

Alexander Gamst Page

Language Relations in Guangzhou

The Intimate and Official Dimension of
Linguistic Codes in Urban China

Master's thesis in Social Anthropology

Trondheim, Spring 2011



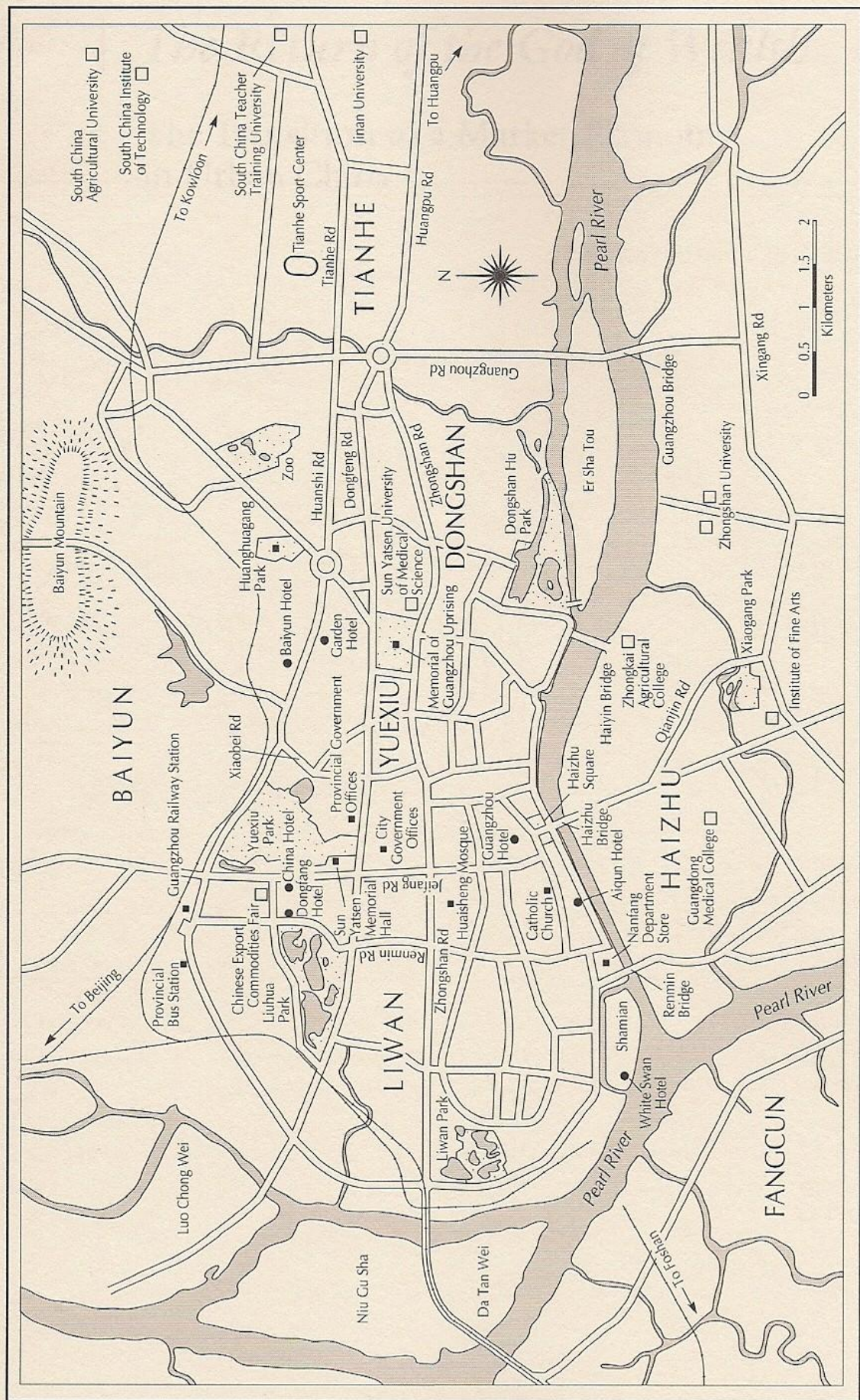


Figure 1: Map of downtown Guangzhou circa 1995, taken from Charlotte Ikels' Map 2 in "Return of the God of Wealth (1996)"

Abstract

This thesis is based on fieldwork conducted in Guangzhou, one of China's major urban areas. The city, as well as the Guangdong province of which Guangzhou is the capital, is associated with the dialect or language called Cantonese, made known in the west through Hong Kong cinema. The national language, Mandarin, is also widely spoken, and the disparity between these two languages are my major focus. Much of my time was spent at Karen's Place, a souvenir shop near the American consulate on the island of Shamian. Here, and elsewhere in Guangzhou, I study how the use of the local and the national languages both affect and are affected by the situation wherein they occur. My argument, while anthropological at core, utilizes much research from sociolinguistics as well as the terminology thereof.

There are nine major language groups in China, and while these are mutually unintelligible, they are nevertheless officially regarded as dialects of Beijing Mandarin. In Guangzhou most people speak both Mandarin and Cantonese, at least to a reasonable standard. My observations suggest that these languages have become hierarchically ranked along two axes, one of respectability, one of intimacy, and so may be said to comprise an official/private division. These axes vary in indirect proportion to each other, so that while Mandarin gives the speaker an air of respectability, Cantonese inspires more empathy. When English is used, such as was often the case in Karen's Place, the linguistic situation is further complicated with the introduction of a third language. The customers at Karen's Place were sorted into categories according to what language they used, which had an impact on the treatment they received. I hold this to be comparable to Sahlins' various levels of reciprocity, as intimacy affects economic behaviour, but must be seen within a framework of *guanxi*, an informal network of reciprocal relationships in Chinese communities.

In many social arenas, language use is situationally determined, for instance, Mandarin should be used in official settings and when addressing police officers and such. Part of this thesis extends beyond Shamian where I discuss the consequences of using the wrong language in a given situation, particularly when one uses the intimate language, Cantonese, in an official situation. This is an example of marked language, i.e. the use of language in a noticeable way attracting attention and eliciting a stronger response than unmarked. Marked language in such cases creates what might be termed cognitive discomfort, which may be resolved with either acceptance or rejection of the marked interaction, which I in turn explain with recourse to Leon Festinger's theory of cognitive dissonance.

Acknowledgements

Man is a social animal whose knowledge is not produced in solitary cogitation, but in interaction with others. Even those who think themselves independent incur debts of gratitude to others in their life, without whom the production of knowledge would be impossible, or difficult at the very least. First and foremost, thanks are owed to all the fine people in Guangzhou who made me part of their lives and without whom this work would, quite literally, be impossible. Thanks are owed to both the University, the department, those who helped finance this study and to the work of those researchers past and present upon whose work I am attempting to build.

Perhaps my greatest debt is to my fellow MA students, as much for moral support as for their intellectual contributions. Having a tightly knit group of people in the same situation has been invaluable for me, and I imagine this holds true for the others as well. I would also like to thank them for their criticism and suggestions when reading extracts, and here Lise Damm Fredriksen deserves special mention, who took the time to read the entire manuscript, and although she did subsequently lose her notes, her time and effort are very much appreciated.

When working on a project such as this, one is in danger of being blind to one's discipline as a whole, becoming lost in one's individual focus and ending up what Max Weber terms "a specialist without spirit". Therefore, I'd also like to thank Lorenzo Cañas Bottos, whose ethnographic reading group provided a welcome diversion.

Special thanks go to Professor Arnulf Kolstad from the psychology department, who not only took time out to listen to a lowly MA student talk about his fieldwork, but also contributed a preliminary draft of an article he was working on.

Last but not least, I'd like to thank Stein Erik Johansen for all his help and guidance.

Some Preliminary Notes on Romanization, Terms and Names

Most Chinese terms used in this thesis are in the Cantonese language, which are rendered into the Roman alphabet using the Yale system. Such Mandarin terms as I use are transcribed using the Hanyu Pinyin romanization, which has now replaced the older Wade-Giles system and is the official Romanized script in China. Some words and place names rendered in the Wade-Giles system are so entrenched that I have kept them. Hong Kong is the most notable of these, as even in mainland China it is written in this way rather than the Pinyin romanization *Xiang Gang*. Sources from the 70s and earlier generally use the Wade-Giles system, so Kwangtung, where Freedman (1971) conducted his fieldwork, is the same place as Guangdong (Pinyin) and Gwóngdung (Yale). Previously, both the Province of Guangdong and its Capitol city of Guangzhou, where this study is based, were called Canton by westerners. When it comes to local conventions, places were often called by their Mandarin names even when speaking Cantonese.

When describing people of East Asian appearance, the term “mongoloid” (one of Mongolian appearance) has acquired an unfortunate pejorative meaning, and I therefore substitute the word “sinoid” (of Chinese appearance).

Chinese names begin with the family name, most often one syllable, and end with the personal name, often two, e.g. Mao Zedong. Here Mao is the family name which is received from the father, and Zedong is the personal name. This may be a source of confusion for westerners. During the early days of the People’s Republic, it was not uncommon for European and American politicians to refer to Mao as “Mr Zedong”. Many Chinese scholars writing for a western audience inverse their names so as to reduce this confusion, for example Yan Yunxiang appears as Yunxiang Yan on his books and articles. This may cause a new level of confusion, as when a name does not follow the one syllable plus two syllable format, it is not always clear if the author has reversed his or her name or not. In those cases where I am unsure, and have been unable to find sufficient biographic material on the author, I assume that the second name is the family name, and cite the author.

It is also very common to take an English name and use the Chinese family name as a surname. Many of my informants use English names, and in these instances I have generally used these, as it was thus those in question introduced themselves, or were introduced, to me.

Language Relations in Guangzhou

The Intimate and Official Dimension of Linguistic Codes in Urban China

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	iv
Chapter 1: Arriving in the Field.....	1
Chapter 2: Fieldwork in Guangzhou	6
Chapter 3: Language and Anthropology	12
Chapter 4: Situational Language and Sociolinguistics.....	30
Chapter 5: Karen's Place	42
Chapter 6: Reciprocity and Linguistic Discrepancy.....	50
Chapter 7: Guanxi	68
Chapter 8: The Entry/Exit Administration Bureau	86
Chapter 9: The Influence of Gender on Linguistic Habits in Guangzhou	90
Chapter 10: The Role of the Unconscious in Determining Action	100
Conclusion	104

Introduction

The various writing systems used in China were gathered into one standard more than two thousand years ago, making Chinese script, *hànzì*, the oldest written system still in use. Nevertheless, the establishment of a spoken national language was far more recent, as until the nineteenth century it was thought to be a futile task (Chen 2008). The standardization of the Chinese spoken language created a linguistic division well known in other societies; that of standard vs. dialect. The impact of language on social groups in China has received very little attention from sinologists, which is unfortunate, not only because of my own argument that it shapes social relations on an interpersonal level, but also because language has played a role in national policies for self-legitimization and modernization. There are any number of books and articles describing Chinese projects of modernization. In recent anthropology these have centred on the perspective of individual actors' projects for constructing the self in relation to an imagined modernity. In reading sinological anthropology, this individualization of modernity seems a ubiquitous phenomenon which manifests in different ways in various arenas in society. To name a few such areas, there have been inquiries into changing household organization (Yan 2009, Ting & Chui 2002), the body (Brownell 2001), sexuality (Rofel 2007), image and entrepreneurship (Jeffrey 2001) as well as any number of other foci too numerous to list. All these accounts describe individuals or groups who create their own conceptions of modernity, and define themselves in accord with, or in opposition to, these concepts. These perspectives present individual strategies, which often come as direct or indirect reactions to state policy.

If the individual strategies are to be understood as personal modernization, the state policies which prompt them are better understood as national strategies of self legitimation in line with Benedict Anderson's *"Imagined Communities (2006)"*. Here the Chinese power holders are attempting to naturalize, not only the idea of China as a bounded nation state, but themselves as the legitimate rulers of it. One of these policies was the standardization of the spoken language at the beginning of the twentieth century (see Chen 2008:205). Before this time, if one was to refer to "Chinese" in the context of language, this would probably be taken to mean the writing system, and not the multitude of linguistic codes used by the people. The writing system was standardised during the Qin dynasty (221 – 206 BC), and has since functioned as a lingua franca. Eventually the speech of Beijing was established as the

national standard *Póutùngwá* (common speech), called Mandarin in the west or simply referred to as “Chinese”. All other tongues spoken within China, comprising nine major families, were defined as dialects of this common speech, regardless of their dissimilarity from it. This fits well with the central argument of Benedict Anderson’s work in that nationalist ideology is dependent on people identifying themselves with common symbols, in this case a standardised language. The role languages play in nationalism may go some way to explain why the number of spoken languages in the world is now continuously falling, being neglected in favour of those such as English, Mandarin and Spanish (Diamond 1997:17).

This thesis is in a sense a study of the effects of this policy, as the relative positions of the variations of Chinese, whether we call them languages or dialects, have become quite hierarchical, something which might well have been the intention. This study grew out of a fieldwork conducted in Guangzhou, from a few weeks prior to the beginning of the year of the tiger (2010) to early May the same year. Guangzhou is the capital city of Guangdong province, and widely accepted as the third largest city in China. It should be noted, however, that due to high numbers of unregistered migrant workers, accurate population figures in Chinese cities are difficult to establish (see Zhang 2001b:201). On older maps using the Wade-Giles romanization, both Guangzhou city and Guangdong province are likely to appear as “Canton”. Guangzhou lies quite close to Hong Kong, about two hours drive inland along the Pearl River delta, and as such has had relatively strong economic ties to Europe even during the periods when China was ostensibly closed (Garrett 1995:73). The people in Guangzhou, and for that matter Hong Kong, speak a dialect known as Cantonese (*Gwóngjàuwá* or *Gwóngdùngwá*), belonging to the Yue family of languages, which is mutually unintelligible with Mandarin. As I was conducting Fieldwork in Guangzhou, I concentrated on learning this local language rather than the national standard, a choice which had a profound impact on how I was received.

This thesis explores how the two languages/dialects are used, by whom, in what situations and the symbolic value with which they are imbued. There is no clear consensus on the difference between language and dialect, so I use the terms interchangeably. Cantonese and Mandarin differ in which situation each is considered appropriate, and the use of one or the other in a given situation will impact how the listener categorises the speaker. Further, the use of the local language in situations which are deemed inappropriate creates incongruence like that which Mary Douglas describes as “cognitive discomfort” (2002:xi). I will suggest ways

Introduction

in which this incongruence may be solved with recourse to Leon Festinger's concept of "Cognitive Dissonance" (see Festinger et al. 1956, Festinger 1957). This is a mechanism for resolving ambiguities between cognitive models and behaviour, of which the classic example has become Aesop's fable "The Fox and the Grapes". This fox, being unable to reach a bunch of grapes hanging from a tree, eventually gives up in disgust, deciding that the grapes were probably sour anyway. Although he initially desired the grapes, he subsequently re-categorised them as something unwanted after finding himself unable to satisfy the desire.

Much of my time in the field was spent on the island of Shamian, which was used by the British as their base of operations from the middle of the nineteenth century, and it retains its somewhat western, colonial atmosphere to this day. The American consulate is presently located on Shamian, which has a great influence on local economy as the Americans comprise a major source of revenue, and it is in the interests of local businesses to cater for them, souvenir shops being an example. The White Swan Hotel is conveniently situated for the consulate and as such is known to American travel agents. Therefore, many Americans who don't have any business at the consulate still stay on Shamian as their travel agents are likely to recommend this hotel. The main part of my fieldwork was conducted on Shamian in a souvenir shop called as Karen's Place, from which one level of my analysis is taken. There I observed the relations between employee and customer, paying special attention to the role of language in defining the social situation. Linguistic discrepancy seemed to influence social behaviour, which was manifested through reciprocity and customer relations in Karen's Place. I observed three different types of customer relations, largely dependent on language, which I analyse using Sahlins' three levels of reciprocity (1972). Language relations were somewhat more complex on Shamian however, due to the prevalence of English. Nevertheless, this section describes "naturally" occurring behaviour, in the sense that the cases that are here described would still have taken place had I not been there.

Another level of analysis arises from the near childlike role many anthropologists attain in the field. As an un-socialized, or at best semi socialised, actor, I made mistakes. Although I had learned some Cantonese, I was by no means fluent, and language proved to be a greater difficulty than I had anticipated. Much of the information which I use in the later part of my argument comes from repeated linguistic faux pas, as I use the wrong language in the wrong situation, causing unforeseen reactions. These other cases describe situations which I myself unwittingly created through these faux pas, although I still hold the reactions created to be

elucidating, as introducing foreign matter into a system may reveal information that would be hard to attain through the “normal” workings of it.

Methodologically, this thesis is based on participant-observation rather than formalised interviews. One of the reasons for this is that interviews invariably proved to be difficult to establish. Typically, after introducing myself and getting to know an individual, I would ask for an interview. The subject would then look slightly taken aback, and ask me what it was I was studying exactly. None I met had the faintest idea what *yàhnleuihhohk* (anthropology) was, which generally prompted long discussions. After a while I would give up and attempt to compromise saying I was a kind of *séwúihohk-ga* (sociologist). This was never accepted, and the would-be subject would answer on the lines of; “*No, no, you said something else before, tell me what you mean*”. Once they began to get a feel for what it actually was I was studying I would get a reply similar to; “*Ah, but then you shouldn’t speak to me, you should go to the villages, that’s where the real China is*”. Interestingly, all those in their forties or older suggested the countryside, whereas those younger often suggested other places, such as museums, as being the repository of the true China. This was, of course, interesting information in its own right, but the end result was that I never got so far as to hold a formal interview, and had to rely on writing down as much of a conversation I could remember whenever I got a moment to myself.

As I discuss the role of language, I should say a little about Cantonese and the foreign speaker. I learned some Cantonese before I went to Guangzhou and by the time I left I had in actuality attained the level of proficiency I believed myself to have before I initially set out. In comparison with European languages it is both more difficult and simple to learn depending on one’s perspective. Its grammar is very easy compared with European languages. The rules for tense are straightforward and verbs aren’t conjugated at all. Pronunciation, however, requires a far greater exactitude, and although the grammar is simple, it has a few elements which are largely unknown in Europe, and take some time to get used to, such as tone and sentence-final particles. Charles Bally (in Bourdieu 1977:1) argues that in a linguistic study, it makes a great deal of difference if one is studying one’s mother tongue or a foreign language, whether one is primarily a speaking subject or a listening subject. As such, I must identify myself as a listening subject, and by no means a speaking one.

Introduction

Rather than attempting a sweeping presentation of all my observations, I have focused on one aspect of social life. There are two dangers associated with this, of which the reader needs to be aware. Firstly, by identifying subtleties in an interaction, drawing them out of their context and focusing on them, it is difficult not to exaggerate them. This is not necessarily a problem, as long as the reader understands what is being done. Often a situation can be quite complex, with several people all doing and saying different things, but then one phenomena catches the anthropologists attention. Whatever this may be, the very act of describing it, and not all other things which are going on, will make them seem more central than they really are. What must be understood is that patterns of behaviour relating to language may well seem more central in my thesis than they were in the daily life of the people being studied. Secondly, by focusing on language and calling upon other aspects of social life to back up my analysis, this may further exacerbate the notion of the centrality of language. Why then have I chosen this focus? The problem of Cantonese vs. Mandarin was not something that was often spoken of, but it seemed to have an impact on social situations, an impact that the anthropology of China seems to have overlooked.

When it comes to informants, the most important were the small group working at Karen's Place, and the people with whom they interacted. These were mainly older men. Outside of Shamian, however, most of my informants were younger women. A trend has arisen in anthropology where "like studies like". By this I mean that female groups tend to get more attention from female anthropologists. There seems to be an assumption that information is gendered and a male anthropologist will not have access to the elusive female world. There may be something in this, although it is truer of some societies than of others, and should not be seen as an absolute for all of anthropology. I encountered little trouble getting to know female informants, and was more likely to be taken aback at their candor than thwarted by their discretion. Like in Suggs' "*A bagful of Locusts and the Baboon woman (2002)*", generation was a greater barrier than gender in information gathering. I feel this disparity in my informants on Shamian and outside should be mentioned as this may have enhanced my impression of Shamian as a separate space.

The first two chapters are introductions to the field, the first telling of my initial reactions, and the second giving a brief history of Shamian island, as well as some information on the city, the province as well as China as a whole.

Language Relations in Guangzhou

In the third chapter, as this thesis is about language, I present a brief history of the study of language in anthropology, both in regards to theoretical framework, and the position it has had in methodology since Malinowski. I then move on to languages in China, and the difficulties involved in defining them as either languages or dialects.

In the fourth chapter, I describe Cantonese and Mandarin in relation to each other, arguing that their uses are situationally determined. This gives them an association with the private and official spheres respectively. Here I introduce the concept I call “movement towards modernity/movement towards traditionalism”, which is a gross simplification, but which I find useful in describing some of the phenomena I encounter. I also introduce the term “markedness” as defined by the sociolinguist Carol Myers-Scotton (1993a, 1993b).

The fifth chapter is more specifically about the shop Karen’s Place, describing the people and their daily lives.

In chapter six, I describe the interaction between workers and customers at Karen’s place, explaining them through a framework based on Marshall Sahlins’ “*Stone Age Economics (1972)*”. Here I argue that aggression in sales technique decreases with social closeness, and that this closeness is in many cases defined by language.

The seventh chapter, as well as the eighth to some extent, expands on the reciprocity debate with recourse to the idiosyncrasies of exchange in Chinese society, for which I retain the Chinese term *guanxi*. Here I return to the idea of markedness, employing it to explain the interplay between language use and *guanxi* relations.

In the eighth chapter I begin by introducing a rather curious case study, and the rest of the chapter is an attempt to explain it. Here I draw on Festinger’s Cognitive Dissonance, the role of gender in China and tie it all in with use of the Cantonese language.

These phenomena I describe seem to be influenced by gender, which is the subject of chapter nine. This chapter is devoted to gender relations in China, and how this ties in with the movement towards modernity/movement towards traditionalism dimension.

Lastly, in the tenth chapter I shall focus on the significance of unconscious processes. As I shall discuss later, the phenomena which constitute the bulk of my argument did not seem to be one of which my informants were aware. This presents both a problem and an opportunity, as I can only present anecdotal evidence to back up my assertions, but it adds a fascinating

Introduction

dimension. If these processes are indeed unconscious, which is what my observations suggest, this says a great deal about their workings. Most importantly, unconscious processes are by definition exempt from conscious control, and would lend credence to my interpretation that the differing treatment is not pragmatic behaviour, but arises from the symbolically charged value of the local language over the national.

Doing Social Science in China

It was only quite recently that sociologists and anthropologists regained access to China after the establishment of the communist government, and it is even more recent that researchers were allowed to perform long-term research on the Han, the ethnic group forming the great majority of the Chinese population. Many anthropologists have described great difficulties during their fieldwork, such as not being allowed to stick to one location more than a fortnight, and being confined to studying minority populations (e.g. Gladney 1998). The social sciences in general do not enjoy a strong position in China, and it was only after the death of Mao that Universities were able to re-establish sociology departments (Barnard & Spencer 1996:95). Social Science was quite a popular study in the 1930s however, when Fei Xiaotong, China's most prominent Sociologist and Anthropologist, was active (Arkush 1981). Fei returned to China in 1938 after receiving his PhD under Malinowski's tutelage. As China was then under Japanese occupation, Fei accepted a professorship in Yunnan Province far to the south-west where the Japanese never reached. The years 1938-48 were a golden age for Chinese sociology, and Fei worked hard to introduce Chinese scholarship internationally. This continued to a lesser degree in the early years of communist rule, but as Russian influence grew, so did the anti-intellectualism of the communist government, and all social science apart from Marxist-Leninist was banned in 1952 (Hamilton & Zheng 1992:9-11).

There has been a distrust of foreign anthropologists, partly because of the old stereotype of the civilised white studying the savage societies of the world (Gladney 1998). No matter how one looks at it, the anthropologist is in a position of power, albeit symbolic. When writing ethnographic material, the writer claims the authority and power to interpret reality, and the Chinese government has preferred to give permission to those fieldworkers who could be relied upon to echo government rhetoric. The monopolization of certain rights in large scale societies, such as the right to administer force, is a well known phenomenon, but in China, and possibly all communist societies, it is taken one step further. The state in fact claims monopoly over its own interpretation (Unger 1993). This is not only from the government's

Language Relations in Guangzhou

side however. Other anthropologists doing fieldwork in China have noted the propensity of informants to preach party politics and to try to convince them of the rightness of government action (Rofel 1999). There is a Mandarin term for this, *Sixiang Gongsuo* (Mind Work) although I didn't encounter a Cantonese equivalent of this term.

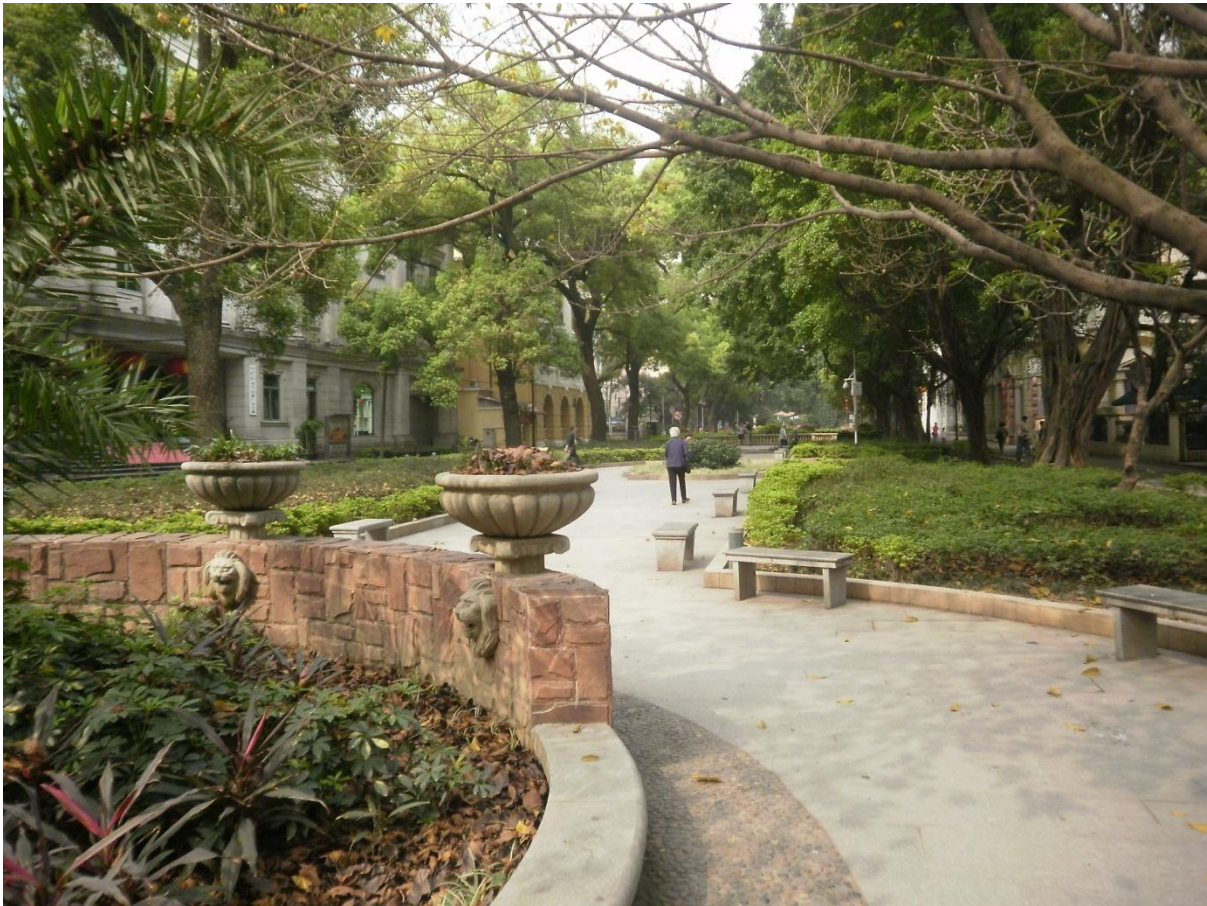


Figure 2: Shamian Dajie 27.02.2010

Chapter 1: Arriving in the Field

The first thing I noticed about Shamian was the smell. I had arrived after dark the previous evening, jetlagged and exhausted, in no frame of mind to begin exploring. After what I can only describe as a spectacularly unsuccessful attempt at conversation with the bellboy, I had simply fallen into the hotel bed and gone to sleep. The next day I was up bright and early with my notebook, pencil and voice recorder in a leather shoulder bag, and set out to see the place I would be spending the next few months. The smell was strangely chemical, though not unpleasant, ubiquitous without being overbearing, a curious olfactory sensation which has ever afterwards been my most vivid memory of the island. It was strongest near the trenches dug by the workers in the roads, exposing the water lines, for it came in fact from the chemicals put into the drinking water, although I didn't realize this at the time.

The whole island was under renovation, which was the reason for the roads being dug up. Shamian, as a popular area for foreign visitors is by way of being one of the city's faces to the outside world, and was to be rejuvenated for the anticipated Asian Games, to some extent an answer to the Olympic Games, which in 2010 was being held in Guangzhou. Everywhere was the sounds of renovation work. The walls of the buildings were covered in steel and bamboo scaffoldings and green mesh. There are three main roads running the length of the island parallel to each other, whereof *Shamian Dajie*, the middle road, is more of a promenade incorporating Shamian Park and Friendship Park. These parks are places where people congregate to speak with each other or exercise. The youngsters generally played badminton and *jie zi*, a game similar to shuttlecock. Older residents were more likely to perform *taijiquan* sets or *qigong* exercises.

This was one of the few parts of town where one could walk, to paraphrase Clifford Geertz, like a "spectre, a nonperson, an invisible man". It would go too far to say that the place was filled with foreigners, but they were by no means an uncommon sight. It stood in stark contrast to the poorer neighbourhoods where people would stop and stare, and small children would point and whisper "*Gwailou*", a quasi-derogatory term for foreigner. As the island was home to the American consulate, many Americans were staying here during the final stages of the adoption process. It was also a typical place to stay for adults who had been adopted and were "rediscovering their roots". There were numerous souvenir shops and restaurants catering for the western tastes of the visitors. Many of the shops had names like "Jenny's Place", "Karen's Place", and there was a restaurant bar called "Lucy's".

It was mostly accidental that I happened into the small shop. I was walking along one of the roads on Shamian, my mind on other matters, and before I knew it stood in front of the entrance to the American consulate. The soldier on watch, not unkindly, stepped forward and directed me to leave, pushing me gently but firmly onto a path away to his right. This brought me into a car park, at the far end of which stood a small shop. Most of the buildings on Shamian were built in a colonial style and lined the three main roads, but this was a newer building in the more Chinese style including a walled courtyard behind the main structure. A large sign over the door boasted a lengthy list of services;

"Good Laundry Service, Free Internet, Free Stroller usage, Small Bottle Inside Handpainting, Carving in the Stone (Chop Stamp), Charcoal Drawing, Picture Engraving, Chinese Painting, Old Painting Restored, Portraits. **KAREN's PLACE** (One Big Gift Store), Artwork Silk Tailor, Tea."

