meet. Three centuries after the Chinese emperor and the papal envoy failed to understand each other, thousands of

Westerners are pouring into China in the hope of making sense of it in the first decade of the 21st century. According to one observer, they, too, are doomed to fail.

> The idea of China has always exerted a pull on the adventurous type....After the first few visits, they start to feel more in tune and experience the first stirrings of a fatal ambition: the secret hope of becoming the `Mr China' of their time, the *zhongguo tong* or `Old China Hand' with the inside track in the Middle Kingdom. In the end, they all want to be Mr China. They want to be like Marco Polo roaming China as the emissary of the Kublai Khan....how many long to become the ultimate China Hand, the only outsider, the first and only *laowai* to crack China? But in the end, it's an illusion.
> (Clissold, 2004: np)

This research project carried out in Shanghai in 2005 aims to learn about the many factors and practices involved in the process of making sense of another culture and to that end the relevant literature is first reviewed. The first book to be discussed was written more than seven hundred years ago but is still important today because of its influence on East – West relations.

2.1.2 The Marco Polo phenomenon

The Travels of Marco Polo (Latham [ed], 1958) was, astonishingly, written in 1298 but was regarded as `the original, and still among the best' in a list of the best Asian travel books in the Far Eastern Economic Review published in July/August 2005. `Sections of the crossing of Central Asia are so accurate that we're told it can still be used as a guide today.' (Vol. 168 No. 7: 74)

Paul Smethurst, who teaches courses on travel writing from Marco Polo to the present at the University of Hong Kong, says that Travels was a revolutionary piece of writing.

> It radically altered European understanding of Asia by forcing the West to recognize a superior culture in the East, and, by describing with such verve the luxuries and sensuousness of Chinese cities, it impressed the idea of an exotic East on the European psyche.
>
> Polo's book contributed to what we now understand as Orientalism – the construction of the East by the West. But unlike later examples of Orientalism, Travels puts a very positive gloss on Asia.
> (Smethurst, 2006: 83)

Smethurst admits that Polo's `splendid vision of the East inadvertently stirred Europe's colonial ambition, laying the roots of imperialism.' Even Christopher Columbus had an early copy and made notes in the margins before later bungling into America while searching out a western route to Polo's Cathay. (Smethurst, 2006: 83)

But Smethurst claims that there is no imperialist intent in Polo's book and says it is a book of liberal and enlightened humanism.

> His work expresses wonder and joy in what is unfamiliar. Races are differentiated but not denigrated, and the customs of different cultures are met with enthusiastic curiosity, not the conformism and prejudice prevalent in Europe at the time.
> (Smethurst, 2006: 83)

It should, of course, be noted that there is some doubt as to whether Marco Polo did, in fact, ever visit China. There is even a book entitled Did Marco Polo Go To China? (Westview Press, 1995) by Frances Wood, the Head of the Chinese Department at the British Library. However, her thesis that Polo did not go to China is described as `untenable' by Igor de Rachewiltz of the Australian National University in Canberra. (rspas.anu.edu.au/eah/Marcopolo.html) What is known for certain is that while in jail Marco Polo met Rustichello of Pisa, a well known French writer and collector of Arthurian romances, and that a certain Giambattista Ramusio (1557) was Polo's editor and biographer. (Latham [ed], 1958: 25)

Smethurst writes that their collaboration

> yielded a book that would give Europe its first authoritative account of the Middle and Far East, in particular China, and reveal the presence of a vast empire and advanced civilization far greater than anything Europeans could achieve or even imagine.
> (Smethurst,2006: 83)

Whereas, according to Smethurst, Marco Polo's writings forced the West to recognize a superior culture in the East, much later writing by Europeans who had either visited the (Middle) East or read Arabic scripts was not so complimentary. Many Western Orientalist scholars, especially in the 19th century when several European nations

were at the height of their imperial power, regarded their own culture as superior and that of `the East' as inferior. In 1978. Edward Said wrote Orientalism, a strong criticism of these Orientalists. Said is widely regarded as the father of post-colonial theory and the book is still considered today a seminal text in the field of cultural studies.

There follows, first, an examination of the reasons for the importance of Orientalism and an example of its present day influence. This is followed by a working definition of the term `Orientalism' for this study and a broad summary of Said's main points. A more detailed discussion of them will be found later in this chapter.

2.1.3 Edward Said – Orientalism

Edward Said's Orientalism is an important text in post-colonial studies and, indeed, it seems almost to have taken on a life of its own. At the last count (Huggan, 2005: 124) it had been translated into thirty-six languages. It is therefore not surprising that `there should now be a booming Said industry, in which numerous scholars from all corners of the world have taken the opportunity to engage in conversation – not all of it friendly – with his work.' (Huggan, 2005: 124-125) Said has `become a talismanic intellectual and political figure, while Orientalism, in particular, [has been] transformed into one of the late twentieth century's few truly totemic critical works.' (Huggan, 2005: 125)

Why should this be so? Gyan Prakash, quoted in Huggan (2005: 125), attributed its phenomenal success to its capacity to unsettle `received categories and modes of understanding' (n.p.). According to Prakash, Orientalism's

> persistent and restless movements between authorial intentions and discursive regimes, scholarly monographs and political tracts, literature and history, philology and travel writings, classical texts and twentieth-century polemics produced a profound uncertainty [...] in which the established authority of Orientalist scholars and their lines of inquiry [came] undone....[It incited] further critical studies of the modern West's construction of the Other...But Orientalism's authority as a critique of Western knowledge remains unmatched.

One example of how Said's influence has extended right up to the 21st century was found in an article in the Sept. 5, 2006, issue of `The Daily Star' in Lebanon. After the fighting between Hizbullah and Israel in the summer of 2006, an Israeli commentator said that whatever Israel does, almost certainly, a `Hizbullah terrorist will pop up somewhere on the back of a donkey with a rocket.' Alastair Crooke, in an article headlined `New Orientalism's "barbarians" and "outlaws" 'said:

> Why the donkey? Because this foremost proponent of modern asymmetrical guerrilla warfare – Hizbullah – must nevertheless somehow be associated with obscurantism, with a reaction against Western modernity and a desire for a return to a pre-modern age. It's just how we see things....It's unconscious. It slips out almost inadvertently. It is not deliberate but, rather, a reflex...Edward Said rightly identified this Western unconscious prejudice as "Orientalism".
> (Crooke, 2006: 1)

This seems to be a modern-day example of the unconscious prejudice which Said labeled `latent Orientalism', a term which will be discussed more fully below. (See 2.2.4)

For the sake of clarity, the term `Orientalism' should first be defined because, as can be seen in the example quoted above, a number of meanings have been attached to it since 1978 when the book was published. The first definition is that it is the classical tradition of studying a region by means of its languages and writings. This was and is an activity carried out in institutions of learning in `the West'. A second definition is a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between `the Orient' and `the Occident'. Said views these distinctions as fictions that gave rise to blame. A third definition is that Orientalism is not only a style of thought but also a system of thought which always rose from the specifically human detail to the general transhuman one. An example is that a verse from the Koran would be considered the best evidence of an ineradicable Muslim sensuality. Finally, a fourth definition of Orientalism is that it is the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient – by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, for dominating it.
(Sardar & Van Loon, 1999: 109)

For the purpose of this research into the process of making sense of another culture, the term `Orientalism' is closest in meaning to the second and third definitions above. It is a style and system of thought which is regarded as a general theory of representation, or misrepresentation, in which `the West' dominates `the East'. The article by Alastair Crooke shows that the Israeli commentator who spoke about the donkey subscribed to that style of thought.

Said's basic argument was that the Orientalists, the Western (mainly British and French) scholars who studied the Middle East, misrepresented the Orient to their Western audience. He contended that they denied the reality, the `brute reality' (Said, 1978: 5), of the geographical area of the world which they were studying and of the culture of the people who lived there.

According to Said, the reason for the Orientalists' misrepresentation was closely connected with the historical era in which they wrote, an era in which several Western nations were at the height of their imperial power. Said even claims that the Orientalist scholars provided the intellectual justification for the imperialist invasion and rule of Arab countries in the Middle East since it seemed `natural' that the superior West should control the inferior East.

In Said's view, the Orient is the source of the West's deepest and most recurring images of `the Other'. It therefore helps the West to define `the Self' in terms of contrast; one culture is what the other is not. To the West, `the Other' is not only backward and inferior but also mysterious and sensuous and even something to be feared.

The main way in which the Orientalists misrepresented the Orient, Said argues, is by using sweeping generalisations which dehumanise the people whom they describe. Instead of studying real contexts in the Middle East, the Orientalists typically wrote about `the Arabs' or `the Arab', using the ethnographic present tense in phrases such as `the Arabs eat X' or `the Arab likes X'. This way of writing makes the Orient seem changeless and eternal, with no variation whatsoever.

The Orientalists also, Said states, emphasise the difference between East and West by using the pronouns `We' and `They', `Us' and `Them', `Our' and `Their'. The repetition of these pronouns polarises the differences and makes them appear absolute and systematic. In addition, the Western Orientalists thought that the Orient was incapable of defining itself, that it had no thinkers of its own, and that therefore they would do the defining for `the natives'. Their influence was so strong that even `the natives' began to believe them.

Another criticism of the Orientalists by Said was their method of study and their attitudes. He says that in the 19th and early 20th centuries most Western scholars studied classical texts in Arabic rather than the real situation in Arab lands and that their attitudes to their subject of study were often hostile.

A final point to sum up Said's argument was that the Orientalists formed a `guild', that they all influenced each other to such a degree that it was not possible to write or say anything about the Orient which was not within their `guidelines'. Their representations not only influenced other scholars but also the public in the West in general who, in the 19th and early 20th centuries, could not travel easily to the Orient to ascertain the reality for themselves. Said claims that `latent Orientalism' was still a strong influence on the West up to the time when he wrote the book Orientalism in 1978.

2.1.4 Said in a China context

Even though the Orientalist scholars whom Said specifically criticised were writing about the Middle East and Arab/Muslim culture, Orientalism was argued as a general theory of all representations of all non-Western cultures. It could therefore be applied to China since the relationship between `East' and `West' in China in the 19th and early 20th centuries was very similar to that in the Middle East. At that time China was often described as `the sick man of Asia'. Politically, it was taken for granted that the West was the dominant power and China, especially after the Opium Wars in the mid-nineteenth century, the submissive semi-colony. It was seen in 1.3 that in Shanghai there were two foreign concessions, the International Settlement and the

French Concession, where the superiority of the powerful, wealthy Westerner was taken for granted.

Although there has been no `Chinese Said', the following excerpts from books by Westerners from three different countries all comment on aspects of the Western engagement with China. The first is by Somerset Maugham who, when describing `The Sinologue' in 1922, long before Said, made a point very similar to Said's contention that the Orientalists concentrated on studying ancient texts rather than reality.

> ...it is a specialized life. Art and beauty seem not to touch him, and as I listen to him talk so sympathetically of the Chinese poets I cannot help asking myself if the best things have not after all slipped through his fingers. Here is a man who has touched reality only through the printed page. The tragic splendour of the lotus moves him only when its loveliness is enshrined in the verse of Li Po and the laughter of demure Chinese girls stirs his blood but in the perfection of an exquisitely chiseled quatrain.
> (Maugham, W.S., 2000, 1922: 142-143)

Like Said, who wrote of the hostile attitude of the Orientalists to their subject of study, an Australian China scholar, Colin Mackerras, in his Sinophiles and Sinophobes (2000), made the same point about some Westerners who had extreme reactions to China. A few examples are given below. While there were some, like Marco Polo, who admired Chinese civilization and especially the relationships among the people, others found aspects to criticize. Matteo Ricci was an Italian Jesuit who was employed at the court in Beijing in the early 17th century and was renowned for his mastery of the Chinese language. He objected, however, to the extreme superstition of the Chinese. Montesquieu, a French philosopher and jurist of the 18th century, thought the Chinese the most unscrupulous people on earth while Lord Macartney, who was sent by King George III to the court of the Chinese Emperor in 1793 refused to kowtow and thought the Chinese superior in their attitude to the West.

Sinophiles

p. 7	Marco Polo:	contentious broils are never heard among them
p. 30	Du Halde:	deference and respect for their old men
p. 47	Walter & Robins:	a very ingenious and industrious people

Sinophobes

p. 28	Matteo Ricci:	grossly subject to superstition
p. 44	Montesquieu:	the most unscrupulous people on earth,,,[especially] in commerce
p. 55	Macartney:	they present themselves with an easy, confident air, as if they considered themselves the superiors

Macartney's use of the pronoun `they' and the ethnographic present tense in the phrase `they present themselves' may be noted in passing as an example of the generalisations criticised by Said.

A third Western scholar, Jonathan Spence at Yale, wrote of the Western `advisers' who tried over many years to change China that `...they speak to us still...about the ambiguities of superiority, and about that indefinable realm where altruism and exploitation meet.' (Spence, 1969: np) Superiority, whether of the West in relation to the East or the East in relation to the West, seems to be one of the common themes when cultures come into contact with each other.

Turning now to a modern Chinese scholar to end this section with regard to Said in the China context, an excerpt from an article by Chen Xiaomei is provided. Her title is `Occidentalism as Counterdiscourse: "He Shang" in Post-Mao China', and she begins her discussion thus:

> In the years since its introduction, Edward Said's celebrated study Orientalism has acquired a near-paradigmatic status as a model of the relationships between Western and non-Western cultures. Said seeks to show how Western imperialist images of its colonial others: images that, of course, are inevitably and sharply at odds with the self-understanding of the indigenous non-Western cultures they purport to represent – not only govern the West's hegemonic policies, but were imported into the West's political and cultural colonies where they affected native points of view and thus served as instruments of domination themselves...
> (Chen, X., 1992: 686)

After considering the importance of Said's Orientalism, Chen makes the following comment:

> Despite the popularity of Said's model, however, comparatists and sinologists have yet to make extensive use of it in their attempts to

> define China's self-image or the nature of Sino-Western social, cultural, and political relationships.
> (Chen, X. 1992: 686-687)

The present research project set in Shanghai in 2005 will attempt to use Said as a model for considering East and West in China, in particular Sino-Western social and cultural relationships. In the main part of this chapter the concept of `the Other' and three themes discovered in the reading of Orientalism and other relevant literature will be discussed.

2.2 How `the Other' is Constructed

The literature shows that the concept of` `the Other' is central to Said's argument and three further themes found in the literature, 1) Generalisation, 2) The Use of `We'/'They' and `East'/'West' and 3) Ethnocentric Attitudes, explain how this concept is constructed. This literature review, and most of this dissertation, is therefore structured around the concept of `the Other' and these three themes. While Said and other post-colonialists found such themes in the writings of 19th and 20th century Orientalist scholars, the question to be raised in this research project is whether such themes are also to be found in attempts to make sense of Chinese culture by contemporary Westerners living in China. More specifically, were these themes found in the process of the construction of China by a small group of *taitais* in Shanghai in 2005?

In the first section below, arguments for and against the concept of `the Other', with its concomitant concept of `the Self', are considered.

2.2.1 Concepts of `the Self' and `the Other'

The concept of `the Other' is to be found on the first page of both Edward Said's Orientalism (1978) and Johannes Fabian's Time and the Other (1983, 2002):

> The Orient is not only adjacent to Europe; it is also the place of Europe's greatest and richest and oldest colonies, the source of its civilizations and languages, its cultural contestant, and one of its deepest and most recurring images of the Other. (Said, 1978: 1)

> ...there is no knowledge of the Other which is not also a temporal, historical, a political act.
> (Fabian, 2002: 1)

It would seem that both scholars considered the concept of `the Other' to be a basic element of their study - of Orientalism, in the case of Said, and of anthropology, in the case of Fabian. Both Said and Fabian place the concept in a historical context, Said commenting that the Orient is the part of the world that was colonised by Europe and Fabian saying that knowledge of the Other is a political act. The variety of ways in which `the Other' is constructed will be discussed below.

Since the object of anthropological study is `the Other', it is obvious that there must be a Self who does the studying. In the foreword to Fabian's Time and the Other is the statement that anthropology was `a scientific discipline whose seemingly self-evident objects were the Others of a Western Self' (Fabian, 2002: xix) and it is also argued that Time and the Other `takes the ethnographic reality of a Western Self vis-à-vis a non-Western Other as its operative assumption.' (Fabian, 2002: xxvii) In recent years `indigenous anthropologists' have come to function as an important corrective against the reification of anthropology's Self/Other dyad in terms of the West/non-West dichotomy but it is claimed that we are not yet at the point where anthropology is no longer defined as the science of non-Western Others. (Fabian, 2002: xxviii)

Said, in speaking of `the Self' who studies or at the very least comes into contact with `the Other', used Kipling's White Man as `an idea, a persona, a style of being.' (1978: 226) He wrote that such people `emerge out of complex historical and cultural circumstances' and that one `became a White Man because one *was* a White Man (emphasis in original)...Being a White Man, in short, was a very concrete manner of being-in-the-world, a way of taking hold of reality, language, and thought.' (1978: 227) Said's description of the White Man seems to be similar to Fabian's idea of the Western Self who, in his concrete ways of living as well as in his thinking, is distinct from `the Other'.

The ways in which this `Western Self' or the `White Man' constructs `the Other' is the subject of the following sections. The three themes mentioned above will form

the structure and they will then be sought in the written and photographic data which is discussed in Chapters 5 and 6.

2.2.2 Theme 1 – Generalisation about `the Other'

In this section it is shown that one of Edward Said's main criticisms of the Orientalists was their use of generalisation, which, he claimed, was a culturally sanctioned practice. In making generalisations, the most common tense used is the ethnographic present, a sign, according to Fabian, that an observer is observing `the Other'. Other linguistic techniques connected with generalisation found in the literature such as the use of absolutes, modifications, and narrative are then discussed.

2.2.2.1 Generalisation

One of Said's major complaints about the Orientalists is that even those who had actually visited it (not all of them had) still indulged in sweeping generalisations about the East. An example is that of the English author, Kinglake, who wrote Eothen (1844) in a `rigidly chronological and dutifully linear' way as if he was describing `a shopping trip to an Oriental bazaar rather than an adventure.' Said scathingly continues: `Kinglake's undeservedly famous and popular work is a pathetic catalogue of pompous ethnocentrisms and tiringly nondescript accounts of the Englishman's East.' (Said, 1978: 193)

What angers Said is that Kinglake went to the East full of `pompous ethnocentrisms' and that, although he did describe his visit in a `rigidly chronological' way, he then makes sweeping generalizations about `the Orient, its culture, mentality, and society' based on canonical attitudes rather than on what he experienced:

> Although Kinglake blithely confesses to no knowledge of any Oriental language, he is not constrained by ignorance from making sweeping generalisations about the Orient, its culture, mentality, and society. Many of the attitudes he repeats are canonical, of course, but it is interesting how little the experience of actually seeing the Orient affected his opinions.
> (Said, 1978: 193)

It may be worth paying attention to some of the vocabulary Said employs to make his points. The use of `blithely confesses' shows that Said thinks that Kinglake saw no need whatsoever to learn any Oriental language and the phrase `not constrained by ignorance' points up the fact that Said considers Kinglake's lack of knowledge about the East a significant factor in his ability (or inability) to portray to Westerners the meaning of what he saw. That Kinglake's attitudes are described as `canonical' means that Said thinks he was far from being the only one with such ideas; such attitudes were considered right and good by the majority of Westerners at that time (1844).

The canonical attitudes held by Westerners in 1844 continued, according to Said, for at least a hundred years. Rudyard Kipling, mentioned above, was born in Bombay, India, in 1865 when the British Empire was at the height of its power. Said comments that `Kipling himself could not merely have happened; the same is true of his White Man.' (Said, 1978:227) Kipling's White Man is an example of a generalisation which arose out of the `complex historical and cultural circumstances' (Said, 1978: 227) of his era and Said says that the practice of making such generalisations is culturally sanctioned, i.e. it is a common practice. He speaks of `large generalisations' by which reality is divided into categories, the important point being that each category was an `evaluative interpretation':

> ...the culturally sanctioned habit of deploying large generalisations by which reality is divided into various collectives: languages, races, types, colors, mentalities, each category being not so much a neutral description as an evaluative interpretation. Underlying these categories is the rigidly binomial opposition of `ours' and `theirs'...
> (Said: 1978: 227)

`Ours' and `theirs' will be discussed below under Theme 2 and the power of the British Empire mentioned above in connection with Kipling will be considered in more detail in Theme 3 but it is worth noting here that the three themes in this chapter are closely related and often overlap or `bleed' into each other.

To emphasise his point that this kind of generalisation is culturally sanctioned, Said mentions a number of well known Western writers:

> An Oriental lives in the Orient, he lives a life of Oriental ease, in a state of Oriental despotism and sensuality, imbued with a feeling of Oriental fatalism. Writers as different as Marx, Disraeli, Burton, and Nerval could carry on a lengthy discussion between themselves, as it were, using all those generalities unquestioningly and yet intelligibly.
> (Said, 1978: 102)

Whereas Said denounced the Orientalist scholars he discussed for their sweeping generalisations, it has been pointed out by Robert Irwin and others that he himself indulged in the same practice. One prime example is the following:

> ...every European, in what he could say about the Orient, was consequently a racist, an imperialist, and almost totally ethnocentric.
> (Said, 1978: 204)

Irwin's criticisms will be considered in detail in 2.3 but two further examples of Said's own generalisations are given here to demonstrate the type of statement he made about the European Orientalists. In the example above Said used `every' and in two further examples he uses the word `*always*' (Said's italics) and the phrase `In all cases...'. Such strong generalisations using absolutes are exactly what Said complained about in the writings of the Orientalists, though, unfortunately, no concrete examples could be found in Orientalism.

> To be a European in the Orient *always* involves being a consciousness set apart from, and unequal with, its surroundings.
> (Said, 1978: 157)

> ...the sheer egoistic powers of the European consciousness at their center. In all cases the Orient is *for* the European observer.
> (Said, 1978: 158)

It may be noted that the subject of Said's generalisations here is the inequality of Europe and the Orient, a subject which will appear again in Theme 3.

In this section there has been a discussion of Said's criticism of the Orientalists for having used generalisations and, in turn, the criticisms of Irwin and others of Said for having used the same practice. The next topic is the linguistic techniques which constitute and signal such generalisations.

2.2.2.2 The ethnographic present

The most important signal of a generalisation is the use of the ethnographic present tense by an observer of `the Other'. One example is Lord Macartney's `they present themselves' and another is Said's `An Oriental lives in the Orient, he lives a life of Oriental ease' (Said, 1978: 102), his `quotation' to explain how the Orientalists spoke and wrote about the people who lived in `the East'. The present tense implies that the subjects of the observation always do exactly the same thing, that there is never any change in their behaviour. Another implication is that the subject lives in a different time from that of the observer – a time in the past.

The ethnographic present tense has been widely used in anthropological research and one critic who drew out the above implications was Johannes Fabian in his Time and the Other (2002). A summing up of his argument is that he identifies the ethnographic present as a rhetorical vehicle that reifies the Other as the inherently deindividuated object of the anthropologist's observation. (Fabian, 2002: xii) It can be seen that a further implication of the use of the tense is that the subject observed is not seen as an individual but as an object.

Two key ideas related to the use of the ethnographic present in Time and the Other are the `schizogenic use of Time' and `the denial of coevalness.' Fabian contends that `the anthropologist in the field employs conceptions of Time quite different from those that inform reports on his findings.' (Fabian, 2002: 21) It is this discrepancy in the use of Time that Fabian calls the `schizogenic use of Time.' An example might be that the anthropologist in the field used the past tense to make a note of what he actually saw whereas in his report he might change the past to the present in order to generalise.

With regard to the phrase `denial of coevalness,' which he coined, Fabian states that he came to the understanding that anthropology is an inherently political discipline and it was that political understanding that led him to suggest the phrase. He defined it as `a persistent and systematic tendency to place the referent(s) of anthropology in a Time other than the present of the producer of anthropological discourse.' (Fabian,

2002: 31) The fact that most anthropologists in the past, and perhaps still in the present, study `primitive' peoples may underlie Fabian's insight.

In Chapter Three (pp. 80-104) Fabian discusses the use of the ethnographic present at length but for reasons of space only some main points relevant to this study can be mentioned here. First, he mentions two objections to the ethnographic present. The first, a logical-statistical objection, is that `without qualifying or quantifying modifiers ("most *X*," or "70 percent of all *X* questioned"), the present unduly magnifies the claim of a statement to general validity.' (Fabian, 2002: 80) As an example, a statement such as the plural form `The Chinese do *X* ' or the singular form `The Chinese does *X*', even without the use of the word `all', makes a claim to general validity. To put it bluntly, `The Chinese' means `All Chinese'. When a modifier such as `most' or `70 per cent' or `some' is used, the statement has a very different meaning.

Fabian's second objection, an ontological one, is that the ethnographic present implies

> a static view of society, one that is unattentive to the fact that all cultures are constantly changing...At the very least...the present tense `freezes' a society at the time of observation; at worst, it contains assumptions about the repetitiveness, predictability, and conservatism of primitives.
> (2002: 81)

The use of the ethnographic present makes it seem that the culture under discussion is `always' the same, that there is never any change. If it is always the same, it must be very primitive, unlike the modern society in which `we' live, which is changing all the time.

An example of this changelessness may be inserted here, although it comes from neither the Middle East nor China:

> I was brought up with all the colonial claptrap of my kind: that `Out There in India' there were dark people irremediably inferior, who were lucky to be ruled by Us. At the boarding schools to which I was sent I looked with pride at the large part of the world coloured pink. I breathed in from birth the assumption that Orientals were subject races, by definition. There was something called the Indian Mind which was changeless, shared by the entire sub-continent.
> (Macfarlane, A. & Macfarlane, I., 2003: 1)

It may be noted again that the three themes identified in the literature are closely related. In addition to the changelessness of the `Indian Mind' (Theme 1), Macfarlane speaks of `my kind' (Theme 2 - `We/`They') and describes the `dark people' as `irremediably inferior' (Theme 3).

After discussing two objections to the use of the ethnographic present tense, Fabian says that it

> represents a choice of expression which is determined by an epistemological position and cannot be derived from, or explained by, linguistic rules alone...[It] not only marks a literary genre (*ethnography*) through the locutionary attitude of discourse/commentary; it also reveals a specific cognitive stance toward its object...it presupposes the givenness of the object of anthropology as something to be *observed. The present tense is a signal identifying a discourse as an observer's language.* (Fabian's italics) (Fabian, 2002: 86)

The use of the ethnographic present tense is one of the main linguistic signs of generalisation but other techniques closely associated with this practice, some strengthening, some weakening the impact of the statement, were found in the literature.

2.2.2.3 Other linguistic techniques

Such phrases as `the Chinese do X', `Chinese do X', `the Chinese does X' and `a Chinese does X', including the use of the pronoun `They' or `He' (never `She') instead of the proper noun, are the most common signals of generalisation but there are other associated techniques which were found in the literature and should be mentioned here briefly.

The first technique is one which merely emphasises the generalisation being made, increasing the effect of repetitiveness and changelessness. It is the use of such absolutes as `all', `always' and `every' which were found in Said's criticism of the Orientalists seen above. Even though `the Chinese' already means `all Chinese' these terms quite obviously strengthen the generalisation made. Such statements are usually made with great feeling and are often, though not always, negative in content.

A second technique, modification, weakens the impact of the generalisation. This technique was mentioned by Fabian (20022: 80) when he pointed out that the use of `most' or `70% of' immediately changes the force of an overall generalisation, weakening it. Common examples of such modifications in everyday speech are `a lot of' or `a bit of', often said in a softening, polite way. In addition to modifications relating to number, there are others that point to a recognition that the speaker might, because of such factors as age or class, have a different viewpoint from others. Still other modifications arise when the speaker tries to understand or respect `the Other' or even thinks she herself is wrong but still makes the generalisation, anyway.

A third technique, narrative, was mentioned by Said as a kind of pressure against the changelessness, or `synchronic essentialism', implied by generalisation.

> Against this static system of `synchronic essentialism' I have called vision because it presumes that the whole Orient can be seen panoptically, there is a constant pressure. The source of pressure is narrative....
> (Said, 1978: 240)

When narratives are recounted they are usually in the past tense and describe a particular event in a particular place at a particular time. With these particularities, they `break in' to the seemingly serene generalisation that `the Chinese always do X'. Another feature of narratives is that they are often full of emotion, a feature lacking in `objective' generalisations.

In summary, under the heading of Theme 1, Generalisation about `the Other', a number of ideas found in the literature about the use of generalisation when making sense of another culture have been discussed. Edward Said criticised the Orientalists for using culturally sanctioned generalisations about the East but he in turn was accused of using similar generalisations when attacking the scholars. Various linguistic techniques which either constitute generalisation or modify it in some way have also been noted.

Theme 2 will address a different way of making sense of another culture: the use of terms such as `We' and `They' and `East' and `West'.

2.2.3 Theme 2 – The Use of `We'/ `They' and `East'/ `West'

The hidden meaning of the seemingly innocent or neutral terms `We' and `They' and `East' and `West' is the topic of the following section. In the literature it was discovered that not only Said but other authors considered that the use of `We' and `They' and, in particular, `East' and `West' when making sense of another culture is a particular way of categorising and schematising with special overtones. Some examples of the discussion of this practice will now be given.

Said, in his summing up of the principal dogmas of Orientalism, says that the first dogma, and therefore presumably the most important in his opinion, is the absolute and systematic difference between the West and the Orient:

> ...the absolute and systematic difference between the West, which is rational, developed, humane, superior, and the Orient, which is aberrant, undeveloped, inferior.
> (Said, 1978: 300)

As an example, Said quotes the scholar William Robertson Smith who wrote about the differences between `the Oriental' and `ourselves' thus:

> The Arabian traveler is quite different from ourselves. The labour of moving from place to place is a mere nuisance to him, he has no enjoyment in effort [as `we' do], and grumbles at hunger or fatigue with all his might [as `we' do not]. You will never persuade the Oriental that, when you get off your camel, you can have any other wish than immediately to squat on a rug and take your rest (*isterih*), smoking and drinking. Moreover the Arab is little impressed by scenery [but `we' are]. (Smith, W., 1912, *Lectures and Essays*, p. 492)
>
> `We' are this, `they' are that. Which Arab, which Islam, when, how, according to what tests: these appear to be distinctions irrelevant to Smith's scrutiny of and experience in the Hejaz.
> (Said, 1978: 237)

A similar systematic differentiation between `Us' and `Them' is noted by Mary Louise Pratt in her description in Imperial Eyes – Travel Writing and Transculturation (1992) of the accounts of postcolonial metropolitan travel writers such as Alberto Moravia in Ghana or Paul Theroux in Guatemala. Here, even though they are describing a particular context at a particular time, the language is `pervasively

normative: the landscape *lacks* shape, finiteness, pattern, history.' Pratt comments that `There is never an excuse for this dehumanizing western habit of representing other parts of the world as having no history.' (Pratt, 1992: 216-219) There seems here an echo of the `inherently deindividuated object of the anthropologist's observation' mentioned above in the summary of Fabian's argument.

Pratt says that Moravia and Theroux also `claim authoritativeness for their vision. What they see is what there is. No sense of limitation on their interpretive powers is suggested...relations of subordination and possession are articulated through metaphors.' They describe `ugliness, incongruity, disorder, and triviality.' They `condemn what they see, trivialize it, and dissociate themselves utterly from it.' Since they dissociate themselves utterly from what they see, it may be assumed that they are describing `Them'. One example is that `The Patagonians, who do not look out the window, are failing to travel correctly on their own trains.' (Pratt, 1992: 217-219) One is reminded of `the Arab', mentioned above, who `is little impressed by scenery'.

Said asks almost plaintively if `there is any way of avoiding the hostility expressed by the division, say, of men into "us" (Westerners) and "they" (Orientals).' (Said, 1978: 45) He does not answer the question but goes on to point out the implications of using such terms:

> When one uses categories like Oriental and Western as both the starting and the end points of analysis, research, public policy...the result is usually to polarise the distinction – the Oriental becomes more Oriental, the Westerner more Western – and limit the human encounter between different cultures, traditions, and societies.
> (Said, 1978: 45-46)

It might seem that the use of `Us' and `Them' is a normal way, a kind of `shorthand', for referring to those who are culturally different from ourselves but, as Said points out, the result is usually to emphasise the distinction and for there to be an implication of superiority and inferiority.

From the use of `us' and `them' it is an easy step to the use of `East' and `West', perhaps more commonly used in written language or even in academic circles. In Orientalism Said states clearly that he refers to the study of the Muslim Middle East

but in the present research project the `East' centres on China. The arbitrariness of the concept of an Orient is described by Gramsci in his Prison Notebooks:

> Obviously East and West are arbitrary and conventional, that is historical constructions, since outside of real history every point on earth is East and West at the same time. This can be seen more clearly from the fact that these terms have crystallized not from the point of view of a hypothetical melancholic man in general, but from the point of view of the European cultural classes who, as a result of their world-wide hegemony, have caused them to be accepted everywhere.
> (Quoted in Irwin, 2006: 290)

The arbitrariness of the concepts of East and West are, perhaps, nowhere more obvious than in China, which for centuries regarded itself as the centre of the world, the Middle Kingdom. However, for historical reasons, even China now regards itself as being in the East, the modern TV tower in Shanghai being called 'The Pearl of the Orient'.

The use of `East' and `West' is now so universal that it tends to be forgotten that they are not only arbitrary but also asymmetrical with regard to power. Two scholars have pointed to this fact. Pratt, in describing colonial encounters, uses the term `contact zone' and in exploring the relations among the colonisers and the colonised she speaks of their copresence and interaction in the `zone'. However she emphasises that the interaction often takes place in a context where the relations of power are asymmetrical.

> By using the term `contact', I aim to foreground the interactive, improvisational dimensions of colonial encounters so easily ignored or suppressed by diffusionist accounts of conquest and domination. A `contact' perspective emphasizes how subjects are constituted in and by their relations to each other. It treats the relations among colonizers and colonized, or travelers and `travelees', not in terms of separateness or apartheid, but in terms of copresence, interaction, interlocking understandings and practices, often within radically asymmetrical relations of power.
> (Pratt, 1992: 7)

Another post-colonial scholar, Ien Ang, in her On Not Speaking Chinese – Living Between Asia and the West (2001), deals with a similar topic, that of the associations adhering to the term `the West'. She quotes Naoki Sakai (1989: 95) who says:

> The West [is] a name always associating itself with those regions, communities, and peoples that appear politically and economically superior to other regions, communities and peoples.
> (Ang, 2001: 4)

Ang continues:

> Indeed, it is the very entrenched hegemony of this asymmetrical relationship between the West and the Rest which reinforces the potency of `Asia' and `Asians' as categories which represent a *difference* from the West.
> (Ang, 2001: 4)

She makes the point not only of the asymmetry but of the fact that the use of the name `the West' `reinforces the potency' of [the East] as a separate category. In this she agrees with Said who spoke of the polarisation of the distinction.

In this brief discussion of `We' and `They and `East' and `West' it has been seen that such terms point up the absolute and systematic difference between the two and that they also have connotations of superiority and inferiority. They not only polarise the distinction but can even lead to hostility. The West dissociates itself from the East as it observes it. The very terms `East' and `West' are wholly arbitrary but are used so often in the materials I have read that it tends to be forgotten that there is an asymmetrical relationship between them. That relationship will be further explored in Theme 3 below.

2.2.4 Theme 3 – Ethnocentric Attitudes

Theme 3 is different from Themes 1 and 2 in that it concerns attitudes rather than linguistic techniques but it is nevertheless an important part of the construction of `the Other', perhaps an even more important part. In 2.2.1 above the underlying concepts of `the Self' and `the Other' which had been discovered in post-colonial literature were discussed. This was followed in Themes 1 and 2 with linguistic strategies which are used to construct the Other. Attitudes are more elusive but equally, if not more, significant. Attitude has been defined as `an ideational formation having affective and cognitive dimensions that create a disposition for a particular pattern of behavior'. (Vertzberger, 1990: 127) In this section of the literature review the views of several scholars on this important aspect of habitual ways of making sense of another culture

are considered. It seems to be an aspect that is sometimes so taken for granted as to be almost invisible.

Post-colonial discourse analyses how the historical fact of European colonialism continues to shape the relationship between the West and the non-West today. Robert Bickers, Senior Lecturer in History at Bristol University, published in 2003 a fascinating book - Empire Made Me – An Englishman Adrift in Shanghai. It is the story of an English policeman, Maurice Tinker, and is based not only on written documents but also many interviews with `old Shanghailanders'. (In general usage, `Shanghailanders' refers to foreigners born in Shanghai and `Shanghainese' to local Chinese.) The first line states: `Empire is with us, in our waking lives, and in our dreams and nightmares.' (Bickers, 2003: 1) Bickers states unequivocally that although the British Empire has disappeared, its influence is still felt, not only in the former colonies but also in the `mother country'. Whereas `(t)he retreat from empire led to...the growth of an idea that all that business was wholly of the past, done and dusty', (2003: 336) Bickers shows that this is not the case and that ideas and attitudes based on the former Western empires are still very much alive today.

Said makes the distinction between `latent Orientalism' (See 2.1.3), `an almost unconscious (and certainly an untouchable) positivity' and `manifest Orientalism', by which he means `the various stated views about Oriental society, languages, literatures, history, sociology and so forth'. (Said, 1978: 206) Whereas `manifest Orientalism' can be found in the writings or speech of Westerners who study the Orient, `latent Orientalism' is more difficult to trace since it is `almost unconscious', as was seen in the example given in 2.1.3 of a Hizbullah `terrorist' `on the back of a donkey' in the summer of 2006 in Lebanon, and `certainly untouchable'.

