

The Fashion Choices of Expatriate Western Women in Hong Kong from 1960 to 1997.

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Abstract

This thesis examines the construction of identities through dress by expatriate Western women in Hong Kong between 1960 and 1997. Tracing a history of production, mediation, retailing, and consumption, it forms the first comprehensive examination of Hong Kong fashion during the period. In thirty-seven years Hong Kong developed and consolidated its position as a garment, and then fashion manufacturer and exporter, manufacturing a succession of merchandise demanded by international customers, and weathering the surges and slackening of global demand unmitigated by government controls. This complex industry formed the context for the paucity of fashion choice for a select group of expatriate Western women residents. In this thesis I show how for this specific group, even with initial hegemonic status, dress remained problematic until they appropriated regional ethnic dress, not as a manifestation of Orientalism, but to enable them to comply with local conservative fashion norms in a situation, which they believed lacked recognised fashion leadership. In addition, they learned to manifest unique identities through dress, which in time, they transposed to their home countries. Conservative fashion dress included: tailoring; the *cheongsam*; the *sari*; the *ao-dai*; and Thai fishermen's pants amongst other items, forming extensive collections of garments curated by informants and used as a means to display familiarity with the host community to compatriots and in their home countries.

As I show in this thesis, contrary to the precepts of Orientalism, it was not possible to live in Asia and retain an Orientalist viewpoint: increasing familiarity with the strange facilitated experimentation with regional dress in an attempt to maintain a hegemony of difference from the host community who rapidly appropriated Western designer fashion clothing during the period. As the exotic became everyday, individuality became increasingly personalised. This thesis investigates the complexities of the appropriation of ethnic dress; the nature of traded dress; 'binge shopping;' comfort clothing; and women's tailoring, as means of demonstrating identities.

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Additional information

The Peg

The Hong Kong dollar was pegged to the U.S. dollar, the world's major currency, in 1983. The exchange rate to the end of the period remained H.K.\$ 7.8 = U.S.\$1.00.

Hong Kong dollar/Sterling exchange rates.

The Hong Kong dollar and sterling exchange rates have varied during the period of research from H.K.\$1.00 = £0.10p to H.K.\$1.00 = £0.15p.

Yale Romanisation System

I have used the Yale Romanisation System for all words in Cantonese, Vietnamese, Balinese, or Hindu. *Putonhua* words are spelled in *Pin-yin*. I have left spellings within quotations as original although the spelling differs from *Pin-yin* or the Yale System in some instances.

Introduction

'The dress [from a dress-kit] had a label which I would have made sure was sewn in to the dress: these days, of course, you sew it on the outside'.¹

Dressing the Diaspora

As the English schoolteacher in her 40s above suggests, dress and more importantly the way in which it is worn (including where the designer's brand name is placed), changes over time. The way expatriate Western women choose to dress to reveal their identities in the colonial and post-colonial world has become increasingly complex especially in Asia, a region of enormous social, cultural, and economic change and diversity, in which, as social scientist John Clammer observes 'Peasants co-exist with yuppies.'² In this thesis I will examine the difficulties and consequences of expatriate Western women's use of dress as a means of manifesting who they felt themselves to be in the near contemporary situation of Hong Kong between 1960 and 1997, using an oral history methodology. This is set against a history of the Hong Kong fashion industry in order to identify the regional nature of Hong Kong fashion in the context of a general shortage of suitable fashions for this group.³

By 1960, fashion and textiles had become established as Hong Kong's largest manufacturing and export categories: the sweatshops of the early 1950s had improved, and production began to develop from basic garments to fashion merchandise. By 1997 fashion and textiles remained of primary importance to many Hong Kong residents, providing: a livelihood, a hobby, and sense of difference that was 'Hong Kong' to the rest of the region. Numerous glittering shopping malls offered genuine fashion merchandise (often the first overseas retail expansion for European brand-names) for visitors from other parts of Asia, as shopping became the past-time of choice for the host population. For many expatriate Western women limited sizing precluded purchase which, together with a lack of access to quality garments manufactured in Hong Kong, resulted in a dearth of fashion choice. From teeming sweatshops producing merchandise for worldwide export in 1960, to high-investment specialised garment manufacturing in 1997 as the manufacturing industry was largely driven over the Hong Kong/People's Republic of China (P.R.C.) border in pursuit of lower labour costs,

Hong Kong did in thirty-seven years, what London and New York each took one hundred and fifty years to achieve.

In this thesis I include a diachronic social, cultural, and economic history of the fashion and textiles industry and its mediation in Hong Kong in order to explain and contextualise my informants' contributions and my findings.

Fashion Leadership

Dress is a critical aspect of appearance, and Western fashion an important symbol of modernity in the developing world, yet without recognised fashion leadership how is Western fashion dress perceived and worn? ⁴ Although my research appears to trace a decline in the social hegemony of expatriate Westerners paralleled by the rise of an increasingly sophisticated, wealthy Asian host-community, it focuses attention on the activities of expatriate Western women, a dominant social group, which distinctively lacked recognised fashion leadership. My research records the strategies that expatriate Western women adopted in order to maintain what they perceived to be fashion hegemony. Like Sophie Woodward's ethnographic research on how women select fashion dress, and design historian Alison Clarke's identification of 'anxiety-provoking' dress situations, my informants experienced similar situations in the midst of an apparent wealth of fashion choice.⁵ The decline in fashion hegemony, paralleled by the changing Hong Kong community, was almost unique amongst developing world cities where speed of communications has made fashion transnationalism the norm. In addition, my informants' experiences were set against a background of communality in dress for the host community, as sociologist Annie Chan's Hong Kong-based research in the later part of the period shows.⁶

Constructs for Research

This research is driven by three very different literatures: firstly, the notion that fashion is located in cities.⁷ Secondly, that Hong Kong forms part of 'The Orient' in cultural theorist Edward Said's conception of Orientalism, assuming that Orientalism is manifest through dress.⁸ And thirdly, that the developing discipline of oral history can be used to examine what past fashion dress in Hong Kong using data gathered through 'recovered' histories and images.

As dress historian Christopher Breward and cultural geographer David Gilbert show, fashion is particularly apparent in world cities.⁹ The fashion context of London (which is a comparable size to Hong Kong), Paris, or New York, with their well-known fashion pasts, are easily obtained from other sources and are part of informed contemporary knowledge.¹⁰ This is not true of Hong Kong, which throughout the period of research remained an exceptional colony. My research contributes to a growing understanding of the unique phenomena of fashion specific to a country and world cities, see for example: Kinsella; Gilbert; Breward; Kelly; Skov; and Kremer, and the identification of regional fashion, see for example: Maynard; Tarlo; Tulloch; and Palmer.¹¹

Notions of self-exoticising through dress, as a strategy for proclaiming difference as proposed by anthropologist Sandra Niessen based on Edward Said's theory of Orientalism, do not explain the breadth of past and current collections of 'Oriental' dress, nor the continuing appeal of this topic.¹² Alternatively, dress can be a sign of a committed solidarity with a culture, or it may be a strategy for safety, as in: 'when in Rome, do as the Romans do,' which was prevalent amongst early travellers.¹³ My research demonstrates that expatriate Western women's adoption of regional ethnic dress was a strategy employed to preserve and retain expatriate identities, eventually conveying a unique appearance on their return to their home countries. Did strategies developed of necessity become permanent solutions to the question of dress for expatriate Western women? How was this apparent if they became accustomed to the distinctive individuality that their adopted dress conferred?

Expatriate Western women's use of Southeast Asian regional fashion and textiles in their home countries demonstrated a minority group identity. As a material memory of former pastimes and privileges, this could be seen as a form of Orientalism representing Asian experience, but is this argument strong enough? Were collections of Asian dress and textiles a strategy with which to express fashion meaning in the relentlessly alien environment (in the climate, culture, and society) of Hong Kong? Did this make sense of the strangeness in which informants found themselves? Cultural theorist Jean Baudrillard proposes that the nature of exile is true patriotism: was this search for meaning in exile evident in my informant's dress behaviour?¹⁴ I propose that the acquisition of ethnic dress was a means of contending with a lack of authority on fashion dress; a strategy to

accommodate their willing or unwilling exile; and an opportunity to proclaim difference as the host community rapidly appropriated Western fashion dress.

The oral history of fashion dress remains an almost unknown methodology in Hong Kong. In the near absence of any collection or institution dedicated to fashion dress and the erratic conservation of any other sites of memory, the fashion dress of Hong Kong is disappearing.¹⁵ Oral histories are a means of 'recovering' unheard voices and stories, forming both a resource and a topic. As design historian Linda Sandino definitively explains, the interview is an interpretive event in which social memory is articulated and as dress historian Lou Taylor observes, this can be elegiac: saying goodbye to changed times.¹⁶

Fashion's importance and scarcity

In situations lacking fashion change where new 'looks' are absent and old 'looks' perpetuate, the fluidity of fashion dress crystallises and fashion becomes stuck in a self-referencing past. Strategies to deal with this anticipated eventuality explain the hoarding of garments when, as design historian Judy Attfield observed: 'people keep certain clothing items long after they serve any practical purpose.'¹⁷ I was continually surprised by my informants' differing definitions of fashion which became apparent in research interviews, and which defined what they decided to retain or dispose of. My research has benefited from access to extensive private collections of garments and photographs, which were made available to me to examine and photograph.

Fashion, the constant change of appearance to express both individuality and conformity, is best likened, as sociologist Fred Davis suggests, to music.¹⁸ Fashion is a form of visual change in Hong Kong, a city in which, for many citizens, means of conveying identity is limited: the speed of fashion change in the later part of the period indicated 'fashionability' (the ability of the community to recognise and adopt fashionable looks), and social status, as explained by Chan.¹⁹ This was especially true of women's fashion in the host community which by the 1990s, was up-dated on a weekly basis as the climate and culture changed rapidly. Whilst men's fashions remained relatively formal, especially in the finance sector (black suit, white long-sleeved shirt even in summer), women's dress frequently included: decorate elements usually seen in evening wear, a wide choice of colours, and a mix of Western and Asian elements. Western expatriate men working in Hong

Kong industry conformed to the local dress codes with few exceptions, resulting in non-heterogeneous dress. This is not to decry expatriate Western men's dress, but during the period of research it was more conservative than might be found in New York or London due to the lack of expatriate Western men in 'creative' occupations. Also, as I will show, self-identity was enshrined in appearance, thus accounting for the relative stability of some Hong Kong fashions.²⁰ Although anything can become fashionable, including items that are borrowed from anti-fashion groups, as both cultural anthropologist Ted Polhemus and sociologist Lise Skov note, it has not been possible for Hong Kong to claim global fashion leadership: Hong Kong produced what fashion demanded, specified, and retailed, elsewhere.²¹ At times this enabled Hong Kong residents to have privileged access to the fashions of elsewhere, and at other times it resulted in a dearth of supply. This research mirrors, supplements, and forms an addendum to the fashions of other cities whose fashions were manufactured in Hong Kong.

Expatriate Western women's dress in Hong Kong

Whilst my research has focused on the activities of fashionable expatriate Western women, research of a particular community by a member of that community cannot be considered to be purely dispassionate. As a methodology however, this approach allows a deeper perception of the topic and to nuance the subject. My perceptions of experiences described to me as a fellow expatriate Western woman in Hong Kong of some years standing, (I first visited Hong Kong for work in December 1989 before relocating permanently in October 1997), have enabled me to understand and probe as Woodward describes, the 'shifting experiences and positionalities and contexts' which informants have described in detail.²² I have also been privy to explanations of situations of which I am assumed to have knowledge because of my nationality (English), my profession (a fashion academic), and, on occasion, my late husband's senior position in a Hong Kong-based company in the 'corporate world.'

As social anthropologist Daniel Miller notes, research based on oral histories is a truth for a given moment in time.²³ It would be a generalisation to suggest that the activities of informants documented in the following chapters represent all expatriate Western women in the same location and period, much less in any other context. Of the women interviewed, there emerged a number of common themes,

information, and situations, and I propose, these are applicable to other women in similar situations assuming that they resorted to similar strategies in order to develop and maintain their sense of fashion dress.²⁴ My informants had wide access to alternatives to fashion dress, and, in this respect, their activities form a record of the ingenuity and creativity of women in appropriating suitable dress to comply with local formal dress codes in a situation of perceived shortage.

Reoccurring discussion of the *cheongsam* throughout the thesis reflects its status as former everyday-dress for the host community, appropriated by expatriate Western women in Hong Kong, and worn by them on their subsequent return to their home countries. The social context in which the *cheongsam* was worn continues to be a topic of research for dress historians including Hazel Clark and myself.²⁵ For this reason, the *cheongsam* is discussed throughout the thesis.

In addition, this thesis contributes to a very small number of publications documenting the Hong Kong fashion system: its production; mediation; retailing; and consumption. In tracing a fashion history in Hong Kong, this thesis especially reflects a shadowy mirror-history of garment production in the United Kingdom, as Hong Kong's manufacturing success mirrored Britain's decline. To contextualise my research, the following section outlines a brief history of Hong Kong.

Hong Kong, the exceptional British colony: a brief history

Historian G.B. Endacott summarises the geographic nature and climate of Hong Kong explaining the original allure of the island for Britain.²⁶ Of histories covering the period between Hong Kong as a stopping-place, a trading centre, a British colony, and its reversion to Chinese sovereignty (1847-1997), Endacott's and fellow historian Frank Welsh's are best known.²⁷ Further work by historians Hughes and Birch, together with Blyth's social history, examines Hong Kong's anomaly in remaining under direct colonial rule within the British Commonwealth system during the latter part of the period.²⁸

Little has been written on Hong Kong fashion: Hong Kong exhibition curator Matthew Turner, examines the design history of the 1960s, and Hao Wu has written the only fashion history of Hong Kong to date, a description of the businesses of The Hong Kong Federation of Garment Makers, tailors, and *cheongsam* makers.²⁹ Travel writer Jan Morris, has alternated contemporary description of dress with historical anecdote.³⁰ The more recent of these publications has been useful in

providing a framework of events affecting Hong Kong, but society magazines, tourist-generated ephemera, and advice literature intended for local expatriate readership, have been most useful in providing insight into fashion dress of the period (see, for example, the maps reproduced at the end of this chapter and photographs reproduced from ephemera throughout this thesis).

China ceded Hong Kong Island in perpetuity to Great Britain in 1841, together with Stonecutter's Island in 1860. In 1898 a larger area of mainland, the Kowloon Peninsula (the tip of mainland China), was leased for ninety-nine years (see Map of Asia 1985; map of Asia, Asian Capitals and the Pearl River Delta, Map of Southeast Asia 1969; and map of Victoria Harbour; at the end of this chapter). The 'Territory' was 'handed over' to Communist China in 1997 with the proviso that it remained a Special Administrative Region for fifty years with its own laws and political constitution, after which time, capitalist Hong Kong would harmonise completely with communist 'Mainland' China.³¹ In the space of one hundred and fifty years Hong Kong, with the sole resource of position, including a secure harbour and a fresh water supply, has been transformed from a 'virtually uninhabited barren rock' (and a safe harbour for passing ships), into a very prosperous city of six million inhabitants (see the development of the city recorded in the photographs reproduced at the end of this chapter: Victoria and Kowloon 1962; The Peak Tram and the view from the Peak 1964; Central 1967; Central and the Harbour 1967; 1970; and 1990; View from the Peak towards Wanchai 1986; and Hong Kong Exhibition and Convention Centre 1997).³²

As novelist John Lanchester notes, the 'territory' of Hong Kong never became a colony as did other parts of the British Empire.³³ Morris explains:

'After 1898, much of Hong Kong was held only on a 99-year lease from another power meaning that even in the prime of imperial ideology it could hardly be considered an absolute imperial possession. Nor was it ever exactly colonized - its population was always overwhelmingly un-British and the British people who went to administer it or profit from it seldom intended to stay for long. It was in fact no more than a British foothold on somebody else's territory, somebody else's civilisation. Hong Kong was essentially an integral part of China, and there was never a chance of its achieving like most other British dependencies, its own national independence.' (J. Morris, 1991)

Like India, Hong Kong was never intended to become an independent Dominion.³⁴ The ambiguity of Hong Kong's status, together with its transitory population for much of the Territory's history, accounted for the continued predominance of spoken Cantonese.

Industrialisation was hastened in a community of *entrepot* traders by the forced relocation of the Shanghainese cotton spinners due to the Civil War in China (1945-1949), establishing factories in Hong Kong, which considerably increased textiles employment for the increasing numbers of mainland refugees.³⁵ Nevertheless, textiles manufacturing remained a minor export until the imposition of the United Nations embargo on Chinese-made goods during the Korean War (1950 -1953) banning importation of Chinese manufactured goods into the United States of America.³⁶ Overnight, the *entrepot* trade was decimated and entrepreneurs turned to manufacturing, always with a global market in mind as the local population could not afford the end products which included textiles, dress, toys; torches, wigs, and artificial flowers.³⁷ The Korean War stimulated the Hong Kong tailoring industry as shiploads of American services personnel arrived in Hong Kong for 'R and R' (Rest and Recuperation) before returning to the United States of America. It became common practise for servicemen to purchase a suit for themselves and a fur coat for their wives during their stay.

By 1960 Hong Kong's exports had regained the levels that they had reached before the embargo, and Hong Kong had been transformed into a manufacturing centre. Despite the imposition of quotas, by the end of the 1960s fashion and textiles had become Hong Kong's major export category as Hong Kong academic E.V. Hsu summarizes:

'Textile manufacturing and garment making occupy the leading position among Hong Kong's industries accounting for 52 per cent of the domestic exports and employing 41 per cent of the industrial labour force. Hong Kong's 732,000 cotton spindles are among the most up to date in the world producing annually 290 million pounds of spun cotton of all counts. The 22,000 looms of Hong Kong's weaving mills produce all types of piece goods from grey drill to gingham, and in 1966 attained an output of 650 million square yards. Other woven products include silk and rayon brocade, lace, mosquito netting, military webbing, carpets and rugs.'³⁸

Textiles and clothing remained the largest export category even at the end of the period, despite repositioning manufacturing over the Chinese border to Shenzhen where the living costs, and therefore wages, were much lower than in Hong Kong. The focus on fashion as a primary source of wealth creation formed a key difference to many other city cultures: the notion of fashion as frivolous, trivial, or something indulged in by women, was rarely encountered in Hong Kong where fashion and textiles manufacturing formed a major part of the economy.

As the wealth of the colony increased (see photograph of Government House 1978, its architecture a testimony to Hong Kong's past), the government provided services, most notably public housing (thereby removing the shantytowns, (see photographs of Shanty town 1962; Shanty town cottage pre.1981; Resettlement Estate 1955; Block of Apartments in Resettlement Estate, pre. 1981; and Domestic life in Resettlement Estate pre.1981, at the end of this chapter, which document the poverty of many Chinese immigrants in the post-war period) and education, for a local population whose aspirations rapidly included fashion.³⁹ Many local residents were able to afford international branded fashion goods in the densely populated, urban community where other indications of status (family, address, car, education, or accent), were less perceptible. During the period of study, extensive shopping malls were established throughout Hong Kong, hosting international designer, luxury-brand-name stores. Until the late 1990s, the malls catered to the local community and large numbers of vacationing Japanese tourists for whom Hong Kong prices were below those charged by inefficiently structured store groups at home.

Japan, as the world's second largest economy and the most prosperous country in Asia, played a significant part in determining tastes in Hong Kong as reflected in the popularity of Japanese designer-name fashion stores; Japanese pop-music and pop-stars; Japanese food; and nick-names.⁴⁰ Numbers of resident expatriate Westerners and Japanese tourists significantly declined on completion of the Handover, and the Asian economic crisis, contributing to a period of recession from the later part of 1997, and reflecting economic ambivalence at the prospect of Chinese rule.

As sociologist Stuart Hall observes, diaspora is a side effect of colonialisation, a phenomenon in cities worldwide.⁴¹ In Hong Kong, local historian Jason Wordie has distinguished between the expatriate, local, and Chinese populations in the post-

war period. Prior to World War II and continuing in some fields of employment thereafter, Portuguese and Eurasian people formed the local community, to which were added large numbers of Chinese fleeing Communist China in the late 1940s.⁴² A brief definition of terms is useful here: 'Asian' is generally used in Hong Kong to describe anyone of Chinese origin, be they nationals of another country or, in many cases, brought up overseas. It is also used to describe people from South and Southeastern Asia (respectively: Nepal, India, Pakistan, and Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore), and anywhere from Mongolia, to Japan. The term is not pejorative. Expatriates are defined as Westerners from overseas who have chosen to make Hong Kong their home for part of their lives in comparison with immigrants who intend to reside in Hong Kong permanently. There was also a small community of Westerners who were born and grew-up in Hong Kong, their parents either having relocated to Hong Kong from Britain, or having fled communism in Shanghai (many of them having previously fled Russia).⁴³ The term 'Western women' may be defined as meaning a Caucasian (or part-Caucasian) member of the cultural, economic and political systems of North America, Europe, or Australasia. Although expatriates may have a second home in their country of origin or elsewhere, Hong Kong was, or had been, their primary residence. Few Western expatriates retired to Hong Kong, as in world terms, the cost of living was high.

In order not to confuse readers, this thesis will refer to the local or host-population as the majority population they had become by the end of the period of research: the largely Cantonese-speaking, Hong Kong Chinese community.⁴⁴ Although Chinese names are usually written family-name before given-name, in order to maintain consistency with Western names included in the text, all names are listed in Western form: given-name followed by family-name.

Sequence of Chapters

The sequence of chapters follows that of garment production: after a literature review, I commence with an overview of fashion production, followed by fashion distribution and availability through local retailing. I follow this with a section on the nature of the expatriate community and reflection on the fashion dress of the host community (which cannot be assumed to be the same as that of better known fashion cities), followed by the mediation of fashion in print and film. In the final chapter I examine the strategies used by expatriate Western women in creating their

own fashion dress as a means of making sense of Hong Kong's very different culture and environment (see the 'exotic' photographs of the street market and the street scene at the end of this introduction). The chapters are explained in more detail below:

Chapter One is primarily a review of published literature relevant to the subject of the thesis and the methodology used to complete this research. Specific topics are introduced with relevant literature in subsequent chapters. This chapter commences with a brief review of conceptions of fashion and the meaning of dress; a summary of the role of fashion in the context of identity construction and consumption theory; followed by an examination of the research methodology. In this chapter I summarize the mechanisms by which fashion change was developed and promulgated in majority and minority communities. In the following section I consider the impact of colonialism and post colonialism, and its manifestation through dress. I conclude with an examination of memory on which oral history research is predicated: its methodology; an explanation of how informants were selected; and an examination of other sources of information used including magazines, archives, photographs, and dress.

In Chapter Two I examine garment production in Hong Kong during the period of research drawing on interviews with: manufacturing employees; fit-models; tailors; designers; buyers; technicians; and employers from a wide spectrum of Hong Kong-based garment industries including: lingerie; men's and women's wear; knitwear; and accessories. These contextualise the sources of fashion dress surrounding and sometimes available to expatriate Western women during the period. A particular issue I address in my section on an oral history methodology, is the experience of the Western fashion industry in specifying and sourcing merchandise from Hong Kong in the 1980s and early 1990s. In 1998 I researched material for the new B.A. course at The Institute of Textiles and Clothing Department at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. As part of my research I was asked to compile a brief history of the fashion and textiles industry in Hong Kong. I realised my experiences as a U.K.-based designer, and that of my colleagues, customers (including designers, buyers, technologists, and merchandisers for U.K. blue chip companies), and friends had become 'forgotten' voices, lost in the small amount of self-congratulatory material on the Hong Kong fashion industry that I unearthed. This chapter will include memories, which I

suggest, more realistically represented the challenges in sourcing and developing merchandise from Hong Kong manufacturers at that time.

Chapter Three examines the availability, or otherwise, of Western fashion dress, decade by decade in Hong Kong. This is an account of fashion retailing throughout the period including: Birds; Justin Jake; Joyce Boutique; Marks and Spencer's; The China Resources Centre; Shanghai Tang; Stanley market (see photographs of Street market 1985 and Stanley Market 2000); factory shopping; and the Oxfam store. I conclude the chapter with a brief examination of the important role of visual merchandising during the period and the popularity of home dressmaking and knitting.

Chapter Four commences with an overview of local fashions in Hong Kong, the social and cultural backgrounds of expatriate Western women, and expatriate dress during the period. This chapter is critical to an understanding of the ironical situation in which informants found themselves: surrounded by unavailable fashion. It explains why expatriate Western women were only briefly able to follow the fashion lead of retail stores, and their subsequent attempts to shoulder this role for themselves. The chapter discusses the lack of fashion leadership and consequently informants' varying notions of fashion; the availability of suitable colours; copy-merchandise; branded merchandise; appropriate modesty; and sizing, together with the difficulties of sourcing an adequate wardrobe. This chapter examines 'binge shopping:' the habit of purchasing in bulk so as to safeguard against future shortage, and the use of the *cheongsam*, to make good shortages of appropriate fashion dress and to dress fashionably.

In Chapter Five I examine at the cultural context, representation, and mediation of fashion dress through locally published media, including newspapers, magazines, film, television, fashion shows and exhibitions, and record the local impact of international publications and film. Examining the wealth of ephemera and advice literature produced for both tourist and residents' use during the period, I show how it inculcated appropriate behaviour in both groups (see Street Map of Central and Tsim Sha Tsui 1979 marked with Swank stores, and Street Map of Central 1990, at the end of the chapter, which suggest shopping as a major tourist activity in Hong Kong). In my examination of advice literature specific to factory shopping; exhibitions; and catwalk shows, I explain why expatriate Western

women found using these sources as models for fashion leadership inappropriate or irrelevant.

In Chapter Six remembered fashions and my preceding chapters are drawn together, recording the experiences of my informants in finding suitable clothing in Hong Kong stores, using tailors to create items for their wardrobes, and significantly, the ethnic dress collections of clothing and textiles which they amassed in their wardrobes. I show that in order to manifest their identities through dress in the city of Hong Kong, expatriate Western women were compelled to create their own fashion dress, and the opportunities and problems this created.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to answer the following question: in distinguishing fashion as a unique regional phenomena as experienced in world cities, did Hong Kong have its own distinctive fashion? And if so, what did this look like and why? Did expatriate Western women's dress in near-contemporary Hong Kong offer dress phenomena not found in other fashion cities? Secondly, was the notion of 'The Orient' objectified and deemed exotic by expatriate Western women living in Hong Kong? My research will show how for expatriate Western women 'The Orient' became as 'everyday' as their surroundings (see the 'Oriental' photographs of rickshaws in Central 1962, and the Street Scene 1986), and how they made sense of the world in which they found themselves, creating meanings through dress, despite, or because of, a lack of fashion leadership in terms of fashion dress in this near-contemporary situation.

Finally, I will demonstrate how expatriate Western women sought new opportunities to express themselves by realizing their changed situations through dress: using dress to manifest changed identities; and using their resourcefulness in coping with a shortage of ready-made fashion dress and a lack of recognised fashion leadership, against a background of increasing sophistication in dress by the host community. I intend that this thesis also prompts a diachronic reconsideration of notable expatriate Western women who, over the past three hundred years, achieved notoriety through dress on their return to the West from overseas. The following work, based on research carried out in Hong Kong between 1999 and 2005 would not have been possible without the generosity of time, and thoughtful attention of my informants.

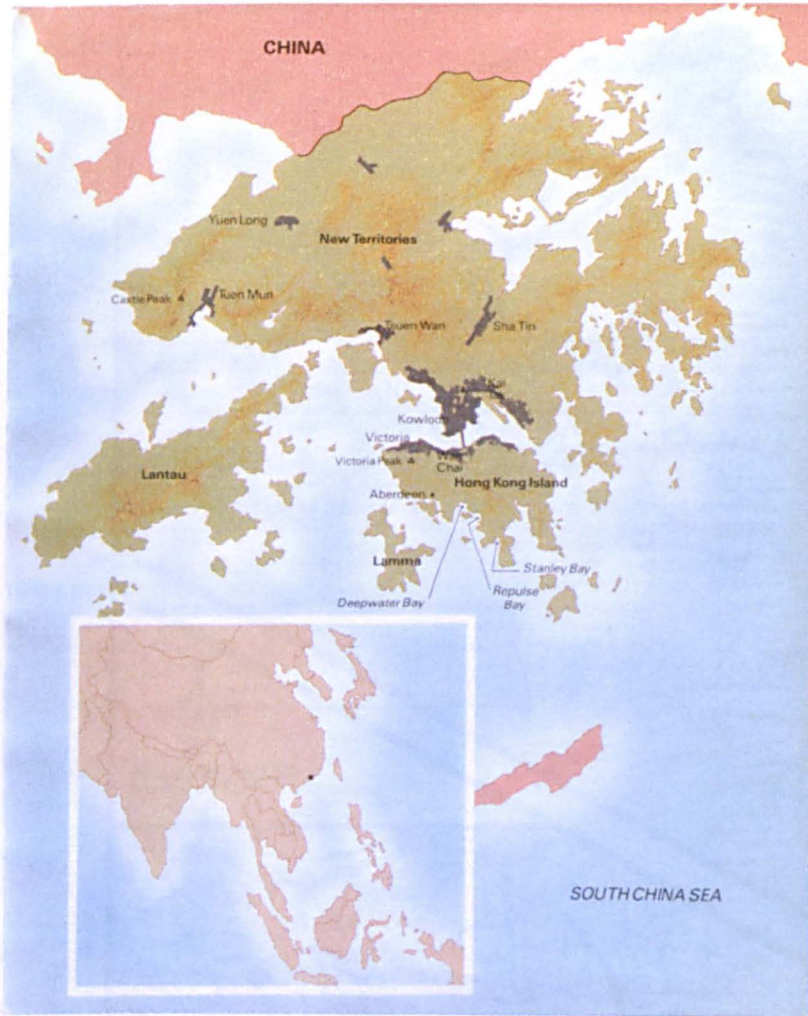


Figure 1 Map of Asia 1985

Geographical map of Hong Kong and insert position within Asian region.

‘Map of Hong Kong and environs, 1985.’

(Fairclough, 1985), Frontispiece.

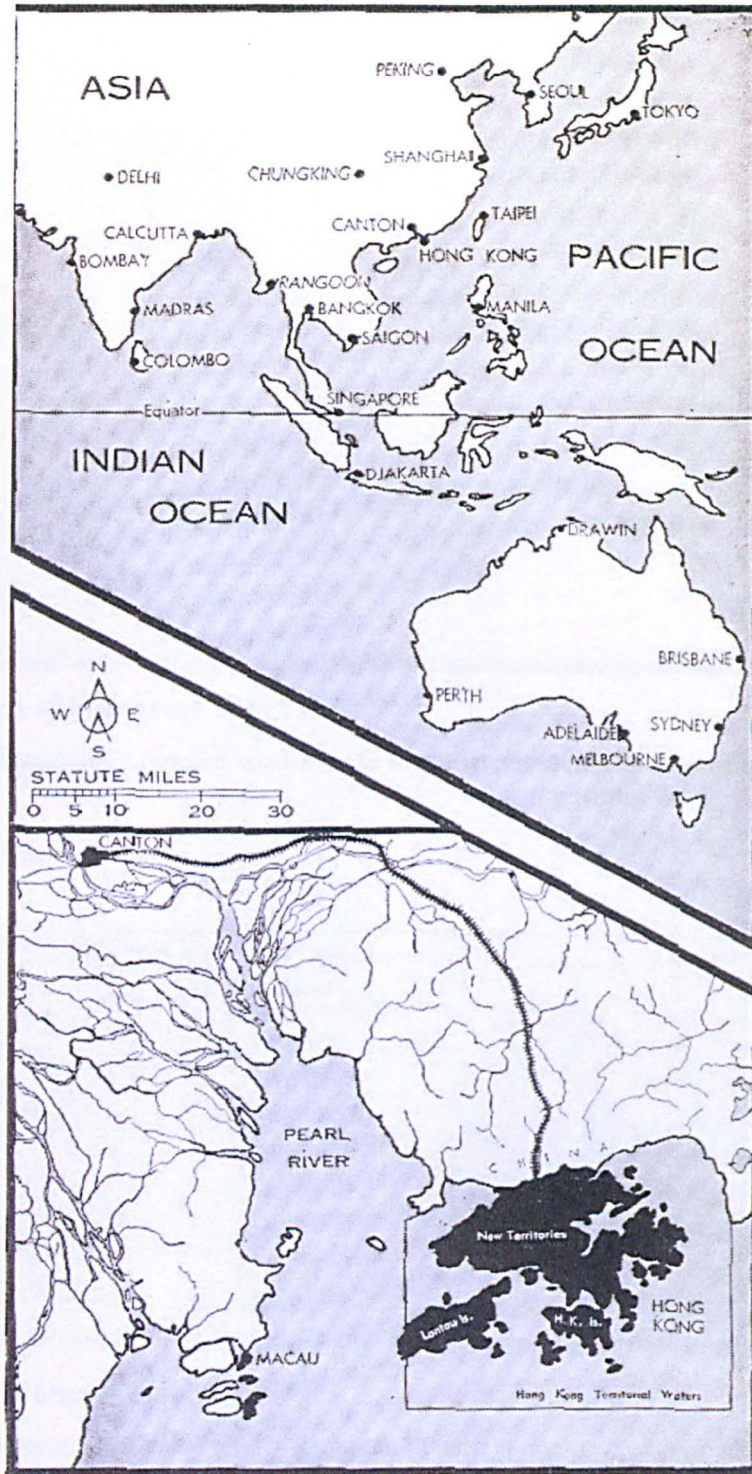


Figure 2 Map of Asia, Asian capitals, and the Pearl River Delta 1967

Hong Kong owes its strategic importance to its proximity to the Pearl River Delta, an early trading centre, and as a stopping place *enroute* to and from Japan and China.

‘Map of Pearl River estuary, insert map of Hong Kong, Lantau, and the New Territories, 1967.’

(W. K. Hoffman, 1967, p. 33), compliments of The Hilton Hotel.

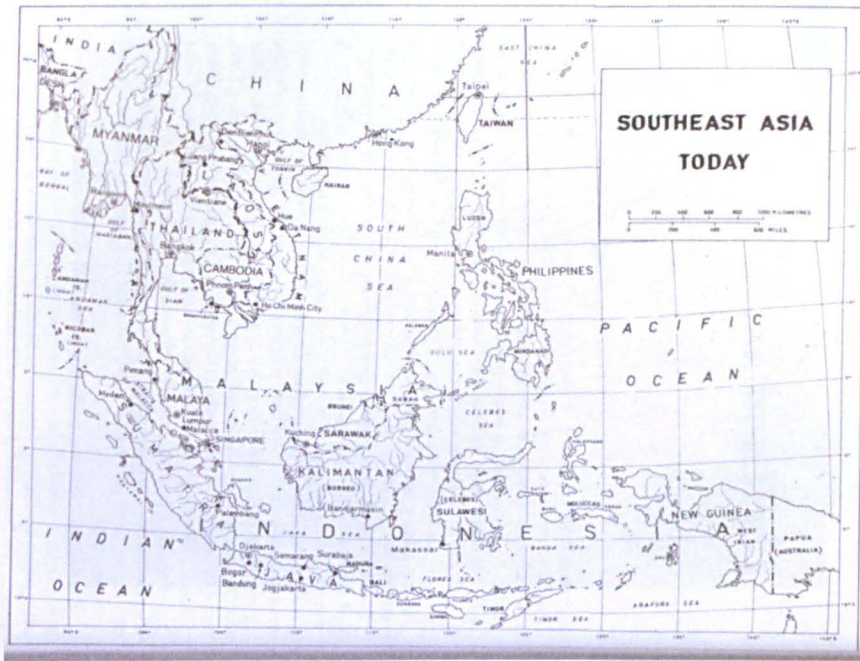


Figure 3 Map of Southeast Asia 1969

Map showing Hong Kong's position relative to the southeast Asian region. 'Map of South East Asia, 1989.'

(SarDesai, 1997, p. 4).

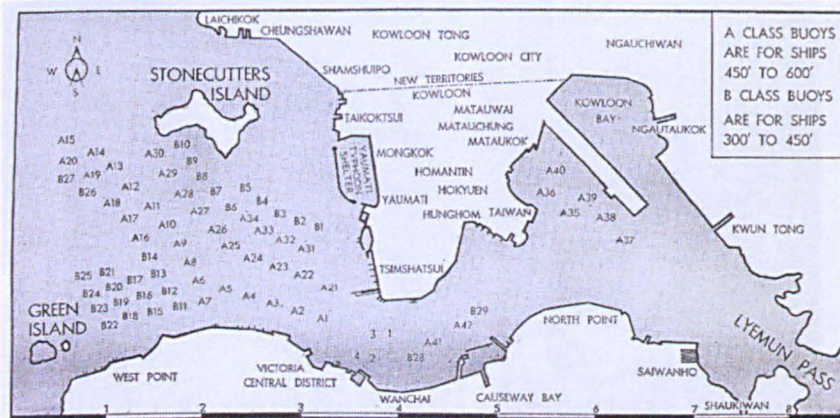


Figure 4 Map of Victoria Harbour 1970

Map of Victoria Harbour (Central was formerly known as Victoria) prior to extensive reclamation work.

'Map of Victoria Harbour showing Ocean Terminal, Stonecutter's Island - still an island, etc., 1970.'

(W.K. Hoffman, 1970, p. 58), compliments of The Mandarin Hotel.



Figure 5 Central district from the air 1967

Distinctive high buildings from the left: The Hilton Hotel, the Bank of China, City Hall (the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank is directly behind) and The Mandarin Hotel.

‘Central district from the air, 1967.’

(W. K. Hoffman, 1967, p. 41), compliments of The Hilton Hotel.



Figure 6 Central and Victoria Harbour from the Peak 1970

‘The Hilton Hotel is bigger than the Hong Kong Shanghai bank[sic.], The Mandarin hotel[sic.] and City Hall centre left, Connaught Road reclamation project visible. Queen’s Road runs in front of the bank.’

Source: Hong Kong Government Information Service, 1970.

(Welsh, 1997).