Chapter 1: Arriving in the Field

Inside, opposite the front door, was the counter, behind which was a woman in her middle to late thirties painting Chinese characters on a slip of red paper with a calligraphy brush. She greeted me in English and asked my name. We spoke a little, but my attempts at Cantonese only confused her, so I gave up. I was beginning to wonder if all the time I had spent “learning” Cantonese was wasted, since I was apparently unable to make myself understood. At this point a man came in from the back room, and walked up to me. “Hello, how are you doing?” he said, and proceeded to show me what felt like every item in his shop, suggesting that I buy it. He was near impossible to deter, even going so far as to argue when I said that a dress he was showing me wouldn’t fit my daughter, whom he had of course never seen. “I think it will fit, and if not, just buy the biggest one and you can get a tailor to fix it when you get home”. If I was steadfast in my refusal to buy something, he would just find something else to show me. In the end he had induced me to buy a large number of articles, which we lay to one side. At this point he was satisfied for the time being, and invited me to have tea with him.

To one side of the door was a tea table. We sat down and the man introduced himself as Deng. He asked me where I was from, what I was doing and so on. I tried again to speak Cantonese, still to no avail. He asked me to repeat what I was trying to say, and after the third time he lit up.

- Oh, you’re speaking in Gwóngjàuwá!?! You speak very well”
- Thank you, but I don’t think so. I’ve spoken to several people, and no one has been able to understand me, so I can’t be speaking very well.
- Your sound (pronunciation) could be better, but if I had known you were speaking Gwóngjàuwá, I would have understood you. Why are you learning Gwóngjàuwá?
- Because I’m in Guangzhou, and that’s what Guangzhou people speak.
- Yes, but if you learn Gwóngjàuwá, you can only speak to People in this city. If you learn Mandarin, you can speak in the whole of China.

Although we were sitting down having tea, the salesmanship hadn’t stopped. Among my newly acquired goods was a tea set, and as we sat there speaking, he managed to add little accessories as well as an extra teapot, as one should not use the same pot for green and black teas. After about two hours of conversation, it was time to leave. He wrapped up my purchases, saying “I’ll make a special price for you”, and suggested I came back the next day so that I could learn how to play *Jeuhng Kei*, a Chinese board game related to western chess. When adding up the price tags on my purchases, I discovered he had in fact given me a

substantial discount, over a hundred Yuan¹, which is quite generous considering two thousand Yuan is a standard monthly wage. After what Deng had said, I was beginning to think that he was right, and that I had made a mistake in not studying Mandarin. I wasn't aware of it at the time, but this was one of my first encounters with the symbolic power that Cantonese seems to have, although I was quite intrigued by the idea that I had not been understood so far because people assumed I was speaking Mandarin atrociously rather than merely Cantonese quite badly. It was the first time I began to wonder if it was possible that Cantonese was associated with the intimate sphere, that the idea of an outsider speaking it was difficult to grasp. A great many encounters over the course of the fieldwork solidified this notion, some of which will be presented throughout my thesis.

¹ During my fieldwork one Yuan was worth 89 øre, so a hundred Yuan would be 89 Norwegian Kroner.

Chapter 2: Fieldwork in Guangzhou

I had originally intended a project on the place of traditional bodily cultivation practices in present day China. Although language was not my main focus when I set out, my interest lay in urban, modernized areas, and as such, Guangzhou provided a nice balance of suitability and interest. Guangzhou is the third largest city in the country, but has not had much attention from anthropologists. Mostly, those researchers in the Pearl River Delta have focused on Hong Kong (e.g. Ikels 1986, Constable 1997). Population wise, most residents estimated about ten, twelve or fifteen million, although they agreed that the true number may be difficult to gauge. In 2009, the statistics bureaux of Guangzhou gave the number as just under ten million, with eight and a half having official registration. These are the permanent population numbers however. Zhang Li in 2001 wrote that the number of migrant workers in such areas is much larger than official figures, and that in some places, the population may be enhanced as much as a third by unregistered migrant workers, the so-called “Floating Population”. Such workers may be crucial, however, to keep the industrial wheels turning as rapidly as they do. Migrant workers may be used in factories for a year or two, working at a pace impossible to keep up in the long run, and then replaced (See Ngai 2005). Guangzhou is the centre of production in the Pearl River delta and principle city in Guangdong, the most economically successful province and the most populous. Its proximity to Hong Kong (about 120km) was also an incentive for me to choose this city.

There is a rather stark rural/urban divide in China, which has arguably decreased these past twenty years or so, but is still quite marked. This is partly because of the *hukou* system, a household registration which restricts permanent migration and is difficult to alter. This was initiated to limit migration from rural areas into urban, although this system has undergone several reforms since its introduction (see Wang 2004). One’s *hukou* classifies one as being either a rural or an urban person, whereof the urban is a far more desired state of being, but changing from a rural classification is prohibitively expensive. Another way in which this divide is maintained is the different policies in place for rural and urban populations, such as how the One-Child Policy is implemented. Benefits, such as health-care have also been divided when along the same divide, although with shifting emphasis. By this I mean that the Guomindang government gave preference to urbanites, which prompted Mao in 1965 to claim that the Directive on Public Health should be renamed the Directive of Urban

Gentlemen's Health. At this time, at least in theory, the socialist government shifted their emphasis onto the peasants, giving rise to the "barefoot doctors", sent from the cities into the countryside to improve public health (Chen 2001:172). Thus, when one is reading ethnography on China, one of the most important things to know, which will almost always be in the title of the work, is whether it is based in a city or a village. One might argue that there will always be a division between these categories, but it appears to have been exacerbated by the policies implemented in post-dynastic times.

Household Organization

When speaking of household organization, there is a tendency to contrast traditional to modern patterns, with the underlying implication that modern to some extent equals westernized. In this context, however, I wish to avoid using the word "traditional", as it implies an inviolate practice or belief that has existed unchanged for a period of time. It also carries with it a moral dimension of the past legitimizing future practice as the very word implies something that should continue to exist simply by virtue of it having existed before. Thus, to differentiate between traditional and modern, when referring to household organization for example, would firstly give a suggestion that the society would have been in stasis if not for western influence, as well as an impression that any change brings us away from an imagined pure state. The study of "traditional" household registration has another difficulty, namely that many people quite simply don't organize themselves the way they themselves claim (Holy & Stuchlik 2006:164-5). Freedman's *"Chinese Lineage and Society (1971)"* is based on fieldwork gathered in Guangdong in the sixties, and while it naturally is completely out of date when describing current trends, it describes very closely what many people claimed to be the common family structure, i.e. patriarchal extended families based around the "cult of descent".

My findings were that for young people, living with their parents was the norm. This was not justified by any reference to filial piety, however, and the most common reasons given were economic. Thus, what might be termed traditional household organization did not die out entirely, but has become more rationalistic in nature (see King 1996, Salaff 1981 and Lau 1981). These three writers describe different areas of social life where households are organized in extended families, not because of filial piety, but for pragmatic concerns. Most jobs which do not require special training or education pay about 2000 Yuan a month, so most young people are not able to support themselves. For that matter, many families are

Chapter 2: Fieldwork in Guangzhou

unable to make ends meet without their children taking part-time jobs and pooling their wages with the parents' incomes, so the parents have a clear vested interest in keeping their children at home (Ting & Chiu 2002). Nearly all my unmarried informants did this, but also expressed a wish to live by themselves, to be free to do as they pleased without parental supervision. The father as a strong disciplinary presence has been severely reduced these past few decades, and has become a figure of indulgence and affection rather than discipline (see Ting & Chiu 2002, Yan 2009), and only in one family I encountered was the father a stern figure of discipline.

Climate and Geology

Guangzhou sits on the Pearl River delta, a short distance inland from Hong Kong and Macao. Much of the year it is brutally hot with daytime temperatures over 30°C, which the high level of humidity makes virtually unbearable. The humid air combined with the extreme pollution means that the city is permanently shrouded in mist. I was an entire week into my fieldwork when I first saw the sun. In Tianhe district, where I lived during the second part of my fieldwork, there were many days where the tops of the highest buildings could not be seen from the street. The south-east provinces of China are noted for being flat, which is reflected in their names, Guangdong: Eastern Expanse and Guangxi: Western Expanse. The two provinces are jointly known as the two Guangs. Apart from a few areas, such as Yuexiu Park, the city is remarkably level. The highest point near the city is Baiyun (White Cloud) mountain, which I suspect does not actually meet the requirements to be classified as more than a hill, a view I didn't dare advance, but which one informant volunteered unprompted.



Figure 3: the city seen from the top of Baiyun Mountain 28.02.2010

Language Relations in Guangzhou

Like most major cities in China, the great majority of the population are Han Chinese, the dominant ethnic group in China which in 1990 made up about 91% of the nation's population (Jankowiak 2008:95). There are some 56 *shoushu minzu* (minority nations) in China, although this number has been revised several times as some groups have applied for minority status or in some cases applied to be counted as part of the Han majority. There are certain rights associated with belonging to a recognized minority, such as exemption from birth restrictions and some affirmative action policies, but this often comes at the expense of stigmatization (See Gladney 1994). The Hui are the largest minority nationality in Guangzhou, and could be seen all over the city peddling foodstuffs from specially outfitted carts. Almost all my informants were Han, at least allegedly. There was a Tibetan coffee shop near to where I lived, where the owner claimed to be Tibetan, but I suspect he was in fact Han. In recent years, the Tibetan minority identity has become something of a draw for tourists, and it is not unheard of for Han to claim to be Tibetan (see Kolås 2005).

Names

When it comes to names, as previously mentioned, the Chinese often choose a western soubriquet that they use in addition to their given names. Most often, this is a linguistic division. They will use their Chinese name when speaking Chinese, their English name when speaking English. Although there are youths who exclusively use their English names, these are in a minority and generally, the given names are used when speaking Chinese. Such well known Chinese celebrities as Jackie Chan and Raymond Chow are known as Chan Kong-Sang and Chow Man-Wai in Guangzhou, and many people won't recognize their western names at all, although I imagine this is different in Hong Kong. According to one of my informants:

“Of Course, when you learn English, you must take an English name. If you don't, how can you speak English? English people should take a Chinese name when learning Chinese too.”

It has previously been quite common for one person to go by different names, and to change them at important junctures of their lives, something which adds an extra degree of confusion to studying Chinese history. In one of our historical discussions for instance, one of the older men on Shamian used the names Guan Yu and Guanfa about the same individual interchangeably. Another example is Sun Yat Sen, who was an early nationalist associated with Guangzhou, although less closely than most people there implied. He is known only as Sun Yat Sen in western media, but goes by several monikers in China, most commonly

Zhongshan. The practice of taking a western name when learning English, or when travelling to western countries for the first time, may be seen as a continuation of this custom. There were several variations I encountered. Some people merely took a name they liked the sound of, taking them from celebrities, characters in films or just ones they have heard. One girl I met was given one from her mother. When in her teens, she went to visit America, and got a passport for the first time. Her mother said she could not have a Chinese name on her passport if she was going to America, so her mother simply made one up which she thought rather uncommon and interesting. This is something I heard quite often, that people said they chose their names because they are uncommon. Another variant I encountered was choosing the name of a character in a film, not because of the name itself, but because she looked up to the character, and wished to emulate her. Karen, one of the owners of Karen's Place, was given her name by her English teacher, as he couldn't pronounce her Chinese name.

“My English teacher was a foreigner, and he could not say our Chinese names. He had special trouble with mine, so he gave me the name [Karen]. He thought that was what my name most sounded like.”

The Two Guangs as Separate Place

Guangdong and Guangxi provinces are collectively associated with the Cantonese dialect, called *Gwóngjàuwá* (Guangzhou speech) or *Gwóngdùngwá* (Guangdong speech). These two words are used interchangeably, which implies that the language is peculiar both to the province and the city. As both these were called Canton in the west, the English translation “Cantonese” encapsulates both these meanings. Although it is officially considered to be a dialect, it belongs to the Yue linguistic family, and is mutually unintelligible with Mandarin (*Póutùngwá*). Mary Erbaugh (1995) claims that 2000 years of unified language in the form of script makes any dis-unification of language seem threatening, although the People's Republic was less strict than the Guomindang government, as they adopted the Japanese model, and so dialect-Mandarin bilingualism has generally been tolerated. There was never a policy in schools that those using languages other than Mandarin should be punished, like that which the Norwegian government implemented on the Sami population, but Children were to be strongly encouraged to learn and use Mandarin (Ikels 1996).

The Mausoleum of Zhou Mei, the second king of Nanyue, is a major tourist attraction in Guangzhou, and a source of much pride. Although any history textbook gives specific dates for the end of one dynasty and the beginning of the next, the process of a new imperial force

conquering the land was actually more gradual than this. After the fall of the Qin dynasty in 206 B.C. it took a few generations for the Han government to gain control over what is now Guangdong and Guangxi provinces. During the years 204 – 111 B.C. the city of Guangzhou was the Capitol of the Nanyue Kingdom, which lasted for five generations of rulers before it was incorporated into the Han Empire. Although local historical markers and material available at the Mausoleum claim that Han forces conquered the Nanyue Kingdom in an unprovoked act of aggression, other sources (Twitchett & Loewe 1986) hold that Nanyue in fact started the conflict. This was the strongest indication other than linguistic I found of a Cantonese identity differentiated from the National.

Shamian Past and Present

The island seen as a business arena balances a number of elements. There are amenities for visiting foreigners in the form of shops, restaurants, massage parlours etc. On the other hand there are also many local people living on the island who have to be catered for. It is widely known that elements of Chinese culture, such as food, are heavily altered when it is intended for western consumption. The daily life on Shamian must balance these issues, remaining Chinese enough for local inhabitants, but still marketable for western consumers.

Although the first of the large-scale British residence along the Pearl River was the Thirteen Factories on the island of Honam, this was never intended to be a permanent arrangement. In keeping with Britain's increased power in the region, the acting governor, Sir Henry Parkes, wished for an area somewhat secluded from the locals, yet close to the city. In 1859, the acting governor leased a sandbar on the river which became the artificial island of Shamian. According to Valerie Garrett, one of the reasons why the British chose this spot was that it catches a breeze from Macau which creates a microclimate slightly more temperate than the surroundings (1995:125). It should be noted, however, that another historian (Roberts 2006:164) writes that the British were forced to abandon the Thirteen Factories after drunken English sailors murdered a Chinese farmer, a version not recounted in Garrett's book. In any case, by 1862 the construction of the island was finished, and the English moved in. The island is about 900 metres long and 300 wide. It was separated from the western suburbs, now the Liwan district, by a narrow canal. Two gated bridges spanned the canal, one which led to the British part of the island, one to the French, as France had been given a portion of Shamian for their previous military assistance, although this section remained unoccupied

until 1889. To the southeast and southwest the Pearl River separates the island from Haizu and Fangcun districts respectively (Garrett 1995:125-8).

Today the island has been swallowed up by urban spread and is near the centre of the city. The bridges are no longer gated, but the one that was still open (the other being closed for renovation) had a police guard post on it, and they presumably stopped beggars and street hawkers as there were none to see on the Shamian side of the canal. The air on the island does in fact feel slightly cleaner and cooler than the rest of the city, which contributes to its feeling of isolation, as does the colonial architecture and abundant greenery which contrasts with the rest of Guangzhou.

History and Body Techniques

Much of the conversation on Shamian was about history. With many of the older inhabitants of Shamian, knowledge about history was tantamount to being a requirement for conversing with them. Yan also notes this, and in a few cases supposes that the historical period discussed may serve as a metaphor for the context of conversation (2009:184-5). With older, I mean those old enough to remember Mao's China. There is a very marked generational gap between those who remember the Cultural Revolution, and those who don't. This is very visible in Chinese cinema (Clarke 2008) and arts (Berry 2008) by the sharp change in style found in the first generation of artists who had no personal knowledge of this period. Deng was a child when the villages were decollectivized (1978-1987), and so only just makes it into the "old" category. One indicator for the Chinese importance of history is their emphasis on time rather than space. Most of their major events are known by the date on which it happened, such as the May 4th movement, the September 18th incident, the April 5th incident as well as the June 4th incident. The generational gap is most noticeable when it comes to the way people of different ages use their bodies, for which I employ Marcel Mauss' term "body techniques (1979)".

When I first arrived in the field, I noted a clear distinction in the way different people walked, gestured, stood and moved. There seemed to be a clear correlation here based on age, with little to no anomalies, so the basis for claiming it to relate to generation seems to me strong. If this was further studied, I expect to find three generations, the first consisting of those born after the end of the Mao era, or Mao dynasty as it is often called. The other categories would be those who are old enough to remember the Mao regime, and those old enough to have participated in it actively. Karen, Deng and Lee belong to the middle category, as they all

remember the collectivized villages, but were not yet of working age. Susan Brownell (1995:9) describes something quite similar. She writes that those over the age of 28 walk back on their heels with shoulders rounded and pressed forward, but those younger walk in a more western manner. She offers two possible explanations. First she suggests that the explanation might be the practice of martial arts, although this is doubtful, since the martial arts she describes with rounded shoulders and low centre of gravity is typical of the southern systems, whereas she was in the north. Also, this explanation would require that all over 28 years have practiced martial arts extensively enough to have had a lasting impact on their body techniques, but no one younger. Her second explanation seems far more credible, and that is that the “Down to the countryside” policy is responsible. As she wrote in 1995, and placed the generational gap at late twenties, this fits well with my observation fifteen years later of the gap being at middle to late forties.

Mauss (1979) calls these unconscious habits of the body by the Latin phrase “habitus”, a phrase which has been developed further by Bourdieu (1977) and is more associated with him. Bourdieu expands the notion of habitus beyond the physical in order to explain the somewhat paradoxical notion that there may be such a thing as individual strategy when there are structures in the social world influencing these strategies. The peculiarities of an environment create certain structured dispositions within the individual, without the necessity of any conscious obedience to expressed rules. In the case of Brownell (1995), she theorized that the gait she observed was created by carrying heavy objects around by means of a pole across one’s shoulders, and while it is need not be stated that one *has* to alter one’s gait for this, it happens automatically, and in Bourdieu’s terms, creates a lasting disposition to continue it. As I was increasingly acclimatized to the field, I ceased to notice these body techniques, and I only became aware of them towards the end of the fieldwork when I reread my earliest notes. Although I became aware at an intellectual level that I had acclimatized my bodily techniques to the field to some degree, this was not brought home fully until I returned to Norway and found the way people there moved every bit as alien as I had initially found the Chinese.

Much of the discourse within the mind/body debate has to do with the idea that the division of these categories is a human construct. Just as those sensations we tend to think of as primarily physical are interpreted, influenced and often partly created by the mind, so is the mind bound to the body. The Cartesian division has thus been much criticised in this discourse (e.g. Merleau-Ponty 2002). The conclusion generally drawn is that mind and body,

Chapter 2: Fieldwork in Guangzhou

in the context of the self divided are, in the Kantian (1999) sense, analytic judgements, that is, judgements springing from human categorization, not from objective truth. The body must be contextualized in order to be transformed into a fruitful area of discussion (see Mauss 1979, Lambek 2006), and Henrietta Moore (2006) claims that all anthropology functions through a continuous process of contextualization. In order for some entity to be emphasized, another must be pushed into the background, and thus is the foreground reified against this background. If we accept the idea that mind and body are not absolutely distinct, but influence each other in any number of ways, then it follows that the epistemology of the body cannot be attained without recourse to the body. There is a field method, or rather a mnemonic device, based on this principle. Here one imitates the movements, postures or action one was engaged in when gathering data so as to stimulate the memory of the event (See Frank 2006 who uses this actively).

Chapter 3: Language and Anthropology

As this thesis is largely about language, I wish to discuss the history of language studies, and how they have been incorporated within the social sciences. Anthropology has long had a close relationship with linguistics, having a common root in the 19th century scholarly tradition. 19th century anthropologists studied “primitive” languages, claiming that they were indicative of ancient kinship structure (see Morgan 1871). It was arguably Boas who introduced Linguistics into mainstream anthropology by showing that languages, races and cultures were independent of each other, thus singling out language as something worthy of study in its own right, not merely another indicator of a society’s backwardness (Barnard 2000). Linguistics took on a new dimension with the advent of Chomsky’s Generative linguistic models, which inspired such directions as Structuralism and Cognitive Anthropology as well as the impact within its own discipline. Although Boas singled language out from culture, thus demonstrating that it was indeed something worthy of scholarly attention, Chomsky (1957), by attempting to establish universal rules for the generation of grammar, was the first to abstract language, giving us the tools with which it *could* be studied. Probably the most famous example of interplay between anthropology and linguistics the way in which Saussure (1959, 2006), probably the 19th century’s most influential linguist, interpreted linguistics as the study of signs, which he called semiology, and the subsequent implementation of this semiology into Lévi-Strauss’ structuralism (1968). In this way, linguistic study was separated out from culture, and abstracted from its context, only to be reintegrated into the study of societies. Bourdieu criticises the structuralist school, but is also influenced by them. He followed the work of Lévi-Strauss closely, and became only gradually dissatisfied with his methods. Bourdieu criticises not just the specifics of Saussure’s theory, but also more generally the Saussurian influence on the Social Sciences (Thompson 1991).

In the latter half twentieth century, anthropological theories focusing on language have tended to follow a cognitive model. The argument put forward by advocates of this perspective is that the structure of a given language directly affects the cogitation of the speaker, leading to the controversial discussion on Linguistic Determinism (see Spender 1985). This seems to me to have a near relationship with Watson’s (1930) and Skinner’s (1957) behaviourism, because if we accept thought as merely “laryngeal habits” or sub-

vocalized speech, then we must also accept that only that which may be formulated verbally may be thought. This perspective is generally known as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. Although Sapir did not explicitly ascribe to this position and Whorf may not actually have formulated it, the latter's study of Hopi language (1956) remains the classic example of the hypothesis. Although the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis relates to language as a whole, both vocabulary and grammar, the primary investigative technique has been through colour terms. Brent Berlin and Paul Kay demonstrated that there was a high level of cross-cultural agreement about these terms in their classic work "*Basic Color terms (1969)*".

Although their study showed much variance when it came to, for example, where the dividing line between red and yellow went, there was remarkable agreement as to what shade was the most ideally red or the most ideally yellow, which they called the "focal point" of a given colour. Thus, taking a colour as being represented by this focal point, it appeared quite clear that societies operated with the same basic categories. A more surprising discovery of this study was that there appeared to be a fixed progression in how colour terms were introduced into a language, something called evolutionary sequencing. If the language of a given society has two colour terms, these would always be black and white, extended to include all light vs. all dark shades. If a language had three terms, the third would always be red and so on. Interestingly, Cantonese is among the five exceptions they list, as it has only eight colour categories, but is grouped in a category where it "should" have nine (Berlin & Kay 1969:21). As Berlin & Kay's informants were bilingual, their research was accused of being essentially flawed. When attempting to correct this with later works, they discovered that their proposed evolutionary sequence seemed in essence valid, but somewhat more complex than that proposed in "*Basic Color Terms*" (D'Andrade 1995:110). However, the arguments of some vision experts may cast doubt over the assumption that colour terms are the best way of assessing epistemological relativism (De Valois & De Valois 1993). They argue that various colour terms stem from the physiological act of perception. This is somewhat borne out by Eleanor Rosch (1978) who showed that people who do not have terms for what we might term the primary colours still remember them better than the secondary colours. However, though the findings of Berlin & Kay were and are questioned, their contribution served to end epistemological relativism as a major discussion within anthropology (Barnard & Spencer 1996:724).

In its strict manifestation, the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis was an example of extreme relativism, and it is probably due to its uncompromising nature that it did not stand up to cross-cultural

research. A softer version resurfaced during the 1980s, suggesting that language influences rather than determines cogitation, a supposition which seems to be more resilient to cross-cultural testing (e.g. Lucy 1992). On the other hand it is possible that the whole supposition derives from a wish for symmetry. It may be natural to assume that the world of words and the world of things be directly relatable like mirror images of each other. It may be that, to quote Bloch's, words do not relate directly to things, but are "...instead small networks of typical understandings and practices concerning the world (2006:290)". The question the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis attempts to answer is whether we are defined by our language. In the case of China, is the Chinese language a function of societal idiosyncrasies or are these qualities created by the language itself? These perspectives which have dominated anthropological study of language are not well suited to describe these phenomena I encounter. There are in fact surprisingly few who have written on the impact of language in determining the situation for a given interaction, and it appears that none have done so in a comparable setting. These phenomena I describe seem to have been the purview of sociolinguistics, which is a somewhat recent interdisciplinary field combining language studies with sociology. Its main focus has been to add an explanatory element to linguistics in order to show why, for example, people of different social classes speak differently, or why a speaker chooses a given word, when there were others that could have been used instead (see Coulmas 2005).

Language and Methodology

Another anthropological focus when it comes to language has been methodological. Malinowski (1961) went so far as to demand that the researcher be fluent in the language of his informants. Although some scholars do question how imperative Linguistic skills are, arguing that one may get by just fine using an interpreter (Borchgrevink 2003), they do agree that if one is able, speaking the local language is preferable to not speaking it. However, we must not get too invested in the idea of speaking, when we know that much human communication is non verbal. Thus the language used in a society also includes its own set of gestures, postures, facial expressions which must be learned just as surely as the spoken language if one is to be said to know a language, and may often take much longer as this code is often more complex than the explicit. In linguistic terms, "code" generally refers to spoken language, i.e. phonological patterns and syntactic differentiation (see Bernstein 1971), but here I use it in a somewhat expanded sense.

Although I had spent some time learning Cantonese, I was by no means fluent and it took me quite some time to become acclimatized enough to use what little I had. I did wonder at times whether my informants were correct and that I was a fool for not studying Mandarin, which is more widely spoken as well as being easier to learn. Nevertheless, I very much doubt whether I would have received the same acceptance in the field as I did had I used Mandarin. Thus, I would partly take issue with Malinowski, partly agree with him. Fluency is too ambitious a demand, and probably reflects the fact that Malinowski himself had a gift for languages, and like many such people failed to understand that the ease they experience is not universal. Personally, I could conduct simple to intermediate conversations, but could not detect all the subtleties going on around me. Nevertheless, I found that knowing some of the local language was invaluable for the acceptance I got simply for trying to speak it.

Languages in China

There are nine major dialects of Chinese; Mandarin, Jin, Yue, Wu, Hui, Xiang, Gan, Min and Kejia or Hakka, all of which are different enough to be considered mutually unintelligible. In China it is common to differentiate between meta-dialects (*fōngyìhn*) and local dialect (*búndei hwá*). In this case, Cantonese is a subset of the Yue dialect. During the Qin Dynasty (221 BC – 206 BC), the written language was standardized, allowing it to function as a lingua franca for more than two thousand years. It was not until they were inspired by the Meiji Restoration in Japan (AD 1868) that the then incumbent Manchu government attempted to standardize the spoken language as well. The initial attempt, *Lao Guojin*, was a constructed language much like Esperanto, and was not a success. It was for the most part only used by government officials, earning it the name *Guanhua*, or “language of the mandarins”. Later, when the Beijing dialect was made into the official national language, the name “Mandarin” derived from this older “language of the mandarins” (Chen 2008).

There is no real, universally accepted definition of what separates language from dialect (Coulmas 2005 p.21). An oft-cited aphorism generally attributed to Max Weinreich, states that “*A language is a dialect with an army and a navy*”. Which is the standard and which is the dialect is indicative of socio-political reality rather than linguistic. This phenomenon is found in any language with a significant number of speakers, but the case of Chinese where a number of unintelligible languages are established as subordinate dialects of another is a rather extreme example. There are obvious socio-political upshots to this. Treating all these mutually unintelligible tongues as dialects of a single language is done to emphasise the unity

of the Chinese nation, in Anderson’s (2006) terms, to create an imagined community of one people, with one culture, speaking one language.

Distribution of the Chinese Language

Name	Approximate Number of Speakers (in Millions)	Major Areas
Mandarin	660	
Beijing Mandarin		Beijing
North-eastern Mandarin		Heilongjiang, Jilin, Liaoning
Jiao-Liao Mandarin		Shandong, Liaoning
Ji-Lu Mandarin		Hebei, Shandong
Central Plains Mandarin		Henan, Shaanxi, Shandong
Lan-Yin Mandarin		Gansu, Ningxia
South-eastern Mandarin		Sichuan, Yunnan, Guizhou
Jiang-Huai Mandarin		Jiangsu, Anhui, Hubei
Jin	45	Shanxi
Wu	70	Shanghai, Southern Jiangsu, Zhejiang
Hui	32	Southern Anhui
Xiang	25	Hunan
Gan	40	Jiangxi
Kejia (Hakka)	40	Guangdong, Fujian, Jiangxi
Yue (Cantonese)	62*	Guangdong, Guangxi, Hong Kong
Min	60	Fujian, Guangdong, Hainan, Taiwan

*This is the distribution within China. Many overseas Chinese people are Cantonese speakers.

Figure 4: adapted from Ping Chen’s Table 1. in *“Languages in Modernizing China (2008:199)”*

My thesis deals with those inhabitants of Guangzhou, primarily on Shamian, who for the most part speak both the official language and the local language. It is difficult to determine exactly how large a portion of the population this is, however. The number of migrant workers in such areas is much larger than official figures, and that in some places, the population may be enhanced as much as a third over the official statistics (Li 2001). Guangdong Province is estimated to have a high level of such unregistered migrants. These people often do not speak Cantonese, nor of course do the registered out-of-towners. The

average person on the street, however, does speak both languages, at least in most areas of the city. In places like the Tianhe district and University Town, there is a higher concentration of people from other countries and other parts of China. Shamian is an interesting middle position as out-of-towners are generally Caucasian foreigners and thus visually discernable, although a few whom I met were American but of Chinese ancestry. Most Chinese people on Shamian are in fact local. Older citizens are less likely to speak Mandarin, but there seems to be little attempt to accommodate them. On the subway train, or Mass Transit Railway (MTR), announcements are given in Mandarin and English, but not Cantonese. I once saw two middle-aged women on the train, laughing at the Mandarin announcer, repeating what was said in tones of mock formality. It is not clear if we can deal with Guangzhou as a bilingual community, as the degree of fluidity in Mandarin is not uniform. Some have a balanced level of skill in both languages, some have a slight predominance in one or the other, and still others have a marked predominance. Jacobsen (1996) argues that such differences in linguistic competence will have consequences for identity construction and allegiances. Most of my informants are, however, fully fluent in both languages, and thus, while it would be too simplistic to describe Guangzhou as a bilingual community, a visitor there will encounter bilingual situations regularly.

Both Cantonese and Mandarin are tone languages, meaning that the same word said in a different tone or pitch alters its meaning. While Mandarin has four such tones, Cantonese has six, arguably nine, and as such is considered much more difficult to learn. These are mid level, high level, low level, high rising, low rising and low falling, and are Romanized using a system of accents and ending a word with a silent “h” to indicate the low tones. Thus, the tone is the only thing differentiating *móu* (hat), *mouh* (fog) and *móuh* (doesn't have) from each other. Such information as is often communicated through tone in European languages is here communicated through sentence-final particles. For example, in English, if a sentence rises from a middle tone to a high tone towards the end, this generally indicates that the sentence is a question. In Cantonese, this is impossible as rising to a higher tone would alter the meaning of the words, and a question is indicated with the particle “a” at the end, a sort of verbal question mark if you will. There are many such sentence-final particles, communicating different types of question, surprise, annoyance etc.