One form of `latent Orientalism' consists of thinking of the Western world as `the world'. Said gives an example from I.A. Richards's foreword to his *Mencius on the Mind* (1932). Richards mentions a French writer, M. Etienne Gilson, who, in the English Preface of his *The Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, speaks of Thomistic Philosophy as `accepting and gathering up the whole of human tradition'. Richards says:

> This is how we all think, to us the Western world is still the World [or the part of the World that counts]; but an impartial observer would perhaps say that such provincialism is dangerous.
> (Quoted in Said: 1978: 254)

This habit of referring to the Western world as the whole world is so ingrained that many Westerners tend not to notice it. It is to be found not only in scholastic circles but also in the Western press and in daily life. I.A. Richards was far in advance of his time (1932) when he says that `such provincialism is dangerous'.

Whereas Richards referred to `provincialism', i.e. a neglect of the rest of the world on the part of the West, Fabian writes about the reasons for the distance between the West and the Rest:

> The distance between the West and the Rest on which all classical anthropological theories have been predicated is by now being disputed in regard to almost every conceivable aspect (moral, aesthetic, intellectual, political). Little more than technology and sheer economic exploitation seem to be left over for the purposes of `explaining' Western superiority. It has become foreseeable that even those prerogatives may either disappear or no longer be claimed. There remains `only' the all-pervading denial of coevalness which ultimately is expressive of a cosmological myth of frightening magnitude and persistency.
> (Fabian, 2002: 35)

Fabian argues that in the past the distance was based on moral, aesthetic, intellectual and political grounds but that when he was writing (in 1982) little more than `technology and sheer economic exploitation' seemed to be left to `explain' Western superiority. Even then he thought that it was `foreseeable' that such prerogatives might disappear. However, his notion of an `all-pervading denial of coevalness', the relegation of `the Other' to a different time from `ours', discussed above in Theme 1, remains `a cosmological myth of frightening magnitude and persistency'.

The persistent attitude of the denial of coevalness seems a notion much stronger than the neglect of the rest of the world by Westerners mentioned by Richards but there are even more forceful words from Said, words seen above in Theme 1 but which bear repeating here:

> ...every European, in what he could say about the Orient, was consequently a racist, an imperialist, and almost totally ethnocentric.
> (Said, 1978: 204)

Said immediately follows this statement by saying that Europeans are not the only ones to have such attitudes. He says, `human societies, at least the more advanced cultures, have rarely offered the individual anything but imperialism, racism, and ethnocentrism for dealing with "other" cultures.' (1978: 204) One might think of the attitude, in history, of the advanced Chinese culture to the barbarians on its borders or the ethnic minorities in its midst. But Said returns to his charge by stating clearly:

> My contention is that Orientalism is fundamentally a political doctrine willed over the Orient because the Orient was weaker than the West, which elided the Orient's difference with its weakness.
> (Said, 1978: 204)

Thus far, in the discussion of the meaning of Said's `latent Orientalism', three possible attitudes of Westerners to the East have been seen: the first a provincialism, the second a denial of coevalness and the third racism, imperialism and ethnocentrism.

One form of ethnocentrism is Eurocentrism which is discussed by Pratt in her Imperial Eyes – Travel Writing and Transculturation (1992). She writes of a new version of Europe's `planetary consciousness', `a version marked by an orientation toward interior exploration and the construction of global-scale meaning through the descriptive apparatuses of natural history'. (Pratt, 1992: 15)

> This new planetary consciousness, I will suggest, is a basic element constructing modern Eurocentrism, that hegemonic reflex that troubles westerners even as it continues to be second nature to them.
> (Pratt, 1992: 15)

Pratt's comment that modern Eurocentrism troubles westerners *even as it continues to be second nature to them* (italics added) is worth noting. It seems to be similar to Said's concept of `latent Orientalism' in that it is `almost unconscious' but Pratt is writing in the 1990s by which time, perhaps, the Westerners are beginning to be aware of their `hegemonic reflex' and are therefore `troubled' by it.

In another chapter, however, Pratt does not seem to be so optimistic. She discusses at length Alexander von Humboldt, the German explorer of South America, and comments, `Over and over one reads that "it took" Alexander von Humboldt to "give us a beautiful vision" of South America'. (Pratt, 1992: 197) She even says that in the spring of 1985 North Americans were treated to a glossy nostalgic revival of Humboldt by the *National Geographic* magazine. Then she asks two important questions:

> Should one conclude that the structures of reception for Humboldt's Americanist writings remain unchanged since 1820? Are the relations of authority, hierarchy, alienation, dependency, Eurocentrism that gave the essentializing aspects of Humboldt's work their appeal in 1820 still so entrenched as to be invisible?
> (Pratt, 1992: 197)

The structures of reception mentioned by Pratt are a reminder that it is not only the travelers who were (are) Eurocentric but their readers, their audience, the general public, as well. Her second question implies that the `relations of authority, hierarchy, alienation, dependency and Eurocentrism' that so appealed to Humboldt's audience in 1820 <u>are</u> still so entrenched as to be invisible.

In this section several terms have been discussed: Said's `latent Orientalism', Richards's `provincialism', Fabian's `denial of coevalness', Said's `racism, imperialism and ethnocentrism' and Pratt's `Eurocentrism'. All of them speak of a world view of the power of the West that tends to be invisible to those who hold it but which influences the way in which they construct `the Other'.

2.3 <u>Comments on Said</u>

This literature review has focussed on the concept of `the Other' and the ways in which that concept is constructed, based mainly on ideas put forward in Edward Said's <u>Orientalism</u> as well as in the work of other scholars. While <u>Orientalism</u> is well known in academic circles, it has been the subject of attack not least by Robert Irwin, an Orientalist at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London. In this section there is a short survey of the comments, both positive and negative, which have been made about the book and the concept of `the Other'. A second point is that Said, while

accusing the Orientalists of generalising, himself generalised, not least about them. His claim that the Orientalists provided the intellectual justification for the European empires of the 19th century is also briefly considered. Finally, Robert Irwin's summing up of the book is discussed.

As an introduction, the first point mentioned in the summary of Said's argument given in 2.1.3 may be stressed again – the fact that Westerners misrepresent `the East' by denying its reality. Agreement with this argument is found in Eric Hayot's discussion of the poetry of Ezra Pound:

> [Said's] topic in Orientalism is the persistence of Western belief that its knowledge of the Orient corresponded perfectly to the Orient's brute reality. (Hayot, 1999: 516)

In the literature it was found that the concept of `the Other' found in Orientalism and other books such as Fabian's Time and the Other is the main target of criticism of a number of writers, including Robert Irwin. Irwin states that, `The "Other" is a key concept in post-colonial theory.' and that it represents `something alien, threatening and, in a sense, dehumanized'. (Irwin, 2006: 291) According to Irwin, Said thought that `The West confirmed its own identity by conjuring up a fictitious entity that was not Western.' (Irwin, 2006: 291) Irwin disagrees with this, stating that he thinks that the West's identity is based mainly on its own ancient heritage, the Greek and Roman civilizations, not necessarily in opposition or counterpoint to any other culture. Even if it were, Irwin believes that for most Protestant Englishmen in the 17th century, a French or Catholic `Other' was much closer at hand. (Irwin, 2006: 191)

Another present-day scholar, Francois Jullien, a professor at Paris-7 Diderot University and director of the Institut de la Pensee Contemporaine, seems to prefer not to use the concept of `the Other'. He writes that there are two concepts of sinology, one merely reproducing Chinese texts, the other daring to draw up theoretical objects by using the exteriority of China, compared with that of Europe's. `I mean exteriority [the state of being outside] and not Otherness, which is a constructed notion.' (Jullien, 2006: 12)

Jullien appears to think that `exteriority' refers to the simple physical fact that China is outside Europe whereas `the Other' is a constructed notion, presumably with many connotations.

A third scholar, Robert Young, also states that the concept of `the Other' is a construct, assigning its origins to the postcolonial school of thought. Young argues that the construction of `the Other' is a false representation and that it can be criticized for being similar to the essentialist ideas of the Orientalists which the postcolonialists were themselves criticizing.

> Postcolonial criticism has constructed two antithetical groups, the colonizer and colonized, self and Other, with the second only knowable through a necessarily false representation, a Manichean division that threatens to reproduce the static, essentialist categories it seeks to undo.
> (Young, 1995: 5)

Attacks on the concept of `the Other' were also found in the writing of a number of other scholars such as Charles Freund in a 2001 article entitled `2001 nights: the end of the orientalist critique' and Keith Windschuttle in `Edward Said's "Orientalism" Revisited' published in 1999.

Irwin's second main criticism of Said, already mentioned briefly in 2.2.2.1, is in connection with generalisation. Said accused the Orientalist scholars of generalising about `the Arabs' but he himself used such techniques in his description of `the Orientalists'. In particular, Said's statement given in 2.2.2.1 characterizing "every" European as a racist and an imperialist has been objected to by Irwin, who said that Said libelled generations of scholars (2006: 295), and others. The only qualification in the statement is the use of the word `almost' in front of `totally ethnocentric'. Irwin comments that other scholars, such as Nadim al-Bitar, a Lebanese Muslim, have also denounced Said for wildly over-generalising about the nature of Orientalism, as well as grotesquely exaggerating the prevalence of racism in Western intellectual circles. (Irwin, 2006: 299)

Irwin objects in particular to Said's generalisations which refer to Orientalists like himself. (Irwin, 2006: 295) Said states that all Orientalists were in the same `guild',

i.e. that they all approached/approach the Orient in exactly the same way. Said described it thus: `the internal consistency of Orientalism and its ideas about the Orient'. (Said, 1978: 5) He makes it appear that all Orientalists spoke with the same voice but Irwin's whole book is a catalogue of the many Orientalists who had varying mindsets and purposes. Some studied the Orient for religious purposes to combat Islam and convert Muslims to Christianity; others were more interested in trade. Irwin even gives examples of early ethnographers such as Alexander Russell (1756) - `*The Natural History of Aleppo*' (2006: 121), Edward William Lane (1836) - `*Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*' (2006: 164) and Christian Hurgronje (1888-9) - `*Mekka*', which is a careful record in German of the `manners and customs of the local inhabitants as well as the visiting pilgrims, detailing their beliefs, rituals and everyday life'. (2006: 200)

Turning to the subject of the intellectual justification for the European empires, Charles Mackerras refers to Edward Said as a well-known scholar who has exerted considerable influence, including on the formation of his own position. He says:

> Said's notion that the West `colonised' knowledge about Asia means that the West devised the construct of `the Orient' as part of the process of enhancing the power of the West over Asian peoples.
> (Mackerras, 1989: 4)

Windschuttle disagrees, however, contending that Orientalism as a cause of imperialism is an idea that `does not deserve to be taken seriously'. (1999: 4) He admits that it provided `a background mindset that convinced it of its cultural and technological advance of Islam' but does not think this sufficient to explain the motives or objectives of imperialism . `[R]eal historians', he argues, `have come to quite different conclusions, with trade, investment, and military causes predominating'. (1999: 5)

A further criticism of Said in connection with history is that in Orientalism he made a number of mistakes with regard to the facts. Irwin lists a number of them and says that they `suggest a breathtaking ignorance of Middle Eastern history'. (Irwin, 2006: 283) An Arab scholar, Ibn Warraq, has written a particularly forceful commentary on

Orientalism entitled `Debunking Edward Said' (2006) in which he agrees with Irwin about Said's historical mistakes and on many other points.

In summing up his criticism of Orientalism, Irwin states that it seems to him to be

> a work of malignant charlatanry in which it is hard to distinguish honest mistakes from wilful misrepresentations. This may seem to my readers to depart from the normal restraint and courtesies of academic debate, but I am afraid that Orientalism led the way in these respects.
> (Irwin, 2006: 4)

It is probably a rare event that a book published in 1978 should arouse such strong feelings almost thirty years later. What is puzzling is Irwin's professed inability to understand why the book has been and remains so popular.

> Obviously I find it impossible to believe that his book was written in good faith. If Said's book is as bad as I think it is, why has it attracted so much attention and praise in certain quarters? I am uncertain of what the correct answer might be.
> (Irwin, 2006: 309)

2.4 Conclusion

The question raised at the beginning of this literature review was whether Edward Said's argument in Orientalism (1978) might usefully inform a study of a small group of Western women in Shanghai in 2005. If it does, what can be learned about the process of making sense of another culture?

The main points in Said's argument were given near the beginning of this chapter and he himself summed it up in these few words:

> My argument takes it that the Orientalist reality is both antihuman and persistent. Its scope, as much as its institutions and *all-pervasive influence* [italics added], lasts up to the present.
> (Said, 1978: 44)

Said was writing in the USA in 1978. Is his argument still relevant in Shanghai in 2005? Does the all-pervasive influence of the Orientalists to which he referred extend as far as China and up to the beginning of the 21st century?

I believe it does and I agree with those who regard Orientalism as a seminal text in post-colonial theory. I think the most important point he makes is in connection with power, especially the arrogance of power which abuses its powerfulness and which is sometimes unconscious and (almost) invisible.

The very fact that Orientalism has been translated into thirty-six languages speaks for itself as does its being quoted in a newspaper article about the Middle East in the summer of 2006. (See 2.1.3) Its relevance to China was shown in the comment by a Chinese scholar that it has near-paradigmatic status as a model of the relationships between Western and non-Western cultures but that Sinologists have yet to make extensive use of it. (See 2.1.4)

The strong criticisms of Said by Irwin and others must, however, be taken into account because they question not only the content of Orientalism but also Said's purpose in writing it. Said's key concept of `the Other', for example, is questioned and criticised for being similar to the essentialist ideas of the Orientalists whom he was criticising. I think, however, that it is a useful concept which underlies the process of an attempt to interpret another culture.

One of the strongest criticisms is that, whereas Said rebuked the Western Orientalists for generalising about the Middle East, he himself generalised about the Orientalists, thus, according to Irwin, libelling generations of sincere and erudite scholars. (See 2.3) This is indeed a serious criticism, not to be taken lightly.

Still other criticisms are in connection with Said's treatment of history in Orientalism. A number of critics disagree with his contention that the Orientalist scholars had a strong influence on the political imperialists of the day, though Mackerras, for one, agrees with him. (See 2.3) Irwin and others have found in Orientalism many regrettable mistakes with regard to historical facts.

I cannot agree, however, with Irwin's overall summing up of Orientalism as `malignant charlatanry' (2006: 4) and his statement that he is uncertain as to why it has attracted `so much attention and praise in certain quarters' (2006: 309) seems disingenuous. There must be good reasons why it has been translated into thirty-six languages.

I believe that the reader reception theory can help towards providing a clue as to why Orientalism has attracted so much attention. This theory states that every time a text is read the reader is simultaneously reader and author. (Casad, 2000: np) Thus, Said's many readers have, like me, constructed a new text for themselves, choosing the parts of his text that are meaningful to them. In other words, Said's argument can be applied, in part, in many situations.

The key concept of `the Other' seems to me to underlie the construction of another culture by anyone and, in particular, it applies to the construction of `the East' by Westerners. Fabian's comment that `there is no knowledge of the Other which is not also a temporal, historical, a political act' (See 2.2.1) is certainly relevant in Shanghai in 2005 as the participants in this research revealed in their comments.

My reading of the literature elicited three themes which seemed important with regard to the construction of `the Other': Theme 1) Generalisation, Theme 2) The Use of `We'/`They' and `East'/`West' and Theme 3) Ethnocentric Attitudes. In my search for habitual ways of making sense of another culture, I therefore sought these three themes in the data collected for this research. My findings are reported in Chapters 5 and 6.

In the next chapter, Chapter 3, the methodology used to collect the data and the reasons for the methods will be discussed.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The first book read at my tutor's suggestion was Edward Said's Orientalism and this was followed by the reading of other post-colonial theorists. I decided to do an empirical study to try to find the answer to the central question of this research: are there habitual ways of making sense of another culture? It seemed that I could make use of Said by asking the question: do Westerners in Shanghai in 2005 still construct the East in the same way as Edward Said claims the Orientalist scholars did in the 19th and early 20th centuries and still did in 1978? The concept of `the Other' and the three themes found in the literature: 1) Generalisation, 2) The Use of `We'/`They' and `East'/`West' and 3) Ethnocentric Attitudes formed a structure for the findings and the analysis.

In this chapter I first explain the reasons why an ethnographic approach was chosen based on the interpretive, phenomenological or constructivist paradigm of the acquisition of knowledge. The constructivist paradigm is first defined and then contrasted with the positivist `objective' paradigm. This is followed by a discussion of the importance of context in social science studies with special reference to Clifford Geertz' concept of `thick description'. The choice of ethnography was partly based on the model of Janice Radway's study Reading the Romance and the use of photographs influenced by Sarah Pink's Doing Visual Ethnography. Finally, there is a description of the actual process used in the research.

3.2 Constructivist paradigm

One definition of the constructivist paradigm is that reality is not an objective fact to be studied by an impartial observer as is the common practice in the natural sciences but that it is socially constructed and that therefore the researcher should attempt to understand the `complex world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it'. (Mertens, 1998: 12) `Constructivism assumes the relativism of multiple social realities, recognizes the mutual creation of knowledge by the viewer and the

viewed, and aims toward interpretive understanding of subjects' meanings.' (Charmaz, 2003: 250)

It may be helpful to compare and contrast the differences between the kinds of knowledge which are thought to be most valid in the constructivist and positivist paradigms and the ways in which this knowledge is obtained. Whereas `positivism holds that the most valid kind of knowledge is *objective* knowledge, and that we come to *know* things by *testing* our ideas through the process of research', (CLMS, 2004: 18)... `phenomenology holds that the most valid kind of knowledge is *subjective* knowledge, and that we come to *know* things by viewing the world *through the eyes of the people we study: through understanding their subjective interpretations of it'*. (CLMS, 2004: 21) (italics in original)

A few examples are given to clarify the differences between these two paradigms or approaches. A positivist, quantitative approach to the study of culture was used by the Dutch researcher, Geert Hofstede, who has become well known in the field especially with regard to the cross-cultural study of values. However, some critics suggest that his methodology is mismatched to the subject of culture, that his approach will only be able to measure and index the surface level of national culture (such as dress and language), and that it cannot reveal deeper levels of meaning and understanding. (CLMS, 2004: 27)

An earlier example of a researcher who strove for objectivity was Margaret Mead, the American anthropologist best known for her Coming of Age in Samoa published in 1928. When trying to answer critics who objected to her use of visual material, she claimed that if cameras were left to film continuously without human intervention they would produce `objective materials'. (Pink, 2007: 9)

A third example of such an approach is Michael Bond, who has been the Professor of Psychology at the Chinese University of Hong Kong for more than 20 years. In his Beyond the Chinese Face – Insights from Psychology (1991) he makes the following claim:

> Science promises objectivity, rules of procedure, progress towards consolidated knowledge, and structure...The procedure of science requires the psychologist to choose a concept which interests him or her, such as interpersonal dominance, linguistic ability, or parental warmth, and then to devise ways to measure this concept reliably.
> (Bond, 1991: 2)

A few of the results of his study are:

> The Chinese child is brought up to regard home as a refuge against the indifference, the rigours, and the arbitrariness of life outside (Bond, 1991: 6)
>
> ...the average Chinese is positively disposed towards Westerners...(Bond, 1991: 45)
>
> ...the Chinese have a rather affectionate relationship with Fate, the great leveler.
> (Bond, 1991: 61)
>
> ...the Chinese, like many other cultural groups, are desperate to improve the living standards of their people. (Bond, 1991: 115)

It can be seen that the statements above are remarkably like the generalisations of the Orientalist scholars criticised by Said, the difference being that Bond claims to have arrived at this kind of knowledge through a scientific procedure. In both cases, no context is provided, Bond, as far as can be discerned, giving no data from the Chinese mainland. It is not known which Chinese he is referring to or when or where.

3.3 Importance of context

Unlike Bond, other scholars have found that an important, in fact an essential, way of making sense of another culture is to pay attention to the specific context in which that culture is observed. Fabian says, `All personal experience is produced under historical conditions, in historical contexts; it must be used with critical awareness and with constant attention to its authoritative claims'. (Fabian, 2002: 89) The personal experience of human beings studied by anthropologists is different from objects studied by the natural scientists in that it can never be exactly replicated. This would seem to be an argument for case studies.

Another scholar who has paid great attention to context and its interpretation is Clifford Geertz, whose `semiotic' concept of culture is important:

> Believing, with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretative one in search of meaning. It is explication I am after, construing social expressions on their surface enigmatical.
> (Geertz, 1973: 5)

Geertz's method of explication is `thick description'. (Geertz, 1973: 6-7) As an example, he gives a story from his field journal of a Jew named Cohen, some Berbers and the French authorities – and some sheep - in the highlands of Morocco in 1912. (Geertz, 1973: 7-9) He then uses the story to show that `what we call our data are really our own constructions of other people's constructions of what they and their compatriots are up to'. (Geertz, 1973: 9) In the present study the data, from both the interviews with Focus Groups and the photographs taken by the participants, are my own constructions of the participants' constructions of what they are thinking or doing or seeing in Shanghai.

Geertz insists on the importance of specific context, contending that if data about what specific people say or do is divorced from the situation it is meaningless. An interpretation of anything should attempt to go into the heart of it.

> If anthropological interpretation is constructing a reading of what happens, then to divorce it from what happens – from what, in this time or that place, specific people say, what they do, what is done to them from the whole vast business of the world – is to divorce it from the applications and render it vacant. A good interpretation of anything – a poem, a person, a history, a ritual, an institution, a society – takes us into the heart of that of which it is the interpretation.
> (Geertz, 1973: 18)

In cross-cultural studies the specific context is particularly important since the observers or researchers are not familiar with the `webs of significance' which make up that culture.

Geertz states that it is difficult to understand the beliefs or actions, in a particular context, of persons from a foreign culture because `we' do not understand the meaning of the signs:

> ...systems of meanings are what produce culture, they are the collective property of a particular people. When `we', either as researchers or simply as human beings, do not understand the beliefs or actions of persons from a foreign culture, we are acknowledging our `lack of familiarity with the imaginative universe within which their acts are signs'.
> (Geertz, 1973: 12-13)

One other scholar should be mentioned with regard to the importance of context: Ien Ang, who was mentioned above in Ch. 1. She is a Professor of Cultural Studies in Australia and is a person of Chinese descent, born in Indonesia and raised in the Netherlands. In answer to critics of Cultural Studies, she asked,

> But didn't the strength of cultural studies lie precisely in its attention to context, in the rigorously anti-reductionist theoretical and methodological assumption that relations between people, culture and power – to capture in a catchphrase what cultural studies is `about' – can only be grasped in their concrete, particular and specific contexts?
> (Ang, 2001: 166)

Ang gives the following answer to her own question:

> ...we need to work through and with...the paradox...which is produced by the simultaneous operation of the pull toward abstraction and decontextualization, on the one hand, and the need to concretize, historicize and contextualize, on the other (Stratton and Ang, 1996)
> (Ang, 2001: 169)

Ang mentions the `simultaneous operation of the pull toward abstraction...and the need to...contextualize', pointing out that the difficulty for the researcher is that the two processes take place at the same time, not one after the other.

Said, like Fabian, Geertz and Ang, also writes about specific contexts. When discussing the relationship between knowledge and politics, he says:

> My argument is that each humanistic investigation must formulate the nature of that connection in the specific context of the study, the subject matter, and its historical circumstances. (Said, 1978: 15)

Finally, Janice Radway, whose ethnographic study of a group of women reading romances is the model for this study, says that her colleagues had turned away from statistical models for the study of society and behaviour and had developed instead a complex rationale for the use of ethnographic methods in the effort to make sense of American culture. They argued that `cultural investigation must always take account of spatial and temporal specificity'. (Radway, 1987: 3)

3.4 Ethnography

Ethnography is a method or technique used by anthropologists and sociologists for studying human behaviour of many kinds, including the behaviour of groups within the same culture. It usually consists of collecting data through interviews, either with individuals or with groups, and its goal is sometimes described as observer participation, in which the researcher not only observes the `subjects' or participants but also participates in their activities.

Sarah Pink in Doing Visual Ethnography gives this definition of ethnography:

> ...ethnography is a process of creating and representing knowledge (about society, culture and individuals) that is based on ethnographers' own experiences. It does not claim to produce an objective or truthful account of reality, but should aim to offer versions of ethnographers' experiences of reality that are as loyal as possible to the context, negotiations and intersubjectivities through which the knowledge was produced. This may entail reflexive, collaborative or participatory methods.
> (Pink, 2007: 22)

Unlike the positivists, ethnographers do not claim `objectivity' or truth'; instead they say that reality is subjective and is known only as it is experienced by individuals. (Pink, 2007: 24) Pink even says that subjectivity should be engaged with as a central aspect of ethnographic knowledge, interpretation and representation. (2007: 23) The vast difference between this viewpoint and that of Margaret Mead, who tried to be as objective as possible by leaving her cameras to film continuously without human intervention, can easily be seen.

While subjectivity is a central aspect of ethnographic knowledge, it should be acknowledged that it is impossible for the ethnographer to know whether she is representing her participants clearly and fairly. The very categorisation of the data under the headings assigned by the researcher is an expression of her own point of view. Pink says that ethnography should engage with issues of representation that question the right of the researcher to represent other people, recognise the impossibility of knowing other minds and acknowledge that the sense we make of informants' words and actions is an expression of our own consciousness. (Pink, 2007: 22)

A model of an ethnographic study is that by Janice Radway, Reading the Romance (1987), a study of a group of sixteen women who were homogeneous and who knew each other well. Radway investigated their reasons for reading popular romantic fiction and discovered that the reasons were complex and not necessarily escapist as is usually imagined. She also found that the behaviour and self-understanding of the participants was `limited if not in crucial ways complexly determined by the social formulation within which these subjects find themselves'. (Radway, 1987: 6) The `social formulation' of the *taitais* in this research project is probably much more complex than that of the Smithton women in Radway's project because they come from very different backgrounds but, in another sense, they are homogeneous in that they are all, with one exception, *taitais*.

Further comparisons can be made between Radway's study and this project in Shanghai. Radway explains that she asked many questions with regard to the meaning of the reading of the romances but `the Smithton women repeatedly answered my questions about the meaning of romances by talking about the meaning of romance reading as a social event in a familial context'. (Radway, 1987: 7) It will be found in the data below that the *taitais* told many stories about their daily lives in answer to questions with regard to such topics as sexism or which aspects of Chinese culture they positively embrace. A difference between Radway's study in which her participants saw themselves `first as wives and mothers' (Radway, 1987: 7) and this project is that in this study the women, although also wives and mothers, saw themselves first as `non-working women'. This is probably one of the crucial factors affecting their ways of making sense of Chinese culture.

3.5 Visual Ethnography

This research project is an ethnographic one and the data from the interviews with a small group of women are the most important source of information. However, visual ethnography seems to be a new field of study and therefore the participants were asked to provide photographs. Details of the procedure followed will be found in 3.6 and in Chapter 6 where the photographic data are presented but some comments should be made here about the use of the visual in ethnography.

If objections are raised with regard to subjectivity in the more common forms of ethnography in which participants are observed and interviews carried out, they are all the more common when visual materials are used. Photographs, for example, can easily be considered as lacking in scientific rigour and as unrepresentative and unsystematic forms of data. (Pink, 2007: 9) However, it has already been noted above that any ethnography is subjective and that therefore this cannot be considered an argument against photographs.

An argument for the use of visual images is that they surround us in our daily life and that they should therefore be used as tools in research. An approach that incorporates visual images and technologies `recognizes the interwovenness of objects, texts, images and technologies in people's everyday lives and identities'. (Pink, 2007: 7)

The advantage of the visual is that it has a certain richness and is not limited by the linearity of words. (Pink, 2007: 87) The visual has no fixed meaning, the meaning being determined by the intentionality of the photographer and by the interpretation of the person who is doing the looking at the image. Another advantage is that the image can be more powerful than words and that it can perhaps convey the feelings of the participants even better than words.

Photography can be used by the researcher to take photographs of the participants for a variety of purposes but another possibility is to put the camera in the hands of the participants. It can easily be seen that issues of power are involved when one takes photographs or when one has one's photograph taken. Two examples of the use of photography were found in the literature, one a project on rural migrant workers in

urban settings in South China (Ma & Tse, 2006: 1-3) in which the researcher held the camera and another in Iranian Kurdistan where the informants held the cameras in their own hands but were asked to photograph their own culture, not a different one. (Ahmady, 2006: 1)

Finally, photographs often reveal as much about the viewer as the viewed. De Munck and Sobo (1998: 223) ask, `Do one's social linkages and social behaviours influence the thematic content of an individual's photographs?' John Berger's answer to the question is: `The way we see things is affected by what we know or what we believe.' (1972: 8) Berger also contends, as will be seen in Ch. 6, that the photographer's way of seeing `is reflected in his [sic] choice of subject'. (1972: 10)

3.6 Description of Process

The timetable of the process of this research is given in Appendix 1 but a fuller description should be given here. The first book read in 2003, at my supervisor's suggestion, was Edward Said's Orientalism which, as will be seen throughout this dissertation, formed the theoretical basis for the study. Other post-colonial theorists read were Johannes Fabian, Mary Louise Pratt and Ien Ang, whose ideas on `the Other' and the ways in which `the West' views `the East' were similar to those of Said. It is clear, however, that Said, in particular, has many critics and therefore it was important to read also books and articles by those who disagree with him.

It was fortunate that just as I was beginning the research in 2003, my husband, George Wang, and I were invited to speak to the Chinese Culture Study Group of Shanghai about our joint autobiography, Shanghai Boy Shanghai Girl – Lives in Parallel, which was published in June 2002. The members of the group became the participants in this study and a detailed description of the group, the way in which I approached them and of the interviews carried out with them can be found in Chapter 4.

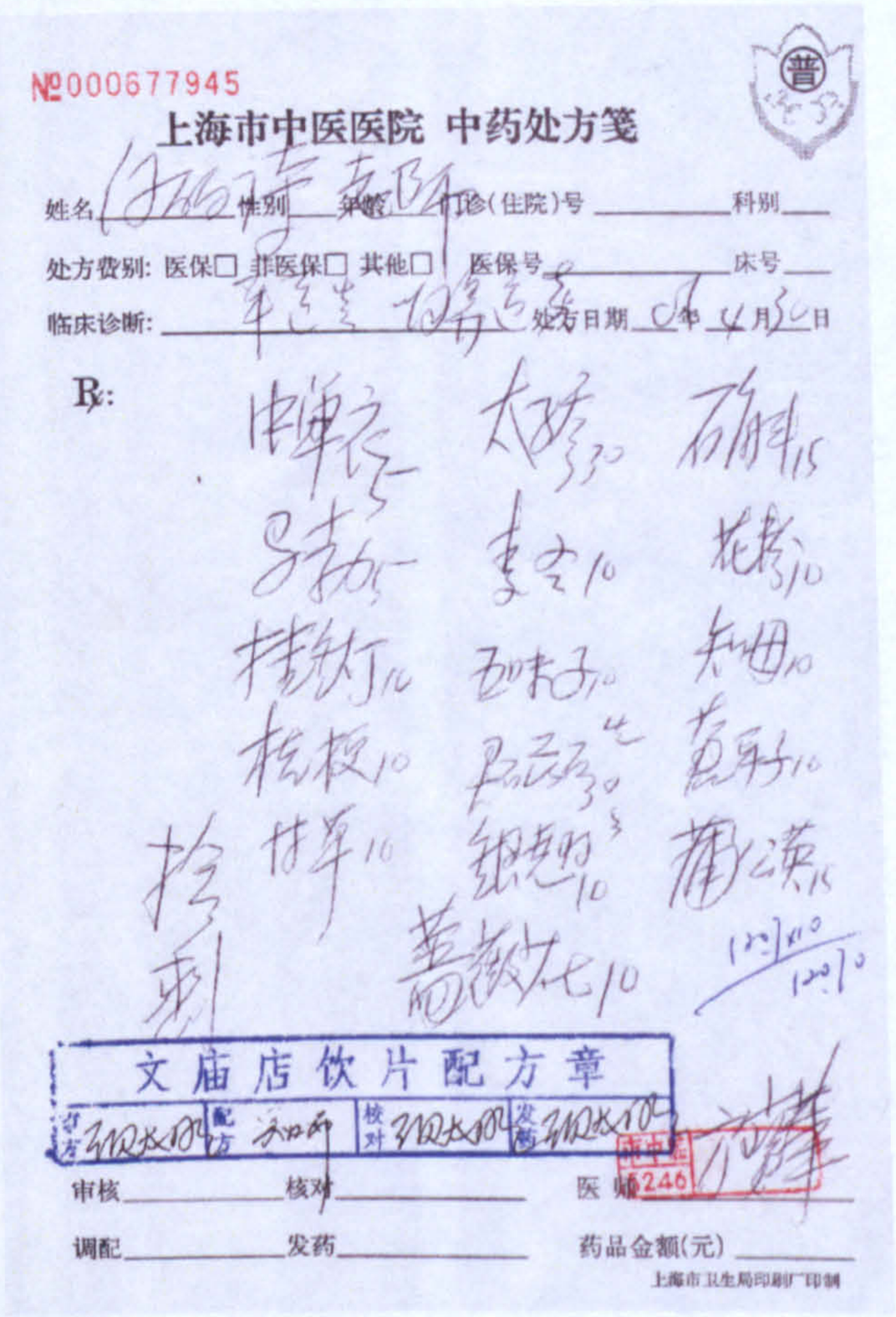
This Study Group consisted of only 18 members but with the example of Radway's study as a model and based on further reading, it seemed that this would not be too small a group. Stake says that the epistemological question is: What can be learned from the single case? His answer is that the case study is designed to optimise

understanding of the case rather than the generalisation beyond. A case is one among others, `a specific One'. (Denzin & Lincoln, eds., 2003b: 135) `In particularities lie the vitality, trauma, and uniqueness of the case.' (Denzin & Lincoln, eds., 2003b: 148)

Among the books read on methodology were three which mentioned self-observation as a valid ethnographic tool. All three were, as it happens, by women. Edginton, in an unpublished PhD thesis, presents `radical psychoanalytic questioning of the ethnographer as text'. Her first chapter consists of an autobiographical narrative which, she claims, exemplifies her argument in her second chapter that `post-modern ethnography should not only [observe others] but should also analyse the narratives of the ethnographer'. (Edginton, 2000: Abstract)

Radway, writing in a new introduction to her Reading the Romance, says,`...what I took to be simple descriptions of my interviewees' self-understandings were mediated if not produced by my own conceptual constructs and ways of seeing the world.' (Radway, 1991: 5) She also wrote about the need to differentiate clearly between remarks by her respondents and her own observations about them and the need to show the nature of the relationship between the interviewees and herself by describing the interviews in greater detail and by including representative transcripts.

The reading of these two authors and of Ang, another woman, mentioned in 1.2, encouraged me to use self-observation as a starting point for this study and I therefore decided to try to isolate the factors that I have found over more than fifty years of close contact with Chinese culture make it difficult for me to understand and cope with it. The three that seemed most salient were: language, food and medicine. The illustration below exemplifies all three as it is a prescription written for me by a traditional Chinese medicine doctor when I had a severe sinus and ear infection during the course of this research. The Chinese characters are indecipherable to me and the many ingredients in the medicine have to be stewed for about an hour.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上海市中医医院 中药处方笺

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In consultation with my supervisor, in August 2004 I devised a set of 20 questions which were based partly on the above three cultural domains and partly on my reading, hoping to learn from the participants concrete details about their lives in Shanghai.

In the spring of 2005 I carried out the interviews. First, five pre-tests of the questions were carried out with individual women, two of whom were from the study group (both were imminently leaving Shanghai). All the pre-testees gave feedback which was helpful in the formulation of the questions, especially Question 7, which was about superiority, and Question 14, about sexism. (See Appendix 4) Questions 12 and 13 were found to be unproductive and therefore were not used after the pre-tests. I decided to interview the participants in Focus Groups after reading in the literature of the advantages of such groups, such as that they provide an opportunity to obtain large and rich amounts of data in the respondents' own words and that they allow respondents to react to and build upon the responses of other group members. (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990: 16)

A good description of a focus group speaks of `the immediate huddled reciprocity that goes on in the talk that takes place in small groups'. (Deacon et al, 1999: 284) Another comment on this topic comes from a participant mentioned in the literature: `I'd rather talk this way, with a group of women....When I am alone with an interviewer, I feel intimidated, scared.' (Madriz, 2003: 363)

On 1 February 2005, at one of the Study Group meetings, I handed out a letter to each participant (See App. 3) in which I asked them to provide me with three photos depicting things which sum up China for them. I explained that this could either involve taking photos especially or they could choose from photos they already had, printed cards or pictures on the Internet. They were also asked to write a brief explanation of their choice.

In the letter I said that the photos would be used as a basis for discussion in groups but, in fact, the themes of the photographs were so different and I had so many other questions to ask that they were not used in this way. This may be unfortunate but the written comments provided were a rich source of data.

The participants were given one month and, in fact, had an extra week as a meeting was postponed. Two or three took their own photos but most gave me ready-made photos of their choice. All the participants are busy women, some with activities connected with their families and others doing charity work. Only four, (3) Cleo, (4) Dora, (8) Hope and (16) Pat, all apologizing profusely, did not manage to give any photographs at all. Two or three, on the other hand, gave me long comments.

During the summer of 2005 I transcribed the interviews and made notes on the comments given by the participants along with the photographs. Thereafter there was a period of reflection on the data and consultation with my supervisor about the research issue. As stated in 1.1, in analyzing the data I did not intend to prove or to verify any existing theories or hypotheses but, instead, to try to answer the question in the research issue about ways of making sense of another culture and to generate a picture of the complexities involved. The three themes found in the literature are discussed in Chapters 5 and 6 with the use of the data collected and constitute both the findings of the research as well as their analyses.

In the spring of 2006 I wrote the first draft of some chapters of the dissertation and, after discussion with my supervisor in August 2006, I spent the final year writing the final draft.

In Chapter 4 I describe the Chinese Culture Study Group of Shanghai and explain the details of the interviews in the Focus Groups and with the three individuals.