Figure 7 Central and Victoria Harbour from the Peak 1990

‘The Hopewell Centre dominates Wanchai. The new town of Tseung Kwan O in centre distance. Dark spire is of the Bank of China building [by I.M. Pei]. Government House is hemmed in, 1990.’

Source: Hong Kong Government Information Service, 1990.

(Welsh, 1997).



Figure 8 Central and Victoria Harbour from the Peak in colour 1967

‘The harbour from The Peak, 1967.’

(W. K. Hoffman, 1967, p. 32), compliments of The Hilton Hotel.

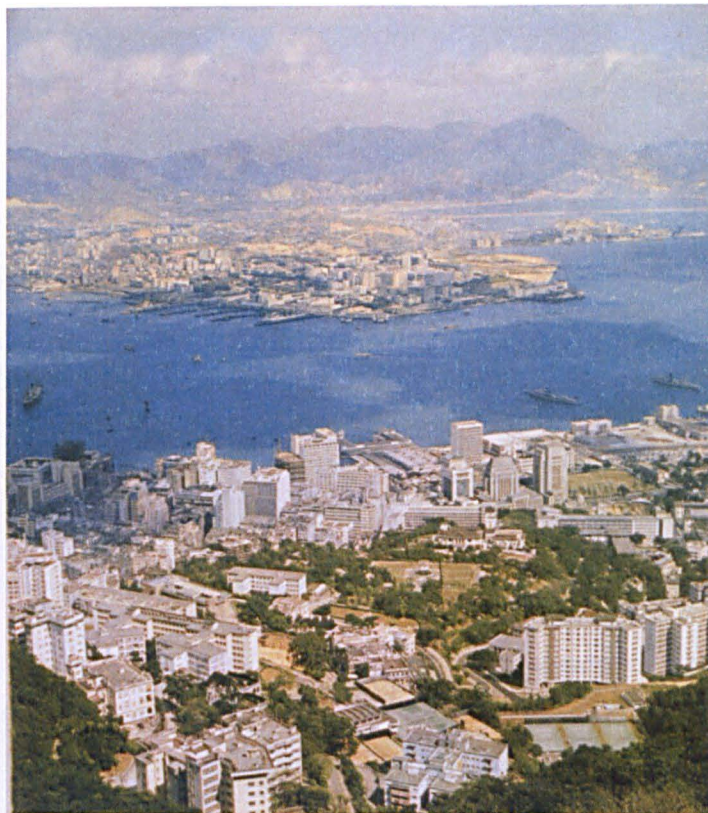


Figure 9 Victoria Harbour and Kowloon in colour 1962

The Kowloon (*Gau Luhng* = Nine Dragons) peninsula is named after the nine peaks of the mountains which lie behind it.

'Panorama of Victoria [Central], Hong Kong, the Harbour and Kowloon from Victoria Peak, 1962.'
(Hurlimann, 1962). Frontispiece.

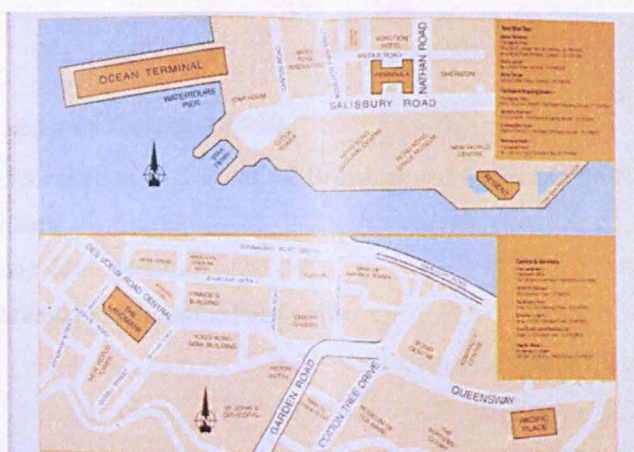


Figure 10 Street map of Central and Tsim Sha Tsui 1979

Map of Tsim Sha Tsui and Central/Admiralty, Swank Shop boutiques marked, 1979.
(Tomkins, 1979, p. 181-2).



Figure 11 Street map of Central 1990

Map shows the central location of the base of the British armed forces and Sir Norman Foster's 'new' Hong Kong Shanghai bank.

'Map published by Leopoldine Mikula.'

(Anderson-Tsang & Mikula, 1990), inside back cover.



Figure 12 Street scene 1986

‘Street scene, Kowloon.’

(Moore, 1986, p. 163).

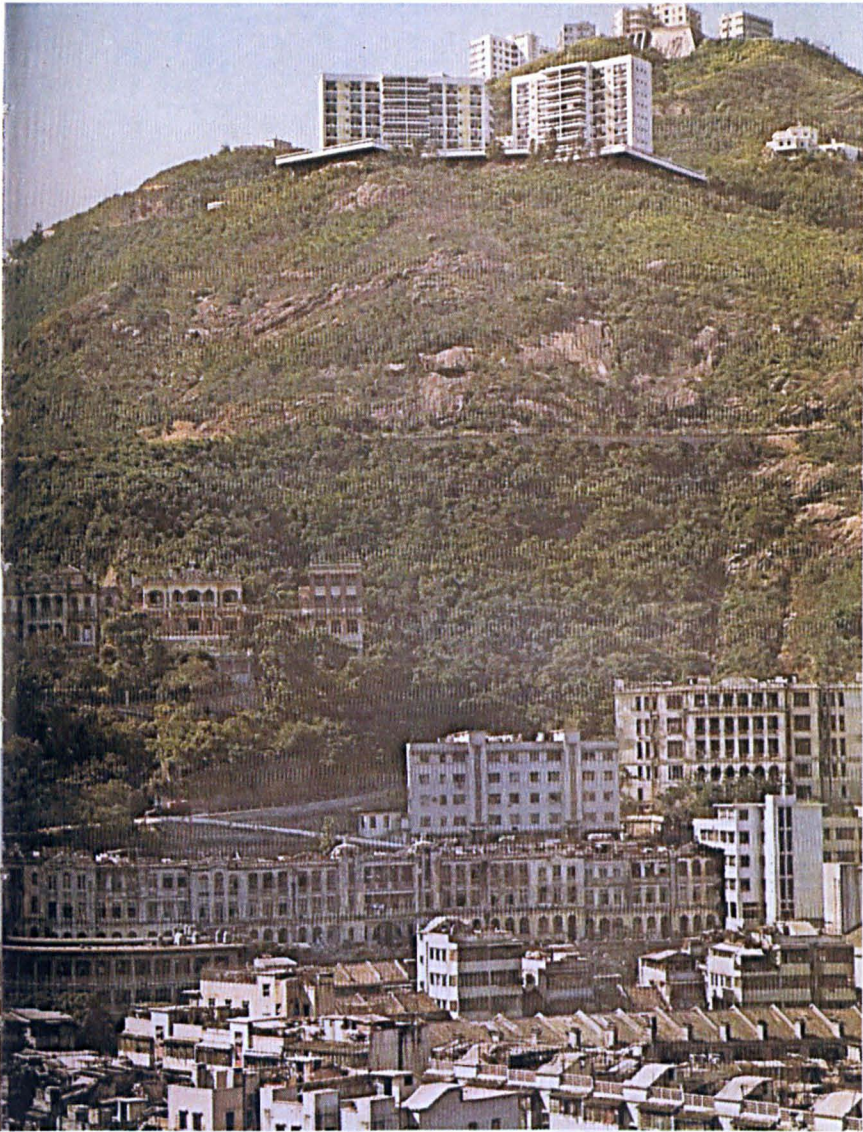


Figure 13 The Peak and new apartment blocks 1964

'Hong Kong's spectacular housing projects are impressive by any standards. Private homes and blocks of flats are literally perched on the tops and the sides of the steep hills which form the Peak area of Hong Kong Island (above). The colonnaded old-style buildings are rapidly disappearing while on lower land other new buildings are encroaching into the tenement areas.'

(Hong Kong Government, 1964). Colour plate, no ref.



Figure 14 The Peak tram and the view from the Peak 1964

'Among the principal attractions [is] [...] the view of the harbour area from the Peak (below). The funicular tram service takes passengers to an altitude of 1,305 feet above sea level and at its steepest part the track has a gradient of one on two.'

(Hong Kong Government, 1964). Colour plate, no ref.



Figure 15 Shanty town 1962

Shanty towns covered the slopes of Hong Kong until the late 1970s.

'A typical squatter colony on the slopes: even here the refugees have found a means to bring a degree of comfort to their lives owing to the demand for labour.'

(Hurlimann, 1962, p. 91-2).



Figure 16 Shanty town cottage, pre. 1981

‘A cottage area, soon to be demolished.’

(Salaff, 1981, p. 287).

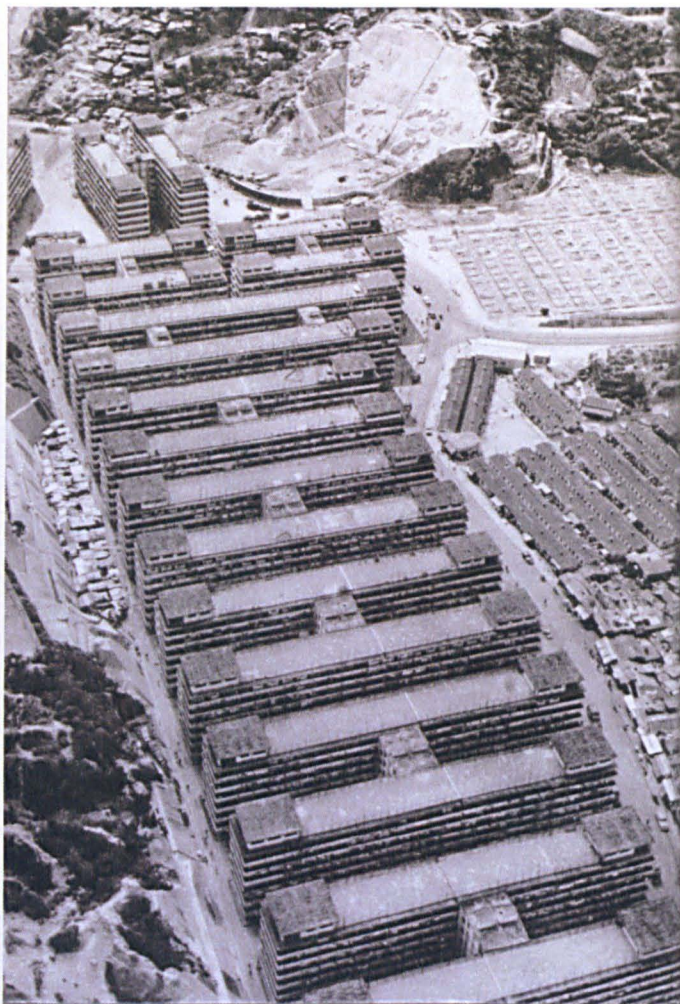


Figure 17 Resettlement Estate 1955

Government housing built after the Shep Kip Mei fire.

'Tai Hang Sai West Resettlement Estate, 1955.'

'The squatter settlements were gradually evacuated and in their place the Public works set up vast blocks of flats at its own expense. It was not concerned with impressing newspaper reporters with a few model housing estates, but was - and for that matter still is - trying to deal with the urgent problem of putting roof over the heads of the homeless and the destitute with all possible speed. Most of these plain concrete blocks are built to a seven-storey H shaped design. As a rule a family of four or five adults is allocated thirty six square metres or so of living space. On each floor, lavatories and washing and bathing facilities are provided. Several hundred thousand persons have already been accommodated in this fashion and the squatter colonies are dwindling fast. Nothing however, indicated a slackening in the rate of construction: even though the onrush of refugees has slowed down in recent years (some fifty persons daily) the birth-rate for its part shows no comparable moderation and keeps the planners well on their toes.'

(Hurlimann, 1962, p. 90-91).

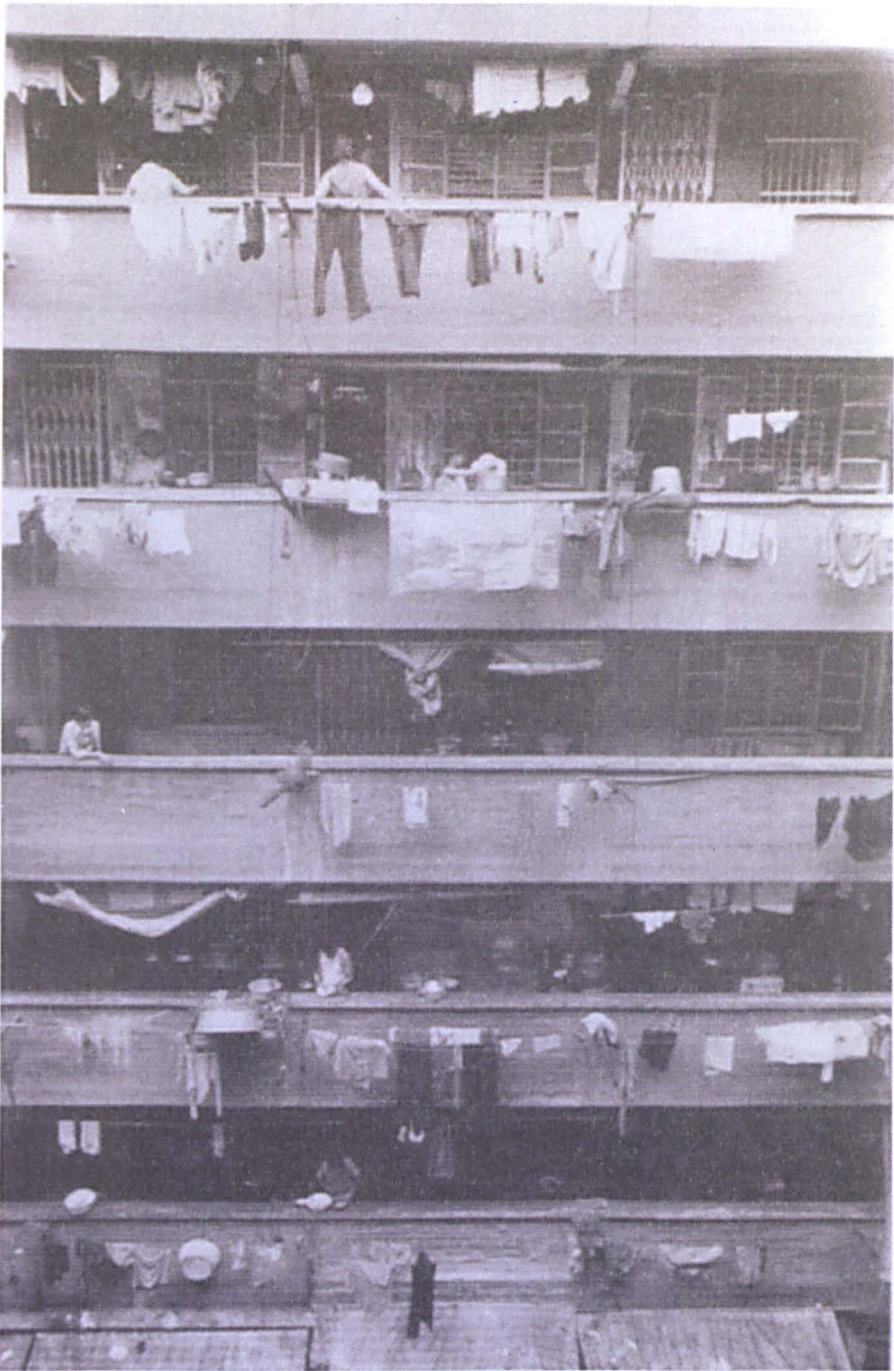


Figure 18 Block of apartments in Resettlement Estate, pre. 1981

'Dusk in a resettlement estate, no date.'

(Salaff, 1981, p. 284).



Figure 19 Domestic life in Resettlement estate apartment, pre. 1981

‘Dinner preparation on a Resettlement Estate, no date.’

(Salaff, 1981, p. 285).



Figure 20 Rickshaws in Central 1962

‘Queens Road, Central, 1962.’

‘A rickshaw-rank at a corner of Queens Road Central, where some of the smartest shops are situated.

In rainy weather the hood of the rickshaw can be raised. In Hong Kong, too, the days of rickshaw transport are numbered since more profitable forms of work are available to the coolies.’

(Hurlimann, 1962, p. 42-44).

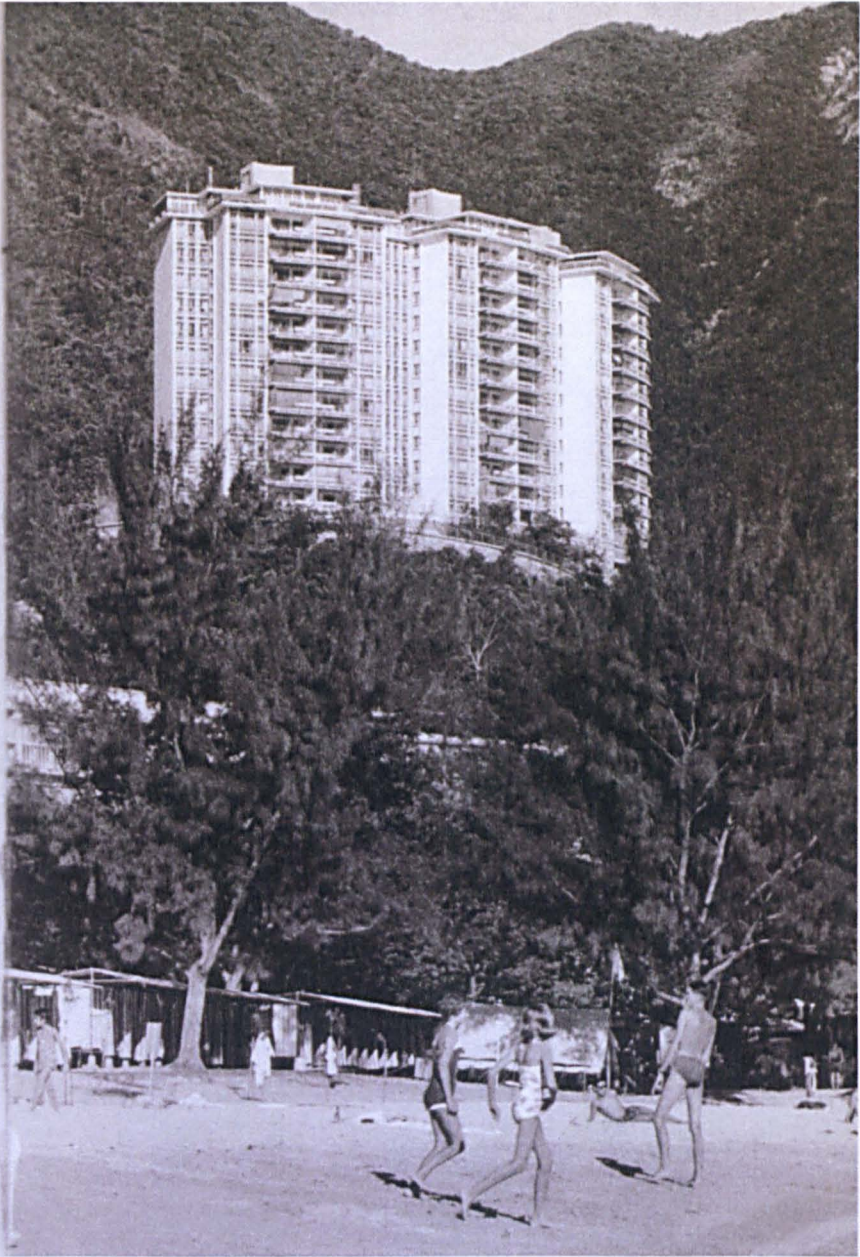


Figure 21 New luxury apartment block at Repulse Bay 1959-60

'The Repulse Bay Bathing-beach, with its smart hotels, and a many storied block of flats, Roydon Court, erected in 1959-60.

(Hurlimann, 1962, p. 64-65).

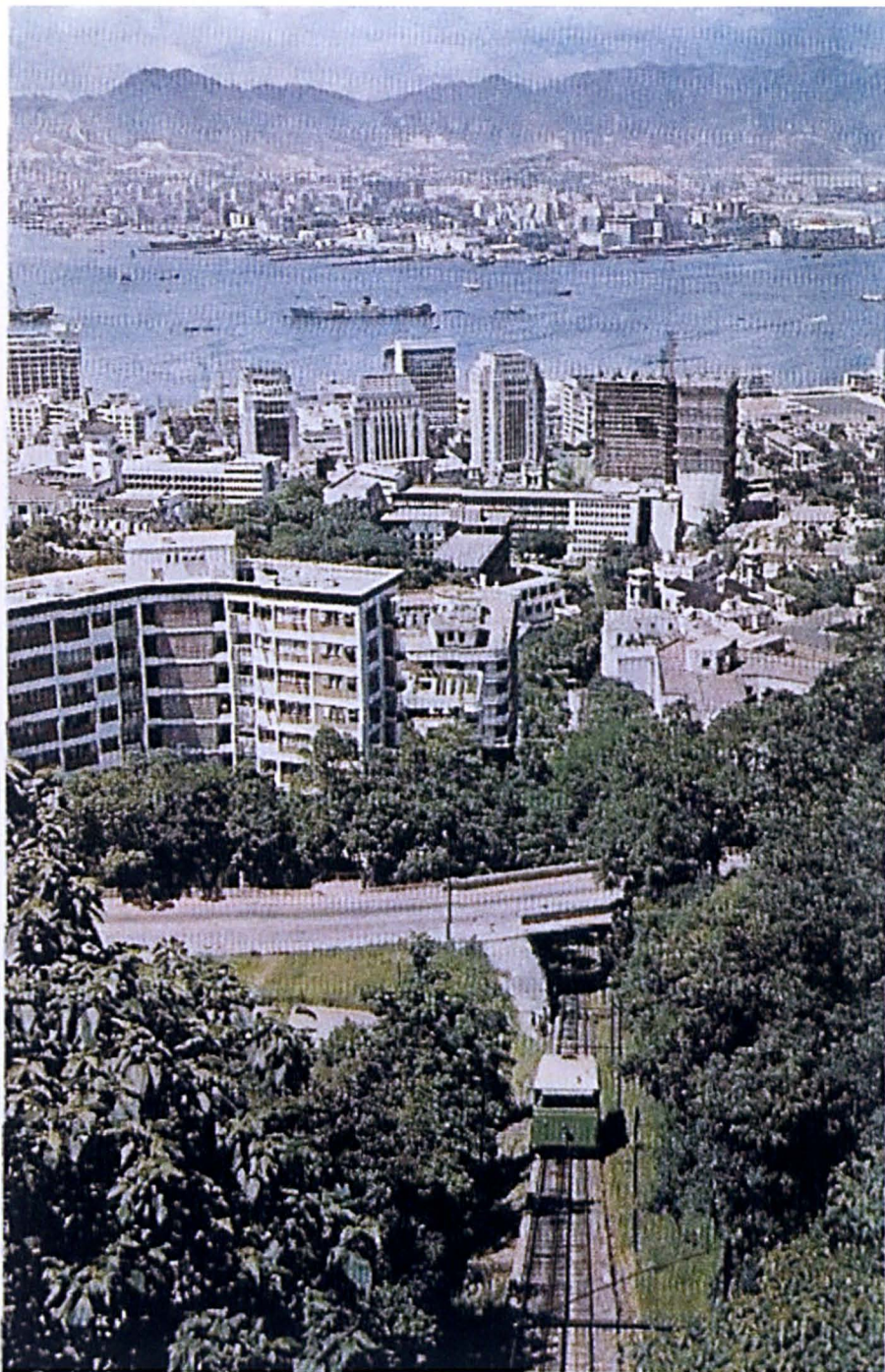


Figure 22 View towards Central from the Peak tramcar 1967

'Peak Tram a funicular cable car, is the most spectacular way to reach The Peak 1,305' above sea level. First opened in 1888, it has operated without a single accident. There are two cars carrying 72 passengers, which are pulled by separate 5,000 steel cables each wound on separate drums. While one car ascends, the other descends, on interlocking tracks except for a passing place in the middle.' (W. K. Hoffman, 1967, p. 25), compliments of The Hilton Hotel.



Figure 23 Government House 1978

'The general view of Government House,' *Hong Kong Tatler*, April 1978.
(1978h, p. 60).

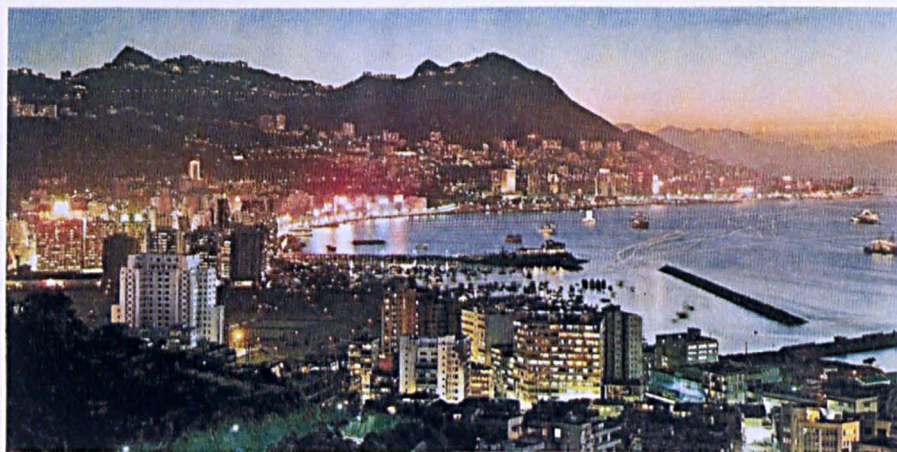


Figure 24 View of Central from North Point 1967

Looking West towards Central, along the north coast of Hong Kong Island, from North Point. The Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club attached to the land by a causeway is visible in the centre of the picture, adjacent to the typhoon shelter. Lantau island is visible on the horizon.

'Central from North Point Hong Kong Island.'

(W. K. Hoffman, 1967, p. 17), compliments of The Hilton Hotel.



Figure 25 View looking West towards Central from North Point 1970

Looking West towards Central from North Point. Victoria Park at Causeway Bay, is visible in the foreground.

‘Central/Hong Kong island from North Point.’

(W.K. Hoffman, 1970, p. 185-6), compliments of The Mandarin Hotel.



Figure 26 Hong Kong Exhibition and Convention Centre 1997

Wanchai and Central behind the Exhibition Centre completed in time for the Handover ceremony, July 1997.

'Convention and Exhibition Centre, 1997.'

(Bartlett & Bartlett, 1998, p. 4).



Figure 27 Street market 1985

'Large numbers of jeans are sold in Hong Kong's street markets.' Street scene, 1985.

(Fairclough, 1985, p. 51).



Figure 28 Stanley market 2000

Although this photograph was taken after the end of the period of research, physically the market was little changed.

Stanley market, January 2000.

Photo VWT.



Figure 29 View from the Peak towards Wanchai 1986

The Bank of America Tower dominates the waterfront at Admiralty prior to the development of Pacific Place. The white-painted Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club is visible in the middle of the harbour at Causeway Bay, and Harbour City and Ocean Terminal are visible on the Tsim Sha Tsui side of the harbour.

‘View towards Wanchai.’

(Moore, 1986, p. 164)

¹ Informant interview: C.A.M.C. 01.9.99.

² See Clammer, *Diaspora and Identity: the sociology of culture in South East Asia*, (Clammer, 2002), Clammer describes Asian cities as 'huge cities with village communities, shifting agriculturists with sedentary farmers.' (Clammer, 2002, p. 13).

³ The term dress encompasses fashion dress.

⁴ See Breward, *Fashion and Modernity*, (Breward & Evans, 2005).

⁵ See Woodward, *Why women wear what they wear*, (Woodward, 2007), and Clarke, 'Fashion and Anxiety,' (Clarke & Miller, 2002).

⁶ Communitarity is customarily credited as being due to the widespread system of rice irrigation in Asia which was controlled by the farmer who worked the plot furthest from the water source. See Chan, 'Shopping for Fashion in Hong Kong,' (A. H. Chan, 2001).

⁷ See Clark, 'Fashion, Identity and the city: Hong Kong,' (H. Clark, 2000a).

⁸ See Said, *Orientalism*, (Said, 1985).

⁹ See Gilbert and Breward, 'Urban Outfitting: The city and the spaces of fashion culture,' (Gilbert, 2000), Breward, *Fashion's World Cities*, (Breward & Gilbert, 2006).

¹⁰ See Breward, *Fashion's World Cities*, (Breward & Gilbert, 2006), and *The London Look: Fashion from street to catwalk*, (Breward, Ehrman, & Evans, 2004) London's current population is 7.5m. See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greater_London, accessed 17.03.07.

¹¹ See Kinsella, 'Cuties in Japan,' (Kinsella, 1995); Gilbert, 'Urban Outfitting: The city and the spaces of fashion culture,' (Gilbert, 2000); Breward, *The Englishness of English Dress*, (Breward, Conekin, & Cox, 2003), Kelly, 'Projecting an Image and expressing Identity: T-shirts in Hawaii,' (Kelly, 2003); Skov, 'Fashion-Nation: A Japanese Globalisation Experience and a Hong Kong Dilemma,' (Skov, 2003); and Kremer, *Broken Threads: the destruction of the Jewish Fashion Industry in Germany and Austria*, (Kremer, 2007). See Maynard, *Fashioned from Penury: dress as cultural practice in Colonial Australia*, (Maynard, 1994); Tarlo, *Clothing Matters: Dress and Identity in India*, (Tarlo, 1996); Tulloch, 'Out of Many, One People': the relativity of Dress, Race and Ethnicity to Jamaica,' (Tulloch, 1998); and Palmer, *Culture and Commerce: the Transatlantic Fashion Trade in the 1950s*, (Palmer, 2001).

¹² See Niessen, 'Afterword: re-orienting Fashion Theory,' (Niessen, 2003).

¹³ See Ribiero, 'On Englishness in Dress,' (Ribiero, 2003), and the Tate Britain exhibition 'The Lure of the East: British Orientalist Painting,' 4th June to 31st August, 2008. See Masefield, *The Travels of Marco Polo*, (Masefield, 1957b).

¹⁴ See Baudrillard, *Cool Memories*, (Baudrillard, 1990: 83).

¹⁵ The Museum of Heritage houses a collection of artefacts of Chinese origin.

¹⁶ See Sandino, 'Oral Histories and Design: Objects and Subjects,' (Sandino, 2006, p. 275), and Taylor, *The Study of Dress History*, (Taylor, 2002, p. 260).

¹⁷ See Attfield, *Wild Things: the Material Culture of Everyday Life* (Attfield, 2000, p. 145).

¹⁸ See Davis, *Fashion, Culture and Identity*, (Davis, 1992).

¹⁹ See Chan, 'Shopping for Fashion in Hong Kong,' (A. H. Chan, 2001).

²⁰ See Chan: inconsistently her informant, Laura, continues 'Yes, they [Emporio Armani] are not cheap, but they're worth it. They do last a lot longer than, say, something you buy from G2000,' (A. H. Chan, 2001, p. 161)

²¹ See Polhemus, *Fashion and anti fashion: anthropology of clothing and adornment* (Polhemus & Proctor, 1978, p. 17) and Lise Skov, (Skov, 2000, p. 48).

²² See Woodward, *Why women wear what they wear*, (Woodward, 2007, p. 42).

²³ See Miller, *The Sari*, (Miller & Banerjee, 2003).

²⁴ See Miller, *The Sari*, (Miller & Banerjee, 2003, p. 255).

²⁵ See Clark, *The Cheongsam*, (H. Clark, 2000b), 'Fashion, Identity and the City; Hong Kong' (H. Clark, 2000a), and 'Cheongsam: Chinese One-Piece Dress' (V. Wilson Trower, forthcoming).

²⁶ See Endacott, *A History of Hong Kong*, (Endacott, 1958) Hong Kong is a British colony situated on the south-east coast of China. It comprises the island of that name which was obtained from China in 1841, the small district of Kowloon on the mainland just opposite, which, together with Stonecutter's Island, was secured in 1860, and a larger area of mainland, called the New Territories, which was leased for ninety-nine years in 1898. This leased territory covers an area of 355 square miles and is in the form of a peninsula with its northern boundary roughly along the Shum Chun River from Deep Bay to the northern shore of Mirs Bay: it includes 235 islands, the biggest being Lantau, Lamma and Cheung Chau. The island of Hong Kong from which the colony takes its name

is less than one tenth the size of the New Territories, having an area of 32 square miles; Kowloon is again only a tenth of the size of the island, being only three and a half square miles.

Hong Kong lies just within the tropics, at the mouth of the Pearl River. It has a monsoon type of climate; the northeast winds blow steadily from October to May, bringing generally dry and cool conditions, and occasionally, in winter, when the wind is from the north, from the land mass of Asia, the temperature drops suddenly. From May to October the south-west monsoon brings great heat and humidity and most of the annual rainfall averaging eighty five inches falls in this season. This geographical factor of the monsoons dominated the navigation of the China Sea by early Western traders, and as long as ships carried sail its influence was always important. Hong Kong also lies within the typhoon zone. Its climate, with its high humidity, extremes of temperature and threat of typhoons, is therefore trying for about half the year.' (Endacott, 1958, p. 1).

²⁷ See Welsh, *A History of Hong Kong*, (Welsh, 1997).

²⁸ See Hughes, *Hong Kong: borrowed place - borrowed time*, (Hughes, 1968); Birch, *Hong Kong: the Colony that never was*, (Birch, 1991); and Blyth, *Hong Kong Remembers*, (Blyth & Wotherspoon, 1996).

²⁹ See Turner, *Hong Kong Sixties Designing Identity*, (Turner & Ngan, 1995), and Wu, *Hong Kong Fashion History*, (Wu & The Federation of Hong Kong Garment Manufacturers, 1992).

³⁰ See Morris, *Hong Kong: an Epilogue to an Empire* (J. Morris, 1993, Morris, 2000).

³¹ See Wang & Wong, *Hong Kong's Transition: a decade after the Deal*, (Wang & Wong, 1995), for a summary of this process.

³² Quoting Lord Palmerston, British Prime minister at the time. Although a commonly held view, several thousand Chinese were living on Hong Kong at the time. See Lee, *City between Worlds: my Hong Kong*, (L. O. Lee, 2008, p. 2).

³³ See Lanchester: "Territory' by the way is the mandatory euphemism - never 'colony.' The C-word is completely verboten. Calling it a territory doesn't affect the fact that our beloved Governor Patten, 'Fat Peng,' as the locals call him, is a legally self - sufficient entity who can do whatever the hell he likes, but it offends the Chinese less and has the supreme virtue of not meaning anything.' *Fragrant Harbour*, (Lanchester, 2002, p. 33).

³⁴ No plans for independence were ever proposed.

³⁵ Chinese civil war: 1945-9. See Hong Kong Spinners Association, *Twenty Five Years of The Hong Kong Cotton Spinning Industry (Available from The Hong Kong Spinners Association)*, (Hong Kong Spinners Association, 1973, p. 5). Sociologist, Siu-Lin Wong explains the President of the Ningbo Resident's Association (a sector of Shanghainese residents) estimated one third of its members were engaged in textile industry, then shipping, then film. In 1960 and in 1978: 'the biggest spinning mill employed over 2000 workers with a capacity of around 94,000 spindles. Average employment and spindleage per mill were about 500 workers and 25,000 spindles respectively. These figures may not be impressive by the standards of developed economies, but the great majority of the industrial establishments in Hong Kong are small. In 1977 out of 37,568 manufacturing concerns, fewer than 1 per cent had as many as 500 workers. Over 90 per cent were small units with fewer than 50 employees.' *Emigrant Entrepreneurs: Shanghai Industrialists in Hong Kong*, (S. L. Wong, 1988, pp. 6, 9).

³⁶ See Wong, *Emigrant Entrepreneurs: Shanghai Industrialists in Hong Kong*, (S. L. Wong, 1988, p. 3).

³⁷ 'Report on Hong Kong,' ("Report on Hong Kong,"), a documentary film produced by C.B.S., with Hollywood star, William Holden - who played the male lead in 'The World of Suzie Wong' - as narrator, made a case for the suspension of the Comprehensive Certificate of Origin which created an embargo on Chinese-origin products originally imposed at the beginning of the Korean war, thereby depressing the Hong Kong economy. It showed poor living conditions: catching a rat by hand in a shanty town, sleeping on the street, and a home in a lean-to shed, in order to substantiate the director's aim in questioning the relevance of the certificate to Hong Kong. Shown at The Royal Asiatic Society conference, Museum of History, Autumn 2000.

³⁸ See Hsu, *A Touristic Guide to Hong Kong*, (Hsu, 1968, p. 86).

³⁹ As seen in the movie 'The World of Suzie Wong,' (Mason, 1960).

⁴⁰ See Moeran and Skov, *Women, Media and Consumption in Japan*, (Moeran & Skov, 1995).

⁴¹ See Hall: 'Colonialism has made ethnic absolutism an increasingly untenable strategy: 'It made the 'colonies' themselves, and even more, large tracts of the 'post-colonial' world, always-already 'diasporic' in relation to what might be thought of as their cultures of origin. The notion that only the multi-cultural cities of the First World are 'diaspora-ised' is a fantasy which can only be sustained by

those who have never lived in the hybridised spaces of a Third World, so-called 'colonial', city.' 'When was 'The Post Colonial'? Thinking at the Limit,' (Hall, 1996, p. 250).

⁴² Conversation with Jason Wordie, 16.03.04.

⁴³ The term is not pejorative.

⁴⁴ A more detailed examination of population composition is noted in Chapter Two.

Chapter 1. A literature review and the content of this research topic.

‘...the other thing that I remember was fashionable was...’¹

Remembered fashion is critical to this thesis: the situation of expatriate Western women in Hong Kong in recollecting fashion and their use of dress to reveal identities and autonomy provides a unique opportunity in which to examine the consequences of a lack of fashion leadership in a near-contemporary situation. This thesis is also a history of the Hong Kong fashion industry from 1960 to 1997, and commences with definitions used throughout the thesis including: fashion; expatriates and transnationals; as well as an examination of previously published work in oral history and obtained from memoirs; and published material on Hong Kong and Hong Kong fashions, which are relevant to this research. In this chapter I consider previously published work on the creation of identities through dress and unpick the unease, which surrounds appropriation of other communities’ dress. I have summarised work, which is examined in more depth in the appropriate chapter, for example: work on fashion magazines, and film, in the chapter on mediation. As my informant above observes memories of fashions worn and their context were critical to my research, I therefore include a section on previously published work on memory. Finally in this chapter I explore the questions, which my research will answer.