The primary writing system is logographic, meaning that a single character represents a concept rather than a sound. It is in this way that it is used as a lingua franca, as a given

character such as 大 meaning big, large or great, may be signified by a different word in each Chinese language. It is pronounced as *dà* in Mandarin, *daaih* in Cantonese, but the appearance of the character and its meaning are constant. Chinese as a language will seem quite ambiguous to one who is used to European languages. If we take a random word in Mandarin such as *Jian*, my small pocket dictionary contains no less than 98 different characters. Granted, there are four tonal levels in Mandarin, but this still leaves an average of 24 characters which are fully homophonous, each of which may have several meanings depending on context. In English, Chinese is most reminiscent of Shakespearean language, which is often highly ambiguous containing many layers of meaning. We may go so far as to equate Chinese words to multivocal metaphors, which Umberto Eco (in Tilley 1999) claims to have so many meanings, they evoke no particular one when viewed out of context. Daoism has had much influence on thought in China. The taijitu or yin-yang symbol is a very powerful illustration of this, demonstrating the Chinese embrace of opposites. Richard Nisbett (2003) calls this a type of dialecticism, although quite different from the Hegelian in that the aggression of that system is absent. The antithesis is not opposed to the thesis in this dialectic, rather the opposing views exist side by side, each containing the seed of their opposite, as indeed do both yin and yang. By this Nisbett argues that the ambiguities westerners reject and find threatening, the Chinese embrace.

Mandarin vs. Cantonese: Language, Dialect or Sociolect?

Anthropology has long had a connection with language. We have seen many examples of new and exciting theoretical perspectives growing out of linguistics. Much of this is based on the premise that the structure inherent in language has an effect on how the speaker conceptualizes his or her surroundings. There seems to be little grounds for claiming that this would be the case for Póutùngwá and Gwóngjàuwá, as both these languages follow very similar patterns. There are some differences in sentence composition, and Cantonese has six to nine distinct tones, whereas Mandarin has four. Nevertheless, in general terms the main difference between them is pronunciation. What I observed in Guangzhou may be more fruitfully explained with recourse to macro sociolinguistics. This perspective takes language as its starting point, attempting to explain its role in delineating communities. Although it is usually used in the context of nations and large scale organizations, there is no reason why it should not be appropriate in this case also, as there is a clear, observable and unambiguous us/them demarcation performed on the basis of language. Although this is not her main focus,

Pun Ngai describes something similar in her book *“Made in China (2005:128-30)”*. Here the factory girls fall into an unofficial hierarchy based on language, the top tier occupied by those speaking Cantonese with Hong Kong accents, Mandarin speakers in the middle and other dialects at the bottom. In this context, the different varieties of Chinese may be said to be sociolects, variations belonging to different classes of person.

Gwóngjàuwá, although it is the first language of most of the community, is considered to be a non-standard variation of Chinese, i.e. Mandarin. Possibly because of the written language forming a common underlying structure, Cantonese and Mandarin share the same composition, being differentiated primarily by the way each word is pronounced. In other words, each language is built on the same concepts, and these concepts are formulated in similar ways bar a few shallow grammatical differences. Thus, however we may view the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, I doubt it to be applicable in Guangzhou. It has been suggested to me that there might nevertheless be cognitive processes at work in choosing one or the other, which may be observed by different conversation choices in the two languages. This, however, would be difficult to research in Guangzhou, as the dialects differ in their context, and any differences in usage may just as easily stem from the social situation as any cognitive effect. My focus here is on language abstracted from its verbalized meaning in favour of its implicit social meaning.

Cantonese is primarily a spoken language. The Yale romanization is only used for academic purposes such as dictionaries, and I have not met a single native speaker who has any knowledge of it. The logographic system is more widely used, and is nearly identical, regardless of the language of the speaker. I say nearly, as in the case of Cantonese, there are some specialized characters for local expressions not found elsewhere as well as some small differences in sentence structure. When writing in roman characters, the Chinese use the Pinyin romanization of Mandarin, and never the Yale romanization of Cantonese. When reading and writing, the logographic writing system is preferred, as the romanization systems are considered too ambiguous to be understandable, especially short statements.

Even when reading Chinese characters, these are generally read in Mandarin and then translated into Cantonese. I once asked a friend of mine to translate the sign on the street where I lived, as I was unable to decipher the second character. She read it first as *“Hua Qiang Lu”*, the Mandarin translation, and then after having read it, she translated it into Cantonese *“Hua Keng Louh”*. I asked her why she didn't just read it in Cantonese to begin

with, and she shrugged, saying: "That's just how we do it". As my proficiency with Cantonese grew, it began to displace English, making up a greater part of conversations. As some found the pronunciation shift when my name was spoken to be awkward, I was eventually given a Chinese Name. It started out as *Ah Lei Shan Dà*, but was quickly abbreviated to simply *Shan Dà*, written with the Chinese characters for mountain (山) and large (大). It was pronounced *Shan Dà* even when speaking Cantonese, although the Cantonese reading of these characters "should be" *Sàan Daaih*. The meaning of characters when writing names are wholly incidental, as only their sounds in Mandarin is significant. Norway is transcribed as *Nuo Wei* (挪威), meaning to rub vigorously. In this way, when it comes to literacy, Cantonese seems wholly subordinate to Mandarin.

As mentioned above, a sociolect is a variation of language associated with a social class or group, and although this term may apply to any vernacular variation which is associated with a particular group, the most influential studies have been conducted on stigmatised categories of people (e.g. Wolfram 2004, Labov 1966). While sociolects may belong to advantaged groups, such as Received Pronunciation which is associated with English University graduates, there is a tendency that these ways of speaking become the standard rather than a variation of it. To illustrate this, although there are age, gender and group specific variations of language, there are few studies of the speech of adult men, as they are the power holders in most societies and their speech patterns tend to define the "neutral" form of the language (Coulmas 2005:61). This idea is summarized in Trudgill's Triangle (1984), a visual representation of accents declining with higher social classes. The idea behind it is that the higher social class an individual has, the fewer non-standard choices that person will make.

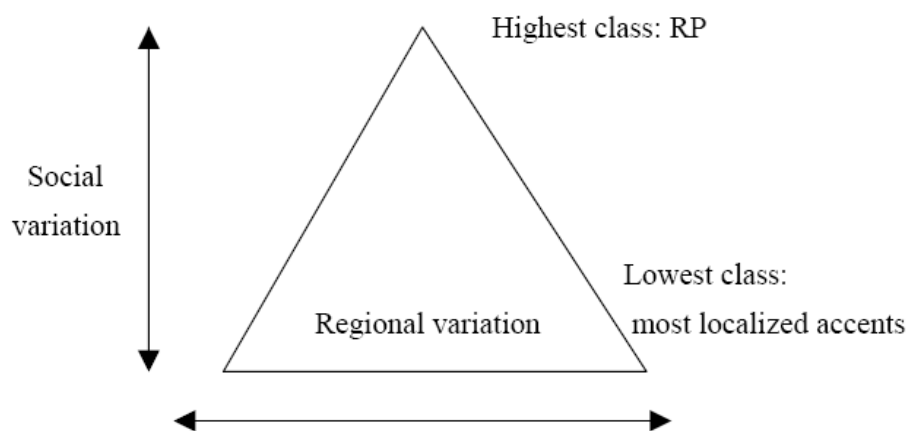


Figure 5: taken from Florian Coulmas' Figure 2.3 in "Sociolinguistics (2005:28)"

Language is an indication of power. This is seen when studying the relationship between standard, in this case Mandarin with a Beijing accent, and dialect, in this case Cantonese with a Guangzhou dialect. When viewing the relation between standard and dialect more generally, we see that there is any number of age, class and gender-specific linguistic variants (see Gibbon 1999, Coupland et al. 1991, Labov 1966 and Romaine 1984). Although linguists differentiate between four age cohorts²; child, adolescent, adult and elderly, the adult category remains largely unstudied, and many relevant works do not even include a chapter on it (Coulmas 2005:61). This is because, as I have already stated, adults, particularly adult males, tend to have the norm defining power in a given society, and if their speech patterns are altered, they are not considered to have developed a variation, and rather they are taken to have redefined the standard.

Cantonese has elements of this, as it is associated with the local over the national, the old rather than the progressive and so on. Also, as I show above, Mandarin is the language of choice for scholarship. However, as I have stated earlier, the average person in Guangzhou is often fluent in both languages, and none with whom I spoke knew both without using both. Cantonese has all the hallmarks of a stigmatized Sociolect, except that it is not spoken by a specific underclass. Rather its use is situational, although those lower in the hierarchy are likely to spend more of their time in situations where informal speech is appropriate. The division was not that some people used Gwóngjàuwá, some Pótùngwá, but that the same person used each in different situations and contexts. Thus, they may be equated to a different classes of behaviour and situation, but not necessarily different classes of person. There is little indication that Guangzhou people themselves consider Cantonese a sociolect. Although the two languages resemble sociolects in some respects, they are really better seen as situational determinates.

Cantonese in Guangzhou

The great majority of the anthropological writings from the Guangdong Province are based around Hong Kong, with the capitol remaining virtually ignored. This is a shame, because Guangzhou is an important city in the area, and forms an interesting contrast to Hong Kong. Visitors to Guangzhou often travel via Hong Kong, many of whom describe a sensation that it was only at this point that they “left the west and entered China”. In the context of

² This should not be confused with the usage of the word “cohort” in sinological terms, meaning a communist party official.

Chapter 3: Language and Anthropology

language, there is an important point to be made regarding not only the social status of the speaker, but the implicit formality of the way each dialect is used. Here I feel that the best way of describing the position of Cantonese in this context, is to contrast Guangzhou usage with Hong Kong usage.

Hong Kong is one of two Special Administrative Regions (SAR) in China, the other being Macao. Although these territories have both reverted to Chinese rule, they are given a high degree of autonomy under article 31 of the Chinese Constitution (Lam et. al. 2007). Among the many concessions made to inhabitants of these two regions is a leniency regarding local language. Mandarin is of course the official language of the Peoples Republic, and it is policy that government officials not only speak it, but use it as their primary tongue. This of course serves the function mentioned above, that China is seen to have a single unifying language, and not many mutually incomprehensible ones. It also gives people living in regions with their own dialect an extra incentive to master Mandarin, as they need it to carry out any official business. Hong Kong and Macao are exceptions to this policy. Among the concessions made to these regions is that government officials are expected to be fluent in the local Cantonese dialect.

Most languages contain several levels of formality and informality, included elided forms of certain words, or words that may be omitted altogether while keeping the sentence comprehensible. Politeness will often be more emphasised in the formal incarnation, which is linked to the fact that the average length of utterances will increase (Mehrota 1995). Generally, when meeting new people, westerners will tend to use a middle position, polite without being overly so. Most language classes, following this model, will aim at establishing a medium level of formality in their speakers. In practice, of course, degrees of formality and requirements for politeness will vary according to the position of the people interacting and of course the situation for the interaction. In informal situations such politeness requirements will be relaxed, and we can expect to see a greater frequency of elided forms and colloquialisms.

As Hong Kong and Macao are exempt from the government mandate for the primacy of mandarin, Cantonese may be used for formal occasions, and so in daily usage, runs the spectrum of formal and informal expression. On the other hand, in Guangzhou only its informal incarnation is in daily use. The result is a more elided and vernacular language, which made it more difficult for an outsider to understand. An example of this is that phrases

like “*chíng maahn*” (May I ask) were simply not used, and were often considered comical if outsiders used them. As an example of elided language use, I was sitting having tea with one of my informants, when we were joined by an acquaintance of his. I told her my name, and asked her hers. At this point I had improved my pronunciation so that she could at least tell which language I was using, and she was quite impressed as not many foreigners learn Cantonese. She then asked me “*bindouh ka?*” which I could make neither head nor tail of. I recognized the word for “where”, and in this context I guessed she was asking where I was from. I never discovered the origin of the word *ka* which is not in any dictionary I have found. I’m guessing that what she said is an abbreviated form of the term with which I was already familiar; “*néih haih bindouh jàhn a*”. This translates directly into “you are where person”, with the sentence-final particle “a” indicating that a question is being asked. I inquired if the “*ka*” was in any way related to the Japanese word for person, but quickly learned that any suggestion of Japanese influence on China was unwise. If I am right, then what she literally said to me was “where person”. On the subject of outside influences on the language, Fei Xiaotong asked villagers in the north of China if there was any influence on their language from the Mongolian, which was categorically denied (1992:39).

Mandarin, on the other hand, is used in more formal situations such as when addressing a police officer, or other uniformed official. Nancy, a local girl who I briefly retained as an interpreter, demonstrated this in my first week. We were in Tianhe district viewing a flat, and needed to find the subway station. She approached a police officer, and asked him respectfully in Mandarin if he could give us directions. He demonstrated to her which way we should go and we both thanked him and went on our way. When we were out of earshot she told me

- I know that guy, he used to live on Shamian
- So, he’s local? Why did you speak Mandarin to him?
- You have to do that.

Note that there was no discussion and no explanation of the phenomenon, merely an expression that this type of behaviour is taken for granted. This was a fairly common answer to my questions, i.e. to shrug and say “*of course, that’s the way it is*”. Like the whole business with the interviews, there was a very clear insinuation that I couldn’t possibly see anything relevant that they themselves were not aware of, and that I had to be discouraged from dead end inquiries. Judging by many published ethnographies, this is by no means

Chapter 3: Language and Anthropology

uncommon or confined to the Chinese. I did get the chance to recall the incident to her at a later date, and ask her about it again, whereupon she said; "*I don't know, it just seems more appropriate*". According to Ikels, during her fieldwork, people did speak Cantonese to policemen, who insisted that they speak Mandarin before answering (1996:19). This appears to have changed somewhat in the intervening years. The situation I observed, where the use of Mandarin is not merely automatic but unquestioned, gives a somewhat Marxist association, although entering into a Marxist interpretation is beyond the scope of this thesis. Here ideology is used to justify the position of those in power, and this ideology is eventually naturalised, becoming hegemony.

Chapter 4: Situational Language and Sociolinguistics

The anthropologist Charlotte Ikels is one of the few who have conducted fieldwork in Guangzhou, and while her focus isn't the disparity between Cantonese and Mandarin, she does mention it. Reading her work it might seem that Mandarin has made some headway in supplanting Cantonese since her study in 1996.

“Cantonese have successfully resisted the substitution of *putonghua* for Cantonese. (...) On the streets, in restaurants, on public transportation, one seldom hears anything other than Cantonese. Beijing is not happy with this state of affairs (p.19).”

This was not quite what I encountered, and I was initially quite perplexed as to why people insisted on using Mandarin. What may be noted in these situations Ikels lists is that all these are what might be termed informal settings. She makes no mention here of what is used if these same people on the street were to ask a policeman a question, or to whom one is speaking on the public transportation or for that matter what kind of restaurant and with whom one is dining. The area of situational language is one that seems to have passed her by.

There is a tendency that one language will be used in certain situations, and not in others. Thus there are three types of settings and situations when it comes to language, these are Cantonese situations, which are usually more private and intimate, Mandarin situations which are more formal or anonymous. Lastly, there are some situations which aren't immediately identifiable as one or the other, but for the moment I wish to deal with the more unambiguous situations. I have represented these in a graph, although it by no means absolute, as an observer will see exceptions to all these situations. Rather, it is a mapping out of tendencies. When in informal settings, situations and attire, people are more likely to use the local language, as well as more receptive for others to use it in addressing them.

Situational Distribution of Languages in Guangzhou

Mandarin	Cantonese
Large Restaurant	Yám Chàh*
Large Department Store	Corner Shop, Hawker
Uniformed Official	Acquaintances
Men	Women

*Yám Chàh literally translates as "to drink tea", and is a pastime where a group of people visit a small Restaurant to talk, eat small dishes and, of course, drink tea.

Figure 6

There is one thing I wish to mention in particular about this graph; the division along the lines of gender. At first glance this division seems incidental. Women spend more time in such settings where Cantonese is the appropriate language than do men, and thus their preference for Cantonese may be explained as a consequence of this situational division. There does seem to be some differentiation along gender lines which goes beyond the situation, but this will be the subject of a later chapter. Interestingly, like the fact that Cantonese is more often used by people of lower social class, but does not really meet the requirements of being a Sociolect, neither is it considered a feminine language, at least I never heard this view stated.

As I wrote above, not all situations may be neatly partitioned off in this way, and some are more ambiguous than others. There is an area in the southeast quarter of Guangzhou city proper known as University Town. It is an island about four kilometres across on which is Sun Yat Sen University³, South China Normal University, Guangzhou University of Traditional Chinese Medicine as well as several others. In a corner shop near Sun Yat Sen University, a woman was buying fruit. By the shop entrance stood the owner chatting with her friend, both of whom were local judging from their speech. The woman approached the two and interrupted them, asking the owner where to find the bananas (*di heungjiu*). The owner seemed not to understand the woman, who repeated her question. After a few attempts, the owner made a big show of comprehension. She smiled, clapped her hands and answered the customer in Mandarin “*ah, di xiāngjiāo*”. She then directed the woman to the far end of the shop where the bananas were to be found, before turning back to her friend. They resumed their conversation in rapid Cantonese. Interested, I approached the owner, and also asked her in Cantonese where to find the bananas. She grimaced, and answered “eh?” a common way of demonstrating incomprehension. I repeated the question, pronouncing each word with more care “*Síujé, bindouh di heungjiu a*”. Just as she had with the previous customer, she made a sudden show of recognition, and answered me in Mandarin. She then prompted me to repeat the word *xiāngjiāo* back to her, and only showed me the way once I had pronounced it to her satisfaction.

This exchange presents an interesting problem, why did she not understand what was asked of her? Judging by her speed and fluency in conversing with her friend, the problem could hardly be her command of the language. Also, her reaction when she finally understood the

³ Note that Sun Yat Sen University appears on the map (Figure 1) as Zhongshan University, but is today about eight kilometres from this location.

question was so theatrical that it could hardly be genuine. So why did she feign incomprehension, and why did she respond in the official language rather than the dialect? This was a corner shop, but a rather large example of its kind. I didn't have the opportunity to ask the lady herself, as I didn't attach much importance to the episode at the time, but my theory is that this was a tactic not unlike sanskritization (see Srinivas 1962), where the owner of the shop was trying to define her shop as a grander place by insisting that Mandarin be used. The lady and I, by using Cantonese, may have been interpreted as trying to define the shop from an ambiguous space to an intimate space, while the shop owner wished it to be a more formal arena. If the woman imagines her emporium to belong in the large category, the woman's use of Cantonese may have been viewed as an attempt to impugn it by being too familiar. Being corrected in this way was not uncommon for me, as it took me some time to become aware of this unspoken etiquette. When asking a policeman the way to Sun Yat Sen University (*Zhongshan daaihohk*), he first corrected this to *Zhongshan dàxué* somewhat sternly before giving directions.

There were two reasons why I had difficulty communicating with the locals, especially during the first month. The first is, as Deng suggested, that people quite simply didn't expect a foreigner to speak Cantonese, and to coin a phrase, I was speaking in one language, whilst they were listening in another. However, I also had great difficulty understanding what others said, mostly because of the vernacular forms used. The problem of being understood lessened as my pronunciation improved, but I never quite overcame the difficulty of understanding the elided, informal variation of Cantonese that was common in Guangzhou, and I often had to ask people to repeat what they had said several times before I understood them.

Public and Private

Rowe (1990) discusses the division of public (*gùng*) and private (*sì*), drawing heavily on Habermas' concepts of *Öffentlichkeit* and *Intimspäre* (1989). The two categories are clearly mutually defining, as it is with the establishment of something thought of as the public sphere, that we gain an understanding of that which does not belong to it, i.e. the private sphere. Habermas utilises a historical perspective, arguing that what might be termed a bourgeois public sphere arose in Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, made possible by a general change in consciousness during this time, as the self interest of the forming bourgeoisie converged with public interest to impose the concept the public onto the society as a whole (Habermas 1989:87). A comparable development took place in China,

although this was somewhat later than Europe. We first begin to see an alteration in the meaning of *gùng* with print culture in late imperial times. Previously, *gùng* had simply been used to denote things belonging to the state bureaucracy (Dikötter 1992:63), but at this time it was appropriated by Chinese social Scientists to approximate more closely with Habermas' usage (Rowe 1990:314). While using Habermas' terminology, Rowe admits that Habermas himself probably would not approve, as his argument is not intended to be generalizable, but is both culturally and temporally specific if not outright Eurocentric. Rowe nevertheless argues that the two cases of early modern Europe and late dynastic China share sufficient characteristics to be equated in this case (1990:314). It should be noted, however, that both the dictionary definition of "public" and Habermas' usage of it, not to mention Rowe's, are highly ambiguous. The way I use public and private here has a certain emotional dimension, and falls nearly parallel to the idea of "us" and "them". The public is what is taken at some level to belong to "them", such as government institutions and officials, while the private is what one can lay emotional ownership to, what one may feel belongs to "us".

It is highly difficult to present ethnographic data on such emotional values, especially when the people asked seem disinclined to reflect on them and merely respond with statements like "of course" and "of course not". My observations leave me in little doubt, however, that it is appropriate to attribute Cantonese to the private sphere, although in this usage "intimate" may be as good a word for it. When it comes to Mandarin, its connection to the public sphere is more explicit, and thus its categorization as such less problematic. If we examine the graph above, we see that those situations where there is an explicit or implied demand for Mandarin are such situations where a certain amount of facade is called for. This of course may be studied empirically, but what is more subjective, although I think at least as valid, are the reactions elicited when Cantonese is used. I was sitting at a coffee shop on Shamian, going over some notes before I went back to the Karen's Place. Two girls were sitting on the next table, giggling and taking pictures of the other guests, the surroundings and each other. One of them took a picture of me, and they both lapsed again into giggling fits. I made a comment, in Cantonese, as to how much they obviously enjoyed taking pictures (*wā, néideih hóu jūngyí yíngséung wo*). They were taken aback for a moment, but then they appeared to understand what I had said, and their reaction was extraordinary. They became very friendly and interested, insisting on joining me at my table. I never observed another foreigner speaking Mandarin elicit such a response, nor did I on those occasions people assumed I was

speaking Mandarin. It seemed to me that by using their private language, I was being admitted into a more personal space than I otherwise would.

How the Social Influences Language

When it comes to how language influences the social, there have been many more sociolinguistic studies than anthropological that are relevant to my argument. There have of course been many anthropological accounts of how language has influenced social relations (e.g. Eidheim 1969), but most of these have merely a peripheral relevance for my argument. In Eidheim's work for instance, the language in question is used by a separate minority, and thus the question of ethnic identity becomes central rather than the symbolism inherent in the language itself. Bilingual communities have been more extensively studied by sociolinguists, such as Blom & Gumperz (1972), Youssi (1995), Myers-Scotton (1993a) and Gardner-Chloros (1991). However, I have been unable to find any research, neither linguistic nor anthropological, in the effects of Búndeiwhà on social interaction, let alone any published works on the subject. Some writers make passing statements, such as Elisabeth Hsu's comment in *"Transmission of Chinese Medicine"*, writing that Mandarin lent a certain formality to all communication (1999:17), and, as has already been mentioned, Ngai describes an unofficial linguistic hierarchy at the factory in which she conducted her fieldwork.

During the seventies, there was a general shift from seeing language as symptomatic of class, position etc. (e.g. Labov 1966), to a more actor oriented position where language use communicates, and goes some way towards producing, class (e.g. Milroy 1980, Giles & Smith 1979). Basil Bernstein (1971) postulated that phonetic variation does not only denote social differences, but is instrumental in reproducing them. If one language is linked to informal situations, then we may expect it to be used to define an ambiguous situation. As I have mentioned, there were no outright offenders in using the wrong language in the wrong situation, but sometimes the situation was more ambiguous and open to interpretation.

Sociolinguistic studies are sometimes conducted in very different ways from anthropological. One way of conducting such studies is to have a sample group listen to a monologue, dialogue or similar, and then to answer questions about the people heard. Ivan Kalmar, Zhong Yong and Xiao Hong (1987) conducted such a study, where one person recorded two identical monologues, speaking Mandarin with a Beijing dialect in one, and with a heavy Cantonese accent in the other. The listeners were told that these recordings were of two

different people, and were asked to fill in a questionnaire on each of them. Among their numerous findings was that the person assumed to be from Beijing was thought to be better educated, more successful and generally have higher chances of success, but the heavy Cantonese accent evoked greater empathy. In this blind test, listeners rated mandarin speakers as being more likely to have a job and more likely to be “white collar”, although those listeners who were Cantonese themselves, responded more positively to the accented speaker. Cantonese is associated with older people and those who speak it are thought more likely to be manual workers. It was also showed that Cantonese speakers considered other such speakers to be more trustworthy than mandarin speakers, and vice versa. Sadly, they did not have a sufficient sample group so as to consider it statistically significant to look at gender differences. What data they did obtain suggests that the “high” dialect impresses women more, but the “low” inspires more empathy. I suspect that a larger sample group would have confirmed this, and that while most Cantonese speakers respond more positively to other Cantonese speakers on an emotional level, this effect is stronger amongst women.

This effect is similar to that of accommodation, which has been more extensively studied (see Wolfram 1997, Bebe & Giles 1984). Accommodation Theory describes the well documented phenomena that people like those who sound the same as them, and that when one is speaking to someone one wishes to please, one will accommodate one’s speech patterns unconsciously to closer match the person with whom one is interacting. One problem with utilizing accommodation theory in an anthropological setting is that it is based on power. It is when two ways of speaking are positioned on a vertical social axis that accommodation is useful, often to converge a stigmatized Sociolect towards the standard (Coulmas 1995:32-3). In reality, however, as the above study suggests, there need not be a single social axis. The person one thinks successful need not be the person with whom one empathises.

Most of these linguistically determined judgements are made unconsciously, as are the behaviours which prompt them. Accommodation, for instance is often done quite unwittingly, but may nevertheless have favourable effects. Once one is aware of the phenomena, it is of course entirely possible to consciously produce the stimulus in order to induce the desired reaction. I strongly suspect that this, ironic as it does seem, would require more skill than unconscious production, as one has to create the illusion that it is occurring naturally. If the recipients realize that they are being manipulated, or otherwise suspect this to be the case, the effect is likely to be the opposite.

Markedness Model

Certain aspects of language use in Guangzhou may be illuminated with recourse to Myers-Scotton's Markedness Model (1993a). She categorizes all communication as either marked or unmarked, a distinction in many ways similar to appropriate and inappropriate. It may also be equated to expected/unexpected in the sense that the unmarked choice is the communication or response the other person anticipates. Although her use of the term "marked" is quite broad, I use it here only in the sense of determining what language is suited to a given interaction, i.e. that language's "unmarked" usage. In figure 6, which showed the unambiguous language situations, using Mandarin in a formal setting is the unmarked, or appropriate and expected, choice, while Cantonese is marked in that it is surprising and would be considered inappropriate. As is suggested by the dramaturgical model (Goffman 1959), although each of us is capable of creating a sentence and being utterly sure no one has said it before in the history of human communication, we tend to rely on a finite number of predefined utterances. Myers-Scotton herself links Markedness to the phenomena of code switching in bilingual persons, where one spontaneously switches to another language mid sentence or interjects words of one language into a conversation carried out in another.

On the surface, this may seem ideally suited to my subject matter, but this is in fact not the case. Although Guangzhou is for all intents and purposes a bilingual community, I did not observe any instances of actual code switching, that is, at no point did a person speaking Cantonese switch to Mandarin or vice versa once an exchange was in progress. Coulmas (2005:111), building on a model suggested by Thomas (1991), claims that English and Japanese, being composite languages, show high frequencies of code switching and use of borrowed words, but Chinese, being more homogenous, has quite a low frequency. There may be something in this, as there are very few borrowed words in use in Guangzhou. The only such word used regularly is *báai-baai*, an obvious sinization of the English "Bye-bye", which has all but supplanted the Cantonese *joigin*, at least among the younger generations.

Not only does this create an additional problem for the notion that language mirrors mind given the fact that Japan has historically been even more isolationist than China, it also suggests how bilingual Guangzhou citizens might use multiple languages, as there is a correlation between code switching and "borrowing" (Coulmas 1992:264-73). In other words, it might go some way towards explaining why Guangzhou people tend to strictly separate the languages, conducting conversations in either one or the other rather than

switching, apart from certain exceptions such as place names. A curious phenomena worth noting is that although Cantonese is often considered somewhat backward within Guangzhou, it is seen as a symbol of modernity by youths in other parts of China due to its association with Hong Kong, and young people will sometimes insert Cantonese phrases into their speech.

Not only language choice and code switching, but also what is said in a given language may be described as marked or unmarked, although I observed no situation where use of Mandarin in itself was marked. We may suppose that two Cantonese people who know one another would be able to communicate coldness by speaking Mandarin, in the same way as someone might use a friend's full name when communicating displeasure, but I never observed this. My informants too, when asked, said that they had never done this nor seen it done, but they agreed that if a friend suddenly started speaking Mandarin to them, they would interpret this as being "pushed away". This is another indication that Cantonese is associated with intimacy whilst Mandarin is more impersonal. Unmarked usage does not generally have the potential of creating a strong response, neither positive nor negative. It raises no eyebrows but passes unnoticed because it is the norm. Using Cantonese in what is unambiguously a Mandarin situation is a "marked" use of that language, and has the potential of provoking stronger responses.

Social Relations and language

Guanxi is a term describing networks of social relationships particular to Chinese communities, and while this concept is the subject of a later chapter, I will mention it here briefly. Tong Kong and Yong Kee (1998) discuss the various bases for forming *guanxi* relationships, noting that in areas of rapid development, locality and dialect becomes such a base. In such areas, workers are brought in from other areas and many are removed from their families. As these relationships have tended to be partly defined by family and to a certain extent still is, being separated from them naturally changes the structure of *guanxi*. In these situations, coming from the same area may be enough to form a bond. In fact, areas of south-east Asia, where Chinese labourers have emigrated to find work, they have often been grouped together according to their locality. It seems probable that one of the main reasons for this is because they therefore would share the same language.

In this context, I wish to define Social Relations as the sum of rights and obligations to another person or group, although these need not be symmetrical. Myers-Scotton (1993b)

also links code switching directly to such rights and obligations. She suggests that code switching is indicative of the speaker's social knowledge, and as such may in certain instances be the unmarked choice. The use of the term "social relations" may give associations to the school of structural functionalism, particularly Radcliffe-Brown's definition of social structure. In his terms social structure is the sum of all social relations which link individuals in a society (1952). This terminology has been an infamous source of confusion in anthropology, as other scholars have used the same terms with different meanings (e.g. Lévi-Strauss 1953). I use social relations in the context of *guanxi* to mean dyadic relations, what some others (e.g. Jacobs 1979, Ong 1999) have called particularist ties.