Chapter 4: The Chinese Culture Study Group of Shanghai

Statement of Purpose 2005-2006

The Chinese Culture Study Group has been formed for expatriate ladies of mixed national backgrounds, living in Shanghai, all sharing a strong interest in the study of Chinese art, history and culture. The purpose of the study group is to provide members the opportunity to better understand the culture of China and will allow them to embrace new ideas through fellowship with women from all over the world who share a desire for lifelong learning and development.

History of Chinese Culture Study Group

The Chinese Culture Study Group of Shanghai was formed in the autumn of 2000 by several women who had been members of a study group in Taipei, Taiwan, which had been running successfully for more than 30 years. The fact that the Shanghai study group is so new reflects the newness, in general, of the expatriates living in Shanghai, compared to other Asian cities such as Taipei, Hong Kong or Singapore. Recent history on the Chinese mainland means that it was only after the `opening up' of China in 1978 (after the Cultural Revolution which is usually dated 1966-1976) that foreigners began to come to Shanghai in any numbers. In fact, it was only in the late 1980s or early 1990s that foreign businessmen brought their wives and families. There is therefore no established group of expatriates who have lived here for many years. In the Study Group the member who has been in Shanghai the longest has been here 13 years but most are here for 3–5 years and then move on when their husbands are transferred to other parts of the world.

Activities

The Study Group aims to organise approximately 15 lectures each year on subjects related to Chinese culture. Their goal is to have high quality speakers on a variety of interesting subjects. In the past six years, from 2000 – 2006, of the 85 meetings held, 34 were on historical topics, including genealogy, journalism and law, 33 on art, including traditional and contemporary Chinese art, 14 on Chinese customs and practices, including Traditional Chinese Medicine and four on Chinese religion. It

should be noted that most of the lectures, even those by Chinese, are given from what might be called an established Western viewpoint, judging what is going on in China with Western values. (See below for a list of the lecture topics from 2000 to 2006.) Lecturers are usually given a fee of about RMB900 (GBP60). Meetings are held on Wednesday mornings, on average twice per month at designated locations – usually in the members' homes. (See below under Observations.)

Occasionally, there are visits to such places as a temple or historic homes but as there are now many other expatriate groups which organise such visits, the Culture Study Group usually meets in one another's homes. Light refreshments are provided during the morning and it is not uncommon for several members to have lunch together in a nearby restaurant after the meeting so it can be seen that the group serves a social as well as an intellectual function.

The following is taken from the `Information and Rules' given out at the beginning of each annual session:

> Members of the group are expected to occasionally host a lecture at their home. If your home is not large enough to accommodate the group, you may hold it at the clubhouse of your housing complex or ask another member to co-host at her home. All refreshments provided should be in accordance with the comfort level of the hostess. Simple refreshments are all that is required as we are in the first place gathering to enjoy the lecture.

The group is sub-divided into groups of three who, in theory, suggest a lecturer and host that particular lecture in the home of one of them. This is an excellent idea in that it encourages the participation of the whole group in the inviting of speakers and in hosting the meeting. In practice, however, there are a few members who know of lecturers in, for example, the art world or the world of journalism and they tend to make the most suggestions.

<u>Membership</u>

The Group consists of 18 members (all foreign passport holders) who originate from three geographical areas: six from Europe, six from the United States/Canada and six others. Two current members of the group are required to nominate a new candidate

for membership. It is suggested that the nominees should have a committed interest in Chinese culture and should expect to be in Shanghai for at least two years to ensure group continuity. The annual fee for each member is RMB900 (GBP60).

The applying candidates are put on a guest list and when there is a vacancy, the Membership Committee will select a new member, based on criteria such as nationality, background, and commitment to and interest in Chinese culture. All lectures are in English and therefore the candidates need to feel comfortable with English. In Taipei there was a long waiting list and one member in Shanghai joined the group here because she had never had the chance in Taipei. Most of the time there is a waiting list in Shanghai. It can be seen, therefore, that the group is an elite one and that it can even be considered an honour to be invited to join.

The Membership Committee consists of two coordinators who are responsible for the overall operation of the group, a Chair and a Treasurer, and a third member from another geographical group who assists the coordinators with membership.

The `Information and Rules' state explicitly what is expected of members:

> It is expected that members will attend all meetings. An attendance book will be kept and members should sign in during meetings. If you know that you will not be able to attend a certain future meeting, please note your absence in the calendar log date as this will allow the coordinators to contact a guest from the guest list to replace you. Absence from the meetings is in principle only excused for reasons of illness (you or a family member) or traveling.

In fact, it is difficult for some members to commit themselves to regular attendance at meetings because they are heavily involved in charitable activities which demand a lot of their time. In addition, they are often traveling outside China with their husbands or to see their children who may be in universities in Europe, the US or Other, e.g. Australia. However, there is a nucleus of regular attenders and a close bond has developed among the members, as can be seen from the hugging (three times for the Dutch) and kissing (with much affection by the Spanish) when the members meet. The British are more reserved.

The `Information and Rules' concludes:

The quality and success of our group will depend on the input and participation of all the members. By working together, sharing ideas and helping each other, we may have the pleasure of being members of a wonderful and interesting group of friends all sharing a similar interest. This should make our stay in Shanghai an unforgettable experience.

Differences within the Group

`...there are social and cultural structures that shape people's options for action but exist independently of their awareness of them.' (Deacon et al, 1999:10)

Within the Study Group there are many differences which may shape their actions and opinions. The following are some of them:

1) Nationality (see above) and nationality of their husbands
2) Ethnicity – most Caucasian, one East Asian, one South Asian
3) Age – See Table 1
4) Their children
5) Money – their wealth and status
6) Occupation – present or former
7) Educational background – all highly educated, most have post-graduate degrees
8) Media – which Western TV channels do they watch? CNN? BBC?
   - which Chinese TV channels (in English) do they watch?
   - which Western newspapers do they read? *International Herald Tribune*? *New York Times*? *Guardian Weekly*?
   - which local English-language newspapers do they read? *Shanghai Daily*?
   - which glossy magazines do they read? *That's Shanghai*? *City Weekend*?
9) What use they make of expat websites on the Internet
10) Their network of friends
11) Their involvement with Shanghai charitable organisations
12) Religion
13) Length of stay in Shanghai – See Table 1

Table 1: *Taitais'* Age and Length of Stay in Shanghai

	Name	Age	Length of Stay in Years
1	Amy	46	7
2	Bess	42	11.5
3	Cleo	33	9
4	Dora	37	3.5 (Hong Kong)
5	Eva	40	8.5
6	Fay	44	3 (Taiwan)
7	Gail	46	3
8	Hope	53	2.5 (Hong Kong)
9	Ivy	46	1.5 (Singapore & Jakarta)
10	Jill	48	13
11	Kate	47	8
12	Lois	57	5 (2 yrs. in Nanjing '89-'91)
13	Meg	49	4 (3 yrs. in Taipei)
14	Nell	62	3
15	Olga	56	5
16	Pat	58	2
17	Rose	59	2 .5 (25 yrs. in Asia)
Average		48.4	5.4

N.B. Additional information about their lengths of stay in other cities in Asia has been inserted according to information given by participants during interviews.

Observations

On March 5, 2003, George Wang and I were invited to have a discussion with the Chinese Culture Study Group about our book Shanghai Boy Shanghai Girl – Lives in Parallel, which had been published in June, 2002. Most participants had bought and read the book before the discussion. Because I was just beginning my PhD and had already thought of focussing on foreigners in Shanghai, I asked one of the leaders of the group if I might study them. She kindly agreed and I have therefore been attending the meetings of the group regularly, twice a month, from Sept. 2003 to the present as a member and a participant observer – or observer participant.

The following is a summary of my observations:

1) Homes

The members host meetings in their own homes which are mostly in `gated communities' with names like Le Chateau, Seasons Villas, Golden Vienna, Forest Manor, Elegant Garden and Windsor Park. None of these compounds has been in existence more than fifteen years and all were built specifically to house mainly overseas businessmen and diplomats. The houses (or large flats) are provided by the multinational companies or consulates. The average rent for villas (houses) is GBP3,000 – GBP9,000 and for apartments GBP2,000 – GBP3,500 per month.

Many of the participants buy antique Chinese furniture, such as opium divans, four poster beds or sideboards, to furnish their homes. They also buy antiques – statues, porcelain – to decorate their living rooms. On the walls are Chinese paintings, large and small, traditional and contemporary. In one home there is a very large oil painting of a young girl as a Chinese Red Guard during the Cultural Revolution.

The homes are usually large, with at the very least, three bedrooms and two bathrooms. If the house is a villa (the term used in Shanghai is `garden villa' since the houses have gardens, a rarity in the crowded city), it may have three or four storeys. If it is a flat, it may be split-level and also have an outdoor patio where barbecues can be held.

2) Children

The participants who have school age children in Shanghai are, of course, very concerned about their education. The international schools in the city are very expensive - fees at Shanghai American School are GBP10,000 per year, not to mention extra expenses for extra-curricular activities such as school trips to other parts of China.

Two of the participants moved during 2005 to compounds nearer their children's schools so that the children would not have to spend long hours on school buses in traffic jams. The parents also play an active part in the schools themselves, two of them even being on the Board of the school – a heavy responsibility.

Several of the participants who have young children chose schools on the basis of the amount of Chinese taught. Even though they themselves had difficulty in learning the Chinese language (See 5.4.5.4), they wanted their children to have the chance to learn it.

One participant spoke of her concern over her son's re-entry to the West, saying that she hoped he would go to a university where there was a multicultural student body.

3) Travel

As mentioned above, the participants travel a great deal all over the world. The big multinational companies for which most of their husbands work pay for one journey per year to the home country for both husband and wife and also for their college/university age children to visit them twice a year. In addition, they often travel at their own expense, e.g. to Singapore for a St. Andrews Ball (`They have the Gurkhas and everything.') or to Scotland for two weeks to take her son's ski boots to him.

Many husbands travel much of the time and the wives sometimes use their roaming mobile phones to converse with their husbands, not knowing in which country he is at that moment.

4) Activities

Several of the participants are heavily involved in charity work and this may cause them to travel to other parts of China. Others work part-time as a nurse, a teacher or a substitute teacher but most of them spend a large part of their lives socialising, either in the evenings with their husbands or in the daytime with other women. They also join other organisations in Shanghai such as the Shanghai Expatriate Association, the Expatriate Professional Women's Society or a Book Club. They play mahjong, too.

However, it may be that one of their favourite activities is shopping. The following are the markets which they know well:

a) Flower Market
b) Pearl Market
c) Antique Market

d) Fabric market

e) Xiangyang Market – cheap clothing and fake watches

They also eat out a great deal in both Western and Chinese restaurants and spend time at the hairdresser and the manicurist and having massages. (See 5.2.1.3) Because they live outside their own countries for long periods of time, they often have house guests, either relatives or friends from their home countries or from other countries in which their husbands have worked.

5) Domestic help

Two of the 17 participants, not being allowed to use their husbands' drivers, drive their own cars. Most of the others are not allowed by the companies to drive – for insurance reasons. They are therefore heavily reliant on their driver and some find this very frustrating. Their relationships with their drivers vary. (See 5.2.1.8) A driver's average monthly pay is: RMB2,500-4,000 (GBP170-270).

All the participants have at least one *ayi* (a female helper) with whom, again, relationships vary. (See 5.2.1.7) There are three types of *ayis*. The *ayi* can work several hours a week as part of the rental package or be hired by the family to work on a full time or part time basis. *Ayis* can also be `live-ins', especially when families have small children, and they then become like a member of the family. If *ayis* can speak English, they can usually receive relatively high pay. An *ayi's* average monthly pay is: RMB1,200-2,500 (GBP80-170).

I have been privileged to have had access to the Chinese Culture Study Group of Shanghai for my study.

Focus Group Interviews

1. Approaching the group

According to the literature, it is important to approach any group in whom the researcher is interested through a `gatekeeper'. In the case of the Chinese Culture Study Group, I asked the Chair if I could have lunch with her one day after the usual

club meeting. Another member was present as well and I broached the subject of the possibility of my interviewing the members of the group for my research in Cultural Studies. Both the Chair and the other member were enthusiastic and gave suggestions.

On October 1, 2004, I wrote a letter to all the club members (See Appendix 2) explaining the purpose of my research and asking for permission to interview them in groups the following spring – 2005. All of them agreed. The reasons for the timing were twofold: 1) I was still reading about the methodology of interviewing focus groups, 2) I wanted to carry out the interviews during 2005, the year on which my study was based.

In my reading about methodology (See 3.5) I gained the idea that asking the participants to provide photographs would be a good way of finding out what they actually `see' in China. In early 2005 I asked them to give me three photographs which summed up China for them. Only four of them did not manage to do so and all of those apologized, saying that it was because of lack of time.

2. Dates of Interviews

Four focus group interviews were carried out on the following dates:

Group I	March 23, 2005	Amy, Eva, Ivy, Meg
Group II	April 6, 2005	Bess, Fay, Jill
Group III	April 13, 2005	Gail, Kate, Nell
Group IV	May 12, 2005	Dora, Hope, Lois, Olga

Groups I, III and IV came to our home and were interviewed in our living room sitting on the sofa and chairs and stools around a tape recorder on a coffee table. Most interviews lasted about two hours, after which the group was invited to a simple, mostly vegetarian Chinese lunch cooked by my husband, George Wang, who is known to all the interviewees. The fact that the interviews took place in a small Chinese/British home in a very ordinary six-storey building with no lift, very different from their own homes, and the fact that they knew they would be eating a home-cooked Chinese meal after the interview must be taken into consideration as this may

have influenced what the interviewees said. They may have been more polite about Chinese culture than if they had been interviewed in a different milieu. However, as all the participants know each other and my husband and me well, I do not think that this is the case. As far as I could tell, each interviewee spoke her mind freely and frankly.

Because of constraints of time, Group II were unable to come to my home and so the interview took place in the home of one of the group on an afternoon after a morning meeting of the club. However, George Wang came to her home and cooked a Chinese lunch for the group in her kitchen. Thus, as with the other three groups, they could have been influenced in their answers to the questions by the (good) food but, similarly, I do not think this was the case.

3. Composition of Focus Groups

Since the Study Group is international, I had originally hoped to have women of different nationalities in each of the focus groups in order to discover whether there were differences of opinion according to their backgrounds. However, this proved to be impossible, practically speaking, because all of the women lead very busy lives as the wives of businessmen or diplomats and I therefore had to put them in groups only according to the days on which they were free to come.

As it turned out, in Group I the four women did come from four different countries and in the other three groups more than one country was represented.

Individual Interviews

Dates of Interviews

February 18, 2005	Pat
March 9, 2005	Rose
May 25, 2005	Cleo

Three individual interviews were carried out because, in the cases of Pat and Rose, they were leaving Shanghai very soon and were not able to come to any of the Focus Groups. I went to their homes and asked them the same questions as for the Focus Groups. Cleo had intended to be part of Focus Group III but at the last minute was unable to come. She insisted, however, that she wanted to be interviewed and so the interview took place in May at the home of one of the club members after a club meeting.

Lists of the lecture topics for the years 2000 – 2006 are provided in Appendix 7 as they show in detail the aspects of Chinese culture which the group deem important.

Chapter 4 has provided information about the Chinese Culture Study Group of Shanghai and the interviews which I carried out with them. In Chapter 5 I discuss the Results of the interviews with the Focus Groups and individuals.

Chapter 5: Results

5.1 Introduction

The results of this research project will now be presented through a discussion of two types of data: the transcripts of the Focus Groups in Chapter 5 and the photographs given by the participants along with their written comments in Chapter 6. The discussion will try to answer the research question: does this data demonstrate across a range of apparently diverse topics that members of the group have recourse to recurrent and recognisably similar sense-making practices across a range of perceived trouble areas?

The results are analysed based on the concept of `the Self' and `the Other' found in Said and Fabian and the three main themes found in Said, Fabian and others which were discussed in the Literature Review in Chapter 2:

1) Generalisation
2) The Use of `We'/`They' and `East'/`West'
3) Ethnocentric Attitudes

Using Themes 1 and 2, there will be an attempt to discover whether the participants in this study used the same practices as the Orientalists that were criticised by Said and whether they used additional, different ones. The participants' attitudes to `the Other' will be found under Theme 3 – Ethnocentric Attitudes.

Chapter 5 is divided into three main sections:

5.2 Definition of `the Self': How Participants Define Themselves

5.3 Definition of `the Other': How Participants Define `the Chinese'

5.4 How `the Self' Constructs `the Other'

The conventions used to highlight the words and techniques used by the participants to define themselves and `the Other' are:

1) **Bold -** for terms used in generalising – e.g. **The Chinese, We / Us, They / Them, All / Always**
2) Underlining - for ethnographic present tense - **The Chinese** do this or **They** think
3) [Square brackets] – for techniques - Modification [mod], Comparison [comp], Example [ex]

4) *Italics* – for Chinese words – e.g. *taitai, ayi*

Extracts from the data are numbered thus: e.g. **Extract 5.2.1.1** and may consist of a statement by one participant, statements by several participants on the same topic or a short conversation in a Focus Group. There will be cross-referencing between excerpts as necessary.

5.2 Definition of `the Self': How Participants Define Themselves

Before discussing the ways, habitual and otherwise, in which the participants define and construct `the Other', it seems necessary to consider the ways in which they define themselves in order to see `who' is doing the defining and constructing. In 2.2.1 it was seen that Fabian wrote about the Western Self and Said about Rudyard Kipling's White Man. The participants in this project define themselves through a variety of strategies, some on a micro-level and some on a macro-level. In this section the meaning of the `label' of *taitai* as used by the participants themselves and by others with whom they come into daily contact will first be addressed. Also on the micro-level, a discussion of the daily social structural constraints under which they operate will be given. This will be followed by an exploration of the wider complex historical and cultural circumstances which influence them in their observation of and interaction with `the Other'. Finally, there are some comments made by the participants themselves on their own process of self-definition.

5.2.1 Meaning of `label' of *taitai*

In Appendix 5 a dictionary definition of the Chinese word *taitai* is provided but to begin this section on the participants' definition of `the Self' some examples of their own use of the word will be given:

Extract 5.2.1.1

Eva: I didn't like the idea of being a 100% *taitai* at home.

Jill: [The Chinese Culture Study Group] gives us a different way of looking at China, instead of just from the superficial *taitai* point of view.

Bess: I didn't want to sound like an ignorant *waiguoren* (outside-country-person = foreign) *taitai*.

It can be seen that there seems to be a pejorative aspect to the word *taitai* since Eva does not want to be a 100% one, just staying at home. The second quote uses the word `superficial' to describe the usual *taitai's* point of view and the third is even stronger, using `ignorant' and claiming that she does not want to sound like a foreign *taitai.*

One member of the Study Group was, in fact, not a *taitai* but she gave me her definition of the term `expatriate':

Extract 5.2.1.2

Cleo: Someone who is sent by a company from his own country, working for a contract of limited years, in different countries, and also someone who has a big house, a driver, a car - so many *ayis*, probably a gardener. Tuition paid, medical fees paid and tickets back home paid - and I don't have anything like that.

Cleo is, in fact, a European Sinologist who has studied the Chinese language and Buddhism for ten years. She was originally invited by the Study Group to give a lecture and then to become a member of the group. It may be found below that her comments differ somewhat from those of the *taitais*.

Here, she gives a clear picture of the privileged position of the husbands of the majority of the Study Group members. The asymmetry referred to by Pratt and Ang in 2.2.3 can begin to be seen in such a description. Although Western businessmen in Shanghai today are not the hegemonic Western imperialists of the 19th and 20th centuries, they are nevertheless wealthy and thus economically powerful. Their wives constitute an elite group among the foreigners in Shanghai in the early 21st century. It should be noted that the definition of `expatriate' given by Cleo is a limited one and that there are, for example, many foreigners in Shanghai who are not sent by multinational companies but who come here of their own choice.

One participant, instead of using the term *taitai*, gave an example of the way she indulges herself just because she is an `expat wife', noting that her life in Shanghai is not `normal':

Extract 5.2.1.3

Meg: The massage - it's an indulgement [sic] - I wouldn't do it if I was living a normal life, if I didn't have the time. I have it about twice a week - I've only just discovered the foot massage. But I have my hair washed here - a terribly expat wife thing - and they give you a head massage. It's terrific. I wouldn't dream of doing it at home.

In a final example of their own use of the word, one participant gave descriptions of the main activities of the *taitais*:

Extract 5.2.1.4

Rose: We are here because of our husbands and so we lead a *taitai* life. We have help, who are usually Chinese, and so we have time to go to the markets - pearls, fabric, antiques, clothes - but our husbands don't. The foreign women here have more time to learn about Chinese culture and some use it to good advantage. There is also community outreach and there are charities - giving back to Shanghai.
Some women, though, are isolated. I think that being a woman is an advantage.

Rose states explicitly that she and the others are in Shanghai because of their husbands; unlike professional women, it was not their own decision or choice to come. `Trailing spouse' is a word used in common parlance for such women. She appears to use the term *taitai* with no negative connotations and includes herself as one of them.

In order to arrive at the meaning of the `label' of *taitai* it would appear to be necessary to examine not only how the participants use the word themselves but also the way in which it is used in their daily lives. Their definition of `the Self' as *taitai* is confirmed by the fact that many of their Chinese `helpers', their *ayis* (see below for explanation) and drivers, use this term when addressing them. A small piece of research was carried out in order to discover the ways in which the participants are addressed and the ways in which they address their `helpers'. The results can be found in Table 2 below.

Table 2

	Names	No. of *ayis*	No. of drivers	Part. =>*Ayi*	*Ayi*=> Part.	Part.=> Driver	Driver=> Part.	Nationality of *Ayi*
1	Amy	1		Sumi	*Taitai*			
2	Bess	1	1	*Ayi*	*Taitai*	*Xiao X*	*Taitai*	
3	Cleo	1		*Ayi*	X *Xiaojie*			
4	Dora	1	1	1st name	1st name	1st name	1st name	Filipina
5	Eva	1	1	*Xiao X*	*Taitai*	*Xiao X*	*Taitai*	
6	Fay	1	1	1st name	1st name	Mr X	1st name	
7	Gail	1	1					
8	Hope	1		*Ayi*	*Taitai*			
9	Ivy	1	1	*Ayi*				
10	Jill	2	1	*Ayi*	*Taitai*	Mr X	*Taitai*	
11	Kate	1 ½	1	Mrs. X	*Taitai*	Mr X	1st name	
12	Lois	1	1	*Xiao X*	1st name	Mr X	*Taitai*	
13	Meg	1	1					Filipina
14	Nell	1		Ear	Madam			
15	Olga	1	1	*Ayi*	*Taitai*	Name	1st name	
16	Pat	1	1	*X Ayi*	1st name	*Xiao X*	1st name	
17	Rose	3		Names				

N.B.

1) *Ayi* = female `helper', Part. = Participant
2) *Xiao X* means `small' or `young' + family name. This form of address is used in Chinese to address a person younger than oneself. It also implies a degree of familiarity.
3) *X Xiaojie* means Miss X, a polite form of address.
4) `Sumi' and `Ear' are two personal names. The participant reported that the *ayi* said, `Call me Ear'. It is possible that it is the English sound of a Chinese name.
5) *X Ayi* means the family name followed by *Ayi.* This would appear to be showing more respect to the employee since there is a recognition of her family name rather than just the generic *Ayi*.
6) Where the nationality of the *ayi* has not been given this means that she is Chinese. Only two participants, both of whom had lived in Hong Kong for some years, had Filipina maids whom they brought to Shanghai.
7) Two participants provided no information about their forms of address. This may have been because of the nature of the Focus Group interview in which they spoke about other things instead or because they thought the forms of address were not important. One participant said that her driver usually just waves and says, `Hello'.

Many variables such as gender, age of employer and employee, length of service and the participant's husband's job need to be taken into account but some comments can perhaps be made based on the information in the table. In particular, the use of *taitai* will be stressed.

1) Seven of the *ayis* address their employers as *Taitai*, which undoubtedly has a strong influence on the participants' perceptions of themselves as *taitai*s. In the 1930s, servants in Shanghai used the pidgin English word `Missee' when speaking to their female employers. Four *ayis* use their employers' first names, most likely because the employer asked them to do so.

One participant provided the following information, showing that in her own Western home she had never had a maid and she was therefore uncertain as to how to handle the situation when she first arrived in Shanghai. She also reveals a double standard in that her husband asked the `helpers' to call him by his first name but thought that his wife shouldn't have allowed them to address her in that way.

Extract 5.2.1.5

Pat: They call me X [her first name] and some people, including my husband, tell me I shouldn't have allowed that. It was the first time I had ever had a maid. My husband worries about it - but they call him X [his first name]! He told them to call him that. He thinks they should say `Mrs [her first name]' or something. I know that some *ayis* call their employers `Madam' but for me that's really strange. If I were to come back, I don't know what I'd do.

In one Focus Group there was a discussion as to the English word that should be used to describe such employees in general. Should it be `help', `helpers', `domestic help', `staff'? Specific terms are `nanny', `babysitter' and `house cleaner'. There was no agreement on a general term but they all agreed on one thing:

Excerpt 5.2.1.6

Lois: You don't say `servants' any more.

As the case of Pat shows, it is rare for Western women to have such `help', except for `cleaning ladies', in their own countries and they react in different ways to having them in Shanghai. Only one participant is called `Madam' by her *ayi*, whom she calls `Ear' at the *ayi's* request.

2) The (all male) drivers address their (all female) employers in a different way. Of the nine for whom information was given, five use their employer's first name and four *Taitai*. The first name is even used by two of the drivers who are addressed by their employers by the more formal `Mr. X'. This, as far as I have been able to

ascertain by observation, does not at all show a lack of respect but rather a closeness to the family. Several of the drivers have worked for the *taitais* for a number of years and are close to the children of the family.

3) Most of the participants use *ayi* when addressing their maids. This is the most common term used in Shanghai in 2005 but research needs to be done on the origin of this usage. In Shanghai in the 1930s, women servants were called *amah* and in Hong Kong, Singapore and Taipei this term is still used. Both are Chinese words, *ayi* meaning `aunt' and *amah* meaning `grandmother'. One suggestion is that the use of *amah* died out during the 1960s and 1970s when there were few foreigners on the mainland and that when there was a new influx of foreigners to Shanghai (and China in general) in the early 1980s, the term *ayi*, used among Chinese for a (generally older) woman with whom they were familiar, came into use.

4) As is well known to readers of novels about foreigners in China in the early 20th century, `Boy!' was the common (derogatory) form of address for male servants of any kind. This would be totally out of the question in 2005. Four of the participants address their driver politely as `Mr X', some using it to maintain a proper distance. Three use `*Xiao X*', most likely for a younger driver and to indicate friendliness. One uses the driver's full name and one only his first name.

5) The two Filipina maids are, of course, not addressed as *ayi*. It is most likely that both are addressed by their first names and that both speak English, which may not be the case with the *ayis*.

It has been seen that in the definition of `the Self' the `label' of *taitai* is used by the participants themselves and also by their `helpers' to address them, thus confirming their status. To end this section a selection of quotations from the transcriptions is presented because the daily interaction between the *taitais* and their `helpers' is a significant part of the `webs of significance' (See Geertz in 3.3) woven around them in Shanghai. In the picture that is painted below it will be seen that there is a great variety of relationships stemming from many factors.

Excerpt 5.2.1.7

Ayis

Olga: The *ayis* come with the company - only two days a week for two hours.

Fay: I try to treat everybody as an equal. But if I do that they walk away with me. One *ayi* - I gave her one finger and she took the whole hand.

Eva: I tell my kids to call her `*Jiejie*' (elder sister) instead of calling her *ayi* because she's still single, she's a young girl and she could be called as a sister. They will sometimes play together and when she's done with her work she can watch TV with the kids. She's a live-in *ayi*; she's part of the family.

Kate: She always keeps, like, her position....When I come home from a trip I hug her and it's like she doesn't know what to do.

Amy: She's my best friend, very bossy but very clever....She tells me that I don't know how to buy so she comes with me.

Jill: My *ayi* has been with us for thirteen years so she's closer to the children than their grandparents or uncles and aunts and she's more actively involved...to the point that the kids fully expect that they'll be able to come back here after they graduate from college and find her. There's no disconnect. She and I work hand in glove - for everything. She comes to X [a Western country] with us all summer because I can't be without her. I will admit to being totally spoiled by that woman.

It can be seen that the relationships have been arbitrarily placed from the most distant to the closest and that the situations vary greatly, depending on the circumstances. In many cases, however, the *ayi* is an important figure in the *taitai's* daily life and therefore contributes to the participant's definition of herself.

Excerpt 5.2.1.8

<u>Drivers</u>

Amy: I haven't any driver...and I didn't want to have a driver for myself because I've been always living in other countries and I wanted my kids to grow up normally - so no driver, we use taxis.

Eva: We had quite a bad experience with the previous driver. He was almost a family member so, this one, he's a very good guy and a

perfect driver but we don't invite him for every meal we have any more - we got hurt quite badly.

Meg: Our driver, well, he's our third driver, could be our fourth. My husband teases me about my being a typical expat wife with a driver…I have quite a distant relationship with this driver. We communicate when we need to but I don't know very much about him. Unlike our first driver who actually was very chatty. He used to teach me new words and correct things that I said, which was great, but he and my husband didn't have a good relationship. He taught my son a few rude words so he had to leave.

Ivy: The driver is just brilliant. …And he's great with the girls, he watches them. If my middle one's out night-clubbing, then he stands outside the nightclub. But I feel safer making sure that he's there, making sure that she gets home rather than having her get in a taxi at night on her own.

Olga: At first they were going to assign us a driver because our other driver got a job in the company and I said that I would interview them because I said, `I spend more time with my driver than I do with my husband' - on a daily basis….

Lois: I have a very good relationship with the driver…We talk in Chinese. He listens to the news in the morning and I listen to the BBC news. And a lot of it is the same, like the big disasters. We have a kind of communication which is very funny because I always forget the word for nuclear energy. And we call that `Chernobyl'. We both know about Chernobyl. A lot of ways we communicate like that. Like *jiaotang* (church). It took me some time and I sometimes pronounce it wrong. And so we say `Amen, Amen' and we know what we are talking about….Whenever I come back from X [a Western country] I really am annoyed that I need him so much because he knows everything - he knows where I go, picks me up. I am a very private person, I really do not like that.

The complexities described by the participants show that the employer / employee relationships differ greatly. Some drivers teach their employers Chinese but it is likely that, in fact, they teach them much more about how to make sense of Chinese culture. What is worth noting is that several participants commented about the artificiality of being driven around Shanghai. One wanted a `normal' life and so does not have a driver, one's husband teased her about it and Lois, who gets on very well with her driver, was the most vocal in saying how `annoyed' she is that she has to, because of her husband's company's rules, depend on him.

In this section the participants' own use of the `label' of *taitai* has been shown and the way in which it is used on a daily basis, on a micro-level, in their relationships with their `helpers' has been described. In the next section their social structural constraints, which also form part of their definition of `the Self', will be discussed.

5.2.2 Social structural constraints

In this section, the `thick description' (See Geertz in 3.3) of the *taitais'* life, begun in 5.2.1 with a consideration of their daily interactions with their `helpers', is continued from a different angle because it has an important bearing on the way in which they define themselves. It will be seen that although the participants are an elite and powerful group, the wives of wealthy expatriate men, there are difficulties for them in living in Shanghai in 2005. The major difficulties consist in their having to live in isolation in compounds and the fact that they are not working, the result being that they often find it difficult to meet Chinese people.

Isolation in compounds

Unlike other Asian cities such as Hong Kong, Taipei or Singapore, where there have been resident expatriate communities for many years, in Shanghai (and in other cities on the Chinese mainland) there were, for historical reasons, almost no expatriates during the 1960s and 1970s. It was only after what is called the `opening up' in 1978 that a few foreigners began to come, first on short visits, and then to live here. In the early 1980s the standard of living was not what it is now and it was difficult for expatriates to find suitable accommodation. Therefore, walled compounds enclosing `villas' were built to provide housing for businessmen, diplomats and others. (See 1.3

and Ch. 4 for more details.) The participants found that living in walled compounds isolated them from local people.

Excerpt 5.2.2.1

Dora: …just the way that the foreign community is very separate from
the local community. We lived in Hong Kong. In our apartment
block there were lots of Chinese families and lots of foreign
families and we all lived together. And here, the only Chinese
people that live in my community are married to American men.

Meg: …there's no connection, **our** lives are separate even if **our** children are going to the same school; **they** don't want to mix.

The separateness of the foreign community from the local community made the *taitais* define themselves as apart from the ordinary life of Shanghainese people, as special. Dora compared this to the more ordinary life she had lived in Hong Kong where her family lived in an apartment block where there were both Chinese and foreign families. Meg commented that the *taitais*' lives are separate even from the ethnic Chinese whose children go to the same school. (See 5.3.3.)

Not working

Not only were the *taitais* hidden away behind walls but, for various reasons, it was much more difficult for them to work in Shanghai than in other Asian cities. Some of them had small children and wanted to spend time on family life but most of them had worked earlier in their lives and found it frustrating to be `confined' to their homes.

Excerpt 5.2.2.2

Dora: …in Hong Kong I was able to work. So there were lots of local
Hong Kong people in my office and you got to know them. You did
stuff with them. It's harder for the `trailing spouse' to work
here.
Jill: Most of us came here and we weren't working. That's the
differentness [sic][between them and their husbands]...There are three
of us sitting here whose husbands apply Western upbringing,
background, morals, education to their bailiwick in business
here and each of them is extremely successful.
Meg: I speak as a woman and as a non-working person...As a woman and as

the wife of a foreigner.

Being a `non-working person' was mentioned by several of the participants and this had a definite impact on their definition of themselves, especially when they compared themselves to their successful husbands.

Difficulty in meeting Chinese

Because of living in compounds behind walls and not working it was very difficult for the participants to meet local Chinese people with whom they could be friends, with whom they could be themselves.

Excerpt 5.2.2.3

Dora: Most of the Chinese people I know are people who are involved with my husband's work. Maybe a couple of families through the school but not many.

Olga: We work with X with the Social Service so we meet people that way but that's, that's a different layer. We visit elderly Chinese people and assist them. But it's still not a direct dialogue with them because we don't speak the language.

Lois: I do. I've had talks with some of the people but these are very different people. These are not the people you would talk to normally in your [Western] life because I think you try to find a circle around you that you feel comfortable with. This is a different thing - this social work. Maybe to X himself. And the teacher, my teacher of Chinese language. That was my contact. I found out a lot from her.

Pat: That's the…thing that frustrated me for the longest time because I felt I had no access to Chinese people except for my *ayi* and driver…I had no access to anybody with whom I could really talk. So I went to the Berlitz School to teach English to Chinese business people. There I got to meet real Chinese - that's unfair and wrong - I don't like this, but people who were more of the background I come from.

To sum up, it was difficult for the *taitais* to meet Chinese people of their own class except through their husbands. Some of them visited elderly Chinese people through the Social Service but that was not the same as finding real friends of their own.

In 5.2.1 and 5.2.2 the *taitais'* ways of defining `the Self' were shown on a micro-level through their everyday life. It was seen that their isolation in compounds and the fact that they were not working made it very difficult for them, in spite of the fact that they were living in the largest city in China, to meet `real Chinese' apart from their own

helpers. In 5.2.3 below their definition of `the Self' will be considered on a macro-level taking into account the many and varied influences on them both before they came to China and after they arrived.

5.2.3 `Complex historical and cultural circumstances'

In the two sections above the participants' definition of `the Self' was discussed in relation to their daily life in Shanghai in 2005. In this section, their definition of `the Self' will be considered from a wider point of view, taking into account the many influences on their way of thinking both before they came to China and since.

In discussing Kipling, Edward Said pointed out that he emerged out of `complex historical and cultural circumstances'. (See 2.2.1 above) The participants in this research project likewise are enmeshed in complex circumstances on a macro-level. In this section on the definition of `the Self', the *taitais'* preconceptions before they arrived in China are mentioned first, followed by a discussion of the influences on them of representations of Chinese culture by others.

Preconceptions

Preconceptions about a culture or society arise in many ways and are formed for the most part without `the Self' being aware of the process. This may be particularly true in the case of China which, in the minds of many Westerners, is in the `Far East' and which in the second half of the 20th century was closed to most Westerners. Two of the participants provided clear statements of their preconceptions before they came to China.

Amy states openly that she was not in the least interested in China and says that for her `China was Mao Zedong', a common way of referring to a country about which not much is known. She also says that she does not know why she had the idea of `cold Chinese people' but thinks that she might have had this cliché, as she now understands it was, because of pictures she had seen. This is an important point which will be discussed further in Chapter 6 below.

Excerpt 5.2.3.1

Amy: I was not in the least interested in China. I always

said to my husband there were three countries I didn't want to go to: Germany, China and Poland. I've been in Germany, now in China...I was fascinated by India, South America, Kenya...China was Mao Zedong. For me, it was a shock when I arrived here. I had this idea of cold Chinese people; I don't know why - maybe I had seen pictures - they were very serious. I had this cliché. So it was fine. When I came I was really surprised.

Pat had a different background from Amy. Her fear of coming to China arose from her Eastern European background which made her afraid from a political point of view. She was influenced on a personal level by a Briton who had worked for the UN in China and had had a positive experience. Whereas Amy's ideas did not change until she arrived in China and was surprised to find that the Chinese people were not `cold' or `serious', as she had expected, it seems that Pat's expectations changed even before her arrival on the recommendation of a respected person who had had personal experience of living in the country.

Excerpt 5.2.3.2

Pat: I was really, really, really afraid to come to China because of my [Eastern European] background - but a Briton who had worked for the UN in China and had had a positive experience said, `You will have a marvelous time'. He gave me a history book of China but I haven't had the chance to read it.