Definitions of Fashion and Dress

To paraphrase sociologist Rene Konig, everything is fashion: fellow sociologist George Sproule’s rather dull definition of fashion as something discernable in a social group does not account for the whim and idiosyncrasy seen in much expatriate Western dress. However, Davis’s observation on the reflexivity of dress not meaning what it apparently meant at first glance, allows a broader canon.² Fashion dress is an image as academic Dick Lauwaert explains in his article, similar to a photograph.³ In a search for new experiences when buying a greetings card or a postcard, we would no more purchase more than one of the same postcard (even although they are sent to different people) than we would wear the same item

everyday although different people may see us each day. That said, we also keep photographs and postcards for our own pleasure with no intention of sending them to others. And in the same way, we retain clothes - sometimes without wearing them. Equally, we purchase cards and wait for the right recipient or occasion to send them, as we buy clothes in the hope that the occasion to wear them will arise. Fashion is an image in which we desire change and variety.

Sociologists, anthropologists, and dress historians have attempted to explain the importance of fashion in society.⁴ In the West no one is outside Western fashion although people continue to look slightly different to each other due to nationality, age, and so on. As dress historians Elizabeth Wilson and Juliet Ash observe, Western fashion is inclusive.⁵ Dress can be seen as: reflecting the changing position of the individual within society and a reflection of real or symbolic status as suggested by curator Ruth Barnes and social psychologist Efrat Tseelon; as a uniform as proposed by Davis; or as semiotician Patrizia Calefato suggests, signs of a work in progress with meaning determined over time, thus rewarding 'making an effort' in appearance. Fashion dress clearly eludes exact definition and may be a combination of some or all of these as social scientist Ruth Rubenstein proposes.⁶ It is important to remember that whilst ethnic and cultural differences are reflected in dress, the overall message of fashion dress is of participation in modernity, and compliance with contemporary society and culture.

Hong Kong local and ethnic dress

In Hong Kong Western fashion dress has replaced the *cheongsam*, which may be thought of as Hong Kong's hybridised ethnic dress for the majority of the female population, since the late 1970s - hybridised because it was always worn with Western accessories. In their work on ethnic dress curator Naomi Szeto and dress historian Valery Garrett summarise dress worn by the local community and local ethnic groups from Hong Kong's inception to the early 1960s (see Steele's photograph of a woman with bound feet; Wilson's photograph of a Han Chinese 19th C. skirt; and Szeto's photograph of a fur-lined *shan* and skirt), including dress of the Punti, Hakka, Hoklo, and Tanka people (see Garrett's photographs of a Hoklo family, and Hakka children at the end of this chapter).⁷ Similarly, Hong Kong resident Ommanney and Morris describe Hakka dress and Western women's emulation of pre-modern Chinese dress respectively.⁸ Traditional ceremonial

clothing, minority ethnic dress and the *cheongsam*, are occasionally mentioned in the work of authors writing on Hong Kong, but to date there is no work on the historical use of clothing by the minority, but hegemonic, expatriate Western community in Hong Kong. Design historian Hazel Clark records the use of vintage and recycled clothes in Hong Kong, but focuses on the activities of the entire community, not only expatriate Western residents.⁹

Constructing identities through fashion as part of a group

Fashion dress conveys membership of a group: 'people like us' as Martin Raymond editor of the trend magazine *Viewpoint* explains.¹⁰ Although small social groups can exhibit a tendency towards conservative dress, class hierarchies by default assume a minority group at the top although usually the elite does not exhibit a tendency towards conservatism. In fact, quite the reverse as is seen in contemporary celebrity culture.¹¹ So why did expatriate Western women for many years the elite of Hong Kong, tend towards conservatism despite being surrounded by a fashion-aware host community and highly visible mass-market fashion clothing production? When any group not in a position of leadership creates a new style, sub-cultural dress leadership occurs.¹² This change does not force a new style, but as Sproles observes, fads may develop within a sub-culture, however only those styles, which are consistent with fashion are adopted and diffused by leaders from other systems.¹³

Expatriate Western women formed a (relatively) wealthy elite in Hong Kong in comparison to the local population for much of the period. Although the top classes may have patronized exclusive designers and retailers, their lifestyle was invisible to those not of that class and of these, as Sproles suggests, only a 'publicity-prone minority receive widespread exposure necessary for fashion leadership.'¹⁴ It is likely this 'trickle down' had little impact on the dress of the local community. Within the small, densely packed, urban community of Hong Kong, visibility was almost inevitable within classes: for the minority expatriate community, attending any social function meant meeting an existing acquaintance. Similarly for the local host community, extended family networks and continued residence in the same city produced close social networks as individuals maintained contact with their classmates from primary school to university and previous employment. Although any creative or innovative individual can become a leader in fashion trends given

that their choices are reasonably in line with the social climate and lifestyle of the time (and assuming that one group recognises the fashion leadership of the other), the desire to be recognised, esteemed, even envied in the process of constructing oneself is common to all. However, fashion leadership is a specialized skill linked to the general popularity of the individual in the group and the group's perception of the status of the dress of the individual.¹⁵ Reasons why expatriate Western women failed to recognise local fashion leadership, nor created their own fashion leadership, and their subsequent strategies for maintaining fashionable dress in an absence of fashion leadership, are examined in Chapters Four and Six.

Fashion dress in Hong Kong can be compared with Indian cricket: like cricket, fashion dress is a symbol of the technologically superior West. Fashion implies participation in modernity, and is a means of creating a sense of membership and belonging. In India, as cultural historian Arjun Appadurai explains, cricket provokes zealous interest and represents sophistication.¹⁶ Similarly, the local Hong Kong community explored fashion with an interest that far outshone the expatriate Western community.

Constructing identities through fashion dress

Dress reveals personality, revealing traits such as an economical nature or a preference for practicality, and is a manifestation of an individual's self-concept reflecting abilities; weaknesses; character; personal worth; appearance; and attractiveness. Correlating the stable self-esteem of an individual and their appearance, Sproles' mainstream-American definition equates higher self-esteem with more expressive dress and those with lower self-esteem with more carefully managed, conservative clothing.¹⁷ Expatriate Western women in Hong Kong effectively had uniqueness thrust upon them as they formed a distinctive minority community. If individuals are motivated to become fashion leaders by a desire for uniqueness, creativity, personal stimulation, and self-confidence, conversely those with personalities wishing to express collectivism are motivated towards conformity favouring social acceptance, avoidance of risks, and compliance. Social preconditions favouring the diffusion of fashion include: a tendency towards collective behaviour; an urban context; and physical mobility. In Hong Kong, the host community's preference for consensus-fashion; the densely packed urban

environment; and a preference for close contact with overseas family members, contributed to rapid fashion diffusion.

Clothing has been seen as a second skin which separates the body from its surroundings establishing sexual and social roles, contributing to identity by reflecting the self in a three-part process: imagination of one's own appearance; imagination of that appearance to another person; and imagination of the judgement of that appearance.¹⁸ Increased satisfaction in appearance correlates with increased interest in clothing. If clothing is an important cue when forming impressions of others (particularly when contact is limited), any status cues lacking congruence create suspicion or confusion in the perceiver's mind. Therefore personality becomes a logical extension of clothing characteristics which are transferred from one similar individual to another using roles, status stereotyping, dress and parts of the body either to accentuate or conceal part of appearance, as fashion sociologists Mary Ellen Roach-Higgins, Joanne Eicher, and Kim Johnson propose.¹⁹ In Hong Kong, a city with many Western nationals, dress was an important means of conveying identities in a community where origins counted for little.

As the self is realised through a multi-voiced, inner dialogue through which any action is decided, the ambivalence of the self is also manifest in the appearance of the body. Clothing contributes to the identity construction of the individual, manifesting personal preferences, fluctuating identities, and the 'yearnings, tensions, concerns and discontents' shared by a given society on which fashion is posited, these Davis calls 'master statuses.'²⁰ Although not a language, as suggested by writer Alison Lurie, dress becomes a visual metaphor for identity, or rather: dress has meanings.²¹ The music-like nature of dress cannot be silent, conveying a message because it is assumed to: this presupposes that people have chosen the garments they are wearing themselves, and that individuals are making an intended statement as sociologist Colin Campbell argues.²² Expatriate Western women could not help but convey their ambivalent position: excluded from Western fashions by time and distance, yet unable to adopt local fashions due to their rejection of local fashion leadership.

How people dress helps determine the self and the way in which others respond to them. Body size, shape, reputation, image, clothing, stance and facial expression, are important for the establishment and maintenance of the self, see Blumer and Stone.²³ In the reflexive practices of discourse and the process of appearance,

observations reveal more about the observer than they do about the observed, thus expatriate Western women's comments about the behaviour of the host community revealed more about their own beliefs and practices than they did of those of the Cantonese community. The self is a collection of likely past, present, and future interactions, established by appearance of which gender is part, thus an individual's manner of dress implies an attitude, arousing in others anticipation of conduct in an expatriate community drawn from disparate places, and whose only means of evaluating each other is based on appearance, gender, and manner.

Individuals who fail to recognize the need for changed appearances in changed circumstances face undesirable social consequences, suggesting that appearance is critical to role-playing, thus the self knowingly dresses for the intended audience's validation.²⁴ This is further complicated by the addition of ethnic dress to Western fashion often festival and ceremonial dress, remarkable as Lurie observes, 'for their rarity or expensiveness or both,' and also in order to appear 'original, exotic and interested in zen, yoga, vegetarianism.'²⁵ As historian Enrica Morina reminds us in a history of Max Mara, ethnicity was *the* fashion in the 1960s and 1970s.²⁶ That is not to suggest clothes can be 'read,' as dress historians Elizabeth Wilson and Andrew Hill suggest: in a Western world of previously unparalleled fashion choice, dress may no longer mean anything.²⁷ Hill argues that people increasingly dress alike, ignoring, as dress historian Adam Briggs points out, the fashion cognoscenti's expertise.²⁸

How fashion is used to construct identities remains contentious. Work to date has largely been completed in the United States of America and may not be transferable to other communities, as it overlooks the complexity of issues contributing to the topic. Fashion clothing is not just a product of a system associated with monetary value, but objects with meanings which are transformed as they travel through systems of production, exchange, and ownership representing psychological benefits. These have two functions: a symbolic, self-expressive function and an instrumental, or use function, as psychologist Deborah Prentice suggests.²⁹ The former gives individuals a sense of continuity in their lives and across generations, and the latter provides meaning and self-expression. This separates people who value possessions for their self-expressive function from people who value possessions for their instrumental purpose (exchange, status, value, and so on). People either use objects to make sense of their lives by learning

about themselves and their families, or interact with their objects and reflect on their possessions, which may include forms of resistance and political consciousness, as social psychologists as Peter Lunt and Sonia Livingstone propose.³⁰

The consumer benefits not only from acquisition of the object, but also in the social exchange necessary to acquire the object. Shopping for many expatriate Western women who were not initially employed, enabled the individual to be valued and validated as a customer, simultaneously exercising consumer rights and participating in local culture. Therefore being seen was important as women packaged themselves for public consumption.³¹

Expatriates and transnationals

The desire to become and remain an expatriate may be for elective or mandatory reasons. However, as psychoanalyst Julia Kristeva notes, expatriates react to their host-community, reflecting the host-community's views of the world as threat or friend, as well as reflecting the behaviour of the expatriate group, instilling in them a special insolent happiness at the prospect of the promise of an infinite future, which presumably was denied them (or they believe was denied them) in their country of origin.³² Whilst expatriate Western women may or may not have been intrigued by the culture of Asia, the sense of liberation, autonomy, and detachment that Kristeva expresses seemed to resonate:

'The animosity of, or at least the annoyance aroused by the foreigner (What are you doing here, Mac, this is not where you belong), hardly surprises him, for he rates them more often than not above himself, be it financially, politically, or socially. At the same time he is quite ready to consider them somewhat narrow-minded, blind. For his scornful hosts lack the *perspective* that himself has in order to see himself and to see them. The foreigner feels strengthened by the distance that detaches him from the others as it does from himself and gives him the lofty sense not so much of holding the truth but of making it and himself relative while others fall victim to the ruts of monovalency. For they are perhaps owners of things, but the foreigner tends to think he is the only one to have a biography, that is, a life made up of ordeals - neither catastrophes nor adventures (although these might easily happen), but simply a life in which acts constitute events because they imply choice, surprises, breaks, adaptations, or cunning, but neither routine nor rest. In the eyes of the foreigner those who are not

foreign have no life at all: barely do they exist, haughty or mediocre, but out of the running and thus almost already cadaverized.³³

This ambivalent response of respect and condescension must have also been apparent to the host community. Kristeva records the effect that becoming a foreigner has on the individual:

'Explosion, the shattering of repression is what leads one to cross a border and find oneself in a foreign country. Tearing oneself away from family, language, and country in order to settle down elsewhere is a daring action accompanied by sexual frenzy; no more prohibition, everything is possible. It matters little whether the crossing of the border is followed by debauchery or, on the contrary, by fearful withdrawal. Exile always involves a shattering of the former body.'³⁴

And conversely cultural theorist Jean Baudrillard, expresses the rose-coloured glow acquired by one's own country:

'One thing protects us from change: exile. In unreality or at the other end of the world, in melancholy or in the South, exile is a marvellous and comfortable structure.

Only the exiled have a land. I know some people who are only close to their country when they are 10,000 kilometres away, driven out by their own brothers. The others are nomads chasing their shadows in the deserts of culture.'³⁵

Expatriate Western women expected to revisit their home country at some point in the future, but nevertheless, the individual is changed by the process of leaving their own country and the requirement to adjust to a new country: every expatriate interviewed remembered the date on which they arrived in Hong Kong: literally, the day they died and were reborn. A significant number of informants came to Hong Kong as a result of personal change in their previous lives. Several informants described themselves as people whose previous lives had ended prior to their arrival in Hong Kong, often in marriage; divorce; the loss of a job; and in one instance on retirement. The change in status this represented was equivalent to being reborn. For many, their new environment placed them at or near the top of a social hierarchy, particularly in the 1960s and 1970s when expatriates formed the predominant social group.

Residency was dependent on employment status or a spouse's employment status for all overseas nationals. Prior to the Handover, British passport holders could work without a work permit, attracting large numbers of travellers in the 1980s and 1990s, whose stay in Hong Kong earned them money with which to continue their travels in S.E. Asia.³⁶ During the period of research, permanent residency was granted after seven years: all expatriates were denied voting rights until they were granted permanent residency. Lack of civic responsibility contributed a sense of transience and difference, as though expatriates were not really part of the community but on an extended vacation. Kristeva examines the rights accorded to foreigners relative to native populations, the effect this has on reducing their status as citizens, and concludes:

'A paradoxical community is emerging, made up of foreigners who are reconciled with themselves to the extent that they recognize themselves as foreigners.'³⁷

Inevitably, some expatriates in Hong Kong saw themselves as 'just passing through,' a state that might last for more than twenty years.³⁸

Subject to the distinctions of social class, becoming an expatriate allowed the foreigner to become someone else, be that someone grander, better, or just different. Moving from one country to another has its problems both historically and in contemporary society.³⁹ Research shows successful adaptation to a new environment depends on: the ability to integrate with the local community based on the length of stay; the degree of assistance provided by employers; and the amount of resources available to cushion differences (refuge in international hotel culture, or frequent return visits to a home country).⁴⁰ Successful relocation is predicated on: feelings of comfort and satisfaction within the new culture; reciprocal evaluation of the expatriate by the host community; job satisfaction; and the development of inter-cultural links. The adoption of non-verbal communication is a significant factor in increasing acceptance by the host culture.

For university students, adaptation to a new country includes: initial elation, a period of frustration, growing confidence, and satisfaction. Research has shown multiple networks and friendships were found to be key in successful integration.⁴¹ Research completed in Hong Kong proposes four phases of expatriate adaptation: disenchantment with a previous situation; a honeymoon period, in which ignorance

of behavioural norms, a low level of commitment, and little obligation to others in the new situation, provide the newcomer with sense of social freedom; a period in which a new cultural identity is sought in which the individual is motivated to adapt and adjust (if intending to remain in the new country), to accommodate new attitudes and behaviour, and finally, adjustment.⁴² Research on the trailing spouse suggests that the level of change experienced by the trailing partner, usually female, is higher than that experienced by the employed partner whose new employment initiated relocation. In practice, assistance in acculturating is rarely extended to the unemployed partner.⁴³ More recently, expatriates have used developing communications technology to maintain transnational status as examined by cultural geographer Claire Dwyer, and, as fellow cultural geographer David Howard opines, the allure of economic power overcomes cultural resistance to a country.⁴⁴ Mary Litterel's research on the acculturation of Indian women in the United States of America through dress shows, that whilst many retain separate wardrobes for visiting India, or Indian nationals in the United States of America, Western dress provokes less racist attention and is more practical in a society with no domestic help.⁴⁵

Opportunities offered by a new country are perceived as alluring, but the process of adaptation is complex, and not all expatriates adapt to changed locations: successful relocation is an achievement. The personal cost of relocation can be high as travel writer Lisa St. Aubin de Teran records in an anecdote about unpleasant trailing spouses in Hong Kong, although expatriate Western women's relative wealth afforded them some alternative choices if they disliked Hong Kong, including time spent in their home countries, or extended visits to relatives overseas.⁴⁶

Creating national identities

As dress historian Aileen Ribeiro points out, dress has indicated English national identities throughout time. She defines the phenomenon of *cod-Englishness*, that excessively English look adopted by some expatriates, being both unfashionable and obsessively English.⁴⁷ Taylor and Breward note the phenomenon of looking unfashionable historically, and dress historian Alison Goodrun's work distinguishes between Mulberry and Paul Smith, two contemporary British looks.⁴⁸

Other researchers have shown dress has been used to reveal class and social position: in 18th and 19th century America (as documented by curator Linda Baumgarten), and Australia; emerging Afro-Caribbean identities in Jamaica; and discrete and conservative Canadian dress, by dress historians Margaret Maynard, Carol Tulloch, and Alexander Palmer respectively.⁴⁹ Maynard records that early shortages of clothing, and therefore a lack of distinction, were inadvertently perceived as egalitarian. A paucity of clothing *per se* meant fashions persisted until the city (the source of new fashion information) was revisited. Tulloch notes distance from fashion sources in 18th century Jamaica meant women were unable to keep pace with European fashions. And Palmer demonstrates how Parisian couture clothing and various copies were worn to reflect Canadian identities as distinct from American ones. Anthropologist Emma Tarlo's work in near contemporary India contrasts a rural desire for modernity with an urban elite's desire to return to tradition. Inevitably, women in all locations developed their own fashionable styles. This situation must have been familiar until recent times for expatriate Western women in all distant colonies including Hong Kong.

Specific garments reveal socially and climatically specific identities. Design historian Caroline Routh's research on Canadian women's dress identifies fur as a widely worn abundant resource before the adoption of central heating.⁵⁰ Conversely, the use of sleeveless garments and cool fabrics (cotton and silk), were commonplace for expatriate residents in tropical and sub-tropical climates before the widespread use of air-conditioning.⁵¹ In contemporary Turkey, the Moslem headscarf is a means of understanding Islamic consumption as anthropologists Ozlem Sandikci and Ger Guli show, contributing to modernity as a means of projecting aesthetic judgments, religious interpretations, and social position.⁵²

Minority identities and dress

In the past, minority groups have attempted to appropriate, emulate or mirror the dress of the majority group.⁵³ Historian Jeena Joselit, shows the 'making' of Americans between 1890 to 1930, recording how dress was a visible sign of acculturation:

'American Jews read clothes, like tea leaves, for signs that Americanisation had successfully taken hold, inside as well as out. Dressing quietly and with restraint

bespoke their assimilability: flashy ornamentation, in contrast, set them apart. No wonder, then, that American Jews put their faith in the laws of good taste and sought to live up to its strictures. From where they stood, at the margins of society, to believe in good taste, after all, was to believe in America and its gifts, especially the gift of perfectibility, the triumph of environment over history.⁵⁴

Dress reflected acceptance of American opportunity together with personal acceptance, as curator Barbara Schreier shows, tracing the rapid adoption of 'American' clothing by Eastern European Jewish immigrants to the United States of America in order to gain local acceptance, and lose the 'greenhorn' status of more recent arrivals:

'Sara Abrams remembered having to learn the words (and the concepts behind them) of 'crisis,' 'shops,' and 'mindjaownbusiness' from her Americanized uncle. But mastering the language took months, even years: by purchasing a new parasol or refashioning an old dress, the newcomers could quickly make a vital cultural connection to their new surroundings. A hat modelled after the styles on Fifth Avenue, a pair of high-heeled shoes suitable for a Saturday night dance, or even a lacy collar purchased to dress up a plain cotton blouse signalled a changing point of view.⁵⁵

Describing a more recent period of American history, the Americanization of Jewish women and gender system has been reflected in jokes and popular cultural practices including a preoccupation with shopping as a means of determining acculturation as sociologist Riv-Ellen Prell observes.⁵⁶ This 'vernacular' dress is used to create identity in societies structured by social and cultural discourses, as dress historian Kathryn Wilson shows.⁵⁷ Wilson stresses that creation of fashion dress was an item 'which had yet to be conceived:' this skill, critical to the success of this sophisticated process, selectively used professional dressmaking skills and a conception of the finished garment. As Maynard shows, later loss of this skill contributed to the decline of professional dressmaking in Australia.⁵⁸

In situations with a shortage of dress, strategies have included the selective use of husbands' uniforms, enabling American Army officers' wives in the 19th century American West to construct identities through dress as Julie Campbell shows. After learning to sew (a necessary skill at remote postings) upper/middle-class women struggled to maintain and supplement their wardrobes through mail order, relying on friends on the eastern seaboard, their husband's visits, and local

dressmakers, although they were largely dressing for themselves: their only audience being their husbands, native Americans, and camp followers. Eventually, learning an unconcern for fashion after years of postings in remote locations, they perversely developed an out-of-date fashion look as a ‘badge of rank’ of officers’ wives on the Western frontier.⁵⁹ The role of the observers is significant: Campbell records that the opportunity to adopt local clothing in extreme temperatures was not considered appropriate even for housedress. Clearly, ‘going native’ was ‘not on,’ but appropriating approved garments including their husband’s uniform was acceptable. Similarly, dress historian Cheryl Buckley notes a fashion for shabby dress worn by wealthier women contributing to First World War work, inverting pre-war dress codes applicable to this social group.⁶⁰ And dress historian Carol Mattingly records a link between 19th century American dress and women speakers, drawing a link between appearance, and the social, political, and religious views of the speaker.⁶¹

For expatriates, immigrants, and migrants, a sense of difference persists. Tulloch quotes Hall in her discussion of Black Britons as a minority group:

‘One’s identity in the country will be forever the migrant, or as Hall describes himself, a diaspora person, and the reality of what he and other migrants cannot be is constantly felt.’⁶²

Whilst not all expatriates may have wished to be what they could not, a continually reiterated sense of difference persists, and, despite local differences in cultural dress, the hegemony of Western fashion dress is pervasive everywhere, as photographer Laura Wilson records in her photo-essay on the Hutterites, a contemporary Anabaptist sect of forty thousand people farming the North Dakota plains.⁶³ Wilson shows how the use of dress distinguishes one colony from another and denotes the status of modernity between Hutterite colonies, in comparison with mainstream American culture:

‘The Lehrerleut women wear colourful, flower-patterned clothing. Their polka dot scarves are starched three times over, giving the women the look of alert, still-winged birds. The Dariusleut women, by contrast, dress in sombre blues and browns and greens. Their skirts are hemmed an inch or two shorter than the Lehrerleuts, which convinces them that they look more stylish and modern.’⁶⁴

Despite a rigorous dress code (Hutterite children are dressed as miniature versions of adults perpetuating seemingly unchanging fashion), the Hutterites are aware of the dress of the community outside their own and desire to be fashionable. Hutterite women are preoccupied with glasses (spectacles), as jewellery might preoccupy women in other cultures. Wilson cites a woman who wears non-prescription lenses, in her own words: 'just to look prettier.'⁶⁵

Exceptionally, historian Richard Wrigley records what is usually a theatrical device, in which the minority elite were unable to reveal themselves as they would have wished through their dress.⁶⁶ The upper classes attempting to evade identification during the French Revolution, a country where identity through dress had become central to the new order of society and the wearing of a cockade could provoke physical violence, dressed as market porters in full *sanculottes*.⁶⁷

Conversely in near contemporary fashion, the proposed adoption of minority dress by a majority could be an uncomfortable experience, as art historian Linda Nochlin comments on reactions to Jean Paul Gaultier's Autumn/Winter 1993 collection on the theme of Hasidic Jews.⁶⁸ Nochlin describes the transvestism of models in male Jewish clothing as mimicry both 'resemblance and menace,' and questions Gaultier's motives as 'inspiration or parody?'⁶⁹ Although the collection was positively received, a fashion spread shot in Borough Park, the Jewish area of New York, by French Vogue was not well received. Taylor suggests this is because in transplanting the collection closer to its origins, the distance between the original source and its re-appropriation was narrowed. We can therefore extrapolate: ethnic dress can be a desirable look when appropriated by fashion, but not in the context of its own ethnicity.⁷⁰

Applying this to the adoption of the *cheongsam* or other Oriental ethnic dress by expatriate Western women, the sense of unease realised in New York is also apparent. The narrow line between respectful emulation and tasteless mimicry becomes clearer. This is further confused by the use of the Orient as a form of fashion especially in the 1960s and 1970s as previously discussed.⁷¹ Whilst both Western fashion dress and 'fancy dress' emulates those further up or down a social hierarchy, in both cases emulation is removed from the site of the original. It is always something decontextualised, recovered, retrieved, or brought back from a

voyage of discovery. To emulate ethnic dress, be it Jewish or Asian within its own context, is unnerving because it suggests emulation of that sub-group, which has profoundly disturbing consequences when expanded: how could colonialists have emulated the dress of their hosts (aside from purposes of concealment) without implying a reversal of hierarchies? It would have been impossible. This defines appropriation: either dress must be clearly appropriated either by combining it with Western dress or using it to create Western dress; or hybridised Asian dress. It would be appropriate, for example, to wear an Indonesian shoulder cloth as a scarf with a Western skirt and top, or for Chinese silk to be used to make a Western jacket, but not to wear the shoulder cloth with Indonesian dress, or to use the silk to make a *changfu*, the long gown, as this would convey a very different message which, as cultural geographer Helen Callaway suggests, may have fulfilled specific objectives, or manifest political or social sympathies.⁷² Hybridisation, frequently part of post-modern fashion looks, references contemporary Western thought.

As previously mentioned, Tarlo's work on near contemporary, regional, ethnic Indian caste dress, and its appropriation by an international urban elite who simultaneously express cultural tradition and modernity through an urban and international fashion trend for 'ethnic chic,' shows that the history of dress from the Raj to a contemporary Indian dress can be seen as differentiation and identification, forming patterns between India and the West, and different groups within Indian society.⁷³ Palmer shows the appropriation of French couture fashions by a Canadian elite in the 1950s defined the nature of regional dress as discreetly fashionable.⁷⁴

Analysis of manifestation of identities through dress completed to date have been limited to isolated places or periods, many either emulating the existing social hierarchy or completely dismissing it. Only given the unusual dilemma described by Wrigley did a higher-ranked group emulate a lower-ranked group due to a specific threat. This provides a key to the unease experienced when appropriated ethnic dress is worn in its original context.

Colonialism, Orientalism, and dress

Attitudes to the Orient of exoticism and hegemony or conversely, the prosaic everyday reality of colonialism, are reflected in the manifestation of identities through dress in colonial and post-colonial periods. Said proposes that the Orient is

'other' to the Occident, and that Oriental knowledge is not the study of the Orient by Occidentals, but an example of exteriority, a strange, fearful yet attractive novelty, reflecting the hegemony of the West (and exemplified by photographs such as Steele's of women with bound-feet, see photograph).⁷⁵ Although he deals primarily with the Near East and Africa and specifically, the West's reaction to Mohammedism, Said observes the Orient has been instructed (he is specifically referring to Napoleon's strategy for Egypt) in the ways of the West 'for its own benefit;' the tendency to record 'everything in sight;' and:

'...to make out of every observable detail a generalization[,] and out of every generalization an immutable law about the Oriental nature, temperament, mentality, custom, or type.'⁷⁶

Imperial attitudes towards host communities are:

'The hegemonism of possessing minorities and anthropomorphism allied by Europocentrism; a white middle class Westerner believes it his human prerogative not only to manage the non white world but also to own it, just because by definition 'it is not quite as human as we are.'⁷⁷

This view may contribute an understanding of the proliferation of European colonial possessions during the late 19th century (including the acquisition of Hong Kong by Britain in 1841) together with a conception of the Orient as a fascinating, but failed series of despotic societies lacking the development of 'the West:' in England, The Royal Asiatic Society was inaugurated in 1823, and an Oriental studies department developed in every major European university by 1850, and museums collected Oriental dress (see example of a 19th century Chinese woman's skirt in the collection of the Victoria and Albert museum, the fur-lined *shan* and skirt in the Hong Kong Museum of History, and photographs of women wearing Hoklo and Hakka dress taken from local research at the end of this chapter).⁷⁸ Said proposes three reasons why Westerners reside in or visit, the Orient: in order to complete scientific research including anthropology; as writers recording experiences, or in order to fulfil dreams or desires. The Western expatriate or visitor to the East undergoes a change in behaviour in the process of becoming a *white man* [my italics], as an idea and a reality:

'It meant - in the colonies speaking in a certain way, behaving accordingly to a code of regulations, and even feeling certain things and not others. It meant specific judgments, evaluations, gestures. It was a form of authority before which non whites and even whites themselves, were expected to bend.'⁷⁹

Said concludes:

'Being a white man, in short, was a very concrete manner of being-in-the-world, a way of taking hold of reality, language, and thought. It made a specific style possible.'⁸⁰

Becoming an expatriate clearly changes Westerners, and my informants made a distinction between local and expatriate residents, Said describes this as a dialectic of 'them and us' and concludes:

'The more one is able to leave one's cultural home, the more easily one is able to judge it, and the whole world as well with the spiritual detachment and generosity necessary for true vision. The more easily, too does one assess oneself and alien cultures with the same combination of intimacy and distance.'⁸¹

'Orientalism' was originally a term denoting an interest - particularly in visual forms - in a culture that was different from that of the West as historian John MacKenzie in his rebuttal of Said's book proposes. Neither pejorative nor prurient, but a fascination with parts of Asia from Egypt to Japan, which was manifest in art, music, architecture, literature, theatre, and artefacts, Orientalism revealed an interest in Asian art forms which have never been out of fashion in the West and have been, on occasion, extremely fashionable until such time as they were replaced by modernism.⁸² Different countries have differing experiences of colonialism, and, as Hall observes, the resulting complexity of colonialism has made concepts of ethnic absolutism an increasingly untenable strategy in the post-colonial period, nor does colonialism end with independence as cultural studies academic Couze Venn warns, but continues for all former colonies in different forms of power and oppression.⁸³

The people of the British Empire, resident in exotic yet closely defined territories, were honoured in systems created between the mid-19th and 20th centuries in a social system familiar to British society, and the whole treated, as

social historian David Carradine describes in his critique of Said, as a 'dumping ground for those who had ruined themselves at home.'⁸⁴ As sociologist Homi K. Bhabha, summarizes: 'colonial power produces the colonized as a fixed reality which is at once an other and yet entirely knowable and visible.'⁸⁵ Returning 'home' from an elevated position in an enlarged and heightened hierarchy replicating the metropolitan model was, in novelist E. M. Forster's words, an 'exile from glory.'⁸⁶ Art historian Nancy Troy claims Orientalism was to be found in fashion designer Paul Poiret's dresses.⁸⁷ And in the use of Yves Saint Laurent's Opium perfume in The Metropolitan Costume Institute 1980-1 exhibition of Ching dynasty robes of the Chinese court, curated by former Vogue and Harper's Bazaar editor Diana Vreeland, according to sociologist Russell Belk.⁸⁸

Colonial dress and identities

The stiffness and starch of 'British Colonial White,' familiar today through film and cartoon, demonstrates dress as an aspect of social status and control at the height of the British Empire in colonial Africa and India, where clothing, uniforms, and the process of 'dressing for dinner' acted as a moral code, a visual marker for changing distinctions of gender, race and class according to Lurie, Erving Goffman, and Callaway.⁸⁹ The difficulties of wearing fashionable Edwardian dress in tropical heat could be resolved by 'going native' that is adopting local clothing more suited to the climate, but at the social cost of exclusion from the group. Pre-modern and modern China had a comparable civil uniform to that of the colonial service (rank badges, dragon robes, the Mao suit, and a comparable attempt at a uniform for women), and as curator Verity Wilson notes, dragon robes were occasionally made for Europeans resident in China.⁹⁰ Inevitably, modern uniforms were subject to attempts to personalise them, for example: in an attempt to individualise their Mao suits, author Jung Chang records 'pretty pink flower-patterned blouses' worn by her mother and her mother's boss, despite the risk of approbation from other members of the Communist Party. Chang records her mother's feelings of excitement and nervousness at daring not to look the same as everybody else.⁹¹ Similarly, textiles were used to create national and individual identities, as Jennifer Salahub shows early Canadian embroideries reveal a complex use of textiles as symbols of nationhood in creating early Canadian identities,

reflecting both the history of women in Canada, and of Canada as a colonial nation.⁹²

In a contemporary period the differing perceptions of tourists travelling abroad and their perceptions of each other are formed by the places they intend to visit. Lurie maintains that for Americans, travel is a trip to a disaster area (i.e. somewhere outside America), therefore they wear casual, cheap clothes in bright colours, so as not to arouse envy or to pick up dirt. However, the British visiting their past empire dress up as representatives of the 'top nation.' Due to these differing notions of dress, Americans assume the British to be stiff and formal, and the British think of Americans as relaxed, simple, and even crude.⁹³ In their examination of dress conveying Muslim identity in contemporary Finland, fashion academic Ritva Koskennurmi-Sivonen and her colleagues explain that younger immigrant women combine Western dress with a headscarf, whereas older women wear their customary ethnic dress with a headscarf (a uniform) which was worn only exceptionally in their home countries.⁹⁴ In pre-handover Hong Kong, Clark examines the use of clothing to create identities, as Hong Kong bid to become or remain (depending on viewpoint) the fashion capital of China.⁹⁵ Local fashion shopping behaviour of Hong Kong residents is a means of examining the dialectic; fashion-as-system and fashion-as-culture approaches to fashion consumption. As Chan explains, it is:

'not so much about being seen to be 'fashionable,' although that is important; more it is about novelty, about new images and creating new possibilities with their bodies through clothes, accessories and cosmetics.'⁹⁶

This definition of fashion as something obtained only from a shopping mall is particular to Hong Kong's dense population and the notion of consumption as a leisure activity.

Memory

As I rely extensively on oral histories using informant's memories, which colour the nature of the research, the following section summarises the historian's perspective of memory. As historian Mary Chamberlain identifies:

'Memory, as a function of the imagination, is both volatile and inferior; at the same time, the individual, peculiarly identified by memory, cannot speak for the collective.'⁹⁷

All oral history methodologies accept informants' voices as truths. As oral historian Linda Sandino explains, social memory is filtered through the present demonstrating that the interview is a interpretative event in which social memory is articulated.⁹⁸ There are two types of memory that informants draw upon, firstly, Flashbulb Memory, as psychologist Gillian Cohen notes:

'It is the term given to the unusually vivid and detailed recollections people often have of the occasion when they first heard about some very dramatic, surprising, important, and emotionally arousing event.... Flashbulb memories typically encode what is called the 'reception event' rather than the event itself. That is, they encode the circumstances in which the person first received the news and usually include the place, who was present at the time, what activities were going on, the effect occasioned by the event, and the source of the news. Once formed, flashbulb memories are apparently long-lasting and unchanging over time. Flashbulb memories are also distinguished by their phenomenological quality. They seem to have the peculiarly vivid character of an actual perception... - "live quality" - and tend to include seemingly irrelevant and trivial details.'⁹⁹

The second form of memory is autobiographical memory. Cohen explains this is how the self is experienced and constructed:

'The defining characteristic of autobiographical memory is its relationship to the self: The remembered events are of personal significance and are the building blocks from which the self is constructed. Paradoxically, the self is both the experiencer and the product of the experiences. Autobiographical memories are long lasting, perhaps because the self-reliance that is characteristic of these memories is known to promote recall...'¹⁰⁰

The most important intrapersonal function of memory is the contribution to the construction and maintenance of self-concept and self-history, as Cohn and cultural historian Marius Kwint propose.¹⁰¹ Memory is fragile because in part it contains imagination of how the topic appeared, as design historians Adrian Forty and Susanne Kuchler explain. As writer Andrea Stuart, imagining herself to be Empress Josephine, suggests: 'We do not wear dresses; we dream them.'¹⁰² For those

separated from familiar places, events, and people, both by distance in the case of all expatriates, and by time, the process of memory enables individuals to reconstruct a sense of themselves. As Miller explains of Indian ethnic dress ‘... the wardrobe is an anthology and collection of memories, a multi-faceted, multi-layered mirror which reflects back the full complexity of an individual’s identity and history.’¹⁰³ Wardrobes form a physical memory of the self and former self as dress evolves over time, that is, a repository for dress no longer worn, as sociologist Ali Guy notes.¹⁰⁴ Sociologist Sophie Woodward suggests that garments are used as a means of working out personal biographies.¹⁰⁵

As this research is time specific, time as an aspect of memory is relevant. If arrival in Hong Kong was when life began for a number of informants, was an unchanging wardrobe a means of halting time? Baudrillard suggests this is not so:

‘What goes out of fashion passes in to everyday life. What disappears from everyday life is revived in fashion.’¹⁰⁶

But he recognizes how changed location changes persona:

‘...the baggage claim scene at airports has an external value; after that death which a flight always to some small extent represents, everyone comes to pick up what belonged to them in a previous life. It is like the distribution of what each person will have the right to take with him in to the hereafter. And by what miracle do you find the same cases, the same bags you had before you left?’¹⁰⁷

For Baudrillard, objects are relics of an earlier world having survived time. As he notes the moment of creation cannot be reproduced and is, therefore, fascinating.¹⁰⁸

Methodologies

Oral history is an emerging methodology useful for research in to groups and situations which are not otherwise documented, and for which other evidence is not available. Recording history through people's own voices allows capture especially of those marginalized by mainstream history. I have used oral history as a synchronic means of collecting information as Taylor summarizes:

'Since clothing is such a fundamental factor within everyday life and human experience, memories of dress should be able to make significant contributions to the field of oral history especially when respondents include both the poorest in society as well as political, social and cultural elites.'¹⁰⁹

All oral history methodologies accept informants' words as truths. However, by agreeing to talk with the researcher, the informant is agreeing to present information which he or she thinks suitable to the researcher. A desire to be heard or to bear witness to the past in some form is apparent. The pitfalls of oral history include: romanticism; personal, political, and gender bias; confused dates and jumbled events. In addition, memories are subject to revisionism and as Taylor and Sandino explain, selective amnesia, for example: a narrative of hard times becomes a heroic record of courage and endurance, and the humiliation of embarrassment lingers for the informant, therefore memories have to be set in context of locality and period as dress historian Rachel Moseley's work shows.¹¹⁰

Whilst analysing fashion industry oral histories from the fashion community both in Hong Kong and the United Kingdom, I have focused on expatriate Western women's use of dress as a means of manifesting identities in Hong Kong. Between 1960 and 1997 men's corporate dress lagged behind that of the United Kingdom, for example, office shirts remained long-sleeved throughout the period despite summer temperatures of 32°C., but offered few aspects unique to Hong Kong. I have endeavoured to support informant interviews by psychological insight and the resources of historical scholarship, whilst acknowledging the interpretative role of the oral historian as the creator of his/her own archives.