Hierarchy may be encoded in language use. Although Chinese has honorifics, these are not as universally used as in the Japanese or Vietnamese. The honorifics are generally reserved for certain professionals, such as doctors and teachers. In Hong Kong it is also usual to use *tai-tai* as an honorific for married women, so that Mrs Lam would be Lam *tai-tai*. This was another phrase which was unused in Guangzhou and caused much amusement when I used it. The unmarked choice of address depends on relative class and professional status as well as gender. Ideally this should be known to addressee so as to avoid faux pas. In addressing any unformed person, Mandarin is the unmarked choice in addition to any honorifics the person might be due. We see however, that the explicit normative imperative in choosing language is one-way. When asked, the informants do not acknowledge any choice in which code to use, simply that they "have to" use Mandarin. There were no situations in which anyone expressed that they "had to" chose Cantonese, apart from the hypothetical example before, and none commented on this without being prompted. Most, when asked why they spoke Cantonese to a certain person, replied with some variant of "Because I know that person". Thus it seems that one will chose the local language when not compelled by norms to do otherwise.

Movement towards Modernity/Movement towards Traditionalism

Most sinologists, in fact all that I've read, have noted some form of the polar positions I call movement towards modernity/movement towards traditionalism, although not in these terms and it must often be inferred from the text. The collection of articles "*China Urban*" edited by Nancy Chen, from which some of my sources are taken, contains some of the most explicit examples. Another fairly explicit example is Fei Xiaotong's metaphorical division of

rural/urban in “*From the Soil*⁴ (1992)”. Although this is an extreme simplification, a surprisingly large number of people fall into one of these two categories, although as I have suggested, conceptions of “modernity” are individual, but involve the appropriation of something seen as distinctly western. Openness to foreigners was equally binary to a surprising degree, as is openness to foreign influences and large scale social change. Much of the locals’ ability to understand non-fluent Chinese seems to vary along a similar dimension. Those who fall into the “movement towards tradition” category seemed to have great difficulty understanding what was said to them by non native speakers. An American visitor to Karen’s Place noted the same thing. He complained that the local taxi drivers didn’t understand anything he said in Mandarin, which Karen attempted to explain.

- I told the guy my address, and he just made a face at me. I’m sure I’m saying it right. Other people I spoke to understand me, so why not this guy?
- Maybe it’s because your face is foreign. You could speak perfectly, and still he could not understand.

I had been in the exact same situation as this man several times, and it seemed to me that many of those who did not understand what was said to them were simply disinclined to make the effort, perhaps even deliberately feigning incomprehension so as to discourage conversation. This is, of course, a highly subjective interpretation, but nevertheless I had encountered the same situation where I could speak to some, but was unable to make myself understood by others, no matter how slowly and deliberately I spoke, and in a few cases I could find no other explanation than the one to whom I was speaking being deliberately obtuse. Doubtless even if my suspicions in this regard are correct, there were some who genuinely tried to understand but were unable to, depending on individual ability. Regardless of its exact nature, there was a division, where some people were more likely to understand than others, the younger over the older, female over male. This division also appeared to have a connection to other categories, such as preferred topics of conversation and style of dress. To say that the Chinese may be divided into two groups in this way is certainly simplistic, but as I suggest, it does hold up under scrutiny surprisingly often. It seems obvious that there is something about Chinese societies that prompts people to choose one or other of these positions. It seems to me that the two groups define themselves by contrast to each other, and

⁴ This is a translation by Gary Hamilton and Wang Zheng of Fei’s 1947 classic *Xiangtu Zhongguo*, which is more literally translated as “Rural China”.

once one is leaning towards one direction, the need for congruence prompts him or her to commit themselves to that side of the polar opposite.

Movement towards Modernity/Movement towards Traditionalism

Towards Modernity	Towards Traditionalism
Seeks contact with westerners	Avoids contact
Higher likelihood of understanding fractured Chinese	Lower likelihood
Higher likelihood of speaking about Europe and America, focusing on present and future*	Speaks about China, focusing on Past

*This is the most generalised manifestation of this phenomenon, but I mention it because it seemed to Be the case

Figure 7

An obvious example of this polarity is how an individual chooses to celebrate their birthday. China adopted the Gregorian calendar in 1912 shortly after the end of Imperial rule, but the lunisolar calendar is still retained, and is the basis for working out festival dates and such. Any given day in the lunisolar calendar need not correspond with the same Gregorian date from year to year. Subsequently, in China, during most years one will have more than one birthday. As an example, let us suppose that a Child is born on the day of the flower festival, which in 2010 fell on the twelfth of February. In 2011 the same day on the Chinese lunisolar calendar will coincide with a different date on the Gregorian. During my sojourn, I had occasion to be part of several birthday celebrations, two of which were for the same person. This girl counted her age according to the lunisolar calendar, but her friends had put together a surprise celebration for her on her Gregorian birthday. She herself didn't know what day it was, and was confused by the appearance of the cake until one of her friend told her what was going on.

What struck me was that on the one hand there appeared to be no convention as to which date took precedence but on the other no one I spoke to used both, the instance above being the exception. A curious phenomenon is that despite the fact that some chose the Gregorian,

some the lunisolar, the choice was naturalized. Whenever I asked someone why they utilized one system over the other, their initial response was invariably “of course”. My feeling is, as I alluded above, that this fits into the whole modernity/traditionalism dichotomy that permeates Chinese society. For that matter, younger people celebrating their birthdays at all is a rather recent and westernized phenomena. Previously, and in some rural areas still, birthdays were reserved for fathers, and only began when they turned sixty, which is one cycle of the Chinese zodiac (Yan 1996:58-9). The sixtieth birthday is still considered a very important one, as was the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the People’s Republic in 2009.

Chapter 5: Karen's Place

Although I had noticed the shop on my first day on Shamian, it was about a week before I visited it. Most of the buildings on Shamian line the three roads running along the east to west axis of the island. These buildings were constructed by the British and French who owned the island, and are of recognizably colonial style. Karen's Place is in a newer building away from the main roads and of more typically Chinese layout, with a main structure and several smaller ones all surrounding a central courtyard. This main structure originally consisted of two rooms, but the partitioning wall has been torn down to leave a large open space within. The interior of the place was quite dark, as there was little artificial lighting, and was crammed with all manner of Chinese paraphernalia, such as *chèuhngsàam* dresses, jewellery, jade ornaments, books, films, even a full size replica of a terracotta soldier. A glass counter full of jade pendants stood opposite the entrance, and to the right of the counter there was a door leading out to the courtyard. Most of the stock was stored there, protected by a makeshift roof made out of tarpaulin. As the back door was never used, the courtyard was only accessible through the main building, with the outside space being about twice the size of the interior. Several smaller one-room structures with three walls and a roof had been built into the courtyard wall, most of which are used as storage space. One of these houses a flat screen television amongst the t-shirts, another has a computer set up, which is rented out to customers at ten Yuan for fifteen minutes, despite what the sign said about free internet.

Now it's time to introduce the people working at the shop. Deng, the manager, came from a small village in the south-west corner of Guangdong Province where his parents and family still lived. He used to return there to celebrate various festivals such as New Year and tomb sweeping day. His knowledge of Europe and America was very detailed, and wherever a foreign customer was from, he could usually recall some trivia about the place, such as famous people or buildings. Both he and his wife were University educated, which is where they had met. He was skilled in engraving and for a fee he carved customers' names into stone stamps. He was also one of the few I met who hadn't taken an English name, despite being one of the better English speakers I encountered. This was somewhat strange as it was he that told me that one should chose an English name when learning English. Like many Chinese, he exhibited a curious blend of superiority and inferiority in his attitudes to the west. He has a high regard for Chinese material culture such as architecture, design, poetry and so

on, which he often brings into conversation, creating the impression that he had a strong need to be seen as being Chinese. In his spare time he practices *xanda*, a Chinese sport most reminiscent of kick-boxing. He appears much in my materials, partly because he is a very expansive personality, and dominates most situations when he is present.

Karen was Deng's wife and the person for whom the shop was named. They in fact owned the shop together, but had very different ideas of how it should be run, and Karen generally took a back seat if Deng was present. This did not seem to be due to any gender induced deference, but merely that she was far less concerned with profit than was her husband, claiming to be content as long as they broke even. She also came from a rural community, although not the same village as Deng. She had two older sisters, both of whose husbands had immigrated to America. She once told me that this was probably the reason why she was allowed to marry for love, as she was the youngest, and her mother had already married off two daughters for money. She told me that it was the custom in her village that as soon as a couple marries, the man went to work in America, so that the village is near emptied of men. She has a much more relaxed approach to customers, saying she does not care if the shop makes money so long as she can sit and draw and chat with her friends. She is a calligraphist and painter, making Chinese translations of various western names on slips of paper which are then sold. On request, she also draws portraits and it is due to her and her husband's skills at handicrafts that the shop is able to boast such an impressive list of services. Like many people in China, she took a western name when learning English.

Lee, a friend of the couple, works there most days. He has no special crafts such as calligraphy or engraving with which to supplement the shops earnings, but is a skilled player of *jeuhng kái* (*xiàngqí* in Mandarin), a game in the chess family popular among many older people in China, especially men. Once or twice a day, a couple of the older gentlemen living on Shamian would come by to play with him outside the shop, which invariably created quite a crowd. They would set up the board on top of one of the perambulators that the shop loaned out so that the game was visible from the main road. *Jeuhng kái* games are popular, especially with older residents, and many of those catching eye of the game will gather round to shout advice or just watch. Lee has a very calm demeanour, and is quite introvert. He is slightly older than Deng, and he too is from a rural background. He rarely deals with any customers except those which he knows already. I was never able to ascertain the nature of his employment, as both Karen and Dong simply described him as a friend.

Chapter 5: Karen's Place

Cheung and Yue-Mei are part time workers. Cheung is a boy in his late teens and comes in two days a week. He is the only one who regularly does such necessary maintenance as stock the shelves, tidy up and clean. Yue-Mei works two or three days a week, occasionally to stock the shelves and clean and such, although on a far more sporadic basis than the boy. There is little actual work to be done, and most of the time everyone is idle, although the two part time workers spend more of their time working than the others. When Yue-Mei was not working, she often sat on a plastic stool a little way up the road talking to passersby.

Normally, the shop does pretty well for a family business, bringing in a monthly profit of up to four thousand Yuan. This is about twice what one would expect to earn from a fulltime, unskilled job, although the renovation work on Shamian did harm business quite substantially.

“Everyone on Shamian say we have a good business probably three – four thousand a month. This is a good sum for local people. However, now the economy is not so good, and profits are down.”

Although I in a previous chapter describe Karen's Place as a souvenir shop, this is somewhat misleading. As may be gathered from the extensive list of services advertised on the sign outside, I am more inclined to think of this place as being a demonstration of Chinese entrepreneurship. The Chinese have a reputation throughout Asia for being astute businessmen, and even a rather sinophobic Thai woman with whom I spoke, had to admit that “*They [the Chinese] are smart when it comes to money*”. Rather than being simply a place to buy souvenirs, it seems to me that they were attempting to offer any service for which a visitor may have a use, but find difficulty in getting fulfilled and most importantly, be prepared to pay for. The invitation to sit and have tea which is given to most visitors, albeit after a gruelling sales pitch, may also be seen in this context. Given the level of entrepreneurship at Karen's Place, I'm inclined to believe that at one level this sociability is another attempt to cover all the needs of visiting people. The isolation of being in such an alien place may be rather jarring for some. An American man who regularly patronized Karen's Place once told me:

“You're used to going to other places, like Mexico, but this is something else. You know you're not gonna understand the language, but, I mean, like, you can't even look stuff up, because it's all written in Chinese [Characters]. At least with Spanish you can understand something. And, you know, make educated guesses. When I finally met someone who spoke English, it was like coming to an oasis”

There also appears to be an element of showcasing “Chineseness” to foreigners, which is not unheard of in Chinese businesses (see Du 2007). It is an inescapable consequence of this type of business that they must represent their culture to others in an "abridged" form, breaking it down into marketable units. An interesting thing to note is that the cultural markers presented are very often ones that would be interpreted as artistic in western thought. Taking a line through Bateson (1972) and Gell (1992), we can imagine that a possible reason for this is the capacity of artistic expressions to include much more than the sum of its parts. Frank (2006) argues that the popularity gained by Hong Kong cinema in the west during the seventies as well as the increased popularity in China, has affected the way the Chinese see themselves.

Mealtimes and Drinking Tea at Karen's

Meals were taken at regular times and were prepared at the shop, being the job of the least senior person present. Mostly, seniority is defined by age, but not necessarily. Lee, for instance was a little older than Deng, but counted below him in the hierarchy as Deng was the owner. So, there was some room for interpretation according to other criteria than age, but by and large the hierarchy may be viewed as primogeniture. Meals also follow the rules of primogeniture, not only in their making, but also in eating. Not only must the least senior person make the food, but if they eat together, they must pick out the choicest morsels and place them in the elder's bowl, although Deng said jokingly that he didn't feel old enough for anyone to do this for him. Audrey Richards (1932) presents an interesting argument that social structure may be seen in mealtime etiquette, although this is a somewhat circular argument as she previously defines social structure as being the food producing unit. This is not my focus, and I do not really have the data to make such a claim myself, but there are interesting implications for similar reasoning, though moderated from Richards' functionalist position. Although it was subtle, and rarely showed itself on the shop floor, there was a hierarchy and mealtimes were when it was most visible.

The workers at Karen's generally didn't eat meals together, but in shifts, which were also arranged according to seniority. Karen and Deng ate together if she was present during mealtimes, but at the start of my fieldwork their son, Chang Chen, had just begun to walk and when he was in the shop he wandered around, pulling items off the shelves and getting underfoot. He had simply become too big of a nuisance to have at work, and so Karen had taken to spending much less time at the shop than she had previously, so as to look after the boy. Therefore, Deng generally took his meals with Lee, unless they should be the only

people working that day, in which case both eat by themselves while the other keeps shop. Karen and Lee never ate together, although I was never given an explanation about this. My theory is that, if meals do demonstrate hierarchy, which indeed seems to be the case, then they would cause difficulties as to the relative positioning of Karen and Lee. She owns the shop with her husband, and so should be on an equal level with him and thus above Lee, but she spends much less time there, and has a much more relaxed attitude to business than Lee. The two never eating meals together would in this case constitute avoidance behaviour in order to avoid unpleasant incongruence (see Barth 1994).

Meals are prepared in the courtyard behind the shop. A small corner to the right of the door is partly walled off and used as a kitchen and dining room, although the only pieces of furniture are plastic, collapsible tables and chairs, which can be moved anywhere. In China, one generally has a bowlful of rice each, with all the other food such as fish, meat and vegetables on platters in the middle of the table. The diners use their chopsticks to pick morsels up a few at a time and put them in their bowls. The bowl is then brought up to the mouth, and the food is dug out of the bowl using circular movements of the sticks. Cheung and Yue-Mei never ate out here as far as I'm aware, but took their meals inside to the shop, or out on the front step.

A great deal of the time is spent sitting at the tea table in the front room. There are numerous etiquettes to be observed here as well, for instance, it is important to keep black and green teas separate. For this purpose, wulong (or oolong) tea is considered to be green. There is some ritual that goes into making the tea. First boiling water is poured over the pot before the leaves are put in and the pot filled. After the tea has been allowed to rest, ten to sixty seconds depending on the type of leaves, the tea is poured into a receptacle about the same size and shape as a milk jug. This first batch is poured out. The jug is refilled, and the cups which are to be used are picked up with a pair of tongs and tea is poured over them before they are set onto the table and filled. The first tea in each cup is not drunk, but poured out, in this case over a small figuring of a frog with a coin in its mouth. The explanation for all this was that tea is a cleansing agent, whereas pouring it over the frog was for luck. The serving of the tea was a useful gauge of my integration in the shop, as etiquette dictates that host pour tea for the guest, but also that the younger pour for the older. To begin with Deng or Lee always poured for me, but as time went on, it became more and more common for me to make and serve the tea. The only time I took tea alone with Karen was late in my fieldwork, and I was expected to serve her. In other words, as time went on, I was losing my privileged position as guest, and becoming more integrated into the hierarchy of the shop, where I was outranked

by Deng, Lee and Karen, but being both their elder and a father, I “outranked” Cheung and Yue-Mei.

When one serves tea for another, the person being served thanks the one serving by tapping his or her index and middle finger on the table. If one’s cup is empty, this may also signify that one is ready for a refill. This is a gesture particular to Guangdong province, and allegedly started during the Qing Dynasty (AD 1644 – 1912), when the Emperor Qiang Long travelled incognito, and his servants, not being able to show him the proper observances, used this gesture to symbolize a kowtow. This story was recounted to me eagerly on many occasions by many different people. The use of tea as a cleansing agent may also be a peculiarity of Guangdong Province, as a girl of my acquaintance from outside Guangdong was unfamiliar with it. At restaurants one is served with an extra bowl for the express purpose of pouring out the first cup of tea, and then washing all other eating utensils in it, which could take several minutes. This was not carried out as fully Karen’s place, but chopsticks were washed in tea immediately before use.

Jeuhng Kéi

The most common pastime in Karen’s was to play *jeuhng kéi*, or *xiàngqí* as it is known in Mandarin. This is a board game in the same family as western chess, sharing quite a few features. Much of the day, Deng and Lee will sit with a small board between them, playing game after game. Similar to western chess, each side has a “general”, the capture of which being the object of the game, and a variety of other pieces of varying capabilities and usefulness. Rather than being distinguished by their shape, each piece is a simple disc of some suitable material with the appropriate character painted on it. This adds another degree of difficulty for a foreign player, as it necessitates that one understand or learn the characters. In my case, this meant that I lost even more spectacularly in my first few attempts than I otherwise would have, as all my mental energy went to remembering what piece was what, so that working on any strategy was difficult.

Once I got the hang of it, I discovered it to be quite an addictive game. As I mention above, it is similar to western chess. However, it has fewer pieces, and the pawns do not cover the entire front rank. Therefore, the stronger pieces may be mobilized faster, and the games tend to be quicker. What really appealed to me, however, was the friendliness of the game. There appears to be less emphasis on winning, and more on getting a good game. If one makes a mistake which will cost the game, most opponents will suggest that the last several moves be

Chapter 5: Karen's Place

reversed and that one be allowed to try again. I first thought this to be a concession to me as a beginner, but judging by how other people play it appears to be perfectly standard practice. If a player places one of the opponent's pieces under pressure, it is usual to point this out, and if one of the players makes an unwise move, it is usual for the other player to point this out, suggesting that the move be redrawn. At the amateur level, it therefore becomes more strategic than western chess, as one cannot hope for one's opponents to make mistakes or not spot that they are vulnerable. Good conduct demands that the opponent be warned whenever one of his or her pieces is threatened.

Chapter 6: Reciprocity and Linguistic Discrepancy

In Chapters three and four, I described the two dialects commonly used in Guangzhou, Cantonese and Mandarin, as well as some of the symbolic values each bring to a given interaction. In this chapter, I will continue this discussion but with an added variable, as many living and working on Shamian speak English in addition to their native language(s), and are required to use it on a daily basis. This by no means includes all of the inhabitants, not even most, but the proportion of English speakers is large when compared to the rest of the city, even such districts as Tianhe. In particular I will show how these languages affected customer relations in Karen's Place. Although much of my argument is based on the different levels of reciprocity postulated by Sahlins (1972), I do not follow this formal division very rigorously. By Sahlins' definition we would expect the sale of goods in a shop, being an example of market economy, to fall under the heading of balanced reciprocity. However, when a customer is identified by looks or language, distinct reactions emerge which I divide into three categories of reciprocal behaviour similar to those of Sahlins.

Rather than follow the formal definitions of generalized, balanced and negative reciprocity, I adhere to the guiding thought which seems to be present beneath this division, namely, that the obligations two people have towards each other, as well as the probabilities of them being upheld, vary according to social closeness. Sahlins himself places much emphasis on the role of kinship ties for determining such closeness, something he has been criticised for, e.g. by Lebra Sugiyama (1975). I do not entirely agree with her critique however, as "*Stone Age Economics*" is explicitly substantivist, a theoretical position developed by Karl Polanyi which distinguishes between market oriented and pre-capitalist societies (1944), and as such there is no claim that it should be applicable to an industrialized nation state. That being said, the main thrust of Sahlins' argument nevertheless seems to be remarkably adaptable to other contexts, although Lebra does have a point that if it should be implemented on a more modern setting kin may prove to be less central than other axes of social closeness such as friendship, ethnicity or other group belonging, which indeed seems to be the case in China (Yan 2009:91).

The formalist approach, in Polanyi's usage opposed to the substantivist, is basically that of classical economy, personified by Adam Smith's oft used term; "Homo Economicus" (2007). The formalist position, like the substantivist, may be criticized for its generalization, but what

must be understood is that both of these positions rely on a certain level of abstraction. The formalist does not suppose that all economic systems are the same, but rather that, at a certain level of abstraction, all economies operate according to the same principles. What much of "*Stone Age Economics*" deals with, coming as it does in the formalist/substantivist debate, is that primitive economics cannot be understood without exploring the dimension of morality. However, this modern/primitive delineation creates a rather sterile view of modern economics as being neutral and thus beyond such issues as morality or immorality. It is, however, a gross simplification to say that industrialized peoples care only for value, whilst primitives care only for values (see Brennan & Eusepi 2009). This debate has been largely ended today, as has the rather unsavoury division between moderns or primitives (see Larsen 1977). The next chapter deals with the notion of *guanxi*, and will explore how morality operates in Chinese economy.

Reciprocity as an anthropological term is associated with Polanyi (1957), but has been a Key Concept since the works of Durkheim (1915) and Mauss (2002). Sahlins draws heavily on Mauss' work, "*The Gift*"⁵, showing him great deference, but writes that the concept of *hau* (2002:14-6) described by Mauss only explains the compulsion to repay a gift, not the inclination to give in the first place nor the expectation to receive. Surely, if a gift has so much power as Mauss describes, accepting one should be more seriously considered. Indeed the Chinese are often wary of accepting gifts for this very reason, which I shall explain more closely later. Although Sahlins' (1972:149-80) critique of Mauss' ethnography is quite convincing, citing several respected scholars like Lévi-Strauss and Firth, "*The Gift*" remains a seminal work in the social sciences and should be mentioned in any study of reciprocity. It might also be mentioned in this context that the anthropological focus on reciprocity has itself been criticised as Eurocentric, as it may be seen as way of naturalising the free-market economy (Weiner 1992:28-30).

The division of generalized, balanced and negative reciprocity is largely analytic. In "*Stone Age Economics (1972)*" Sahlins is elaborating on a continuum of reciprocities postulated by Malinowski (1961). It seems to be natural for academics when confronted with a continuum to describe it in terms of tripartite divisions, identifying first the outer extremes before describing the middle position. This brings with it the risk of obfuscating the fact that what is actually being described are gradual rather than abrupt transitions. Sahlins has not overlooked

⁵ This work was written in 1923 as "*Essay sur le don*" and published posthumously in 1950. I am using the 2002 edition, translated by W. Halls in 1990.

this, and points out that many, perhaps most, transactions will fall somewhere in between of the various positions he has described. The situation met at Karen's Place perhaps more readily lends itself to a tripartite division as there are three languages used each with a corresponding "level of reciprocity". This is not to say that anomalies weren't encountered, especially when a given customer was known to the employees beforehand. Sociability also falls into a continuum which correlates to that of reciprocity, both reaffirming the other. I shall deal more closely with this continuum of social relationships in the next chapter.

Aggression in Sales Technique: Foreign Customers

As I have previously mentioned, the sales approach of the manager at Karen's Place was remarkably persistent, at least towards certain customers. I'd like to deal with these foreign patrons first before I move on to the Chinese, as the treatment they encounter differs considerably. On my first visit at Karen's Place, I ended up spending over a thousand Yuan but was still assailed with questions like "do you have a gift for your father yet", "do you need any more tea" or "do you have enough clothes". The second time was much the same but by the third time, this started to abate. With each visit, more time was spent on talking and less on salesmanship, until I was able to visit without being asked to buy anything. I soon learned that I was not the only one to be subjected to the intense treatment with which I had initially been met. Once I had become more or less accepted, most of the time at Karen's Place was spent at leisure, drinking tea, playing *jeuhng k'ei* and talking until a customer came in. At this point, the response of the staff would depend greatly on the customer in question as well as who was minding the shop.

Karen would generally remain seated, continuing with what she was doing. If the customers looked foreign, she would greet them in English and ask them where they were from. When in the shop, she was most often to be found behind the till, working on her calligraphy, and would ask the person to whom she was speaking if they would like their names spelled in Chinese characters or their portrait drawn. If they went to browse the shelves, she would remain seated, but she would stop what she was doing and follow them with her eyes as they went around. Lee, Cheung and Yue-Mei did not speak English, and so were obviously unable to engage foreign customers in conversation, although they too kept a very close eye on them, not letting them out of sight. The two youngest of the three knew the odd word such as "hello", and tended to approach foreigners, greet them, then withdraw again, following them

a at a distance of a few paces. Lee is somewhat more reserved, even shy, and rarely engages anyone except his friends. He also keeps an eye on customers, but keeps his distance.

Deng's response was the most extreme. If the customer was of Caucasian appearance, or was otherwise revealed to be foreign, he would follow them through the shop much as he had me, and suggest goods for purchase in his rapid-fire manner. He was incredibly difficult to deter, even when some people became rather agitated. A family from Arkansas who were in town to adopt a child grew quite angry at this treatment, making no effort to conceal their agitation. Deng was insisting that the medium sized shirts would fit the rather obese mother of the family. She became indignant, possibly interpreting Deng's claim as facetious, and the family soon stormed out. Although there were others who left the shop in annoyance, this was the most extreme case. Generally, the reactions on the customers' side were mixed. One man, a business owner from New Jersey, joked that he should offer Deng a job in his sales department. Some were persuaded to buy quite a bit more than they had intended, while others were annoyed into buying less.

Although this full-pressure approach is unique to Deng, the others do vary on the same criteria as to how closely a customer is observed while browsing the shelves. Like Karen, the others keep a very close eye on English speakers. For Chinese customers, Lee, Cheung and Yue-Mei will simply move so as always to have them in their field of vision, whereas foreigners will actually be followed at a distance of a yard or two. Here also I hold Sahlins main argument to be elucidating. Whereas the decrease of pressure described above may be seen as a movement through the spheres of reciprocity leaving the negative behind, the lessening of surveillance may suggest that these people are more trusted not to see the shop as a valid target for negative reciprocity, i.e. thievery.

Aggression in Sales Technique: Chinese Customers

Chinese people who enter the shop and are not known to the staff will be greeted in Mandarin. The sales pitch will be somewhat more relaxed compared to that experienced by foreigners, as is the surveillance. The prompts would also be for cheaper items, such as cigarettes and tea. However, if the person should be known to be a local, or identify himself as such, there was no pressure to buy whatsoever, and the person would be permitted to browse the shelves unmonitored. The way in which strangers could identify themselves as local was through language. If after the initial greeting they responded in Cantonese, they would receive the same treatment as those already known to the staff. During my first few

visits here, the declining amount of pressure exerted was an indication of how I was slowly being accepted, until one day I was asked to sit down for some tea, and there was no attempt to sell me anything. I suggest that by using the local language, one is in some way defining oneself as belonging to a more intimate sphere, and thus the closer the customer comes, the more he or she moves towards the sociable pole on the continuum of reciprocity.

Thus, we see a clear linguistic partition into Cantonese, Mandarin and English where the user of each elicits a certain type of economic behaviour. This cannot be seen wholly in the specific interaction, but in the larger context of the relationship in which it exists. There is nothing inherent in any of these languages to prompt any different reactions, what is relevant is the degree of social nearness or distance each one symbolizes. If a business owner in Guangzhou hailed from Beijing, it is entirely possible that the phenomenon would be inverted, and Mandarin speakers would be the ones encountering favouritism. In “*Stone Age Economics*” Sahlins argues that as social closeness rises, so too does the obligations and expectation that exist within the relationship, and here we see that each language carries with it a symbolic value of social closeness which is attributed to the speaker. But if there are many axes for determining social distance, why do I focus so much on the linguistic?

Social Closeness and Geographic Closeness

Phonetic discrepancy is generally indicative of geographic distance. In Guangzhou both Cantonese and Mandarin are used by most locals, those from Guangdong and Guangxi provinces, whilst for out-of-towners, Mandarin was likely to be their only way of communicating with locals. Outside Hong Kong it is very rare, even slightly suspect, for anyone to learn Cantonese for whom it is not a native language. In the case of Shamian Island, there are three tongues generally used, as there are many there who speak English in addition to Cantonese and Mandarin. Now, it might be argued that the favouritism of certain speakers in Karen’s Place is not a response to language per se, but rather a response to geographic nearness, of which language is an indication. There are, however, instances of English speaking sinoid foreigners being treated in the same way as Americans and Europeans, although I only observed a few such occurrences. Race is an important concept in China (Dikötter 1992), although for the purposes of categorizing insider from outsider, functional rather than morphological criteria seem to be more relevant (see D’Andrade 1995). In other words, although a European might well categorize a Kinh (Vietnamese), either consciously or unconsciously, as being more closely related to China than to Europe, The

Chinese may well see a Kih as having more in common with Europeans than themselves as both belong to the foreigner category. Sociolinguistic studies, such as that by Ivan Kalmar, Zhong Yong and Xiao Hong (1987) show that language affects our impressions of others and how we relate to them in manifold ways, but this naturally doesn't exclude other factors nor mean that language necessarily be the most relevant.

What I am suggesting here is that in Guangzhou, as it is a polyglot community, language served as a means of categorising the other if no other factors made themselves relevant. What directed interaction was the amalgamated quality of "nearness" which included a number of factors, not least linguistic. Depending on which language is used, the speaker may be placed into a cognitive map of social proximity, which I have elsewhere in this thesis described as the insider/outsider dimension. As social proximity intensifies, so does the volume of social relations. Sahlins (1972), for instance, argued that reciprocal relationships, i.e. gift giving and trade, changed nature according to the distance between two actors. We may pose this argument another way by repeating that the closer two actors are socially, the more obligations they will have to each other, as well as the expectation that they will be honoured. Here English speakers are the most distant and the group to whom the unsociable end of the reciprocity continuum is an appropriate tactic. Cantonese speakers fall on the more sociable side of the spectrum, while Mandarin speakers fall somewhere in between, although closer to the sociable extreme than the unsociable. Outside Shamian the use of Mandarin doesn't seem to elicit any special treatment whatsoever, presumably because in most of the city Mandarin and Cantonese are opposed to each other, whereas on Shamian they gain slight favourable status when compared to English speakers. This creates vague associations to the idea of segmentary opposition (see Evans-Pritchard 1940). Alone, the two languages are opposed, but when English is added to the linguistic environment, the Chinese languages are in a sense brought closer together as they have more in common with each other than with English.

Acceptance into the Field

Being accepted in the field was a gradual process, and one which occupied most of my stay. It was a day in April, one of the colder days in the year. In fact, it never got all that cold here, but houses are made to keep the heat out, not in, and the high humidity exacerbated the actually quite mild weather making it seem far more biting than it really was. The road work on Shamian had advanced to the stage where there was a ditch immediately outside the shop

door, which naturally impacted business quite substantially. It was actually not that wide or deep, and it made ingress more inconvenient than impossible, but even so, Karen and Deng were anticipating a quiet day. Lee had returned to his family's village to visit his mother, a matter on which Deng and Karen would say little to me at that time. Cheung was at school, and Yue-Mei was sitting at her accustomed spot a stone's throw up the road, so it was just the three of us.