Both Amy and Pat, unlike Chateaubriand, who was described by Edward Said as needing to see things not as they were but as he supposed they were (1978: 171), were prepared to abandon their preconceptions. Said wrote of Chateaubriand:

> He brought a very heavy load of personal objectives and suppositions to the Orient, unloaded them there, and proceeded thereafter to push people, places, and ideas around in the Orient as if nothing could resist his imperious imagination. (Said, 1978: 171)

Amy and Pat were willing to create a new `Self' and, by joining the Chinese Culture Study Group and in their daily lives, to try to engage with `the Other' in Shanghai.

<u>Influence of representations of Chinese culture by others</u>

The cultural circumstances of the participants include not only their own experiences but also representations of Chinese culture by others in words and pictures. These can have a strong influence on them as they define `the Self'.

Said claimed that the Orientalists were like a guild, influencing each other and even all other Western visitors to the `East' so profoundly that they could not see the "brute reality" in front of their eyes. (1978: 5) The participants in this study were asked whether they thought that other Western people's representations of Shanghai had influenced them. (See Appendix 4, Q. 6)

Interestingly, the majority of the answers were at first about representations by Chinese writers and film makers rather than Westerners. Life and Death in Shanghai by Nien Cheng, published in 1986 in the United States, was mentioned by several participants. It was one of the first books about the Cultural Revolution to be published in English and, especially because it is set in Shanghai, is often read by expatriates here. Another book about the Cultural Revolution in English, this one published in the UK, is Wild Swans by Jung Chang. It became a best seller and has even become a kind of genre of its own:

Excerpt 5.2.3.3

Olga: Many of us have gone to the Swans and all that genre of Cultural Revolution books that also gave us a perception...
Pat: I have read Xinran's The Good Women of China - a horrible book.

A well known Chinese film director has also influenced the perceptions of many of the participants:

Excerpt 5.2.3.4

Jill: Zhang Yimou films - *Red Lantern, Ju Dou, To Live.* Those films influenced me in making me want to learn more about recent history. If I didn't have that window opened, you've got enough just studying what's going on in the politics of today but I think those representations pique your interest.

Books written by Westerners seemed, however, to be one of the main influences on the participants. Nell explicitly recognizes the fact that she is `a different person' re-reading a book which she remembers as a kid. The factors that make her different are her age, the fact that she is living in Shanghai and also that she feels she understands the culture. She says that The Good Earth is a book `you've read', indicating that it is so well known that she thinks all the other participants have read it.

Excerpt 5.2.3.5

Nell: The Good Earth by Pearl Buck - one that you've read and I remember as a kid but re-reading it again I understood it

through a different person, being older and living here and understanding the culture.

The following seven examples are presented together as, taken together, they give a good idea of the wide range of materials written by Westerners on China.

Excerpt 5.2.3.6

Meg: Winter in China by Douglas Galbraith, set in the 40s in Shanghai and Nanjing. Most of the books I've read written by Westerners tend to be set in the International Settlement days [the 1930s] as opposed to now. I always see this gap in the literature where you can actually make many parallels between now and then.

Gail: Shanghai Hotel by Vicki Baum - I learned a lot through this book about Chinese people, about the foreigners living in Shanghai, and I can tell you I thought it's exactly the same like, maybe sixty years later, because you also have adventurous people that came to Shanghai to start a business, you still have….I would really recommend you to read this - she's German.

Olga: Shanghai by Christopher New is supposed to be one of the best historically-based novels. I like reading books like that that gave me a foundation of the history before.

Lois: Eating Bitterness by Fox Butterfield. He was an American journalist who started in 1979, I think, in a hotel room in Beijing, one of the first. We knew we were going to China - in '86 - so that was an eye-opener for the situation.

Hope: Exile in Shanghai by Michelle Kahn, a Jewish person from France.

It's a story about the Jewish people who were here during the war

- it starts when they arrive - Hongkew [a district in Shanghai where many Jews were forced to live by the Japanese occupation authorities]. It made such an impression on me and as soon as I came and lived here within two weeks I was out here, walking around and reading the book again.

Rose: The Firemaker, The Killing Room, Snakehead by Peter May - thrillers set in China, one in Shanghai - they were stereotypical but a good introduction.

Cleo: Belle de Shanghai and La Femme Orientale by a French professor.

They are describing Chinese women, especially from Shanghai, and they were **all** related to prostitution. So that was quite, in a way, interesting, in another way, disturbing because it seems

that, especially on Shanghai, women were represented **always** by being light and frivolous and easily selling their body for money, a bit luxurious…He's still traveling to China and he's completely in love with Shanghai and the way he was talking about the city was **always** like `The Paris of the Orient'. You think of the Folies Bergeres and **all** this light entertainment. It was indeed decadent.

Phrases such as `gave me a foundation of the history', `an eye-opener', `made such an impression on me', `a good introduction' and `disturbing' show that the women were influenced in a variety of ways by the books they read.

To end this section on `complex historical and cultural circumstances', a short extract of a conversation in one Focus Group is presented because it shows the *taitais* discussing the writings of authors and journalists with whom they did not agree:

Excerpt 5.2.3.7

Bess: I've read all the Joy Luck Club things…I find them really annoying - Amy Tang.
Fay: I can't read her any more.
Bess: A Chinese American. About Chinese who've grown up abroad coming to terms with their Chineseness.
Fay: We had a representation of that in X [a European country]. It's in Beijing, it's Lulu. I loved her books before we came out but…
Jill: There's another one: Mike Chinoy - the CNN guy with a black moustache. I cannot stand to look at this Caucasian guy telling me about China. It drives me crazy.
Betty: Why?
Jill: I don't know. Because he doesn't live here. Because I think I know more than he does. And I don't. It's just an immediate reaction. I just don't like to see that guy telling me about China.
Fay: There's a X [a European country] journalist here and he came here about two years ago. Every item he publishes in the newspaper I get sent by my friends or my mother and the first things he wrote - Oh my God - I was just - he has to live here

for five years and then he can start writing.
Bess: I started reading Riding the Iron Rooster by Paul Theroux. I'm
thinking of travel books written by Westerners. I had to put it
down - I found it really patronising.

`Because he doesn't live here' is perhaps the most important comment in the above conversation. The *taitais* do not claim to know more than the Chinese American, the Western journalists or the travel writer but they seem to feel that they are in a privileged position because they have lived here `for five years' – or more.

The preconceptions of the *taitais* before they came to Shanghai and the written and visual representations of Chinese culture, the `complex historical and cultural circumstances' which influenced them, have been discussed in 5.2.3. In 5.2.4-7 there will be a brief mention of the *taitais'* own descriptions of their processes of defining `the Self'.

5.2.4 Description of own process of making sense of another culture

Two participants, both of whom had spent more than ten years in China, reflected on their own process of making sense of another culture. The first, defining herself as a sojourner, described how she tried to integrate or at least to get used to this country by learning a little of the language and making progress in being able to talk to local people. However, when she had to go deeper, she discovered that it required more energy. Because she knew she would be in China for only a limited time, she did not put much effort into her attempts and then felt frustrated.

Excerpt 5.2.4.1

Lois: I think the longer I stay here, the less I feel I can integrate.
Because you can integrate, no, not integrate, you can get used to
this country a few years, you learn the language a little bit,
you can talk, you feel you're progressing and then you have to go
to the second layer - and that takes so much energy…I know I am
going out again so I don't put that energy in any more and then I
get frustrated.

The second participant who reflected on her own process had lived in Asia, not just China, for 25 years and her summing up of her experience revealed that even after such a long time she realised that there was more to learn.

Excerpt 5.2.4.2

Rose: I have lived in Asia for 25 years; the more I know, the more I realise
there is to know. It whets my appetite.

Both of the above participants put effort into learning the Chinese language and learning about Chinese culture. In this, they were very different from the `shop and bitch ladies', i.e. those who spend their time in Shanghai mainly shopping and complaining, mentioned below in 5.2.7.1. Sadly, since they are mentioned by a participant as living in her compound, it could be true that the latter are the majority among Western *taitais* in Shanghai in 2005 although it may be that they do not complain as openly as in the 1930s.

5.2.5 Self-reflection

Another participant reflected on the Focus Group discussion and then sent me an email, part of which is reproduced below.

Excerpt 5.2.5.1

Bess: I've just been thinking we were sounding a bit [mod] too
paternalistic - for example having a go at **the Chinese** for being
too materialistic when the reality is **we** are no different **we** just
try and cover it up and pretend **we** are not - **we** at least I [mod]
think the West is increasingly materialistic….I also thought **we**
flattered ourselves a bit [mod]in thinking **the Chinese** needed **us**
to be here….

[See also Excerpt 5.4.8.9]

Since reading a bit more Chinese history and studying TCM (Traditional
Chinese Medicine) the light has come on in my head in understanding why
they behave the way **they** do…I am only now beginning to appreciate how
2,000 years ago what amazing things **their** scholars were doing.

After the discussion Bess thought that the group was `sounding a bit too paternalistic'

when they criticised **the Chinese** (see 5.3.3 on the use of **the Chinese**) for being too materialistic, i.e. too interested in making money. She wanted to say that she thought that **we**, i.e. Westerners, (see 5.4.5 on the use of **we** and **they**) are no different but that **we** pretend **we** are not. She also thought that **we** flattered ourselves in thinking that **the Chinese** needed **us** to be here. In other words, she thought that the Westerners over-estimate their own importance. Her comment appears again in 5.4.8.9 under Theme 3 – Ethnocentric Attitudes.

The second part of her comment shows that her `Self' had changed after reading more about Chinese history and Traditional Chinese Medicine, i.e. she had become more informed about, and therefore more appreciative of, the culture in which she was living.

5.2.6 Definition of `the Self' given by `the Other'

An interesting example of a definition of `the Self' by others was provided by one participant.

Excerpt 5.2.6.1

Meg: Your identity is your husband's. You are seen as your husband's wife, *laobanniang* (boss's wife, a term similar to *taitai*), more so in China than in other places. For a long time my son's teacher would say, "Hello, X's mother!" Or I was X's wife. Me, I was just nothing.

Eva: I don't think there's any problem. Your identity a little bit. It's quite similar to X [another Asian country]. I'm not Eva. I'm my son's mummy.

In this short exchange in one Focus Group Meg complained that she `was just nothing' because she was seen as her husband's wife and even addressed as her son's mother. Eva, in response, did not think of this as a problem because, she said, in another Asian country she was addressed as her `son's mummy'. This is an example, perhaps, of Meg not realizing that that particular form of address was part of the web of significance in certain Asian countries, that the relationship of the mother to the son is more important than her own identity. (See 5.4.1 on the use of the ethnographic present, seen here in the use of is and are seen.)

5.2.7 Definition of `the Self' in relation to other Westerners

Finally, in one Focus Group the participants defined themselves in relation to other Westerners in Shanghai.

Excerpt 5.2.7.1

Jill: …one of the things I realised after being here a long time was that, quite selfishly, I began to disassociate myself from other *taitais*. When they would leave, you could ask this foreign woman, `How many Chinese people have you had sit down at your dinner table?'
Fay: Exactly.
Jill: `How many Chinese people have you gotten into a conversation with that you don't pay?' and most of them would say, `Zero'. That's an issue - those aren't people I necessarily want to hang around with.
Bess: But how many Chinese people would you have eaten in a public place with? Because **Chinese** don't eat, don't entertain at home.
Jill: Same thing. How many Chinese people have you invited to dinner in a restaurant?
Fay: Or how many have you been invited by?
Jill: The people in our compound would say, `Zero'.
Bess: But that's our age group. If you go to the restaurants there are heaps of 20-something-year-old foreigners, socialising with Chinese. It's generational.
Jill: Younger people and single people, I agree. But that's why I joined this group. There's the `shop and bitch ladies' that I just don't want to spend that much time with.

The group defined themselves in relation to two other types of foreign women in Shanghai, first, other *taitais*, and secondly, `younger people and single people'. With regard to the second, they realized that they, all of whom in this group happen to be in their 40s, are different from the `20-something-year-old foreigners' who socialise freely with Chinese people in restaurants. What was even more interesting was their comparison of themselves with the `shop and bitch ladies' from whom they wanted to disassociate themselves. They recognised that their interests and, perhaps, values were different from some other expatriate women in Shanghai.

In summary, `the Self' was defined by the participants on a micro-level in their own use of the `label' of *taitai* and in their interaction in their daily life with their *ayis* and drivers. The severe social structural constraints under which they lived in Shanghai in 2005 also influenced their self-definition. On the macro-level, two participants

described how their preconceptions, probably formed by countless historical and cultural influences, were changed. The many written and visual influences on the participants consisted of books read, films seen and journalists' articles read. One *taitai* saw herself as a sojourner and another reflected on the attitudes that had been revealed in her Focus Group discussion. A third thought that she was defined by local people not as herself but as seen in her family relationships. Finally, one Focus Group looked at themselves in relation to other Westerners in Shanghai.

In this section the participants definitions of themselves have been discussed. In 5.3 below their definition of `the Other' will be considered.

5.3 Definition of `the Other': How Participants Define `the Chinese'

5.3.1 Theme 1 - Generalising

In 5.2 there was a discussion of the definition of `the Self', it being important to know through whose eyes `the Other' is seen. This topic will be explored more fully in Chapter 6 in connection with the photographs taken by the participants. In 5.3 and 5.4 there will be a presentation of the ways in which `the Other' are defined and constructed by the participants in order to ascertain how the data in this study relate to the central question: whether there are recurrent and recognisably similar sense-making practices in the construction of `the Other'.

Edward Said criticised the Orientalists for using sweeping generalisations and referring to `an Oriental' or `the Oriental' (2.2.2.1). Fabian, as well as Said, wrote about the use of the ethnographic present in denying coevalness (2.2.2.2). The binary schematisation of the world found in the use of `We' and `They' and `East' and `West' was mentioned in 2.2.3, and in 2.2.4 the problem of attitudes of ethnocentrism was raised. Did the participants in this study, the *taitais* in Shanghai in 2005, do what the Orientalists did? What sense-making practices did they use? Did they have the same attitudes?

In 5.3 there will be an attempt to see how the participants define `the Other' using `The Chinese' and `They' and similar words and phrases. There will then be a table to show the total use of such linguistic items and a summary to provide the picture

that has been painted of `the Chinese' by this means. It will be seen that the results in this section come under Theme 1 – Generalisation.

In 5.4, still under the heading of Theme 1, Generalisation, a variety of ways in which `the Self' constructs `the Other' will be considered. It will be discovered that the *taitais* who participated in this project used a variety of techniques in addition to but still connected with generalisation and that the picture of `the Chinese' that emerges is much more vivid. Themes 2 and 3 close this section when it is discovered that the *taitais* do use `We' and `They', sometimes in a similar way to the Orientalists, and that their ethnocentric attitudes are also sometimes, but not always, similar.

The conventions given in 5.1 above to highlight the techniques used are repeated here:

1) **Bold -** for terms used in generalising – e.g. **The Chinese, We / Us, They / Them, All / Always**
2) Underlining - for ethnographic present tense - **The Chinese** do this or **They** think
3) [Square brackets] – for techniques - Modification [mod], Comparison [comp], Example [ex]
4) *Italics* – for Chinese words – e.g. *taitai, ayi*

In some cases the same excerpt, or parts of it, appear in more than one section and these will be cross-referenced.

Before providing the results, however, there are two short introductory sections in which the participants comment on the process of generalisation in the context in which the research was carried out and clarify `the Other'.

5.3.2 Difficulty of Generalising

While most of the participants generalised, using phrases such as `The Chinese do X', two of them made comments on the difficulty of generalising. The first mentioned the size of China, `which is as big as a continent', and pointed out that there are such differences that the Chinese themselves have difficulties in understanding each other. The second spoke about `Chinese food' which covers `a very broad spectrum'.

Excerpt 5.3.2.1

Cleo: It's a question of mentality that has been built through wars,

conflicts and not only with foreign countries but inside mainland China which is as big as a continent. A mentality which is also different depending on the province so already **Chinese people** have so many differences inside their own population. **They** already have difficulties in understanding each other; then for **us** it's an even greater problem.

Excerpt 5.3.2.2

Meg: Saying **Chinese food** - it's a very broad spectrum because Shanghainese food I think is quite greasy but I love Singaporean Chinese cooking.

The participants were aware that generalising about a country as large and diverse as China was difficult but, as will be seen below, they proceeded to do so.

5.3.3 Participants' clarification of `the Other'

In one Focus Group interview, a participant gave voice to a question which had perhaps been in the minds of others as well:

Excerpt 5.3.3.1

Amy: When you say Chinese, do you mean Shanghainese?
Betty: Mm, not necessarily. We are talking about Chinese culture in Shanghai.
Amy: Because my husband knows Singaporeans and I have a lot of Hong Kongese friends.
Betty: How come you have Singapore and Hong Kong friends but not Shanghai friends?
Amy: Because it's very difficult. Hong Kongese and Singaporeans are considered like expats. **They** go to **our** clubs, **they** live in **our** compounds, **they** go to **our** schools,,,but Shanghainese - it's changing and **they** are starting to make more money but so far it's another world. It's very difficult. **We** want to - but **they** are afraid, maybe, because of the culture or the language. It's not only that **we** don't want to….

As Amy remarks, in the present situation in Shanghai, Hong Kongese and Singaporeans – and Taiwanese – `are considered like expats'. They are, however, ethnic Chinese and may therefore be the representatives of `the Other' whom the participants see most often in `their' compounds, even if there is not much interaction between them. In this specific context of Shanghai in 2005, therefore, it may not always be entirely clear who `the Other' is – a local Shanghainese or an ethnic Chinese from another Asian city. In addition, it should be noted here that there are also in Shanghai ethnic Chinese who are, in fact, Western by birth and/or upbringing.

Even on an individual level, the participants were not entirely sure of who `the Other' is:

Excerpt 5.3.3.2

Ivy: I've got one Chinese friend who's married to a Chinese person but
they had lived in X [a European country] for twelve years so they're not really full Chinese - although they are.

Ivy is referring to the Westernization of Chinese people who live abroad for some time and their degree of Chineseness. She at first says that they are `not really full Chinese' and then modifies her statement by saying that `they are'. It is not always easy to identify exactly who `the Other' is; there seem to be gradations of `Otherness'.

5.3.4 Use of `The Chinese' and `They/Them'

Edward Said wrote about the way in which the Orientalists generalised the whole of the Middle East by using such terms as `the Orientals', `the Arabs', `Arabs', `the Arab' and `an Arab'. (See 2.2.2.1) There are many examples of the use of similar terms in the data in this study and they will therefore be categorised under several headings according to the following topics: Relationships, Food, Medicine, Money, Customs and Perceived Behaviours and Attributes. Pronouns such as `They/Them' are used as well as the proper noun `the Chinese' and these examples are presented here also. A few examples use `It', referring to the Chinese theory about food. When there is an opposition between `We/They' or `Us/Them' the excerpts will be found in 5.4.7 under Theme 2. It will be noticed that the ethnographic present mentioned in particular by Fabian (See 2.2.2.2) is always used to form the generalisation with `The Chinese' and `They/Them'.

Relationships

Most of the participants are mothers and their children attend the international schools in Shanghai. The first excerpt comments on the difference between `the Chinese mothers' and `the foreigners', i.e. the participants.

(N.B. In Excerpts 5.3.4.1 – 3 the Chinese mothers and children mentioned are the foreign passport-holder Chinese mentioned in 5.3.3.1, i.e. the Hong Kongese, Singaporeans and Taiwanese.)

Excerpt 5.3.4.1

Meg: **The Chinese mothers** don't participate in school activities or
come to pick their children up in the same way as the foreigners
do.

The second excerpt deals with the `Chinese children'. Meg provides an example of the generalisation she is making about the way in which Chinese children are brought up: the fact that not one of them came to her four-year-old son's birthday party.

Excerpt 5.3.4.2

Meg: **Chinese children** are brought up in a different way to non-Chinese
children. **Chinese children** have a lot of after-school activities.
To invite **a Chinese child** to your house to play is a slightly
alien concept. With birthday parties, there were only two
foreign children in my son's class and only those two came -
quite hard to explain to a four-year-old. 18 children didn't
reply, just didn't come. [ex] It's very hard for the children to
make friends unless they are neighbours or thrown together.

(Sec 5.4.5.1 – Examples)

Interestingly, in the next excerpt, Amy says that the friends of her children, who attend the same school as Meg's, are all Asian and often come to her house. Her comment seems to refer to the behaviour of the Asian children in her home.

Excerpt 5.3.4.3

Amy: My children do not have a single Western friend. All of them are
from Korea, Hong Kong, Singapore - I have never seen a foreigner
in my house in seven years. I realized that **Asian children** are
more nice than ours.

The next comment refers to Shanghainese parents and children, the first `they' meaning the parents and the second the children.

Excerpt 5.3.4.4

Eva: **They** have these *xiao huangdi* (little emperors). **They** are very,
very spoiled - a lot of [mod] kids - it's not fair to say
everybody but quite a big number of kids [mod] are spoiled. If

they go on like that…

In the above excerpt there are two modifications which will be mentioned in 5.4.3.1.

In the final two excerpts in this section the relationships are not about family relationships but more general ones between Chinese and foreigners.

Excerpt 5.3.4.5

Cleo: In general, I am a foreigner here and I will always be. So when
there is conflict, when there is something I don't understand, I
am the one to withdraw. I am the one to try to understand - it's
not **them** who have to understand me. **They** would have to do it if
they were living in X [a Western country].

Excerpt 5.3.4.6

Rose: I jog in the Zoo every morning; I think X [a Western country]
could learn from the spirit, the resourcefulness of the elderly
in the park. **Their** camaraderie is appealing; **they** give me the
thumbs up as I pass. There is an unspoken community among those
who are there; one doesn't have to spend a lot to continue
relationships.

Food

In talking about food, the participants generalized about the Chinese theory of `hot' and `cold' foods and continued their conversation with comments on `it', using the ethnographic present tense.

Excerpt 5.3.4.7

Pat: I think **the Chinese theory** about `hot' and `cold' foods is
fascinating but I don't know much about it…I realize **it's** nothing
to do with the temperature of the food. **It's** some property or
other which reacts somehow in my body. I don't discount **it**,
don't think **it** is crazy - just don't know enough about **it**.
Eva: I don't really believe in **it**…but I think there is…
Ivy: **It's** just so complicated, do you not think?...There's certainly
something in **it** but I don't pay too much attention to **it**.
Meg: **This business** about if you are `hot' you need `cold' food, that's
a bit complicated - it's much better to have a balanced diet.
Lois: We have this saying, `An apple a day keeps the doctor away' and I
stick to that.

Jill: Our session this morning [at the Study Group's meeting] proved that -
there were about twenty of us, we're all pretty intelligent but
we couldn't get it. We were eating the food, we had the choices
and she [the German TCM practitioner] said, `What is this?' and it was always...[ex]

The following two excerpts are about Chinese people's preferences in food and their ways of eating.

Excerpt 5.3.4.8

Meg: I think **Chinese people** don't like food that is not Chinese. **They're** actually far more culturally tight about eating other...Certainly in Britain people will eat every type of food.
Amy: **Chinese** are very narrow-minded for that. Sometimes I say to my
Chinese friends, `Come on, eat this, it's good, it's tasty!' **They** don't like it.

Excerpt 5.3.4.9

Amy: **They** don't realize that **they** are not polite because **they** really
must show **they** are enjoying the food. So when **they** are doing
these noises....
Meg: **They** think it's better for the digestion.

Medicine

Traditional Chinese medicine is closely related to diet. The `hot' and `cold' foods mentioned above can also be described in terms of Yin and Yang. In the second excerpt there is an implicit reference to the difference between the Chinese and Western ways of treatment.

Excerpt 5.3.4.10

Amy: The problem with **the Chinese** is that **they** talk about something
you don't understand. **They** start with the Yin and Yang and balance - I have no idea what it means.
Ivy: Also, with **the Chinese** and the Singaporeans, they say that if you
go to the doctor and say, `This is wrong with me', **they** just give
you medication and **they** don't explain to you what they're giving
it to you for.

In the following excerpt there is again a reference to the close connection between food and medicine as the participant speaks about things she has learned from her *ayi* and driver.

Excerpt 5.3.4.11

Bess: I use Chinese traditional medicine a lot. Things like **their** belief in green vegetables, the cooked pears when the children are sick - just things I've picked up from the *ayi* about food you can or can't eat…With things like catching a cold - if you actually listen to **the Chinese** depending on whether it's the early stage, the middle or the late, **they** have really effective treatments…Our driver has taught us all sorts of little tricks.

Money

In the first excerpt several participants comment on what they see as the Chinese obsession with money.

Excerpt 5.3.4.12

Lois: I see **these people** busy with earning money - and I understand because **they** didn't have it and **they** want it very much [mod] - I think **they** are on the wrong track…I don't think money is the solution to all problems. I think **they** need to consider more their old values and I'm not talking about Confucius because I don't think I like that kind of society. But a little more consideration for other people.

Bess: The obsession with money makes **them** lose sight of other things.

Eva: **I** think Shanghai is developing too fast over the last ten years. That's the time **I've** lived here. **They** are missing something.

The obsession with money leads, in the participants' opinion, to the fact that, whether it be at `the level of the *ayi*' or in `Chinese society' in general, the concept of quality is not as important as the price.

Excerpt 5.3.4.13

Jill: The biggest respect I get from my *ayi* is when I get the vegetables cheaper than she does. That drives her crazy. [ex] With the level of the *ayi* [mod] the concept of quality is not not there but money comes first…It matters to **them** that every

penny does count. I get that. I will respect that. [mod] But
sometimes you have to say, `Yes, but this blouse will last ten
years and the one you just bought for Y19 won't.' [ex]
(See 5.4.3.4)
Fay: But that <u>is</u> no concept for **them** because **they** <u>don't go</u> for the ten
years. **They** <u>go</u> for the week.

Excerpt 5.3.4.14

Lois: That whole word `quality'. That's something that aggravates
me…the difference between *jiade* (false, fake) and *zhende* (real,
true). That has to do with the concept of quality. If I go to a
shop and I buy for more money the real thing because I don't want
to go to the shop next month again because the old one is broken,
I would prefer to buy the one that I can use a whole year. (She
told a long story about buying a cartridge of printer ink. Her driver said, `But you don't know if that's the real thing' – even though she had paid more.)
<u>That's ever so true</u> in **Chinese society**. <u>You're never sure</u> you've got
the real thing. It's been aggravating me more and more and more….

The final sentence in the excerpt above was said with great feeling.

<u>Customs</u>

The following excerpts show the participants commenting on customs which are different from those in their own cultures.

Excerpt 5.3.4.15

Bess: This has taken you more than ten years to figure out. This <u>is</u>
the way **they** <u>think</u>. If you ask **them** a question and **they** don't
want to give you a negative answer, **they'll** dance around and
around and around. You've got to know how to ask the question in
the right way.

Excerpt 5.3.4.16

Eva: It's very important for **Chinese**, the face. **They** have to be loud,
they have to show to the whole world that they are doing things
well.

Excerpt 5.3.4.17

Meg: What's offputting is the hawking. You know you are back in **China**
when you hear the hawking at the airport in a smart restaurant.
It is very offputting...**It** definitely has got less. Just in the
last year and a half.
Amy: **It's** improved a lot, a lot.
Meg: I think there was a lull during SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory
Syndrome in 2003) but I think **it's** coming back.
Amy: When I came here **it** was the background, **it** was all the time, **it**
was really awful but I think after the SARS **it's** improved a lot.

In the excerpt above, as in 5.3.4.7, the pronoun `it' has replaced `they/them'.

The following excerpt is about `a Chinese' who has lived in the West for some time, saying that `they' are really adaptable, i.e. they probably no longer observe traditional Chinese customs.

Excerpt 5.3.4.18

Bess: When you meet **a Chinese** who's lived in the **West** for ten years
and **they've** adopted **all** these Western values, **they're** really adaptable.

Perceived behaviours and attributes

The final selection of excerpts shows that the participants express opinions about `the Chinese' in general on a variety of topics and in 5.3.3.21 it can be seen that, although they often agree with each other, the *taitais* do not always do so.

Excerpt 5.3.4.19

Fay: Every day what amazes me is how **they** cross the road...Does **he** want
to be killed? Is **he** committing suicide or what? It never stops.
With the bike, without the bike, with the whole family, with the baby...

Excerpt 5.3.4.20

Betty: Do you ever experience what you might call sexism?

Kate: Yes…in the streets. Nothing that's overly offensive but comments.
Like **they** just can't be bothered with a woman - to answer those
questions. When I know **they** understand you, **they** just say, `No,
I don't understand'. It's like a put-off where **they** say things
they don't think you understand, like `Big bottom' or things like
that. [ex]

Excerpt 5.3.4.21

Amy: **They** are warm people, and somehow **they** are naïve in some aspects.
And the culture, culture, culture - I like **their** fabrics - Chinese embroidery.
Eva: I think **they** are not naïve. **They** are very smart people. **They**
are nice - **they** are very gentle.
Amy: Not polite…!
Eva: I wouldn't put it like this, but countryside folks, not really
much culture, **their** mind is not trained…

Excerpt 5.3.4.22

Pat: I love **Chinese people** - that is my biggest discovery that I'll
take out most. Maybe sometimes **they'll** push you around but, generally speaking, **they** are enormously kind, enormously kind.

Excerpt 5.3.4.23

Meg: My perception of Chinese perception of civilization is that **they**
do think **they** are superior to everybody else. **They** might need
technology or know-how skills from the West. But as far as **their**
culture is concerned I think **they** feel it is the best in the world - everybody else is inferior.
(Meg's ethnic origin is in a South Asian country.)

In 5.3.4 many examples of the use of `The Chinese', `They/Them' and, in two excerpts, `It' have been provided around the topics of Relationships, Food, Medicine, Money, Customs and Perceived Behaviours and Attributes. The ethnographic present tense was used in every case. In 5.3.5 the use of generalisations is continued, the use of `All' and `Always' strengthening them.

5.3.5 Use of `All' / `Always'

`All' and `Always' as well as similar expressions such as `Everybody', `Nobody' and `Everything' are used to strengthen and emphasise a generalisation which has been made. The first two excerpts are parts of narratives which can be found in 5.4.4. However, Excerpt 5.3.5.5 is given here in its entirety, including a modification and an example, in order for the full force of the two `all's to be understood. It will be seen that the *taitais* have strong opinions on a variety of topics - from relationships to culture, work, money and business.

Excerpt 5.3.5.1

Kate: I've met many **Chinese people** but there **always** seems to be a, a wall - people that we work with for years, that have been to our home many times and - there **always** seems to be a bit of [mod] a wall even though we try to be warm and share. It just seems like you can only go so far. I would like to have a richer, deeper - but I've been invited to - for example, a gentleman I know who is a furniture carver. He's allowed us to break the walls a little deeper. He's even invited us to another friend's house...

(See continuation of the story in Narrative in 5.4.4.1)

In the following excerpt, Gail's story, which can be found in 5.4.4.4, is about visiting her *ayi's* home. She thought the *ayi* might be embarrassed and says that she could always find a way to let her know that fact.

Excerpt 5.3.5.2

Gail: ...**Chinese people** can **always** find a way but she never did that so I think that was really nice.

(See Narrative in 5.4.4.4)

Excerpt 5.3.5.3

Meg: We went to a function here...and it suddenly struck me that **all the Chinese** were on one side and **all** the non-Chinese were on the other. I was talking to some of the other ladies there and saying, `Why is this?' and they **all** said that they had no Chinese friends, that they found it very hard to cross the gap.

Excerpt 5.3.5.4

Jill: Let's be brutally honest. We see a 48-year-old fat white guy with a 25-year-old Chinese girl and we **all** think the same thing: `Got him'.

Excerpt 5.3.5.5

Kate: The thing that first comes to mind, that concerns me greatly,
is that **all** of the historical buildings and **all** of the culture

in Shanghai - but I know it's happening elsewhere in the country [mod] - is being taken away and I think future generations are going to be harmed terribly for not having these historical perspectives. And more and more, when I think it's about to slow down and someone's captured it [sic], I just find that another neighbourhood has gone that I never would have thought would be touched. Mr. X, who works with us, his home is being threatened, not for a good reason, what's going to be replacing his home is not a building that's going to serve the people that live there or others well. It's just another building. That concerns me. I don't understand. [ex]

(See 5.4.5.1 – Examples)

Excerpt 5.3.5.6

Amy: There is something missing here. It's too much material. Too much money, money, money, money and **they** are forgetting something. **They** are forgetting the balance. **Chinese** are **always** talking about balance but I think the new generation is forgetting that.

Excerpt 5.3.5.7

Kate: And the work ethic - you almost have to be careful not to abuse them. **Everybody's** available, morning, noon and night. **Nobody** has a baseball game to go to or a birthday...**They're** willing to do **anything** to make sure that **they** are on the right path and **they** can be successful - the tenacity.

Excerpt 5.3.5.8

Fay: But it's **always** very difficult. It's very difficult for **all** the **Western** companies to get into this upper layer of **Chinese** **people** knowing each other and doing business with each other. And that will **always** be there. **They** know exactly….

Excerpt 5.3.5.9

Bess: ...**the Chinese** are **always** good with money. For generations...**All** those things about luck, fortune tellers. You've got to have a gold cart in the house with **all** the coins in it; **everything** about bringing luck and money into your house.

5.3.6 Summary

The examples given above in 5.3.4 and 5.3.5 are only a few instances of the use of `the Chinese', `They/Them' and similar words and phrases in the data. In order to show the frequency of such techniques in the interviews a table is provided below showing the total number of times they were used.

Table 3: Use of `the Chinese' and `They'

	Names	The Chinese	Chinese	Chinese people	They	Them	Their	Other terms
FG I 1	Amy	3	3	-	35	2	4	5
2	Eva	1	1	1	19	7	2	5
3	Ivy	3	-	-	11	2	-	3
4	Meg	2	1	6	17	1	2	16
FG II 5	Bess	8	5	1	32	8	9	5
6	Fay	1	-	2	36	3	-	7
7	Jill	-	1	3	21	3	2	1
FG III 8	Gail	-	1	3	12	1	1	4
9	Kate	-	-	1	37	2	6	3
10	Nell	-	-	-	7	1	1	2
FG IV 11	Dora	-	1	-	31	3	9	2
12	Hope	1	-	2	37	2	-	4
13	Lois	3	-	-	25	2	3	10
14	Olga	-	-	-	5	3	-	5
Ind. 15	Cleo	3	1	6	33	6	6	7
16	Pat	4	-	2	10	-	2	3
17	Rose	1	1	1	3	-	1	8

N.B.

1) FG = Focus Group, Ind. = Individual interview
2) The participants are listed alphabetically within their Focus Groups.
3) Terms such as `the Shanghainese', `Hong Kongers', `Singaporeans', and `Taiwanese' are not included.

4) `They' may refer to the categories mentioned above as well as to `the Chinese'.

Results

1) The results are shown according to Focus Groups so that the interaction within the group can be seen. As might be expected, it is noticeable that in each group some participants are more talkative than others.
2) All 17 participants used `they', 7 of them more than 30 times. It was used most often in a generalisation made by the participant beginning with `the Chinese' or a similar term. It was also used in response to another participant.
3) 15 of the 17 participants used at least one of the first three categories, `the Chinese', `Chinese' and `Chinese people'. The other two used `Asian people' and `elderly Chinese'.
4) Under `Other' the most common expressions were:
   (the) Chinese women / men / children / kids / girls
   It will be noted that Meg used many of these expressions.
5) The ethnographic present tense was commonly used after these expressions.
6) Only four participants used the modifier `a lot of' in front of `Chinese / people / women'.
7) Bess sent an email after the Focus Group interview in which , in addition to the information in the table, she used `the Chinese' 3 times, `they' 8 times, `them' 4 times and `their' 5 times.

As a further summary of the generalisations used by the *taitais*, it may be useful to draw the picture of `the Chinese' that has emerged so far. It seems that the Chinese are hardworking, both in school and at work and that they are obsessed with money. This obsession is shown by the fact that they always want to buy cheap things regardless of the quality and by the number of fake goods in the market. It also explains their interest in luck and fortune tellers. The Chinese concept of food and medicine is different from that of non-Chinese. There seems to be a barrier between the Chinese and non-Chinese because they have a different way of thinking and an indirect way of speaking. They also have their own way of doing business.

Interestingly, this picture, though not identical, is very similar to one in a book written for Western managers at about the same time as Edward Said's Orientalism. The statements are given here for comparison with the data provided by the *taitais*:

1. The Chinese have a strong sense of family.
2. The Chinese are fair and this sense of fairness comes from Confucianism. It teaches returning good for good, and justice for evil.
3. The Chinese are practical business people.
4. The Chinese are hardworking, industrious people.
5. The Chinese have a love of life and a sense of beauty that is seen in their art. They also have a high regard for the written word.

(Harris & Moran, 1979: 311)

In this section of Chapter 5 the data showing how the participants define `the Other' have been provided and it has been seen that, like the Orientalist scholars, they do generalise, using such phrases as `the Chinese' and `They/Them'. They also employ very often the ethnographic present tense which was described by Fabian as a signal identifying a discourse as an observer's language. The picture of the Chinese that has emerged is somewhat stereotypical and not unlike one which appeared in a book written by Westerners more than twenty years ago. In the next part of the chapter it will be seen that the *taitais* employed a variety of other strategies in making sense of Chinese culture and that the picture that emerges is much more vivid.

5.4 How `the Self' Constructs `the Other'

5.4.1 Introduction

The use of generalisations was seen above to be a common practice as the *taitais* attempted to define `the Other'. In this section Theme 1, Generalisation, is still the focus but it will be seen that under that heading there are a number of strategies used by the *taitais* that go beyond a straightforward statement about, or definition of, `the Chinese'. These strategies may be said to be ways in which `the Self' constructs `the Other'. The first strategy is still a generalisation but it is about `the Shanghainese', i.e. the people in the particular context in which the *taitais* live. This is followed by modifications and narratives, techniques which were both mentioned in the literature. Following them are two techniques which were not mentioned in the literature: the use of examples and comparisons.