My research includes interviews with British, American, European, and Australasian nationals. It documents the perceptions of my informants with regard to other overseas nationals and their own place within the expatriate communities of Hong Kong. In a pilot project, informants were selected not by pre-determined categories, but on a 'Snowballing' basis, as the complexity of the topic precluded a specific social category or identity. The pitfalls of this methodology became apparent as it relied on informants' social networks; their ability to conceive of the topic under consideration; and their willingness to suggest another appropriate informant. A snowballing methodology is appropriate in order to explore a thread or small community, but is likely to produce patchy coverage of an era or wider

topic. It also removes control of the research area from the researcher as subsequent interviews are dictated by informants, and these are also likely to be self-validating. After some unrewarding interviews, selection of informants was confined to articulate members of the fashion, art, or design communities, as better able to remember and describe fashion of a particular period with a more sophisticated vocabulary for colour, fabrics, and an interest in fashion. This was not exclusively the case, and informants with a 'passion for fashion' included a banker, a lawyer, and a secretary.

In order to compare fashion groups within the expatriate Western community, I interviewed expatriates from the Mid-Levels, and the two principal islands which form part of Hong Kong: Lamma, and Lantau (Discovery Bay): see the maps at the end of the introduction. The Mid-Levels, an area adjacent to the downtown Central district (previously Victoria) on Hong Kong Island, was home to a large number of middle-class expatriates and local professionals, close to the trendy nightlife-areas of Lan Kwai Fong and SoHo.¹¹¹ The second location Lamma Island, a short ferry ride from Central, was home to those seeking an alternative lifestyle; less highly paid Western expatriates and members of the local community; and those frequently engaged in creative or 'alternative' occupations. It had a vacation atmosphere and was a weekend leisure destination. The third location was Discovery Bay, a 1980s waterfront housing development on the shore of the mountainous island of Lantau cut off from its hinterland (Lantau is visible in the background of photograph of Hong Kong island looking West towards Central from North Point; and View of Central from North Point 1967, at the end of the introduction section). Access to Discovery Bay was by an hour-long ferry journey from Central. The car-free gated-community, popularly known as 'Delivery Bay' a reference to the large number of expatriate Western families who lived there and, as the rent was affordable, some single expatriate Western women. Its surreal ambiance was reminiscent of the Patrick McGowan television series 'The Prisoner,' and its non-Asian 'look' made it attractive to some Europeans. Exceptions to the above methodology were informants drawn from elite residential areas such as The Peak, Shek O, and Repulse Bay (see the photographs of The Peak 1964; new Apartment block in Repulse Bay 1959-60; and View towards Central from the Peak tramcar 1967, at the end of the chapter).

I sought to cover the period of research from a number of viewpoints: top, middle, and bottom of social groups, using a variety of nationalities to contribute further viewpoints. Informants from the earlier period of research (1960 to the mid-1970s) proved more elusive to interview as many Civil Service employees retired from Hong Kong in 1997 and returned to their home countries or emigrated. Remaining informants were drawn from a social elite who included owners and directors of established Hong Kong businesses. In the course of the interviews, many women invited me to see their wardrobes. I accepted these invitations and was therefore able to photograph many of the garments described, which gave me a second opportunity to clarify comments. Many Hong Kong privileges were common to all informants, including: regional travel; the availability of inexpensive domestic help; and an extensive social network. Sixty-five informants were interviewed in total.

Early in my research the experience of leaving one's home country and relocating to Hong Kong emerged as a strong theme. This was critical to informants' understanding of their own fashion dress. The experience of dislocation enabled informants to distinguish between their former (frequently) unfashionable selves and their later fashionable selves. Dress revealed shared identities, not objective truths, and differences in dress, (particularly 'smartness' which was perceived in a variety of formats), formed a second reoccurring theme.

Informants were recruited strategically and opportunistically. I compiled a list of retailers, store owners, journalists, buyers, manufacturers, and designers, and contacted them: with two exceptions all agreed to be interviewed.¹¹² Recommendations were sought through contacts in the fashion industry, and *Drapers*, the United Kingdom fashion trade magazine, kindly printed my request for informants. The opportunity to meet long-term residents, fashion professionals at public events, and introductions through mutual friends and business acquaintances, enabled me to cover the period to my satisfaction.

Informants answered a list of questions: one for expatriate Western women, one for fashion industry professionals, with additional questions to clarify meaning – see Appendices. The two sets of questions were designed to set the informants at ease and to contextualise the research by allowing the informant to explain his or her Hong Kong fashion history. These comments were compared in order to definitively establish events and trends, from more than one viewpoint. The second

questionnaire for expatriate Western women probed their use of dress as a means of manifesting identities, and provided a framework enabling the informant to recall information in a chronological sequence (being the easiest means of remembering a large amount of information). Most informants were people I had not previously met or had met only briefly. Had I known them well, I think interviews might have been organised around their wardrobes, their employment or social lives. As Woodward found in her research, my informants were happy to recount fashion as a series of 'looks,' with little recognition of the phasing out of clothing apart from explanations justifying its retention.¹¹³ All interviews were conducted in English and recorded with one exception (the informant, a C.E.O., preferred not to be recorded), notes were made throughout the interviews and a hard copy of the transcript was later delivered to the informant. Occasionally this provoked additional information or clarification of comments from the informant.

All informants were offered anonymity. Hong Kong is a small community. I wanted my informants to feel as unconstrained as possible when talking with me, but nor was it my intention to embarrass any of my informants whose pasts they may have wished to conceal.¹¹⁴ I have therefore coded informants' names, except those whose identity it is impossible to conceal (for non-Hong Kong residents this applies only to Sir David Tang). I have added some contextual information in order to clarify the quotation, or comment, without revealing the identity of the informant. In many cases, besides being shown the contents of wardrobes I was shown photograph albums, which I was allowed to borrow in order to copy them.

I sought information, especially on the part of the period with which I was unfamiliar, to check and provide different viewpoints to my own memories of the Hong Kong fashion manufacturing industry (from some fifteen years previously); and to compile an unbiased history of expatriate Western women's fashion in Hong Kong as worn by all classes of Hong Kong expatriate Western women. In order to contextualise Hong Kong fashion during the period of research, I interviewed a number of people who were closely connected with the fashion and textiles industry of Hong Kong. These included: fashion professionals sourcing a wide range of fashion and fashion-related merchandise; developing merchandise; editing locally published style magazines; and the owners and employees of various Hong Kong factories. Informants selected for their contextual information included resident and non-residents; and male and female Western expatriates, see

Appendices. Interviews included: people who worked as fitting models; designers; stylists; people who ran fashion-education establishments; trade development bodies; or entrepreneurial retailers. Interviews were obtained from people in businesses related to fashion clothing including one charity shop and a 'better-end' dry-cleaner. The picture of the Hong Kong fashion industry, which emerges from my research is based on oral histories from: yarn, fabric, and garment manufacturers; factory employees; buyers; tailors; and retailers. These interviews contribute to an otherwise undocumented period of Hong Kong fashion history.

Interviews were transcribed and rechecked against the original tape. This time-consuming process enabled initial analysis of the contents: either corroborating other informants' comments; to clarify context or situation; or to identify unique experience. This was sufficient in most cases for me to memorise all significant events that the informant had described. Reflection and discussion with my transcriber, friends and colleagues contextualized informants' experiences.¹¹⁵ The problem in using the material collected has not been a shortage of material, but rather in many instances selecting from the wealth of material available. Most analysis was straightforward, however, thinking about what had been omitted, or the real meaning of what the informant was saying, required reflection and comparison with other informants describing the same period and, sometimes, similar experiences. Sociologist Raphael Samuel notes informants' conscious or unconscious repressions in recounting their histories.¹¹⁶ As Samuel describes, I also found informants recounted humiliating experiences against themselves, such as being embarrassed by a dress, their size, and the way they treated sales assistants, as humorous incidents.¹¹⁷ Informants, many of whom did not come from wealthy backgrounds, tended to omit mention of changes in their personal circumstances: at the beginning of the interview an informant might describe accepting a job on local terms, and by the end of the interview how they had a collection of five fur coats and shopped in Lane Crawford (the top Hong Kong department store). I have examined fictional and semi-fictionalised accounts of expatriate Western women in my research including those of Han, Lanchester, and Mason, as sociologist Jean Penneff notes, to distinguish between observation and imagination.¹¹⁸

As discussed above, I was very aware that as an expatriate and a woman, that is an 'insider,' my own understanding and experiences could not help but colour informants' information (see Introduction). I took care to dress in a fashionable but

not extreme way (although my hair was cut on a No.1 with a quiff at this time) during interviews. I endeavoured to appear friendly, uncritical, and interested in everything that my informants had to tell me. I nodded and smiled to encourage further confidences. Interviewing was very interesting and mostly pleasurable except when informants drifted off the topic; or commenced historical descriptions of Hong Kong and other information I had already covered from written sources, when they had to be steered back to the topic.¹¹⁹ As previously mentioned, the most frustrating part was to hear widely varying definitions of fashion, particularly observations about what was about to become fashionable again, even from fashion professionals, but which would have disturbed the flow of the interview had I seriously challenged them. All interviews were an account of what the informant understood fashion to be in a specific time and place. Many informants would have liked to continue the conversation to encompass current day fashions, but broadening the period of study would have introduced transnationalism, which would not have combined well with the earlier period. As a Caucasian female with a similar background to many informants (art college graduate, traveller, fashion professional, academic, middle-class, depending how I described myself to my informant), I was assumed to share many of the opinions and experiences that my informants described to me. Only on one occasion did one informant patronise me.¹²⁰ I accept that research conducted of one person by another cannot help but be partial in some respects however, I have sought to make this as impartial as possible in my selection of informants.

Samuel urges us to beware the creation of myth, and on occasion I did feel I was hearing a oft-repeated tale, especially when interviewing successful members of the community. For example, one retailer sourced merchandise locally and taught herself Cantonese to do so. This would be a considerable achievement as Cantonese is a difficult language to learn. I later discovered she spoke four languages, which probably helped her to master Cantonese.¹²¹ Other occasional frustrations included unexpected background noise (Christmas carols in one hotel coffee lounge), poor quality recordings, or faulty recording equipment. Lastly, it is easy to imagine that the women interviewed formed a wealthy unemployed class kept by their husbands' generous salary packages. Whilst this was true of some women, by far a greater number worked full-time and very hard to achieve success. As Samuel

warns us we should beware of repressive myths, which deny women's achievements.¹²²

Other sources of material included everything I could read on Hong Kong history from its inception and to the current period, Hong Kong memoirs, and any written source on the meanings of dress, particularly contemporary research from *The Journal of Fashion Theory*. I compiled a list of novels and films, which were based in Hong Kong to read and study (including visiting the British Film Institute when in London). Almost all material portrayed Hong Kong as an exotic location. I also attended local talks by the Hong Kong branch of the Royal Geographic Society, The Royal Asiatic Society, and The Hong Kong Anthropological Society, of which I am also a member. These provided an economic and a social background to my research. I sought out texts with opposing views to Said when I realised my research, using informants living in an 'Oriental' society, did not concur with his notions of Orientalism.

After completing my third or fourth interview, I realised I would have to increase my knowledge of Asian textiles in order to recognise some of the garments and textiles which my informants had knowingly or unknowingly acquired. As a member of The Textile Society of Hong Kong, I was fortunate to have access to knowledgeable dress historians. I was able to travel within the Asian region, to study and to occasionally purchase ethnic dress and textiles in Japan, China, Vietnam, Thailand, Singapore, India, Pakistan, and Indonesia, and also in the United Kingdom (the Victoria and Albert museum, the Ashmolean, the ethnographic museum in Cambridge), and Paris (The Musee de L' Homme). I am also indebted to curators and dress historians who identified garments and textiles from photographs which accompanied papers read at conferences, and The Hong Kong Polytechnic University Learning Resources Centre (L.R.C.) which purchased books on regional textiles and dress on my recommendation, and without which I would not have been able to inform myself on the subject. The L.R.C. also housed a collection of magazines published in Hong Kong from the 1970s, including *The Tatler* and *Hong Kong* and magazine for the Shanghai Banking Corporation Visa card-holders from which useful source material for the chapter on mediation was obtained. I purchased a wide range of Hong Kong ephemera from a local second-hand bookstore and specialist booksellers, and was able to visit all four Hong Kong university libraries which had ephemera collections, and also held collections of

Government Information Office and American Chamber of Commerce publications, particularly *Living in Hong Kong*, which offered advice on investing in or relocating to Hong Kong. *The Other Hong Kong*, an annual publication written by local academics provided a viewpoint, which balanced that of the government. I was fortunate to be given a collection of articles on Hong Kong tailoring which had been collated by one of the Hong Kong newspapers in the 1970s, and was able to photocopy scrapbooks of two 1960s fashion boutique owners. I was also lent ephemera material by some of my informants.

Additional sources for texts and images

Lastly, magazines, archives, and photographs have been used to contextualise oral histories. Magazine advertisements translate the garment advertised in terms of human values, explaining its symbolic exchange value and referent system in order that, as academic Judith Williamson concludes, people become the ‘sum of their consumer goods.’¹²³ According to several researchers, magazine readers conceive of themselves as ‘inherently in need of improvement’ through consumption.¹²⁴ Feminist academic Ellen McCracken explains that magazines commodify desire in order to attract and retain the advertisers:

‘...commodified desire, is an important semiotic tool whereby the encoders of magazine texts strive to anchor a preferred social accenting in the grand tale that they construct about reality.’¹²⁵

And cultural studies academic Andrew Wernick observes that modern imagistic advertisements speak to the consumer-ego, the ‘you’ to whom the advertisement speaks.¹²⁶ According to cultural theorist Paul Jobling in his study of fashion shoots and their related texts since 1980, fashion shoots convey more than details of clothing:

‘In short, it can be argued that fashion photography is not necessarily for people who want to know what clothes really look like, for example, the fashion buyers of large stores and their customers. The catwalk, designer’s studio and changing room perform this function, affording the opportunity for scrutinising garments on bodies in movement, or for trying them, on, while simultaneously enhancing their appeal with atmospheric music and lighting. Certainly the fashion spread can be seen to share

similar concerns to the display of garments in arenas such as these in so far as it also trades on ideas of fantasy and masquerade. But the representation of clothing does not offer exactly the same point of identification as clothing demonstrated on the catwalk, or displayed on a mannequin or model in the studio. Rather, much fashion photography beckons us into a world of unbridled fantasies by placing fashion and the body in any number of discursive contexts. Thus it would be myopic to argue that such imagery is innocent or without deeper ideological signification. Indeed, on many occasions fashion photography has either little or nothing to do with clothing, or else clothing itself seems to become an alibi for the representation of other contemporaneous issues and ideas.¹²⁷

As he observes:

'In common with any other form of cultural production, then, the fashion spread not only emanates from the society in which it was produced but also comments on it.'¹²⁸

Similarly, Taylor examines the problems of trying to 'read' clothes from photographs considering 'why the image was taken, by whom, under what conditions, for what audience and for what use?'¹²⁹ Wernick continues: '... advertising is certainly only one aspect of a wider process of cultural commodification: institutionally, a subsector of the culture industry; textually, a delimited sub-field within the larger field of commercially produced signs,' proposing that the meaning of advertising is embodied both in image and words (as could also be said of fashion spreads in women's magazines).¹³⁰ Social anthropologist Brian Moeran's book *Ethnography at Work* is useful in considering the development and meaning of advertising imagery.¹³¹ Fashion examples seen in localized publications, from Japan for example, suggest that a greater level of detail is acceptable to an Asian readership than would be tolerated in the West. Cultural sociologist Lise Skov, and Moeran, note the detailed instructions available in Japanese magazines telling readers how to wear clothes, and comment on the resulting market segmentation which is continually manipulated to advantage by advertisers and editors.¹³²

Similarly to Davis, film academic Geoffrey Novell-Smith explains films mean 'as painting or music do, partly through meaning but partly in other ways; partly in ways that have linguistic equivalents and partly in ways that do not.'¹³³ These meanings as are transient, film academic William Phillips observes that our view of film is coloured by culture or political viewpoint: even the same person

experiencing the same work some years later usually sees different meanings in it.¹³⁴ The films featuring Hong Kong during this period are all American, formatted as classical Hollywood cinema.¹³⁵

Conclusion

In this thesis I document as full a history of the Hong Kong fashion system from 1960 to 1997 as possible, as a context within which to set my research questions. In Chapter Two I recount the development of the fashion production system, and in Chapter Three I document fashion retailing throughout the period. In Chapter Four I explain the use of fashion by expatriate Western women and the local community during the period. In Chapter Five I record the mediation of fashion through magazines and film during the period. In Chapter Six, I examine how expatriate Western women used fashion to create identities.

If it is assumed fashion is led, what is fashion in a situation without fashion leadership? Is this situation constant: did the expatriate Western women manifesting identities through dress, occasionally accept fashion leadership from the host community, and if so, why and how did they select some host community fashions to emulate and not others?¹³⁶ This research will redress the view of fashion as either a dominant, or ephemeral, instigator of social change.

Specifically, an assessment of the fashion dress of expatriate Western women in a near contemporary situation, as a means of manifesting identities, should enable chronotopes of groups in other specific locations and time periods to be examined, in terms of economic and social history, business history, consumption studies and a history of dress. In dress history this research contributes to both top-end and mass-market research, and both to object-based and textual research within the discipline of design history. That said, this research also examines the ways in which expatriate Western women made sense of the radically different environments in which they found themselves. This chronotope cannot be rationalised through modernist mechanisms but must be considered in terms of post-modernism, as the very juxtaposition that is Asia formed a strategic landscape against which all research was set.

In this thesis, I argue that as Hong Kong was not considered a 'fashion city' by expatriate Western women (as were New York, London, Paris, and more recently, Milan and Tokyo), and that fashion was a Western notion, therefore local

emulation was inconceivable. However, this was complicated by the use of 'Oriental' or Asian dress as part of Western fashion for much of the period of research. As Asian dress was fashionable, how did expatriate Western women disentangle this and achieve fashionable 'looks' whilst not appearing to adopt Asian dress and, therefore, Asian values? What effect did the shortage of ready-made Western fashion have on expatriate Western women: forcing them to give up fashion (as Campbell's research proposes) and adopt a dress code of their own, or, as I show, requiring them to become increasingly resourceful in sourcing suitable fashion dress from other sources? In so doing I show that they created a fashion 'look,' and what this 'look' looked like.

While seeking to assess the historical contribution of expatriate Western women to fashion dress by using my informants as a series of case studies, it is my intention to show the activities of expatriate Western women within a larger context: firstly, within that of the host community in Hong Kong, and secondly, and more importantly, within the context of a country whose major export was fashion and textiles. As fashion became an acknowledged part of the world's cities, what was the experience of living in a city which earned its living through fashion, but which had no recognised fashion of its own for expatriate Western women? This thesis shows how exclusion was manifest and its long-term consequences. Diverse and sophisticated systems of retailing became common in Hong Kong during the period of research, yet, for its small expatriate Western community, Hong Kong's distance from other fashion centres precluded emulation of fashion innovations, other than as mainstream 'looks.' Expatriate Western women personalised other city's fashions, adapting them to wear in a 'Hong Kong' manner.

This thesis contributes to insights that purchasing and wearing 'Oriental' dress grounded in notions of Orientalism, assumed and promoted since publication of Said's book in 1985. The appropriation and adoption of ethnic dress as an expression of identity construction, a concept suggested by Lurie, has formed the largest unexpected element of this study. Not only did informants purchase many garments and textiles on their travels in Southeast Asia, but they had them made up by Hong Kong tailors in to Western tailored garments. Discussion within each chapter shows how Orientalism is too simplistic an idea to account for the ways in which Asian dress was worn, or to account for the enormous collections of

garments and textiles, which my informants revealed. Orientalism assumes the wearer indulges in some sort of ‘fancy dress,’ in fact, as I show, this dress was anything but ‘fancy.’

In much the same way, as specific garments are transformed from something originally used by a majority community, to use by a minority community (as Tulloch’s research on the headtie in Britain demonstrates), the tailored *cheongsam*, a symbol of free Chinese identity, changed its meaning when adopted by women of colonial origin.¹³⁷ The *cheongsam* became a conservative garment worn on formal occasions, one of a number of garments which enabled expatriate Western women (as in Wilson’s research) to successfully create things which did not yet exist, overcoming language differences and, in many cases, differences of meaning, in commissioning garments.¹³⁸ I examine how tailored garments differed from ready-to-wear merchandise in Hong Kong, incorporating recognition of identity, brand, and gender in to the very fibres of a garment reflecting life experience and conferring security, for expatriate Western women who as trailing spouses, at least initially after their arrival, did not work and had limited means of expressing their identities and autonomy in Hong Kong, and communicating their changed status on their return to their home country.

A further consideration, which is not within the scope of this study but is of note: for those able to afford it, the use of plastic surgery enabled some informants to wear fashions which may have otherwise been impossible. The topic of plastic surgery reoccurred throughout interviews across all age groups and income levels. This may be partly driven by an unflattering comparison between the generally slender Asian community and, generally, stockier expatriate Westerners, but also by a virtual absence of elderly expatriate Westerners in the community.¹³⁹

Events in China (still closed to Westerners in the early 1960s) preoccupied the Hong Kong expatriate and host communities more than the far-away activities of the British government.¹⁴⁰ Riots in Beijing in 1967 were echoed by disturbances in Hong Kong, giving birth to ‘the famous and resilient legend of Hong Kong: ‘Mao Zedong had only to lift a telephone in Beijing to get the British out of the colony.’¹⁴¹ I should like to make clear that this research is not a celebration of colonialism but an examination of the use of dress in constructing identities in minority situations. Nevertheless colonialism and racism are notions which colour some of my respondent’s experiences and which must be addressed. Said’s work on

colonialism recognising Asians as 'not quite human' helps explain the employment roles of some expatriates in Hong Kong in the period of research, as does his observation that the fascination of the East remains an attraction for many. Colonialism and racism form a background to this thesis, but with increasing ease of communication and the opportunity to live and work overseas for both expatriates and the host-population, overt racism has declined. Colonialism in terms of China's long history was transient.

Consumption studies are barely comprehended in Hong Kong with an economy focused on retailing and mediation. The notion that an object has a life after its purchase, and that its meaning can change (other than to become superseded), is unthinkable in a society where items are replaced to keep pace with fashion change or because they break (a common occurrence in a sub-tropical climate). As sociologist Joanne Entwistle advocates, a study of fashion dress whilst recognising the social forces framing dress, precludes reducing fashion and dress to social or economic conditions.¹⁴²

For middle class Western expatriates returning to their home countries, there is a cultural expectation that they will have used the experience of living overseas to gain insight in to different cultures. For expatriate Western women who did not work (which would have brought them in to contact with the host community), nor attempt to learn Cantonese, nor interact with the local community in other ways, it is my hypothesis that for them dress formed instant, and highly visible, evidence in their home communities of a broadening of cultural experience.



Figure 30 Bound foot woman late 19th C.

Late 19th century, bound foot woman.

(Steele & Major, 1999, p. 36).

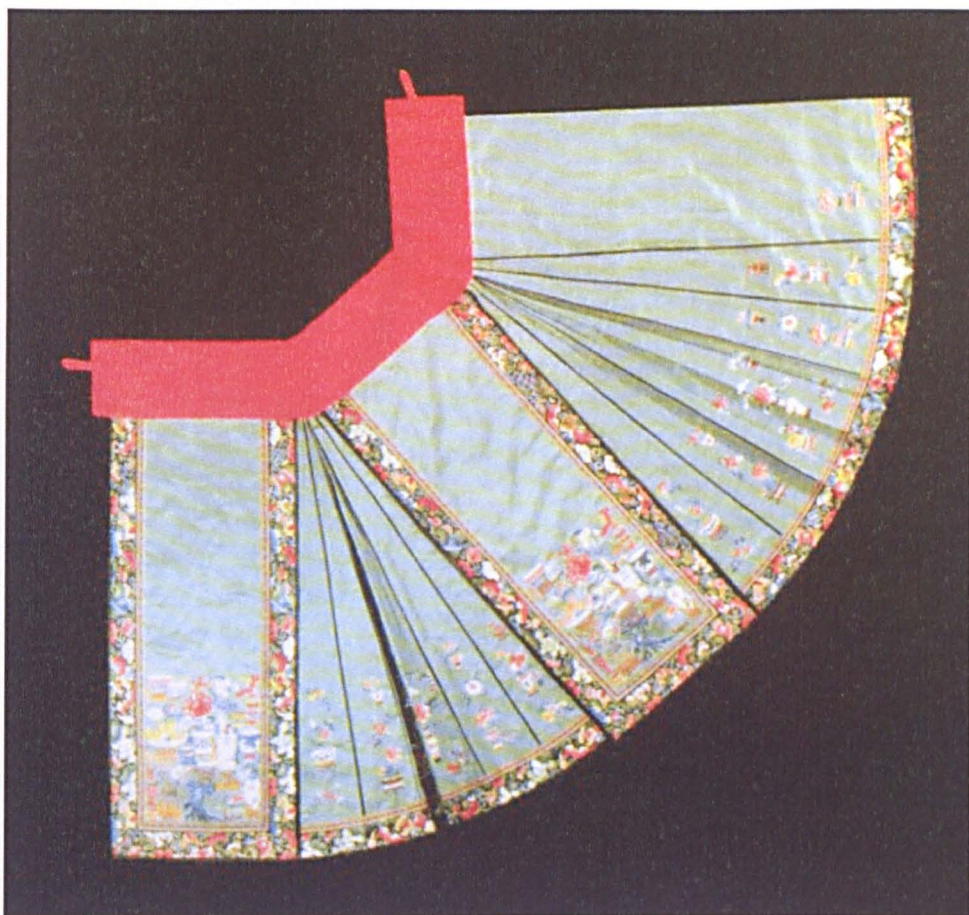


Figure 31 Han Chinese woman's skirt 19th to 20th C.

Han Chinese woman's skirt 19th to 20th century, embroidery on satin weave silk. Victoria and Albert Museum.

(V. Wilson, 1986, p. 54).



Figure 32 Woman's fur-lined *shan* and skirt 1910-20s

Woman's fur-lined patterned satin *shan* and skirt, 1910-30s.

Hong Kong Museum of History.

(Szeto, 1992, p. 65).



Figure 33 Hoklo family at Dai Wong Festival 1979

Hoklo child in embroidered collar and sash for the Dai Wong Festival, mother wearing a patterned baby carrier carries a younger child, grandmother wearing Hoklo straw hat holds child's crown, Tai Po, 1979.

(Garrett, 1987, Plate 5).



Figure 34 Hakka children and the border 1970

Children wearing Hakka hats in front of the China/Hong Kong border.

'China Border is best viewed from the Lok Ma Chau Police Station. With a telescope, it is possible to observe life going on within the Chinese village on the other side of the Shumchum River which is the boundary [with Hong Kong]. Inhabitants of this village occasionally cross to the Hong Kong side of the river to shop and barter.'

(W.K. Hoffman, 1970, p. 19).

¹ Informant interview: C.A.M.C. 01.09.99.

² See Konig: *The Restless Image: a Sociology of Fashion*, (Konig, 1973), and Sproles: *Fashion: consumer behaviour toward dress*, (G.B. Sproles, 1979): 'A clothing fashion is a style of dress that is temporarily adopted by a discernable proportion of members of a social group because that chosen style is perceived to be socially appropriate for the time and situation.' And: '...a dynamic mechanism of change through which a potential fashion object is transmitted from its point of creation to public introduction, discernable public acceptance, and eventual obsolescence.' (G.B. Sproles, 1979, p. 5). See Davis: *Fashion, Culture and Identity*, (Davis, 1992): 'As visual metaphor the clothing that is dress (one should perhaps distinguish between the two) is capable of communicating many things including something as subtle, for example, as the wearer's reflexive awareness of what is being 'said.' Thus, much clothing, particularly that presuming a high degree of fashion consciousness, brackets as with quotation marks its statements for the sake of rendering by in direction quite different meanings from those apparent at first glance.' (Davis, 1992, p. 25).

³ See Lauwaert: 'Clothing and the inner being; Clothing is a thing; Clothing and Imagination; Democratic snobbery,' (Lauwaert, 2006, p. 183).

⁴ See Simmel: 'Fashion,' (Simmel, 1971); Konig: *The Restless Image: a Sociology of Fashion*, (Konig, 1973); Fallers: 'A Note on the Trickle Effect,' (Fallers, 1973); Polhemus: *Fashion and anti fashion: anthropology of clothing and adornment*, (Polhemus & Proctor, 1978); Sproles: *Fashion: consumer behaviour toward dress*, (G.B. Sproles, 1979); and Bourdieu: *Distinction; a social critique of the judgement of taste*, (Bourdieu, 1984).

⁵ See Wilson and Ash: *Fashion and Modernity*, (E. Wilson & Ash, 1985, pp. 4-5).

⁶ See Barnes: *Dress and Gender: making and meaning in cultural contexts*, (Barnes & Eicher, 1992, p. 1); Tseelon: 'Fashion and the signification of social order,' (Tseelon, 1992a); Davis: *Fashion, Culture and Identity*, (Davis, 1992); Calefato: 'Fashion and Worldliness: Language and Imagery of the Clothed Body,' (Calefato, 1997); and Rubinstein: *Dress codes: Meanings and Messages in American Culture*, (Rubinstein, 2001).

⁷ See Szeto: *Dress in Hong Kong: a century of change and customs*, (Szeto, 1992). See Garrett: *Traditional Chinese Clothing in Hong Kong and South China, 1840-1980*, (Garrett, 1987), and 'The Samfu in Rural Hong Kong,' (Garrett, 1991).

⁸ Ommanney describes Hakka dress: 'The peasant people, many of whom still live in walled villages four hundred years old, belong to the Hakka tribe, who fled from the mainland and took refuge here in the seventeenth century. They wear sombre black clothes and huge, platelike straw hats with no crown and a wide hanging fringe around the brim.' *Eastern Windows* (Ommanney, 1962, p. 200). Morris mentions Western women's preference for the slit skirt in her book. See Morris: *Hong Kong: an Epilogue to an Empire*, (J. Morris, 2000, p. 62).

⁹ See Clark: *Old Clothes, New Looks: Second Hand Fashion*, (H. Clark & Palmer, 2005b).

¹⁰ See Raymond: *The Tomorrow People: future consumers and how to read them* (Raymond, 2003).

¹¹ See Raymond: *The Tomorrow People: future consumers and how to read them* (Raymond, 2003), and Veblen: *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (Veblen, 1899, p. 197).

¹² See Sproles: *Fashion: consumer behaviour toward dress*, (G.B. Sproles, 1979).

¹³ See Sproles: *Fashion: consumer behaviour toward dress*, (G.B. Sproles, 1979, p. 138). This is clearly seen in the adoption of Chinese baby carriers by other members of the community, notably Nepalese women responsible for small children, but nobody - but nobody - except a Hakka woman would ever have worn a Hakka hat.

¹⁴ See Sproles: *Fashion: consumer behaviour toward dress*, (G.B. Sproles, 1979, p. 131).

¹⁵ See Sproles: *Changing Appearances: Understanding Dress in Contemporary Society*, (G.B. Sproles & Burns, 1994).

¹⁶ See Appadurai: *Playing with Modernity: the Decolonization of Cricket*, (Appadurai, 1996).

¹⁷ See Sproles: *Fashion: consumer behaviour toward dress*, (G.B. Sproles, 1979). I assume his research was conducted in America. It is hard to see how this might apply to some groups, for example, British sub-cultures.

¹⁸ See Horn and Gurel: *The Second Skin: an Interdisciplinary Study of Clothing*, (Horn & Gurel, 1981).

¹⁹ See Horn and Gurel: *The Second Skin: an Interdisciplinary Study of Clothing*, (Horn & Gurel, 1981, p. 169); Roach-Higgins, Eicher, and Johnson: *Dress and Identity*, (Roach-Higgins, Eicher, & Johnson, 1995, p. 4).

²⁰ See Davis: *Fashion, Culture and Identity*, (Davis, 1992, p. 17).

²¹ See Lurie, *The Language of Clothes*, (Lurie, 1981).

²² See Davis: *Fashion, Culture and Identity*, (Davis, 1992, p. 18), and Campbell: 'When the Meaning is not the message: a critique of the consumption communication thesis,' (C. Campbell, 1997, p. 348).

²³ See Blumer: 'Society as Symbolic Interaction,' (Blumer, 1998), and Stone, (Stone, 1998).

²⁴ See Stone: 'Appearance and the Self,' (Stone, 1998, p. 104).

²⁵ See Lurie: *The Language of Clothes*, (Lurie, 1981, pp. 96 and 95).

²⁶ See Morini: 'A Fashion Story,' (Morini, 2006, p. 52).

²⁷ See Wilson: 'Fashion and Modernity,' (E. Wilson, 2005), Hill: 'People Dress so Badly nowadays: Fashion and Late Modernity,' (Hill, 2005), and Tseelon: 'Fashion Research and its Discontents,' (Tseelon, 2001).

²⁸ See Briggs: 'Response,' (Briggs, 2005).

²⁹ See Prentice: 'Psychological Correspondence of Possessions, Attitudes and Values,' (Prentice, 1987).

³⁰ Prentice uses the example of one's grandmother's watch. See Prentice: (Prentice, 1987, p. 1002); and Lunt and Livingstone: *Mass Consumption and Personal Identity*, (Lunt & Livingstone, 1992, p. 18).

³¹ See Lunt: *Mass Consumption and Personal Identity*, (Lunt & Livingstone, 1992, p. 89); Green: 'Introduction, Unpicking the Seams,' (Green, Banin, & Guy, 2001, p. 257); Stone: 'Appearance and the Self,' (Stone, 1998, p. 104); Lunt: *Mass Consumption and Personal Identity*, (Lunt & Livingstone, 1992, pp. 24, 70); and Green: 'Introduction, Unpicking the Seams,' (Green et al., 2001).

³² See Kristeva: *Strangers to Ourselves* (Kristeva, 1991). 'Foreigner' is the umbrella term that Kristeva uses to describe all those who no longer live in the country of their birth. Chris Breward notes the sense of alien splendour that the dress of enclaves of foreigners created in London in 1906 in his book *Fashioning London*, despite their contribution to the cultural and economic history of the imperial capital. See Breward: *Fashion and Modernity*, (Breward & Evans, 2005, p. 57).

³³ See Kristeva: *Strangers to Ourselves*, (Kristeva, 1991, pp. 6 -7). 'Foreigner' is also the rather exclusive word used to describe all non-Cantonese people in Hong Kong.

³⁴ See Kristeva: *Strangers to Ourselves*, (Kristeva, 1991, p. 30).

³⁵ See Baudrillard: *Cool Memories*, (Baudrillard, 1990, p. 83).

³⁶ British passport holders did not require a visa to enter, or to work in Hong Kong, prior to the Handover.

³⁷ See Kristeva: *Strangers to Ourselves*, (Kristeva, 1991, p. 195).

³⁸ Conversation with S.K., a self-described 'traveller,' although she has lived in Hong Kong for more than twenty years leaving it only for a two-week vacation each summer. Summer 2005.

³⁹ Historian David Gilmour, records the difficulties in finding employment and social adaptation faced by retiring members of the Indian Civil Service on their return to the United Kingdom in his sympathetic portrait of Victorian civil servants in India. See Gilmour: *The Ruling Caste: Imperial lives in the Victorian Raj*, (Gilmour, 2005).

⁴⁰ See Argyle: 'Inter-cultural Communication' (Argyle, 1982).

⁴¹ See Furnham: 'Social difficulty in a foreign culture: an empirical analysis of culture shock' (Furnham & Bochner, 1982, p. 173).

⁴² See Etheredge: *The Expatriate Experience: toward a model of cultural adjustment*, (Etheredge, 1989).

⁴³ See Lee: *The perceptions of expatriate spouses on organisational assistance in international transfers*, (E. Lee, 1991). Some work, completed in the early 1990s, has examined the impact of the disruption that relocation to Hong Kong has had on women's careers. See Brewster: 'Current issues in expatriation' (Brewster, 1992).