Around mid day, there was a sudden shower of rain, with the heavy droplets one gets in subtropical areas. An American family came running in seeking shelter, so Deng and Karen got up to greet them. This was easier said than done, however, as it was a rather large family. There was a mother and father, two biological children in their teens and one small boy they had come to Guangzhou in order to adopt. Lastly there was also an uncle. This was the only time the shop was filled past capacity, as there were three adults and two adolescents that needed watching, but just two shopkeepers. Deng was dealing with the uncle, while Karen was speaking to the mother. Karen is more relaxed than Deng, but she can exert a bit of pressure if she has a mind to, and was doing so now, trying to get them to buy something before the rain abated, which was already happening. I did not have to opportunity to observe them very closely, however, as the small boy was rushing around making a mess, and I felt obliged to stop him. I kept him occupied for a time, and then ended up talking with the father. During our conversation, I advised him to buy a city map and a *Xinhua Zidian* (a dictionary of Chinese characters), saying that for my own part, these things had proved invaluable. I also persuaded him to buy some tea. This was the first time was allowed to deal with customers, and there was a noticeable relaxation to my presence at this point, and I was taken into their confidence to a far greater degree after this incident. The first indication of this was that I had asked casually why Lee was gone, and the two had seemed somewhat evasive. Immediately after the family had left, we sat down, and I was told that Lee's mother was dying of cancer, and that the village healer had told her to send for her family as she had little time left.

Profitability vs. Sociability

I have placed much emphasis on Sahlins' levels of reciprocity in "*Stone Age Economics*". In an earlier work, Sahlins describes all social interaction as a kind of Reciprocity (1968), which gives some associations to transactional analysis (Barth 1966). Just as social relationships are highlighted by economic interactions, they are reaffirmed by them. Seeing as this is a business, may we view this treatment of customers within transactional analysis? According

to Barth, all social interactions are transactional in the sense of entailing flow of goods and services, as even spending an hour in amiable chitchat may be seen as a service of sorts. At some level, everyone constructs a mental “ledger”, on which are tallied the costs and benefits of a given action in order to maximize value. Similarly to Bourdieu (1986), Barth implements an extended view of exchangeable value, and in his analysis seems to incorporate anything tangible or intangible that one may find desirable. Barth has a far greater emphasis on individual, voluntary actions than Bourdieu however, for which he has been criticised, directly by Talal Asad (1972), but as Barth’s work is formalist, any substantivist may be seen as a critic of his. On the surface, it seems perfectly reasonable to exert extra pressure on certain customers. As the foreign patrons are far more likely to be temporary residents, repeat custom is less of a concern. The value of social relations may be seen as lessened compared with monetary value with regard to foreign guests. In this ledger that Barth postulates, exerting pressure on foreigners will be less detrimental, seeing as how they generally stay in China for limited periods and one will likely not see a “return” on social capital. In addition, they are more likely to have disposable income, as well as being more inclined towards purchasing the more expensive souvenir items. On the other hand, for each person persuaded into spending more money, at least one simply left. It is of course difficult to be sure, but I’m inclined to think that the amount of custom evens out, meaning that the effort to pressure customers to buy more and more resulted in no significant monetary gain. An American man who entered the shop one day is an example of an instance where the full-pressure approach was profitable. Deng and I were alone this day, as Karen had gone to pick up their son from kindergarten, and Lee was visiting his mother who was ill. A man in a grey suit came in, and Deng rose to greet him.

- Hello, how are you? Can I help you with something?
- Hi. Nah, I’m just looking around.
- Do you work for the embassy? Then you should get a statue of Guan-yu (indicating the figurines in the corner). He will bring you much power.
- No, I don’t work at the embassy, I run a business. I just wanted to see what kind of place this was.
- You’re a businessman? Then you should get a chess set. It helps exercise your mind.
- I can’t play this kind of chess.
- No problem, if you buy a set now, you can come in tomorrow and I can teach you. Where are you from?

The conversation continued in this vein for about five minutes. The man was from New Jersey, about which Deng displayed an impressive amount of knowledge. Amid his purchasing suggestions Deng interspersed comments and questions about the man's hometown, which made it difficult for him to withdraw himself from the conversation. In the end he complained that his head was hurting, whereupon he was given a cup of ginseng tea and advised to buy a small supply of his own. The man ended up buying a few packs of tea, although he said that he had not intended to buy anything, and joked that he should "*Hire this guy for the marketing department*". Although the man didn't actually end up spending much, he spent more than he otherwise would, and thus this was one unambiguous instance of the maximum pressure approach being profitable, however there is no way of knowing how many sales have been lost in other such encounters.

In Sahlins' terms, haggling is a form of negative reciprocity (1972:201), and while he makes no mention of the high pressure sales approach, I have no doubt he would term this as negative reciprocity as well as it is in much the same vein. As all the goods have sticker prices on them, the employees at the shop can hardly haggle upward from this, but most of the wares are greatly overpriced to begin with. There is a section for DVD's for instance, which were sold for 50 Yuan apiece, despite the fact that on most streets there were hawkers selling the same films for less than a tenth of the price, although as we have seen, hawkers seemed to be denied access to Shamian. As we shall see later, this overpricing also gives considerable leeway to give discounts to the more favoured customers, which is another variable in which a given transaction may move to the more sociable and of the reciprocal continuum.

Flexible Prices and "Making Special Deals"

It seems to me that the flexibility of prices in this type of setting has been unfairly overlooked in academic writings. Dumont mentions briefly that in India, status may be expressed quantitatively in that the price of milk varies according to the caste of the buyer (1970:104). Something similar may be seen in Karen's Place, with social closeness taking the place of caste. The closeness between the customer and the seller could readily be gauged by the size of the discount offered. Almost all the wares in Karen's were extremely overpriced, ranging between three to twelve times what one would otherwise expect to pay. Snacks and Chinese brands of cigarettes were the only exceptions, undoubtedly due to the fact that these were almost exclusively bought by locals. Imported snacks such as Oreo cookies were sometimes

bought by foreigners, but such items are extremely expensive by Chinese standards at the outset, and can hardly be marked up much further. This overpricing means that for close friends, it is possible to charge a fraction of the sticker price without taking a loss. “I will make a special deal for you” was said almost every time a sale was made, but for foreigners this usually meant knocking a Yuan or two off the total, which was partly symbolic and, I suspect, partly to make the total easier to calculate. The linguistic and the network aspects of the situation were similar, but not convergent. For example, Cantonese met less pressure in sales technique and got a better deal than Mandarin speakers and foreigners, but one had to actually be a member of the insider category before the discount became substantial. This is tied up with the moral dimension of *guanxi* relationships, which is the subject of a later chapter.

Hu Hsien Chin (2009) places much emphasis on the countryman/foreigner dimension in the morality of economic behaviour. Utilizing Hu’s account on my own material, if anyone at Karen’s had treated a countryman in the manner foreigners were treated, it could have constituted a major loss of face if it attracted attention, and the business would have suffered greatly as few will have dealings with someone seen as immoral. There seems to be a far greater leniency with regard to such immoral behaviour where foreigners are concerned. In many societies sin is defined by distance, sometimes explicitly so (e.g. Kluckhohn 1959). I never heard this view openly stated in Guangzhou, but it seems clearly to be the case. Although Hu (2009) argues that the Chinese/non Chinese element be central, in Guangzhou it seemed to be the insider/outsider category, regardless of nationality. When it comes to the fear of losing face for immoral conduct, however, this is more acutely feared when dealing with other Chinese, as they are familiar with the mechanisms for mobilizing public opinion which seems to be prerequisite to incur a loss of face. In other words, some behaviour is potentially immoral, but not automatically so. If one feels one is being unfairly treated in China, one has the option of creating a scene, gather a crowd so as to shame the “wrongdoer” into correcting their ways. Should a party participating in a given transaction not be thus publicly rebuked for being unfair, there is no loss of face. The concept of face will be treated more fully later.

Social Relationships and Transactions

In many anthropological accounts, social relationships are visualized as a set of concentric spheres converging on an individual, with communication intensifying the closer one gets to

Chapter 6: Reciprocity and Linguistic Discrepancy

the centre. For Sahlins (1972), these spheres denote zones within which transactions are dominated by balanced, generalized and negative reciprocity respectively (see figure 4 below). For Yan (1996) these spheres fall into what he calls the core zone, the reliable zone and the effective zone, with parts of the village society at large falling into what I have previously called minor *guanxi* relations. Kipnis (1997) describes another village, Fengjia, which operates with a different division of *guanxi* types. The villagers of Fengjia recognize core family, relatives, fellow villagers and friends. Finally, Fei, in a more poetic style, also conceptualises relationships in China as concentric circles, likening them to those produced by throwing a stone in a lake. Like Sahlins, Fei also places great emphasis on kinship networks for determining where one's circles intersect with another's (1992:62-3). We see that the basic structure is the same. There is a hierarchical ranking of people according to social closeness, although we see from this that how this ranking is defined varies by region. As I have frequently argued, these spheres describing social closeness are mirrored by another set based on linguistic proximity, where Cantonese, Mandarin and English are roughly analogue to Sahlins' generalized, balanced and negative reciprocation.

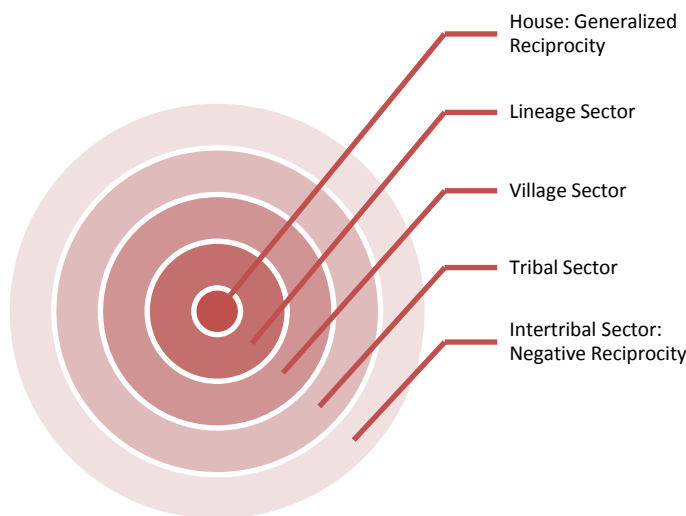


Figure 8: adapted from Marshall Sahlins Figure 5.1 in “*Stone Age Economics (1972:199)*”

The tripartite division I have described before of English, Mandarin and Cantonese speakers describes transactions, as it were, in a vacuum. Other factors could affect the situation, networks being a major one. A mandarin speaker who is a stranger would meet the kind of reception I have described before, but one known to the employees could get preferential treatment on a line with Cantonese speakers or better. If I'm correct, then the language used

associates the speaker to a symbolic landscape of social spheres, but this will not trump pre-existing network relations.

Zhou, the Friendly Soldier

Negative reciprocity towards countrymen might bring with it loss of face, but only the most extreme cases. The kind of treatment non-Cantonese Chinese met in Karen's is perfectly acceptable. Treating Chinese people differently based on language is more difficult to explain as maximizing behaviour, as there was only one instance I observed where a non-local Chinese was successfully convinced to spend more than he or she had initially intended. Whether or not the pressure actually does induce customers to spend more money is not relevant to my analysis. The point is whether or not this is the intention of the behaviour. The individual in question was called Zhou, and he was a soldier on guard at the American Consulate. He came in for a pack of cigarettes, but was sold three. Zhou was a special case, however, as he was very eager to establish good relations with all the inhabitants of Shamian, even attempting to learn a few phrases in Cantonese.

- Hi, are you going off duty?
- No, I'm just on break. I need a pack of cigarettes.
- Are you going to be on duty long? One may not be enough. All the work going on around here is very stressful so you're likely to smoke a lot. I think you need at least two.
- Fine, give me three packs.

He took his three packs of cigarettes, paid for them, and left. I saw him a few times on Shamian, and once when I found him alone, I approached him and we spoke for a short while. One of the things I asked him was why he was trying to learn Cantonese.

"I'm trying to learn Gwóngjàuwá, because if you speak this, the Guangzhou people will treat you better. If you speak only Mandarin, maybe they think 'You stay in Beijing when Guangzhou not doing well, but now we are rich, you come to take our fortune.'"

This statement echoes my division into levels of reciprocity. If outsiders are at some level taken to be intruders coming to exploit Guangzhou's economic growth, then they are more on the negative side of the sociability spectrum. Zhou was the only one to state such a view openly, however, as natives of Guangzhou denied any such difference in treatment, so we

must be wary of taking his statement too literally. It does, however, show that at least for an outsider, the difference in how Mandarin and Cantonese speakers are met is noticeable.

Let's look a little closer at the case of Zhou the friendly soldier. He is, as I have written, a special case, but for more than one reason. I have argued that through repeated interactions one may move along the continuum so that one's language no longer determines interaction, the linguistic axis being supplanted by the sociability axis. Zhou is something of an anomaly here, as he is a regular customer and an inhabitant of Shamian, why then isn't he elevated to close sphere despite attempts at Cantonese? My supposition, in line with previous observations, is that despite his repeat custom and attempts at the local language, he is in uniform and as such is too firmly rooted in the "official" sphere to be easily elevated from it. Conversely, not all the men who came to play *jeuhng kái* with Lee were *Gwóngjàujàhn*, but none of them ever bought a thing, nor were they asked to, and yet their presence did not seem to be resented by anyone.

In the city proper, we see an indication that use of the personal language places an individual into the private sphere, although this is merely symbolic and transitory. The case above, although it seems on the surface to be an aberration to my argument, may be explained by the emphasis on the private/official spheres. Here Zhou's unmistakable belonging to the official sphere restricts re-categorization, despite "inappropriate" use of Cantonese. For the most part, which language is to be used is determined by situation, although Mandarin has a greater span of "acceptable" situations than Cantonese. As I shall show in the next chapter, even though insider and outsider are best understood as points on a continuum, the institution of *guanxi* gives them the properties of polar opposites. In other words, although social closeness is a continuum, it may, under some particular circumstances, act as a discontinuity. Whereas most of the city uses one of two languages depending on the situation, there are three languages commonly used in the shop, each prompting a certain response from those working there. From a set of polar opposites, the tripartite situation at Karen's Place reintroduces elements of the continuum in that there is a subdivision within the system. Cantonese speakers are still symbolically insinuated into the private sphere, becoming "insiders", but there are now two degrees of outsider-ness.

Race

Race is quite an important factor in China, and as such it deserved some treatment. As I have given some discussion to the element of social distance, it may seem natural that race may

play an important role, but my observations suggest it to be less relevant than one might suppose, at least in Karen's Place. Quite early on in my fieldwork, a young woman entered who I supposed at the time to be Chinese. Cheung, Deng, Lee and I were all outside the shop playing *Jie Zi* (shuttlecock). The skill and coordination that the local people displayed in this game never ceased to impress me, nor did the embarrassment of playing against them. When the woman came, Deng went inside to attend to her while the rest of us continued the game. After a few humiliating rounds, I happened to overhear a snatch of conversation from inside which was conducted in English. The young woman, it turned out, was from Thailand, and was not interested in buying anything, only to ask directions. Deng was attempting to deflect all her questions and turn the conversation to selling the woman something. The lady, on her part, was only trying to get directions to a pet shop, and dismissed all Deng's suggestions with phrases like "*Yes yes, that's very nice, but do you know where I might buy things for my dog?*". Deng responded that he did not know, but that he did carry maps of the city. The woman shook her head, saying that these would be no good to her. Such maps would hardly be so detailed as to denote individual shops, she explained. She thanked him and left. The treatment the Thai woman received lies far closer to the one of foreigners than that of Mandarin speaking Chinese.

Coming back to the question of race, does this incidence prove that racial grouping does not influence the language groupings? It is tempting to say yes, but it is necessary to add a few qualifiers. The concept of race is not entirely baseless. There are morphological differences in human populations which correspond with geographic regions to a certain degree. However, in any taxonomic division of humans, there is too much overlap between categories and too much variation within categories to argue their validity (Gould 1981). Although there is a difference in physical appearance between, say, the Nuer and the Chinese, plus also some biological differences such as Asians generally having a lower tolerance for alcohol and Africans being more susceptible to certain diseases. However, any strict delineation between an Asian "race" and an African "race" comes up against a great many middle positions. Where do Indians fit in? What about Persians, are they Asian or Caucasian? Such delineations that have been made are indicative of a socio-political reality rather than biological (Marshall 1993).

In this way, biological differences are taken to be more discontinuous than are actually the case, in order to serve socio-political needs. Race is thus more an expression of folk taxonomy rather than biological fact. Blumenbach's division in 1795 between Caucasian,

Chapter 6: Reciprocity and Linguistic Discrepancy

Mongolian, Ethiopian, American and Malayan is amongst the best known, but there have been many others ranging from several to several dozen races. The point of all this is that there is no guarantee that a Chinese person would consider a Thai woman as belonging to the same racial grouping as himself. Dikötter (1992) argues that racial delineations have a far longer history in China than in Europe, although it is rooted in a completely different cosmology. In this system, the Chinese people comprise their own race, and are the only people capable of true civilization. Other groups are graded by their geographical, cultural and physical proximity to the Chinese. The western view of race has influenced the Chinese view in recent times, although this discourse is very complex. It is implicit in Dikötter's work, although he doesn't suggest it explicitly, that one of the main reasons that the western racial theory won favour in China was that it classifies the sinoid peoples as yellow. The Daoist inspired cosmology formerly described the Chinese as white and Europeans as red, but the Chinese were willing to describe themselves as yellow, because it is seen as a very auspicious colour.

Although the impact of race in social relations may be difficult to decipher, we may be sure that she would be grouped together with the Chinese in a western/eastern division. In the Chinese concept of race, there are two opposing views, one stems from Daoism, and holds the Chinese to comprise its own racial category, whereas the other is defined in opposition to an encroaching west, and defines the "yellow races" as one group in opposition to the "white race" (Dikötter 1992). The relationship in China to westerners is very complex, involving competing feelings of superiority and inferiority. Outsiders are still often considered inherently incapable of learning Chinese culture. I am told that the Japanese have a similar consideration of westerners' capacity for acculturation. Here is another instance where we see that the Chinese do not differentiate between race and culture the way western scholars supposedly do, although Barth writes that the definition of "ethnic" with which most scholars operate is based on the proposition race = culture = language, although this is not stated (1969:11).

Determining the general opinion of the Chinese towards western foreigners remains problematic. At once they inhabit a privileged and a stigmatized position, and although those who fall into the "movement towards modernity" category do communicate a generally positive attitude towards westerners, there is often a hidden resentment beneath the surface. Metzger (1993) claims that there is a feeling that when the west becomes the benchmark for deciding what is modern, then this denies the Chinese their own modernity. Although I do

think Metzger is on to something, I suggest that these feelings are more buried than he supposes. When uncovering hidden processes beneath the explicit, it is not thereby said that what we have found is the “real” feelings. There is such a thing as ambivalence. All in all, I found race in the sense most Europeans would use the word to be less relevant than the tripartite division already suggested of foreigner, far Chinese and near Chinese denoted by linguistic code.

The only real exception to this tripartite system happened about two weeks after I started going to Karen's place. Deng and I was sitting at the small table, playing chess and drinking tea, when two men of sinoid appearance wearing business suits entered. I expected Deng to jump to his feet and greet these visitors. Although they were sinoid, I didn't think them Chinese, and so I anticipated them to get the same treatment the as Thai woman. However, he did not move, merely glared at the two men as they made their way amongst the shelves. He muttered a word under his breath; “Japanese”. The two men stayed for about ten minutes, during which time, Deng didn't say much. He remained seated the entire time, keeping his eyes on the Japanese men. When they were about to leave, one of them picked up a city map, looked at the price tag, counted out the correct change and gave it to Deng. He had remained seated throughout the whole episode, and at no point did anyone except the two Japanese men exchange a word.

This tense relationship with the Japanese is very common in Guangzhou, and indeed the antipathy of the Chinese towards the Japanese is well known and is reciprocated to a somewhat lesser extent. Although the following quote is from my interpreter Nancy, it could just as easily be attributed to any of a half dozen other people with just a few words interchanged. Although the dislike between the peoples of the two countries, especially the Chinese for the Japanese, was hardly surprising, the justifications given for this animosity were so similar as to be nearly word-for-word reiterations.

“I hate the Japanese. I think it's because of the past. They came and did very bad things in this country, and now they say they do nothing wrong. I think if you ask someone from another country, they would say they couldn't do these things that Japan did. They come here often to make trouble for China, since the Tang dynasty”

After this, Nancy added a historical note, which was repeated by three of the six other informants asked. Again, the choice of words was strikingly similar.

Chapter 6: Reciprocity and Linguistic Discrepancy

“The Mongols who conquer China try to take Japan. But the Yuan (Mongols) were not strong people on the sea. They are horse-people. Genghis Khan did not trust the Han (Chinese), who are very strong on the sea. If he did trust them, Japan would be a province of China now.”

Although it is difficult to say from just this one encounter, it seems as if the Japanese fall outside the ordinary system at Karen's place. In terms of race, they seem to have a special place here too. History goes some way towards explaining the animosity, but there is also a general trend in boundary creation that the strictest boundaries are erected towards that which lies closest. Barth (1969:16) argues that groups persist despite culture contact due to structuring of interactions which may prevent group differences from being reduced. The closer groups are, the more such mechanisms must be invoked, and the more the boundaries between the groups will be reaffirmed (e.g. Eidheim 1969). We see in Leach's study of insults and profanities that it is those neighbouring categories which have the greatest emotional power. It is because the dog is socially near to humans that “son of a bitch” may be considered an insult, whilst referring to someone as “son of a kangaroo” would be merely perplexing.

Chapter 7: Guanxi

I have previously suggested that marked use of the language related to the private sphere may be understood to establish a temporary association resembling *guanxi* relations. As is common knowledge, China is the most populous country in the world as well as one of the largest, and thus one would anticipate any attempt to draw general conclusions about its society to be highly problematic. Granted, generalization will always pose a problem, but not necessarily to the same degree in every setting. Nevertheless, it is striking how well such generalizations mirror reality in China, to the extent that phenomena observed in rural Sichuan Province may also be observed in urban Guangdong. Interestingly, this homogeneity was anticipated by Montesquieu in 1748 (1949). His suggestion was that in Asiatic regimes, new concepts would either be adopted on a larger level (like Confucianism) or quickly crushed (like the Beijing democracy movement, see Rosen 1985). I must be clear, however, that I am not claiming that China is homogenous, merely that it is more so than one would suspect

There are many different academic understandings of *guanxi*, each with their corresponding definition. Due to the structure of the Chinese languages, their words often have an ephemeral quality to western ears, and it is difficult to tie them down to any one given meaning. Any translation from Chinese to English will necessarily be a reduction, though, of course, translating from any source language to another is always problematic (see Swann 1992, Behar 1993). Aihwa Ong (1997:181) argues that *guanxi* is in fact a western term, constructed by sinologists to partition Chinese society into manageable analytic categories. She explains the Chinese adoption of this term, and several others, as a project of “self-orientalization” (1997:195), a claim which Gold et al (2002:5) Contest. According to Gold and his associates, early researchers in Hong Kong have in retrospect recalled hearing the term before it entered western academic parlance, but were unaware of its significance at the time. The most common approximations of *guanxi* are “relationships” and “particularist ties” (see Jacobs 1979). Problems in defining *guanxi* may arise from the aforementioned division of rural and urban spaces. When several authors differ on their descriptions of *guanxi*, it is in fact difficult to determine if these differences are due mostly to the perspectives of the anthropologists themselves, on the rural/urban divide, or on other regional differences. With this in mind, a translation viewed as fitting by the majority of sinologists is unlikely, if not

outright impossible. It should not be forgotten that while *guanxi* is most likely an emic term, the way it is utilized in academic writings is an etic appropriation of it. As no English translation captures the multiplicity of the word, it is best to leave it un-translated.

Guanxi is a system of reciprocity which exists in all Chinese communities. Relationships in China are formalized, involving both a certain level of gift exchange and an obligation on both parts to do favours for the other when asked. When two people have established such a relationship to each other, they are said to have *guanxi*. Although it may be described as being institutionalised, at least in a manner of speaking, it is not enforced through any official sanction beyond “losing face”, although this may be a grave enough punishment in its own right. There are academically divergent analyses on the nature of *guanxi*, and although it is difficult to be completely sure of the reason for this, what is clear is that there is an Urban/Rural division. Insider/Outsider and Family Member/Stranger are dimensions which are connected through the rural *guanxi* concept. Here the family is one’s main network, and external connections will often be modelled on kinship (Kolstad & Yang 2010).

In previous chapters we discussed the symbolism invoked by the use of language, focusing especially on linguistic discrepancy as a tool for categorization. We saw how relations of exchange, especially customer relations analysed in terms of Sahlins’ levels of reciprocity, could be taken as a window to understanding these phenomena. Exchange cannot be understood by itself, but must be seen in relation to its larger context (Sahlins 1972), and therefore the Chinese form of reciprocity known as *guanxi* must be understood in order to contextualize these exchanges. To exemplify this, let us re-examine a point made earlier in this thesis. When discussing methodology, we saw that interviews were very difficult to establish. My informants and I invariably became bogged down in a discussion on the anthropological discipline. Most people seemed curiously unconcerned by the fact that everything I saw and heard could potentially end up in print, but they did seem wary of giving formal statements unless they were sure what they would be used for. The recording device in particular appeared to intimidate people whenever it was brought out, so I never once got the opportunity to so much as turn it on.

Taking *guanxi* into account furnished us with a possible explanation as to why interviews were difficult to conduct. As an outsider, with no formal authority and to whom the locals were under no obligation to speak, one is also external to this network. As such, the hesitation to engage in an interview may be seen as a procrastinating tactic, engaging the other in

conversation as a way to place the interviewer into a cognitive category approaching the insider category in order to justify interaction, something Leon Festinger terms “cognitive dissonance” (1957). Cognitive dissonance is a mechanism for self justification, and may be described as a “*tension that arises when one is simultaneously aware of two inconsistent cognitions (Myers 2002:148)*”. Put simply, cognitive dissonance may be described as the need to resolve internal conflicts. The interviewee is placed in a position where he or she is expected to interact with a person external to their network, and in order to make peace with this conflict may either establish a relation or reject the interaction entirely.

Zhujiang Xin Cun Police Station

I was in the local police office in Zhujiang New Town, an area within the Tianhe district. I was obliged to go there to finalize my household registration form, colloquially known as the “yellow paper”. Having filled it in at home, this then needed to be transferred onto the police database in order to make it valid. However, this should have been done several months ago, and now we had reached a deadlock. My visa had run out, and I was unable to do anything about this without a valid yellow paper, but equally I couldn’t get the police to accept my yellow paper without a visa. QT, the company owning the building in which I lived, had sent an interpreter, a friendly local girl named Cathrina. She tried her best to help me, but after about an hour of fruitless weeding she had to leave for another appointment. I had been sitting alone in the reception area, watching the police woman stare at her computer screen for a further quarter of an hour before I felt compelled to break the silence. I asked her; “*Síujé, néih haih-m-haih Gwóngdung jàhn a*” (miss, are you from Guangdong Province). She looked slightly taken aback for a moment, but answered me in Cantonese that indeed she was, although not from Guangzhou. We chatted for a minute or two before she looked at my papers again, rattled away at her keyboard for a while, and told me that it was all sorted out and I could go. She had changed the date in her system so that it now showed that I had delivered the form for processing at the allotted time and not the actual date. I thanked her profusely, and she said “no problem” in English, giving me a playful salute.

This exchange raises questions. Not only did she set aside the legality of the matter to get me the yellow paper, she also ignored the faux pas on my part in addressing her as *síujé* (miss) rather than *gíngchaat* (officer). In previous chapters I have argued that language is a tool for categorization in Guangzhou, acting as a marker as to what kind of interaction is appropriate for the person in question. In this chapter I suggest that this tendency is strengthened in

certain situations so that use of the private language may establish temporary dyadic relations akin to *guanxi*.

Guanxi and the Insider/Outsider dimension

Beyond the general definition above, *guanxi* refers to the potential influence which actors have the ability to mobilize through their social network, and is a ubiquitous phenomenon in all Chinese communities. *Guanxi* is, in its simplest sense, related to a division between insider and outsider and the mutual dynamic of moral obligations this entails. As I will show, this distinction is quite sharp in Guangzhou and offers little room for ambiguity. The insider category is synonymous with moral expectations and obligations manifesting as reciprocal exchanges of gifts and favours, while there appears to be little to no moral obligation to those in the outsider category. There seems to be either complete trust or complete distrust, to paraphrase Mauss (2001).

It should not be supposed that insider/outsider is a dichotomous value. Rather, each denote points along a continuum of social closeness to which I have previously alluded, although in a society such as China they may certainly attain the appearance of dichotomies. Although this brings us dangerously close to linguistic determinism which I have discussed elsewhere in this text, it seems to me that the very existence of the term “*guanxi*” serves to solidify those partaking and those not partaking in it as distinct categories, analogous to how sociability may be constructed “after the fact” by the very act of categorization (see Levine 1999). Herein we find the first division in the scholarly understanding of *guanxi*, as some writers focus on the morality of the system, while others focus purely on the flow of material goods. Although relativism, at least a weak form, is considered central to the discipline of anthropology (see Geertz 1984), many who ostensibly embrace it nonetheless betray a moral positioning in their writings. Most studies of *guanxi* seem to contain an implicit condemnation or defence of it stemming from the positioning of the anthropologist themselves.

Continuum of Rights and Obligations

Taking a line through Marshall Sahlins, material flow and social closeness are correlated. If we imagine that obligations are generally proportional with rights in dyadic connections, we may further imagine a continuum of such closeness. At one extreme are people with no relations to each other whatsoever, and are under no obligations to respect any norms with

regard to each other. At the other extreme are “total” social relations where the linked pair is obliged to fulfil any need the other may have. Naturally, both these polar extremes are largely hypothetical, and the actual relationships people share will fall somewhere in between. Even to complete strangers, some niceties must be observed, and thus we never reach the bottom of our imagined continuum, as there are a minimum of mutual norms which exist even between strangers. In Guangzhou, this minimum level was much lower than in our part of the world. Such minor niceties as we expect from strangers, but which could not be observed in Guangzhou include holding the door open for someone who is a few steps behind us, allowing someone in a cafe to claim a table by leaving their jacket draped over a chair and similar. It may seem from this that the Chinese are brazenly rude, and indeed many westerners describe them as such.

Many visitors to China are shocked at the way people in the “outsider” category are treated, although they are generally unaware that this changes drastically as soon as a social relationship is established. As soon as this happens, the relationship takes on the characteristics of *guanxi*. There appears to be no category for casual acquaintance, i.e. people with whom one interacts but is under no obligation to exchange gifts or do favours. The number of gift exchanges one has with the individual, the grandeur of the gift and the types of favours which may be requested all vary in accordance with the strength of the relationship as well as the position of the people involved. To put it another way, if I may return to our imagined continuum of social closeness, in Guangzhou, possibly in China generally, there is a large chunk of the lower portion of it which is simply not occupied by any dyadic pair, because they either fall into the insider or the outsider categories. Where we in the west may move from being strangers, then on nodding terms, then on speaking terms and so on, this generally appears not to be the case in Guangzhou.