Further ways in which `the Self' constructs `the Other' are then explored through Themes 2 and 3. Under Theme 2 it will be seen that the *taitais* do use `We' and `They' as the Orientalists did but perhaps with some variation. In Theme 3, Ethnocentric Attitudes, there will be an attempt to discern the attitudes of the *taitais* to `the Other'.

By way of introduction to this section, two points may be made. The first is a reminder about `the Self' in this research project who is constructing `the Other'. As has been shown in the first part of this chapter, the *taitais* were a particular elite group of mainly Western women who were living in Shanghai in 2005. Their construction of `the Other' is formed by their background and their experience. As will be seen in the first examples below, their contact with `the Other' was mainly through taxi drivers and hairdressers, not, for example, Chinese intellectuals with whom Western students and teachers have contact or Chinese colleagues with whom their husbands work.

The second point to be raised arises from Said's comment on the modern Orientalist:

> His human detachment, whose sign is the absence of sympathy covered by professional knowledge, is weighted heavily with all the orthodox attitudes, perspectives, and moods of Orientalism...His Orient is not the Orient as it is, but the Orient as it has been Orientalized. (Said, 1978: 104)

It will be interesting to discover whether the results of this research show that the *taitais* construct `the Other' in the manner described by Said.

5.4.2 Use of 'the Shanghainese'

In 5.3.4 it was seen that the examples given of the use of `The Chinese', `They' and similar terms covered a wide range of topics. In the data there were also quite a number of references to `the Shanghainese', mainly in answer to a specific question about them. (See Q. 19 in Appendix 4.) These are presented here in a separate short section and since they seem to be, on the whole, either very positive or very negative they are categorised in that way.

Positive

Excerpt 5.4.2.1

Bess: If you ask **a Beijinger, they'll** tell you that **they're** greedy,
money-hungry, sophisticated, nouveau riche - but I think **the**
Beijing cabby drivers are just con men. **The Shanghai taxi driver,**
you try and tip **them** and they'll throw the money back at you.

Excerpt 5.4.2.2

Meg: I think you can tell **a Shanghainese. They've** got a great zest,
happiness about **them,** especially the women. You get that buzz in
Shanghai.

Excerpt 5.4.2.3

Rose: **The Shanghainese** are industrious; **they** have an inexplicable
dynamism and energy - which one does not find in Beijing. This
makes Shanghai special. It is people who make a place. The
young 30 and 40 year olds are propelling the city forward, in
the Arts and in many fields.

Negative

Excerpt 5.4.2.4

Bess: [**The Shanghainese women**] are tyrants.
Jill: **They** rule the roost. **They** control the money and everything.

Excerpt 5.4.2.5

Jill: There's a huge racial bias here against the Hong Kong Chinese -
and Beijingese...**Every** crime that's ever been committed in
Shanghai is committed by a *waidi* (outsider). **Shanghainese** would
never break the law. **They're** very, very biased.
Pat: **The Shanghainese** know when another person is Shanghainese. Once
a woman ran in front of the car and I said, `She's just a young
person' but the driver said, `*Bu* (not) younger, no Shanghainese'.
He figured she was ignorant - not Shanghainese [ex]...**The**
Shanghainese feel **they** are pretty cool and superior; **they** are
wise to the ways of the world.
Amy: Of course **they** think that they are the best ever and more than
that. There is Shanghai and there is the rest of the world! `I
come from Shanghai!' You go for a highlight and say, `Be
careful, please' - `I'm Shanghainese'. `That's the reason I'm
telling you'. [ex] They are too proud - if I was from Nanjing,
I'd say, `Come on - relax'.

It was the rich Shanghainese to whom Amy was referring when she later said:

Excerpt 5.4.2.6

Amy: In the seven years I've been here **they** have made a lot of money but from an educational point of view **they** are still the same. **They** live in **our** compounds but **they** spit in the street….I think **they** are intelligent and **they** will learn.
(See 5.4.7.1)

The comment about spitting is a noteworthy, graphic one, showing the participant's observation of her neighbours.

The longer comment below is a direct answer to the question (Q. 19) as to whether the participants thought that Shanghainese are different from other Chinese. They were also asked to define the difference. This participant, the Sinologist, gives a historical reason for her answer.

Excerpt 5.4.2.7

Cleo: I do think very much that **Shanghainese** are very different. In many ways. Physically, **they** are very fashionable. **They** speak loud and with very proud voice and manners. **They** are of course very business-orientated. That's the way the city grew as well.

Now, you hear it in the conversations. Shanghai is the place to make money. In a way, it's perverting a little bit the society here and there is definitely a loss of authenticity in the way China could be. **They** are not always kind because **they** are very ambitious and I believe **they** are definitely *kanbuqi* (look down on) the other Chinese because Shanghai from its past with foreign concessions and so on and its development, definitely has already brought them to that way of thinking.

A preliminary answer to the question as to whether the *taitais* construct `the Other' in the way described by Said might be that they do not, since they seem to engage, even if only in a limited way, with `the Orient as it is' – the taxi driver, the hairdresser and their neighbours. Said spoke of the Orientalists' `human detachment' and `absence of sympathy' but this does not seem to be true in the case of the *taitais*.

5.4.3 Modifications

As was seen in 5.3.5, the use of `All' and `Always' strengthens a generalisation but there are several techniques used when a participant wants to weaken, or at least to make less strong, a generalisation. Fabian (See 2.2.2.2) pointed out that there is an important statistical difference between saying, e.g. `The Chinese' and `most Chinese' or `70% of all Chinese'. In the examples below, only the first two refer to quantity. The other ways of modifying will be explained below.

Excerpt 5.4.3.1

Eva: **They** have these *xiao huangdi* (little emperors). **They** are very,
very spoiled - **a lot of** [mod] kids - **it's not fair to say everybody but quite a big number of kids** [mod] are spoiled. If
they go on like that….
(See also 5.3.4.4)
Kate: (See 5.3.5.1 for `Always' and 5.4.4.1 for full Narrative) …there **always** seems
to be **a bit of** [mod] a wall even though we try to be warm and
share.

`A lot of' and `a bit of' are common modifications used in everyday speech. Eva's longer modification `it's not fair to say everybody but quite a big number of kids' shows that she was aware of the unfairness of saying `everybody'. She comes from another Asian country and perhaps was therefore trying to be more polite about the Chinese children.

In the next excerpt the participant modifies her statement by saying that the illegal practices she describes go on in other parts of the world as well as in China but that the media highlights it here.

Excerpt 5.4.3.2

Kate: It's one thing to go to Xiangyang Market and know that you are
buying goods that are copied but when you buy vehicles that you
find have parts that are…and pharmaceuticals - those are life threatening **but it also goes on in other parts of the world** [mod] even though it's highlighted here in China. They
find counterfeit motor parts in the US - in Detroit. And they

find counterfeit pharmaceuticals. The media highlights it here
but it's happening everywhere in the world. [mod]

The following three examples are a recognition that their age modifies the participants' attitudes or behaviour.

Excerpt 5.4.3.3

Meg: Most expats that I know would choose not to eat Chinese food in China even though they are quite adventurous eaters in world terms. **If I was younger,** I would say, `Oh yeah, I can eat scorpions' which I did get at a banquet once and I thought I don't even want to know.

Meg: A friend of ours introduced us to some great street food - she was 21 and she had a gung ho attitude toward eating but I have to say, **again maybe it's an age thing,** the hygiene aspect tends to put me off certain things that I would otherwise try.

Bess: **But that's our age group**. If you go to the restaurants there are heaps of 20-something-year-old foreigners, socialising with Chinese. **It's generational.**

(See 5.2.7.1)

One example shows a modification not according to difference in age but according to difference in class.

Excerpt 5.4.3.4

Jill: **With the level of the ayi** the concept of quality is not not there but money comes first.

(See 5.3.4.13)

The last three modifications indicate that the participants are trying to understand a situation even though they do not agree with `the Other'.

Excerpt 5.4.3.5

Lois: If I see **these people** busy with earning money - and I understand because **they** didn't have it and **they** want it very much [mod] - I think **they** are on the wrong track.

Jill: (See 5.3.4.13 for full quotation) It matters to them that every penny does count. I get that. I will respect that. [mod] But...

Gail: (See 5.4.7.2 for full quotation) But for me it's not the value of the thing in money - it's because it comes from my grandmother. If it breaks, I will never get the same. And I can feel **they** don't

have this sentiment - **maybe I'm wrong** [mod].

All of the modifications appear to show the *taitais'* nuanced approach to `the Other' rather than the absolute and systematic difference between East and West seen by the Orientalists, according to Said. The *taitais* recognize that there are factors that might affect their viewpoint. Their perspective is still, of course, Western but they are prepared to see that they are influenced by their age or class and that illegal practices they see in China also occur in the West. They even say that they might be wrong.

5.4.4 Narratives

In the literature, in addition to modifications, there was mention of another linguistic strategy which can be used in the construction of `the Other', that of narrative. (See 2.2.3) Said says that narrative is a constant pressure against the static system of "synchronic essentialism" which he calls vision because it presumes that the whole Orient can be seen panoptically. (Said, 1978: 240) When stories are told, they must be told in a particular context, not about the whole of the Middle East or of China.

In the Focus Groups the *taitais* told many stories which were lively representations of their experiences in Shanghai in 2005 and during all the years they had lived here. It seems that chatting in a Focus Group with their friends encouraged them to relate more tales and that this was therefore a productive methodology. Because of their length, only a few narratives can be reproduced here.

The first narrative describes a visit by the *taitai* to the home of a friend of a friend on the last day of the lunar year, the most important evening in the Chinese calendar. The *taitai* had earlier felt that there was a wall between herself and `Chinese people' and she was therefore overcome with emotion on that evening. She recognises that the probable reason for not being invited more often to a Chinese home is the difference in `living conditions', i.e. status and wealth.

Visits

Excerpt 5.4.4.1

Kate: I've met many Chinese people but there **always** seems

to be a, a wall - people that we work with for years, that have been to our home many times and - there **always** seems to be a bit of [mod] a wall even though we try to be warm and share. It just seems like you can only go so far. I would like to have a richer, deeper - but I've been invited to - for example, a gentleman I know who is a furniture carver. He's allowed us to break the walls a little deeper. He's even invited us to another friend's house. We had the pleasure of going to a friend of his house on the last day of the Chinese New Year. And I felt very blessed that we were in a family setting, the grandparents were there and we all shared *tang yuan* (a special sweet dumpling served at Chinese New Year) together and I even got very emotional and they said, `Are you OK?' and I said, `No, I'm fine'. I just realised that that was very special - to be extended - but that happens very rarely. Like you would be invited to our homes at a very special occasion...For him to extend that invitation was really special. I have the feeling that a lot of people are uncomfortable with their living conditions where I would never judge anybody where they live but I think that that's where it stems from.

(See 5.3.5.1 `Always' and 5.4.3.1 Modifications)

The next three narratives are about visits by the *taitais* to the homes of their `helpers'. In any culture, this is probably not a common occurrence and it may be that some of the members of the Chinese Culture Study Group have unusually close relationships with their `helpers'. As seen above in 5.2.1, however, these relationships varied greatly.

A second narrative by Kate is given because she tells about her unusual experience of visiting her *ayi's* home in another town and because she describes it as `really, truly, a very, very China experience', her `most China experience ever'.

Excerpt 5.4.4.2

Kate: Our *ayi* is from Shaoxing (a town in neighbouring Zhejiang Province) and we spent the night at her home and it was a wonderful experience. The whole village knew we were coming...I was sitting outside in the morning and it was National Day and I could hear footsteps on the path and these little boys came

and they said, `Oh, *waiguoren* (a foreigner)!' and they all ran.
It was like, `Wait till you see what I've found!' They went and got a whole other group of kids - and I could just see from
their expression - it was like something really special. It was like, `I've got a toad!'…It was just priceless! And I know
she kind of paraded us through the town. There were ducks and
an ox on the property and it was really, truly, a very, very China experience. That was our most China experience ever - it
was lovely.

Dora also had the experience of visiting the home of one of her `helpers', her driver, and she described it as `really a memorable experience and probably the closest we've come to seeing how local people live'. Like Kate, she comments on the gap in status and wealth because she knows that this is not how they live `on a day to day basis', that a special effort was made that evening.

Excerpt 5.4.4.3

Dora: I was at the home of our first driver who invited us for Chinese New Year dinner. It was fascinating. We brought the
kids. It was a five-storey walkup. It was one room with a tiny little bedroom off the side for a child. The kitchen was
maybe a third of the size of…and the bathrooms were downstairs
and outside. But it was just hilarious. Every neighbour came…He had his aunts and his cousins. One of his cousins studied French and X [her son] knew some French so the whole dinner was kind of a combination of French, German, English and
Chinese and people were translating for each other. His mother
bought the hairy crabs and they crawled across the floor and the kids played with the crabs. It was really a memorable experience and probably the closest we've come to seeing how local people live. And this, I'm sure, was not how they would live
on a day to day basis. This was a big deal. They bought wine. It
was very clear that this was....

Yet another participant visited her *ayi's* home. As with Kate's story above, mention is made of the difference in the living conditions – `You know my house is old' – but both the *taitai* and the *ayi* were happy that the visit took place.

Excerpt 5.4.4.4

Gail: …the first time I went to *ayi's*, the day before, I thought maybe she would - because the driver usually brought the cat to

her home - I thought maybe as it was a holiday we thought we won't bother the driver, we can drive ourselves. I asked her because I thought, `Maybe she doesn't want us to go to her home'. But she looked so happy! It was, `*Hen gaoxing! Hen gaoxing!* (Very happy) My husband will be there and my daughter will be there and…' She didn't say it like…she just said, `You know my house is old' but it's a nice house. She just wanted to tell me she was happy. She could have told me, `No, it's not convenient'. Chinese people can **always** find a way but she never did that so I think that was really nice. (See 5.3.5.2)

The four narratives above about visits to Chinese homes seem to bring to life `real people', both `the Self' and `the Other', providing a very different picture from the rather sterile generalisation `the Chinese do X'. The close relationships between `the Self' and `the Other' can be felt even if they are not stated in so many words. The following narratives cover a variety of everyday experiences.

Different cultures have many different customs with regard to eating. The following two humorous narratives are about the experiences of foreigners, especially wealthy expatriates, at Chinese banquets. In the first story, Olga switches to the present tense to tell her story - `We sit at the table…We're all waiting' - for effect.

<u>Protocol at banquets</u>

Excerpt 5.4.4.5

Olga: We went to X's [her driver] wedding. We sit at the table with his sister who speaks English. We're all waiting for somebody to eat. Waiting, waiting - and finally I get hungry. I go take a peanut. Everyone starts eating. They were waiting for us. We never even thought. My daughter and I never thought that we were the honoured guests. At the end, everyone's leaving. Gosh, it's a school night. Who's going to leave? Finally, I just stood up - everyone left. So sometimes it's the protocol.

Olga: When we first came, my husband's predecessor said, `OK, you have to learn how to eat shrimp. Put it in your mouth, take off the shell and spit out and eat that'. So my husband worked on this for six months. Then his old boss came back and he was

eating it and peeling it (with his fingers) and my husband said,
`How come you're not doing it the other way?' And he said, `Oh,
I never learned it but I just thought maybe you should'. I never - I just peel (with fingers).

Still on the theme of food, two participants told stories about how their life in China has had an effect on their children's taste in food. In the first story the `child' is a university student but in the second story the children are under the age of ten.

Participants' children's taste in food

Excerpt 5.4.4.6

Ivy: With my son having his local friends here from the bar, he used to go out and eat Chinese quite a bit. So when he was going back to X [a Western country] to university he got his friends in the usual restaurant to write down what he used to eat in China so that he then presents it to his local Chinese restaurant in X and they say, `Ah, you want real Chinese food!'
So they cook him real Chinese food. And everybody else is having the X Chinese food.

Dora: We cook a lot of Chinese food. We cook more Asian food, Indian, Thai and Chinese than we do Western food...I remember we were home once - my mother's cooking for them and finally we took them out for dinner in a Thai place - there were dumplings and noodles. They hadn't eaten a thing for, like, three nights. My mother's making potatoes and steaks. That's what they do - born in X [another Asian city] - `Where's the noodles?' Don't give them potatoes. They love dumplings - *xiaolongbao* (Shanghai-style dumplings). They can't get enough of them. We cook *gongbao* (spicy) chicken and hot and sour soup….

As has been noted above, food and medicine are closely related. The *taitais* had many stories to tell about their experiences with traditional Chinese medicine, only one of which is included here.

Traditional Chinese medicine

Excerpt 5.4.4.7

Hope: With this Chinese doctor in Hong Kong, when he had a first look at me, it was funny because I had all these red marks on my face and he called it a butterfly and then he said, `Can I see your tongue because I'm quite sure your tongue is a butterfly

as well?' And it was. It was really red. It was sometimes hurting. Immediately he told me not to eat this, this and that…Within three or four weeks I had a normal tongue and I wasn't as red any more. It did make a huge change.
Betty: So - you believe in it?
Hope: Oh, certainly, certainly.

The final story is on a universal theme – love. Interestingly, a Chinese girl spoke to one of the participants about her boyfriend, saying, `You are the only one I can talk [to] about this'.

Human relationships

Excerpt 5.4.4.8

Gail: There is a management office in our compound and one of the girls there liked to talk to me and it was funny because we hadn't been here for six months. One day she asked me, `Can I come to your home and have a talk with you?' I was really, `Yes, of course. No problem'. And she said, `Well, this is very confidential but I thought you were the kind of person I could talk to. You are the only one I can talk about this'. And I was thinking, `What is going on?' And she had a problem with her boyfriend. She could tell me things that she couldn't tell to other Chinese people that wouldn't understand. So we talked quite a lot about this.

The narratives about protocol at Chinese banquets show the *taitais* – and their husbands – learning about Chinese customs, i.e. adapting to the culture of `the Other' during their stay in Shanghai. The next two stories show that the children of the *taitais* have come to like Chinese food so much that when they return to the West they want `real' Chinese (or Thai) food, not the pseudo-Chinese fare in most Chinese restaurants in Western countries. Food and medicine are closely related and one *taitai*, at least, believes very strongly in the efficacy of Chinese medicine. The final narrative shows that attitudes to love and marriage are changing in China, `the Other', but perhaps not quickly enough and that therefore the young girl felt that the Western *taitai* was the only person to whom she could speak about her love life.

It has been seen that Modifications and Narratives, two techniques mentioned in the literature, are significant additions to Generalisations. To end this section under the

heading of Theme 1, Generalisations, two more strategies found in the data but not mentioned in the literature will be shown: Examples and Comparisons.

5.4.5 Examples

In the course of the discussions in the Focus Groups many examples were given by the participants, usually to emphasize points they were making. In some other excerpts in this chapter the convention [ex] can be seen. Only three of these have been repeated here. The number of the full context in which the example appears is given.

Excerpt 5.4.5.1

Meg: (See 5.3.4.2 for full quotation) With birthday parties, there were only two foreign children in my son's class and only those two came - quite hard to explain to a four-year-old. 18 children didn't reply, just didn't come….

Kate: (See 5.3.5.5 for full quotation) Mr. X, who works with us, his home is being threatened, not for a good reason, what's going to be replacing his home is not a building that's going to serve the people that live there or others well. It's just another building. That concerns me. I don't understand.

Gail: (See 5.4.7.2 for full quotation) Sometimes I say, `Oh, we have to be careful with this thing because it comes from my grandmother'….And I can see that *ayi* doesn't understand that. She thinks it's just a cup - or whatever…But for me it's not the value of the thing in money - it's because it comes from my grandmother. If it breaks, I will never get the same.

The three examples above were repeated to make the point that the vivid details the *taitais* provide are constructions of `the Other' which are easily remembered: the 18 Chinese children who did not come to the foreign child's birthday party, Mr. X, whose home is threatened by the demolition of buildings in his area and the *ayi*, who, according to the *taitai*, does not understand the value of an old cup which is an heirloom.

In the Focus Groups mundane aspects of Chinese culture in daily life were discussed and in the talk about food many examples were provided, six of which are shown below.

Excerpt 5.4.5.2

Olga: My husband knew how to banter [at a banquet] …it's an important
part of the culture.
Kate: The kids thought there was a petting zoo at every restaurant.
They'd be playing with them all - all the critters at the front.

[Since Chinese people like their food fresh, there are at the front of many Chinese restaurants fish tanks in which are not only live fish but also turtles and crabs.]

Cleo: I have been always very adventurous with food. Little birds on
the stick - I managed to put the roasted bird in my mouth and I
crunched it.
Fay: In the beginning I really hated those dishes with all the chicken pieces - with the bones in. I hated that because you
put the whole piece in your mouth and then you start spitting
it out. And now I order it - I love it! I love the dish!
Jill: My sons want dumplings. They'll choose *Dou Jiang Wang* (a Chinese restaurant) over McDonalds for lunch.
Bess: My youngest was raised as a Chinese baby. He was given rice
and the juice of the green vegetables. Whenever I cook the
vegetables now, `Do you want the juice?' `Oh yeah.'

The last two examples about food were similar to the two narratives above which showed that the *taitais'* children's taste in food has been influenced by their long stay in Shanghai. (See 5.4.4.6)

The close connection between food and medicine has already been noted and two examples are given here which show that the *taitais* had already been exposed to Chinese culture before they came to Shanghai. There is no longer, if there ever was, any absolute and systematic difference between East and West. (Said, 1978: 300)

The first participant comes from another East Asian country.

Excerpt 5.4.5.3

Eva: Actually, my grandfather was a Chinese medical doctor so I grew up with
the needles and so I'm not afraid of them. Every time I started
coughing it was, `Come. Lie down.' It was not only the needles. I
took a lot of medicine too. It's not only to cure sickness, it's also
prevention.

Ivy: Actually, my father was the first [a European country] doctor to be registered as an acupuncturist…I used to get acupuncture for anything but also I'd get penicillin for anything. It would be, `Here, take antibiotics but let me stick a needle in you'…So I was brought up accepting alternative therapies.

The final topic of discussion on which examples are provided was the difficulty of the Chinese language. Again, the participants had much to say and only a few of their examples can be given here.

Excerpt 5.4.5.4

Pat: I'm very interested in languages - I have an MA in French literature. I can speak six or seven languages - English, French, German, Spanish, Portuguese, Hungarian and Dutch - so naturally I was drawn to learning Chinese - but it was so different and difficult…My level is way below what it should be after a year and a half.

Fay: It just doesn't click. I speak five languages - Dutch, English, French, German and Spanish - and Chinese is just too difficult. I can't get it out of my throat…It's the tones.

Hope: I'm a language person - and I couldn't get it. Actually, I had the same problem with the tones.

Eva: It was just too difficult for me. I'm Asian basically [although educated in the West, she comes from another Asian country] - I thought the word order and everything should be similar but it wasn't. It was a total shock to me. The most difficult thing I couldn't figure out was the four different tones. Each tone has a different meaning - so I gave up.

Nell: I just don't have an ear to hear.

Olga: I'm tone deaf - and I just got to the point…I got stomachaches, headaches…Why am I paying to do this? So I just had to stop…I feel bad that I can't but it was just too painful. It just doesn't stick.

These are graphic accounts of the difficulties encountered by intelligent women who were trying to learn the language of the country of `the Other'.

One of the few *taitais* who did make some headway in the learning of the Chinese language and who could even read and write Chinese characters, though not enough to read a newspaper, commented that in order to learn the language she had to change her way of thinking – a difficult process.

Excerpt 5.4.5.5

Gail: I've been speaking a lot of languages but I must admit that the language is so different from Europe and Western languages so you also have to change your way of thinking. That is really difficult.

For purposes of comparison, this section ends with one success story – of a husband. Although the *taitai* herself had failed to learn Chinese, her husband, a busy Western businessman, was doing well and, significantly, they were encouraging their children to learn it.

Excerpt 5.4.5.6

Dora: I took lessons for maybe ten weeks [but] I just couldn't stand it. I just hated language. I always have. My husband, on the other hand, takes lessons anywhere from two to five times a week, depending on how long he's in town. He's not fluent but he's completely conversant. He holds all his staff meetings in Chinese. He's learned to read and write. He's up to about a thousand characters in 15 months. He's studying all the time. The kids are learning it. We're certainly encouraging the kids to learn it. I wish I knew it.

As with the narratives, it seems that the sense-making practice of giving examples brings to life both `the Self' and `the Other'. It can be seen that the *taitais* did make efforts, particularly in their attempts to learn the Chinese language, but that they were not always successful in bridging the gap.

5.4.6 Comparisons

Another sense-making practice which was not found in the literature but which appeared frequently in the data in this study is the making of comparisons. It happens that most of the *taitais* have lived in more than one Asian city and in other parts of the

world as well. Their comparisons are categorised geographically and it will be seen that they cover a great variety of topics.

Hong Kong

Excerpt 5.4.6.1

Dora: Compared to Hong Kong Chinese, **they** *work* harder, **they're** more aggressive, **they** *seem to know* Shanghai is on the cutting edge of becoming something big and **they're** going to be part of it. **They're** hungry, **they're** much sharper than in Hong Kong.

Jill: X [her husband] laughs and laughs when someone tries to send a Honky Chinese to deal with Shanghainese. **They** will just eat them for dinner.

Bess: But you know - **they** are so good at English here. Compared to somewhere like Hong Kong where it's pretty bad still.

Other Asian cities

Excerpt 5.4.6.2

Ivy: It's a bit like Singapore because **we** were in Singapore for eight years and in Singapore **all** the old parts were pulled down, just exactly what **they're** doing here now....If **they're** not careful here, it's going to be the same.

Fay: In Taiwan we had an alarm system. Break-ins were not unusual, you had to watch your purse. But there's nothing like that here. I'm not afraid in my house, I leave the door open at night...**People** are not jealous here yet. I hardly think **they** are jealous - **they** are where **they** are.

Dora: Compared to X [another Asian city] - I lived there for many years, 15 years ago, and they were really...I mean they don't like women and if you're a woman that's the worst thing. They just ignore you - completely. It's really terrible. You were not a human being...Here in Shanghai, I don't really feel the difference.

Gail: In Beijing **Chinese people** are more rude. You can feel the administration heritage. It's in the north and so more cold. In Hong Kong it's like **people** first watch your money and your purse and your Visa card. Here, I never - I think **Shanghainese** people are very friendly. If they want to help you, it's just to be friendly and helpful - not thinking, `Maybe she will give me some money.' I think **they** are very different.

Bess: It will be interesting to see how much **they** keep some of **their** nicer values as **they** become more - compared with Hong Kong Chinese, the Honkies, Singaporeans....

Betty: Do you think **they** will be different?

Bess: Depends whether **they** keep **their** socialist values. X [her husband] is getting pessimistic - he thinks they're all going the way of Indonesia - corruption.

Japan

Excerpt 5.4.6.3

Lois: …if **a Chinese** is here and **he** wants to go there and **he** cannot go that way, **he** will go that way or that way whereas **a Japanese…he** just won't go. **A Japanese** is far more rigid than **a Chinese**.

Europe

Excerpt 5.4.6.4

Gail: When I came to Shanghai three years ago you would rarely hear of things being stolen but now it's every day - mobile phone. It's a normal evolution - when you still have so many poor people and so many so rich people…It's **like in Europe** at Christmas when you see all these shops with a lot of things to buy and there are more and more poor people - it's not correct.

Cleo: …in Shanghai there are quite a few businesswomen and they are actually tough, good businesswomen. The great thing is that here in China **men** don't mind if they deal with a woman **while in Europe** I have a feeling that sometimes because men are more macho, **they** have difficulties dealing with a woman.

Pat: When I lived in X [a European country], the X were aggressively strong and rude to me…But the Chinese…it's live and let live…Everything doesn't have to be just so and so.

The rest of the world

Excerpt 5.4.6.5

Gail: It's **the first country in my life** I experienced where **a taxi driver** doesn't want you to pay the fare because he took a wrong way.

Kate: That's one of the things I love about Shanghai…it's the energy - it's incredible…**they're** such entrepreneurs…They're so eager to get somewhere and that doesn't exist in **the rest of the world** these days.

Meg: I am far more conscious of race here than I have been in **other parts of the world**..Maybe that's part of an expatriate society, anyway, where the expat is separate to the locals. But I find

it more pronounced in **China.**
(As was noted in 5.3.4.23, Meg's ethnic origin is in a South Asian country.)

Whereas the Orientalists criticised by Said made simplistic comments about the absolute and systematic difference between `East' and `West', the *taitais*, most of whom had had the experience of living in more than one Asian country, were, on the whole, able to make informed comparisons. Fay's comment (See 5.4.6.2), however, that she could leave her door open at night was true enough in her secure compound but she was not correct in thinking that there are no break-ins in Shanghai. Gail (See 5.4.6.4) was nearer to the truth when she talked about mobile phones being stolen every day. Not one *taitai*, though, said that she felt unsafe in Shanghai.

Under the heading of Theme 1, Generalisation, it has been seen that the participants in this study did, like the Orientalists, use many generalisations as they defined `the Other'. The dull and dehumanised picture of `the Chinese' produced by these generalisations was found in 5.3.6. However, the participants used a number of other sense-making practices as they constructed `the Other' and these strategies produced a much more vivid and detailed picture of `the Other', while at the same time revealing much about the *taitais* themselves.

5.4.7 Theme 2 - Use of `We' and `They' / `East' and `West'

Besides generalising and employing other linguistic sense-making practices, another technique in the construction of `the Other' is the use of `We' and `They, `Us' and `Them', `Our' and `Their'. The examples found in this study are provided here under the heading of Theme 2. Said (See 2.2.3) pointed out that the result of this practice is usually to polarise the distinction, the Oriental becoming more Oriental, the Westerner becoming more Western. In the excerpts below, the first three, all by Amy, might seem to bear this out. However, she also spoke of having many Asian children in her home, saying that they were `more nice' than ours (See 5.3.4.3), and in her comment accompanying her photographs (See 6.1.1.1) she praised the Chinese people in general as being `nice, warm, family-loving, funny...And so much likes [sic] us!'

Excerpt 5.4.7.1

Amy: **We** don't really know what's going on in **their** houses every day…I know because **everything** that is going on in front of me is not…You turn on the TV and you don't understand anything. I think it's a big problem but it's also an attitude problem - **we** don't want to and **they** don't want to.

Amy: I think **they** are afraid of what **we** think about **them**. Now, I don't know but when I came it was like **Chinese girls** want passports, money, sort of, you know…complex. Let's say **they** are a little bit complex.

Amy: In the seven years I've been here **they** have made a lot of money but from an educational point of view **they** are still the same. **They** live in **our** compounds but **they** spit in the street…I think **they** are intelligent and **they** will learn.

(See 5.4.2.6)

In the following excerpts each participant speaks about a particular aspect of the difference between `Us' and `Them'. In the first, the difference is in our attitudes to the past.

Excerpt 5.4.7.2

Gail: One thing that is really difficult to understand for us **Western** culture [sic], and especially North Europe culture, is the fact that **they** don't keep houses and places from the past…**We** think differently, even an old house, you try to renew it, to restore it but I don't think **they** have the same way of thinking than we have…Sometimes I say, `Oh, we have to be careful with this thing because it comes from my grandmother'….And I can see that *ayi* doesn't understand that. She thinks it's just a cup - or whatever…[ex] But for me it's not the value of the thing in money - it's because it comes from my grandmother. If it breaks, I will never get the same. And I can feel **they** don't have this sentiment - maybe I'm wrong [mod].

(See 5.4.3.5 and 5.4.5.1)

In the next excerpt the participant also speaks about the past but the difference is in the attitude to architecture.

Excerpt 5.4.7.3

Meg: To **me**, one of the beauties of Shanghai is old Shanghai. Now,

they have grotesque columns and cherubs and all this neo-Romantic stuff which has got nothing to do with China, even its recent past. They leave **me** totally cold. The old French areas where you've got those beautiful houses or even the little lanes, they have character. Why are **they** picking this aspect of **Western** civilisation or culture?

The difference between cultures is also noted with regard to medicine. This *taitai*, however, comments that she knows her attitude to TCM is changing.

Excerpt 5.4.7.4

Jill: Also it's a bit cultural. **Our** culture demands quick response. When you're sick, you want to go to a doctor and you want to be well in seven days. The TCM approach is that **they're** going to treat the whole body and it's going to take a couple of months but you will get better. I'm sure that's appropriate. I can believe that now. I would have said this differently a year ago.

Since the *taitais'* husbands are businessmen they notice differences in business practices.

Excerpt 5.4.7.5

Bess: There is **the Chinese** way of being commercial that **we** don't get. I don't understand it.
Jill: More cutthroat?
Bess: I don't know. Just successful. Whether there's something there that **we** could still learn.

A common complaint in Shanghai is about being bumped by other people on the busy streets. As in 5.4.7.4, the *taitai* notices that her attitude is changing.

Excerpt 5.4.7.6

Pat: **We** have different concepts of relative space - at first I was bothered by being bumped on the street - now I don't notice it any more.

Space is mentioned again in the following excerpt in the context of the Westerner's sense of privacy.

Excerpt 5.4.7.7

Fay: **They** don't respect your privacy. I cannot deal with that. **They're** in my garden, **they're** looking into my kitchen to see what I'm doing.

Jill: **We** definitely as Westerners, **we** have that one metre bit, a sense of
privacy that's been stripped away here...is something that I have trouble
dealing with.

One participant, the Sinologist, commented on the fact that Chinese people always travel in groups whereas Westerners sometimes travel alone and she ascribes this to the fact that Westerners are more individualistic.

Excerpt 5.4.7.8

Cleo: **Chinese people** travel in groups - **they never** travel alone. That's something very foreign - it's a concept that's not Chinese. **The Chinese** go always surrounded by other people and
that is something **we** have difficulties to cope with because **we**
are more individualistic.

Cleo, the Sinologist, also comments on the difference between `Us' and `Them' in ways of learning. Whereas some Westerners decry the Chinese tendency to imitate, e.g. in art, Cleo admires it.

Excerpt 5.4.7.9

Cleo: From the way **their** mind is working, which I think is fantastic,
we don't learn the same way. **They have** a super memory, **they** work more visually while **we** work more with listening apparently.
They are beautiful in imitating, of course, so **they** have this
capacity of learning. **We** do have a different one.

From the concept of `We' and `They' it is easy to generalise still further by speaking about `East' and `West'. The arbitrariness of these concepts was referred to in 2.2.3. However, these terms are widely used with reference to differences between China and other countries. In the first example below, the difference was in connection with eating, the participant acknowledging that it was just her `Western thing'.

Excerpt 5.4.7.10

Pat: I don't like seeing things being killed in front of me...I wish
they would peel the shrimps because as much as it's against the
culture I peel them with my hands - I cannot peel them in my mouth. I always take the heads off - I cannot eat the head. I
haven't eaten the eyes of fish but the rest of the fish I like...I think it's just my **Western** thing - that **we** don't eat it.
I find it a little beyond me. I did eat escargots in France so

don't know why I don't eat snails here - maybe I'm older and more set in my ways.

The next excerpt, in which the participant acknowledges the strong influence of her Western upbringing, is from the context of a conversation about traditional Chinese medicine. This remark was somewhat surprising in that it came from the Sinologist who, of all the participants, might have been expected to subscribe to a non-Western way of treating illness.

Excerpt 5.4.7.11

Cleo: I'm not Chinese and, not being a Chinese, I can't always embrace their beliefs. I've been raised in a **Western** country so I tend to believe more in the environment I grew up in, even though it's very interesting, but….

It is well known that the concept of losing face is an important one in China and that this leads to a difference in interpersonal relationships between East and West.

Excerpt 5.4.7.12

Rose: In the **West, we** <u>try</u> to be transparent; in X [a Western country] **we** <u>deal</u> with things one on one; here, that is not the most effective way. In **China**, you <u>try</u> to talk to a third person because you <u>don't want</u> A to lose face; to soften it, you <u>go</u> through a third person.

In answer to a question about what China and the West could learn from each other (See App. 4, Q. 7), one participant gave the following comment.

Excerpt 5.4.7.13

Bess: In terms of what **China** could learn from the **West**, it's probably a bit [mod] hypocritical given the big corruption scandals in the big US multinationals last year, but the big Achilles heel here <u>is</u> corruption - absolutely.

In answer to the same question the Sinologist had this to say:

Excerpt 5.4.7.14

Cleo: Indeed **Chinese** <u>have</u> a lot to learn from the **Westerners** but because they have been so disturbed by the political and economical events of the past 100 years that they unfortunately couldn't progress, move on at the same pace. On the other hand, they are **not always** learning the right things from the **Westerners**, unfortunately. We <u>have</u> a lot of shortcoming, **not always** influencing them in the right way and so we <u>do have</u> a lot to learn from them, from their long, old and rich history…

I have been **always** amazed by this country which is so big and still managed to be kept unified so **we** sometimes do criticise a lot the government but you need a good hand to hold so many people in such a big country. It's the only example on the entire world.

The *taitais'* use of `We' and `They' and `East' and `West' has indeed pointed up the differences between `the Self' and `the Other' but they seem to use these terms in a different `mood' from the Orientalists. (See 5.4.1.) They see not the Orientalised Orient of the Orientalists but the Orient as it is on the streets and in the restaurants in Shanghai in 2005. Furthermore, they do not see it as changeless but as having the possibility of change, both in themselves and in `the Other'. In 5.4.7.4 Jill says that her attitude to traditional Chinese medicine has changed in the past year and in 5.4.7.6 Pat says she does not notice being bumped on the street any more. Amy, in 5.4.7.1,says that the Shanghainese `will learn' (not to spit).