⁴⁴ See Dwyer: *Tracing transnationalities through commodity culture*, (C. Dwyer, 2004), and Howard: 'Dominicans Abroad,' (Howard, 2003).

⁴⁵ See Litterel and Ogle: *Women, migration and the experience of Dress*, (Litterell & Ogle, 2007).

⁴⁶ See St. Aubin de Teran: *Memory Maps*, (St. Aubin de Teran, 2003, pp. 150-1).

⁴⁷ Ribiero describes an ultra-English look in 20th century menswear adopted by English expatriate men in southern Spain. See Ribiero: 'On Englishness in Dress,' (Ribiero, 2003, p. 25).

⁴⁸ See Taylor: 'Paris couture 1940-1944,' (Taylor, 1992), and Breward: *The London Look: Fashion from street to catwalk*, (Breward, 2004). See Goodrun: *The National Fabric: Fashion, Britishness, Globalisation*, (Goodrun, 2005).

⁴⁹ See Baumgarten: *What Clothes Reveal: the Language of Clothing in Colonial and Federal America*, (Baumgarten, 2002); Maynard: *Fashioned from Penury: dress as cultural practice in*

Colonial Australia, (Maynard, 1994); Tulloch: 'Fashioned in Black and White; Women's dress in Jamaica, 1880-1907,' (Tulloch, 1997-8); and Palmer: 'Culture and Costume *Couture and Commerce: The Transatlantic Fashion Trade in the 1950s*, (Palmer, 2001).

⁵⁰ See Routh: *In Style: 100 years of Canadian Women's Fashion*, (Routh, 1993). Similarly, the use of sleeveless and cool fabric (cotton and silk) clothes would have been commonplace for expatriate residents before the widespread use of air-conditioning. In the later part of the period, a Western woman wearing a sleeveless or a low-necked garment would indicate tourist status.

⁵¹ See the beginning of the movie *The World of Suzie Wong*, (Mason, 1960).

⁵² See, Sandikci: 'Aesthetics, Ethics and Politics of the Turkish Headscarf,' (Sandikci & Guliz, 2005).

⁵³ See Kaiser: 'Beyond Binaries: Respecting the Improvisation in African-American Style,' (S. Kaiser, Ranine, Hall, & Ketchim, 2004).

⁵⁴ See Joselit: *A Perfect Fit: clothes, character, and the promise of America*, (Joselit, 2002, pp. 34 and 186).

⁵⁵ See Schreier: *Becoming American Women: Clothing and the Jewish Immigrant Experience: 1880-1920*, (Schreier, 1994, p. 11).

⁵⁶ See Prell: 'Why Jewish Princesses Don't Sweat: desire and consumption in postwar American Jewish Culture,' (Prell, 1996).

⁵⁷ See Wilson: 'Commodified Craft, Creative Community; Women's Vernacular Dress in Nineteenth Century Philadelphia,' (K. E. Wilson, 1999).

⁵⁸ See Maynard: *Out of Line: Australian Women and Style*, (Maynard, 2001, p. 78).

⁵⁹ See Campbell: 'Wearily moving her needle; Army Officers' Wives and Sewing in the Nineteenth Century West,' (J. A. Campbell, 1999).

⁶⁰ See Buckley: 'De-Humanised Females and Amazonians': British Wartime Fashion and its Representation in *Home Chat*, 1914-1918,' (Buckley, 2003).

⁶¹ See Mattingly: *Appropriat[ing] Dress: Rhetorical Style in Nineteenth Century America*, (Mattingly, 2002).

⁶² Tulloch quotes Hall, (Desert Island Discs 2000). See Tulloch: 'Strawberries and Cream: Dress, migration and the Quintessence of Englishness,' (Tulloch, 2003, p. 64).

⁶³ See Wilson: *Hutterites of Montana*, (L. Wilson, 2000).

⁶⁴ See Wilson: *Hutterites of Montana*, (L. Wilson, 2000, p. 28), and Kleeblatt, *Too Jewish?: challenging traditional identities*, (Kleeblatt, 1996).

⁶⁵ See Wilson: *Hutterites of Montana*, (L. Wilson, 2000, p. 28).

⁶⁶ See the role of *Portia* in Shakespeare's 'The Merchant of Venice.'

⁶⁷ See Wrigley: *The Politics of Appearances; representations of Dress in Revolutionary France*, (Wrigley, 2002).

⁶⁸ See Nochlin: 'Foreword; The Couturier and the Hasid,' (Nochlin, 1996).

⁶⁹ See Nochlin: 'Foreword; The Couturier and the Hasid,' (Nochlin, 1996, p. xx).

⁷⁰ See Taylor: *The Study of Dress History*, (Taylor, 2002).

⁷¹ See Morini: 'A Fashion Story,' (Morini, 2006).

⁷² Long gown worn by men in the Qing dynasty. See Callaway: 'Dressing for Dinner in the Bush: Rituals of Self Definition and British Imperial Authority,' (Callaway, 1992).

⁷³ See Tarlo: *Clothing Matters; Dress and Identity in India*, (Tarlo, 1996, p. 317, 319, 324, 332).

⁷⁴ See Palmer: *Couture and Commerce: The Transatlantic Fashion Trade in the 1950s*, (Palmer, 2001, p. 289).

⁷⁵ See Said: *Orientalism*, (Said, 1985, p. 43).

⁷⁶ See Said: *Orientalism*, (Said, 1985, p. 86).

⁷⁷ See Said: *Orientalism*, (Said, 1985, p. 108).

⁷⁸ See Said: *Orientalism*, (Said, 1985, p. 191). Darwin's work on the Evolution of Species also contributed to 19th century notions, ideas, beliefs, clichés, and learning about the East as a place of sensuality, despotism, aberrant mentality, habits of inaccuracy, backwardness, concluding with a separate and unchallenged coherence: the Orient was incapable of governing itself. As an indication of the proliferation of the use of Oriental, dress historian Gail Reekie records that the Australian department store David Jones, promoted their own line of ready-made clothing line under the Orient label. See Reekie, *Temptations: Sex, Selling, and the Department Store* (Reekie, 1993, p. 71).

⁷⁹ See Said: *Orientalism*, (Said, 1985, pp. 226-7).

⁸⁰ See Said: *Orientalism*, (Said, 1985, p. 227).

⁸¹ See Said: *Orientalism*, (Said, 1985, pp. 237, 259).

- ⁸² See MacKenzie: *Orientalism: History, Theory and the Arts*, (MacKenzie, 1995), a response to *Orientalism*. The Goodwood Hotel in Singapore owns Vladimar Trechikoff's oil painting 'The Green Lady,' painted in Java in the 1930s which became a 20th century icon of Orientalism. See Tyers: *Singapore: Then and Now*, (Tyers, 1976).
- ⁸³ See Hall: 'When was 'The Post Colonial'? Thinking at the Limit' (Hall, 1996, pp. 249, 250), and Venn: *Occidentalism: Modernity and Subjectivity* (Venn, 2000, p. 44).
- ⁸⁴ In his rebuttal of Said's book, Carradine calls this system 'Ornamentalism.' See Carradine: *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw Their Empire*, (Cannadine, 2001). Incompetence in selecting local rulers was known, apparently, as 'Lugard's rule' after the British civil servant.
- ⁸⁵ See Bhabha: 'Difference, Discrimination, and the Discourse of Colonialism' (Bhabha, 1982).
- ⁸⁶ Novelist E. M. Forster used the phrase in his novel set in India, *A Passage to India*. See Forster: *A Passage to India* (Forster, 1936, p. 22) and Cannadine: *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw Their Empire*, (Cannadine, 2001, p. 128).
- ⁸⁷ See Troy: 'Paul Poiret's Minaret Style: Originality, Reproduction, and Art in Fashion,' (Troy, 2002), Koda: *Poiret*, (Koda & Bolton, 2007).
- ⁸⁸ See Belk: *Collecting in a Consumer Society*, (Belk, 1995, p. 113).
- ⁸⁹ See Lurie: (Lurie, 1981, pp. 185-87). See Goffman: (E Goffman, 1968); Callaway: *Gender, Culture and Empire* (Callaway, 1987); and Callaway: 'Dressing for Dinner in the Bush: Rituals of Self Definition and British Imperial Authority,' (Callaway, 1992).
- ⁹⁰ See Wilson: *Chinese Dress*, (V. Wilson, 1986, p. 124), and Finnane: 'Looking for the Jiang Qing Desires: Some Preliminary Findings,' (Finnane, 2005, p. 18).
- ⁹¹ See Chang: *Wild Swans*, (Chang, 1991, p. 171).
- ⁹² See Salahub: 'Dutiful Daughters; Fashionable Domestic Embroidery in Canada and the British Model, 1764-1911,' (J.E. Salahub, 1998), and Salahub: 'Embroidering the Ties of Empire; the Lord Grey Banners,' (J. E. Salahub, 1999).
- ⁹³ See Lurie: *The Language of Clothes*, (Lurie, 1981, p. 109)
- ⁹⁴ See Koskennurmi-Sivonen: 'United Fashion: Making a Muslim appearance in Finland,' (Koskennurmi-Sivonen, Koivula, & Maijala, 2004).
- ⁹⁵ See Clark: 'Fashion, Identity and the City; Hong Kong,' (H. Clark, 2000a).
- ⁹⁶ See Chan, 'Shopping for Fashion in Hong Kong,' (A. H. Chan, 2001, p. 166).
- ⁹⁷ See Chamberlain: 'Gender and Memory; Oral History and Women's History,' (Chamberlain, 1995, p. 95).
- ⁹⁸ See Sandino: 'Oral Histories and Design: Objects and Subjects,' (Sandino, 2006, p. 278).
- ⁹⁹ See Cohen: *Memory in the Real World*, (Cohen, 1996, pp. 99-100).
- ¹⁰⁰ See Cohen: *Memory in the Real World*, (Cohen, 1996, p. 147).
- ¹⁰¹ See Kwint: 'Introduction,' (Kwint, 1999).
- ¹⁰² See Forty and Kuchler: *The Art of Forgetting*, (Forty & Kuchler, 1999, p. 2); and Stuart: 'A Second Skin: Women write about Clothes,' (Stuart, 1998, p. 106).
- ¹⁰³ See Miller: *The Sari*, (Miller & Banerjee, 2003, p. 47).
- ¹⁰⁴ See Guy: *Through the Wardrobe: women's relationship with their clothes*, (Guy, Banim, & Green, 2001)
- ¹⁰⁵ See Woodward, (Woodward, 2007, p. 62).
- ¹⁰⁶ See Baudrillard: *Cool Memories*, (Baudrillard, 1990, p. 147).
- ¹⁰⁷ See Baudrillard: *Cool Memories*, (Baudrillard, 1990, p. 156).
- ¹⁰⁸ See Baudrillard: *Cool Memories*, (Baudrillard, 1996, p. 75).
- ¹⁰⁹ See Taylor: *The Study of Dress History*, (Taylor, 2002, p. 242).
- ¹¹⁰ See Taylor: *The Study of Dress History*, (Taylor, 2002, p. 262), Sandino: 'Oral Histories and Design: Objects and Subjects,' (Sandino, 2006, p. 278), and Moseley: 'Dress Class and Audrey Hepburn: the significance of the Cinderella Story,' (Moseley, 2005, p. 119).
- ¹¹¹ South of Hollywood Road.
- ¹¹² One Hong Kong-based designer declined as she claimed she was too busy. I was unable to contact a journalist now based in the United Kingdom despite several attempts.
- ¹¹³ See Woodward: *Why women wear what they wear*, (Woodward, 2007, p. 120).
- ¹¹⁴ For example, one informant's first marriage was to a Hong Kong resident but having divorced and remarried, the children from her second marriage did not know that she had been previously married.
- ¹¹⁵ Without the help of a transcriber I would have taken far longer to complete my research. I used two: one was a secretary who had little interest in fashion and the other who I preferred to use was

an artist who had grown up in Hong Kong. She became very interested in the project and frequently commented on the interview.

¹¹⁶ See Samuel: 'Introduction' (Samuel & Thompson, 1990, p. 7).

¹¹⁷ See Samuel: 'Introduction' (Samuel & Thompson, 1990, p. 9).

¹¹⁸ See Han: *Love is a Many Splendored Thing*, (Han, 1952), Lanchester: *Fragrant Harbour*, (Lanchester, 2002), Mason: *The World of Suzie Wong*, (Mason, 1957), and Peneff: 'Myths in Life Stories,' (Peneff, 1990, p. 42)

¹¹⁹ For example, one informant wanted to talk about her cats, another began a description of the origins of the Sindi community in Hong Kong.

¹²⁰ One of my informants who had come to Hong Kong as a very privileged teenager, married and remained in Hong Kong. When she asked who my husband worked for I told her and she immediately replied 'Oh, an engineer...'

¹²¹ See Samuel: 'Introduction,' (Samuel & Thompson, 1990, p. 15).

¹²² See Samuel: 'Introduction,' (Samuel & Thompson, 1990, p. 17).

¹²³ See Williamson: *Decoding Advertisements: ideology and meaning in Advertising*, (Williamson, 1978, p. 179).

¹²⁴ See Winship: *Inside Women's Magazines*, (Winship, 1987), and McCracken: *Decoding women's magazines: from Mademoiselle to Ms.*, (McCracken, 1993, p. 172).

¹²⁵ See McCracken: *Decoding women's magazines: from Mademoiselle to Ms.*, (McCracken, 1993, p. 229).

¹²⁶ See Wernick: *Promotional Culture: advertising, ideology, and symbolic expression*, (Wernick, 1991, p. 31).

¹²⁷ See Jobling: *Fashion Spreads: Word and Image in Fashion Photography Since 1980*, (Jobling, 1999, p. 2).

¹²⁸ See Jobling: *Fashion Spreads: Word and Image in Fashion Photography Since 1980*, (Jobling, 1999, p. 12).

¹²⁹ See Taylor: *The Study of Dress History*, (Taylor, 2002, p. 163).

¹³⁰ See Wernick: *Promotional Culture: advertising, ideology, and symbolic expression*, (Wernick, 1991, p. 181)

¹³¹ See Moeran: *Ethnography at Work*, (Moeran, 2006).

¹³² See Skov and Moeran: *Women, Media and Consumption in Japan*, (Moeran & Skov, 1995, pp. 52, 68)

¹³³ See Nowell-Smith: *How films mean or, from aesthetics to semiotics and half-way back again*, (Nowell-Smith, 2000, p. 16).

¹³⁴ See Phillips: *Film: an introduction*, (W. H. Phillips, 1999, p. 414).

¹³⁵ See Phillips: *Film: an introduction*, (W. H. Phillips, 1999, pp. 268-9).

¹³⁶ Examples might have included wearing white tights, knotting a small scarf around one's throat (both past office-lady fashions), or carrying a designer-name handbag (the aspiration of almost all female Hong Kong residents).

¹³⁷ See Niessen: *Re-Orienting Fashion: The globalisation of Asian Dress*, (Niessen, Leshkovich, & Jones, 2003).

¹³⁸ See Wilson: 'Commodified Craft, Creative Community; Women's Vernacular Dress in Nineteenth Century Philadelphia,' (K. E. Wilson, 1999).

¹³⁹ Expatriates generally retired overseas.

¹⁴⁰ Notably the 1989 student uprising in Tiananmen Square.

¹⁴¹ See Morris: *Hong Kong: an Epilogue to an Empire*, (J. Morris, 2000, p. 274). Expatriate businessman and author, Joop Litmaath implies that this was not so in his description of visiting the Canton Fair: '... most travellers from Hong Kong would visit the Guangzhou (Canton) Trade Fair for a whole month (either from April 15 to May 15 or from October 15 to November 15), the Customs authorities at the Chinese entry point allowed only one bottle of alcoholic drink per person.' And: 'The first ever Guangzhou Fair was held in 1957...' See Litmaath: *Far East of Amsterdam*, (Litmaath, 2003, pp. 24 – 25).

¹⁴² i.e. the fashion system, social location, class, income, gender, ethnicity, region, occupation, and the structure of dress in everyday life.

Chapter 2. Production: manufacture and design; and tailoring

'Hong Kong is [the] Italy of today.'¹

My informant, a British C.E.O. whose company supplied top-end merchandise to Europe and the United States of America, remains a huge enthusiast for the Hong Kong fashion industry and its potential.

This chapter focuses on the fashion manufacturing industry by examining the economic history of Hong Kong as a colony of the British Empire (and part of the Commonwealth) and climate as the context for the experiences of Expatriate Western women. Two summaries follow: one of Hong Kong residents, and specifically the position of women, including expatriate Westerners within the community and the other on the rise of Hong Kong's prosperity.

The major part of this chapter is a chronological history of the fashion industry including the use of child labour, distribution, and other related industries. In this chapter I recognize the vital role that the garment industry (including tailoring, factory shops, and markets dependent on proximity to the garment industry) played in contributing to the variety of alternative fashion choices available to expatriate Western women, offering the opportunity to supplement their wardrobes which retail stores could not. Hong Kong-wide investment in the fashion industry underlined its financial importance: it was a significant employer of expatriate Western women and provided the context for their experiences of living in Hong Kong.

Hong Kong: a political history

Hong Kong has been self-financing during much of that its colonial history. Welsh quotes Nigel Fisher, then Under Secretary to the British Colonial Secretary, discussing the possible imposition of textiles quotas in 1963: 'Hong Kong might not be a showcase for democracy in the East... but Britain could be proud of her remarkable colony. Its colony is a success story if ever there was one,' alluding to Hong Kong's exceptional lack of financial dependence.² Writer James Pope-Hennessy describes how Hong Kong companies' initial prosperity was later based on legitimate trades.³ Morris describes Hong Kong: 'Pictures of the Queen ornament offices, the Queen's birthday garden party is one of the social events of

the year, the Yacht Club, the Golf Club, the Police force all enjoy the prefix royal.⁴ Only as an afterthought were attempts made to ensure political, social, and economic wellbeing of residents when the expiration of the 1897 New Territories lease in 1997 became imminent. The agreement between Britain and China shadowed the period of research from 1960 to the period of the Handover in June 1997: the British agreed to withdraw from Hong Kong island and the New Territories, and the Chinese agreed to create a Special Autonomous Region in which Hong Kong law would continue to operate for a further fifty years until the two melded in to one. The citizens of Hong Kong played no part in determining their future.⁵

The structure of Legco (the Governor and the fourteen ministers of the Executive Council that formed the government) fostered a calculating society, Morris notes:

‘Little in Hong Kong is very funny – this must be one of the most calculating and deliberate societies on earth. The degree of Legco’s power, like its ration of democratic system, has been most carefully estimated and controlled, set against the unique circumstances of Hong Kong, and released or restrained as an engineer controls a steam valve.’⁶

This was in part due to the work of Sir John Cowperwhaite, Financial Secretary from 1961 to 1971. Welsh describes him as having ‘virtually complete control’ of the colony’s finances’ in pursuing a policy of ‘positive non intervention’ in the tradition of Gladstone or John Stuart Mill.⁷ He summarizes Cowperwhaite’s achievements quoting the *Hong Kong Annual Review* of 1971:

‘With the most minimal restraints on maximizing profits, continual low taxation and rigid control of public expenditure, Hong Kong, in spite of the continuing embargo on trade between China and the U.S.A. became a ‘Gladstonian Paradise’ and ‘a living laboratory in which to observe market place competition. In the Cowperwhaite decade real wages rose by 50 per cent after allowance for inflation, and the percentage of households with incomes of less than \$400 per month (which could be regarded as fairly acute poverty) fell from well over 50 per cent to 16 per cent. In spite of a scare in 1965, when a number of small banks failed, with consequent frustrations and disappointment, it could be said that, from an impoverished colony struggling to cope with an influx of refugees, Hong Kong had become a stable and increasingly affluent society comparable with the developed world in nearly every way.’⁸

Subsequent critics suggested that this policy persisted. Academic Lawrence Mills, writing on 'Industry and Trade' notes what he calls: 'Hong Kong's Draconian and Darwinian approach to business. Essentially the government's policy is to have no policy when it comes to what industry should make: manufacturers are left to make their own mistakes without help from the government.'⁹ John Flowerdew an academic working in Hong Kong, suggests that this *laissez-faire* policy was the basis of Thatcher's economic policy for Britain and quoting his 1992 policy speech, was continued by Chris Patten, the last governor:

'Our prescription for prosperity is straight forward. We believe that businessmen and not politicians or officials make the best commercial decisions. We believe that low and predictable taxes are the best form of investment incentive. We believe that government spending must follow, not outpace, economic growth. We believe in competition within a sound, fair framework of regulation and law.'¹⁰

By the mid-1980s China became, and remained, Hong Kong's largest trading partner and by the late-1980s Hong Kong and China's external trade figures mirrored each other accounting for nearly one third of the other's trade.¹¹ This 'Berlin of East Asia,' as travel writer Gene Gleason described Hong Kong, could no longer remain a colony in view of changing attitudes towards colonialism and economic changes within China.¹² Early negotiations, in which the British and the Chinese attempted to determine Hong Kong's future given that it would be incapable of maintaining its independence from China without the New Territories, began in the 1990s.¹³ Morris explains:

'Its imperial functions are vestigial, and in many ways it is hardly a colony at all. It is virtually autonomous in its internal affairs. Its currency is pegged to the U.S. dollar, not the British pound, and its prosperity benefits the British economy only in the most indirect way, through the prosperity of British-owned companies. Strategically it means nothing to the British, diplomatically it has lately been a burden, industrially it is often in direct competition with Britain's own industries. The ideal of *civis britannicus sum* has long since gone by the board in the easternmost possession – successive parliamentary acts in London have ensured that very few citizens of Hong Kong are qualified to possess full British passports, or have the right to settle in Britain itself.'¹⁴

As a consequence of its relationships with the rest of the world, self-determination in all aspects of life in Hong Kong was well established by the end of the colonial period.

Climate

It is important to understand the climate of Hong Kong in order to contextualize informants' experiences. Hong Kong is located slightly south of the Tropic of Cancer, and enjoys a varied climate depending on the wind direction. Summer temperatures are a little above thirty degrees Centigrade and relatively humid:

December	relative humidity 70%
July	relative humidity 83% ¹⁵

Humidity levels affect drying and storing clothes, fibre and fabric choices: acrylic feels uncomfortably clammy, and linen, especially if loosely woven, becomes limp and floppy. Pope-Hennessy noted residents living on The Peak kept clothes, linens and shoes in 'hot cupboards' in an attempt to stop the damp white mist from destroying them.¹⁶ Ommanney, describes the heat and humidity of Hong Kong before air-conditioning became prevalent in the late 1970s:

'I did not come the East until I was nearly fifty, which they, whoever 'they' may be, say is much too late. I am inclined to think that they are right in this case, for at that age it is difficult to get used to the heat, to the constant stickiness and to the disconcerting mistimed drip of sweat. At critical moments it drips on to the paper as you write, on to the cheque you are signing, on to the goods you are examining in a shop, into the drink you are lifting to your lips. It trickles warmly, like the tip of a feather running down your side, under the evening shirt into which you have just labouriously changed.'¹⁷

Gleason records the consequences of the climate:

'In the popular mind it [Hong Kong] was associated with such disagreeable phenomena as rainstorms, typhoons, floods, pirates, malaria, bubonic plague, squalor...'¹⁸

More recently, Lanchester describes the immediate impact of the humidity on the principal character, a Westerner, in his novel *Fragrant Harbour*: 'We got off the plane comfortably before the proles at the back of the 747. The air was close. It was

hot but more than that it was lethally muggy and humid. It was as if your whole body was wrapped in warm, wet muslin.¹⁹

In Hong Kong the temperatures drop from just above 30° Centigrade to occasionally, zero during the winter months but more usually 10° Centigrade. For a community accustomed to high temperatures, living in un-heated accommodation designed to be comfortable in hot weather, a drop of up to twelve degrees Centigrade within a 24-hour period, as sometimes occurred at the autumn equinox, was shocking, an English schoolteacher and long-term resident in her 40s explained:

‘...it’s not [the actual temperature] but when the temperatures drop from being quite high and then go down to about six or seven you notice it. People might say “Oh, that’s not very cold” but when you are used to it being very high, you do notice it. I don’t know if they still do it, but in the old days when the temperature dropped they used to all go out to see the frosts on the mountain [Tai Mo Shan].’²⁰

The autumn, the driest period of the year, marked by falling temperatures and declining humidity, enabled lightweight winter fashions to be worn. The coldest part of the year coincided with Chinese New Year at the end of January or early February. This was followed by a wet, cold, yet humid spring period, before the temperatures rose again in late April, reaching their maximum in July and August.²¹

Population

In the 1960s the population of Hong Kong comprised of four major groups: a local, majority Cantonese population whose numbers were swelled by more than a million in the post-war period in an exodus from Communist China; a much smaller group of British residents (born in Hong Kong) and Western expatriates, including Western families who came from Shanghai in the post-war period, a long-established Indian population, and a large number of European or Eurasian Meeanee.²² As Hong Kong became more cosmopolitan the population was composed of a wider number of ethnic groups and nationalities: the majority Cantonese population, ‘mainlanders’ (from parts of The People’s Republic of China), Taiwanese, Filipinos, Indians, Western expatriates (drawn largely from the United States of America, Great Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Australia, and New Zealand), together with large numbers of ethnic-Cantonese

who were born, or were partly-educated, overseas and small numbers of nationals from South and Southeast Asia.²³ The substantial Meeanee population were absorbed in to either the European or Chinese communities.²⁴ These groups existed peaceably alongside each other throughout the duration of the colony.²⁵ One of the expatriates interviewed by May Holdsworth and Caroline Courtauld, an Asian-based journalist and a film producer, in their book on expatriates explains that Hong Kong is a state of mind. Hong Kong was home only for one generation of the off-spring of post-war Chinese immigrants, but would be a region of China for the next generation.²⁶

By the late 1980s, expatriate Westerners in Hong Kong had changed.²⁷ Holdsworth comments: 'The image conjured up of second raters living in (undeserved) luxury recalls the traditional practice by the British families of shunting their black sheep or younger sons off to make their mischief and their fortunes in the colonies.'²⁸ The development of Deng Xiaoping's 'Open Door' policy drew a new group of expatriates to Hong Kong. Holdsworth summarises:

'..it was the unveiling of this open door policy in 1978 that allowed Hong Kong to reinvent itself as a service and financial centre for China and the rest of the region. Spectacularly rich rewards attended this conversion, and, as the territory boomed, more multinational business set up shop here. What ensued was pivotal: yuppies arrived on the scene, a different breed of expatriates - not serving the Empire or lording it in the traditional hong, but a transient army of mercenaries, drawn by opportunism and the prospect of deals, and ready to spend the money and bonuses they earned on enjoying themselves.

Hong Kong was quick to accommodate these new consumers, and in doing so began to acquire a sophistication and gloss in the popular perception just at the point when independent travel became a mandatory rite of passage for middle-class students in the Western world, and South East Asia replaced India as the backpackers Nirvana. No longer was the city the sinkhole of the East, the place where you could mingle with the demi-monde of the likes of Suzie Wong and buy a twenty-four-hour-tailored suit that fell apart in twenty four days. Its attractions became more diverse and generic - in tropical Asia, Hong Kong was the city most similar to London, Sydney, or New York. It was where communications were reliable and things worked; for visitors it was a welcome antidote to the disorder and backwardness of the rest of the region.'

And so more people came - travellers and backpackers who stopped off for a temporary job to replenish their dwindling cash or a break before tackling more arduous destinations in their Lonely Planet guides. They arrived with none of the social preconceptions of their predecessors. Actually they even introduced a touch of

bohemianism, for they didn't think it was letting the expatriate side down if they went around on the local buses or served drinks in a Tsim Sha Tsui bar.

But a film club showing classic movies in a school hall emphatically wasn't their style. And so they imposed their own, aided and abetted by overseas Chinese and returnees, the sons and daughters of locals who had acquired their university degrees and Western tastes in London or Los Angeles, and were as dedicated to pursuing fun as their expatriate counterparts.²⁹

Another Holdsworth informant, Australian finance lawyer Deborah Glass describes this new group of expatriates who settled in Hong Kong in the later part of the period of study:

'Everyone was just passing through. Expats were all on short term contracts, even the ones who'd been there for twenty years. Even the locals seemed to be passing through, on their way to Canada or Australia. People were always coming or going, and that meant they did not have fixed closed social groups but were willing to open up to the latest 'FOBs' - those 'fresh off the boat.'³⁰

The removal of student protesters from Tiananmen Square by Chinese government forces on July 4th 1989 provoked mass demonstrations in Hong Kong and an annual, candle-lit vigil thereafter.³¹ Prosaically, large numbers of Hong Kong passport holders relocated to countries which offered them, usually after three years, a passport and residency should they decide, unnerved by the Chinese government, to leave Hong Kong permanently (see poster at the end of this chapter).³² Morris records:

'Many of Hong Kong's brightest citizens had already decided, in fact to leave the colony. Chinese plutocrats had long banked money in other countries, bought houses, arranged passports and visa, and taken precautions against ill-fortune that enough cash could buy. Now less affluent Chinese, too, were finding their way to Canada, Australia or the United States – in 1988 alone, it was estimated, some 50,000 went.'³³

Most returned to Hong Kong after obtaining an overseas passport and became part of the globalised community of the 1990s. This mixed community of transient nationals resident in a city described by the Hong Kong Tourist Association in its U.S. advertising as 'New York with Mountains.'

Women in Hong Kong

In the early 1960s there were no senior women in the government, and very few in business. By the end of the period this had changed as increasing education standards enabled more women to obtain better jobs.³⁴ Amongst others, politician Anson Chan dressed in distinctively bright, simply constructed suits (rather like a colourful version of Jackie Kennedy), her hair and dress emulated by female Asian professionals. As industrial employment declined towards the end of the period, fewer local women continued to earn the relatively high salaries that were available in manufacturing: many ceased work or accepted unskilled service-sector employment.³⁵

The social milieu of the late 1960s of the relatively small expatriate community was somewhat prudish and too small to offer anonymity.³⁶ For many local men it was not uncommon during the 1960s and 70s to have a second wife, or concubine (see photograph of the Mok-Lau wedding at the end of this chapter, this high-society family was famous for their adherence to this Chinese tradition). The prevalence of Chinese mistresses kept by unmarried Western men (who would otherwise have lived on the Hong Kong-side of the harbour, crossed only by the Star Ferry or a car ferry at that time) was revealed in the polite social enquiry of the 1960s: 'Are you married or do you live in Kowloon?'³⁷ Hong Kong's founding fashion entrepreneur Margaret Tancock, attributed part of her success to her gender, claiming that it was easier for her to obtain what she wanted as a female in a largely male business community, than it would have been as a male.³⁸ Dated social manners such as assuming expatriate Western women were the 'trailing spouse' shocked informants like this Australian woman when, after her arrival in the late-1970s, the first question she was asked on being introduced at a University social event was 'What does your husband do?'³⁹ At the end of the 1990s the Territory remained a small community where many single expatriate Western women had successful careers, but found it difficult to find suitable expatriate boyfriends of the few Western men who did not have local girlfriends.⁴⁰

Social prosperity in Hong Kong

Hong Kong's commercial success can be attributed to post-war Shanghainese entrepreneurs, many of which opened prosperous businesses in textiles as Wong

records.⁴¹ Consequently, the Shanghainese in Hong Kong were accredited with taste, and emulated by the Cantonese. The impact of rapid industrialisation and the emergence of a knowledge-based industries on the fortunes of many residents together with their changing outlook, combined to create an unusually wealthy population. Mathews records the change from a developing economy in 1960 to a per capita purchasing power similar to that of Japan and eighty per cent of that of the United States in 1997.⁴² He records the impact the possibility of wealth and consumption had on the community where it was seen, without criticism as a positive thing.⁴³ Hong Kong revered and emulated Japan (the most profitable country in Asia) in areas such as economic development, fashions, pop-music, food, television shows, and movies.

The Peg (which aligned the Hong Kong dollar to the U.S. dollar) provided financial security to the people of Hong Kong.⁴⁴ The C.E.O. of a top-end brand whose Chinese wife was born and raised in Hong Kong, explained:

'I grew up with rationing and all sorts of stuff like that, and my parents all came back from the war and [that was] all they ever talked about at their cocktail parties and stuff like that, and every cocktail party I can remember, there was always somebody with one leg or one arm, and that was the way it was. For the Hong Kong Chinese: they all grew up in resettlement estates. My wife, who is 41, grew up in a Resettlement estate, and what they want - if you had grown up in a Resettlement estate you would want - as much Gucci, Prada, Rolex, and Mercedes as you could possibly get your hands on to put between you and that [memory].'⁴⁵

This observation accounts for some of the excesses of local celebrities.⁴⁶

Lanchester summarizes the social context of Hong Kong in the late 1990s in the words of his journalist protagonist:

'...some well wisher or other would ask whether I had 'settled in yet,' or how long had it taken me to 'settle in.' Even by local small-talk standards it was a stupid question. What would it mean, for an expat on the make (i.e. any expat) to have settled in Hong Kong? It's not a 'settle in' kind of place. I have felt a near continuous mixture of exhilaration, panic, culture shock, and alienation, mixed in with another, perhaps deeper, feeling of being finally at home. Money was all that mattered. In the decade I worked in UK journalism, there was a huge amount of talk about materialism in Britain - all that guff about Thatcher having said there was no such thing as society. Well, I have lived in Hong Kong for a few years now, and I can tell you that every single word

about materialism in the U.K. is bullshit. The whole country is a Franciscan monastery compared with Hong Kong. ... Money is a typhoon, and Britain has so far felt only its first breath.⁴⁷

Locals and expatriates formed a community whose efforts were well rewarded. For some money provided a buffer distancing them from remembered privations, and for others including expatriates, the opportunity to enjoy a very different life from the one they were born in to.

The industrial development of the textiles and fashion industries in Hong Kong

Given Hong Kong's trade and craft beginnings, its development as a major textiles and fashion manufacturing centre employing many expatriate Westerners by the 1960s seemed unlikely. Szeto depicts the elaborate dress and accessories supplied by the pre-industrial trades and crafts Hong Kong's of several ethnic groups. For most of its existence Hong Kong was a centre for comprador activities, trading goods between China and Hong Kong's overseas partners.⁴⁸ Trades and industries servicing Hong Kong's businesses included shipbuilding, repair and supply, banking, and insurance. When the trade embargo was imposed in the early 1950s, Gleason records: 'the whole economy of the colony came crashing down with it.'⁴⁹ The Hong Kong market was too small and its people too poor to support its own industries.⁵⁰ Hong Kong had few natural resources, a limited water supply, and suitable land for factories was scarce and expensive (see photograph of development of Kwun Tong). However, the government was stable, the Territory had a large influx of labour and capital from pre-communist China; its banking, shipping, and insurance services were efficient; it had a sheltered, deep-water harbour advantageous for industrial development; and the local population had a cultural work ethic. Whilst most European companies worked an eight-hour day, six-day week, some Chinese companies worked an eleven-hour day. Morris describes manufacturing premises of the 1950s and 1960s:

'Hong Kong industries then were often Dickensian: sweatshop workers labouring terrible hours for miserable wages, small children assembling toys or picking at fabrics, makeshift machinery improperly protected, squalid conditions, ruthless methods, fantastic production levels and enormous profits.'⁵¹

Refugees provided a labour force for British, American, and Hong Kong enterprises producing merchandise for export in small crowded factories.⁵²

Ommanney likened conditions to Britain's industrialization with low wages, long hours, no welfare state, and relentless poverty.⁵³

Without government intervention, the Hong Kong economy provided what the world demanded, and as a consequence was vulnerable to fluctuations of the marketplace. Early products included wigs, and plastic flowers as well as textiles, (see pictures at the end of this chapter).⁵⁴ Shirlee Edelstein, editor of the Hong Kong expatriate handbook *Living in Hong Kong*, describes the plastic flower-making industry as so prevalent that the pressed-out scrap parts of the plastic flowers, assembled by Hoklo women who lived on boats, littered many beaches.⁵⁵ Pollution was common: dying and bleaching industries caused local rivers to run varying colours depending on the colour being dyed, but were eventually restricted due to limited water supplies and location difficulties.⁵⁶ The wig-making industry (see photograph of a young Hong Kong woman constructing a wig) illustrates the consequences of economic fluctuation: during the production boom it expanded from several thousand employees in the late 1960s, to a peak of 478 factories in 1970 employing 39,000 women. By June 1973, it had declined, as its Western fashion appeal declined, to 160 factories employing fewer than 8,000 workers.⁵⁷ This ability of Hong Kong industry to capitalise on global market needs was due in part to weak unions and limited employee protection.⁵⁸

The consequence of the U.S. trade embargo resulted in an explosion of industrial activity as rapid industrialization and a search for new export markets followed.⁵⁹ Gleason and Endacott document the large numbers of immigrants from mainland China who fled to Hong Kong to reside in the growing slums of the period.⁶⁰ Colonial historian Margery Perham records the reaction of the Hong Kong government (and thereby, the British government), at the prospect of remedying poor social conditions:

'Hong Kong existed for trade: full social services meant heavy taxation and if trade were heavily taxed it would go elsewhere. The Chinese labourers came to get good money in conditions of freedom and safety: to tax or nag these labourers beyond an essential minimum would make the Colony unattractive to them. As one of the British officials said in Council, the choice in Hong Kong was between wealth or health.'⁶¹

Social welfare remained a limited option, fostering acceptance that individuals thrive best when dependent on their own efforts.⁶²

Production in the 1960s

By the 1960s industrialisation was commonplace and companies were prospering (see pictures of factories at the end of the chapter). Gleason describes the 1960 output of one of the larger enterprises, the South Sea Textile Manufacturing Co., with 45,000 spindles and nine hundred looms based in a nine-acre factory founded in 1948 in Tsuen Wan:

‘The spindles and looms, imported from Japan, England, Switzerland and the United States, are the finest obtainable. Much of the carding combing, and sizing machinery is fully automatic, tended by Chinese girls in their early twenties. Some of the girls appear to be prematurely grey, but it’s nothing more than loose cotton that has settled on their black hair; all wear breathing masks to protect their lungs from floating cotton. Every phase of the operation is under strict quality control, preserving the uniform diameter of the yarn and testing its tensile strength.’⁶³

My informant, the C.E.O. of a British-based Cut, Make, Trim, (C.M.T.) manufacturer supplying the High Street market regretted the demise of this company that produced high quality knitted cotton.⁶⁴

Keeping the machines in continuous use prevented machinery rusting in the humid environment and reduced proportional overhead costs.⁶⁵ Spinning factories also wove cloth producing basic fabrics including: khaki, cottons, corduroys, polyester/cotton, and acrylic/cotton mixes (see pictures at the end of this chapter). With local sales based on credit rather than letter of credit, small local C.M.T. factories were able to purchase, make, and sell merchandise before paying for their raw materials, effectively using the large fabric spinners to part finance their production costs.⁶⁶ Innovations in the early 1970s included: open-spinning of cotton replacing slower ring-spinning to produce a finer, even yarn, and The Hong Kong Spinners Association, founded in 1955, in part to train future employees.⁶⁷ The effects of the embargo continued to be felt on trade figures until 1960 but the Territory avoided imminent poverty to become: ‘bigger as a manufacturer than it

ever had been as a trader.⁶⁸ By 1961 nearly half Hong Kong employees were concentrated in the textiles and garment industries.⁶⁹

Nevertheless, the impact of the Korean trade embargo was severe. Hollywood film star, William Holden, whose most famous role opposite Nancy Kwan in *'The World of Suzie Wong'*, linked him to Hong Kong in the minds of the American public, presented a documentary film *'Report on Hong Kong,'* a plea to the American public to insist that their government lift the trade embargo, in order to improve the quality of the host community's lives.⁷⁰ Holden explains how the Comprehensive Certificate of Origin enabled legal Hong Kong exports to be distinguished from illegal Chinese exports.⁷¹ The effect of the ban on light industry with its low wage levels, and thus most Hong Kong residents' quality of life, was calculated as being ineffable⁷². Gleason claimed local traders chose 'to apply or not for the colony's Commerce and Industry Department for the right to issue Comprehensive Certificates of Origin, because it involves so much paperwork, red tape, and delay that the shops would just as soon skip the American market and concentrate on the British and others who can but do without these pesky certificates.'⁷³

Although wages were disproportionately low in comparison to the labour costs of the countries to which merchandise was destined in the early 1960s, Gleason suggests they were in keeping with the cost of living, food, and transport:

'There is no minimum wage. Most workers are paid by the day or on a piecework basis. Normal daily wages of industrial workers are [U.S.] 50cents to \$1.30 for the unskilled, \$1.20 to \$1.70 for semi-skilled, and \$1.30 to \$3.50 for skilled men. Women get 30% less than men. Overtime is at time and a quarter or time and a half, with latter prevalent. Incentive pay is given for good performance and attendance. Some companies provide free or subsidized food to compensate workers for cost of living jumps. A bonus of one months wages is paid by many companies just before the Chinese New Year.'⁷⁴

These figures may be taken as optimum as an informant employed in a knitting factory recollected that overtime was worked at the same rate as 8am to 6pm employment.⁷⁵

The C.E.O. of a top-end brand explained quality workmanship combined with relatively low labour costs offered enticing opportunities for the garment construction industry:

'I first went out in 1969, and this company grew on the back of the conclusions that were drawn as a result of that trip. Those conclusions were that everybody else was using Hong Kong in entirely the wrong way: they were using it as a source of cheap production, whereas actually what they should have been doing was using it as a source of very high-quality production because [of the] manufacturing techniques there. They didn't have the techniques, what they had was very high quality, very inexpensive labour. And what was destroying the European garment manufacturing was the need to mechanize it, and the early stages of mechanized mass production eliminated all the handwork, the crafts, the skills, the things that really make a garment very special.'⁷⁶

He explained the potential that he saw in Hong Kong in the late 1960s: .