Guanxi and Favours

Whatever its origins, the term *guanxi* denotes a concept of a reciprocal network between individuals. Between two persons any kind of social tie will include some level of *guanxi*. These dyadic connections bring both rights and obligations to those within the network, such as the need for ritual gift exchange at key points in the year and life-cycle. The aspect of *guanxi* most under scrutiny from social science is the obligation on the part of those between whom the relation has been established to do favours for each other when in a position to do so. One is expected to favour members of one’s own network wherever there is room for

human discretion. This expectation does not only come from the beneficiary of the transaction, but of society at large as well. Although there are exceptions, most people are perfectly content with others benefiting from their connections. In most parts of the bureaucracy there is legal wiggle room for these obligations to be fulfilled, as well as a tolerance for this from one's peers. In fact, rather than viewing favouritism as corruption, most would view the failure to show favouritism as a betrayal of social obligations. Many working in western embassies in China tell similar stories where they are asked by Chinese friends to provide a visa for them, the friendship coming under strain when they are unable to comply. In other words, such obligations transcend legality as well as other loyalties, except family.

One of the biggest differences between the rural and urban setting is the degree of entrepreneurship. This is partly due to the diverse nature of the insider/outsider dichotomy, which most often manifests as family/non-family in rural spaces, and friend/non-friend in the Cities (Kolstad & Yang 2010). While the Chinese are known for their entrepreneurism, this is difficult without a *guanxi* network. Many have noted that such relationships vastly increase ones' playing field in China allowing one to "go through the back door" in order to get things done. It is this kind of mechanism which provokes antipathy from certain commentators, exacerbating, as is the claim, the already rampant levels of corruption in this country (See Wedeman 2004). Those who are more favourably disposed often point out that going through the back door is not just quicker and cheaper, it is often the only way to get things done in China, as I myself experienced with regard to the yellow paper story at the beginning of this chapter. The problem with this, of course, is that people without connections are in a difficult position. As Karen once said; "*We have no good relationships. We do not know anybody, so have no way to improve our situation*". In addition to going through the back door, extensive *guanxi* is invaluable as it allows one to disperse economic risk throughout the social support network (Scott 1976).

Instrumental Guanxi in Large Scale Business

Although this is quite far from my own focus, I feel it necessary to at least mention the business environment as it is featured so prominently in recent scholarship. Most studies of *guanxi* treat it solely within the landscape of business relations (e.g. Seligman 1999, Kiong & Kee 1998), dealing with what Walder (1986) calls "ceremonialized bribery". Private entrepreneurs often have to rely on *guanxi* networks to survive. Entrepreneurship has had a

long history in the Pearl River delta, but still encounters many obstacles, both legal and social, in penetrating arenas dominated by the state (Fan et al. 2006). The ways in which *guanxi* is described in most accounts are often reminiscent of Bourdieu's "*Forms of Capital (1986)*", a similarity noted by Smart (1993) and Gold et al (2002). In this sense, *guanxi* is seen as an ability to transform the nature of one's "capital" by manipulating the threads of the network. Through judicial mobilization, economic capital may be transformed into social, social into cultural and so on. For instance, using one's connections to get into a prestigious university is one of the ways in which social capital may be transformed into cultural. Although this comparison with Bourdieu is explicit in the two works mentioned above, it is made implicitly in any number of them, such as in Hwang's "*Face and Favour (1987)*". Here he presents an argument remarkably similar to Bourdieu but using different terms. It should not be supposed that I am accusing Hwang, as well as many others, of plagiarism. It is entirely possible for two or indeed several people to reach similar conclusions independently of each other.

The instrumental focus of these more organizationally oriented studies may be a consequence of what I like to call Post-Orientalism. China is well known as a collectivist society, although the reality is often quite distant from the archetype many people construct. An archetype is a psychological concept denoting a fixed composition of traits that are projected onto another, in many ways synonymous with stereotype. The term is associated with Carl Gustav Jung (1991, 2003), who thought them innate and hereditary. An example of such an archetype is that of the Oriental presented by Edward Said (1978), and while he writes chiefly on the Middle East, the general dynamic of his work may be applicable here. Said describes an us/them dynamic where "they" are defined in opposition to an emerging idea of "us". The two categories define each other, and both are equally constructed. Thus, the image of the Oriental is not constructed with reference to the Orientals themselves, but is as it were the photo negative of that of how the Occidental wishes to be defined.

I suggest that this is still done, but that in post modern times when we are more capable of self critique, defining others in opposition does not necessarily entail slander as it seems to do Said's work (1978), but may almost be taken as an elegy of what we find missing in our own society. A parallel to Dryden's noble savage, we construct an archetype of the collectivist Oriental. One of the chief components of this archetype is that it is selfless, always putting the good of the group before its own. It is also spiritual, wise and concerned with higher things rather than transitory matter. Most aspects of the Chinese archetype seen by outsiders

as most integral to the Chinese persona were under direct attack by the communist government. Some of these campaigns were more successful than others, and while patriarchal control within the household was severely undermined (Yan 2009, Ting & Chiu 2002), *guanxi* relations persisted. I imagine that to one expecting this manner of person, the pragmatism of the Chinese may be somewhat jarring. To one who has accepted the Orientalist archetype of this collectivistic non-person, I suggest that the cynical and exploitative treatment they would no doubt have been subject to as members of the outsider category, especially within business from which most of these instrumental accounts come, blinded them to the morality of the system. The shock of the Orientalist archetype being shattered created a new archetype which is a reaction to it, the Post-Orientalist.

Guanxi and Gift Exchange

It should not be supposed that all gift giving practices are to be thought of as *guanxi* relations, or that every gift implies an obligation on the side of the receiver to reciprocate to the giver. In China as in the west, there are institutionalized gifts which adults give to children. During the New Year celebrations, adults give envelopes of money to children, called “lucky money”. These are not reciprocated directly, but indirectly, as these children will themselves be the givers when they grow up, assuming the custom still exists. Yan Yunxiang (1996:63, 73) describes the same lucky money institution briefly, which he calls by Malinowski’s term “pure gifts”. I find this somewhat problematic. Although as I stated above there is no obligation for direct reciprocation, the fact that one received as a child may be seen as the instigator for one to give later in life. If these relations were understood as *guanxi*, it would be problematic, even going against my own definition of it as the person to whom repayment occurs is not the one from whom the initial gift was received. While these gifts are exchanged by people within a *guanxi* network, they are not themselves necessarily *guanxi*.

Yan (1996, 2009) describes any number of different gift giving traditions in China. He describes an array of emic terms for different categories of gifts, although it does seem like some of these categories might reasonably be considered a subset of *guanxi*. He writes that the 21 sets of gifts range from pure gifts to indirect payment (See Malinowski 1961). What appears to distinguish these categories from each other is popular opinion, and the perceived intention on the part of the giver. Although it is understood that a portion of relation building is for the purposes of the pragmatic implementations of such ties, networking as we would call it, the ones with whom one is attempting to create a relationship is unlikely to accept the

attempt if they perceive a risk of being taken advantage of. Outright bribery is unacceptable. Yan describes an episode where a young man, in need of building materials, presents a cash gift to the official in charge of such matters. He is turned down, and only succeeds in angering and insulting the official. The “bribe”, if it should so be called, cannot be presented outright, but must go through the pre-existing avenues of the network. He eventually manages to get the gift to the official through two intermediaries, placing him slightly in debt to these middlemen for the favour they did him. As well as serving a functional role, these intermediaries also serve a moral one. Once receiving the gift, the official’s obligation to reciprocate will be towards the intermediary in his immediate exchange network, and not to the actual recipient of the favour.

A Moral System

Guanxi is often understood by foreigners as those favours ego may expect from its network, and while this is a functional description of how outsiders would view its operation in a business context, to understand it, one must equally emphasize the obligations ego has towards said network. Although many attempt to establish *guanxi* for pragmatic ends, and no doubt some succeed, the obligation is primarily moral. Interestingly, we do not see much stinginess in China, but rather the opposite, i.e. people will attempt to give gifts that aren’t accepted. Ong mentions *guanxi* in the business landscape briefly, but focuses on outside obligations to family and friends (2006:221). The morality of relations may also be seen in the fact that none of the workers at Karen’s had been laid off, despite both Deng and Karen complaining that business had been down due to the work on Shamian. Only once during all my time at Karen’s was there enough work to occupy all employees at the same time, and this flap only lasted for about twenty minutes. This was, of course, the incident I described in a previous chapter where a whole family sought shelter from the rain.

If we take a line through Geertz (1973), we may claim that most of the negative views come from thin description. It seems to me that the fact that people only seek ties with some and avoid them with others will seem quite anomalous in this view, and the moral nature of *guanxi* must be taken into account to make sense of this. If it were only a flow of gifts and favours, then there would be no reason to resist adding people to ones network, as the flow is symmetrical. Although, as Yan points out, Gift giving may account for 20% of a household’s outgoings, he does not factor in that it must also account for some of its income as the majority of gifts he describes are in fact cash or readily useful things such as food which may

be deducted from the household's necessary expenditure. Any gift must be reciprocated as must a favour, so no matter how large one's network, one's incomings and outgoings should theoretically balance. In this view, a larger network would only increase one's ability to transform capital into the form most useful in a given situation.

However in reality things are not that simple. *Guanxi* relations, particularly close ones involve not only an obligation to circulate monetary values, but also an emotional commitment and a time commitment. In his book "*Reciprocity: An Economics of Social Relations (2008)*", Serge-Christophe Kolm spends some time on the subject of "liking", that is, giving gifts because we like someone and/or wish to be liked by them. Indeed, looking at for instance Yan's earlier work (1996), those instances where people maintained relations while actually disliking each other generally proved unsustainable. Time spent is an indication of liking and of the moral dimension of this network. In maintaining social ties, one is obliged to attend various functions with the person. This is not necessary for the pragmatic aspect of *guanxi*, as Yan describes several instances where one household sent gifts in connection with a funeral, wedding, housewarming or similar, without attending the ceremony personally. This is a very serious snub, and communicates that while the giver acknowledges a reciprocal relationship and intends to honour it, it is a relationship the giver regrets.

Guanxi relations are always personal. They are not group to group, or person to group, but dyadic. In this way, the networks focus on the self, radiating outwards to the various spheres of ego's social universe. In an instrumental sense, these relations are not transferrable. The moral obligations one person has towards another may not be given onto a third party outside this dyadic link, but may be used on another's behalf. They are also not easily reversible without a major breach of etiquette on one side or the other of the exchange. What must be understood in this case is that moral obligation is central to *guanxi*, and if these relations are used for the benefit of a third party, the obligations is not to this person, nor is the favour. The obligation is to the person with whom one has *guanxi*. Especially earlier accounts view it as little more than manipulation for personal gain. It has elements of power play, but also a moral dimension. This is seen when farmers need extra hands. They almost always ask people from their network for help, but the large quantities of food drink and cigarettes they are expected to supply for their helpers make this no cheaper than hiring day-labourers. Especially in rural *guanxi* there is an element of one-upmanship which no doubt makes this particular institution economically costly (Yan 1996).

Chapter 7: Guanxi

Another example that favours are not merely exploitation is that just as there is an obligation to grant favours, there is an expectation to seek them. In the above example, even though this system causes a net loss, it would be socially unacceptable to hire outside help when one has a network one may draw from. Such a person would be said to “have no *guanxi*”, a grave accusation tantamount to saying this person is not really a person at all. Similarly, in my own fieldwork, I returned to Karen’s Place after having rented an apartment in town, and the people there were somewhat put out that I had not asked them for help. I had in fact considered this, but had decided against it, this being the early days of the fieldwork. When I told him I had moved into a new apartment, Deng was both surprised and, it seemed to me, a little hurt.

- Why you do not come to me? I can help you, maybe get a better deal.
- I didn’t want to disturb you with this. I thought maybe you would not like it if I asked you for a favour.
- Where do you live now? Is it expensive?
- In Tianhe district. I pay 4000 Yuan a month.
- 4000? Ai ya, too expensive! OK, you are foreigner, so maybe you do not understand. We help each other. I don’t have an apartment, but maybe I know someone who does. You ask me for help, I ask him for help and then you get good business from him.

Here again we see that *guanxi* works through existing networks. It would not be possible for me to ask this third person for help directly, but I may do so through a member of my network who is in turn a member of his network. Another example of the obligations of this system arose one day when I decided to get a guitar. I would after all be in the field for some time, and I didn’t want to get too rusty. I had found a shop that looked decent, and what’s more it was inside the subway station at Chen Clan Academy, so it was very conveniently situated. When I told some of my acquaintances about this, however, they insisted on taking me to a shop clear across town where a friend or distant relative of one of them worked. The place was a long walk from the nearest station, and when we got there, it turned out that their relationship wasn’t close enough to prompt much of a discount, merely a symbolic one of a few percent. Nevertheless, whenever possible, needs should be met from within one’s network.

Producing Guanxi

Along with these processes comes the initial establishment of relations, of producing *guanxi*. There is a general tendency of attempting to establish relations upwards and resisting them

downwards, although “up” and “down” in this context is situational and fluctuates according to need. In other words, if I have much to gain in establishing a relationship with another person, but this person has little to be gained from me, and then I am more likely to seek contact, and this hypothetical other is more likely to avoid it. This was apparent in the reception I met at the Department of Anthropology at Sun Yat-Sen University. They were unwilling to establish any connection with me, no doubt realizing that I would need more help from them than I would be able to supply in return. Conversely, I was actively contacted by a class at the Foreign Languages Institute, as the opportunity to practice English with a native speaker was valued by them for its own sake.

Particularist ties and instrumental relation-building begin with gift exchange. With kin networks or among neighbours, this is highly ritualized, especially in rural areas. One aspect of *guanxi* which is stronger in the rural model is the kindred web. In contrast, it may be supposed that in urban areas we are left solely with the friend-to-friend dyad when it comes to relation building, however it does seem that such relationships mirror kin relations, especially where there is a difference in status. In such cases, the relationship often takes on a metaphorical parent/child dimension, especially when involving two males, as the father/son dyad is a central one in Chinese mental universe (Parish & Whyte 1978). There is a major difference in urban *guanxi*, however, which is that most of an individual's network are achieved rather than ascribed, and are initiated by a gift. Such gifts exchanges are, as previously indicated, most often initiated upward.

Social relations being initiated by gift exchange is, according to Sahlins, characteristic of what he calls primitive society. It is a way to avoid a “Hobbesian Chaos”. Strict rules exist in China regarding reciprocation, the aim being to give a slightly grander gift in return. If one gives a gift of lesser value, one loses face, and if one gives too extravagant a gift, it may be seen as a slight. The one who initiates a gift exchange should never give a gift beyond the means of the recipient, as it will be impossible to reciprocate. Such a faux pas means a loss of face to both parties, and so it is common to invest a great deal of thought into these transactions. This means that even between people who are quite close, generalized reciprocity as Sahlins defines, or weak reciprocity as Price (1962) terms it, is difficult. Although the time of reciprocation may in some instances remain unspecified, the value or quality is not. The obligation existing in a *guanxi* relationship to perform favours seems much closer to generalized reciprocity, the solidarity extreme.

Chapter 7: Guanxi

While the custom of initiating exchanges upwards in the hierarchy may be seen as an affirmation of inequality, Yang (1989) sees it as an informal appropriation of power away from the communist state. Yang studies urban China, where state control was never as rigidly enforced as in rural areas. Yang argues that gift giving upwards within the bureaucracy subverts administrative power, as gift giving in anthropological perspectives is generally held to establish some symbolic power over the recipient, who becomes indebted to the giver (Mauss 2001). Yan however, sees *guanxi* as a tool for constructing the social person. One learns how to deal with different categories of person through gift exchange, and especially how one is positioned within the five principle dyads of Confucianism, ruler to subject, father to son, older to younger, husband to wife and friend to friend. As a villager in Xiajia said:

“Red Flowers need the support of green leaves. If you want to be somebody, you need friends, need to be involved in situations like [gift giving]. That is how *Guanxi* works (Yan 1996:81).”

In this regard, Yan suggests that China is a somewhat anomalous case where anthropological models of gift-relations are concerned. He suggests that that the giving of gifts upward within the bureaucracy does not undermine it, but reinforces it. In any case, both Yang and Yan seem to laud the social dimension such dynamics bring to what would otherwise be an impersonal bureaucratic system. There seems to be a general trend that those who describe gift relations in the non-business environment, tend to have a more humanized impression of their workings.

Everyday Guanxi

As I was in no way involved in major business, the *guanxi* I encountered was of a rather different nature. The obligations of *guanxi* are naturally connected to one's status, as I have already stated that one is expected to do such favours as one is in a position to do for one with whom one has such a relation. By connected to one's status I mean that, for example, an employee at a bank may be under obligation to approve a friend's loan application, as this is a favour he is in a position to perform, whereas a shopkeeper's obligations to his network extend more along the lines of discounts and extending credit. Naturally, the kind of favours one may perform depends on one's position. In Karen's Place, *guanxi* manifested in two ways, one was the way in which members of the employees' network could expect better deals than others, whilst the other was that stock needed to be obtained through friends and relations, even when this was disadvantageous.

One of the biggest sale items in Karen's was silk garments, which occupied about a fourth of the main room of the shop. These were made in Deng's home village at the southern end of the Guangdong province, the tailor being a cousin of his. There was a problem regarding fittings, however, as she made them according to Chinese sizes, whereas a large portion of the customers were Americans, whose tendencies towards the corpulent are well known. The result was that the XL and XXL sizes went fast, these being the largest available and would fit a Caucasian man of medium build, and there was nothing there which would fit a heavily built, or even a well built person. I once asked Karen about this after a family of five from Texas had been looking at the clothes, but found nothing to fit them as even the children were rather overweight.

- If you get so much of your business from the Americans, why don't you get clothes that fit them?
- These clothes come from [Deng's] cousin in his village. She makes them all, it is her business. Of course we must buy from her and not from another. But she doesn't like to work with too big clothes. Ai ya, it's like making a tent, not a dress. Too difficult.

Here we see a similar situation as the farmers described by Yan. Even though it is not an ideal arrangement, wherever possible one's needs should be met from within one's network, rather than going outside it. Although the clothes here were the same price as in similar shops on Shamian, there was less of a profit margin as the producer also gets a more favourable price for her wares than if she had been supplying a shopkeeper outside her *guanxi* network.

Concepts of Face and Guanxi

Guanxi is closely bound up with the concept of "face". This one of the Chinese terms which has most penetrated our language, although here as well the English term loses something in translation. Although it is difficult to give an exhaustive account of the meanings of this term, Goffman wrote: "*Face is an image of self delineated in terms of approved social attributes (1955:213)*". Although term has been appropriated into both English and Norwegian, it has a somewhat narrower meaning within these languages than in Chinese. The Chinese in fact operate with two distinct concepts of face, or prestige, the one bound up with one's standing as a moral person, the other for one's reputation for achievements, although not all regions distinguish between these with separate terms. Hu Hsien Chin (2009) differentiates between *Lien-tzu* (moral face) and *Mien-tzu* (prestige face). These concepts go back at least as far as 400 BC, although the terms denoting the concepts have changed slightly. Being unable to provide a favour when asked, or reciprocate, is a major loss of face, most often on moral

grounds as one should only ask favours the other is in a position to do. *Lien* is not just a matter of morality, but a measure of how trustworthy a person is. As trust is so important in China, the loss of *lien* face is more acutely feared than physical danger according to Hu (2009:50)⁶.

Lien is personal, *mien* may be borrowed. In an economic perspective, these categories may be seen as moral spheres. To sacrifice *lien* for *mien*, morality for gain, is highly suspect, while the opposite is laudable (see Bohannan 1959). As few people will deal with someone seen as untrustworthy, *mien* would be hard to attain and maintain without *lien*. A firm hiring a new employee will want to know about his or her character, and is very unlikely to engage someone without a solid reputation. Thus, morality is upheld partly by a fear of public opinion, partly through fear that one's *guanxi* relations and potential to expand it will suffer.

The condemnation of one's group for morally questionable behaviour is much feared, which allows for a strategy, when one feels unfairly treated, to make a scene and gather a crowd in order to shame the other party. An example of this given by Hu (2009:46-7) is an episode which took place in a street market. A woman had arranged to hire a donkey, but the handler was unable to deliver on time. The handler demanded that, since the woman had arranged to hire a donkey from *him*, she was obligated to wait, and not go to another. The woman got agitated and argued loudly, which caused a crowd to gather. None of them said anything, but the salesman, sensing that public opinion was against him, was compelled to back down. This is a very common strategy, at least when one is fairly certain to get the benefit of public opinion. This is not open to everyone, however. For an official, or anyone of similar status, open quarrelling and having to rely on public censure will lose him face. The way Hu describes *lien* face, drawing on public condemnation may actually create something as immoral which would otherwise not be viewed as such. Exploiting outsiders will generally not be considered immoral, as I have pointed out there doesn't seem to be any expectation of fair treatment with those in the outsider category. However, outsiders still have the option of mobilizing support from on lookers, and although none did so at Karen's, another episode took place during my last week in Guangzhou.

The incident with the truck

⁶ While I think he may well be right, one wonders how he knows this, as he cites neither research nor ethnographic data to demonstrate this point.

Twice a week there is delivery of food to Karen's place, fish on Mondays, vegetables and chicken on Wednesdays. I arrived on a Wednesday to see an argument in progress. It transpired that the driver of the delivery van had driven too close to buildings and the top of the van had torn off the awnings above the door. When I arrived, Deng and Karen had rushed out to assess the damage. Deng was arguing with the driver, while Karen was on the phone with a repairman asking how much it would cost to fix. The driver of the van, whose name I didn't catch, was unapologetic and in fact seemed to be angry himself as he blamed Deng and Karen for the accident. He said it was their fault for having awnings on the front of the shop, a statement which infuriated Deng. Karen put her hand over the mouthpiece of her phone and shouted that it would cost three hundred Yuan. Deng turned back to the driver and demanded the money there and then, which the driver refused. The argument got rather heated from there on, and Karen had to verbally restrain her husband from attacking the driver. The driver left, saying he had more deliveries to do, and that they would have to sort it out that evening. We went back into the shop and Deng went off to calm down while I sat talking to Karen.

- This is not the first time he has done this you know. When we had been open about four months he did the same thing, and now he will not pay. He cannot do this thing. Last time he did this, we said OK, it is an accident, but now he does it again. He says it is our fault. This does not happen to him any other place, and here it has happened twice. It must be our fault. He's coming back later, and if he still will not pay, I'll let Deng do whatever he wants, I will not stop him next time.
- Are you sure that's a good idea? There are a lot of police on this island
- The policemen on the island already know the situation. If there is a fight, they will know the reason and will not get angry.

The driver came back twice during the day, once when he stopped for lunch and when he finished his shift. Each time he came, the argument was continued. The driver offered to pay fifty Yuan, a fraction of the estimated cost of repairing the damage. During his first brake, a crowd began to form, including one of the policemen stationed on the island. As soon as this happened, the man got in his truck and drove off. The second time he came, however, the driver had finished his work for the day and had no excuse to leave. Again, as the argument went on, a small crowd gathered, looking on and commenting amongst themselves. The whole scene became reminiscent of a courtroom, each party claiming to be the victim, but the decision ultimately resting on the onlookers. The "verdict" is delivered quite subtly, and appeared to me to consist mostly of the body language of the people in the crowd when the

losing part of the exchange is speaking. The driver must have felt the favour of the crowd turning against him, for as the exchange prolonged, he seemed less certain and more agitated, and his eyes were increasingly darting to the onlookers. Deng, on the other hand, also sensing the public mood, became more confident and assertive, keeping his gaze steady. While the shift in mood was quite gradual, it seemed to me that whoever began to lose the advantage in such an exchange was unlikely to regain it. The end result was that the driver suddenly stopped talking, threw up his arms, and handed over three hundred Yuan without saying another word.

While *guanxi* is dyadic, face is at one time personal and communal. While it is a person's own responsibility to maintain their prestige, a good face also reflects well on one's family and network. Good academic results reflect well on one's teacher, good performance at work is good for the boss and so on. The older male/younger male dyad has long been central in China. As well as one's actual father, older brothers, teachers, mentors and so on may fill the prestigious slot in this pair. Being part of such a dyad is both rewarding and hazardous in a social sense, as both prestige and disgrace reflect onto the other. Responsibility, though, only flows upwards. A man may be disgraced by his father's ill deed, but is not deemed responsible for it. A father, however, may well be blamed for the misdeeds of his son, and the same is the case for those relationships which mirror the father/son dyad. During the Qing Dynasty, a criminal's father and older brothers could legally be caned for their younger kinsman's crimes (Sommer 2002:70).

Chapter 8: The Entry/ Exit Administration Bureau

The episode taking place in the Zhujiang New Town police station, recounted in the previous chapter, was part of a series of incidents. During what was to become the last few weeks of my fieldwork, a difficulty arose with regard to my visa. According to Chinese law, any foreign national is required to report to the nearest police station for registration within 24 hours of arriving in China, or changing address. Henrietta, the young lady who represented the company which owned my building, had told me that they would handle this and, being of a trusting disposition, I saw no reason to doubt her. Indeed, I was required to include my passport number and visa number on the contract when taking up residence, and some men came a week later to photocopy all my documents, which I then assumed were taken to the local police station. This, as I learned too late, was not done. Two men came to my door one afternoon and asked to see my papers. After a cursory examination, they told me I would have to contact the entry/exit administration near Ximenkou station. Naturally, I asked if there was some kind of problem, but they would not tell me, merely repeated that I would have to visit the administration. I ended up doing so a great many times, as well as the local police station, until I finally got the yellow paper registered; an incident I recounted above. This was just part of the process, however. It didn't mean I was in the clear, merely that I was finally able to get the entry/exit administration to process my case.

Coco, another estate agent of my acquaintance, told me that this was common practice. She said that if a company rents out accommodation to a foreigner, they are required to pay 7% of their rent to the government, and therefore many such companies stop foreigners from registering themselves so as to avoid giving the government their share. When I recounted the story to my informants and friends, they all told me I was a fool to have trusted someone I did not know, and that I was hopelessly naive to have taken a relative stranger at her word on any matter. Yan (2009) argues that trust has deteriorated drastically after decommunalization, to the point where one may not trust anyone not a part of one's immediate network, i.e. *guanxi* network. Henrietta was coming to my apartment to speak things over, when Fletcher, a friend of mine, insisted that she be in on the discussion, and also that we go down to the lobby and speak to her there. When Henrietta came, Fletcher confronted her and shouted at her for a good few minutes. Naturally, this gathered a crowd, which was when Henrietta agreed that the company would supply a free interpreter, the girl Cathrina, to go with me to the police

station to help me sort out the situation. This is another example of how the act was retroactively defined as immoral by invoking public opinion against the “wrongdoer”.

At the Administration Building

I was in the entry/exit bureau in Guangzhou. I had been attempting to resolve the difficulties regarding my visa for the better part of two weeks. The place was full of anxious, often quite angry, people sitting on plastic seats with bunches of documents in their hands. I had previously been sent away several times to collect an impressive amount of documentation, but on this day I was sure I had all the papers and forms I needed. Fletcher had come with me on two of the previous trips here, but had tried shouting at the policeman on duty, which had not been a good move. This time I was there alone. The majority of my fellow applicants were of African appearance, although there were a few Europeans and some Chinese as well. One Englishman with a London accent was shouting at the woman behind a desk, and she seemed completely unfazed by him.

- Why can't you listen to me?
- You need to take this paper to the police department.
- But I already did, they said it was all sorted out.
- You need to take this paper to the police department, and have them put it on their computer.
- I did that yesterday! Is this a different paper?
- You need to take this paper to the police department.
- Can you just tell me, is this the same bloody paper, or is it another one? Because I took the household registration form to the police yesterday.
- You need to take this paper to the police department.

This exchange continued, going on for quite some time. About halfway through, the officer had pressed the button summoning the next person in line, a young middle-eastern woman. She was obliged to sit waiting for the irate Englishman to finish. I spoke a little with the man after he came away from the window, and coincidentally, he was in the exact same situation as I was and had just come from the police department where he had registered his yellow paper. He could not understand what more was required of him and left, still cursing under his breath.

About 20 minutes later, it was my turn. I sat down in my seat, and greeted the woman in Cantonese. I introduced myself, told her that I spoke only a limited amount of Chinese, and asked if she minded if we used English. She warmed to me perceptively, shouting “Wā, you speak Cantonese”. Our interaction had a completely different tone than the one I had just witnessed, despite the fact that my situation was nigh identical with that of the irate Englishman. Where she in the previous interaction had stuck to what I suspect was a standardized script for dealing with applicants, ours was more akin to a normal conversation, and she was able to tell me that after the police add the information on the “yellow paper” on their computer, it takes at least 24 hours before it appears on their system. It should be noted that although I believe language to have played a part in this, it is entirely possible that I would have been given more information than the other Englishman simply by being respectful and not losing my temper.

A few days later I was back to get the final verdict on my re-application, although I did not hold out much hope. China has a zero-tolerance policy for visa related cases, and I was expecting little other than a two-week exit visa and a fine. I greeted the policeman on duty in a similar way as I had greeted the lady officer on my last visit, to which his reply was, in English; “You and I have nothing to talk about”, before he handed me my papers and directed me to leave.

Cognitive Dissonance

There are several manifestations of cognitive dissonance. In *“How Prophecy Fails (1956)”*, which is where the term first appears, Festinger is mainly using it to explain why presenting someone with concrete proof of the falsehood of their belief does not always prompt them to give it up, but may in fact strengthen it. I use it in a different sense, which is in line with Festinger’s definition, although not his major focus. I use it to explain that cognitive discomfort is resolved by an alteration of cognitive categories. This is quite close to Mary Douglas’ *“Purity and Danger (2002)”*, although I find Festinger’s theories more closely match my observations as Festinger supposes an “either/or” approach to resolving cognitive dissonance, whereas Douglas presents several (2002:48-9). Douglas does in fact mention Festinger briefly (2002:49), although she draws on yet another manifestation of Cognitive Dissonance, i.e. that if one is at variance with one’s social group, one will either waver in one’s conviction, or leave the group. This is, of course, not so far removed from my own usage. According to Douglas, it is not always unpleasant to confront ambiguity. The

ambiguous always elicits an emotional response, although not necessarily a negative one (2002:46-7). This is the subject of an article by Leach, where he argues that ambiguous categories are the subject of humour as well as unpleasantness. The rabbit, for instance, becomes the source of sexual metaphors, words and jokes because it crosses the boundaries of the farm, being a creature of the outfield which wanders into the infield (1979:160-3). Ambiguity seems to be more tolerable in some areas than others.