5.4.8 Theme 3 Ethnocentric Attitudes

The data in Chapter 5 reveal not only linguistic techniques but also attitudes to the Other which may be found in the transcripts of the discussions in the Focus Groups. In 2.2.4 it was seen that Said says that `every European, in what he could say about the Orient, was consequently a racist, an imperialist, and almost totally ethnocentric'. The former imperialist Western powers are no more but, as Bickers says, `Empire is with us, in our waking lives, and in our dreams and nightmares'. (See 2.2.4) The attitudes, ethnocentric or otherwise, of the *taitais* in Shanghai in 2005 may be seen in the excerpts below. An attitude has been defined as `an ideational formation having affective and cognitive dimensions that create a disposition for a particular pattern of behaviour'. (Katzenstein & Keohane, 2007: 12). An `ideational formation' is much more difficult to identify than a linguistic technique and the excerpts given below are therefore only tentative categorisations.

Under Theme 3, first, the way in which skin colour was mentioned by the *taitais* is shown, followed by their comments on the behaviour and attitudes of other Westerners, both children and adults, to `the Other'. Finally, the participants reveal their own varying attitudes. It could, of course, be argued that their attitudes are shown in all of the data in the whole research project.

Skin colour is recognised as a common way in which cultures, or races, observe each other. The following five references are the only times in which the word `white' was mentioned in any of the interviews. In the first two the *taitais* complain that in the market the price will go up when their white faces are seen. The third statement, which appears to praise the Asian students at the American School, was followed by a comment that although they do better than the white students in their studies, they do nothing but study. In other words, it was a criticism of the Asians.

Excerpt 5.4.8.1

Pat: I am not good at bargaining - I take a Chinese friend with me if I really want a good price. The truth is I don't want to be a good bargainer. Maybe it's a little bit of reverse snobbism - I feel sympathy because **they** need to make a living too. My disposable cash is much more than **theirs**. I've always been told, `Just because you're **white**, you…' On the other hand, I don't want to feel cheated.

Olga: I like to [bargain] but I won't go to the bottom price. I do not need to get the last…Sometimes when I'm with friends that are like that I get embarrassed because it's like, `Come on…' But I do get angry when because **they** see my **white** face **they're** just way out there. I say, `*Shanghai ren* (I'm a Shanghai person)'but I don't need to get the absolutely lowest price.

Dora: I think it's pathetic that at the American School when you see the Honor Roll there's only one **white** face on it.

There are certain advantages in being white.

Excerpt 5.4.8.2

Lois: The thing is being **white** at a table like that [a Chinese banquet] you're allowed to do anything you like - even at a banquet. You can get away with a lot because you're a foreigner.

Hope: [My husband] loves to go to the old quarter…He will bring our guests there. He knows so many people around there by now because he's tall and he's grey - **everybody** recognises him. So **they're** all playing cards on the street and **they're** playing with **their** crickets. Whenever he comes, it's like, `Ah! The big, **white** friend is coming!'

The word `yellow' was mentioned only twice during the whole study.

Excerpt 5.4.8.3

Olga: Sometimes I wonder when you see the old man with the young girl.
Lois: We call it `yellow fever' - the old guys with the small yellow girl friends.
Hope: …If you talk about `yellow fever', then I think of X [another Asian country] - it's disgusting.

In speaking about the attitudes of Western children in Shanghai the *taitais* made the following comments.

Excerpt 5.4.8.4

Meg: There is the little emperor syndrome on the one hand and there is the expat brat on the other and to try and steer your child between the two is actually quite hard. You have to keep reinforcing to your children that people are there to help you, not to serve you, not to be your slave. I see children treating their helpers in a very disdainful way which I find very offensive, actually.
Fay: One of the things you see a lot is children mistreating drivers and *ayis*.
Bess: I try to get the children to call [the driver] Mr. X because they're embarrassed at an eight-year-old calling him *Xiao X* [See 5.2, Table 2, Note 2]. We try and not apply sort of colonialistic treatment of Chinese…I'm constantly horrified at the way some people do treat their staff.

It may be worth noting that this was the only instance of the use of the word `colonialistic' [sic] in this whole study apart from a reference to pidgin English which is no longer used in the 21st century and which was said to have the connotation of being `a bit colonial and superior'.

The attitudes of some Western adults were also commented on.

Excerpt 5.4.8.5

Meg: I think expats can be quite openly rude talking about Chinese, presuming that they can't understand. If they come across things they don't like - I've been with people who said things that made me embarrassed. Some of it is to do with feeling a

bit isolated, disconnected from what's going on.

Finally, the participants made some comments about their own attitudes. The first mentions her feeling of shame with regard to the way `we' sometimes treat Chinese.

Excerpt 5.4.8.6

Amy: Sometimes [mod] **we** <u>are</u> very stupid, **we** <u>have</u> this superiority and
oh...sometimes [mod] **we** <u>are</u> very pretentious. I <u>feel</u> very ashamed
sometimes [mod] - the way **we** can treat **Chinese** <u>is</u> [mod] sometimes
awful.

The next excerpt mentions the participant's awareness of her special status as a Westerner in Shanghai.

Excerpt 5.4.8.7

Pat: At first, it frightened me when **they** screamed so much, all talking at the tops of **their** voices but I don't see any meanness - maybe it's because I have a special status as a Westerner here.

The following statement shows the participant feeling `humiliated' at the thought of the way Westerners spoke to the Chinese using pidgin English in the 1920s. Her choice of the word `humiliated' is interesting in that it is usually used by Chinese to refer to their treatment by white Westerners in the early part of the 20th century.

Excerpt 5.4.8.8

Jill: No pidgin English. In fact, I think it's funny when I read it.
Sometimes you read it in novels. First of all, my immediate reaction is that nobody speaks like that any more
and I can't believe people used to talk like that in the 20s -
it's humiliating.

Bess' comment below was given in 5.2.5.1 as part of her definition of `the Self' but it is repeated here because of the attitudes she mentions. Nell's comment which follows Bess' has been inserted here as, even though she was in a different Focus Group, it shows the type of remark to which Bess was referring.

Excerpt 5.4.8.9

Bess: [See **Excerpt 5.2.5.1** for full quotation.] I've just been thinking we were sounding a bit [mod] too paternalistic...I also
thought we flattered ourselves a bit [mod] in thinking **the Chinese** needed us to be here....
Nell: ...it is amazing what's happened - in ten years - what China has
adapted to. With all of us here, and making it work.

A final vivid picture to conclude this section and the whole chapter shows that the *taitai* is well aware of her special status but that she admires the perseverance of `the Other'.

Excerpt 5.4.8.10

Hope: I sit in my car and it's raining and I see all **those people** on bikes. **They're** going home where it will be so humid and cold - and **they** keep going on.

Under Theme 3 there have been a variety of types of comments by the *taitais*, first about skin colour, next about the attitudes of other Westerners to `the Other' and finally about their own attitudes. While they themselves come from powerful (or at least formerly powerful) Western countries and may still sometimes reveal the superiority of the Orientalists, on the whole it could be said that the data reveal that they try not to cling to `the orthodox attitudes, perspectives and moods of Orientalism' (Said, 1978: 104). Their ethnocentric attitudes might be closer to the `Eurocentrism, that hegemonic reflex that troubles westerners even as it continues to be second nature to them`, described by Pratt. (119: 15)

5.5 Conclusion

To conclude this chapter about the results of the interview data, the question regarding Said's argument will first be answered and the content of the *taitais'* answers then considered.

What can be learned about the process of making sense of another culture, using Said's thesis? Did the *taitais* in Shanghai in 2005 use the same practices as the Orientalists? The answer is partly in the affirmative, but they did far more than generalise and speak of `We' and `They' and the crucial difference lies in their specificity.

With regard to their generalising, (Theme 1), they did make statements about such topics as the education of Chinese children or the behaviour of Chinese mothers but their generalisations were based on their own experience, not, as in the case of some of the Orientalists, on second hand information. Since all of them had lived in Shanghai for a number of years they probably felt they had the right to make such statements and, on the whole, the others corroborated what they said. Sometimes,

there were differences of opinion, for example, as to whether Shanghainese people were or were not naïve, whether they were gentle or impolite.

Although the *taitais* generalised, they also used a variety of linguistic techniques such as modifications of the generalisations, softening them, and narratives, which bring a context to life in a way that no generalisation can. In the Focus Groups they also used many examples from their daily life, often after a generalisation. The examples they gave of their own, mostly failed, attempts to learn the Chinese language were particularly vivid. A final linguistic technique was the use of comparisons in which Shanghai was shown in either a positive or a negative light compared to another city or country or even the rest of the world. For example, one comparison which might be surprising to Western readers is that one *taitai*, at least, thought that the level of spoken English among Chinese in Shanghai is better than that in Hong Kong. Another was that Shanghai people are more friendly than those in a big city in Europe.

Turning to Theme 2, it was found that the *taitais* did, like the Orientalists, use the expressions `We' and `They and `East' and `West'. This is a natural `shorthand' way of speaking about `the Other' when noting differences between cultures or peoples. As was noted at the beginning of 5.4.7, however, the *taitai* who spoke several times about differences between `Us' and `Them' also wrote in her comments accompanying her photographs about how similar "we" and the Chinese are. Thus, she did not seem to use `We' and `They' with the intention to polarise.

Under the heading of Theme 3, it was found that the attitude which Said called `latent Orientalism' or ethnocentrism was present and was acknowledged by some of the *taitais.* One even wrote an email to me after the Focus Group discussion saying that she thought they had been `paternalistic'. (See 5.2.3.7) Another said openly in front of the others, `The way we can treat Chinese is sometimes awful'. (See 5.4.8.6) They also reported seeing other Westerners behaving badly: `I'm constantly horrified at the way some people do treat their staff'. (See 5.4.8.4) However, unlike the Orientalists, most of the *taitais* seemed to be aware of their very special status as wealthy Westerners and to have a sympathetic attitude to Chinese living in poorer conditions. The final comment (See 5.4.8.10) is a good example: `I sit in my car and it's raining and I see all those people on bikes...and they keep going on'.

There are, then, habitual ways of making sense of another culture but the content of the *taitais'* remarks should now be considered as they provide a glimpse into their own lives and their ideas about `the Other', the Chinese. The picture to be drawn is in no way a complete one but at least it is based on their own words and actions.

In their definition of `the Self' there were two important factors on the micro-level and the macro-level. The first was their realisation that their conditions of living in Shanghai in 2005 were different from those in other Asian cities or in their home countries. They spoke about the fact that their way of life in Shanghai in 2005 was not a `normal' one. One *taitai* laughed at herself for having massages, saying she would never do that in her home country. (See 5.2.1.3) While many of the *taitais* have drivers and vans provided by their husbands' companies, one said that she wanted her children to have a `normal' life and she therefore made the conscious choice not to have a driver. (See 5.2.1.8)

As described in Chapters 1 and 4, most of the *taitais* live in walled compounds and more than one of them spoke about their feeling of separation, if not isolation, from the local community because of living behind walls. The local people with whom they did have daily contact were their `helpers', their *ayis* and drivers, and, as might be expected, the relationships with these people varied greatly. On the whole, though, the *taitais* treated their staff as friends, addressing their drivers as `Mr. X' or by his name, and some of them even visited the homes of these helpers, something that would have been unthinkable in the 1930s when I was growing up in Shanghai and is probably rare even today.

In defining themselves, the *taitais* made comparisons with two other groups of foreigners in Shanghai in 2005. The first were the `shop and bitch ladies' (See 5.2.7.1), a reference to other *taitais*, probably living in their compounds, who spend their time shopping, associating only with each other and complaining. One of the participants said that her reason for joining the Study Group was that she did not want to be `a 100% *taitai*'. (See 5.2.1.1) The other group with which they compared themselves, somewhat enviously, was `the 20-something-year-old foreigners' (See 5.2.7.1) who are able to mix easily with Chinese people in restaurants and bars.

These are young Westerners who are working in Shanghai and who live a more `normal' life than the *taitais*.

On the macro-level, the *taitais* were influenced by the wider world in a number of ways, not least by their educational background in the West. Even the Sinologist, in the context of a conversation about traditional Chinese medicine, said, `I'm not Chinese and, not being a Chinese, I can't always embrace their beliefs. I've been raised in a Western country so I tend to believe more in the environment I grew up in.' (See 5.4.7.10)

The *taitais* read widely and, of course, were influenced by the Western media but, interestingly, those who had been in Shanghai longer said they found some of the books they read `patronising' (See 5.2.3.7) and they could not bear to watch Western commentators on TV or read their written reports because those reporters do not live in Shanghai. (See 5.2.3.7)

Turning from their definition of themselves to their discussions about `the Other', it was found that they had much to say about what they had observed and experienced. One of the topics on which several of them expounded with feeling was the tearing down of old houses in Shanghai: `...all of the historical buildings and all of the culture in Shanghai...is being taken away'. (See 5.3.5.5) They thought that future generations of Chinese would be missing part of their history. This topic was closely connected with that of money since the *taitais* said that more attention was being paid to development than to the preservation of historic buildings. They also spoke about what they saw as the Chinese obsession with money (See 5.3.5.6 – `Too much money, money, money, money') and the desire to buy things cheaply without paying attention to the quality. Bargaining in the market, an activity in which most of the *taitais* were often involved, is one aspect of this interest in money.

Even though the *taitais* were interested in Chinese culture, they saw some Chinese customs of which they did not approve. `They live in our compounds but spit in the street' (See 5.4.2.6) was one comment about the rich Shanghainese who in 2005 were beginning to move into the compounds previously inhabited only by Westerners and

Chinese with foreign passports. The implication was that the nouveau riche in Shanghai have much to learn if they want to mingle with Westerners.

Not all the comments were negative. The same *taitai*. Amy, who spoke about `money, money, money, money' also said, `And the culture, culture, culture – I like their fabrics – Chinese embroidery.' (See 5.3.4.21) With regard to the hard work of the workers in her husband's business, Kate said: `And the work ethic...Everybody's available...Nobody has a baseball game to go to or a birthday.' (See 5.3.5.7) One generalisation was: `I love Chinese people – that is my biggest discovery...They are enormously kind, enormously kind.' (See 5.3.4.22)

To summarise, it may be said that in the interviews the *taitais* provided many specific details about their lives in Shanghai in 2005 and about their views of `the Chinese' in general and in particular. In Chapter 6 the data they provided through photographs and written comments will be discussed.

Interpreting Another Culture:

An Ethnographic Study of how Western-educated Women Make Sense of Chinese Culture in Shanghai

Part II

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements

for the PhD

Department of English Studies

University of Strathclyde

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July 2007

Chapter 6: Results – Photographs

6.1 Introduction

In Ch. 5 the transcripts of the Focus Group discussions were used as data and the findings discussed. In this chapter the data to be used are the photographs taken by the participants at the researcher's request and their written comments. An addition to the data will be some comments by one of the participants, Lois, who was kind enough to read the first versions of Chapters 5 and 6.

The question to be addressed is what we can discover through the photographs and comments about how the participants go about making sense of another culture. The purpose is to collaboratively create not the `brute reality' spoken of by Said (See 2.2.5) but a version of the reality of the life of the *taitais* in Shanghai in 2005, using photographs that extend beyond the limitations set by the linearity of a verbal or textual narrative. (Pink, 2007: 87)

The three themes found in Chapter 2: 1) Generalisation, 2) The use of `We'/`They' and `East'/`West' and 3) Ethnocentric Attitudes, will still underlie the discussion as will ideas in Chapter 3 from Berger and Pink. For example, Berger's statement that `the photographer's way of seeing is reflected in his choice of subject' (1972: 10) will be taken into account as will Pink's comment that `the relationship between the subjectivities of the researcher and the informants produces a negotiated version of reality'. (2007: 24)

The instructions to the participants with regard to the photographs can be found in full in the letter in Appendix 3 but the main instructions are given here for convenience.

> Could each participant bring to the club meeting on March 2nd three photos depicting things which sum up China for them. This may involve taking photos especially or it may involve choosing from photos already taken. Please write a brief explanation of your choice. If you want to choose something unphotographable, please just write a brief note on it. These will be used as a basis for discussion in groups and individually of what constitutes Chinese culture in Shanghai in 2005.

This chapter will be structured in the same way as Chapter 5:

6.2 Definition of `the Self'

6.3 How `the Self' Constructs `the Other'

The same conventions will be used and they are repeated here:

1) **Bold -** for terms used in generalizing – e.g. **The Chinese, We / Us, They / Them, All / Always**

2) Underlining - for ethnographic present tense - **The Chinese** do this or **They** think

3) [Square brackets] – for techniques - Modification [mod], Comparison [comp], Example [ex]

4) *Italics* – for Chinese words – e.g. *taitai, ayi*

Before considering the findings, however, there will be a brief discussion of the reasons for using photography, incorporating a comparison of the written data in Ch. 5 and the visual data which will be found in Ch. 6. There will also be an example of a cross-cultural photographic comparison to clarify some distinctive ways in which `East' and `West' seem to make sense of the Other.

6.1.1 Why Photography?

In Ch. 3 the reasons for using visual as well as written ethnography were discussed at length but it seems appropriate to return to the subject here as an introduction to the photographic data in the light of the written data in Ch. 5.

The `limitations set by the linearity of a verbal or textual narrative' have already been referred to above and it is therefore easy to see that words and pictures complement one another as different types of ethnographic knowledge. John Berger says, `Seeing comes before words...It is seeing which establishes our place in the surrounding world.' (1972: 7) However, there is no essential hierarchy of knowledge...for ethnographic representation. Visual representations bear an important relationship to, but cannot replace, words in theoretical discussion. (Pink, 2007: 6)

In this particular study, the data from the Focus Group interviews was, in fact, spoken data which was then transcribed by the researcher into written form. The following is a summary of the differences between the written and visual data.

Focus Group Interviews

1) This was a group activity and the topics for discussion were chosen by me.
2) Because of the nature of the activity, the participants had to give spontaneous answers.
3) The content of the questions was mainly about daily life with some more general questions.
4) The questions focused on the actions of the participants and their interaction with Chinese people.

Photographs

1) This was an individual activity and the topics of the photographs were chosen by each participant herself.
2) Each participant could take some time to either take or find the photographs.
3) The content of the photographs was more `reflective' as each participant searched for things that summed up China for her.
4) The photographs focused on the participants' observation, not interaction – on what they saw rather than on what they did.

Besides providing a different type of ethnographic knowledge, photographs can help the researcher to learn about the participants' view of reality and also about who is doing the looking. It should be stressed that the meaning of the photo is constructed by the maker, the researcher and the reader, all of whom `carry their social positions and interests to the photographic act'. (Pink, 2007: 13)

A third reason for using photographs is that while cultural studies focusses on `interpreting existing images and objects and the social and cultural conditions within which they are produced', cultural studies itself `has incorporated the visual

surprisingly little in its own research practices'. (Pink, 2007: 14) This study therefore can be seen as an experiment.

Finally, since the participants were highly educated, intelligent women it seemed only natural to involve them as much as possible in the process of the research. They reported that they had enjoyed the taking or choosing of photographs and that it had made them think.

While photographs have many advantages as data and they can be interpreted in many arbitrary and subjective ways, there are still some important aspects of a culture that are unphotographable. Thinking of this, I had specifically asked the participants to write a brief note if they thought of such an aspect. (See instructions above.) The following was the only such response:

Excerpt 6.1.1.1

Amy: What I like of Shanghai, of China is the soul of it! You cannot take a picture of feelings, but this is what I will take with me when I leave the country [she was about to leave after seven years], the great surprise I had when I realized that people, so far, so distant and weird to me, were nice, warm, family-loving, funny….And so much likes [sic] us!
(See 5.3.3.3 and 5.4.5.1)

This comment is an example not only of something unphotographable – `the soul' – but also of the connection between the interviews and the photographs in this research. In 5.3.3.3 it was recorded that Amy was one of the participants who arrived in Shanghai with strong preconceptions – `I had this idea of cold Chinese people'. It is interesting to note, in the context of this chapter, that she added, `I don't know why - maybe I had seen pictures'. Pink (2007: 94) writes about the importance of `Absent photographs', meaning the pictures, such as those seen by Amy, which participants describe during research; Pink says `they provide interesting examples of how informants visualise certain emotions, values and experiences'.

The strong influence of images and the many ways in which they can be interpreted can perhaps be considered still further reasons for making use of them in ethnographic research.

6.1.2 A Chinese Representation of Edinburgh

Fortuitously, an Edinburgh friend told me about a book she had seen in Shanghai, entitled simply Edinburgh. (Chen, 2004) It turned out to be revealing as a means of comparison with the photos which the participants in this study took. There follows a brief description of the contents of the book with some comments.

On the cover, under the large title EDINBURGH, written in very small print is: `Edinburgh is perched on a number of extinct volcano cones and rocky crags and has a brooding, chilly beauty unequalled anywhere in Britain'. The photograph on the cover is of a blue sky with white clouds – not, perhaps, the image a British observer would choose for Edinburgh.

The book consists of seventeen chapters, the titles of which are given in both Chinese and English. The bulk of the book is photographs, many of which take up whole pages. As might be expected, at the beginning there are photos of Edinburgh's skyline, with the Castle and Arthur's Seat featuring largely.

A building is a snapshot of a particular time and place but also an enduring reminder of cultural identity. The photo shows the `rose' spire of St. Giles Cathedral, Scotland's `national' church, appearing above layers of roofs. (Chen, 2004: 45)

One chapter is entitled `Fascinating Tartan' and there are paintings, not photographs, of two men wearing kilts, each one set in a mountainous landscape which, though heather, bluebells and sheep can be seen, looks suspiciously like a Chinese landscape painting. (Chen, 2004: 58, 61) The fact that Scottish men wear `skirts' is one of the best known facts about Scotland among ordinary Chinese people.

Several chapters are devoted to the Edinburgh International Festival, the Film Festival and the Fringe, with a number of performances being shown. The contributors to the book are listed at the back, most of them Chinese but some Scottish names appearing

as well. Two chapters are entitled: `This is Ruth Beale' and `This is James A Nicholl' and their life stories are told in both English and Chinese, with many photos.

The chapters most closely related to this study were the last two: `This is Broomhouse Place' and `They'. (Chen, 2004: 154-171, 172-191) It appears that the Chinese photographers visited a council house area of Edinburgh and spent an afternoon there. It is not explained (in English) how they made connections with the inhabitants.

A number of rather plain-looking, brown council houses are shown with the comment: `There are quite a lot [of] houses like this one in the town'. (Chen, 2004: 157) No other comment is given. It is not known whether the Chinese photographers knew of the difference between privately owned property and council houses in the UK and all the social connotations adhering thereto.

A few pages later there is a photo of more council houses with this caption: `Sarah has a big garden. She loves sitting in the garden drinking afternoon tea, it often takes half a day'.

(Chen, 2004: 160)

In fact, the garden is quite small by Western standards and it has a plain lawn surrounded by a well-kept green hedge (compared to the neighbours'), with a few flowers beside the path leading to the front door.

Under the title heading of the final chapter, `They', is written: `They are real people living in the city'. (Chen, 2004: 172) In other words, the Chinese photographers seem to have wanted to seek out `real people' to represent the city of Edinburgh. They did not use the pronoun `They' to generalize about what all Scots do, the practice of the Orientalists criticised by Edward Said in Orientalism. (See 2.2.2.1) On the following pages are photographs of 17 `real people', most by themselves, gazing directly at the photographer. It appears that they were asked why they like the city of Edinburgh because the captions give their names and such comments as `Always feel at home here', `This city is great for students' and the following:

`Ames Armstrong / 60 / Housewife / I like it [Edinburgh] because all my family connections have been in Edinburgh. My grandmother, aunts, uncles, cousin, brothers and sisters, as we are a very close family. I have 3 sons and 5 grandchildren.'

This Westerner gives what might have been a Chinese comment in the past when Chinese families were larger than they are now.

(Chen, 2004: 185)

An even closer close-up with a very direct gaze is given on p. 67 with no comment. It is part of a chapter entitled `From London to Edinburgh, 5 hours 16'' and was taken on a train. (Chen, 2004: 67)

While the scope of representation is different, a book compared to three photographs, it is striking that not one of the photos provided by the participants in this study was of a single individual Chinese person with a name, gazing at the photographer and, perhaps, giving a reason as to why they liked this city. It is interesting to speculate on possible reasons for this omission:

1) The participants did not have time.
2) They cannot speak Chinese well enough to be able to communicate with an individual Chinese person whom they do not know.
3) They are too `shy' to approach an unknown Chinese person.
4) They do not think it is appropriate in Chinese culture to approach someone they do not know to ask if they may take a photo.
5) They did not think of taking a photo of an individual Chinese person they do know, e.g. their *ayi* or driver.
6) Could this be something to do with class? If they had known a Chinese person of their own class, would they have taken a photo of that person to represent China?
7) Several participants provided photos of crowds. Do they think of Chinese people in the mass rather than as individuals?

Lois, the participant who read an earlier version of this chapter, made the following comments with regard to 3) above: `In Western culture this is intruding on "privacy".' She generalises about Western attitudes to privacy.

With regard to 7) above, Lois stated that `Westerners do not see "relations" as prime subject - no people as "culture".' In other words, the instructions from the researcher were to represent or sum up Chinese culture in a photograph and Lois generalises by saying that `culture', in Western eyes, is not closely bound up with individual people.

In this section, 6.1, after some introductory remarks, a comparison between the written data in Ch. 5 and the photographic data in this chapter was made and some reasons for the use of photographs in this research were given. There was also an example of a contribution by a participant describing an unphotographable aspect of

Chinese culture which she had experienced in Shanghai. Finally, a cross-cultural comparison was made using photographs taken and comments made by a Chinese photographer in Edinburgh. In 6.2 the first group of photographs taken by the participants as part of their process of making sense of another culture will be provided and discussed.

6.2 Definition of `the Self': How Participants Define Themselves

6.2.1 Introduction

As with the written data in Chapter 5, it appears that the definition of `the Self' should come first so that it can be established at the outset who is doing the looking at `the Other'. (Pink, 2007: 67) The first group of photographs to be discussed are several that seem to define the participants themselves rather than `the Chinese' or `Them'. Only six photographs have been placed in this category though others which appear later in the chapter could arguably have been placed here since, as Berger points out, `we are always looking at the relation between things and ourselves'. (1972: 9)

A comment is given first, followed by one or more photographs. Above each photograph is its number in this thesis, a title given by the researcher and the name of the participant who provided it followed by a number indicating which of her three photographs it is.

6.2.2 Definition of `the Self'

The six photographs in this section were provided in response to the instructions in the letter to the participants to `sum up China'. They have been categorised here under the heading of Definition of `the Self' because they seem to portray the lives of the participants in China rather than China, or Chinese culture, itself. Another way to `see' or `read' the photographs is as descriptions of `Us' rather than of `Them'.

The setting of each photo is, of course, China. In the first Nell is seen with members of her family and teachers from an international school in Shanghai in a small restaurant in Suzhou. It seems that they have just finished a Chinese meal and Nell's comment for this photo and the next uses the word `Enjoying'. It appears that her intention in giving the first three photos is to show her appreciation of various aspects

of Chinese culture: food, a colourful market and a scenic area but she does not generalise in her comments.

Her fourth photo was taken at a meeting of the Chinese Culture Study Group and thus shows the importance to her of the group in her life in Shanghai. The photo was taken in the large living room in the home of one of the participants and it can be seen that refreshments provided by the hostess are part of the proceedings. The *taitais'* high standard of living is obvious from the size of the room and the decorations.

In these photographs people are seen gazing at the camera but those doing the gazing are, on the whole, `the Self', not `the Other', an important difference from the photographs taken by the Chinese photographers in Edinburgh.

6.2.2.1 Eating in a Chinese restaurant (Nell 1)

Nell: Enjoying Chinese food with our teachers from X International School, Shanghai, in Suzhou

(a city near Shanghai)

6.2.2.2 Shopping in a Chinese market (Nell 3)

Nell: Enjoying the market with my grandson.

6.2.2.3 Touring in China (Nell 4)

Nell: Stone Forest in Yunnan

6.2.2.4 Socialising (Nell 2)

Nell: My dear friend at one of our meetings at our Chinese Culture Study Group of Shanghai.

The following photo provided by Olga again shows a small group of Western women but on this occasion they are visiting old Chinese people in a home for the elderly.

Nearly all the people in the photo are gazing at the camera but their names are not given. In her comment Olga says that she has been doing this kind of charitable work for four years – information about herself which, according to my observation, is representative of what many of the wealthy *taitais* do. However, at the end of her comment she generalises by saying that the elderly Chinese represent Old China. This may have been because she carefully chose three very different subjects for her three photos: 1) this one representing Old China 2) a highrise in Pudong representing Modern China 3) a `roundhouse' in another province (See 6.3.2.4) to represent the great diversity of cultures in China. Her three representations thus show her knowledge of the history and geography of the country, i.e. the person who is doing the looking is an informed observer. She evidently tried to give an all-round picture to sum up China whereas other participants, for example Rose (See 6.3.5), chose a particular theme such as a government policy.

6.2.2.5 Visiting the elderly (Olga 2)

Olga: Group of Western women visiting old Chinese people
I go with a group of international women and visit elderly Chinese - we give financial support, food and gifts. Visit them monthly - 4 years. Represent Old China.

In the photographs above we do not know who the photographer is but in the final photograph in this section the photographer is most likely Bess herself and it is probable that one or more of her children appear in the photograph. She had lived in

Shanghai for 11½ years with young children and she therefore considered the international school to which her children went an important part of her and her children's life in China. Two noteworthy features in the photograph are the number of Asian faces among the children who attend the American School, a topic mentioned by the *taitais* in their Focus Group discussions, and the size of the houses, which are representative of the houses in which the *taitais* live. Again, Bess seems to be describing herself and her life here rather than China, `the Other'.

6.2.2.6 Shanghai American School (Bess 3)

Bess: Main part of my and my children's life here. Pre-K in '93 till now. The fun and excitement of annual cross country race - all the staff in silly costumes. Kids so happy.

It would appear that all of the above photographs were already in the possession of the participants when they received my letter, i.e. that they were not taken specifically for this research project. This does not lessen their value as data. Pink (2007: 36) notes:

> Individual photographers…may not fit neatly into just one of the identities that is implied by the distinction between categories such as domestic, amateur, professional (or ethnographic) images and producers. No photographic… image need have one single identity and…no images are, for example, essentially `ethnographic' but are given ethnographic meanings in relation to the discourses that people use to define them.

The ethnographic meaning of the photographs above has been assigned by the researcher by their being placed in the category of Definition of `the Self'.

In this section six photographs in which the participants defined `the Self' rather than `the Other' have been shown and discussed. In the following, longer, section photographs of `the Other' will be provided and it will be seen that some, though not all, were taken specifically for this project.

6.3 How `the Self' Constructs `the Other'

6.3.1 Introduction

The photographs provided by the *taitais* to `sum up China', `the Other', proved to be of a great variety and they have therefore been categorised according to topics, always keeping in mind the three themes: 1) Generalisation, 2) The use of `We' and `They' and `East' and `West' and 3) Ethnocentric Attitudes.

The first three topics are: Classical Chinese Culture / Architecture, Street Scenes and Aspects of Chinese Culture. The majority of the photographs were on these three. The last two topics are what might be classified as new ethnographic fields: Government Policies and Ideas.

The number of photographs given of each subject is provided as it seems significant, for example, that not just one but three photographs of the Great Wall were given by three different participants. For reasons of space, only one is printed here.

6.3.2 Classical Chinese Culture / Architecture

Three participants chose photographs of classical Chinese culture, Ivy and Jill of architecture and Eva of Peking Opera, to sum up China. Most of these photographs are commercially produced and chosen by the participants, not taken by them.

In her comment on the first photo, the Great Wall, one of the three given, Ivy generalises by saying that it is probably associated in Westerners' minds with China – along with rice, tea and chopsticks, three elements from the cultural domain of

Chinese food. In comparison, it would probably be true to say that the Great Wall also sums up China in the minds of many Chinese people but in a totally different way. They would probably see it as a symbol of pride in Chinese history. For example, there is an old Chinese saying: `If you fail to reach the Great Wall, you are not a man'. The vast difference in the meaning of the Wall to Westerners and Chinese can thus be seen.

Jill also generalises and uses the absolute `**always** China to me', i.e. the Wall sums up China for her. Both participants mention visiting the Wall, Ivy saying that her one visit will `**always**' be one of the most special memories for her family and Jill stressing that her family `**always**' tries to see the Wall when there are no people there, a Western attitude to sightseeing.

These photographs could be compared to the Chinese photographer's similar picture of culturally important architecture in Edinburgh.

6.3.2.1 <u>The Great Wall</u> (Ivy 3)

Ivy: The Great Wall - probably along with `Rice, Tea and Chopsticks' would be the most common word associated with China for **Westerners**. Our visit to the Wall will **always** be one of the most special memories we will have of China.

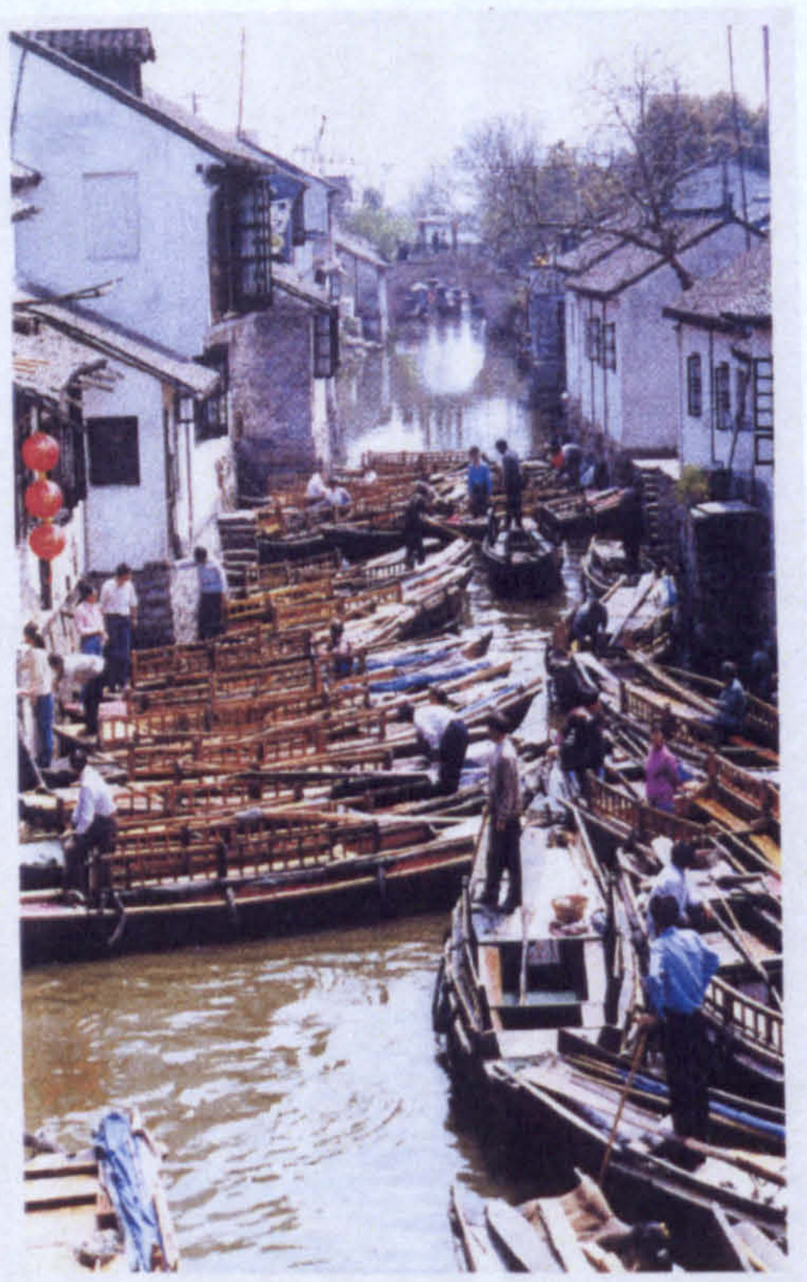
Jill: The Great Wall - **always** China to me! We **always** try to see the wall at `off-peak' times so there are no people (Before 9 am).

The next two photographs are also of architecture but on a very different scale from that of the Great Wall. They are of domestic Chinese architecture in what are called `water towns' – towns criss-crossed by narrow canals alongside of which are small houses with white-washed walls and grey roofs. There are arched bridges over the canals and small boats rowed by oarsmen. It may be worth noting that these `water towns' are visited by millions of Chinese as well as foreign tourists, all perhaps seeking the `real' China.

The intentionality of the first photographer, Jill, is shown by the fact that she used the word `real' twice in her comment. Like the Chinese photographer in Edinburgh who searched for `real people' (See 6.1), Jill wants to portray `real' China, `old China'. However, she says that the town, Zhou Zhuang, is now a tourist venue and laments that it is therefore not `real' any more.

Ivy probably took the second photograph herself on her travels. It shows a structure by the river in Tongli, another `water town' near Shanghai, and she says that the classic Chinese architecture epitomises the culture of China for her. She then adds a modification, `at least part of' China, indicating that, unlike the Orientalists criticised by Said (See 2.2.2.1), she knows the first statement is an over-generalisation. She reveals her Western background in her comment about `willow pattern', the blue and white pattern on china which is a common Western image of China. Her final comment mentions the adoption of modern architecture into a classical Chinese setting and she seems to have no concern over this whereas other participants, like Jill, appear to think that only the `old' is `real'. Three photographs of Chinese architecture were given, two of which are presented here.

6.3.2.2 Chinese architecture (Jill 3)



Jill: Zhou Zhuang - a traditional `water town' near Shanghai
When we first arrived (1992) Zhou Zhuang was a rare and real glimpse of `old China'. Not yet a tourist venue. I always thought it was real. Not so any more!

Ivy: Structure by the river in Tongli
There are several aspects of this photograph which, for me, epitomizes the culture of, or at least part of, [mod] China.