'...like everybody else I needed some very, very cheap merchandise and I couldn't protect my margins in this country [England]. I went out there when I was about twenty-five, twenty-six, and I already had a very solid ten years training in garment manufacturing [his parents ran a knitwear factory in Leicester] whereas all the other people going out there were either retail buyers or wholesale buyers, who were merchants and traders. So when they went out there they saw, say, a sweater that at home would cost £5 available at £1.50. When I went out there I saw a sweater made in shitty yarn that was linked and made on a hand frame, and of course, [on] a hand frame you could make a much better garment than you can on an automatic machine. So, as a manufacturer I saw that I could do all the things in Hong Kong that I couldn't [do], that I had had to engineer-out of the process, in this country.'⁷⁷

The cost saving financed the brand name marketing budgets of designer names that developed shortly afterwards.⁷⁸

Hong Kong's many tailoring shops run by residents originally from Shanghai, Hong Kong, or India (including Mohan and the Harilela families), also employed inexpensive labour: by the late 1960s production was estimated to be 40,000 suits per annum, with as many as 50% of tourists commissioning a suit during their visit from one of the two hundred tailor's shops catering to tourists, of a total of one thousand-plus tailor's shops in the Territory.⁷⁹ Local customers accounted for only 3% of the suit business.⁸⁰ Despite their more glamorous reputation, the distinction between Shanghainese tailors (see photograph of Ambassador Fashions), and Cantonese tailors relied on the formers' better understanding of customers' styling needs, communication, and their preference for hand rather than machine sewing.⁸¹ Hong Kong had a reputation for completing a suit in 24-hours at very low cost: in practice each tailor worked on between eight and thirty suits at any one time

depending on the time of the year specializing (as did British tailors) in jackets, or waistcoats and trousers.⁸² Gleason examines the myth of the 24-hour suit in the 1960s:

‘How did this poppycock originate? I have a tentative hypothesis, based on close observation of Hong Kong tailors. They are publicity hounds, ever eager to have their suits worn by actors, press agents and other kinds of walking clothes-horses who will serve to advertise their shop. These clients receive their suits either free of charge or at drastic discounts, in return for which the tailor expects them to behave in their normal fashion, that is, boast loudly and endlessly about their attire – As they do about everything else they possess. A Chinese tailor can size up his clients at least as expertly as he fits a suit, and he knows he can count on the special-discount chaps to exaggerate the merits of his suits and understate their prices to make themselves look good. For his own protection he knocks himself out, disrupts the entire shop if need be, to give a motion picture actor a perfect fit in the shortest possible time. He thus obtains the services of a talking clothes-dummy, which is much cheaper than buying a printed advertisement in a newspaper or travel magazine.’⁸³

Nevertheless on average, suits were completed in three days costing slightly less for a ready-made suit of the same materials than in the U.S. in 1963.⁸⁴ If the customer was able to monitor quality and bargain reducing the price to 80–95% of the initial quote, shirts were very good value. Gleason adds a warning to check the quality of the cloth.

Trade and distribution

Trade associations and government-funded bodies promoting Hong Kong merchandise were listed in *Living in Hong Kong*, produced annually from 1969 by The American Chamber of Commerce (AmCham), and designed to promote reciprocal trade.⁸⁵ Hong Kong’s location encouraged industry: positioned further east than the ‘hippy trail’ to India of the 1960s, distance was an obstacle to travel.⁸⁶ Visitors were occasional unless on private or government business.⁸⁷ Kai Tak airport, infamously located in the centre of the city with an approach and take-off route directly over the roofs of thousands of homes, opened in 1958. Trade with London, seven-thousand-plus miles west, even in the late 1960s consisted of a series of flights in order to refuel and the eleven-thousand-plus mile journey to New York was for many years impossible to complete by the Great Circle route

due to aviation limitations.⁸⁸ Distribution by sea took six weeks therefore merchandise sometimes took up to three months to reach its final destination eliminating the use of Hong Kong production for fashionable garments, and encouraging manufacturers to rely on basic-clothing production.⁸⁹ In practice British-based wholesalers who held stock, ordered merchandise for the next season before they had finished selling the previous season's merchandise, which was a risky practise.⁹⁰

Production and Child Labour in the 1970s

Many newly arrived Chinese attempted to perpetuate hierarchical family relationships in Hong Kong's rapidly modernising community as research collected in the early 1970s by sociologist Janet Salaff explains.⁹¹ Having failed to perpetuate traditional alliance, kinship, and family bonds, they instead created street, neighbourhood, and other alliances. A low wage earner could not support his entire family without the assistance of a working daughter (who worked from on average thirteen years), and whose first jobs were dependant on those alliances. Historian, David Faure records children working as outworkers in their own homes, and an informant who grew up during this period remembered older children pushing dim-sum carts in restaurants.⁹² Salaff notes that the birth rate dropped quickly as industrialisation continued, producing large numbers of young local women who remained unmarried as family structures increasingly resembled those of the West.⁹³ As the eldest son remained in the family, whereas daughters customarily 'married out,' it was in a Chinese family's interests to continue to educate their son for as long as possible so that he might obtain a better position, in order to keep the family in the future.⁹⁴ Once married, a daughter's earnings would go to her husband's family providing little incentive to educate daughters.⁹⁵

Nearly 50% of the labour force (of which 50% was female), were employed in factories in the early 1970s.⁹⁶ Women were assumed to be indifferent to long-term job security and were employed in industries subject to greatest overseas fluctuation including: textiles, garments, shoes, plastics, metal-ware, electrical appliances, and electronics.⁹⁷ British politicians anxious to protect their own industries and impose restrictions on Hong Kong's growing exports used child labour as evidence of inhuman factory conditions.⁹⁸ Potentially adverse publicity and resulting commercial damage from the practice of employing young girls in

Hong Kong factories gave rise to continuing concerns in the international fashion industry generating an industry-wide distaste for sub-contracting; use of out-workers; and rigorous compliance codes for ethical practice in attempts to control production practices. Describing factory conditions in Southeast Asia in the early 1970s, the C.E.O. of a top-end brand described a system of what seemed to him to be double moral standards, in that countries with other abusive systems (i.e. sex industry workers, or forced overtime) were not penalised by Western importers.⁹⁹

All informants interviewed denied seeing examples of child labour, although many agreed there were young-looking employees in factories. Nevertheless, academic author Sek-Hong Ng records 124 cases of child employment were brought before the courts in 1988 alone (see photographs of a match factory; a figurine painter; and knitwear machinists; and a denim machinist, all examples of industries which employed young or underage female employees for their manual dexterity).¹⁰⁰ The apprentice system in which an apprentice paid his machinist teacher a sum for two weeks training before graduating to piece-work rates, was later replaced by education at the Polytechnic, the Technical Institutions, and the Clothing Industry Training Board.¹⁰¹ Interestingly, three C.E.O.s interviewed remembered that they had had several employees who, when the time came for them to retire, explained that they were not yet actually of retirement age, and wished to continue to work.¹⁰² It was impossible to verify the age of employees born in mainland China: when they arrived in Hong Kong seeking employment in the 1960s, the temptation for them to suggest that they were older and therefore more experienced, would have been overwhelming. Locking employees in to prevent them from leaving in order to complete an urgent order was commonplace in the 1960s and early 1970s.¹⁰³ The C.E.O. of a lingerie company reflected:

‘I believe those are things that probably happened in the ’60s when the world was bit harder, and I know that in those days people were hiring workers under age. They locked them [in], and forced them to work, and they wouldn’t let them go until they finished the work, but I have not encountered that, especially after the ’70s: things started to look a lot better.’¹⁰⁴

He had also been unfairly treated when he joined the industry, accepting this was part of a system.¹⁰⁵ Unsurprisingly, staff stability became problematic especially during the 1970s when American electronic manufacturing businesses assembling

component parts competed with the garment industry for manually dexterous workers before relocating to green field sites throughout Asia.¹⁰⁶

Fabric and yarn sourcing were critically important for manufacturers. The C.E.O. of a private label knitwear supplier remembered in the early 1970s: 'We could only have certain colours at the very beginning and we had to pick from [one] swatch, those dye stuffs...'¹⁰⁷ Even tailoring fabrics were imported: one German informant then in her 20s recalled having a black trouser suit made in the early 1970s by a French tailor in Gloucester Building (the Landmark) from Pierre Cardin fabric. The suit, which she continued to wear for thirty years after having the bell-bottom flares straightened, bore a Pierre Cardin label.¹⁰⁸

Yarn sourcing was limited, top-end quality was imported from European agents: Oriental Pacific (part of the Hutchison Group), Laidlaw & Fairgrievies, and Dawson who imported Shetland wool producing yarn in Hong Kong, pioneering use of very high-quality raw materials with inexpensive Hong Kong labour. Less expensive wool and acrylic yarns were imported from Taiwan and Korea.¹⁰⁹ Manufacture became more sophisticated as markets became increasingly differentiated.¹¹⁰ The C.E.O. of a top-end brand remembered:

'We started producing the most beautiful silk blouses with French seams, shell buttons, and twin needling using silk thread - stuff like that - we imported Swiss or German interlinings. We didn't use shitty raw material. The biggest hindrance in those days was that the label industry, or the interlinings industry in Italy or Europe was producing for the top end of the market. Out there [in Hong Kong] it was producing for C & A's, Woolworth's, J.C. Penny, and the American mass merchants.'¹¹¹

The former student remembered: '[a]t that time, for striping, you had to have a good memory. Every time: how many courses? And remember to change the yarn.'¹¹² Even garments which were ten-percent plus or minus the specified dimensions would be accepted by the buyer.¹¹³ Considerable variations in colour were acceptable, and metameric colour matching was unpopular when it was introduced.

One means of establishing the quality of a potential supplier has always been to ask who else the manufacturer supplies. The C.E.O. of a top-end brand recalled his experiences in the early 1970s when most companies did not have designers but merely copied what was asked of them:

‘...we developed a product line based on luxury raw materials – silk, cashmere, lambswool, leather, etc. that was the foundation. We added design excellence - which was quite revolutionary. In those days, when I first started, who designed? There was Marc O’ Polo from Sweden. Marc O’ Polo was an inspiration for me because it was the only merchandise I found as I went round the factories that was on the same wave length as I was.’¹¹⁴

The quality of production was sufficiently high that he decided, after four years of partial production in Hong Kong, to transfer the manufacturing base of his company from Leicester/Nottingham, innovating the first Cut-Make-Trim (C.M.T.) production process in Hong Kong bringing in raw materials and distributing them to manufacturers.¹¹⁵

Many fashion professionals sourcing from Hong Kong factories in the early 1970s rarely, if ever, visited factories as wholesalers, importers and agents feared elimination from the supply chain the following season despite the buyers’ residual doubts that the nominated factory was used.¹¹⁶ The knitwear C.E.O. explained she bought from expatriate agents whose Cantonese employees dealt with supplier factories: she did not monitor quality and had little idea where the merchandise made.¹¹⁷ An ex-knitwear factory employee explained rejected merchandise was unravelled and re-knitted (without additional pay) to complete an order.¹¹⁸

Copying was rife and making ‘cabbage’ a normal practice. An embittered expatriate husband and wife team supplying local boutiques in the early 1970s complained:

‘We were doing patchwork leather bags [and leather garments] in 1972. [A Hong Kong boutique] would buy our samples... get them done [at] a third of the price somewhere else. That’s how it was. That’s how it has always been in this town. The garment business is not a nice one in terms of loyalty, and we used to take stuff to factories and they would make us a dozen and make three dozen for themselves [cabbage]. We would go round all the markets and see all our stuff. It was hell: badly made; half the price; just sucking off the ideas.’¹¹⁹

Unsurprisingly, this couple eventually left the fashion business. The knitwear employee explained how he would attempt to copy any interesting knitwear that caught his attention in Hong Kong stores describing it to his clients as a ‘design.’¹²⁰

In the late 1980s still emulation accounted for much 'design' with little or no proactive development on the part of Hong Kong manufacturers or agents.

Factory development and quotas

Multi-storey buildings each containing many factories located in urbanized areas of the New Territories that smelt distinctively of chemical processing, serving centrally located sales and marketing offices.¹²¹ Few spinning mills employed over 2,000 workers (less than 1% of employers): academic Lok Sang Ho reports that even in the late 1980s 'over 93% of all manufacturing establishments continued to be small in scale, employing less than 50 persons.'¹²² With low capitalization these were not 'high-tech,' yet were invaluable to the economy providing much of its resilience and vitality.¹²³ Salaff describes employment in a Mong Kok tenement:

'It was there the two sisters stitched brassieres on sewing machines for domestic retailing by small independent proprietors. The living-room workshop was staffed by at most three sewing machine operators, Sister-in-Law hand-sheared the cotton fabrics to stitching patterns. The flat rate salary of each sister somewhat exceeded the monthly average of piece workers in the colony's garment trade. The pace of toil was less hurried, and working hours were more flexible than in a larger garment factory. When orders were short, or when Sister-In-Law failed to keep ahead of the stitchers, the girls were paid for a full day but were dismissed early.'¹²⁴

In comparison Salaff describes high-quality manufacturing conditions at Triumph, the large West German-owned underwear factory:

'...[the] company set an official maximum wage of \$5 per day. When an experienced worker mastered shortcuts that enabled her to attain this maximum, the management reduced the value of each piece, thereby keeping wages well below the ceiling. Employing a 'scientific management' approach (timing the girl's motions with a stop watch and blueprinting for economy their physical workflow), the foreman often arbitrarily and without notice changed the piece rates. In Wai-gun's [her informant's] words, 'In our factory, employer-worker relations are awful. There is a German woman walking around the room all the time. When she sits in front of you clocking your speed, it makes you really nervous. They also pick 'stones from eggs' and find tiny faults in our work. We pretend not to understand. When they speak to us we pay no attention. If they hand us work to redo, we just put it aside, and make repairs only when the stitching is really poor.'¹²⁵

This situation was not unusual in this and other industries and accounted for the poor standard of some Hong Kong merchandise. An English designer then in her 20s, remembered organising large-scale pre-production runs to determine labour rates for full-scale production in the 1970s.¹²⁶

Hong Kong was experiencing one of the world's most rapid industrial revolutions even though the British House of Commons and newspapers around the world repeatedly anathematised the Hong Kong government for its devotion to *laissez faire*.¹²⁷ The C.E.O. of the lingerie company explained that high levels of production in the 1970s meant jobs were relatively easy to obtain,:

'I think that the workers here [in Hong Kong], [had] an attitude because it was so easy to find jobs. You had really to win them to your side, so to say. If we had some deadline to catch, or I had to accept an order which required a very short turn around time I would go to my workers and just speak to them and say 'Help me and help yourself also in a situation like this. It's not everyday I come and tell you 'Please do this for me, do this for the company but please support me.' And if you are able to speak very clearly with them, they will help you, but if they won't, if they have family obligations: then let them go.'¹²⁸

This enlightened view of employer/employee relations was unusual.

Imposition of the United Kingdom and the United States of America production quotas directly threatened rising textiles production and exports: in 1959 the United States government proposed a voluntary cut in Hong Kong exports, the Hong Kong garment manufacturers' counter proposal was rejected, exports to the United States of America dropped and decline persisted until 1961.¹²⁹ Wong summarizes the details of the quota agreements: the United Kingdom's government's Lancashire Pact (1959 to 1965); the Cotton Textile Arrangement (1962 to 1973); and the Multi-Fibre Arrangement (operational since 1974).¹³⁰ Mr. P.Y. Tang, owner of the South Sea Textile Manufacturing Co. typified the reaction of the Hong Kong Spinners Association to this threat to their industries:

'I just can't see the wisdom of Western powers in restricting Hong Kong textile exports,' he told David Lan, a reporter for the China Mail, a colony daily. We have no hinterland or diversified industries to which refugees may turn from a threatened textile industry.'¹³¹

In the late 1950s British M.P., Earnest Thornton, Labour Member for Farnsworth, Lancashire, whose constituency included British cotton manufacturers, accused Hong Kong textile industrialists of forcing, their employees to work twelve-hour shifts claiming: 'Many mills only allowed two, or even one and a half days off per month, although even these could be worked 'in very exceptional circumstances.'¹³² The Minister, Mr Profumo (see endnote), responded that explained a draft Employment Bill to control working conditions was being prepared by the Hong Kong government. More reasonably Welsh observes: 'the contribution made by investment in modern machinery employed in Hong Kong, at a time when many British manufacturers were refusing to invest in plant and equipment and British banks were reluctant to lend for redevelopment. Hong Kong prosperity might have owed much to exploited workers, but competent banking practices, and a reluctance of government to intervene in business more than absolutely necessary were at least as significant.'¹³³

One C.E.O. described quotas as 'a necessary evil developed between the buying countries and the selling countries,' that increased export prices and became a desirable trade-able commodity as it could usually be resold at a profit.¹³⁴ The quota system perpetuated limited production of garments that attracted no quota or for which there was excess quota, as production of growing merchandise categories relocated elsewhere.¹³⁵ The process of 'submarine-ing' (making the garment in China and 'finishing' it in Hong Kong, so that it could be exported using the Hong Kong quota and not that of China which was in limited supply) grew, nevertheless the government promoted a 'free enterprise philosophy and environment which provides maximum freedom for personal and corporate initiative' in the 1970s and 1980s.¹³⁶ As Edelstein notes in 1979:

'Excellent communications, a superb natural harbour with modern container terminals, a large and productive work force and other factors assure the Colony of its continued reputation as a leading commercial center and manufacturing complex in Asia.'¹³⁷

The C.E.O. of the top-end brand remembered that this proactive attitude to production together with the low labour costs helped Hong Kong manufacturers to supply mass markets as working conditions gradually improved:

'I would go into a man's office and look at whether he had a fish tank [beloved of *feng shui* practitioners]; if it was clean; whether he dressed himself: he didn't have to dress himself in Armani, but was his shirt clean and pressed? Was his tie clean? Did he present himself as a man who cared a lot about his appearance? About his office: was his office clean and tidy? and it was my inevitable experience that people who had untidy offices, cigarettes all over the place, ashes here, there and everywhere, ... didn't have a tidy mind and didn't run good factories.' ... '[A]nd what were their moral principles: ... were they faithful to their wives? ... I always would find out if a guy slept around, if he slept around he would normally be an unfaithful supplier.'¹³⁸

As a methodology for selecting suppliers this was as good as any: reputation, personal recommendation, and previous orders were the only means of determining the quality and reliability of production. It was difficult to determine the size of companies and their ownership especially for infrequent visitors, hence the reliance on British-based agents to safeguard against sub-standard quality and ensure timely delivery.

Production in the late 1970s

By the late 1970s Hong Kong was the world's 'speed-sourcing' capital: whilst most production was of basic merchandise, a few manufacturers like the C.E.O. able to produce top-quality merchandise were supplying the top-end of the market including Brown's, Harvey Nichol's, Henry Bendel's, Macy's, and Sak's.¹³⁹ As a low labour cost centre Hong Kong produced large quantities of labour intensive fur garments, much purchased by American naval personnel who continued to 'R+R' in Hong Kong prior to their return to the United States of America for shore leave (see pictures of James Fong Fur Co., Empress Fur, and International Fur Company stores at the end of this chapter, many other stores of lower quality also competed in this marketplace).¹⁴⁰ Naval personnel purchased a fur coat for their wives and local residents wore fur whenever opportunity permitted.¹⁴¹

The Correctional Services Department (C.S.D.), part of the Civil Service, developed workshops in the late 1970s to provide prisoners with employment, to reduce prison unrest and to provide training. Competing with the garment industry, piece rates were evaluated for the construction of Government-use clothing (mail-bags, prison uniforms, hospital clothing, and police uniforms). The C.S.D. supplied government departments, charging only direct costs to their customers. In

comparison to the peaks and troughs of production in the garment industry, the Department sought to smooth the flow of production by accepting only perennial orders. Merchandise was benchmarked for cost and quality with products sourced on the open market, and the saving the measure by which the C.S.D. industries were evaluated (see photographs of CSD facilities at the end of this chapter).¹⁴²

The British Armed Forces, expatriate Westerners for whom purchasing clothes from retail stores was difficult, fuelled the demand for men's and women's tailoring. One female lawyer then in her 20s, remembered being plied with gin-and-tonics by her tailor in the mid-1970s, presumably to distract her from criticising whilst being fitted for a suit.¹⁴³ Salaff describes the relentless grind of tailoring for local consumption: in a business involving the entire family (see photograph of the complete work force, the whole family in their tailor's shop), two sons slept on the premises locked in by their mother to guard the shop, the Second sister who had completed vocational training, completed the main burden of tailoring work (see picture at the end of this chapter), whilst her mother sub-contracted work to tenement neighbours (button-holing, covering buttons, and hemming). The mother considered her family a reliable source of labour especially during holiday periods (as at Chinese New Year) when wages increased due to increased demand and tailors regularly worked around the clock.¹⁴⁴ Unsurprisingly, Salaff records 'all the Yao children regarded the business as a necessary but stagnant and tedious cul-de-sac, and each cultivated an aspiration for alternative occupations.'¹⁴⁵

A few tailors including Benny Yeung, offered an exclusive bespoke service to women at the top end of the market, but generally men's tailors offered tailoring services to women and one women's tailor also offered to make soft furnishings and upholstery (see pictures of advertisements for tailors' services at the end of this chapter).¹⁴⁶ Tailored results varied enormously: some informants were very pleased with items that they had commissioned, especially items that had been copied from Western designer pieces, others were disappointed by the fabric (an inability for customers' to envisage its draping qualities was problematic), the fit, and the techniques used. Whilst simply tailored garments seemed to be successful, those requiring an unusual cut or precise proportions to achieve a perfect fit were not.

Specialist tailors made the *cheongsam*, daily dress for many local women (see picture of machinist at the end of this chapter).¹⁴⁷ Accessorized with Western accessories, its fabric, colour, pattern, and detailing reflected Western fashions. The

cheongsam tailor was a specialist: this item of ethnic Asian dress most closely resembling Western tailoring was moulded on the body by a series of darts to create a three-dimensional shape, and was usually fully lined. The diagonal opening decorated with piping and *huaniu* (flower-button fastenings), was worked using the diagonal weave of the fabric in much the same way as a tailored jacket.¹⁴⁸ Considered very flattering, it could be made fitted for a young woman, or semi-fitted for a more comfortable fit for an older woman.¹⁴⁹ Dressmakers, sometimes specialising only in one garment (shirts for example), were widely used by expatriate Western women. Results were more successful than men's tailors as female customers could source their own fabrics and dressmakers were more amenable to developing designs and assisting with anything from alterations to fantasy outfits for special occasions.¹⁵⁰

Fashion manufacturing businesses were assisted by the Trade Development Council (T.D.C.) established by the Government in October 1966 and funded by an import-export *ad valorem* surcharge, offering manufacturers advice on colour, weave, and future trends.¹⁵¹ Promotional T.D.C. fashion shows were staged in hotel ballrooms and became popular sometimes not because of the clothes being promoted, but because the audience comprised of members of the mostly unworldly host community could view barely-clad models.¹⁵² By the late 1970s with a permanent display office and representative officers in the United States of America and Europe to promote overseas sales, the T.D.C. promoted local production design with 'Apparel' magazine, and the development of the 'Designer of the Year' competition to promote overseas sales (see photograph of an early T.D.C. promotion in Selfridges department store window).¹⁵³ The T.D.C. promoted added value to manufactured products, which manufacturers slowly accepted and learned to anticipate buyers' requests.¹⁵⁴ The T.D.C. assisted manufacturers in diversifying from denim to new markets as denim merchandise became undercut by developing manufacturers in India and Taiwan.¹⁵⁵ By 1979, America was the largest foreign investor in Hong Kong with its own Textile Committee as a major portion of Hong Kong's textile production was sold to the United States.¹⁵⁶

Production in the 1980s

As most export merchandise was of relatively low value, the 'Made in Hong Kong' label required by law by many importing countries, became synonymous with low

quality. Importing countries exploited customers' emotions to counter inexpensive imports, which undercut local merchandise. An American designer then in her 20s, described 'chills running down her spine,' as she remembered an American campaign which showed ordinary American garment workers describing which part of a pair of jeans they completed: 'I sew the zip,' 'I sew the pockets...' (readers may also remember the 'I'm backing Britain' campaign of the 1960s).¹⁵⁷ She tried to avoid the poor quality association:

'... we had a problem with our things saying at the back [on the garment label] 'Made in Hong Kong.' We tried to think of other ways to hide the words to make it sound better: 'Made in the Crown Colony of Hong Kong.' I had 'Made on Earth by Man,' all sorts of things that I put on the back of the labels, then you turn[ed] it over and it would say 'Made in Hong Kong.'¹⁵⁸

In practice many buyers had little idea where their merchandise was made, the ex-buyer explained: 'As a buyer, I never went to China: the factories were in Hong Kong. It was made in Hong Kong' (see pictures at the end of this chapter).¹⁵⁹ The C.E.O. of the British High Street supplier knew that subcontracting, even unwittingly, would be sufficient pretence for his customers to claim the order was substandard and to refuse to accept the merchandise if initial sales were slow and they wanted to reduce their stock holding.¹⁶⁰ However, intending to import from China for his principal customers, he visited a new purpose-built Chinese factory in the early 1980s:

'They were... just the other side of Shenzhen. I can remember being taken by Mr. Carroll of Carroll's Gloves to his new factory just beyond the industrial zone around Shenzhen. Everything was new [but] they didn't have air-conditioning. And when I asked about the air-conditioning: he didn't say he couldn't afford it [which would have been a loss of face], he said he couldn't get an electricity quota.'¹⁶¹

Again economic necessity and face combine here to obfuscate production: the quality of merchandise that employees were able to achieve was limited by the environment: work with coloured leathers or difficult fabrics (chiffon, fine silks, or silk satin) was rendered impossible by the summer climate, although as the *Tatler* records it was possible (see photograph of the high quality, locally constructed 'Chinese princess' outfit).

Production in the mid 1980s

Hong Kong contained more than 140,00 factories employing workers on piece rates, to English eyes these appeared invisible as there were no factory chimneys, Morris observed: 'it is though all that work is done in secret, hidden away in back streets of the urban mass' (see pictures of factory environments at the end of this chapter).¹⁶² Buyers sourced fabrics through Interstoff agents, used locally spun yarns, or mainland China cotton-based woven fabrics. Low-quality polyesters imported from Japan improved rapidly putting the most desirable fabrics beyond the budget of British High Street buyers.¹⁶³ Synthetic fibres were sourced from Taiwan, which was a source of knitwear production until the late 1980s.¹⁶⁴ Korea specialised in silks. Fabrics were sourced through personal contacts as there was no fabric trade show and some fabrics such as linen, were completely unavailable. Quality fur fabric was available in Korea which made plush toys but not in Hong Kong, which limited production of soft accessories and garment trims.¹⁶⁵ The quality of trimmings and garment accessories (buttons, buckles, studs, zips, and so on), sourced from Sham Shui Po was variable.¹⁶⁶ Other designers besides myself, found it expedient to source in home countries and to ship or fly all component parts to Hong Kong for assembly.¹⁶⁷ Lingerie manufacturers produced their own warp knit fabrics, and accessory manufacturers their own narrow fabrics. The C.E.O. of a lingerie factory supplying international brand names described the process of evolution as fabric technologies developed and replaced older fabrics:

'In those days I saw 'Hollywood silk' (polyester satin)... and then we went into cotton-Lycra. Again the customer said 'We don't need cotton from you: cotton we can get from Turkey,' but we still could supply the niche of doing cotton-Lycra... We made our own cotton-Lycra in those days. Then I saw the new generation of Nylon and I was talking to ICI about Tactel.'¹⁶⁸

The evolution of product described above traces a demand for seasonal improvement driven by chain stores buyers searching for product justification reasons in a competitive and fast changing global retail market. By the mid-1980s new sourcing was increasingly demanded by British retailers driven by the market place to offer new products and added value.¹⁶⁹

Tailoring declined as retail choice increased together with a relative decrease in the cost of international travel enabling expatriates to shop overseas more frequently. Expatriate Western women's ability to predict successful tailoring styles declined (as Maynard similarly records in Australia), as fashion change accelerated and tailoring costs increased.¹⁷⁰ The soft, draped jacket developed by Giorgio Armani was beyond the skills of most Hong Kong tailors who could not source suitable fabrics and resisted changes to their customary solid construction techniques. As with the rest of the garment industry, the increase in labour prices in Hong Kong drove tailors to Shenzhen as more specialised industries emerged.¹⁷¹ As in other countries, customers who remained were those for whom local sizing was problematic.¹⁷² Some informants continued to use tailors to replicate preferred styles including a prominent member of Hong Kong society who, over a period of twenty years, commissioned a wardrobe of forty white, or near-white suits, created by tailors in batches.¹⁷³ Some dressmakers took pains to understand their clients' needs and creatively 'sold-up:' a British expatriate member of Hong Kong society examining a published photograph of Princess Diana and herself, recalled her dress in the photograph was suggested by the dressmaker who had already completed a knee-length version for her.¹⁷⁴ Delay in achieving the final garment was a further deterrent, together with a lack of mass-production techniques (more recently valued in a dressmaker's work) as this American informant working in an architectural practice, then in her 30s explained:

'I had some other dresses made here, I bought voiles in Los Angeles because you cannot find here [then] come hell or high water... I've had them copy some of the things I have, but the truth is, they look like they were *made* dresses, they don't look like they're 'proper.' And I had them copy from pictures I had cut out of a magazine, and I said 'I want this and so on,' and they did O.K. but, umm, those are [sic.] a seamstress here and there, so sometimes I didn't pay a huge amount to have those made, but certainly, for the tailors and some of the people who value themselves as seamstresses here: by the time you're done with fabric and cost you've paid certainly as much as a garment which you can try on in a store and know whether you are going to like it or not, whether it needs adjusting or not.'¹⁷⁵

This informant nuances the distinction between homemade or bespoke versus mass-production and the limitations of the tailor's imagination here. Bespoke clothing did not carry the surety which recognisable brand names embodied: that

the garment would be socially acceptable, reiterating identities, for its given audience.

Production in the late 1980s

In order to continue to grow his business and margins the C.E.O. of the top-end brand explained restructuring the production process. They were being continually undercut when supplying a major American chain store (which placed significant orders with peripheral suppliers), by a huge American fashion-sourcing house which secured the bulk of the business and which was part of the customer's parent company.¹⁷⁶ Because of the size of the 'buy' allocated them, the American sourcing house effectively set the price for the garment. In an attempt to create entry barriers and to develop their business, the directors of the Hong Kong-based business developed a production method by which they could reduce manufacturing lead times from three months to three or four days in order to produce orders of 10,000 pieces in ten days. As one of the first Hong Kong companies develop this practice which became international, I quote the C.E.O.'s explanation in detail:

'We created the manufacturing-in-parallel system, ...not in-sequence, and we started limiting the risk by stocking raw material components. If we were making lambswool/angora/nylon [sweaters], we would stock all three components and then the minute we knew where we were going (i.e. the colours and styles of the bulk order were confirmed) we would start spinning the un-dyed yarn, dyeing it, and then converting it into garments. What we showed [the customer was] how it was possible to cut their mark-downs radically by allocating open-to-buy to-a programme and letting us manage the process. So we would say: 'O.K., you are now committing \$5 million to this programme,' and they said, 'Right, O.K., there is \$5 million committed to this programme.' That equates to a million and a half dollars of money [at wholesale]. That is half a million dollars of raw materials. That is quarter of a million dollars of fibre and quarter of a million dollars of spinning, and \$100,000 of dyestuffs. We were able to produce five or ten percent of the \$5 million worth of goods, deliver them to retail in test styles - many different styles, many different colours - and find out where the [sales] activity was going to be. And as we got information we went hard [and dyed and produced in volume].

At the end of the season here is the equation: if you buy \$5 million worth of this garment for retail and it doesn't sell, it is going to cost you quarter of a million, maybe \$300,000 to turn it back into cash and there is a very significant loss. If you buy half a million dollars worth of the raw materials your loss is going to be 25 percent of getting

rid of it, and your cash flow will be far better. Instead of 'gunking' your cash flow up with huge clip of something you don't need, you are going to be 'gunking' out your cash flow with some raw materials you don't need. And raw materials, inevitably, can be sold off back into the market if they are un-dyed with a fairly minimal loss.'¹⁷⁷

The cost to a retailer in clearing slow-moving or non-selling merchandise in time and square footage on the sales floor when they could be selling merchandise at full price in the same space is high. Anything, which minimises their risk, reduces marked-down merchandise, or maximises sales is attractive. Initial sales at the beginning of a season are used by the fashion business to indicate potential best-selling lines.¹⁷⁸ By stocking raw materials and dyeing, spinning, and knitting in minimum batch sizes instead of dyeing the entire order, etc, the manufacturer, and therefore the retailer, retains flexibility and can minimise slow-moving colours and styles, and maximise fast-moving colours and styles. After initial evaluation of sales, the retail merchandiser or buyer can demonstrate (to his or her boss for whom this is extremely important) zero commitment for slow-moving merchandise and the opportunity to repeat order for fast-moving merchandise. This strategy requires commitment of both parties as if the retailer leaves the manufacturer with unsold raw materials this damages the manufacturer's cash flow and profitability despite his ability to resell un-dyed raw materials. However, for large 'buys' trust between both parties is essential as the retailer must rely on the manufacturer to deliver consistently and on time otherwise sales, and therefore profits, are lost. This system was widely adopted throughout the mass market and later extended to include woven garments, which were made 'in the griegge' (using un-dyed component parts) and dyed in to fast-selling colours as required.¹⁷⁹

Despite improvements in methods of manufacture, informants remembered poor working conditions in the late 1980s: dark, badly-lit factories; machines crammed close together; dyeing processes and machinists side-by-side (with spilt dye on the floor), together with an atmosphere filled with fibres (especially when cotton spinning or working with sheepskin or fur, see photographs: especially South Sea Cotton Manufacturing Company); unpleasant smells; noise; and dirt.¹⁸⁰ By 1985, 67% of the total industrial workforce was employed in textiles; clothing; electronics; plastic products; toys; and the watch and clock industries. By 1986 these accounted for 78% of Hong Kong's total domestic exports.¹⁸¹ One British designer working in Hong Kong remembered factories in the late 1980s:

'I was just appalled. I have one very distinct memory of this scene: one was a washing factory where they must have been washing some of our shirts: it was hot as hell. There was about twenty years of slime. The guys in there were skinny, skinny, skinny - looked old but they probably weren't - just with shorts on. Absolutely bare: because of the heat. It was almost Dickensian. There was this sort of dripping air-conditioner vents outside, and slime: it was appalling.'¹⁸²

I remember badly-lit factories in 1989, where cutters worked alongside sewing machinists in untidy work spaces piled with scraps, cuttings; and work everywhere: piled in bags on the floor beside machines decorated with toys at which machinists ate their lunch.¹⁸³ Lack of concern about quality of the environment was reflected in the quality of the product. High Street customers' standards were lower and the sight of fixtures of merchandise with threads hanging from every garment was not uncommon. The company I worked for in the mid-1980s to mid-90s found it prudent to complete a 100% inspection of imported merchandise before it was packaged and distributed to retail customers. Mills records:

'Some sectors are amongst the most modern in the world, particularly knitting, while others leave rather more than a lot to be desired. The finishing sector, for example, is characterized by factories ranging from the very sophisticated to the downright horrible.'¹⁸⁴

An ex-British High Street buyer maintained that local factory managers always knew when their customers' Quality Control (Q.C.) employees were in Hong Kong, especially if they worked for the American market.¹⁸⁵ Spot checks were impossible as the factories warned each other when Q.C. staff visited the Territory. She claimed: '[They] borrow a light box (used to check the metameric match of component parts under the lighting conditions used on the sales-floor) for factory inspections,' and mimicked the response she received to her requests to improve quality of merchandise:

'Why a light box? Why a metal detector? Why a needle replacement policy? Buyer not asked to do before.'¹⁸⁶

A metal detector is used to trace all parts of a broken needle, which may have caught in the garment whilst it is being sewn, and a needle replacement policy

dictates action to be completed in the event of a broken needle. These include proof all parts of the needle have been recovered, that they are safely disposed of, and a record kept of replacements to highlight faulty machines), in order to avoid adverse publicity created by broken needles in High Street merchandise, which erodes reputations for quality and causes an outcry particularly when found in children's clothes.