In this regard, a stranger interacting like an outsider becomes much like Leach's "rabbit in the infield", a creature belonging to the outskirts of the moral universe, but transgressing into the inner sphere. By using Cantonese in a Mandarin setting, the speaker becomes like the rabbit, an entity of the external intruding upon the internal. This in turn leads to incongruence within the conceptualized social space of the one spoken to, the addressee. The addressee will feel compelled to resolve, a manifestation of "Cognitive Dissonance" (Festinger et al 1956, Festinger 1957). In these cases there were two ways the officials chose to resolve this incongruence, either by outright rejecting the marked attempt at communication, thus adjusting the situation to fit the cognitive model, or accepting the addresser's reality, thus adjusting the cognitive model to fit the situation. The speaker (or addresser) will be unconsciously categorized as an insider for the duration of the interaction, and in accordance with this, the addressee seems to feel some of the pressure for favourable treatment inherent in minor *guanxi* relations.

Chapter 9: The Influence of Gender on Linguistic Habits in Guangzhou

Much of my argument has been building to the point reached in a previous chapter that not only do the two languages in Guangzhou correspond with a symbolic categorization into either personal or impersonal spheres, but also that marked use of the private language can create a temporary bond reminiscent of *guanxi* connections. The cases of the police women at the Zhujiang New Town station and at the entry/exit administration are excellent examples of both these aspects, as both officers seemed to be operating from an externally mandated interpretation of their roles as party representatives. However, both of them broke the facade and began to speak of more personal things, talking about their home towns and interests, when the use of Cantonese redefined the situation as one of intimacy. It seems that in these particular instances, the language itself was the key factor in drawing out the personality behind the persona. Essentially, at this point the communication was no longer with the women in capacity as police officers, but with the persons playing out these roles. Like any marked attempt at communication, this has the potential to elicit an unusually positive or a negative response exceeding those of unmarked communication. In this case these responses include, and are initiated by, acceptance or rejection of the marked communication (see Myers-Scotton 1993a). In chapter 4, I associated women more with the use of Cantonese than men, but here I was limited to discussing the situational significance of gender.

To the extent I have previously discussed the role of gender on the use of language, the prevalence of Cantonese among women may be interpreted as part of the dynamic of social class in general. Mandarin is after all the national standard, and government officials are required to use it. Local people in positions of power are every bit as proficient in Cantonese as locals of working class, speaking it when appropriate, but are more likely to find themselves often in situations demanding the use of Mandarin. The reverse is true of the working classes and of women. They use Mandarin when situation dictates, but generally spend less time in the social landscapes wherein it is mandated. However, there seems to be a correlation between the female gender and the Cantonese language that goes beyond the situational. In public situations where there is an explicit demand for Mandarin, women seem more likely than men to accept marked uses of Cantonese. If we look back on the case at the police station and at the entry/exit administration bureau, both officers involved were female, although admittedly two is far too small a sample group from which to conclusively draw

generalizations, so with that in mind we should ask ourselves, if not conclusions, what indications may be drawn from them?

The question becomes one of why both these women softened their positions rather than feel affronted when the local language was used. I have previously used the concept of cognitive dissonance to explain categorization according to language use as a way of resolving cognitive discomfort. However, this only demonstrates the disposition to categorize, it does not explain why, when more than one option exists, one was chosen over another. This is something that is lacking also in Myers-Scotton's own analyses. Obviously, when one is drawn between two opposing but viable reactions to an ambiguous situation, the choice of one or the other is extremely complex, and quite individual. It has to do with a multitude of dispositions which may be additionally affected by innumerable and unaccountable variables. However, there does seem to be a general discrepancy in these dispositions along gender lines. Women speak more Cantonese, and seem more inclined to speak it when given a choice. In the study by Kalmar et al (1987) the female subjects showed considerable more sympathy with the heavily accented speaker than the men did. There are two dynamics I wish to explore in this chapter. One is the preference women seem to have to use Cantonese, which I connect to an association with the intimate sphere. The other is the increased disposition of women to accept marked use of Cantonese, which I explain with the movement towards modernity/movement towards traditionalism dichotomy I forwarded in chapter 3.

Gender Studies in China

In China, the study of gender goes hand in hand with that of modernization (see Rofel 1999:7, Evans 2008:68). Just as the genders must be defined in relation to each other, so too do they acquire meaning with reference to societal changes. According to Harriet Evans (2008) women's liberation was facilitated in China by the Communists' mobilization of female labour. There is a tendency for revolutions to call on support from the female half of the population (Borchorst & Siim 2002, Okeke-Ihejirika & Franceschet 2002), which was the case also in China with the Maoist slogan "*Women hold up half the sky*" (Connell 2009:124). Much of the focus of the subsequent Mao administration was to establish what has been termed a mass-body, undifferentiated and androgynous (Xu 1999:974-5). The methods used may be seen as a combination of control by an external authority and modification of embodied values so that external control is no longer necessary. Thus, there exist simultaneous influences which Bateson terms "lateral sanctions" and "sanctions from above"

(1936:98). If we return to Evan's account of the mobilization of women, however, there is a problem with her timeline. Women's liberation in China began before Mao although it appears to have been appropriated by the communist party. The practice of foot-binding, for instance, was discontinued in 1919 (Gamble 1943:182), but even older people in Guangzhou tell that it was ended by the Communists in 1949. This is to my mind the best indicator that women's liberation is seen as a part of the quest for modernity, for if it was not perceived as something ultimately good and bound up with the notion of progress, it would not be taken out of its historical context and laid wholly at the feet of Mao and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

Next to the Down-to-the-Countryside movement, the Policy of Birth Planning of 1978, also known as the One-Child policy, is probably one of the CCP's most infamous decrees, and is well known for prompting a wave of female infanticide, but has also had an unexpected consequence of promoting gender equality. There have not been many studies of the effects this policy has had on a local level (Short & Fengying 1998:373), but the phenomenon of female infanticide and abandonment is well known, although exaggerated according to my informants. More common is the practice of aborting female foetuses, although such sex-selective abortions are illegal. In rural areas it is easier to get around regulations, for example by simply not reporting the birth of a girl, or forging another person's name in place of the mother's. However, though reducing the number of girl children, the One-Child Policy has improved the standing of those girls who do grow up. Before this policy, if a family had limited means to pay for their children's education, university was the privilege of the oldest son, whereas now there is no need to prioritize amongst one's children. In other words, the investments of time and money that used to be reserved for sons were now going to daughters (Fong 2002). Studies conducted in Wuhan showed no discrepancy in education levels in young men and women (Tsui & Rich 2002).

There is a commonly repeated explanation as to why male children are preferred, accusing the dowry system of making girls into economic burdens. This "traditional" explanation is probably fallacious, at least in Guangdong Province. In recent times, dowry has all but disappeared, but not bridewealth and so it is now more expensive to marry off a son than a daughter. In Xiajia village, bridewealth has been transformed into a cash gift given directly to the bride by the groom's parents, but this was the result of a particular concatenation of circumstances in this village, and not necessarily a representative situation (Yan 2009). In the 60s when Maurice Freedman conducted his fieldwork in Guangdong, the gift exchange in

connection with a wedding was quite complex, and included dowry and bridewealth as well as gifts to the couple themselves (1971:53-4). Freedman explains the preference of sons over daughters with the practice of ancestor worship, as only a man may tend the family shrine. A man should have at least three or four sons so as to be guaranteed that one would survive to manhood and tend his families' shrine. In Guangzhou it has become a matter of political correctness to say that one does not mind the gender of one's child, but I was met with utter incredulity when I said that I hoped my next child would be a girl. Statistical data shows that these attitudes may be generalized to the rest of the country, indeed random sampling implies that the preference of boys over girls may be more severe than previously supposed (see Ding & Hesketh 2006), although from the study by Fong's as well as that of Tsui and Rich, it seems as if, whilst fewer girls are born, those that are have better prospects than they did in larger families.

A quick search of an academic database for "gender in China" will yield a massive amount of material on the Chinese family (e.g. Davis & Harrell 1993, Yan 2003 & Milwertz 1996). This is, of course, another manifestation of the Chinese archetype as the Chinese are well known for their orientation towards the family. Reading some of these works, it is difficult to get much impression of the individuals involved, as what is described to a large degree is the dynamic of a corporate unit. This is interesting as Signe Howell and Marit Melhuus (1993) lament an opposing trend in the field of gendered anthropology in general, that many focus on individuals, few on kinship. They claim that the study of kinship gave way in the 70s to the study of personhood. This shift has not been nearly as sweeping in the anthropology of China, as here the primary focus is still on the group rather than the individual. The problem with this lingering academic focus is that in recent decades, family has lost much of its former importance in society. On the one hand Communist Party policy has been, that which is well known in nation building, to appropriate for the state the symbolic value formerly reserved for kin (see Anderson 2006). Formerly, the Chinese kinship system was well known for its complexity. In fact, it is used by Lévi-Strauss to typify an objective system, as there are hundreds of terms, as well as a mechanic to construct additional terms describing one's exact connection to a distant relative (1963:78-9). On the other hand, the One Child Policy has made for smaller families of far simpler composition. Urbanization also cannot be overlooked as kinship groups tend to be less relevant in cities. Lastly, but by no means least, China has undergone a marked individualization and in the household the centrality of the family has been partly supplanted by that of the conjugal dyad (Yan 2009). This is not to say

that family is to be dismissed, and although its importance has diminished, it is still of great importance. For a long time the discipline of Anthropology centred on kinship for this very reason (see Morgan 1871, Radcliffe-Brown & Forde 1950 and Lévi-Strauss 1969). Family has long had a central importance in China, which no doubt is the reason why scholars are loath to abandon it.

The construction of gender has moved from a state ordered one, to one of personal cultivation (Zhang 2001a). Granted, both of these dynamics will always be present, but agency has become more relevant with the softening of government authority during the last two or three decades. Suzanne Gottschang in two studies (2001, 2007) describes a situation where individual choice trumps governmental policy. In 1950 81% of mothers breastfed their babies, whereas in 1991 the number had fallen to 11%. Gottschang explains this by a spread of western body ideals where the women were afraid that feeding would ruin their breasts. This development prompted a campaign focusing on the health benefits of breastfeeding in order to raise these figures and improve the overall health of the population. The campaign also promoted the idea of the naturalness of breastfeeding, as well as its importance in forming a relationship with the child. At the specific hospital where Gottschang conducted her initial fieldwork in 2001, one of the benefits claimed for breast-feeding was weight loss, although none of the new mothers believed this claim. In 1995 hospitals were prohibited from promoting substitutes and doctors were required to expound the benefits of human breast milk. The goal was to reach 85% by the year 2010, but according to China Daily online newspaper, this goal was not reached, being below 60% in some cities. The point is that although the numbers have risen, and it is plain that governmental urging has had an effect, there was no formal punishment for not following the recommendation. The final choice belonged to the mothers in question.

It is possible to overstress the role of agency however. Gender roles need not be the result of premeditated interaction, but of complex interplays of actions and ideologies too intricate to foresee. The empowerment of urban women, for example, was not part of official party rhetoric for legitimizing the One-Child policy, but may well have been so had it been an anticipated result. Joshua Goldstein writes much the same in his introduction to *Everyday Modernity in China* (2006). Here he writes that the temporal term “modern” runs together with the spatial term “the west”. This is indicative of a postcolonial “west vs. the rest” mentality which seems is proving incredibly enduring, displacing itself into any number of

discourses. We may relate this to the dichotomy I have termed “movement towards modernity/traditionalism”. Although China was never colonized per se, there are similarities.

Women and the Private Sphere

This is not, to my mind, a simpler discussion than that on modernity, although it takes up considerably less space. Here we enter into areas which have enjoyed greater attention in mainstream anthropology, mostly thanks to Michelle Rosaldo’s and Louise Lamphere’s landmark work “*Woman, Culture and Society (1974)*”, of which Sherry Ortner is a contributor. The argument is that women, because of their role in child rearing, have a greater part of domestic tasks than men, and that their contributions are underrated, whereas those of men are heavily emphasized. It was exclusively Karen who took their son, Chen to day care and picked him up again, and this is quite typical in Guangzhou. Mothers have the bulk of domestic responsibilities, even those who work full time. The amount of time women spend on these sorts of activities may be thought to create an affinity with the private sphere over the public. This may in turn cause a greater resonance with the language of the private sphere than is generally experienced by men. This would also account for why women felt more sympathy for the heavily accented speaker than the men did (see Kalmar et al. 1987). This may seem to fall in under the old dichotomization of public men and domestic women (see Ortner 1974, Moore 1988). Although I stated above that the female association with Cantonese went beyond the situational, this argument somewhat straddles the chasm of situational and symbolic.

Any strict binary division is problematic, and public man/private woman is complicated by the fact that women have entered the workforce, and hence the public sphere, also in China (see Hanami 1993). To this, I offer two responses. Firstly, although women do occupy administrative positions, they are underrepresented and are few in the upper echelons of the government. Secondly, Chinese officials appear to display a remarkable capacity for compartmentalization. The cases with the police women demonstrate this, and to a lesser extent the policeman who gave directions to Nancy. In all those cases, the interaction did not seem to be taking place with the police officers as individuals, but only in their capacity as officers. Both the police women were speaking what appeared to be standardized responses, with identical deadpan expressions. When it comes to the policeman, neither he nor Nancy displayed any recognition of each other at all. Of course, there is no way of knowing if he also recognized Nancy, but she certainly recognized him.

Movement towards Modernity

An anthropologist working on his PhD thesis put it rather neatly during a lunch break; what the anthropologist perceives as the implicit importance of a given situation is not what the people themselves see as the explicit importance of the same situation. One of the biggest problems of my analysis is that the importance of linguistic choice was obvious to me, but the people themselves denied any knowledge of it. In order to explain the linguistic behaviour, we must understand a little about the dynamics of Chinese modernity. Modernity, as I have continually stressed, has become a personal quest for many people in China, and there are many different, competing sometimes even contradictory ways of attaining it, all according to what the individual views as the essence of “The Modern”. Valuing female and male children equally seemed to me to be seen as a part of cosmopolitanism for some people, whereas for other’s dressing in a “cool” manner, following western trends was central. In many instances this can almost resemble cargo cult behaviour, where one appropriates certain elements of western culture isolated from their context in an unconscious hope that this will bestow this indefatigable “modernity”.

Among some of my younger, female informants sexual experimentation was much talked about, sometimes to an astonishingly explicit degree. Promiscuity is viewed as sexual liberation, not only part of the personal movement towards modernity (see Ikels 1996, Rofel 2007), but also to a certain degree part of the governmental, as non-reproductive sex within the bounds of marriage is now beginning to be seen as something healthy and beneficial rather than something sinful. The unofficial ban for widows and those over child bearing age⁷ to engage in romance and sex has all but disappeared (Shea 2005:115-6). Another indication of this is the practice of foot-binding, which has a curious history in academia, as it is often viewed as an erotic practice (Blake 1994:686), despite having a number other aspects worthy of study. The focus on the erotic aspects of foot-binding (e.g. Levy 1966) are to my mind indicative of the contemporary association of female sexuality with liberation, as then the discontinuation of foot-binding may be viewed symbolically as the release from bondage of female sexuality.

Women and girls in Guangzhou, particularly on Shamian, are very forward in approaching strangers. They often ask foreigners if they may pose for a photo with them, and ask for their contact information. This does not seem to be more than flirtation, and there is often no

⁷ At 35, birth statistics drop sharply, so it is generally here a woman is considered to be past this age.

intention of contacting the person. The point of the exercise is the triumph of the audacity more than anything else. While this is a far cry from actual sexual promiscuity, we can see the same dynamic of liberation through quasi-illicit intimacy. I was somewhat taken aback by the forwardness of many of the Chinese girls before I realized this. Popular conception would lead one to expect a certain timidity from them, but I anticipated this to be somewhat overstated by the proverbial “they”, another indication of archetypes at work. I was regularly approached by girls, often opening the conversation in extremely frank terms asking me if I was single. Even though I replied that I am not, and am in fact a father, they would often sit down and talk for a while, commenting on me in the most complimentary terms. This took quite a bit of getting used to, as especially the flattering remarks regarding my appearance were quite embarrassing. I was unsure of what the polite response was, as I thought that reciprocating might seem a bit too flirtatious. When I asked Deng about this, he laughed for a while, and then told me that they were just trying to be polite. The act of complimenting someone else is closely tied to the concept of “face”, as one gains prestige by acting respectfully to others. Women, at least urban women, seem to fall into the movement towards modernity category far more often than men, possibly because being a marginalised group, they have had more to gain from social change. As I have previously suggested, those who fall into this category are far more likely to understand the Chinese, both standard and dialect, spoken by foreigners. This may also go some way towards explaining why women appear more likely to accept marked communication than men.

Rejection and Face: a Gendered Division

I explored the concept of face in more depth towards the end of the chapter on *guanxi*. Hu (2009) writes that rejection carries with it a severe loss of Face which is felt so keenly that it is not uncommon for young men to commit suicide after being publicly spurned by a young lady. Hu, however, is writing about men, and makes no mention of what would happen if a man rejects a woman. If this is largely a one-sided phenomenon, it would go some way towards explaining why girls and women seem so much more outgoing than men. As Hu points out, the concept of face is still of great importance in China, although not necessarily in the terms with which we in the west are familiar. For a man, approaching another person socially and being rejected is a major humiliation and loss of face. This is felt most keenly when rejected romantically, but is true for any social relationship. This may go some way to explaining why contact with men was in general far more difficult to establish, and that most of the men I met were introduced to me by women.

Chapter 9: The Influence of Gender on Linguistic Habits in Guangzhou

Thus there are several explanations for why women tend to speak Cantonese and accept its usage to a greater degree than do men. Firstly, as we have already explored at some length, there is the situational division, of which I think we need say little more at this point. Secondly, there is the classical division of women to the domestic sphere, men to the public. If we view the two languages in Guangzhou as divided between two spheres, whereof Cantonese is the intimate, then we might suppose that there should be some unconscious resonance here, that even if Cantonese is not explicitly stated as a feminine language, at some level, women recognize it as belonging more to them than to men. Then we come to the issue of why women should accept marked language use to a greater degree than men. There seems to be, at some level, a likening of intimacy with modernity. Much of urban life in China, at least to a portion of the population, revolves around constructing personalized modernity, of which illicit intimacy may be a manifestation. Thus the prevalence of women on the modernity side of the division may be said to increase the likelihood that they accept rather than reject marked communication attempts.

Chapter 10: The Role of the Unconscious in Determining Action

What I am describing is in no way revolutionary. We may observe in many societies that the use of a language or regional dialect may be a factor in establishing relations, so what is it that makes this case different? The main factor I argue to be central is the idiosyncrasies of Chinese social relationships, which further structure the already binary nature of the languages into a private sphere and an official. As with accommodation in general, a Cantonese listener may well categorize a Cantonese speaker into a more intimate positioning along the sociability spectrum than he/she would a Mandarin speaker. However, seeing as language studies tend to specify that people aren't aware of these processes, it may be inferred that is of pivotal importance for these processes to be unconscious. Like accommodation, switching to Cantonese seems to have a dangerous potential usage for manipulation. However, this potential disappears once one is aware of one's own mental processes. Accommodation is described as a positive mechanism, i.e. one acclimatizes one's speech to the other, communicating fellowship and creating a more positive impression. Conversely, if the other party, which we might call the accommodatee, is or becomes aware of this, inferring that he or she is being manipulated, it might be supposed to have the opposite effect. On the one hand, based on my observations, there is no doubt in my mind that speech has an important effect on social interaction. On the other hand, this was categorically denied by all those with whom I spoke on the matter. Either my informants were unaware of what they were doing, or they were merely claiming ignorance. As I demonstrated in an earlier chapter, treating the two different categories of Chinese speakers differently was only profitable on a single occasion, and therefore makes little sense as a conscious strategy. The most likely answer seems to be that they were in fact unaware that these categories of people were approached differently.

The unconscious has long been the purview of psychoanalytic theory, being especially associated with Freud. Freud's specific ideas have now been largely abandoned, but his more general ideas, such as the unconscious, have proved more resilient. Psychoanalysis has in the past few decades been increasingly brought into other disciplines, and as a concept is not incompatible with anthropology, as each supposes that society has a direct affect on the personality of the individual (Howard 1982:38). Nevertheless, D'Andrade still advocates a closer relationship between cognitive science and anthropology, as anthropologists are often unaware of psychological discoveries on how the mind works, and psychologists in turn are unaware of how their laboratory findings relate to the "real world" (1995:xiv). Edward Hall

claims that many anthropologists have adopted a rather Freudian view, but substituting conscious/unconscious with other terms, such as overt/covert or explicit/implicit (1959:65). Another, more explicit anthropological perspective of the unconscious is presented by Gregory Bateson in *“Steps to an Ecology of Mind”*. This is a composite view, drawing on Butler’s, Ames’ and Fenichel’s theories of the levels of mind we might divide into conscious and unconscious (1972:134-8). Bateson argues that skill sets are, with practice, taken over to a greater degree by the unconscious mind and gradually fade out of our awareness. Much of his argument in this work is based on what psychologists call “automaticity”. Though Bateson uses it in a rather narrow context of “primitive art”, it is a wonderfully adaptable argument and has become important in nearly all subdivisions of psychology (Moors & de Houwer 2007:11). What sociolinguists call accommodation, for example, may be explained as automatic mimicry in social psychological parlance (e.g. Dijksterhuis et al. 2007:59).

For Freud, the conscious mind was taken for granted, while the unconscious was that which was taken as the necessary field of study, a dark repository of all repressed knowledge (Bateson 1972:135). Bateson reasons that it is the hidden nature of the unconscious which gives it the mystique which makes it intellectually appealing to Freud. Bateson turns this ordering on its head, suggesting that it is in fact the conscious mind that is far more complex and inexplicable than the unconscious, which operates in timeless linearity, incapable of the convoluted cognitions and deceptions of secondary process (1972:135-6). Although he makes no mention of this, his view of the unconscious also contradicts Lévi-Strauss’ *“Structural Anthropology (1963)”* cited elsewhere in this thesis. Like with other Freudian perspectives, the unconscious is of central importance in structural anthropology (see Rossi 1973), sharing as it does the idea of a hidden generating principle from which behaviour springs.

The unconscious mind operates according to primary process, which is distinct from the secondary process of the conscious mind. To the extent that thoughts may be transcribed as a sequence of verbal statements, the language of primary process possesses no tense, no negatives and no clear distinction of metaphoric and concrete. Primary process is preverbal, and operates only in the immediate present and in positives. It also operates in images, as it is unable to distinguish the sign from the thing signified (Bateson 1972:138-42). There is a pervasive image of the unconscious likening the mind to an iceberg, with the sea level representing the threshold of consciousness. This metaphor is ultimately fallacious, as it implies that the mind is homogenous though only partly accessible to our awareness. The

Chapter 10: The Role of the Unconscious in Determining Action

mind in this understanding is uniform, both in nature and mode of functioning. This differs somewhat from the demarcation of primary and secondary process as presented by Bateson.

It is obvious that as consciousness is a function of neurological processes, these must necessarily start before consciousness can be present (Norretranders 1998:221). Dijksterhuis et al. argue that for any action or decision we may trace the conscious thought that is the instigator of it, and in turn the unconscious thought that preceded the conscious. From the time the first brain activity starts to the action itself, only the final quarter of mental processing is done consciously, from which they conclude that action ultimately follows from this automatic processing (2007:53-4). Here they are in fact describing the entirety of the person's thoughts and deeds as a function of the primary process, that "*behavior is unconscious by default (p:55)*". This model seems to suppose an extremely passive view of human agency. This might have some connection with the examples they present in order to illustrate the argument, e.g. from unconsciously seeing the juice, to consciously wanting some to the action of pouring oneself a glass. This is a fairly uncontroversial example, but it is clear that the conscious mind has the capacity to veto the unconscious, because this is something everyone has experienced. We have all, as it were, seen the juice, acknowledged the juice, wanted the juice but decided not to have some. This is a good example of how laboratory findings make sense in their milieu, but fail to stand up to "real world" scrutiny. Automaticity as Bateson describes it, although he does not use this term, takes this more into account, for it is only when primary process has taken over an action without conscious intervention that automation sets in. In this context I include re-categorization from one cognitive category to another as a type of action.

By the above argument that the conscious mind holds unconscious urges in check, it might well seem as if the unconscious is being trivialised. This is not my intent and we cannot pretend that the unconscious is not important. We know from any number of works, particularly in the symbolic school of anthropology, how important one's subliminal associations and preconceptions may be. Archetypes, for example, play a far more important role in social interaction than we ourselves are aware (Dijksterhuis et al. 2007:55). What I am attempting to describe is a linear succession of thought, crossing the threshold of consciousness before becoming action. In these instances, where thought passes through both levels of mind, the unconscious certainly influences action, but does not determine it. In this way, far from being a simple middle man between the unconscious instigation and action, the conscious mind may function as a filtering device. If, however, thought bypasses

consciousness, the filtering mechanism is also bypassed. This is sometimes beneficial, such as in reflex actions, where one simply doesn't have time to decide to, for instance, slam on the brakes when someone steps into the road. In the case of manipulation, for example by misusing linguistic codes, it may be less beneficial, although here I should reiterate that such mechanisms as accommodation are generally done unwittingly, and following Bateson's argument that the language of the unconscious speaks to the unconscious, accommodation would be much harder to fake than to do automatically.

Thus, primary process consists of linear statements that bridge literal and metaphoric arenas of meaning influencing, and partly structuring, the potentially convoluted process of higher mental functions, but does not go so far as to determine them. If we view the use of Cantonese as the stimulus identifying a member of the intimate sphere which in turn acts as an instigator for the sequence of unconscious to conscious to action, we may suppose that unconscious processes create a predilection to categorize the speaker more favourably in line with a cognitive category of "insider". If, however, it is as I suspect that many of my informants are unaware of this sequence, the all-important filtering stage is lost, and the predilection increasingly gains the properties of a causal determinant. If we chose to see this as habitus, that there exist a disposition to treat some people better if they are symbolically closer, then we can follow Bourdieu's statement that habitus is unconscious, and therefore difficult to change (1977:78-9).

Conclusion

Conclusion

This thesis was, in a way, a study into the local effects of a national policy. Had the question been whether or not this policy was successful, the answer would have to be yes. Mandarin's claim to official status does not seem to be contested in any serious way, and people in Guangzhou accept that when "Chinese" is used to describe a language, Mandarin is what is meant. One of my initial suppositions was that the languages used in Guangzhou were hierarchically ranked, which I wrote in the introductory chapter of this thesis. Although my findings partly verify this, it turns out I was being far too simplistic. What I have found is that these languages are indeed ranked, but according to more than one standard, creating two main axes we might call formality and intimacy which seem to vary in indirect proportion to each other. The study conducted by Kalmar et al. (1987) showed much the same thing, but they rely to a great extent on subject statements, and do not draw generalizations beyond these. Being symbolically loaded as belonging to either the formal or the intimate, the way in which language is used serves as a tool for categorization, linking the speaker to a set of notions of insider or outsider. Although the matter under scrutiny was the role of language, it may be said that this thesis has in reality been about the intimate sphere and the official sphere. While Mandarin is in a sense the language of the power holder, creating respectability and the image of a successful person, it is inferior to Cantonese when judged according to a hierarchy based on sociability.

As well as being symbolically linked to abstract categories of private and public, these languages are also divided into situational categories of the same kind. Being governmentally mandated, Mandarin must be used in a number of situations, which was not contested as far as I could see. It appeared to have become naturalized that this was the way things were, to such a degree that the only reply I could get was "of course, this is the way things are", with no reflection beyond this. Although Cantonese is associated with certain groups such as manual laborers and the elderly, there was, as far as I could see, no evidence that Cantonese could be regarded as a sociolect, as the division in usage was situational, not individual. The reason why Cantonese was associated more with certain groups, and for that matter a certain gender, is precisely due to this situational nature.

On Shamian, or at least in Karen's Place, this linguistic division was further complicated by the addition of English. Here Mandarin too gained a symbolic value for categorization in a

positive direction simply by being juxtaposed with English. English, then, takes over the role of Mandarin as the “outsider” language, and Mandarin is redirected into a new category we might call that of the “distant insider”. The position of the users of these languages along a sociability spectrum was made apparent by the reciprocal relations established between the shop’s employees and its customers. The positioning along this spectrum is, however, limited by the institution of *guanxi*, which solidifies the partition into insider and outsider, meaning that for the purposes of prolonged interaction, there is no middle ground between these categories.

What I observed in Guangzhou gives the impression that, at least to my group of informants, categorization based on language was automatic when strangers were concerned. When this categorization was not congruent with the situation, this seemed to cause people difficulty. In these instances where marked language was used, we saw additional mechanisms at work, such as those of cognitive dissonance. This was not a situation that I observed “occurring naturally” if I may so term it. The only instances of cognitive dissonance I saw were those in which I myself affected the situation. However, I still hold these findings to be valuable, as atypical situations have the ability to throw into sharp relief the underlying principles of the society under scrutiny. In activating more mechanisms than ordinary situations, they often reveal more information. Here the atypical situation consisted of language that was situationally misplaced, recreating the speaker into a symbolic interloper, which I liken to Leach’s rabbit. In the contexts I describe, cognitive dissonance acted as a mechanism for maintaining congruence in one’s categories, either reinterpreting the interloper as an insider, or demanding the interloper cease his ingress, i.e. speak Mandarin.

I saw a definite linguistic divide along gender lines, which was not sufficiently explained with recourse to the situational division. This may well have a connection with the old supposition that the private sphere is the domain of the woman, whereas the public is the domain of the man. As this division mirrors that of the two languages, I suggest that Cantonese was taken to belong more to women than to men, although I must reiterate that this association was never explicitly stated by the informants themselves. In addition there seemed to be a gender division as to the disposition to accept marked communication, which might be explained with recourse to my division of movement towards modernity/movement towards traditionalism.

Conclusion

Finally, the question remains why these tendencies I observed were so strong, especially these two cases involving the police women. The explanations for this are twofold. One, the institution of *guanxi* coupled with the phenomenon of cognitive dissonance caused the creation of temporary *guanxi* relations as a strategy to reduce cognitive discomfort in the face of marked language. Further, if these tendencies are indeed unconscious, then the capacities with which they may be countered are severely reduced, as without filtration from higher mental processes, primary process becomes the dictator of behaviour.

Lastly, I would like to say a few words concerning further studies in China. I believe that language has not received the attention it deserves from sinologists, something I hope this thesis has demonstrated. Although the history of ideas is complex and will always be debatable, I suggest that this lack of rigour is due to language being linked to the argument of epistemological relativism, and lost much of his momentum after 1969 with the publication of "*Basic Color Terms*" by Berlin & Kay. This study has also served to drive home the importance of coincidence on anthropological data. Had I attempted to learn Mandarin rather than Cantonese before and during my fieldwork, this particular study would likely not have been possible.