- The obvious classic Chinese architecture along the river bank with geometrically rigid form
- The trees, not quite willow pattern but close enough, reflected in the stream

(Ivy 1)

- Finally the structure in the photograph is a very modern design and, framed as it is in this somewhat classical setting, it captures the adoption of modern architecture into the fabric of Chinese houses and cities.

The last photograph of classical Chinese culture is of a Peking Opera actor, heavily made up and wearing a traditional, elaborate, brightly-coloured costume. This art form is part of what might be described as `high' Chinese culture and it appears that it summed up China for Eva, the only participant whose origins are in another East Asian country. She, in fact, gave three photographs of three different Peking Opera characters, all apparently downloaded from the Internet. She provided no written comments and so it can only be assumed from her choice of subject that this particular art form, perhaps representing Chinese art in general, constitutes Chinese culture for her.

6.3.2.3 Peking Opera (Eva 1)

Chinese New Year `red packet' (Eva 4)

Eva is embedded in Oriental culture and she provided, in addition to three photographs of Peking Opera actors, examples of `high' Chinese culture, a small red envelope with a picture of fish on it, an example of `popular' Chinese culture. She was the only participant who provided, as well as photographs, a meaningful artefact. It happened that the letter requesting the photographs was given to the participants not long after Chinese New Year when money is given, mainly to children, in such red envelopes. It seems that this could be a reminder to

researchers that the time of year when data is gathered can have significant influence on the response.

The fish in the picture represent wealth as the large Chinese character meaning `remainder' is pronounced `*yu*', a homonym for `fish'. The giver of the red envelope hopes that the recipient will have more than enough money in the New Year. Further hidden meanings may be found in the fact that there are six fish, `*liu*' (six) sounding similar to `*le*' (happiness), and in the golden moon and clouds. A modern touch to this ancient Oriental custom is that the red envelope advertises a Western bank, Citibank.

The last two photographs in this section return to the theme of architecture. The first was mentioned above (See 6.2.2.5). It shows that this participant is aware that Shanghai cannot represent China and that in the vast country there are many minority areas where a great diversity of cultures can be found.

Lois, however, seemed to feel that Olga had stretched the concept of Chinese culture too far because she wrote, `So what is Chinese culture? Han? In developed areas we meet mainly Han people.' In making sense of another culture its boundaries need to be considered. Should one take into account the variety of minority cultures within a country or concentrate on the majority culture?

6.3.2.4 Roundhouse (Olga 3)

Olga: A `roundhouse' in another province. Great diversity of culture in minority areas

The last photograph in this section is of a totally different type of architecture – the modern highrises in Pudong on the eastern bank of the Huangpu River which winds

through Shanghai. As with the Great Wall, three photographs of this modern architecture in Shanghai were given by three different participants but only one is presented here. Kate's photograph was the best view of the whole scene but she gave no comments and therefore Gail's comments on the same scene are given. There are two similar examples below where the comment is given by a participant other than the provider of the photograph.

These three participants, unlike Jill (See 6.3.2.1 and 2), seem to generalise that it is modern China, not old China, that sums up Chinese culture, at least as it is seen in Shanghai in 2005. Gail's comment generalises still further since she says that the buildings represent the fast pace of change in Shanghai in a short time.

6.3.2.5 Modern architecture (Kate 1)

Gail: `Pearl of the Orient' TV Tower - a Shanghai landmark
Modern China, huge progress in a short time.
Capacity to adapt very fast in the modern world.

In this section, through looking at photographs provided by the participants on the topic of classical Chinese culture and architecture, it can be seen that in their process of making sense of another culture the participants generalise about `real' China, `old' China and `modern' China. In their comments, two participants use the absolute `always', which, as seen in 5.4.2, strengthens and emphasises the generalisation. One

participant adds the modification `a part of' China to avoid using too sweeping a generalisation. (Theme 1) Their Western way of looking is revealed in their comments about their visits to the Great Wall and in the mention of the willow pattern, which is well known to most Westerners. (Theme 2) As far as ethnocentricity is concerned, it would seem that the photographs in this section show an admiration for the culture of `the Other', whether in its art forms or its architecture, old or new, mainstream or minority. (Theme 3) It will be seen in the next section showing street scenes that ethnocentricity may produce a greater variety of attitudes.

6.3.3 Street Scenes

The second topic under which the participants' photographs are classified is street scenes. In the process of making sense of another culture, the scenes on the streets that are eye-catching are, of course, those that are different from what can be seen in one's home country. As one stays longer in the country of `the Other', there may be a change in what the `Self' notices but it is usually still something different. It therefore seems that many of the *taitais'* pictures in this section `speak' of `Us' and `Them'.

Clothes hanging out to dry in a modern city are what catch the attention of many Westerners, who are accustomed to drying their washing either in their back gardens in suburbs or in electric tumble dryers in cities. Three photographs of clothes, sheets and quilts hanging outside buildings to dry and be sunned were given, the same number as of the Great Wall and the classical Chinese architecture. Two are presented here.

Ivy's comment shows that she is in a dilemma as to whether to show `Shanghai' culture or `Chinese' culture but she chooses this scene because, she says, it can be seen `in many cities', i.e. she is generalising. Of note is the fact that she uses for the second time the word `capture' (See 6.3.2.2 above) to describe what she has done with the camera. In other words, she feels she has `succeeded in recording, showing or describing a situation or feeling, using...pictures'. (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, 1978, 2003: 218) This might be considered an argument for using visual data.

Amy depicts clothes hanging outside a four-storey building next door to a bank on a tree-lined boulevard on a sunny winter day and makes the point of the contrast between the old and the new. A modern glass skyscraper can be seen in the background. She describes Shanghai as `an impressive, modern, overwhelming city' but says `however "China" is still there', implying that the real `China' is not in the modernity but in the old. This might be an example of the denial of coevalness mentioned by Fabian (See 2.2.2) especially since she says that the clothes are hanging out to dry in the sun `like in the old days' [in the West]. However, she makes her attitude explicit when she says she feels `fortunate' to have seen `the dichotomy between old and new times'. She sees and appreciates the rapid change from old to new in Shanghai in the process of which both old and new can be seen side by side.

6.3.3.1 Clothes hanging out to dry (Ivy 2)

Ivy: Street scene in Shanghai

Perhaps this is a snapshot of `Shanghai' culture as opposed to `Chinese' but it captures the areas found in many cities which are compact, disorganized and where the focus is very much on practical functionality.

(Amy 1)

Amy: What fascinates me most in this precise moment of the history of Shanghai is the contrast…We go outside everyday and we realize how Shanghai becomes an impressive, modern, overwhelming city…however "China" is still there …I do not know how much time this will last, but I feel fortunate to have seen the dichotomy between old and new times…These cloth [sic] hanging in the street, in order…getting dry and disinfected by sun, like in the old days.

A second common street scene that attracts the attention of Westerners in Shanghai is the sight of so many bicycles, another sign of the transition from old to new in China. Although there are now thousands of car owners and the number of bicycles is dwindling, there are still many more than are seen on streets in the West. Lois' comment on the next photo was: `For me it is not the bicycles but the masses of them.'

Three photographs of bicycles were given, the same number as for the Great Wall, classical Chinese architecture and clothes hanging out to dry. These four topics were the most popular ways in which the participants summed up Chinese culture. Only one photograph of bicycles is shown here.

Ivy's comment seems to imply that she thought that the researcher wanted something representing `an ancient aspect of Chinese society' but she firmly states that bicycles are a `symbol of today's China', modifying her generalisation by saying `at least in many Westerners' minds'.

6.3.3.2 Bicycles (Kate 2)

Ivy: The bicycles, of course, although hardly an ancient aspect of Chinese society, are indelibly *interconnected, at least in many* **Westerners'** minds, [mod] as a symbol of today's China.

In addition to the contrast between old and new, another contrast that can be seen on the streets in Shanghai is that between rich and poor or, perhaps, `Us' and `Them'. Amy, who went out into the streets to take photographs specifically for this project, chose as her second subject (after the clothes hanging out to dry) a shop selling expensive branded goods in front of which can be seen a Chinese person. She describes the person as `this old Shanghainese' but both Lois and I think it is a young woman – an example of difference in interpretation. Lois said: `He is not an old guy! It is two different versions: rich - `poor', or not rich.'

In her comment on this photograph Amy generalises by saying that `two different versions of China' are shown, instead of trying to decide whether the old or the new, the rich or the poor, is the `real' China.

6.3.3.3 Fashion (Amy 2)

Amy: …this old Shanghainese, in front of Hermes, symbol of luxury in Europe. Two different versions of China, the city moving fast - people trying to follow, to catch up…

Crowds are a common sight on the streets in Shanghai with its population of 20 million and two photographs of crowds were provided, another example of `Us' and `Them' since such crowds are rare in the West unless at a festival or pop concert.

Fay's comment generalizes about what `**the Chinese**' do in a crowd and Lois explains her comment in this way: `It is not a reaction to the crowd but to the fact that in a crowd **Chinese people** can just do what **they** think **they** have to do without considering others!'

6.3.3.4 Crowds (Kate 3)

Fay: Sometimes, in a crowd like this, **the Chinese** can stop and do something for **themselves** without regard for others, or the impact of **their** action. **We** call it `stop at the end of the escalator and plan your day'. It is very typical for **Chinese**.

In addition to crowds on the streets, another common sight on the streets and in the parks in Shanghai, especially in the early morning, is that of groups of people, men and women, mainly elderly, doing a variety of exercises. Two participants provided photographs of this.

Rose mentions the red banner, an uncommon sight in the West. She is able to read the Chinese words and provides them with no comment. Her use of the word `Resourcefulness' implies her admiration for the retired men and women in the photograph, her point perhaps being that if they were richer they would be exercising indoors in a gym.

Meg provided no comments but her photo is included along with Rose's because it shows women exercising in winter (note the jackets and gloves) on a pavement outside a bank. While exercise in a park might not be so unusual to Westerners, exercising on a city pavement often attracts their attention.

6.3.3.5 Exercising (Rose 1)

Rose: Men and women exercising outdoors under red banner saying: `Be
civilized - enjoy the park in a civilized way. Be a lovable Shanghai person.' Resourcefulness of retired men and women. Parks a popular spot to gather for exercise (*duan lian zheng*) and
social activities.

(Meg 1)

Another scene on the streets of Shanghai is that of people sitting chatting to each other. The following photograph shows relatively poor people bundled up against the winter cold. Gail's comment is not, however, about poverty but a generalisation about the importance of human relationships to Chinese people.

6.3.3.6 Chatting (Gail 2)

Gail: People chatting on the street in winter
There is no China without human relationship. To communicate
every day between friends, neighbours is essential. It also belongs to the tradition.

In their leisure time, Chinese people not only chat on the streets but also play games. Amy's third photo, after the clothes hanging out to dry and the Hermes store, is of two men playing a game on the street. The fact that the name of the game is wrong - it should be Chinese chess not mahjong – is immaterial. She generalises by saying that people, i.e. Chinese people, can `always' find time for their favourite sport, implying, perhaps, that they can find a balance between work and play.

6.3.3.7 Playing Games (Amy 3)

Amy: And mahjong, **always** mahjong, **people** find time for their favorite sport!!!

The final street scene in this section shows a stall-holder, one of many who catch the eyes of Westerners on the streets of Shanghai. This man is asleep beside his small stall on which can be seen maps and other paper goods. There is a bicycle leaning against the wall beside him and a pair of female feet in sandals can be glimpsed at the side of the picture. It may be worth looking in more detail at this last picture, reading it not at the level of what it shows within its frame but at the level of what it refers to outside it. (Berger, 1972: 94)

Fay's comment mentions the `laziness' of the Chinese man combined with being an entrepreneur, which, she says, is something `**we** see often' in Shanghai. By using the ethnographic present tense she explicitly reminds us that she is part of a Western group observing the local people and she says that she has seen this scene not just once but many times. Her mention of `laziness' might be thought to be a denigratory remark about the Chinese from a superior ethnocentric viewpoint. Lois, however, pointed out that this participant is not a native speaker of English, saying, `An X's [non-English speaker's] "lazy" might not be an English speaker's "lazy"', a timely reminder to the researcher to pay attention to this linguistic point.

My reaction to the word `lazy' may have been a felt need to `protect' the stall-holder. Pink (2007: 51) writes about the ethics of making moral judgments about those whom we study, saying that she felt obliged to `protect' the bullfighting fans whom she studied from animal rights activists who judged them from a different moral point of view. It could also be that the interpretation of this photograph is one of those sites of negotiation between the subjectivities of the researcher and the participant mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. (See 6.1)

Furthermore, Pink (2007: 68) comments that `photographs produced as part of an ethnographic project will be given different meanings by the subjects of those images, local people in that context, the researcher, and other...audiences.' It is interesting to speculate on the meanings of this photo that might be given by:

1) the stall-holder - who might have been angry that his photo was taken while he was asleep, an ethical issue in covert photography
2) the owner of the feet - who might have been his wife and who might *either* have agreed that he is `lazy' or who might have said that she was on duty at that time
3) George Wang - who was told by a similar stall-holder whom he found asleep that he had had to get up at 3 a.m. that day, i.e. George, because of his own working-class background, was perhaps more aware of the man's poverty and hard work
4) Lois – who generalised further, `**Chinese** spend a lot of time sleeping - **they** can sleep anywhere - (in the West) poor people don't sleep in the open.'
5) Fay
6) the researcher
7) the readers of this paper

Lastly, in the second part of her comment Fay mentions the Chinese man's `being comfortable with a total lack of privacy', an echo of her complaint about the opposite in the Focus Group with regard to Chinese people not respecting her privacy. (See 5.4.5.7)

6.3.3.8 Stall-holder (Fay 3)

Fay: A man sleeping beside a stall selling maps
The combination of laziness, but being an entrepreneur at the same time, is something **we** see often here. Also being comfortable exposing yourself in a vulnerable situation, being comfortable with a total lack of privacy is noteworthy.

The detailed comments about the photograph of the stall-holder show the potential richness of photographic data in ethnographic research. For reasons of space, only one photograph has been dealt with in such depth.

In 6.3.3 a variety of street scenes in Shanghai in 2005 were shown in photographs, some of which were taken intentionally for this project by the participants and others chosen by them for the same purpose. It has been seen that the second theme of this research, that of `We' and `They' and `East and West' is implied in all the photographs since the people who were doing the looking were Western women looking at Easterners doing something different from themselves. Theme 1 was seen in the generalisations in some of the comments and Theme 3 in the attitudes displayed, some appreciative of `the Other', e.g. the resourcefulness of people exercising in the park and the human relationships seen in the chatting on the street, some less

complimentary, e.g. the lack of consideration on crowded streets and the laziness of the stall-holder.

In the next section, 6.3.4, which contains four photographs of aspects of Chinese culture, the photographs are categorised under Theme 1 - Generalisation about `the Other'.

6.3.4 Aspects of Chinese culture

In this section four aspects of Chinese culture as seen by the *taitais* in Shanghai in 2005 are shown in their photographs. On the whole they generalise about `the Other' from their observation although one speaks of a more personal involvement.

The first aspect is trade as seen in a clothes market. Gail seems to generalise about the fact that trade – and bargaining, not on the whole a Western custom – are important aspects of Chinese culture. Like some of the other participants, she notices change, in this case in the field of commerce.

6.3.4.1 Trade (Gail 3)

Gail: A clothes market. Trade and bargaining. Traditional markets cope with the modern world.

The second aspect to be shown is religion, as seen in the statues of some Chinese gods in a temple. In her comment, Fay uses the word `tacky' to describe the statues and, as above, Lois reminded the researcher that Fay is a non-native speaker of English

and that therefore the meanings of the word to her and to a native speaker might be different. However, Lois had a difference of opinion with Fay with regard to the artistic value of the statues. Whereas Fay compares the `tacky' statues in the photograph with `statues in the West', a strong generalisation, Lois comments, `also in the West some churches with tacky statues'. In addition to `tacky', Fay uses such vocabulary as `like giant toys', `simple' and `childish' which seem to imply her evaluation of them as a Western adult.

6.3.4.2 Religion (Fay 2)

Fay: Chinese gods in a temple
Religion / superstition. The statues look tacky, like giant toys.
Unlike statues in the **West**, which are made as art, these are
simple, and almost childish. But this does not seem to harm
their credibility.

The next aspect of Chinese culture to be pictured is food. Bess took this photograph for this project and she uses it as an example of a daily staple of Chinese diet, adding in her comment that she herself has adopted it, i.e. her lifestyle has been changed by living in Shanghai. She has noticed a change in Chinese society, the disappearance of wet markets from the streets in the more than ten years in which she has lived in the city, i.e improvement in hygiene and in shopping arrangements.

6.3.4.3 Food (Bess 2)

Bess: Green vegetables - daily staple of Chinese diet that I have adopted. Years of shopping in wet markets which are disappearing [11 ½ years]

The last photograph in this section was also taken by Bess herself. It shows her observation of the Chinese appreciation of beauty as seen in an annual blossom show. The flowers shown are usually called in English `bonsai', a Japanese word (*bon* – tray, bowl *sai* – cultivation). In Chinese they are called *pengjing* (bowl scenery).

6.3.4.4 Beauty (Bess 1)

Bess: Century Park annual blossom show - beauty among the skyscrapers. Promise of spring after a long wet grey cold winter. Chinese appreciation of the beauty of these blossoms.

In this short section four photographs of various aspects of Chinese culture - trade, religion, food and beauty – have been shown along with the participants' comments, most of which generalised about the aspect of `the Other' shown in the picture.

In the following two sections the ethnographic fields chosen by the participants are, perhaps, more unusual.

6.3.5 Government Policies

The photographs shown above were all taken or chosen by the participants in response to the instruction by the researcher in the letter of 1 February 2005 to bring to the study group's meeting three photos depicting things which sum up China for them. Two of the participants interpreted that instruction in an *unusual* way by choosing what might be termed new ethnographic fields.

Pink says

> …today's research practices are…influenced by the specific political, technological and material context in which ethnographers work as well as new understandings of what might constitute an ethnographic `field'. (2007: 27)

She gives as examples the domestic interior, the Internet and the human imagination and dreams as possible sites of study. In this project one participant chose Government Policies and another Ideas.

Rose chose the Chinese government's one child policy as her main topic and she gave seven photographs in all. It seems that a policy of any government on, for example, capital punishment or social welfare might be a fruitful source of data for an ethnographic study and that it is an excellent way to sum up `the Other' or, at least, one aspect of `the Other'.

In her comments Rose generalises about two results of China's one child policy: the preference for male children resulting in an `imbalance in [the] population between males and females' and the `little emperor or empress syndrome', the fact that the single children are often spoiled. She says that the imbalance `may create (a) social problem', a problem well known to both Chinese and Westerners. Whereas China's one child policy is often seen in the West as controversial, Rose appears to evaluate it not so much from a `We' and `They' perspective nor from a Chinese point of view. She simply notes the possible results of the policy.

The first photograph below shows a poster advocating the one child policy, the second a small Uyghur boy, a member of an ethnic minority in the northwest of China, and the third a group of children illustrating the imbalance between males and females.

6.3.5.1 Poster advocating one child policy (Rose 4)

Rose: Orphanages populated by females or disabled or deformed male
children - more imbalance in population between males and females
may create social problem - little emperor or empress syndrome -
DINK (Double Income No Kids) - young adults enjoy life in Shanghai.

6.3.5.2 Small Uyghur boy (ethnic minority in the northwest of China) (Rose 5)

Rose: Preference for male child - *zhong nan qing nu* (pay more attention to men than to women)

6.3.5.3 Group of children – four boys, two girls (Rose 6)

Rose: One child policy results in more males than females in population

Rose's next photo shows not the one child policy but the result of another Chinese government policy, that of encouraging some people to become rich before others.

The children in the photo above live in a rural area whereas it is obvious from the dress of the two girls below that they are urban teenagers.

6.3.5.4 Two teenaged girls (Rose 7)

Rose: City vs rural teenagers - more modern stylish dress

The last photograph in this section is not one of Rose's but it has been placed here by the researcher because it seems to illustrate one of the effects of the one child policy mentioned by Rose, that of the little emperor or empress syndrome. Jill puts it another way: `It is rare to ever see an unhappy Chinese child. **They** are so loved!' She generalises still further, saying that small Chinese children `always represent the "true China"' to her.

6.3.5.5 Children feeding pigeons in People's Square in Shanghai (Jill 4)

Jill: Small Chinese children - **always** represent the `true China' to me.

They represent China's youth, naivity, purity and happiness. It is rare to ever see an unhappy Chinese child. **They** are so loved!

Two photographs in this section are the only ones given by the participants, apart from those defining the `Self', in which the subject is gazing at the camera: the small Uyghur boy quite close up and the group of six children from further away. However, we do not know their names and their words are not recorded and they therefore seem to be representatives of the single children in China rather than the `real people' pictured by the Chinese photographer in 6.1.

The five photographs in this section illustrate clearly, perhaps more clearly and vividly than words, the one child policy in China and its effects. The gap between the urban rich and rural poor, the result of another policy, is also shown.

6.3.6 Ideas

Lois, whose comments on other participants' photographs have been interspersed above, decided to take photographs herself for this project of her own ideas about Chinese culture and society. This was an original choice of subject and these photographs show quite clearly who is doing the looking, a Western woman who has strong ideas about Chinese culture. The `reading' of such photographs by the researcher and the readers of this paper entails searching, as with the photograph of the stall-holder in 6.3.3.8, for the meaning outside the frame. Fortunately, for the first two pictures, Lois has provided fairly lengthy written comments.

Interestingly, Lois provided a photograph almost identical to Bess's (See 6.3.4.4) of a large bonsai outdoors. However, the meanings of the two photographs as revealed in the participants' comments are very different. *Lois uses the bonsai to illustrate not* Chinese appreciation of beauty but what she considers a characteristic of `the Chinese', i.e. to `meddle with everything'. Tellingly, she herself uses quotation marks around the words `the Chinese' as if to say that she knows this is a phrase used in generalisation. She also uses the ethnographic present tense. Indeed, in her written comment she generalises the concept of `meddling' to include not only tourism but also health and appearance.

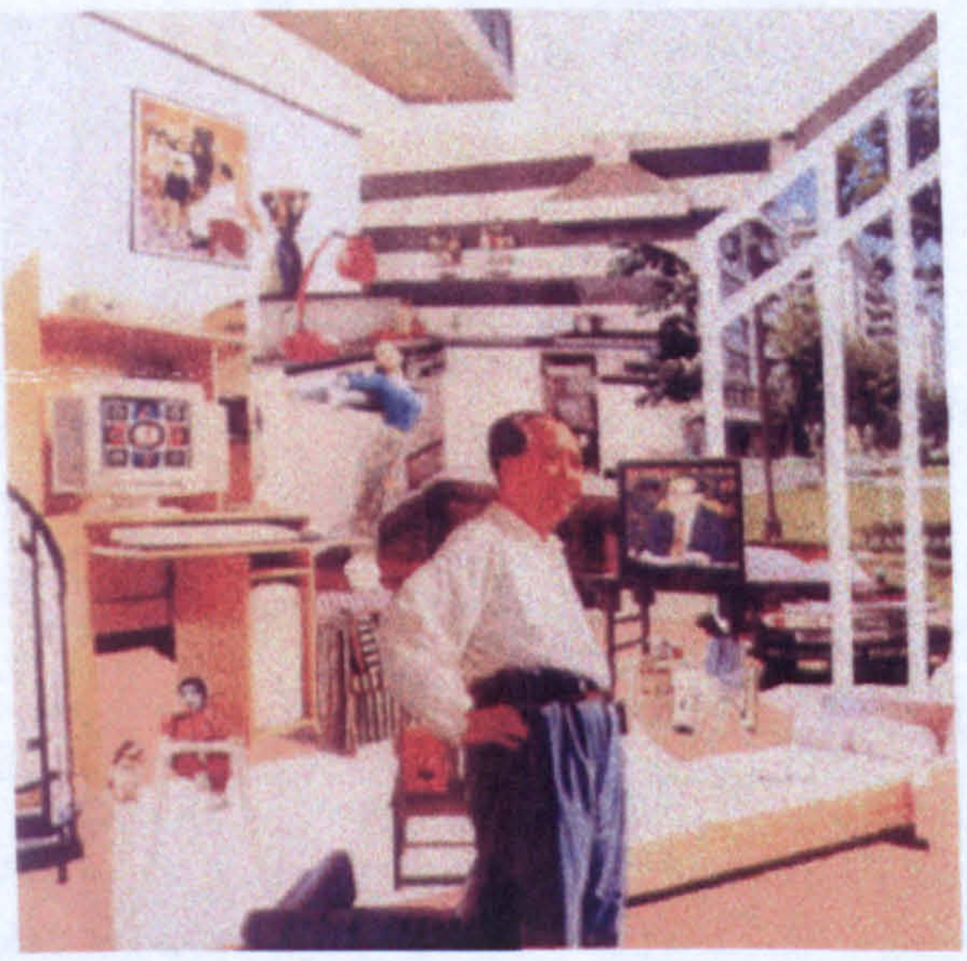
6.3.6.1 Meddling (Lois 1)

Lois: I chose that one to illustrate how manipulative I think `**the Chinese**' are. **They** meddle with everything and when **they** don't do so, **they** don't value it (nature). We traveled through some parts of the country and we found that the places **Chinese tourists** would visit were **always** something manmade `cultured'. A rock with an inscription, a temple. We would drive in the countryside, through the mountains and enjoy the scenery. Even the guide *in* Xinjiang [a province in the northwest of China] knew he had to take us to different places.

Same thing [meddling] I find the dealing with their health. It is impossible to leave the body alone, take some rest and wait until it is over. The slightest cough has to be treated with some medicine. Look at the popularity of plastic surgery. Even when there is nothing wrong with **their** body **they** want to beautify it. Appearance is so all important!

Lois' second photograph is of a collage showing Chairman Mao standing in a modern house. She explained in further written comments that the idea she intended to represent in the photo is `development'. Chairman Mao represents `closed China' and Jiang Zemin (seen on the television screen) represents the `opening up of China (after Deng)'. She added: `What do people want? - IKEA -

cultural imperialism?? by own choice!!!' In other words, the people, especially the young people, choose Westernisation. Far from `blaming' them, Lois says, `Apparently the Chinese people went after the same things as we did' but she does seem to think that they have gone too far in being `totally focused on making money' and in `showing off'. She expressed similar views in the discussion in the Focus Group.



social changes. For instance I have visited old people in an old people's home. Something unheard of before!

People in Shanghai, especially **young people**, are totally focused on making money and trying to get what is on the picture with this difference: They would change to another channel on TV and hang another painting on the wall, probably from IKEA. Modern weddings **all** go with the big photo session in the (hired) white dress with the traditional red dress during the party. A party that can't be big enough for **those with money**! Showing off is something I see a lot around me.

6.3.6.2 Development (Lois 2)

Lois: Chairman Mao in a modern house
Title: What is it that makes modern houses so appealing.
This is to illustrate our feeling coming back to China after our first assignment in Nanjing some 15 years ago (1989-1991). The changes were so many! Apparently **the Chinese people** went after the same things
as **we** did and got it in a short time. With it we saw

In her third photograph, Lois focuses on another idea, that of the prevalence of fake goods in China. As with the stress on making money seen above, this was a topic on which she also expressed strong views during the Focus Group discussion.

What is intriguing about this photograph is that, instead of just providing information, the participant has used it to challenge the researcher. Pink (2007: 76) says

> Sometimes the photographs informants request [or take] challenge the assumptions behind the ethnographer's original intentions and initiate a shift in the anticipated use of photography as a research method.

This has certainly happened here.

Again, Lois has used a photograph of beautiful flowers, this time in a vase indoors in front of two Chinese scrolls hanging on the wall. Two other types of plants are visible in the picture. She uses it to ask, `What is fake, what is real?' and she ends this short comment with `I bet you can't tell.' She is right.

6.3.6.3 Fakes (Lois 3)

Lois: Flowers. This is for you to find out. What is fake, what is real? I bet you can't tell.

The last three photographs in this chapter have been used in an unusual and original way to present ideas and they thus added depth to the photographic data presented and discussed in this whole chapter.

6.3.7 Conclusion

To sum up this chapter on the photographic data, the question raised at the beginning, "Why Photography?" may be raised again and answered more fully. As could be seen in the comparison given of the interview data and the photographs, the main reason was to `make up' for the limitations of words, to use the pictures as an elaboration and extension of the words. To give just one example at the beginning of this summary, a

comparison may be made between the words said by Hope, which were placed at the end of Chapter 5 specifically because it was thought that they showed her sympathetic view of the cyclists riding by her car in the rain, and the photograph of cyclists in the rain in 6.3.3.2, which says it all, powerfully, without words.

The words are the main source of information about what the *taitais* think but what they said was always in answer to the questions and in the context of the Focus Group formed of their peers. Their photographs were taken or chosen entirely by them in response to the instructions of the researcher in her letter. (See Appendix 3) These instructions may repeated here since they obviously have a bearing on the subjects the *taitais* chose to photograph. The first was to bring three photos `depicting things which sum up China' for them. The instruction was deliberately as short as possible in the hope that it would encourage the participants to use photographs in any way they liked. However, the word `things' may have influenced them to take pictures of objects rather than of people. The second instruction about `what constitutes Chinese culture in Shanghai in 2005' was also deliberately inserted to let the participants know that the definition of culture given in the letter could be their guideline. In the interviews, there had been many questions about daily life in Shanghai in 2005 with the intention of grounding the study in that context as a reaction to the essentialism and reductionism of the Orientalists criticised by Said.

In the table below the subjects chosen by the participants are summarised:

Table 4

Participants' lives	6		
Classical Chinese culture	10	Great Wall	3
		Domestic architecture	4
		Peking Opera	2
		`Red packet'	1
Development	4	Modern architecture	3
		Collage	1
Outdoor scenes	20	People	7
		Clothes out to dry	3
		Transportation	4
		Crowds	2

		Government policies	4
Beauty	3	Flowers	3
Miscellaneous	3	Trade	1
		Religion	1
		Food	1
Total	46		46

N.B. Beauty – only one was intended to show the Chinese love of beauty. The two others had a totally different intentionality: 1) meddling 2) fakes

It can be seen that even in such a small group of 17 participants, there was a certain regularity in the subjects chosen. The six which portray their own lives can be categorized as definition of `the Self' and they add to the definition given in words which was recorded at the beginning of Chapter 5. All the other photographs are of one or another aspect of `the Other' and a selection has been seen in this chapter under several headings. The participants who chose photographs of classical Chinese culture were presumably responding mainly to the first instruction, to "sum up" China, whereas those who chose development and outdoor scenes were perhaps thinking more about "what constitutes Chinese culture in Shanghai in 2005". It can be seen that architecture, both ancient and modern, figures largely and that street scenes featuring people are also a popular choice.

There is also, however, a wide variety of choices with a number of themes having only one example. Trade, an important aspect of China as its economy rises dramatically in the first decade of the 21st century, is one. Another is Religion, with exotic `gods' attracting the eye of the Westerner. A third is Food, a photograph of a red plastic colander containing Chinese greens, which the participant says have become a staple of her diet. A fourth is Beauty, with the participant's comment about the Chinese love of beauty tying in almost exactly with what was written about the Chinese in a book in 1979. (See 5.3.6)

It might be argued that this method of observation is `unscientific' and therefore meaningless or that the reality of Shanghai is not shown. However, Pink's comment quoted at the beginning of the chapter is worth repeating here: `...the relationship between the subjectivities of the researcher and the informants produces a negotiated version of reality'. (2007: 24)

Cross-cultural uses of photography

The Chinese representation of Edinburgh given in 6.1.2 provides a useful comparison with the photographs taken or chosen by the *mainly Western taitais in Shanghai. The* book was designed by a well known visual artist in Shanghai, Chan Yifei, who, sadly, died a few years ago in dramatic circumstances while directing a film. The aim of his book seems to have been to give an accurate representation of Edinburgh, including the people of Edinburgh, to his readers / viewers. The photographer who took the photos was certainly a male *professional photographer* and this may account for the differences noted between his photographs and those taken by the female participants in this research. Quite a number of their photographs, however, were chosen, not taken, and this difference, therefore, should not be overstated.

The photograph of the `rose spire' of St. Giles' Cathedral would have attracted the attention of the Chinese photographer as, although there are in Shanghai churches with tall spires built in the early 20th century, there are no `rose spires'. The second photograph of the Chinese photographer shows a woman sitting in her garden in front of a council house of which, it was noted by the Chinese, there are `quite a lot'. In Shanghai, because of the density of population seen in Excerpt 6.3.3.4, it is rare for even the wealthy to have a garden at all. As for the Chinese photographs of Scots looking directly at the camera, it must be assumed that, in most cases, permission had been granted by the subject of the photograph since the name of the person is given as well as his/her reason for liking Edinburgh. It is not known what kind of conversation may have taken place between the elderly woman smoking a cigarette on the train and the photographer.

It is also not known whether the designer and photographer realised that they might be invading others' privacy since, as was seen in Ch. 5 (See 5.4.7.7), the Chinese and Western concepts of privacy are different. This difference in concept of privacy may have accounted for the lack of photographs of individuals gazing at the camera among the data given by the *taitais*. There may have been other reasons for this omission (See 6.1.2) but Lois firmly gave this as the main reason.

The subjects of the *taitais'* photographs, like those of the Chinese photographer, were things that attracted their attention because they were distinctive and different from what they had seen and experienced in the West. It might be the Great Wall, an iconic Chinese structure, or people exercising on the street or a poster advocating China's one child policy. The participants' intentionality, in answer to the instructions, was to show this difference.

Participants as photographers

In Chapter 3 there was a brief discussion about the participants as photographers as a group but there can now be a more detailed consideration of them as they stand revealed through their photographs. Berger says, `The way we see things is affected by what we know or what we believe'. (1972: 8) By looking closely at themes which were found in both Chapters 5 and 6 a deeper understanding of the *taitais* can be gained.

In Chapter 5.2 the participants defined themselves through their answers to the questions in the interviews but in Chapter 6 a few of them can actually be seen in person. (Confidentiality was promised to all participants but permission was given for these few photographs to be included.)

Not only the *taitais* but also their homes can be seen: an interior in 6.2.2.4 and the exterior of two houses in 6.2.2.6. Living, isolated, as they themselves said, in such houses in gated compounds, they view `the Other' from a particular standpoint. In 6.3.3.1 Ivy says that the area shown, with clothes hanging out to dry, is `compact' and `disorganised' and that `the focus is very much on practical functionality', a good description of a relatively poor district of Shanghai. Amy's photograph is of what might be described as middle class flats in Shanghai but they remind her of `the old days' in the West. Still on the subject of homes, it is probable that the overcrowded conditions in which the masses of people shown in 6.3.3.4 live are rarely seen by the *taitais*.

Besides homes, another theme which can be seen in the definition of `the Self' is that of the Asian faces shown in 6.2.2.6 at the Shanghai American School. (In Shanghai

in 2005 on the whole no local Shanghainese children were permitted to attend the school. Only `foreign' passport holders – Chinese Americans, Koreans, Hong Kongers, Singaporeans and Taiwanese – besides many other nationalities could do so.) Bess, who provided the photograph, made no mention of the many Asian faces – only three or four white ones can be seen – but instead wrote that the school had been a main part of her and her children's life in Shanghai. Other participants, however, did mention the preponderance of Asians. In 5.3.4.2 Meg spoke of her disappointment when her four year old son's Asian classmates did not come to his birthday party. Amy, however, whose son attended the same school, said that her house was full of Asian children who behaved well. (See 5.3.4.3) Yet another mention was made of this phenomenon by Dora who commented that it was pathetic that there was only one white face on the Honor Roll at the American School. (See 5.4.8.1)

A theme which was mentioned a number of times by the *taitais* in the interviews was that of their worry that Shanghai was destroying its cultural heritage by tearing down many of the old buildings. (See 5.3.5.5 under `All'.) It is noteworthy, then, that several of them chose ancient Chinese architecture (6.3.2.2) as the subject of their photographs. The reason why they are so concerned about the cultural heritage may be that they come from Western cultures where every effort is made to preserve ancient buildings – and where there is the money and space to do so.

In 6.3.3.2 a striking photograph of cyclists wearing colourful raincapes is seen. A very similar photograph was on the cover of the *National Geographic* magazine a few years ago, showing that it is a scene which attracts the attention of Westerners. However, it has already been mentioned at the beginning of this section that the photograph shows vividly the perseverance of the Chinese cyclists who, like Westerners, would undoubtedly all rather have been sitting comfortably in cars.

Several more connections between the words in Chapter 5 and the photographs in Chapter 6 will be mentioned briefly. Excerpt 6.3.4.1 is of Trade and the written comment mentions bargaining. In Chapter 5 bargaining was mentioned because the participant's white face had an effect on the price. (See 5.4.8.1) Excerpt 6.3.4.3 showing the green cabbage was mentioned by the same participant in 5.4.5.2 because she and her young son, who was brought up by the *ayi*, now drink the cabbage water

for their health. Excerpt 6.3.5.4 shows urban teenagers and may remind the reader that several participants spoke of the present Chinese obsession with money. In Excerpt 6.3.5.5 Jill shows Chinese children who are `so loved' but other participants think they are little emperors who are terribly spoiled. (See 5.3.4.4) In Excerpt 6.3.6.3 Lois challenges the viewer to guess *which of the beautiful flowers are fakes* and she spoke fervently on this theme too in the Focus Group.

The three choices of subject of a few of the participants have been mentioned above, e.g. Olga showing Old China, Modern China and an ethnic minority house, but it is impossible to list the three choices of all the participants. Some tried to encompass three aspects of such a huge subject while others, e.g. Rose, chose a theme such as a government policy. On the whole, the photographs provided showed the similarities of the *taitais*, their highly educated background, their wealth and their Western viewpoint. As a group, they are remarkably similar in outlook.