Unsurprisingly, the knowledge sector provided attractive alternative employment when it developed in the late 1980s. Ho records a shortage of manufacturing employees: '...there were periodic complaints from manufacturers that they were forced to decline some orders for fear of not being able to meet delivery dates.'¹⁸⁷ The use of labour in the manufacturing sector between 1978 and 1988 remained static. Although one could argue that this was due to the imposition of quotas which had the effect of stifling growth, Hong Kong production was already relocating over the border to Shenzhen and beyond in search of lower costs.¹⁸⁸ I remember visiting near-empty factories in the New Territories in late 1989, each with six elderly machinists working in the corner of a large bare room. Each manager would routinely complain he was unable to attract workers when in truth, the machines and production had been relocated. The remaining machinists were retained to make samples and to allow continued use of quota allowances, which were supplemented by submarine-d merchandise. The relocation of manufacturing and a slow moving border-control system caused a decline in bespoke leather and fur garments.

Copying was not limited to the garment design but extended to the textiles used in the late 1980s, a designer explained:

'We produced a lot of novelty shirts out of India. A novelty fabric, plain fabric would be something that had an interesting texture or weave, and the Holy Grail of novelty fabrics at the time was trying to recreate the Ghost crinkle: that was a huge thing. There was a sort of expensive check that when it was done well was done in viscose and we were trying to [make] polyesters mix, and we were trying to do it to the same finish but cheaper. It would always come out too stiff or too thin, or not controllable.'¹⁸⁹

With hindsight it appears that this was not because of a lack of local designers, although their ability to forecast overseas trends remains unproven, but a failure on

the part of factory owners to understand the designer's proactive role and their company's developing need for one. A great deal of time was spent by British fashion professionals feeding Hong Kong manufacturers and agents ideas and demanding development of new techniques and technologies. The C.E.O. of a company supplying the British High Street complained:

'And the design element was really non-existent. The copying element was to the fore, and if you wanted to lead, you had to go either competitive shopping in the U.K. or work to some requests that you had for this, or that, or the other. And they would be quite good at copying but the design element was generally missing.'¹⁹⁰

This was despite the use of local and expatriate designers in some companies.

Despite improvements to production and the growing internationalism of factory customers, many expatriate Western women in Hong Kong remained unable to purchase merchandise from the limited size range stocked by Hong Kong retail stores and continued to require access to factory sales, over-makes, seconds, or overseas travel to complete their wardrobes.

Production in the early 1990s

The future of Hong Kong after 1997, was at first prompted by renewal of land leases and discussed discretely in order not to provoke a loss of financial confidence in the community.¹⁹¹ The solution - the 1984 Anglo-Chinese Treaty - created a semi-autonomous region known officially as the Special Administrative Region, Hong Kong, would be incorporated in to China for a further half century and known as 'Hong Kong, China.' Morris explains:

'Residents would revert to Chinese citizenship the Peoples Liberation Army would move in, but expatriate officials would be allowed to stay if required, and the structure of Hong Kong commerce and finance, the stock exchange, the banks, the insurance companies, the property development schemes – the whole teeming mass of it would be given another fifty years grace.'¹⁹²

This arrangement was met with doubt by Hong Kong residents who strove to secure overseas residency where possible (see poster protesting at Britain's limited residency offer), as companies diversified overseas in order to protect their capital. Hong Kong became a service and financial centre for China and the Southeast

Asian region as multinational businesses opened branches in Hong Kong and simultaneously an exodus, and later a returning influx of Hong Kong nationals seeking overseas nationality and residency further stimulated migration. Writing in the late 1980s, Tsim records an annual staff turnover of 25% was not unusual.¹⁹³ Immigration (and the Hang Seng Index) stabilised after reassurances that the 'Open Door' policy would continue to be implemented after the Handover but economic trade continued to be vulnerable to global trading conditions and political and economic confidence after manufacturing employment peaked in the early 1990s.¹⁹⁴

The quality of manufacturing remained mixed despite the introduction of quality inspections by technicians, designers, buyers, or agents. The buyer summed up facilities: 'Some dives - quality control [problems] - we used recommended places supplying the U.K.' (see photographs of machine shops, a conveyor production system, denim finishing department, a denim machinist and jeans factory, and computerised fabric cutting).¹⁹⁵ She described how her staff worked with the factories, creating obligation, networking, and how buyers based in the United Kingdom or increasingly in Hong Kong-based buying offices, implemented retailers' developing ethnic trading policies.¹⁹⁶ The American designer distinguished the qualities of finish available:

'Out of the same factory, you could have Liz Claiborne, and you could have my company, x. For me, somebody would cut the threads and it would go on the next basket, be ironed, folded, and then it was sent to me. For Liz Claiborne it would go through eight more people, be clipped and checked and da-di-da, and all that sort of stuff, but it would be in the [same] factory. ... You could very often have Ralph Lauren and x [her brand] made in the exact same factory. It was just a question of how many steps did the x stuff go through compared to the Ralph Lauren stuff?'¹⁹⁷

It must be understood that this entailed relatively small quality differences: a company making for Marks and Spencer's was unlikely to be making for Harrods. There were also factories in which excellent conditions were maintained: the buyer recommended a factory, which produced merchandise for Liz Claiborne, describing the employees as 'happy people, cheerful.' She remembered: 'Fantastic [conditions, in the] suit unit: you could eat off the floor.'¹⁹⁸ The C.E.O. of the lingerie company (which required a light touch to make) explained the factory had to be clean and well lit, with air conditioning. He maintained housekeeping and

carpentry teams on the premises because he felt that as the employees gave him the best part of their day he should respond in kind.¹⁹⁹ He provided lunch but due to increasing staff numbers (there was no quota on lingerie), he could not longer do so, however he continued to provide rice. Exploitation risked adverse publicity: the buyer made a practise of asking how much people were getting paid, as she explained: ‘In a system of exploitation who would want to do it?’²⁰⁰ Retailers insisted on better factory conditions as production quality was increasingly evaluated (see pictures at the end of this chapter).

The C.E.O. of the top-end brand explained that the ‘atelier’ system of production was no longer viable as production runs increased:

‘[When] every factory was a floor in an industrial building, or a corner of a floor, every owner sat in his office with a small general office outside with one hundred or fifty girls on the floor, atelier, proprietor-management system, that system is as good as the owner, and that system can produce merchandise that, where the owner is really good and conscientious he can produce merchandise that is to the standard of ‘right first time.’²⁰¹

Comparing the disadvantages of ‘large scale’ systems to the ‘atelier’ system, he continued:

‘The minute you have offsite-manufacturing you must have ‘right first time’ manufacturing management, and you can’t do that on a small scale. You have to have 5,000 employees or 3,000 employees to be able to have the pre-production engineering functions in place. All of those pre-production engineering functions could be in the head of the man who started as a cutter, and had to do the sewing, the pressing, and had four girls, and started in a sweatshop. He will learn intuitively everything that has to be done to make an absolutely perfect garment.’²⁰²

Industry-wide practices which aided slim margins were described by many: the English designer then in her 30s, employed by a Hong Kong sourcing house, explained how production samples were made in-house so that they were always perfect, inevitably gaining immediate customer approval to proceed with bulk production which was manufactured elsewhere. Occasionally the bulk production did not always match the sample: she claimed: ‘We never got one thing shipped back.’²⁰³ Other ‘sharp practices’ by the company she worked for (and common to

the garment industry), included charging for the cost of air transportation and then shipping the goods. This entailed manufacturing and shipping at a much earlier date in order to meet the delivery deadline. The American designer explained she would buy small quantities of European or American fabrics and have them copied in Hong Kong, Taiwan, or Korea for Hong Kong production retailed in the United States of America and Europe.²⁰⁴ Designers continued to be asked to copy other designers' work.

Very occasionally Hong Kong cultural differences caused problems with overseas customers. The English Hong Kong-based designer recounted the problems caused by a fit sample forwarded, unseen by her, to her American customer:

'I sampled [was asked for] a fit sample: so somebody had gone to the market and bought a printed fabric and I hadn't seen it, and they had sent it to the buyer and a fax came in absolutely outraged. This was a New York office, and one of the Chinese guys had bought this fabric, they made it up, they checked it for size and no-one had even thought about it. It was a piccaninny print, and I think it even had "nigger" written on it. It was absolutely dreadful. It was just awful. And they [the customer] refused to fit it and they sent a swatch back or faxed a swatch back, and it was like, 'Oh my God,' and trying to explain to the merchandiser why it was so offensive: they just didn't understand at all.'²⁰⁵

Besides the offence caused by a print, even over-production of garment labels produced problems, as the America designer recalled:

'I was in Paterson Street, going to the movies with my husband, we walked into a shop and David said, 'Isn't this your label?' And I said 'Yes,' and it said x [brand name] by x [informant's name]. It had my name on it, and it was [on] an *amah* pyjama, and it was in the Paterson Street Mall, at the time, it was underneath the movie theatre there. It wasn't horrible, but it wasn't as fancy as it is now, but it wasn't awful. It was a nylon-pyjama shop. It was full of nylon *amah* pyjamas! Can you imagine pants in nylon? Not even the cotton ones! And as I continued to go through the shop every single garment in that shop had my name on it, and there wasn't one thing in that shop I wanted my name on!

So we went to the movies. Of course, I could think of nothing else. First thing I did when I got into the office was:

'Judy, get in here now!' Judy came in - my sort of right-hand, my agent, and merchandiser - and I said:

'Judy, I went to a shop,' told her the story and she said:

'I don't know how it happened, I will find out.' So we had this label guy who had been working for us for a very long time, and he said:

'Oh, I just sell the overruns.' So he had been manufacturing these labels and whenever we placed an order for twelve hundred labels or whatever it was, we had a new label every season, so the labels were different, so at the end of the season, if he had any left, and he didn't need them, he gave them to the shop, and he said:

'Oh, I have been doing it for years. I didn't think anything of it.'

So, there we go, that is what happens with overruns!²⁰⁶

The notion of copyright or the importance of brand were not part of many of the local community's experience at this time.

Lead-times generated their own pressures but attempts to cut corners and anticipate customer's decisions occasionally backfired. The English designer recollected a fabric shade called 'Paris Red' by her customer:

'We had approved a lab-dip in-house so that we could start [the production]. It had gone back and forth, back and forth, and back and forth, and they [the customer] wouldn't approve it. Finally, I was made [by her employer] to approve a lab-dip, which shows that production could start if they wanted to ship it, and we sent the lab-dip off to the American buyers and by the time they received it, the fabric had all been dyed, and they said: "We haven't approved this colour, and we don't want to run it any more. We have changed our minds". I remember that was sort of, 'Ooh,' and I think we had to come clean on that one. It went, they ran it, but they changed the style I think, and did it in a different style and [we] discounted it for them or something.'²⁰⁷

In this instance the commitment of the supplier to the customer was used as leverage to mitigate the possibly financially crippling mistake which the supplier had made, apparently in an effort to be of apparent assistance the customer.

Designers remained either unused or poorly used, as several designers even as late as the early 1990s remembered: a Hong Kong-based designer remembered development based on the previous seasons sales, magazine clippings and competitive shopping samples forwarded by buyers, the occasional shopping trip but little trend development which was not encouraged.²⁰⁸ Yet for her company, employing art-college trained graduates was a selling feature: after three years in

the company she had ten British design graduate colleagues. The finance personnel were Indian and everyone else was Chinese.²⁰⁹ A British designer, winner of a British fashion college competition for the position, complained that when she arrived the director of the department in a large retail consortium she was assigned to did not know how to use designers, not allowing them to leave their desks.²¹⁰ Another was disheartened by her employer's relentless commercialisation of the product:

'I remember once doing a range of samples, taking them into my employers before the buyers came in, and one of them said to me "What do you think you are? Jean Muir? We are not employing you to design this kind of thing.'²¹¹

When the American designer accepted promotion to design director she was overwhelmed to be given a furniture catalogue and told: 'Put whatever furniture you want.'²¹² The C.E.O. knitwear supplier summarised the difference in her twenty-year experience: '...designers in Hong Kong [meaning Hong Kong designers without Western experience] ... just don't know what the European woman wants.'²¹³ Those whose jobs had a particularly technical element were more successful, as this designer who worked in Hong Kong from 1980 explained:

'I saw an advertisement for a job for somebody to help a designer in x, [a swimwear and sportswear manufacturer]. So I got the job and - because I wasn't an expatriate then [she was married to a local Cantonese resident] - I was regarded as local.'... 'I was never treated like an expatriate. I got local pay, within four months my pay was doubled. Then I developed blocks for the junior [range]. In Hong Kong x made for Asia, and we did a survey of the junior figures: schoolchildren, we were making [a] Junior Miss range, and children's ranges, as well as ladies. They have [a size range] called BD's... so I developed all the blocks for those things. And then we did men's: we made men's swimwear, and I did most of the blocks because my colleague, he was from Leicester, didn't really have the technical knowledge... he was more artistic. So I was the technical [one]. And then we developed teen-wear, and I think over the ten years that I worked for x they were successful in their ranges.'²¹⁴

The 'buy' was large in comparison to most British orders, the English designer reflected:

'...the first time you get a fax from a buyer saying 'We want to buy 16,000 of it,' you just think 'Wow!' I think the responsibility and the speed with which we worked made us all. I am not the same person I was before I went, and I wouldn't have done the things that I have done since had I not had that experience, although it was very hard. You took responsibility for things; and you dealt with things; and it made you very grown-up.'²¹⁵

Certainly the scale of orders and all the process of development, sampling production and delivery encouraged professionalism in the supply chain. The American designer contrasted the sampling process in her office, part of a large American company in the 1990s, with that of her previous job working for a Hong Kong-based company:

'...with the wovens, I had a lot of fabric salesmen come knock on my door and I would buy fabrics by ten yard cuts. I had a sample room and had samples made-up there. When it came to production I had a production guy for each company that I worked for who I would pass all the information on to, who I bought it from, what fabric it was. I had pattern-makers who did nothing but calculate quantities - that was before computers. Somebody actually sat and laid out the patterns for production, [...] a marker - and you would pass the information on, and they would buy the fabric from whoever we bought it from. There was no question about shopping around trying to find cheaper, whereas in Hong Kong that is what you did. If I found [a] fabric, and if x [her previous boss] could get it five percent cheaper from someone else, he did.'²¹⁶

At this time computers were used to plan layout in higher labour cost countries and as indicated, exclusivity of colour or fabric was not necessarily a mandatory component of large production. It is interesting that the company described retaining pattern-making expertise rather than pushing it down the supply chain.

Production in the mid 1990s

The fashion and textiles industries were subject to continuous supply chain management development as manufacturers responded to increasingly complex customer demands, providing value-added services (such as packaging, mixed colour and size bulk-packs), in order to withstand competition from countries manufacturing nearer to the customer's home country who offered increasingly flexible delivery schedules.²¹⁷ The increase in speed of distribution was best illustrated by the increased speed of production samples: the knitwear supplier

described how samples which had taken two or three months to reach her London office in the early 1970s, were usually available in three weeks in the 1990s and, if the yarn was in stock, within two or three days.²¹⁸ Reflecting on changes in Hong Kong manufacturing over a period of thirty years, the C.E.O. of the top-end brand observed:

‘You go full circle [now]: it is the technology that enables a company aiming at absolute excellence to produce an absolutely immaculate product. The cottage industry manufacturing is no longer the way to go. The absolute top standard product you now get through using sophisticated mass-production techniques.’²¹⁹

This observation reflected mass and middle market production excluding merchandise requiring handwork or embellishment supplied by very low labour cost countries such as India. By 1996 the manufacturing sector declined to less than 20% of employment as production continued to migrate over the border. Offices and showrooms remained in Hong Kong, as Hong Kong continued to be a time-efficient place for buyers sourcing and placing orders.²²⁰ Informants recollected the changes, for example, in the decline of hand-flat knitting machine production and the increase in sophisticated knitwear machinery.²²¹ The designer who handled the account for a U.S. department store account with six hundred stores explained the attraction of Hong Kong’s location as a manufacturing hub:

‘I think it was a \$19 million U.S. account, and very, very down-and-dirty: big volume. The buyers bought a lot of designer things but really it was very mid-America, very wide appeal. We did a lot of business: soft clothing. It was shirts, skirts, and dresses for the really big pieces. We did a lot of print work, and mainly the prints came from Taiwan or Korea. We did some out of India: but that was always really traumatic [due to poor quality], so as much as possible we did it out of Taiwan and Korea.. We did a lot of silk: there was quota in and out of China, probably most of the plain colours, if it was silk, would have come from China. Things like crepon ... came from Taiwan.’²²²

Speed to market remained a critical advantage: the United Kingdom-based knitwear supplier explained that by the end of the period of research she still sourced knitwear from two Hong Kong factories because they could return bulk production in four weeks whilst she developed less costly production capacities in Eastern Europe and in other Southeast Asian countries.²²³

The impact of the Asian environment on designers varied. Some designers became interested in Asian dress: one repeatedly used Asian dress details in her design work for her mid-market American customer, another became a full-time author after commencing her writing career noting ethnic dress in her lunch hour.²²⁴ Durability of fashion dress conflicted with fast-changing local fashions. This enabled garments to be created using fabrics which were previously considered to be incompatible, for example: making them impossible to wash, as it was unlikely that the owner would wear the garment for long enough that it would require washing.²²⁵ For older informants this was perceived as a lack of foresight in production quality: as anthropologist Kaori O'Connor observes, the history of migrating fibres from one kind of garment to another has yet to be written.²²⁶

Remaining businesses that did not relocate increasingly invested in semi-automation: the C.E.O. of a Hong Kong denim factory explained that by the late 1990s 'Fashion styles still require[d] a lot of hand work, but the basic five-pocket [jean] was automated' (see pictures of denim manufacture at the end of this chapter).²²⁷ The top-end C.E.O. summarised the advantages of Hong Kong manufacturing:

'[H.K. production] was a tremendous success, that success enabled me to start employing a design team [which] was a success, and that enabled me to sell the factories and move out of "iron and steel" and go into the far more lucrative, exciting and interesting business of producing a brand, a design collection, and go into wholesaling brand management.'²²⁸

In retrospect, the lack of a fabric exhibition (Interstoff, was first held in October 1997), and the consequent difficulties of sourcing in Hong Kong held back product development, yet the C.E.O. of the knitwear company explained that Hong Kong knitwear quality produced over the past thirty-plus years remained consistently higher than that available elsewhere.²²⁹

By the late 1990s the customer had changed. The C.E.O. of the lingerie company observed he did not know anyone who was manufacturing for local volume sales or for China, instead the manufacturers remaining in Hong Kong were servicing global customers.²³⁰ This reflected considerable change in local management attitudes and a willingness to upgrade to match customers' requirements, including: International Standardization for Organisation (I.S.O.)

certificates; designers; fabric sourcing; computerization; computer aided design (C.A.D.); Butylated hydroxytoluene-free (B.H.T.-free) bags; a showroom; an office in Hong Kong; and a factory in Shenzhen, China, and the Philippines. Distribution moved from shipping to airfreight as speed to retail increased. The buyer remembered rising standards as daughters took over and improved their father's businesses.²³¹

As regional markets developed, international distribution methods developed and implemented, garments manufactured in Hong Kong or China were no longer first shipped to a warehouse in the country of origin of the brand in Europe or the United States of America, and then redistributed to their final destination. Instead, they were distributed directly from factory to retailer.²³² Inevitably there were over-makes, seconds, and cancelled orders: ten per cent under or, sometimes, over was acceptable. Under production was usually due to fabric problems.²³³ Cancelled orders or over-makes were disposed of locally and could be seen hanging on Fa Yuen Street stalls.²³⁴

The C.E.O. of the top-end brand observed the production wheel had turned full circle: Hong Kong had been left with the same orders that the Italians were left with when Hong Kong manufacturing initially developed in the 1960s, that was: short runs of fashion merchandise made to a very high-quality standard in small factories, necessitating continual production of samples, sidestepping the role of Hong Kong-based agents, and dealing directly with local buying offices.²³⁵ The buyer described the role of Hong Kong in the international buying market place:

'[The] basics [were] bought in China. [Buyers were] scared: [they] used importers to protect themselves. Manchester-boys and France import off-season [merchandise from Hong Kong], [the] buyer took no risk.'²³⁶

In this sense the use of importers and agents has not changed. The C.E.O. of the top-end brand reflected:

'The concept was that Hong Kong should become Italy, and had the ability to be far better than Italy: the workers were better; the middle management was far better; entrepreneurial skills were far better. Delivering on time was something the Chinese completely understood: getting a re-order was what they totally understood, that satisfying a customer meant you got more orders, and a one-order deal was a total waste

of time for everybody. The Chinese inherent business skills that gave Hong Kong the ability to become the premier manufacturing source.²³⁷

Conclusion

During a period of thirty-seven years, Hong Kong fashion production developed, became established, and declined in response to changing market demands. Operating on a *laissez-faire* principle, the government intervened as little as possible in Hong Kong's manufacturing and export industries, maintaining a view that the market would determine the nature of production. The humid climate suitable for early cotton-spinning, was later mitigated by air-conditioning allowing for production of finer, more easily damaged merchandise. Nevertheless, decline was inevitable given low-cost competition throughout the region. However, buyers were reluctant to travel to increasingly remote locations, therefore Hong Kong in 1997 retained some manufacturing due to logistics; the quota system (which acted as a form of protectionism guaranteeing Hong Kong access to overseas markets); and because, in some industry sectors, labour formed a relatively small component part of production costs.²³⁸ Competition from lower-labour-cost countries and green-field sites, together with market demands for in-season, just-in-time delivery, and increasing individualism, shifted production to neighbouring Asian countries, or closer to customers' home market (Eastern Europe, Turkey, or Mexico).

Although production declined, financial volume increased and fashion and textiles remained Hong Kong's leading export due to the introduction of quotas and subsequent submarine-ing Hong Kong's importance as a regional distribution centre and head-office site increased. The introduction of quotas changed the nature of production in Hong Kong: items that were free of quota (such as lingerie), continued to be produced others that were technology-intensive (such as knitwear) remained longer than labour-intensive merchandise (such as gloves and fur coats), which relocated. Production lead times dropped from seven weeks for a knitted garment in the late 1960s to thirty-three days, by the late 1990s.²³⁹ Many manufacturers supplied either American or European markets in order to maintain consistency of sizing.

The use of child labour, prevalent in many Hong Kong industries during the early part of the period, ceased as women were increasingly employed in service industries, family size shrank, and the benefits of education for daughters able to

earn higher salaries became apparent to the host community. Overseas suppliers and their customers also increasingly specified and monitored production methods in order to prevent bad overseas press from damaging their brand names.

Despite the increasing wealth of the local population, the number of tailors declined, due in part to their reluctance to recognise changing fashions, and the increasing availability of high-quality, ready-to-wear merchandise, the relative reduction in international travel costs also allowed potential expatriate customers to shop in their home countries or elsewhere.²⁴⁰ As in other countries, Hong Kong tailors retained customers for whom standard sizes were not available in local stores.

The Hong Kong government tax system fostered business development whereby any cost incurred was tax allowable. Effectively this meant that items used for entertaining clients such as club memberships, corporate junks, charity tickets for social events, were tax deductible. Pleasure was often business.²⁴¹ It seems fitting to repeat Ommanney's comments on legislation of 1962 that restricted the employment hours of women and children. His words were probably as true at the end of the period as when he wrote them:

'More stringent regulations to control working hours are now being introduced, but whether they will stop the people from working is very doubtful. In the hours not taken up by their jobs they will probably find other work. They will certainly not use them for leisure, a word which scarcely exists in the Chinese vocabulary.'²⁴²

It is a coincidence that Hong Kong's rise and decline in garment production mirrors the hegemony of expatriate Western women's social status. The earlier period witnessed enormous production destined directly for overseas customers.

In Hong Kong expatriate Western women, members of the very Western consumer group that the merchandise was destined for, had no access to this merchandise (except through seconds or over-makes sold at local markets) and were forced to rely on tailors to copy outfits, or to create new ones based on magazine clippings and sketches using available materials. For expatriate Western women the pursuit of appropriate dress became easier as air travel become less expensive. Nevertheless at the end of the period, despite the number of Hong Kong

garments factories, many expatriate Western women were still relying on tailors and over-makes to supplement their wardrobes.



Figure 35 Wig Making

Wig-making was one of the earliest products produced by Hong Kong's expanding manufacturers in the early 1960s.

'Popularised by Connie Chan Po Chu, the new economic freedom of the factory girl was part of the transformation of sex roles and of the family during the sixties. If factory conditions and disparities in pay were not quite so glamorous [sic.], aspirations to independence were already established.'

(Turner & Ngan, 1995, p. 42).



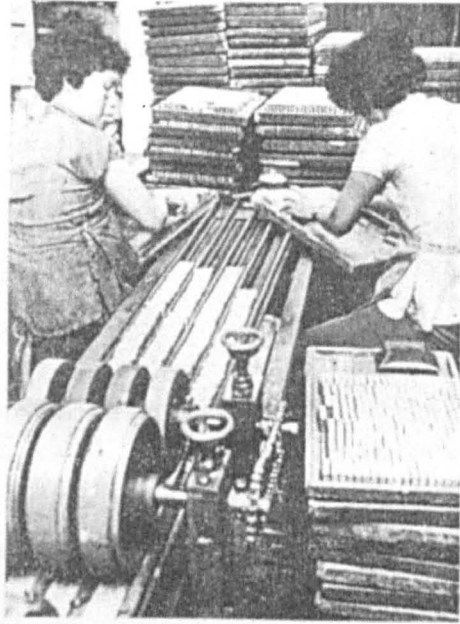
Figure 36 Cotton spinning in South Sea Manufacturing Company 1962

'In the spinning-mill of a large textile firm founded in 1948 South Sea Textile Manufacturing Co. Ltd. in the New Territories, which in 1961 employed 1420 male and 630 female workers.

The workshops are equipped with the most-up-to-date machinery of American, British and Swiss origin. The workers, mostly younger people, have their own dormitories, canteens, co-operative shops, hospital, library playing fields, and swimming pool on the factory estate.'

(Hurlimann, 1962, pp. 12, 110).

Match factory in
Macau



Young Hong Kong
girl polishes an ivory
carved figurine of a
Chinese goddess



Figure 37 Child Labour 1967

Eldest daughters were often sent to work from an early age in the earlier part of the period. Their earnings contributed to the household income and enabled their younger brother(s) to continue their studies.

Child labourers polishing an ivory figurine in Hong Kong, and making matches in Macau. (Gleason, 1967, p. 128).

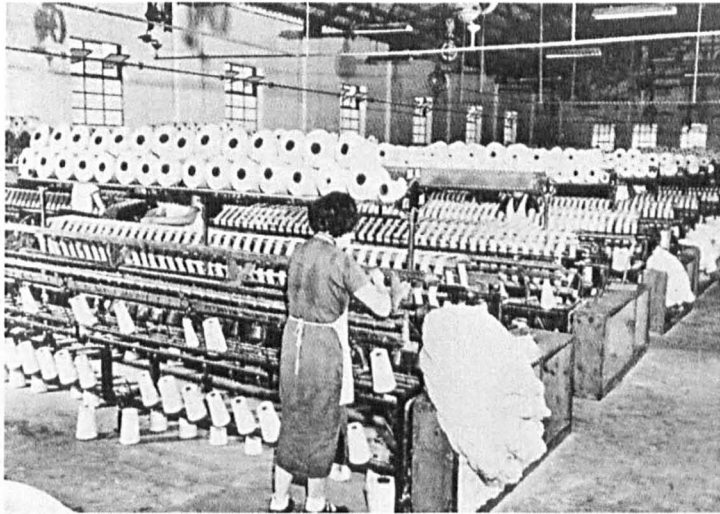


Figure 38 Cotton spinning 1991

The opportunity to borrow money to finance initial cotton spinning production on new machinery, together with a rapidly growing population keen to increase their standard of living enabled cotton manufacturers to develop rapidly in the early part of the period.

'The 1952 United Nation's embargo on trade with communist states, principally Mainland China, together with the Korean War, gave Hong Kong industry the opportunity to develop. The influx of Shanghainese textile entrepreneurs was vital to the continuation of this growth period.'

(Birch, 1991, p. 104, Plate 71).

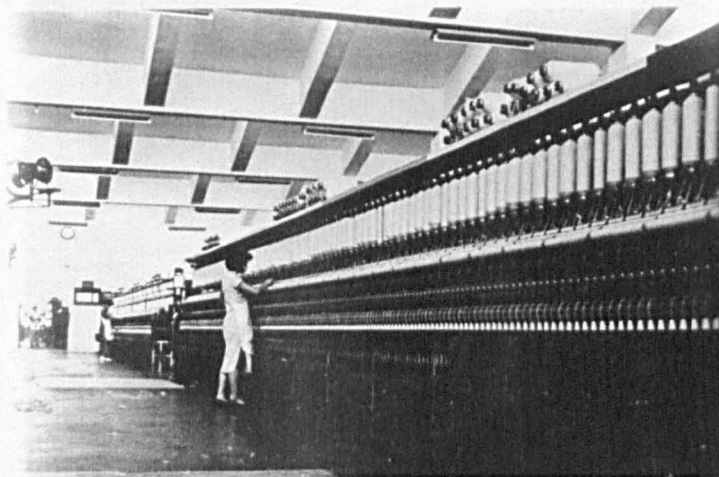


Figure 39 South Sea Cotton Manufacturing Company 1963

The South Seas Cotton Manufacturing Company made cotton interlock and other fabrics for export.

'Girls at work in the vast spinning room of the South Sea Textile Manufacturing Co. at Tseun Wan, Hong Kong, one of the world's most modern textile mills.'

(Gleason, 1963), no ref.



Figure 40 Machinists at work 1992

Workroom with fan, no air conditioning.

'Production system, machinists. No date.'

(Wu & The Federation of Hong Kong Garment Manufacturers, 1992, pp. 142-3).



Figure 41 Denim jeans production 1992

Finishing dept. No air conditioning

'Jeans production. No date.'

(Wu & The Federation of Hong Kong Garment Manufacturers, 1992, p. 113).



Figure 42 Machinists 1992

Work piled on machine tables.

'Divisional production. No date.'

(Wu & The Federation of Hong Kong Garment Manufacturers, 1992, p. 144).

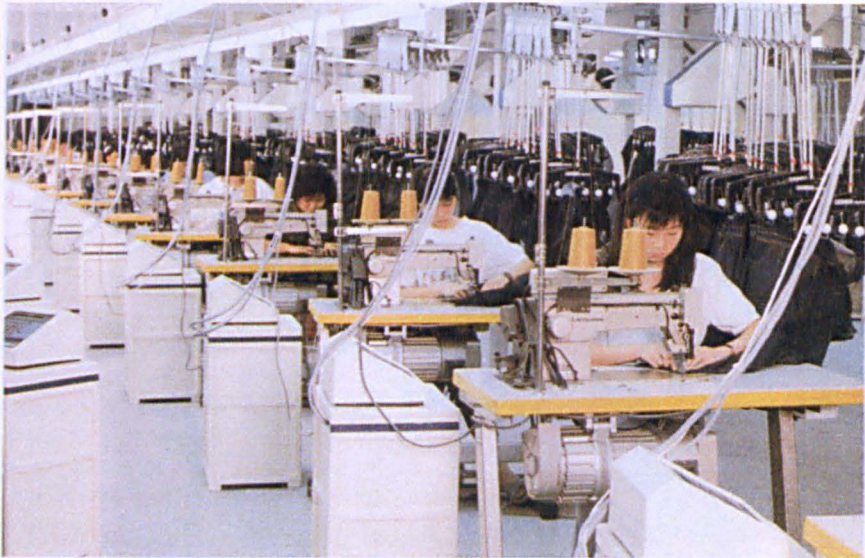


Figure 43 Hanging conveyor production system 1992

Conveyor belt feeds work to machinist, reducing damage.

'Conveyor system, no date.'

(Wu & The Federation of Hong Kong Garment Manufacturers, 1992, p. 145).



Figure 44 Machinist wearing cheongsam c. pre. 1978

Machinist wearing a cheongsam making dolls. No date, circa pre. 1978.

(Turner & Ngan, 1995, p. 42).



Figure 45 Young knitwear machinist 1981

'Seaming sleeves in a factory producing fashionable garments.'

(Salaff, 1981, p. 279).



Figure 46 Young V-back knitwear machinist 1981

‘Knitting in a factory producing fashionable garments.’

(Salaff, 1981, p. 280).



Figure 47 Young machinist assembling jeans 1981

‘Garment assembly in a blue jeans factory.’

(Salaff, 1981, p. 281).



Figure 48 Tailor's family and shop 1981

The anti-social hours and poor return made these siblings determined to find other careers.

'A family tailoring business.'

(Salaff, 1981, p. 283).



Figure 49 Machinist in jeans factory 1985

The previous positions of this machinist are not listed, nor is there any indication how she received her job training.

'Lai Sau Chun is 35. She has been a machinist for ten years, making jeans for the Golden Crown Garment factory on Hong Kong Island. The factory employs 250 people and produces 1 million pairs of jeans a year.'

(Fairclough, 1985, p. 50).



Figure 50 Machinists in jeans factory 1985

Hourly pay rates contributed to better production standards than piece-rates.

'I enjoy my job here, although I have to work very long hours in a crowded factory. There is no minimum wage in Hong Kong which means we are not always paid as much as we should be, but we can usually earn a little extra money by doing overtime. Most of us are on an hourly rate of pay, although some workers are paid according to how many articles they produce.

Generally men received higher wages than women, even if they are doing the same job.'

(Fairclough, 1985, p. 50).

HOUSE OF LADIES' FASHION FABRICS



- * Quality Woollens
- * Swiss Cottons & Irish Linens
- * French Laces & Brocades
- * Swiss Embroidered Novelties
- * Printed & Plain Silks
- * Thai Silks & Indian Raw-Silks

FURNISHING & UPHOLSTERY FABRICS
EXPERT LADIES' TAILORING

Kayamally's
ESTABLISHED 1941

MAIN STORE:
Kayamally Building,
22-B, Queen's Road, C.,
Hong Kong.



BRANCH:
24-A, Carrarvon Road,
Kowloon.

Figure 51 Ladies' tailors offers soft furnishings c. 1970

This ladies' tailors also offered soft-furnishing.

'House of Ladies advertisement.' c. 1970.

(Hong Kong Tourist Association, c. 1970, p. 98).



Figure 52 High-quality Hong Kong fabric and garment production 1987

High quality example of Hong Kong production.

'Chinese Princess - a stunning evening ensemble in pure silk from Amigo International fashions. The five layer ensemble features pleated silk, quilted silk, embroidery, appliqué and traditional Chinese fastenings.'

(1987, p. 83).



Figure 53 Kwun Tong factory development 1964

'Completely new townships have been developed to increase and assist the colony's industrialization programme. At Kwun Tong (above) on the east of the Kowloon peninsula land has been reclaimed from the sea for factory development purposes. Purchasers of industrial sites in Kwun Tong can pay the land premium by up to 20 annual instalments at five per cent interest.' (Hong Kong Government, 1964), colour plate. No ref.

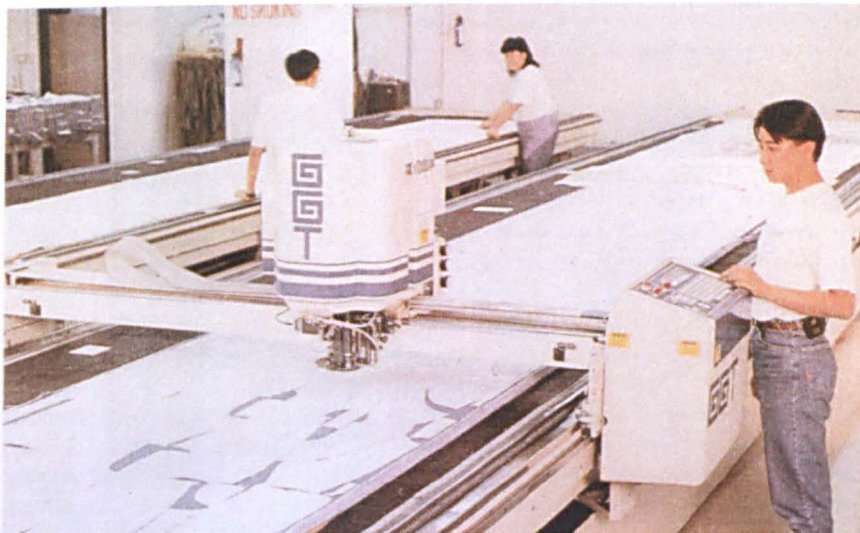


Figure 54 Computerised fabric cutting 1992

Computerised cutting table,

(Wu & The Federation of Hong Kong Garment Manufacturers, 1992, p. 117).