Bibliography

Bibliography:

Anderson, Benedict (2006): "*Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*", London: Verso Books

Arkush, David R. (1981): "*Fei Xiaotong and Sociology in Revolutionary China*", Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press

Asad, Talal (1972): "*Market Model, Class Structure and Consent: A Reconsideration of Swat Political Organization*", in: "*Man, Vol.7, No.1*", London: Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland

Atran, Scott (1985): "*The Nature of Folk-Botanical Life Forms*", in: "*American Anthropologist, Vol.87, No.2*", Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell

Barnard, Alan (2000): "*History and Theory in Anthropology*", Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Barnard, Alan & Jonathon Spencer (1996): "*Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology*", London: Routledge

Barth, Fredrik (1966): "*Models of Social Organization*", London: Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland

Barth, Fredrik (1969): "*Introduction*", in, Fredrik Barth (ed.): "*Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference*", Bergen: Universitetsforlaget

Barth, Fredrik (1994): "*Rolledilemmaer og far-sønndominans i slektssystemer i Midtøsten*", in Fredrik Barth (ed.): "*Manifestasjon og Prosess*", Oslo: Universitetsforlaget

Bateson, Gregory (1936): "*Naven*": Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Bateson, Gregory (1972): "*Steps to an Ecology of Mind*", New York: Ballantine Books

Bebe, Leslie M. & Howard Giles (1984): "*Speech Accommodation Theories: A Discussion in Terms of Second Language Acquisition*", in: "*International Journal of the Sociology of Language, Vol.46*", Berlin: De Gruyter

Behar, Ruth (1993): "*Translated Woman*", Boston, MA: Beacon

Bernstein, Basil (1971): "*Class, Codes and Control: Theoretical Studies towards Sociology of*

Language Relations in Guangzhou

Language", London: Routledge

Berlin, Brent & Paul D. Kay (1969): "*Basic Color Terms: Their Universality and Evolution*", Berkeley, CA: University of California Press

Berremen, Gerald D. (1963): "*Hindus of the Himalayas*", Berkeley: University of California Press

Berry, Chris (2008): "*Cinema: From Foreign Import to Global Brand*", in, Kam, L. (ed.): "*Cambridge Companion to Modern Chinese Culture*", Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Blake, Fred (1994): "*Foot Binding in Neo-Confucian China and the Appropriation of Female Labour*", in: "*Signs, Vol.19, No.3*", Chicago: Chicago Journals

Bloch, Maurice (2006): "*Language, Anthropology and Cognitive Science*", in, Moore, Henrietta & Sanders, Todd (eds.): "*Anthropology in Theory, issues in Epistemology*", Malden, MA: Blackwell

Blom, Jan-Petter & Gumperz, John (1972): "*Social Meaning in Linguistic Structures: Code-Switching in Language*", in, John Gumperz & Dell Hymes (eds.): "*Directions in Sociolinguistics*", New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston

Bohannan, Paul (1959): "*The Impact of Money on an African Subsistence Economy*", in: "*Journal of Economic History, Vol.19*", Philadelphia, PA: The Economic History Association of the University of Pennsylvania

Borchgrevink, Axel (2003): "*Silencing Language: Of Anthropologists and Interpreters*", in: "*Ethnography, Vol.4, No.1*", London: Sage Publications

Borchorst, Anette & Birte Siim (2002): "*The Women-Friendly Welfare States Revisited*", London: Routledge

Bourdieu, Pierre (1977): "*Outline of a Theory of Practice*", Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Bourdieu, Pierre (1986): "*The Forms of Capital*", in, Richardson, J. (ed.): "*Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*", New York: Greenwood Press

Bourdieu, Pierre (1991): "*Language and Symbolic Power*", Cambridge: Polity Press

Bibliography

Brennan, Geoffrey & Giuseppe Eusepi (2009): "*Value and Values, Preferences and Price: An Economic Perspective on Ethical Questions*", in, Geoffrey Brennan & Giuseppe Eusepi (eds.): "*The Economics of Ethics and the Ethics of Economics*", Cheltenham: Edward Elgar

Brownell, Susan (1995): "*Bodies, Boundaries and the State*", in, Susan Brownell (ed.): "*Training the Body for China: Sports in the Moral Order of the People's Republic*", Chicago: Chicago University Press

Brownell, Susan (2001): "*Making Dream Bodies in Beijing: Athletes, Fashion Models and Urban Mystique in China*", in, Nancy Chen, Constance Clark, Suzanne Gottschang & Lynn Jeffrey (eds.): "*China Urban: Ethnographies of Contemporary Culture*", Durham, NC: Duke University Press

Chen, Nancy (2001): "*Health, Wealth and the Good Life*", in, Nancy Chen, Constance Clark, Suzanne Gottschang & Lynn Jeffrey (eds.): "*China Urban: Ethnographies of Contemporary Culture*", Durham, NC: Duke University Press

Chen, Ping (2008): "*Languages in a Modernizing China*", in, Kam Louie (ed.): "*Cambridge Companion to Modern Chinese Culture*", Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Chomsky, Noam (1957): "*Syntactic Structures*", The Hague: Mouton

Clarke, David (2008): "*Revolutions in Vision: Chinese art and the Experience of Modernity*", in, Kam, Louie (ed.): "*Cambridge Companion to Modern Chinese Culture*", Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Clifford, James (1988): "*On Orientalism*", in, Clifford, J. (ed.): "*The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth Century Ethnography, Literature and Art*", Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press

Connell, Raewyn (2009): "*Gender*", Cambridge: Polity Press

Constable, Nicole (1997): "*Maid to Order in Hong Kong: Stories of Filipina Workers*", Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press

Coulmas, Florian (1992): "*Language and Economy*", Oxford: Blackwell

Coulmas, Florian (2005): "*Sociolinguistics: The Study of Speakers Choices*", Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Language Relations in Guangzhou

Coupland, Nikolas, Justine Coupland & Howard Giles (1991): "*Language, Society and the Elderly: Discourse, Identity and Ageing*", Oxford: Blackwell

D'Andrade, Roy (1995): "*The Development of Cognitive Anthropology*", Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Davis, Deborah & Stevan Harrell (1993): "*Introduction*", in Deborah Davis & Stevan Harrell (eds.): "*Chinese Families in the Post-Mao Era*", Berkeley, CA: University of California Press

Diamond, Jared (1997): "*Guns Germs and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*", New York: W. W. Norton & Company

Dijksterhuis, Ap, Tanya L. Chartrand & Henk Aarts (2007): "*Effects of Priming and Perception on Social Behaviour and Goal Pursuits*", in, John A. Bargh (ed.): "*Social Psychology and the Unconscious: The Automaticity of Higher Mental Processes*", New York: Psychology Press

Dikötter, Frank (1992): "*The Discourse of Race in Modern China*", London: Hurst & Company

Douglas, Mary (2002): "*Purity and Danger*", London: Routledge

Ding, Qu D. & Therese Hesketh (2006): "*Family Size, Fertility Preferences and Sex Ratio in China in the Era of the One Child Family Policy: Results from National Family Planning and Reproductive Health Survey*", in: "*British Medical Journal, Vol.333, No.7564*", London: BMJ Publishing Group

Du, Liping (2007): "*A Unique Medicine Market in Guanxi*", in: "*Ethnology, Vol.46, No.1*", Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh – Of the Commonwealth System of Higher Education

Dumont, Louis (1970): "*Homo Hierarchicus: The Caste System and its Implications*", Delhi: Vikas Publications

Durkheim, Emile (1915): "*Elementary Forms of Religious Life*", New York: Macmillan

Eidheim, Harald (1969): "*When Ethnic Identity is a Social Stigma*", in, Fredrik Barth (ed.): "*Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference*", Bergen: Universitetsforlaget

Bibliography

Erbough, Mary (1995): "*Southern Chinese Dialects as a Medium for Reconciliation Within Greater China*", in: "*Language in Society, Vol.24*", Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Evans, Harriett (2005): "*Gender in Modern Chinese Culture*", in, Kam Louie (ed.): "*Cambridge Companion to Modern Chinese Culture*", Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Evans-Pritchard, Edward E. (1940): "*The Nuer*", Oxford: Clarendon Press

Fan, Jie, Thomas Heberer & Wolfgang Taubmann (2006): "*Rural China: Economic and Social Life in the Late Twentieth Century*", Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, Inc.

Fei, Xiaotong (1992): "*From the Soil: The Foundations of Chinese Society*", Berkeley, CA: University of California Press

Festinger, Leon (1957): "*A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance*", Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press

Festinger, Leon, Henry Riecken & Stanley Schächter (1956): "*When Prophecy Fails: A Social and Psychological Study of a Modern Group that Predicted the Destruction of the World*", Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota press

Fong, Vanessa (2002): "*China's One-Child Policy and the Empowerment of Urban Daughters*", in: "*American Anthropologist: New Series, Vol.104, No.4*", Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell

Frank, Adam (2006): "*Taijiquan and the Search for the Little Old Chinese Man: Understanding Identity through Martial Arts*", New York: Palgrave Macmillan

Freedman, Maurice (1971): "*Chinese Lineage and Society: Fukien and Kwangtung*", New York: The Athlone Press

Galtung, Marte K. (2009): "*Kina: Folket, Historien, Politikken, Kulturen*", Oslo: Aschehaug

Gamble, Sidney D. (1943): "*The Disappearance of Foot-Binding in Tingsien*", in: "*The American Journal of Sociology, Vol.49, No.2*", Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press

Gardner-Chloros, P. (1991): "*Language, Selection and Switching in Strasbourg*", Oxford: Oxford University Press

Language Relations in Guangzhou

Garrett, Valerie (1995): "*Heaven is High, the Emperor Far Away: Merchants and Mandarins in Old Canton*", Oxford: Oxford University Press

Geertz, Clifford (1973): "*The Interpretation of Cultures*", New York: Basic Books

Geertz, Clifford (1984): "*Anti Anti-Relativism*", in "*American Anthropologist, Vol.86*", Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell

Gell, Alfred (1992): "*The Technology of Enchantment and the Enchantment of Technology*", in, Jeremy Coote & Anthony Sheldon. (eds.): "*Anthropology, Art and Aesthetics*", Oxford: Clarendon Press

Gibbon, Margaret (1999): "*Feminist Perspectives on Language*", London: Longman

Giles, Howard & Robert St. Clair (1979): "*Language and Social Psychology*", Oxford: Wiley Blackwell

Gladney, Dru C. (1994): "*Representing Nationality in China: Refiguring Majority/Minority Identities*", in: "*The Journal of Asian Studies, Vol.53, No.1*", Association for Asian Studies: Online Publication February 1994

Gladney, Dru C. (1998): "*Ethnic Identity in China: The Making of a Muslim Minority Nationality*", Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace & Company

Goffman, Erving (1955): "*On Face-work: An Analysis of Ritual Elements of Social Interaction*", in: "*Psychiatry: Journal for the Study of Interpersonal Processes, Vol.18, No.3*", Washington, DC: The William Alanson White Psychiatric Foundation

Goffman, Erving (1959): "*The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*", London: Penguin Books

Gold, Thomas, Doug Gertie & David Wank (2002): "*Social Connections in China: Institutions, Culture and the Changing Nature of Guanxi*", Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Goldstein, Joshua (2006): "*Introduction*", in, Madeleine Yue Deng & Joshua Goldstein (eds.): "*Everyday Modernity in China*", Seattle: University of Washington Press

Gottschang, Suzanne Z. (2001): "*The Consuming Mother: Infant Feeding and the Feminine Body in Urban China*", in, Nancy Chen, Constance Clark, Suzanne Gottschang & Lynn

Bibliography

Jeffrey (eds.): *"China Urban: Ethnographies of Contemporary Culture"*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press

Gottschang, Suzanne Z. (2007): *"Maternal Bodies, Breast-Feeding and Consumer Desire in Urban China"*, in: *"Medical Anthropology Quarterly: New Series, Vol.21, No.1"*, Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell

Gould, Stephen J. (1981): *"The Mismeasure of Man"*, New York: Norton

Greenhalg, Suzan (1993): *"the Peasantization of the One-child Policy in Shanxi"*, in, Deborah Davis & Stevan Harrell (eds.): *"Chinese Families in the Post-Mao Era"*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press

Habermas, Jürgen (1989): *"The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere"*, Great Britain: Polity Press

Hall, Edward T. (1959): *"The Silent Language"*, New York: Premier Books

Holy, Ladislav & Mira Stuchlik (2006): *"Anthropological Data and Social Reality"*, in, Todd Sanders & Henrietta Moore (eds.): *"Anthropology in Theory: Issues in Epistemology"*, Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing

Hamilton, Gary G. & Wang Zheng (1992): *"Introduction"*, in Fei Xiaotong: *"From the Soil: The Foundations of Chinese Society"*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press

Hanami, Makiko T. (1993): *"Beyond the Domestic/Public Dichotomy: Problems and New Directions"*, in: *"Hitotsubashi Journal of Arts and Sciences Vol.34, No.1"*, Online Publication December 1993

Harrell, Stevan (2002): *"Ways of Being Ethnic in Southwest China"*, Seattle, WA: Washington University Press

Howard, Alan (1982): *"Interactional Psychology: Some Implications for Psychological Anthropology"*, in: *"American Anthropologist: New Series, Vol.84, No.2"*, Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell

Howell, Signe & Marit Melhuus (1993): *"The Study of Kinship; the Study of Person; a Study of Gender?"*, in, Teresa Del Valle (ed.): *"Gendered Anthropology"*, London: Routledge

Language Relations in Guangzhou

Hsu, Elisabeth (1999): "*The Transmission of Chinese Medicine*", Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Hu, Hsien Chin (2009): "*The Chinese Concept of 'Face'*", in "*American Anthropologist, Vol.46, No.1*", Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell

Hwang, Juck-Ryoon (1990): "'Deference' versus 'Politeness' in Korean Speech", in: "*International Journal of the Sociology of Language, No. 82*", Berlin: De Gruyter

Hwang, Kwang-Kuo (1987): "*Face and Favour: The Chinese Power Game*", in: "*American Journal of Sociology, Vol.92, No.4*", Chicago: University of Chicago Press

Ikels, Charlotte (1986): "*Aging and Adaptation: Chinese in Hong Kong and the United States*", North Haven, CT: Archon Books

Ikels, Charlotte (1996): "*The Return of the God of Wealth: The Transition to Market Economy in Urban China*", Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press

Jacobs, Bruce (1979): "*A Preliminary Model of particularist Ties in Chinese Political Alliances: KanCh'ing and Kuanshi in A Rural Taiwanese Township*", in: "*The China Quarterly 78*", Cambridge Journals Online: Published February 17th 2009

Jacobsen, Rodolfo (1996): "*In Search of the Deeper Message: Codeswitching Rationales of Mexican Americans and Malaysians*", in, Marlis Hellinger & Ulrich Ammon (eds.): "*Contrastive Sociolinguistics*", New York: Mouton de Gruyter

Jankowiak, William (2008): "*Ethnicity and Chinese Identity: Ethnographic Insight and Political Positioning*", in, Kam Louie (ed.): "*Cambridge Companion to Modern Chinese Culture*", Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Jeffrey, Lyn (2001): "*Placing Practices: Transnational Network Marketing in Mainland China*", in, Nancy Chen, Constance Clark, Suzanne Gottschang & Lynn Jeffrey (eds.): "*China Urban: Ethnographies of Contemporary Culture*", Durham, NC: Duke University Press

Jung, Carl G. (1991): "*The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*", London: Routledge

Jung, Carl G. (2003): "*Four Archetypes*", London: Routledge

Bibliography

Kalmar, Ivan, Zhong Yong & Xiao Hong (1987): "*Language attitudes in Guangzhou, China*", in: "*Language in Society, Vol.16, No.4*", Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press

Kant, Immanuel (1999): "*Critique of Pure Reason*", Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

King, Ambrose W. C. (1996): "*The Transformation of Confucianism in the Post Confucian Era*", in Tu Wei-Ming (ed.): "*Confucian Tradition in East Asian Modernity: Moral Education and Economic Culture in Japan and the Four Mini-Dragons*", Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press

Kiong, Tong C. & Yong P. Kee (1998): "*Guangxi Bases, Xinyong and Chinese Business Networks*", in: "*The British Journal of Sociology, Vol. 49, No. 1*", Oxford: Blackwell Publishing

Kipnis, Andrew B. (1997): "*Producing Guanxi: sentiment, Self, and Subculture in a North China Village*", Durham: Duke University Press

Kluckhohn, Clyde (1959): "*The Philosophy of Navaho Indians*", in, Fried, M. H. (ed.): "*Readings in Anthropology, Vol.2*", New York: Crowell & Kroeber A. L.

Kolm, Serge-Christophe (2008): "*Reciprocity: An Economics of Social Relations*", Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Kolstad, Arnulf & Yang, Y. (2010): "*Chinese Guanxi, its meaning, content and context dependency, and how it relates to social network, friendship and social identity: A case study of the classification of Chinese Guanxi in urban and rural China*", Unpublished

Kolås, Åshild (2005): "*Ethnic Tourism in Shangrila: Representations of Place and Tibetan Identity*", Oslo: Department of Social Anthropology, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Oslo Unipub

Labov, William (1966): "*The Social Stratification of English in New York City*", Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics

Lam, Wai-man, Percy Luen-Tim Lui, Wilson Wong & Ian Holliday (2007): "*Contemporary Hong Kong Politics: Governance in the Post 1997-era*", Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press

Lambek, Michael (2006): "*Body and Mind in Body, Body and Mind in Body: Some Anthropological Inventions in a Long Conversation*", in, Henrietta Moore and Todd Sanders (eds.): "*Anthropology in Theory: Issues in Epistemology*", Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing

Larsen, Tord (1977): "*Formalisme/substantivisme: et sentralt erkjennelsesteoretisk problem i antropologien*", Unpublished

Lau, Siu-Kai (1981): "*Chinese Familism in an Urban-Industrial Setting: The Case for Hong Kong*", in: "*Journal of Marriage and the Family, Vol. 43*", National Council of Family Relations

Leach, Edmund (1979): "*Anthropological Categories of Language: animal Categories and Verbal Abuse*", in, William A. Lessa & Evon Z. Vogt (eds.): "*Reader in Comparative Religion: An Anthropological Approach*", New York: Harper Collins Publishers

Lebra, Takie S. (1975): "*An Alternative Approach to Reciprocity*", in: "*American Anthropologist, Vol. 77*", Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell

Levine, Hal (1999): "*Reconstructing Ethnicity*", in: "*The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, Vol. 5, No. 2*", London: Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland

Lévi-Strauss, Claude (1953): "*On Social Structure*" in Alfred L. Kroeber (ed.): "*Anthropology Today: An Encyclopedic Inventory*", Chicago: University of Chicago Press

Lévi-Strauss, Claude (1963): "*Structural Anthropology*", New York: Basic Books

Lévi-Strauss, Claude (1969): "*Elementary Structures of Kinship*", Boston, MA: Beacon

Levy, Howard (1966): "*Chinese Foot-Binding: The History of a Curious Erotic Custom*", New York: Walton Rawls

Lucy, John (1992): "*Grammatical Categories and Cognition: A Case Study in the Linguistic Relativism Hypothesis*", Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Malinowski, Bronislaw (1961): "*Argonauts of the Western Pacific*", New York: E. P. Dutton & Co, Inc

Bibliography

Marshall, Gloria A. (1993): "*Racial Classification*", in, Harding, S. (ed.): "*The 'Racial' Economy of Science*", Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press

Mauss, Marcel (1979): "*Body Techniques*", in, Marcel Mauss (ed.): "*Sociology and Psychology*", London: Routledge & Keagan Paul

Mauss, Marcel (2002): "*The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*", London: Routledge

Mehrota, Rajah R. (1995): "*How to be Polite in Indian English*", in, Fishman, J. (ed.): "*International Journal of the Sociology of Language, No. 116*", Berlin: De Gruyter

Metzger, Thomas A. (1993): "*The Sociological Imagination of China: Comments on the thoughts of Chin Yao-chi*", in: "*Journal of Asian Studies, Vol. 52, No. 4*", Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Merleau-Ponty, Maurice (2002): "*The Phenomenology of Perception*", London: Routledge

Milroy, Leslie (1980): "*Language and Social Networks*", Oxford: Basil Blackwell

Milwertz, Cecilia N. (1996): "*Accepting Population Control: Urban Chinese Women and the One-child Family Policy*", London: Routledge

Montesquieu (1949): "*The Spirit of the Laws*", New York: Hafner Press

Moore, Henrietta L. (1988): "*Feminism and Anthropology*", Cambridge: Polity Press

Moore, Henrietta (2006): "*Global Anxieties: Concept-metaphors and Pre-theoretical Commitments in Anthropology*", in, Henrietta Moore and Todd Sanders (eds.): "*Anthropology in Theory: Issues in Epistemology*", Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing

Moors, Agnes & Jan de Houwer (2007): "*What is Automaticity? An Analysis of its Component Features and their Interrelations*", in, John A. Bargh (ed.): "*Social Psychology and the Unconscious: The Automaticity of Higher Mental Processes*", New York: Psychology Press

Morgan, Lewis Henry (1871): "*Systems of consanguinity and affinity in the human family*", Washington, DC: Smithsonian

Myers, David G. (2002): "*Social Psychology*", Boston: Mc Graw Hill

Language Relations in Guangzhou

Myers-Scotton, Carol (1993a): "*Social Motivations for Codeswitching: Evidence from Africa*", Oxford: Claredon Press

Myers-Scotton, Carol (1993b): "*Duelling Languages: Grammatical Structure in Codeswitching*", Oxford: Claredon Press

Ngai, Pun (2005): "*Made in China: Women Factory Workers in a Global Context*", Durham: Duke University Press

Nisbett, Richard (2003): "*The Geography of Thought: How Asians and Westerners Think Differently – And Why*", London: Nicholas Breadley Publishing

Okeke-Ihejirika, Philomina E. & Susan Franceschet (2002): "*Democratization & State Feminism: Gender Politics in Africa and Latin America*", Development and Change 33

Ong, Aihwa (1997): "*Chinese Modernities: Narratives of Nation and Capitalism*", in, Aihwa Ong & Donald Nonini (eds.): "*Ungrounded Empires: The Cultural Politics of Modern Chinese Transnationalism*", London: Routledge

Ong, Aihwa (1999): "*Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality*", Durham, NC: Duke University Press

Ong, Aihwa (2006): "*Neoliberalism as Exception: Mutations in Citizenship and Sovereignty*", Durham: Duke University Press

Ortner, Sherry B. (1974): "*Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture*", in, Michelle Rosaldo & Louise Lamphere (eds.): "*Woman, Culture and Society*", Stanford: Stanford University Press

Parish, William & Martin K. Whyte (1978): "*Village and Family in Contemporary China*", Chicago: University of Chicago Press

Polanyi, Karl (1944): "*The Great Transformation*", New York: Farrar & Rinehart

Polanyi, Karl (1957): "*The Economy as Instituted Process*", in Karl Polanyi, Conrad Arensberg & Harry Pearson (eds.): "*Trade and Markets in the Early Empires*", Glencoe, IL: free Press

Price, John Andrew (1962): "*Washo Economy*", Nevada State Museum Anthropological Papers Number 6erwerwrewwerewerewr

Bibliography

Radcliffe-Brown, Alfred R. (1952): "*Structure and Function in Primitive society*", London: Cohen & West Ltd.

Radcliffe-Brown, Alfred R. & Darryl Forde (1950): "*African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*", London: Oxford University Press

Richards, Audrey (1932): "*Hunger and Work in the Savage Tribe*", London: George Routledge & Sons Ltd.

Roberts, J. A. G. (2006): "*A History of China*", China: Palgrave Macmillan

Rofel, Lisa (1999): "*Other Modernities: Gendered Yearnings in China after Socialism*", Berkeley, CA: University of California Press

Rofel, Lisa (2007): "*Desiring China: Experiments in Neoliberalism, Sexuality and Public Culture*", Durham, NC: Duke University Press

Romaine, Suzanne (1984): "*The Language of Children and Adolescents*", Oxford: Basil Blackwell

Rosaldo, Michelle Z. & Louise Lamphere (1974): "*Woman, Culture and Society*", Stanford: Stanford University Press

Rosch, Eleanor (1978): "*Principles of Categorization*", in, Eleanor Rosch and Barbara B. Lloyd (eds.): "*Cognition and Categorization*", Hillsdale: Erlbaum

Rosen, Stanley (1985): "*Guangzhou's Democracy Movement in Cultural Revolution Perspective*", in: "*The China Quarterly, No.101*", Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Rossi, Ino (1973): "*The Unconscious in the Anthropology of Claude Lévi-Strauss*", in: "*American Anthropologist: New Series, Vol.75, No.1*", Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell

Rowe, William (1990): "*The Public Sphere in Modern China*", in "*Modern China, Vol.16, No.3*", London: Sage Publications

Sahlins, Marshall (1968): "*Tribesmen*", Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall

Sahlins, Marshall (1972): "*Stone Age Economics*", Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co

Said, Edward W. (1978): "*Orientalism*", London: Routledge.

Language Relations in Guangzhou

Salaff, Janet W. (1981): "*Working Daughters of Hong Kong: Filial Piety or Power in the Family?*", Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Saussure, Ferdinand de (1959): "*Course in General Linguistics*", New York: Mc Graw Hill

Saussure, Ferdinand de (2006): "*Writings in General Linguistics*", Oxford: Oxford University Press

Scott, James C. (1976): "*The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in South-east Asia*", New Haven, CT: Yale University Press

Seligman, Scott D. (1999): "*Chinese Business Etiquette: A Guide to Protocol, Manners and Culture in the People's Republic of China*", New York: Warner Business Books

Shea, Jeanne (2005): "*Sexual 'Liberation' and the Older Woman in Contemporary Mainland China*", in: "*Modern China, Vol.31, No.1*", London: Sage Publications

Short, Suzan & Zhai Fengying (1998): "*Looking Locally at China's One-Child Policy*", in: "*Studies in Family Planning, Vol.29, No.4*", Population Council

Siu, Helen F. (1993): "*Reconstituting Dowry and Brideprice in South China*", in Deborah Davis & Stevan Harrell (eds.): "*Chinese Families in the Post-Mao Era*", Berkeley, CA: University of California Press

Skinner, Burrhus F. (1957): "*Verbal Behaviour*" Copley Publishing Group

Smart, Alan (1993): "*Gifts, Bribes and Guanxi: A Reconsideration of Bourdieu's Capital*", in: "*Cultural Anthropology, Vol. 8, No. 3*", Malden, MA: Blackwell

Smith, Adam (2007): "*An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*", Hampshire: Harriman House Ltd.

Sommer, Matthew (2002): "*The Regulation of Masculinity*", in Susan Brownell & Jeffrey Wasserstrom (eds.): "*Chinese Feminities, Chinese Masculinities: A Reader*", Berkeley, CA: University of California Press

Suggs, David N. (2002): "*A Bagful of Locusts and the Baboon Woman: Constructions of Gender, Change and Continuity in Botswana*", Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace & Company

Spender, Dale (1985): "*Man Made Language: 2nd Edition*", London: Routledge

Bibliography

- Srinivas, Mysore N. (1962): *"Caste in Modern India: And Other Essays"*, London: Asia Publishing House
- Swann, Brian (1992): *"On the Translation of Native American Literatures"*, Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press
- Thomas, George (1991): *"Linguistic Purism"*, London: Longman
- Thompson, John B. (1991): *"Introduction"*, in Pierre Bourdieu: *"Language and Symbolic Power"*, Cambridge: Polity Press
- Tilley, Christopher 1999: *"Metaphor and Material Culture"*, Oxford: Blackwell
- Ting, Kwok-Fai & Stephen W. K. Chiu (2002): *"Leaving the Parental Home: Chinese Culture in an Urban Context"*, in, *"Journal of Marriage and Family, Vol. 64, No. 3"*, National Council of Family Relations
- Trudgill, Peter (1984): *"Sociolinguistics: 2nd Edition"*, London: Penguin Books
- Tsui, Ming & Lynne Rich (2002): *"The Only Child and Educational Opportunity for Girls in Urban China"*, in: *"Gender and Society, Vol.16"*, London: Sage Publications
- Twitchett, Denis & Michael Loewe (1986): *"The Cambridge History of China: Volume 1: The Ch'in and Han Empires, 221 B.C.-A.D.220"*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Unger, Jonathan (1993): *"Urban Families in the Eighties: A Review of Chinese Surveys"*, in Deborah Davis & Stevan Harrell (eds.): *"Chinese Families in the Post-Mao Era"*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press
- De Valois, Russell & Karen De Valois (1993): *"A Multi-State Color Model"*, in: *"Vision Research Vol.33, No.8"*, Amsterdam: Elsevier
- Walder, Andrew (1986): *"Communist Neo-Traditionalism: Work and Authority in Chinese Industry"*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press
- Wang, Fei-Ling (2004): *"Reformed Migration Control and New Targeted People: China's Hukou System in the 2000s"*, in: *"The China Quarterly No.177"*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Watson, John B. (1930): *"Behaviourism"*, New York: Norton

Wedeman, Andrew (2004): "*The Intensification of Corruption in China*", in: "*The China Quarterly, No. 180*", Cambridge, Cambridge University Press

Weiner, Anette (1992): "*Inalienable Possessions: The Paradox of Keeping-While-Giving*", Berkeley, CA: University of California Press

Whorf, Benjamin L. (1956): "*An American Indian Model of the Universe*", in John B. Carrol (ed.): "*Language, Thought and Reality: Selected Writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf*", Cambridge, MA: MIT Press

Wolfram, Walt (1997): "*Dialect in Society*", in, Florian Coulmas (ed.): "*The Handbook of Sociolinguistics*", Oxford: Blackwell

Wolfram, Walt (2004): "*Social varieties of American English*", in Edward Finegan & John R. Rickford (eds.): "*Language in the USA: Themes for the Twenty-first Century*", Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Xu, Jian (1999): "*Body, Discourse, and the Cultural Politics of Contemporary Chinese Qigong*", in: "*The Journal of Asian Studies, Vol.58, No.4*". The Association of Asian studies, Online publication: November 4, 1999

Yan, Yunxiang (1996): "*The Flow of Gifts: Reciprocity and Social Networks in a Chinese Village*", Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press

Yan, Yunxiang (2003): "*Private Life under Socialism: Love, Intimacy and Family Change in a Chinese Village 1949-1999*", Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press

Yan, Yunxiang (2006): "*Girl Power: Young Women and the Waning of Patriarchy in Rural North China*", in: "*Ethnology, Vol.45, No.2*", Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh – Of the Commonwealth System of Higher Education

Yan, Yunxiang (2009): "*The Individualization of Chinese Society*", Oxford: Berg

Yang, Mayfair M. (1989): "*The Gift Economy and State Power in China*", in, Shryock, A. (ed.): "*Comparative Studies in Society and History, Vol. 31, No.1*", Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Youssi, Abderrahim (1995): "*The Moroccan Triaglossa: Facts and Implications*", in, Fishman, J. (ed.): "*International Journal of the Sociology of Language*", Berlin: De Gruyter

Bibliography

Zhang, Everett Y. (2001a): "*Goudui and the State: Constructing Entrepreneurial Masculinity in Two Cosmopolitan Areas of Post-Socialist China*", in, Dorothy Hodgson (ed.): "*Gendered Modernities*", New York: Palgrave

Zhang, Li (2001b): "*Contesting Crime, Order and Migrant Spaces in Beijing*", in, Nancy Chen, Constance Clark, Suzanne Gottschang & Lynn Jeffrey (eds.): "*China Urban: Ethnographies of Contemporary Culture*", Durham, NC: Duke University Press

Other Sources:

<http://www.gdstats.gov.cn/tjnj/e4.htm>: Guangzhou Statistical Yearbook 28.07.2010

http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2007-08/07/content_5448787.htm: China Daily.com.cn
28.07.2010