There are, however, differences which may be pointed out. One difference is their nationality and it has been noted above, in both Chapters 5 and 6, that Eva comes from an East Asian country. Although educated in the West, her Asian background reveals itself in both her words and her photographs. Meg's ethnic origin is in a South Asian country. A second difference is in the length of stay in Shanghai. Lois was the only one who had been in China (in Nanjing) in the 1980s and her choice of the collage to show the rapid development and extreme changes in Chinese society reflects this. The photograph of the collage also reflects her interest in modern Chinese art.

More difficult to pin down are the differences in attitude - their ethnocentricity. It seems that of all the participants Fay had the most negative reaction to Chinese culture as she experienced it in Shanghai. She wrote of the way Chinese behave in crowds, of the `tacky' statues in the temple and of the `lazy' stall-holder on the pavement. There is no way of knowing, however, why she held such attitudes, what experiences had influenced her. At the other end of the continuum is, perhaps, Jill, who wrote of the Chinese children who are `so loved'. Not all the participants agreed with her. Rose, who presented photographs of the Chinese government's one child policy, did not say much about her own attitude to it but it is highly likely that not all the *taitais* would agree on such a controversial topic.

Many interpretations

As was shown above with regard to the photograph of the stall-holder (6.3.3.8), a photograph can be interpreted in many different ways by different people. There follows a brief example from my own experience.

When I look at a photograph of the Great Wall, I am reminded of the four times I have visited it with different friends and members of my family. On one occasion I was with an eminent visitor from Glasgow who, on catching sight of the Wall, exclaimed, `I must look at my watch and make a note of the time when I first saw the Great Wall of China, which I have heard about ever since my childhood'.

The pictures of the Chinese domestic architecture in the `water towns' near Shanghai similarly remind me of my visits to them. Being a Westerner, like Jill, I lament the fact that there are so many tourists there now and they are so commercialised. However, George Wang wisely remarks that it is good that so many Chinese are now rich enough to visit them.

Peking Opera is described as the *jinghua* (cream, essence, quintessence) of Chinese culture. The distinctive makeup painted on the actors' faces, the sumptuous costumes and the unbelievable acrobatics are attractive to many Westerners. The shrill, high-pitched music, however, is an acquired taste which very few Westerners acquire. George Wang laments that young Chinese prefer Western forms of entertainment and that Peking Opera seems to be dying out.

Excerpt 6.3.2.5 show the modern architecture in Pudong on the eastern bank of the Huangpu River and, in particular, the TV Tower named `Pearl of the Orient'. I can remember that fifteen years ago there were only paddy fields in Pudong and, since Shanghai is my home town, I feel great pride, even as a Westerner, in its achievements. However, some Western visitors think the pink pearls on the TV Tower are `kitsch' and they lament the fact that Shanghai has built another Manhattan. `Why isn't it more Chinese?' they ask.

The above are for the reference of the readers of this paper, each of whom will have their own experiences to bring to the photographs.

Meaning outside the frame

John Berger wrote about `reading the [photo] differently: not at the level of what it shows within its frame but at the level of what it refers to outside it'. (1972: 94) This was mentioned in connection with the photograph of the stall-holder (See 6.3.3.8) but could be applied to almost any of the photographs presented.

As an example, Excerpt 6.3.2.4 shows a `roundhouse', a distinctive style of architecture built by one of China's 56 ethnic minorities. The sight of this photograph might lead to a multitude of questions, such as:

1) Why does this ethnic minority build houses like this?
2) In what province can they be found?
3) What are their special customs?
4) What is their history?
5) What are their relationships with other ethnic minorities and with the majority Han people?

There could be many questions arising out of just one photograph.

Photographs: a rich source of data

It has been shown that photographs are an extremely rich source of data for ethnographic research. They are powerful, presenting a `message' with feeling, as in the photograph of the bicycles. They are useful in cross-cultural studies in that they show distinctive differences. They reveal a great deal about the photographers and their attitudes. They can be interpreted in a great variety of ways by different viewers and they give rise to many questions of issues.

Ch. 7: Conclusion

7.1 Findings

In this research project the central issue was to ask whether there are habitual ways of making sense of another culture or, to put it another way, whether there are recurrent and recognizably similar sense-making practices across a range of areas. The aim, as stated in 1.1, was to answer this question and to generate a picture of the complexity surrounding it. There will now be an attempt to answer the question, making use of Edward Said's theory, and to draw a complex picture of the small group of Western *taitais* in Shanghai in 2005 who were the participants in this study.

Existing literature, including Edward Said's Orientalism, has put forward the post-colonial theory which holds that when `West' constructs `East' a basic concept is that of `the Other'. Three themes found in the literature showed that this concept is constructed mainly by the use of generalisations and the use of `We'/`They' and `East'/`West' and that ethnocentric attitudes are often found. Other scholars, like Irwin, do not subscribe to this theory, pointing out that generalisation, in particular, is a common feature of many types of study. This research, an empirical case study, has shown that the post-colonial theory can usefully inform an ethnographic study of a small group of Western women in Shanghai in 2005. The *taitais*, however, also displayed differences in their behaviour from the Orientalists who were the subjects of Said's study. These similarities and differences will now be discussed.

There should first be a consideration of `the Self', the participants in the research who were the observers of `the Other', Chinese culture. One obvious difference is the context in which this study was carried out - Shanghai in 2005, not the Middle East in earlier times. In the ethos and mindset of the present era of the Internet, rapid communication and easy travel there is, on the whole, a trend away from racist, imperialist and `almost totally ethnocentric' (Said, 1978: 204) attitudes. One participant said of the pidgin English in novels set in Shanghai, `I can't believe people used to talk like that in the 20s – it's humiliating'. (See 5.4.8.8)

Another major difference between the *taitais* and the Orientalists was that they were not specialist scholars studying the East but instead the wives of wealthy businessmen or diplomats who were in Shanghai as sojourners for varying lengths of time. The *taitais* had not chosen to come to Shanghai but accompanied their husbands as `trailing spouses'.

Another difference from the Orientalists was that, based on their comments in the interviews and the photographs, it seems that most of the *taitais* were aware of their `Eurocentrism, that hegemonic reflex that troubles westerners even as it continues to be second nature to them' (Pratt, 1992: 15). The Orientalists, according to Said, were hardly aware of, let alone troubled by, their Eurocentrism. To them it was taken for granted that the West was superior, the East inferior.

The Orientalists, again according to Said, were sometimes hostile to the Orient – often, as Irwin states, for religious reasons – but the *taitais* were on the whole receptive to `the Other'. Besides their background, other influences on them were the people they met and above all their experience of Chinese culture, since all of them were living in Shanghai in 2005 and some had been living here for more than ten years. This particular group, the Chinese Culture Study Group of Shanghai, by their very membership in the group, were predisposed to be sympathetic towards Chinese culture. However, by their own account, as will be seen below, their experience was limited because of the circumstances in which they lived in the city and because they were not working.

Turning to generalisation, the first of the three themes mentioned above, it was found in the data that the *taitais* did, like the Orientalists, use such phrases as `the Chinese' and `Chinese people' with the ethnographic present tense in both the interviews and the written comments accompanying the photographs provided. However, as Irwin and others have noted, the use of generalisations is a common practice in research and is almost impossible to avoid when describing another culture. The *taitais*, in addition, used a number of linguistic techniques such as modifications and narratives which had been mentioned in the literature. They also used examples and comparisons, all of which conveyed a rich picture of themselves and of `the Other',

the Chinese people and culture which formed the context of the study. This picture will be described below.

Another technique mentioned by Said was the use of `We'/'They' and `East'/'West' which, according to him, polarised the distinction between the two. The use of such terms was, indeed, found in the data but, as demonstrated by the fact that the same *taitai* who used them also spoke warmly of the similarities of East and West, their use does not necessarily signify polarisation or hostility. It can be a mere observation of fact.

The third theme in this study was that of ethnocentric attitudes, an aspect more difficult to elucidate than the more obvious linguistic practices. While there may have been some misunderstandings, ranging from a mistake about the name of a Chinese game played on the street to a perception of `laziness' in a stallholder, it seems that on the whole the attitudes of most of the *taitais* were sympathetic. They saw aspects of Chinese culture which they did not like, such as spitting, obsession with money and the destruction of some historic buildings in Shanghai, about which they spoke frankly from their Western background. They also, however, were keenly aware of their own special status as wealthy *taitais* and realised that this influenced their viewpoint.

It seems that the main theory of Said and others can be applied to this small group of women in Shanghai in 2005 because the results of the research show that they did use such linguistic practices as generalisation and the use of `We'/'They'. They also revealed ethnocentric attitudes in varying degrees. However, it has also been shown by comparison how different they were from the Orientalists described by Said. In summary, unlike the Orientalists, they did not, on the whole, misrepresent the Orient or deny its reality. In fact, especially in their written comments with the photographs, they were, on the contrary, searching for the `real' China.

There will now be an attempt to `draw a picture' of the complex situation in which this small group of *taitais* was living in Shanghai in 2005. I learned a great deal from them because George Wang and I live in a different district of Shanghai from them and without joining the Study Group and being invited into their homes I would never

have known so much about them. From time to time I met their family members – mothers and children – who were visiting from their home countries. They gave me lifts in their vans and I even got to know their drivers. I gradually learned about the differences among them with regard not only to their nationality and age but also with regard to status and wealth. One of them confessed to me that she particularly wanted to attend one meeting because it was in the home of a member who was living in a compound much `grander' than her own.

The image which will perhaps be most helpful in drawing the picture is that of a `wall' because most of the participants were living in the walled compounds described in Chapter 4. In addition to the physical walls, there was a metaphorical one mentioned by Kate: "...there always seems to be a, a wall..." (See 5.3.5.1) The question as to who builds this metaphorical `wall' and who should tear it down is in itself a complex one but here I shall limit myself to describing the attempts, as I witnessed them, of the *taitais* to pull it down or, at least, to make holes, big and small, in it. These were their attempts to make sense of another culture.

First, their relationships with their *ayis* and drivers were important to them since these Chinese people were the ones with whom they had most contact. Whereas their husbands were meeting Chinese colleagues every day, the *taitais* were limited, on the whole, to contacts with their `helpers'. Quite a number of these `helpers' worked for the *taitais'* families for years and it should, perhaps, be pointed out that their salaries were very high, higher even than those of many new university graduates. This reflects the fact of the extremely high status of the husbands of the *taitais*. The children of some of the `helpers' even attended universities abroad and found good jobs in companies. Some of the *taitais'* relationships with their `helpers' were extraordinarily close, even to the extent that they visited their homes, not only in Shanghai but also in the countryside. These visits were described by the *taitais* as `our most China experience ever' (See 5.4.4.2) and `really a memorable experience' (See 5.4.4.3). They had made a hole in the `wall', even if only for a short time.

A few *taitais* managed to make a bigger hole in the `wall' by working, not because they needed money but solely for the purpose of contacting `real' Chinese people. One taught English at a language school specifically because she wanted to meet

Chinese people. Others worked for charitable organisations and thus had the chance to meet Chinese people who needed help as well as their Chinese co-workers with whom they could be friends.

The most difficult part of attempting to pull down the `wall', as related by the *taitais*, was the learning of the tonal Chinese spoken language, not to mention the complicated written characters. They gave graphic accounts of how they had tried, with varying degrees of success and this was a factor in the making sense of another culture with which I could easily relate, as was mentioned in 1.2. However, it should be noted that nearly all their husbands managed to use Chinese to some degree in their work and one *taitai* related that her husband, though far busier than she was, managed to learn the language well enough to be able to have business meetings in Chinese. (See 5.4.5.6) Could this be a matter of motivation? All the *taitais* wanted their children to be able to speak Chinese and several had even chosen schools for their children based on the fact that more Chinese was taught there than at other international schools. (In passing it might be noted that the learning of a foreign language, mainly English, the international language of commerce, is compulsory in every Chinese school but that the learning of Chinese is to be found in only a handful of schools in the UK. As far as I know, it is only in very recent years that the number of schools teaching Chinese seems to be increasing slightly.)

In different cultures, the eating of food plays a significant role and in this aspect most of the *taitais* seemed to have made large holes in the `wall'. There were, of course, Chinese foods that they did not like, such as stinky bean curd (which smells like Danish cheese) but they could all mention Chinese dishes they liked and could even cook themselves. Four of them spoke of how their children prefer Chinese food to Western dishes. One gave a graphic example: `My youngest was raised as a Chinese baby. He was given rice and the juice of the green vegetables. Whenever I cook the vegetables now, "Do you want the juice?" "Oh yeah."' (See 5.4.5.2)

Misunderstandings about health and medicine, perhaps especially for women, who may be concerned about their own health or that of their children, can easily build a `wall'. When it came to traditional Chinese medicine, one surprising finding was that two *taitais* had been exposed to it even in their childhood and another related

enthusiastically her experiences of having been healed by Chinese doctors. Other *taitais* would have nothing to do with it, sticking to `An apple a day....' (See 5.3.4.7).

One comment on the tearing down of the metaphorical `wall' is that, unlike a physical wall which can be destroyed in seconds by explosives, it takes a long time and much patience and understanding. It also depends on attitude. One frank *taitai* said, `It's an attitude problem – we don't want to and they don't want to...' (See 5.4.7.1) Other *taitais* spoke of how their attitudes had changed over time with regard to Chinese medicine and even to what might seem the minor matter of being bumped on crowded streets. These small changes in attitude might be described as cracks in the `wall'. One of the most interesting exchanges in a Focus Group centred on the *taitais'* reaction to Western journalists' reports on China. They did not claim to know more than the journalists but said that the reason they could not bear to listen to them was, `Because he doesn't live here' (See 5.2.3.7). They knew their attitudes had changed over time.

The time taken to tear down a metaphorical `wall' varies from person to person. One participant who had been in Shanghai only three years, a relatively short time compared to others who had lived here more than ten years, said she felt she was a different person. When speaking about Pearl Buck's The Good Earth, a novel about China well known especially to Americans, Nell said that when she was re-reading it here in a Book Club (a favourite activity among the *taitais*) `I understood it through *a different person*, being older and *living here and understanding the culture* [italics added]' (See 5.2.3.5). Even though she lived behind a physical wall in a compound and `felt' the metaphorical `wall' in her daily life, she still thought of herself as a different person because of living here and understanding the culture.

Rose, who was interviewed individually, was one of the older *taitais* who had lived in Asia for many years. Her comment was, `I have lived in Asia for 25 years. The more I know, the more I realize there is to know. It whets my appetite.' (See 5.2.4.2).

Finally, the example may be mentioned of one of the *taitais* who tried to break through the `wall' in three different ways after living in Shanghai for more than ten years. First, she, her husband and her two children could all speak Chinese fluently

and loved to go out and eat a simple meal of Chinese noodles. Second, she went to work for an international charitable organisation where she could not only `make a difference' but also come into close contact with young Chinese professionals. And thirdly, her family moved out of the wall-surrounded compound to a very nice house in an upper middle class Chinese neighbourhood.

To conclude, Edward Said complained that the Orientalists dehumanised Orientals by making sweeping generalisations about them. In this study I have attempted to draw a humanistic picture, including such details as books read, food eaten and *ayis* hugged, of a small group of elite Western-educated women who were trying to make sense of Chinese culture in Shanghai in 2005.

7.2 Methodology

The methods used in this research were ethnographic interviews of small focus groups and of individuals and the taking of photographs by the participants of things that summed up China for them and of what, for them, constituted Chinese culture in Shanghai in 2005. It was a collaborative production of ethnographic knowledge by a small group of women and the researcher following the model of Radway in her Reading the Romance. Hopefully, a vivid picture of the women themselves and of the Chinese context in which they were living has emerged.

7.3 Limitations

This research consisted of a case study in a particular context. The question arises as to whether the findings of this study are applicable to other situations, in other parts of China, the East or even the world. An extra limitation is that this was a very specific group of elite wives of businessmen and diplomats and they can in no way be considered representative of all foreigners in Shanghai in 2005. However, the fact that they are intelligent, articulate women helped greatly in the production of the ethnographic knowledge.

7.4 Suggestions

Similar studies of Westerners in other Asian settings should be carried out to determine whether similar strategies, such as generalisation and the use of `We/They' and `East/West', are used. It would be interesting to find out what kinds of ethnographic attitudes were revealed. Even more interesting would be similar studies of Chinese in Western settings.

7.5 Impact of the Study

This research project was designed with no practical application in mind. It may have practical applications but I am not sure what they might be. The project arose out of my own desire to understand more deeply the process of making sense of another culture in which I have been involved all my life.

The members of the Chinese Culture Study Group of Shanghai have helped me greatly in the understanding of this process. The collaboration between the participants and the researcher in a specific context yields real ethnographic knowledge, even though it may be only a small slice of reality. The `picture' painted in 7.1 is of one small group of Western women in Shanghai in 2005. Whether the knowledge gained can be extrapolated to other foreigners in Shanghai, to other Westerners in other parts of China or even to East-West relationships is for the reader to determine.

One of the participants spoke of how, in the process of learning the Chinese language, 'you have to change your way of thinking. That's really difficult'. (See 5.4.5.5) At a recent meeting of the Chinese Culture Study Group one of the members reported on a research project in which she had been engaged with a colleague. The title of her report was `How China Transforms an Executive's Mind' and explored `the impact of Eastern thought on a select group of Western executives who have extensive exposure to China.' (Lynton & Thogersen, 2006: 179) The research was based on 30 in-depth interviews with exceptionally effective business executives. All of them had `learned essential lessons from the way many Chinese people think' (N.B. `many Chinese people') (Lynton & Thogersen, 2006: 171) and said that `China teaches them to think,

feel and act differently than they do at home.' (Lynton & Thogersen, 2006: 179) To me, such research on the way busy executives have not only learned the Chinese language but also allowed China to transform their minds gives cause for hope in relations between `East' and `West'.

7.6 Importance of the Study

Shanghai is the largest city in the fastest developing country in the world – China. In 2010 the world's largest ever Expo will be held in Shanghai. It seems that it is important for Westerners who will be coming to the Expo to have some knowledge of `the East', in particular some knowledge of the history of East – West relations, and to be aware of their attitude to `the East'.

In Shanghai in 1937, George Wang was picked up by the police at the age of ten in a case of mistaken identity:

> The policeman took me to an upstairs room in the station where a European officer questioned me in broken Chinese about the whereabouts of the other boy. I told him I didn't know, but he was not satisfied. After a few questions he got up from his desk and pulled open the drawer. Taking out a pistol, he pointed it at me, threatening to shoot me if I didn't tell the truth. What could I tell him? I was only ten, and I cried out in sheer terror. He questioned me for some time. He must have known I was not lying because, finally, he let me go but not before ordering me to bend over and whacking me on the bottom several times with a ruler.
> (Wang & Barr, 2002: 112)

In recent years George has been insulted by Westerners at the Shanghai Railway Station and at the Airport. The European at the Railway Station changed his attitude immediately when he realised that George was my husband.

Hopefully, Westerners coming to the Shanghai Expo in 2010 will not bring semi-colonial attitudes to this former semi-colony and will not, for example, expect everyone in Shanghai to speak English. In the *Shanghai Daily* of June 26, 2007 (Vol. 008 No. 2268, p. C9) a Western columnist wrote about three examples of Western behaviour which he had recently seen: a large, loud Western businessman rudely demanding better service in a fast food restaurant, a Western woman shouting at her cringing *ayi* on the street and two Western men getting out of a taxi complaining

about the taxi driver not speaking English. Perhaps this research project does, after all, have practical applications.

The very entrenched hegemony of the asymmetrical relationship between the West and the Rest, which Ang described (2001: 4), still exists today and, as seen above, the superior attitudes of the Orientalists described by Said can also still be found. However, from my own experience of living in Shanghai in different periods of history, I can see that, for many complex reasons, the attitudes of most Westerners towards Chinese people have changed greatly. From this research project it can be seen that most of the *taitais*, an elite group of Western-educated women, had an attitude of respect for and interest in their host country. If they were not able to `crack China', they did at least make 'cracks' and 'holes' of various sizes in the cultural `wall' surrounding them.

Appendix 1: Timetable of Process of Research

March 03 – Dec 03	Reading – theory
Jan 04 – July 04	Voluntary suspension
Aug 04 – Feb 05	Discussion with supervisor – interview questions discussed Reading – theory, methodology
Mar 05 – May 05	Five individual pre-tests of interview questions Collect data – photographs - interview four focus groups - individual interviews
June 05 – Aug 05	Transcribe interviews Further reading – methodology
Sept 05 – Mar 06	Reflection on data Consultation with supervisor on research issue Further reading
Apr 06 – May 06	First draft of dissertation
June 06 – Aug 06	Discussion with supervisor Further reading
Sept 06 – July 07	Final draft of dissertation

Appendix 2: Letter to Participants – 1 October 2004

70/2/503 Dong Tiyuhui Rd
Shanghai 200081
Tel: 5666 6256
E-mail: bbarr@sh.cnuninet.net

1 October 2004

To: The Chinese Culture Study Group of Shanghai

Dear Fellow Members

Some of you know, I think, that I am attempting, in my seventies, to do a PhD in Cultural Studies at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow, Scotland. I had been thinking for a while of studying intercultural relations in Shanghai, my birthplace, and this summer my supervisor suggested that I concentrate on the present.

This is where you come in! I wonder whether you would be willing to help me by being interviewed, in groups or individually, and perhaps answering a questionnaire. Since our club consists of groups originating from three geographical areas, it might be interesting to interview you in those groups and compare notes.

I am still at the beginning of my study and my supervisor suggests that I do more reading both on the methodology of my research and on the topic. Any interviews, therefore, would not take place until next spring at the earliest but I am writing to you now to ask for your reaction. If you would not feel comfortable about being interviewed, please do not hesitate to say so. If, on the other hand, you would not mind, I think we might all find it an interesting exercise in self-reflection on the ways in which we perceive another culture. I would welcome any suggestions you may have for my study.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Best wishes

Betty Barr

Appendix 3: Letter to Participants – 1 February 2005

70/2/503 Dong Tiyuhui Road
Shanghai 200081
Tel: 5666 6256
Email: me_barr@yahoo.com

1 February 2005

To: The Chinese Culture Study Group of Shanghai

Dear Fellow Members

Last October you kindly agreed to be a participant in my study of how we perceive another culture. I am now writing to give you more details and I hope you will enjoy our joint investigation.

Definition of Culture

There are many definitions but here is one which may help us all:
`Culture consists of the beliefs, behaviors, norms, attitudes, social arrangements and forms of expression that form a describable pattern in the lives of members of a community or institution'. LeCompte & Schensul, 1999

Tentative Plan of Study in 2005

1) Feb. 2 - March 2

Could each participant bring to the club meeting on March 2nd three photos depicting things which sum up China for them. This may involve taking photos especially or it may involve choosing from photos already taken. Please write a brief explanation of your choice. If you want to choose something unphotographable, please just write a brief note on it. These will be used as a basis for discussion in groups and individually of what constitutes Chinese culture in Shanghai in 2005.

2) March - May A pilot group will pre-test the interview questions.
Focus group interviews - two or three small groups
Individual interviews

3) Sept. - Oct. A follow-up questionnaire will be sent to all of you.

I hope that this will not take up too much of your time. If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact me at the email address above.

Thank you in advance.
Betty Barr

Appendix 4: Questions for Interviews

1. (For members of Chinese Culture Study Group)
   Why did you join the Chinese Culture Study Group?

1a. (For non-members – pre-testing)
   Do you find Chinese Culture interesting? If so, why? If not, why not?

2. What, for you, is the greatest obstacle to understanding China?
3. How do you meet most Chinese people?

3a. How many helpers do you have? e.g. *ayi*, driver
   How do you address them? How do they address you?
   Can you briefly describe your relationship with them?

4. How does your husband meet most Chinese people?
5. What school do your children attend? Why was that school chosen?
6. How have other Western people's representations of Shanghai/China influenced you, e.g. non-fiction, fiction, films? Can you give some examples?
7. Do you feel that the Chinese have some way to go to catch up with the West or do you feel that the West could learn from the Chinese? In what ways?

8. <u>Topic 1 – Language</u>
   a) Have you studied *putonghua* (Mandarin)? If so, for how long? How (class, one to one? Why did you study it?
   b) With what success? e.g. Can you carry on a conversation? With whom?
      In what situations? On what topics?
      Can you read a Chinese newspaper?
   c) Do you ever hear / use pidgin English?
   d) Can you understand / speak Shanghai dialect?
   e) Do you think the difficulty of the Chinese language is one of the greatest barriers for Westerners in understanding China?

9. <u>Topic 2 – Food</u>
   a) Which Chinese dishes do you particularly like / dislike? Why?
   b) Can you cook Chinese food? Which dishes?
   c) Have you had any `successes' or `failures' with eating Chinese food?
   d) When you go to Chinese banquets do you experience any difficulties?

10. <u>Topic 3 – Health</u>
   a) Have you ever been to a Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) doctor? Had acupuncture / moxibustion? Had a Chinese massage? Had Reflexology treatment on your feet? Any other Chinese treatment?
   b) When do you choose Western medicine and when TCM? Why?
   c) What is your understanding of / opinion about the Chinese description of certain foods being `hot' or `cold'?

11. Are you good at bargaining in street markets with Chinese vendors?
12. Have you been stared at in Shanghai? (Can you give some `stories'?)
13. Is there any (other) Chinese behaviour in public which you do not like? (Give examples.)
14. Are there ways in which you think that your experience of China as a woman might be different from a man's? Do you think some of your experiences of

China are special – just because you are a woman?

14a As a woman, have you experienced / witnessed any examples of sexism in Shanghai?

15. What is your attitude to intercultural (mixed) marriages?

16. Can you think of (other) bridges between Eastern and Western cultures in Shanghai?

17. Which aspects of Chinese culture do you positively embrace?

18. When there is lack of understanding or even conflict between the two cultures, how do you deal with this?

19. Do you think that Shanghainese are different from other Chinese? If so, can you define the difference?

20. Do you think that Chinese culture as you experience it in Shanghai in 2005 is the way forward for China?

Appendix 5: Definition of *Taitai*

Xiandai Hanyu Cidian (Contemporary Chinese Dictionary), (1990), Beijing: Commercial Press

Taitai

1) In the old society, wives of officials
2) In the old society, servants in the home of officials and landlords used *taitai* to address their mistress
3) A respectful way to address a married woman, e.g. *Wang Taitai*
4) Used when introducing one's wife to others, e.g. *wode taitai* (my wife)
5) *dial* (paternal) great-grandmother or great-grandfather

Daban

(This is the *putonghua* (Mandarin) form of the word `taipan' used in English. The pronunciation of the English word is nearer to the Cantonese form of the word.)

In the old society, the title of the manager of a foreign company

Chambers 20th Century Dictionary (1983), Edinburgh: Chambers

taipan

a foreigner living in China and controlling his company's business there [Chin]

N.B.

1) The word `taipan' became well known in the West after James Clavell wrote a novel with that title in Hong Kong in 1966. The `word' can be spelled `tai-pan' or `tai pan'.
2) `taipan' is not listed in either the Longman Dictionary of English Language and Culture (1992) or the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (2003)
3) *taitai* is not listed in any of the above three English dictionaries but is at present widely used in expatriate circles in Chinese-speaking societies such as Shanghai, Taipei, and Hong Kong to mean the wife of a wealthy man, Chinese or foreign.

Appendix 6: Shanghai Statistics

Geographical location: Latitude 31.14N Longitude: 121.27E
(Latitude similar to Cairo and New Orleans)

On the Huangpu River, near the mouth of the *Chang Jiang* (Long River = Yangtze River)

Average temperatures:	Jan.	Avg high	3.5	Jul Avg high	27.8
		Avg low	0.3	Avg low	24.7

Population: 17.42 million (2004) residents
Transient population: approx. 3-4 million – migrant workers from other provinces
Population density: 2,747 people per sq km (2004)
Land area: 5,299 sq km

Life expectancy:	Male	Female	Combined
1950-55	39.3	42.3	40.8
2000-05	69.8	73.3	71.5

(Above figures for the whole of China. Shanghai figures would be higher.)

Pre-1949 foreign population in Shanghai

1942	150,931	(highest)
2005	51,000	(working)

In 2005, the city added 18,325 new expatriate jobs compared with 4,047 in 2000.

Annual per capita net income (China)
Urban RMB 9,422 (GBP620) Rural RMB 2,936 (GBP196) (2004)

The number of Chinese people in abject poverty was reduced by more than 100 million between 1985 and 2005.
There are still more than 100 million "needy" people in China if the international income standard of US$1 is applied.

Automobile production (China)
2005 Autos 5.71 million Private cars 2.95 million

Domestic car sales*, Jan-Jun 2006 (2005 not available)

Company		Market share %
Shanghai GM	183,900	10.19
Shanghai VW	161,900	8.98

- excludes buses, trucks, recreation vehicles and jeeps

Bicycle usage (China)
Bicycles per 100 households
2004 139

Bicycle output (China)
2005 (Jan-Nov) 51.18 million

Shanghai transrapid rail system (Maglev)

Year of completion	2004
Top speed (km/hour)	500
Operating speed (km/hour)	430
Track length (km)	30

Commercial property
RMB per sq m

	2003	**2004**	**2005**
Shanghai	5,881 (GBP392)	6,385 (GBP452)	6,698 (GBP447)

Urban commercial real estate constructed (China)
Million sq m

	Floor space
2004	1,281,63

Tallest buildings (China)

	Location	**Storeys**	**Height(m)**	**Year**
1. Jin Mao Building	Shanghai	88	421	1999
4. Shimao Int'l Plaza	Shanghai	60	333	2005
7. Plaza 66	Shanghai	66	288	2001
8. Sunjoy Tomorrow Square	Shanghai	55	285	2003
10. HK New World Tower	Shanghai	61	278	2002

Number of tall buildings (35 metres and above)

Shanghai 772

Income per capita (2006)
Shanghai RMB 18,645 (GBP1,434)

Foreign direct investment
(billion)

	2002	**2003**
Shanghai	USD4.27 (GBP2.14)	USD5.47 (GBP2.74)

Internet users (China)
Million users

	Broadband	**Internet**
2005	48.39	111

Computers (China)
Million units

	Desktops	**Laptops**
2005	80.84	45.65

Environment:
1) Sixteen of the world's twenty most air-polluted cities are in China.
2) Auto emissions accounted for 79% of total air pollution in 2005.
3) Environmental degradation is costing China nearly 8% of its annual GDP.

Coal mining accidents (China)

2005	5,938

Official figures show 5,986 miners died from coal mining accidents in 2005.

Mobile telephones (China)
Million users

2005	393.43

Fixed telephones (China)
Million users

2005	350.43

Volume of freight at major coastal ports (China)
Million tons

	1985	**1995**	**2004**
Shanghai	112.91	165.67	378.96

(Most of the statistics above are from: China by NUMBERS 2007 (2006), Hong Kong: China Economic Review Publishing)

Appendix 7: Chinese Culture Study Group

Lectures: 2000 - 2006

Programme: 2000-2001

14 Nov.	Chinese Blue and White Porcelain	Grace Teng
28 Nov.	What has made Shanghai the city that it has become now	Tess Johnston
12 Dec.	China's changing business and political environment and Nora's family history (Granddaughter of Sun Yat Sen)	Nora Sun
10 Jan.	History of Chinese textiles	Maura March
31 Jan.	Chinese festivals and traditions	Grace Teng
14 Feb.	Shanghai Museum: Chinese bronzes	Zhou Zhi Tsong
28 Feb.	Introduction to Chinese Medicine	Dr. Shao Lei
14 Mar.	Aspects of Love, Sex and Marriage in Imperial China	Lynn Pan
28 Mar.	Introduction to contemporary Chinese art at ShangArt	Lorenz Heibling
18 Apr.	Buddhism	Anne-Cecile Noique
9 May	Chinese porcelain: its influences on the decorative arts of Europe	Anne Haworth
23 May	Current international political issues in China	Graham Earnshaw

Programme: 2001-2002

26 Sep.	Shanghai Museum: Jade collection	Zhou Zhi Tsong
10 Oct.	Introduction to acupuncture	Dr Joseph Yu
24 Oct.	Movie "To Live" producer: Zhang Yimou	(group discussion)
7 Nov.	Strangers Always: a Jewish Family in Wartime Shanghai	Rena Krasno, author
21 Nov.	Introduction to old and antique Chinese rugs	Mr Xu
5 Dec.	Women as object of desire in Chinese paintings	Lynn Pan
9 Jan.	Visit to the Sex Museum	
23 Jan.	18th Century Chinese Jade	Mike Bruhn
6 Feb.	Business and society in China	John Hulpke
27 Feb.	John Zhang: Cultural Revolution and his charity works	John Zhang
6 Mar.	China: Porcelain for the World	Anne Haworth
20 Mar.	Tourism in pre-Liberation days	Peter Hibbard
10 Apr.	Exhibition of post-revolutionary posters	Yang Peiming
24 Apr.	China's Entrepreneurs: Fast Track to the Top or Dead End	Rubert Hoogewerf
8 May	Early development of the Chinese written language	Zhu Jiang
22 May	Chinese Literature of the First 30 Years of the PRC	Dr Richard King

Programme: 2002-2003

25 Sep.	Romance in Modern China	James Farrer, author
9 Oct.	The Kingfisher – The blue feather	Beverly Jackson, author
23 Oct.	Chinese cinema	Maria Barbieri
6 Nov.	China joining what sort of *world?*	*Warren Kinne*
20 Nov.	Walking tour – Jewish Quarter	Georgia Noy
11 Dec.	China AIDS Disaster and Drugs	Peter Goodman, journalist
15 Jan.	Nanjing Massacre: Guardian journalist	John Gittings, journalist
29 Jan.	Shanghai Museum: Ethnic Chinese Dress/Ornaments	Bao Yanli
12 Feb.	Movie and discussion: "The Shower"	(speaker cancelled)
26 Feb.	Three Women Rulers of China: The Empress Wu, The Empress Dowager, Madam Mao	Lynn Pan
5 Mar.	Book Discussion: Shanghai Boy Shanghai Girl - Lives in Parallel	George Wang & Betty Barr, authors
26 Mar.	Chinese Genealogy	Danny Chin
April	Cancelled because of SARS	
7 May	Shanghai: Tale of Four Cities	Lynn Pan
21 May	Shanghai Historical Museum	(at base of TV Tower)

Programme: 2003-2004

15 Oct.	*Leng Hong:* Chinese Artist (now lives in France)	Leng Hong
29 Oct.	Cultural Revolution: *Propaganda posters*	*Linda* Johnson
12 Nov.	Catholic collections: collection from the antique markets	Robert DeWitt
3 Dec.	China law: Developing a legal system	Victor Ho
10 Dec.	Buddhism: Tour of the Longhua Temple	Anne-Cecile Noique
14 Jan.	Historical homes in Shanghai	Yang Pei Ming
28 Jan.	Journalists, the Press and the Chinese Government	Barry Porter
11 Feb.	Chinese Medicine	Dr. Shao Lei
25 Feb.	Jesuit Library and Church	Wang Renfang
10 Mar.	Old Shanghai Architecture	Tess Johnston
24 Mar.	Chinese Paintings: Art of Love	Lynn Pan
7 Apr.	Shanghai Museum: Chinese treasures-famous paintings	Zhou Yanqun
21 Apr.	Betty Barr: Shanghai 1973-75	Betty and George
12 May	Misunderstanding of China: The Pillars of Power	Fons Tuinstra

Programme: 2004-2005

22 Sep.	General Meeting	Sally Willett
29 Sep.	Family Sun (by granddaughter of Sun Yat Sen)	Nora Sun
13 Oct.	Traditional Chinese Medicine – Woman's Health	Doris Rathgeber
27 Oct.	Chinese History – Boxer Rebellion	Doug Spelman
10 Nov.	Expat Woman of Shanghai – 1930s	Anne Warr
24 Nov.	Between Two Worlds – book discussion	George Wang & Betty Barr, authors
8 Dec.	Western Influence on Chinese Porcelain	Marc Malki
19 Jan.	Shanghai Museum: Bronzes	Shanghai Museum
2 Feb.	YWCA Secretary – Shanghai 1920s	Shi Baozhen
16 Feb.	Chinese Education	Wang Huang
2 Mar.	Chinese Film: "To Live"	
16 Mar.	French Art Influence in the 20s-40s	Lynn Pan
6 Apr.	Traditional Chinese Medicine – Diet	Doris Rathgeber
20 Apr.	Visit to Art Scene Warehouse	Lorenz Heibling
11 May	End of Year Luncheon	
25 May	"Roots and Shoots" / Planning Meeting	Tori Zwisler

Programme: 2005-2006

14 Sep.	General Meeting	Sally Willett
28 Sep.	Chinese Porcelain	Marc Malki
12 Oct.	Chinese Values and Identity in Transition	Steve Kulich
26 Oct.	Chinese Home Rebuilding Projects	Mr. Zhou
9 Nov.	Carl Crow (1935 Shanghai maps)	Paul French
23 Nov.	Cultural Sensitivities and the Aesthetics of Traditional Chinese Furniture	Curtis Evarts
7 Dec.	Porcelain – the Stories in the Pictures	Dr. Ni Yibin
18 Jan.	Masterpieces of Painting and Calligraphy	Shanghai Museum
8 Feb.	International issues – China	Graham Earnshaw
22 Feb.	17th Century Jingdezhen Porcelain	Shanghai Museum
8 Mar.	An Insight into Chinese Contemporary Art	Michelle Blumenthal
22 Mar.	Two Writers and Two Marriages in 1930s Shanghai	Lynn Pan
5 Apr.	Canadian documentary: "Paradise for Adventurers"	George Wang
12 Apr.	History of Photography in China	Dennis Crow
19 Apr.	Operation Yao Ming: Inside view of sports politics in China	Brook Larmer, author
10 May	End of Year Luncheon	
24 May	"Half the Sky" Foundation / Planning Meeting	Jeronia Muntaner

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