Figure 55 T.D.C. export promotion for Selfridges pre. 1992

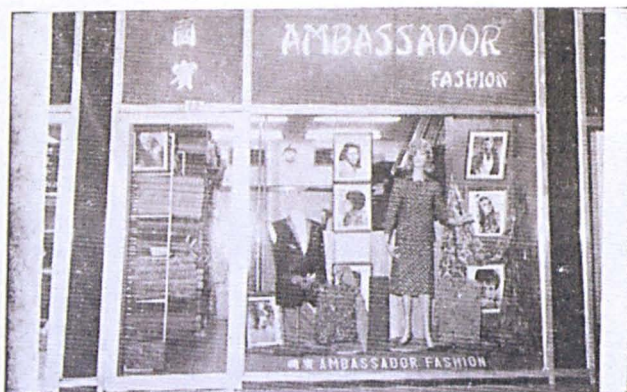
The Trade Development Council (T.D.C.) was responsible for promoting Hong Kong exports overseas.

T.D.C. promotion in Selfridges, London. No date.

(Wu & The Federation of Hong Kong Garment Manufacturers, 1992, p. 128).

Hong Kong

TAILORING

**AMBASSADOR FASHIONS**

22 Lock Road, Kowloon

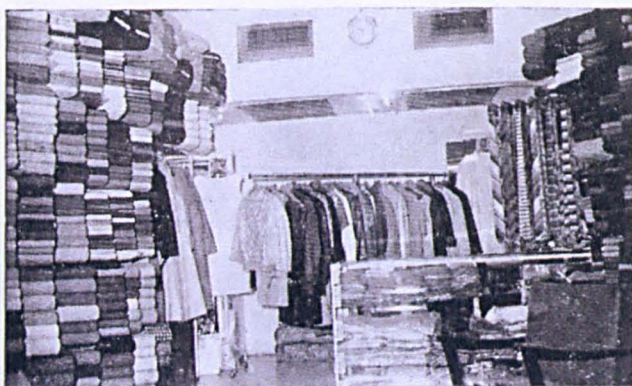
Map Position: K-20

HOURS: 9-am/9-pm M/S. 9-am/6-pm Sun.

Tel: K-664530

Ambassador Fashions are well known for their high quality custom tailor-made clothes both for ladies and men. A wide selection of English made woollen suitings, terelyne, cotton, worsted, silks and brocades. All orders are strictly carried out at their own workshop by experienced Shanghainese tailors.

An Efficient Round-The-World MAIL ORDER SERVICE is provided.



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Figure 56 Mens' and Ladies' tailors 1967

Mens' and ladies' tailors offering English fabrics made up by experienced Shanghainese tailors together with a mail-order service. The store interior resembles a workroom or a man's tailors, note the tie-rack, nor any attempt at display.

(W. K. Hoffman, 1967, p. 175), compliments of The Hilton Hotel.

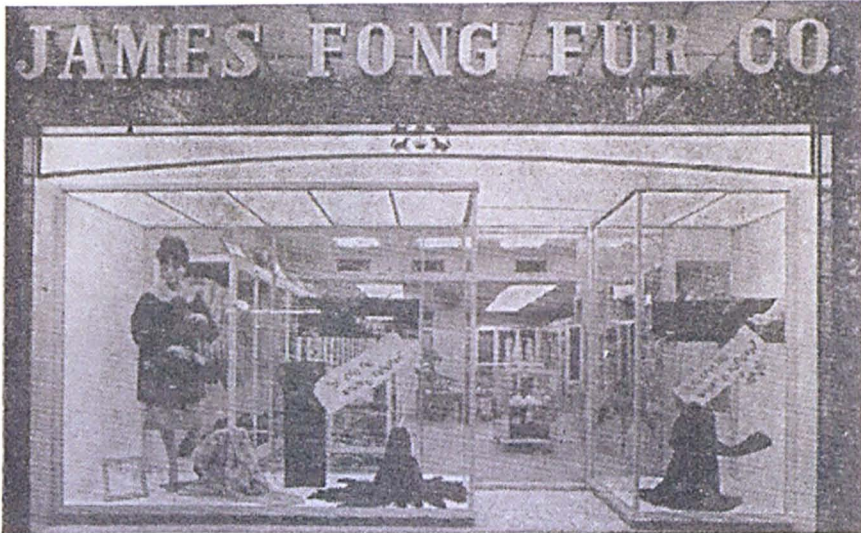


Figure 57 James Fong Fur Co. store exterior 1970

'James Fong Fur Co. offers a vast selection of Quality Furs and attends to the individual needs of their customers. Mr. Fong guarantees all of his products and has built up a solid reputation in the fur business. Customers are granted a Certificate for free-of-charge fur storage upon making a fur purchase. Other services available are dyeing, restyling, alterations, cleaning and cold storage.'

(W.K. Hoffman, 1970, p. 159), compliments of The Mandarin Hotel.

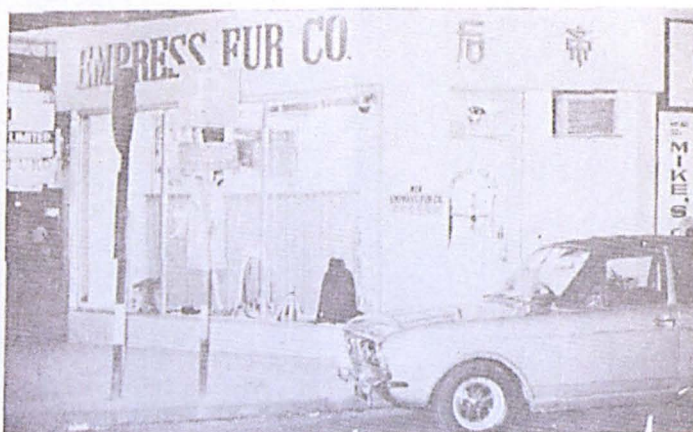


Figure 58 James Fong Fur Co. store interior 1970

(W.K. Hoffman, 1970, p. 159), compliments of The Mandarin Hotel.

FUR

Kowloon



EMPRESS FUR CO.

32 Mody Road, Kowloon.

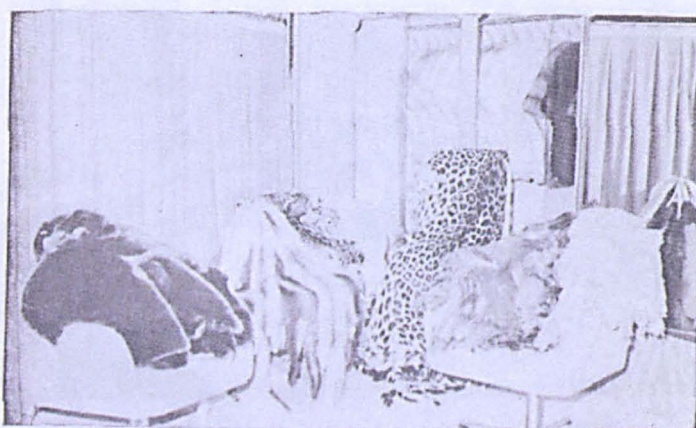
Telephone: K-682004

Map Position: 89-U

HOURS: 9-am/8:30-pm Mon-Sat; 9-am/6-pm Sunday.

EMPRESS has a wide selection of fine furs ranging from the very exotic South American OCELOT to pampered sophisticated MINK — EMBA, of course.

The exclusive range of their ready made fur garments will no doubt satisfy any lady, and, should she prefer, a specially designed fur piece could be made to suit her taste. Manageress, Mrs. Sheila Hollands is always in attendance.



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Figure 59 Empress Fur Company store and merchandise 1970

The Empress Fur Company advertisement lists the furs available, including EMBA (Mutation Mink Breeders Association) products, offers be-spoke work, and reassures the customer that the Western manageress is always available.

(W.K. Hoffman, 1970, p. 158), compliments of The Mandarin Hotel.



Figure 60 International Fur Company store exterior 1970

'The International Fur Company are direct Importers of fine mink in every colour from white to black. They have a fine and very large collection of Ocelot, Leopard, Russian Sable, Squirrel and Ermine in all shades and style. They are manufacturers, exporters, wholesalers and retailers - either ready-made or made-to-order. Mail orders are also welcome.'

(W.K. Hoffman, 1970, p. 156), compliments of The Mandarin Hotel.



Figure 61 International Fur Company store interior 1970

Store interior.

(W.K. Hoffman, 1970, p. 156), compliments of The Mandarin Hotel.

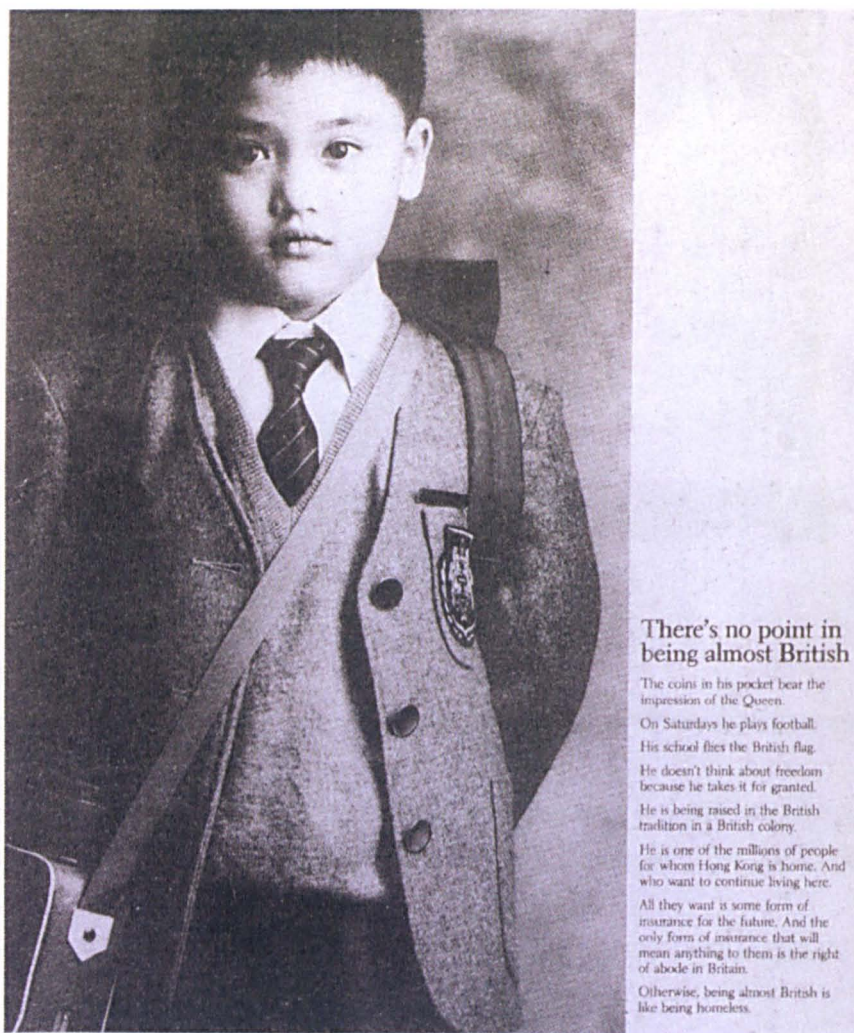


Figure 62 Poster protesting against limited residency offer 1990

Poster protesting against the British Government's limited offer of citizenship and residency for Hong Kong nationals after the Handover.

'There's no point in being almost British,' 1990 poster campaign designed to pressure the U.K. to restore citizenship to 3.5M British passport holders.'

(Turner & Ngan, 1995, p. 8).



Figure 63 Mok-Lau wedding, Hong Kong Tatler 1978

'Mrs Mok Ying-kie, Mrs Mok Ying-kie, Mr. Mok Ying-kie...'

Tatler, (1978j, p. 106).

Hong Kong historian Jason Wordie explained how women were treated in an earlier part of the period:

'Prominent stockbroker the late Mok, Ying-kie has two such wives, who both always appeared side by side in the social pages flanking their husband; each was equally captioned as Mrs Mok Ying-Kie.'

'Why Hong Kong never really bade farewell to its concubines' Ping chai = equal wives. Jason Wordie, Past Master (Wordie, 2003, p. 11).



Figure 64 Correctional Services Industries post-1997

By the end of the period of research the Correctional Services Industries, part of the Correctional Services Department, was the largest garment manufacturer in Hong Kong. The picture shows inmates, faces averted, laying up fabric under the supervision of an instructor. 'Laying up fabric.'

(Hong Kong Correctional Services Department, 2002, p. 6).



Figure 65 Correctional Services Industries post-1997

Garments were constructed by inmates trained to complete a number of processes.

‘Female sewing workshop.’

(Hong Kong Correctional Services Department, 2002, p. 9).

¹ Informant interview: S.G.M.J. 24.07.01.

² See Welsh, *A History of Hong Kong*, (Welsh, 1997, p. 461).

³ 'It might be called, in one sense, a cautionary tale: the cult of money being its central theme. Firms which first made their fortunes in the opium traffic still flourish on the island, although the sources of their wealth are nowadays less destructive and their methods more benign.' (Pope-Hennessy, 1969, p. 16). Pope-Hennessy is the grandson of a former Governor of Hong Kong.

⁴ See Morris, *Hong Kong: an Epilogue to an Empire*, (J. Morris, 1993, p. 203).

⁵ 'The British agreed to withdraw not merely from the New Territories, about which they had no choice, but from Hong Kong Island and the Kowloon Peninsula, which had theoretically been ceded to them forever. The Chinese agreed to give Xiangang [as Hong Kong is named in Putonghua, China's official language] a semi-autonomous status as a Special Administrative Region, allowing it to continue in its capitalist ways for another half century after its return to the Chinese motherland – 'One Country, Two Systems,' as they said with their fondness for symbolic numerals. In the meantime they would evolve a new constitution, the Basic Law, to come into force in 1997, and the two Powers would work together in regular consultation towards an amicable handover. It was an accord specifically between London and Beijing. The people of Hong Kong took no part in the negotiations, as they had taken no part in any of the previous compacts between the Empires that ruled their destinies.' (J. Morris, 2000, pp. 30-31).

⁶ See Morris, *Hong Kong: an Epilogue to an Empire*, (J. Morris, 2000, p. 203). Canadian sociologist Janet Salaff, details the oligarchy which continued until the Handover: from the British Government-appointed Governor, surrounded by an administration appointed by him, to the lower ranks of the Civil Service, comprised a total of eight percent of local people in 1973. See Salaff, *Working daughters of Hong Kong: filial piety or power in the family?*, (Salaff, 1995, p. 18).

⁷ 'Politicians and civil servants do not necessarily know more about business than businessmen nor did politicians have to suffer the consequences of business failure. They should therefore keep their noses to their own grindstone. Market mechanisms should be left to adjust fluctuations in the economy, and the government should concern itself only with sharply focused and minimal intervention on behalf of the most needy.' (Welsh, 1997, pp. 461-2).

⁸ See Welsh, from *Hong Kong Annual Review 1971*, p. 2, quoted in Welsh, *A History of Hong Kong*, (Welsh, 1997, p. 462).

⁹ See Mills, 'Industry and Trade,' (Mills, 1989, p. 104). Margaret Thatcher's financial policies when she came to power in Britain in 1980 were said to be derived from the model created by Cowperwhite.

¹⁰ See Flowerdew, from the 1992 policy speech, *The Final years of British Hong Kong: The Discourse of Colonial Withdrawal*, (Flowerdew, 1998, p. 195).

¹¹ See Welsh, *A History of Hong Kong*, (Welsh, 1997, p. 524).

¹² See Gleason, *Tales of Hong Kong*, (Gleason, 1963, p. 11).

¹³ Morris itemises and explains the final agreement of 1984 in what was by this time, a world-class city, see Morris *Hong Kong: an Epilogue to an Empire*, (J. Morris, 2000, p. 30). See Berger on Hong Kong leases and industrial estates, (Berger & Lester, 1997, p. 16).

¹⁴ See Morris, *Hong Kong: an Epilogue to an Empire*, (J. Morris, 2000, p. 213).

¹⁵ See Hsu, *A Touristic Guide to Hong Kong*, (Hsu, 1968, p. 31).

¹⁶ See Pope-Hennessy, *Half Crown Colony: A Hong Kong notebook*, (Pope-Hennessy, 1969, p. 110).

¹⁷ See Ommanney *Eastern Windows*, (Ommanney, 1962, p. 13). Dr. F.D. Ommanney was of U.K. origin, spending five years in Singapore, then H.K.. He became Reader in Marine Biology, at H.K.U. and Director of the fishery research unit attached to the University.

¹⁸ See Gleason, *Tales of Hong Kong*, (Gleason, 1963, p. 131).

¹⁹ See Lanchester, *Fragrant Harbour*, (Lanchester, 2002, p. 30).

²⁰ Informant interview: L.A.M.L. 24.01.02.

²¹ Cantonese for spring time, *cheun tin*, translates as 'wet season,'

²² Hence the common description 'refugee community.' Russians and Iranians were amongst the Western refugees who fled communist Shanghai. Mekanese people were part Portuguese-part Asian in varying proportions, from Macau, the Portuguese island-colony across the Pearl River delta. Source: conversation with Jason Wordie, 16.03.2004.

²³ Cantonese, both from Hong Kong and Guangdong province (bordering Hong Kong in mainland China), including Hoklo, Hakka, Punti minority-communities, Canton province. The Indian community included Sindis, from what today would be Pakistan. Post-war, the Mekanese

community have been absorbed in to the European or Asian population becoming a distant memory within a generation. Conversation with Jason Wordie, 16.03.2004.

²⁴ I am grateful to Jason Wordie for his comments on this topic.

²⁵ 'Then in the mid-60s came the widespread riots, demonstrations and disruptions spawned by the Cultural Revolution that for several months rocked the territory to its foundations and almost brought Hong Kong to a standstill.' See Litmaath, *Far East of Amsterdam*, (Litmaath, 2003, p. 39).

²⁶ See expatriate I.C.A.C. (Independent Commission Against Corruption) investigator Stacy Mosher, (Holdsworth & Courtauld, 2002, p. 151).

²⁷ Holdsworth and Courtauld proposed calling their book - describing Hong Kong expatriates and the positions that they held in the territory - not 'Foreign Devils,' the literal translation of 'gweilo,' the Cantonese word for foreigner, but 'Gilded Mediocrity' in order to describe their expected findings. See Holdsworth, *Foreign Devils: Expatriates in Hong Kong*, (Holdsworth & Courtauld, 2002, p. xii).

²⁸ See Holdsworth and Courtauld, *Foreign Devils: Expatriates in Hong Kong*, (Holdsworth & Courtauld, 2002, p. xii).

²⁹ See Holdsworth and Courtauld, *Foreign Devils: Expatriates in Hong Kong*, (Holdsworth & Courtauld, 2002, p. 153), the hongos are the 'top' companies.

³⁰ See Holdsworth and Courtauld, *Foreign Devils: Expatriates in Hong Kong*, (Holdsworth & Courtauld, 2002, p. 216).

³¹ Ironically, Morris comments the events in Tiananmen Square in June 1989: 'as for the official corruption to which the Beijing students were objecting, much of it had been engendered by the very free-market forces of which Hong Kong was the champion' See Morris, *Hong Kong: an Epilogue to an Empire*, (J. Morris, 1993, p. 298).

³² Notably, Canada, Australia, and to some extent, America. See Berger, (Berger & Lester, 1997, p. 11). For numbers, see geographer C. P. Lo, *Hong Kong*, (Lo, 1992, p. 28).

³³ See Morris, *Hong Kong: an Epilogue to an Empire*, (J. Morris, 1993, p. 294).

³⁴ In the earlier part of the period Salaff records the increases in women's educational standards over the period resulted in an increase in their ability to retain better paid, higher status jobs, see Salaff, *Working daughters of Hong Kong: filial piety or power in the family?*, (Salaff, 1981, p. xix). See also Chapter 2. See Gleason, *Hong Kong*, (Gleason, 1963, pp. 146 -8).

³⁵ See Lee, *Womens Employment in Hong Kong*, (W. K. M. Lee, 1996, p. 285). As cleaners, office messengers, or as workers in fast food restaurants, (W. K. M. Lee, 1996, p. 290).

³⁶ 'Unattached Western women do not fare too happily in the colony, unless they have full-time careers, a habit of circumspection and plenty of money of their own.

To begin with, the competition from Chinese girls, both qualitatively and in sheer numbers, is discouraging. Being so few, ladies from the West are almost painfully conspicuous. Hong Kong is not London or New York - above all, it is not Paris! - and the British or American girl who chooses to indulge in what would be a discreet little affair at home is astounded to discover that the news of her quiet romance has travelled through the colony from LowWu [sic.] to Repulse Bay with the velocity of an interplanetary rocket. Before she knows it, her name is scratched off every important social list in the colony,' *Tales of Hong Kong*, (Gleason, 1967, p. 11-12).

³⁷ Informant interview: L.B.F.L. 21.03.02.

³⁸ Informant interview: M.M.T.L. 16.08.02.

³⁹ Informant interview: D.D.C.C. 13.08.99.

⁴⁰ I am grateful to female friends for conversations on this topic.

⁴¹ See Wong, *Emigrant Entrepreneurs: Shanghai Industrialists in Hong Kong*, (S. L. Wong, 1988, p. 23).

⁴² 'Over the last few decades, the standard of living in Hong Kong has risen by an extraordinary degree ... until the 1960s, Hong Kong was very much a developing economy in its per capita income, but by 1997, Hong Kong's per capita income, in real purchasing power, was roughly equal to that of Japan, and 80% of that of the United States,' (G. Mathews & T.-L. Lui, 2001, p. 9).

⁴³ 'For people who have grown up in comparative poverty, to now have the possibility of wealth and of freely consuming seems an unalloyed good. One finds, in Hong Kong, very little criticism of consumption and consumerism, outside of refined intellectual circles; it is seen by almost everyone as a positive thing.' (G. Mathews & T.-L. Lui, 2001, p. 10).

⁴⁴ See Faure, *Economy*, (Faure & Lee, 2004, p. 334). Like much of Asia, children have traditionally been seen as a means of support in old age, see informant interview: S.G.M.J. 24.07.01.

⁴⁵ Informant interview: S.G.M.J. 24.07.01.

⁴⁶ For example, Mr and Mrs Kai Bong Chau.

⁴⁷ See Lanchester, *Fragrant Harbour*, (Lanchester, 2002, p. 35-36).

⁴⁸ See Szeto, *Of hearts & hands: Hong Kong's traditional trades and crafts*, (Szeto, 1996), and *Dress in Hong Kong: a century of change and customs*, (Szeto, 1992). Author Charles Drage describes the role of the comprador, a title originating in early foreign trade practice in the Appendix 111 to his book *Taikoo*, a history of Swire, one of the local *hongs*:

'The foreign merchant, knowing little if any Chinese, had to rely on a Chinese merchant to conduct the Chinese side of his business. The Chinese merchant who undertook this work was called a comprador, a word of Portuguese origin. In Chinese the word was Mai-pan – selling manager. The comprador had two functions. The more important was to act as the purchasing and selling agent for the foreign merchant. The second function was to provide and guarantee the good faith and financial integrity of the Chinese staff employed in the undertaking [to the foreign merchant].' (Drage, 1970, p. 285).

⁴⁹ See Gleason, *Hong Kong*, (Gleason, 1963, pp. 114-5).

⁵⁰ 'Most of its residents have always been too poor to buy anything more than the simplest necessities of food, clothing and shelter.' (Gleason, 1963, p. 128).

⁵¹ See Morris, *Hong Kong: an Epilogue to an Empire*, (J. Morris, 1993, p. 166).

⁵² Korean war: 1950–1953. See Morris, *Hong Kong: an Epilogue to an Empire*, (J. Morris, 2000, p. 28).

'The revolution itself sent an influx of refugee industrialists into Hong Kong, and when in the following year [1950] the revolutionary Government went to war against the United Nations in Korea, the consequent interruption of all Western trade with China transformed the colonies functions. Until then the territory had seen itself, as its founders had always seen it, primarily as an entrepot, through which commerce with China could conveniently and efficiently pass. The free port of Hong Kong was one of the world's busiest, but the place produced very little itself, and though governed as a Crown colony, and proudly listed in imperial rosters, was essentially an economic appendage of China proper.' (J. Morris, 2000, p. 28)

⁵³ 'In the new textiles factories, until the introduction of the new legislation at the beginning of 1959, the workers did fourteen hours a day with half an hour's break for lunch, Sundays included and no holidays. I once met the European manager of one such establishment, who prided himself on the enlightened conditions of employment in his particular factory. His people only worked twelve hours a day with half an hour's break and they lived in, in long, bleak dormitories. They were perfectly happy he said, and thankful to have their jobs. And that I could well believe. In most Chinese shops, though not in the European ones, the assistants work eight or nine hours a day, Saturdays and sometimes Sundays included.' (Ommanney, 1962, p. 202).

⁵⁴ See Wu, *Hong Kong Fashion History*, (Hong Kong Cotton Spinners Association, 1988). Berger interviewed over 400 companies, in a similar format to *Made in America*. See Berger, *Made by Hong Kong*, (Berger & Lester, 1997, p. 69).

⁵⁵ See Edelstein: 'Water pollution has also come to Hong Kong. The sand is filled with the remnants of plastic flower making aboard fishing junks and the garbage from these vessels as well as oil and other pollutants.' (Edelstein, 1979, p. 122).

⁵⁶ Informant interviews: G.N.T.S. 30.11.01., and S.C.C.P. 20.03.02.

⁵⁷ See Salaff, *Working daughters of Hong Kong: filial piety or power in the family?*, (Salaff, 1995, p. 20).

⁵⁸ Gleason writing in 1963, notes that unions did exist but were powerless in wage negotiation, despite the union of spinning, weaving, and dyeing workers having more than 10,000 members, see Gleason, *Hong Kong*, (Gleason, 1963, p. 135).

⁵⁹ See Gleason, *Hong Kong*, (Gleason, 1963, p. 24).

⁶⁰ Gleason describes how the '[f]ugitives from the Communist 'liberation' [sic.] swarmed in to Hong Kong at the rate of 10,000 a week,' (Gleason, 1963, p. 76). See Endacott:

'The central feature of Hong Kong's post-war history has been the appearance of a vast new immigrant population from the mainland, following communist successes in the Civil War and particularly their capture of Canton in October 1949, which by May 1950 had brought 700,000, refugees in to Hong Kong. The population of 1,600,000, at the end of 1946 had swollen to an estimated 2,360,000 by the end of 1950 and to 2 1/2 millions at the end of 1956. The newcomers made their homes on roof tops, in stairways and in crude insanitary shanty towns on the hill sides, and subjected community and public utility services to severe strain. It was quite impossible to absorb so rapid an inflow and in May 1950 entry from China was restricted at the frontier by a quota system to make those entering roughly equal to those leaving. A serious squatter fire on the evening of Christmas Day 1953 which made 53,000 homeless forced the Government in to large settlement

schemes and the adoption of a policy of integrating the squatters in to the community. This policy, coupled with the new British colonial policy of improving social and economic conditions, led the Hong Kong Government gradually to embark on new and wider fields of social welfare, mostly in allegiance with voluntary welfare agencies operated by religious bodies.' (Endacott, 1958).

⁶¹ See Perham, *Lugard: The Years of Authority, 1898-1945. The second part of the life of Frederick Dealtry Lugard Later Lord Lugard of Abinger P.C., G.C.M.G., C.B., D.S.O.*, (Perham, 1968). See Perham, *Lugard: The Years of Authority, 1898-1945. The second part of the life of Frederick Dealtry Lugard Later Lord Lugard of Abinger P.C., G.C.M.G., C.B., D.S.O.*, (Perham, 1968, p. 312). Faure also discusses resettlement estates, see Faure, *Economy*, (Faure & Lee, 2004, pp. 271-3), as does Smart, *The Shep Kip Mei Myth: Squatters, Fires, and Colonial Rule in Hong Kong 1950-1963*, (Smart, 2006).

⁶² Historian, Alan Smart's book *The Shep Kip Mei Myth: Squatters, Fires, and Colonial Rule in Hong Kong 1950-1963*, (Smart, 2006), explains that the Hong Kong government was embarrassed in to developing a workable rehousing policy by offers of Chinese aid for those made homeless in this and other fires.

⁶³ See Gleason, *Hong Kong*, (Gleason, 1963, p. 127).

⁶⁴ Numerous discussions with informant: R.M.S.S. 11.02.03.

⁶⁵ Running 8,300 hours a year, in comparison to 3,700 hours in German factories, and 1,450 in English ones.

⁶⁶ Credit terms for local customers were based on 45 or 60 days payment. Letter of credit, used by overseas customers, would guarantee payment before production commenced. In addition local customers were offered a service or quality guarantee. Informant interview: D.C.C.L. 26.11.01.

⁶⁷ Informant interview: D.C.C.L. 26.11.01. In 1955 the Association gave \$300,000 to the Hong Kong Technical College, which became the Polytechnic in 1972, and later The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, in order to provide a textile workshop, see Wong, *Emigrant Entrepreneurs: Shanghai Industrialists in Hong Kong*, (S. L. Wong, 1988, p. 66], and Faure, *Economy*, (Faure, 2004, p. 179). Faure describes personnel managers as acting as *mama-sans* to find employees, see Faure, *Economy*, (Faure & Lee, 2004, pp. 16-25), and informant interview: B.V.G.S. 24.04.02.

⁶⁸ See Gleason, *Hong Kong*, (Gleason, 1963, 89).

⁶⁹ Gleason describes Hong Kong in 1961 as having 6,359 companies with 271,729 workers, see Gleason, *Hong Kong*, (Gleason, 1963, p. 89), and: 'At the end of 1961, registered and recorded industries employed a round total of 272,000 persons, with 42 percent of these workers concentrated in two categories, textile making with 69,000, and garment making with 45,000.' (Gleason, 1963, p. 121, 123).

⁷⁰ See Mason, *The World of Suzie Wong*, (Mason, 1960), and Mason, ("Report on Hong Kong," 1959). Gleason explains its impact in the early 1950s: 'In 1951 the economy of Hong Kong set two memorable precedents; it reached the highest level in the colony's 110-year history and then fell on its face. When the year ended it looked as if Hong Kong was finished as a world trading port.' (Gleason, 1963, p. 113).

⁷¹ See Gleason, *Hong Kong*, (Gleason, 1963, p. 26).

⁷² See Gleason, *Hong Kong*, (Gleason, 1963, p. 129). The Comprehensive Certificate of Origin regulations applied to all items thought to be manufactured in China: silk, linen, cotton, jade, furniture, Chinese antiques and handicrafts. Neither raw materials nor finished goods were permitted to be manufactured in China. Gleason explains the certificate acted as an import restriction: 'The colony government protects the validity of the certificates to insure trade relations with its biggest customer, and because it gives the colony a monopoly on certain goods for which Red China would otherwise have the market sewed up. The most vociferous critics of the Comprehensive Certificate of Origin are American tourists who recoil from it as if they had been handed a two sets of income-tax demands for the same year.' (Gleason, 1963, p. 123).

⁷³ See Gleason, *Hong Kong*, (Gleason, 1963, p. 291).

⁷⁴ See Gleason, *Hong Kong*, (Gleason, 1963, p. 133-4). All prices are in U.S. dollars.

⁷⁵ Informant interview: K.T.L.L. 04.11.01.

⁷⁶ Informant interview: S.G.M.J. 24.07.01.

⁷⁷ Informant interview: S.G.M.J. 24.07.01.

⁷⁸ 'Hong Kong made clothing in the manufacturing process and enabled brands to advertise glossily on the magazines....thousands and millions of dollars because they were able to command this high margin.' Informant interview: S.D.T.T. 23.11.02., and: 'The first jeans which bore the label 'Made in Hong Kong' were 'GLORIA VANDERBILTS',' see The Federation of Hong Kong Garment

Manufacturers and Wu, *Hong Kong Fashion History*, (Wu & The Federation of Hong Kong Garment Manufacturers, 1992, p. 115).

⁷⁹ Sam's, the name of the best known tailor, is also the Cantonese word for clothes: Romanisation: *Saam*.

⁸⁰ Hong Kong Standard tailoring press cutting archive 11.03.98. In addition, a number of tailors offered a mail-order tailoring service for overseas customers, Hong Kong Standard tailoring press cutting archive 13.08.69. The Federation of Hong Kong Garment Manufacturers estimated there were 15,000 tailors employed in Hong Kong in the 1960s, see Wu, *Hong Kong Fashion History*, (Wu & The Federation of Hong Kong Garment Manufacturers, 1992, p. 30).

⁸¹ Hong Kong Standard tailoring press cutting archive records a Shanghai Tailor's Union 21.12.67. Other tailoring groups included the Hong Kong Tailoring Contractor's Association and The Hong Kong and Kowloon European style Tailor's Union, (Hong Kong Standard tailoring press cutting archive: 14.5.69.); The European-style Tailor's Union and The Hong Kong Western Style Tailoring Trade Free Worker's Union (Hong Kong Standard tailoring press cutting archive: 17.05.69.) and The Tailoring Merchant's Association, (Hong Kong Standard tailoring press cutting archive: 20.05.69.) One tailor interviewed partially disagreed with the distinction: 'It's a myth, to a point it's a sales pitch. It's a racial thing, it's like the Northern people against the Southern people, the Shanghainese and Northerners consider the Cantonese little black farmers. It's an older style of tailoring, I think the stitching is a lot finer, the cut is very old-fashioned - I don't know an awful lot about it - it's generally much more time consuming, much finer stitching. In a way, the construction is better, but it is much, much more expensive, and it's still the old school, which I think nobody wants anymore. It may have been great in the 1930s and 1940s when it made a lot of sense, but I think that's all gone these days. I think it's just another piece of waffle to get you in.' Informant interview: W.W.M.L. 02.11.00.

⁸² Hong Kong Standard tailoring press cutting archive: 5.12.67. Pricing was seasonal, doubling the week before Chinese New Year, Hong Kong Standard tailoring press cutting archive: 07.01.63.

⁸³ See Gleason, *Tales of Hong Kong*, (Gleason, 1967, p. 172-3).

⁸⁴ The Hong Kong Standard tailoring press cutting archive courtesy of A.S.U.S. 06.09.02., and see Gleason, *Hong Kong*, (Gleason, 1963, p. 295-7).

⁸⁵ See Wickman, *Living in Hong Kong*, (Wickman, 1973, p. 189-93). These include The Chinese Manufacturers Association, the Federation of Hong Kong Industries, The Hong Kong Chamber of Commerce, The Hong Kong Management Association, The Hong Kong Productivity Centre, *Living in Hong Kong*, (Wickman, 1973, pp. 189-193).

⁸⁶ See Morris, 'Ordered British colony that it is, the place was never on the multi-ethnic hippie trail of the 1960s, and no young devotees found their gurus in the Daoist temples of Hong Kong.' (J. Morris, 1993, p. 62).

⁸⁷ See Gleason, *Hong Kong*, (Gleason, 1963, p. 131).

⁸⁸ One fashion informant described the journey to Europe, landing on runways marked by charcoal-fuelled lights as late as 1967. Informant interview: S.C.C.P. 20.03.02.

⁸⁹ See Chapter Four, the origins of the Justin Jake boutique.

⁹⁰ Informant interview: E.E.P.L. 18.07.01.

⁹¹ See Salaff, *Working daughters of Hong Kong: filial piety or power in the family?* (Salaff, 1981), and *Working daughters of Hong Kong: filial piety or power in the family?*, (Salaff, 1995, p. 258).

⁹² See Faure, *Economy: a documentary history of Hong Kong*, (Faure & Lee, 2004). See Faure, (Faure & Lee, 2004, pp. 270, 279-280). I am grateful to my second cousin, Iris Trower for her comments.

⁹³ Pope-Hennessy noted: 'In Hong Kong, in fact, the tenets of the mill-owners of Victorian England still prevail.' (Pope-Hennessy, 1969, p. 98). Salaff records an increase in numbers: by thirty three percent in seven years between 1969 and 1976, see Salaff, *Working daughters of Hong Kong: filial piety or power in the family?*, (Salaff, 1981).

⁹⁴ See Faure, *Economy*, (Faure & Lee, 2004, pp. 171-178).

⁹⁵ Skov referencing the work of Tsurumi in industrialising Japan, describes a similar system of exploitation, which allowed the male breadwinner of each family to retain his position as the assumed head of the family and the continuance of social order. See Skov, 'Introduction, Hiding in the Light: from Oshin to Yoshimoto Banana' (Skov, 1995, p. 15), and Tsurumi, P. (1990) *Factory Girls: women in the thread mills of Meiji Japan*, Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press.

⁹⁶ See Faure, *Economy*, (Faure & Lee, 2004, p. 167-169).

⁹⁷ See Salaff, *Working daughters of Hong Kong: filial piety or power in the family?* (Salaff, 1995).

⁹⁸ See Faure, *Economy*, (Faure & Lee, 2004, p. 256).

⁹⁹ ‘...where a child can get labour in Bangladesh and Decca is a huge benefit to that child and to that family, and there is an enormous double standard set by people, and there would be far better ways of... [I]t is just absolutely appalling to me that the world will get in such a lather about child labour when a million and a half women are in the sex industry in Manila and Bangkok and nobody is prepared to do anything about it. I mean, why will we buy garments from Thailand, in a country that will allow a million women to be enslaved in the sex industry, and yet we won’t buy garments from another factory that is using kids who are under age but supporting themselves and their families and keeping themselves away from starvation? I mean, the illogicality, the immorality of the position of these people is just outrageous.’ Informant interview: S.G.M.J. 24.07.01.

¹⁰⁰ See Ng, ‘Labour and Employment’ in *The Other Hong Report*, (Ng, 1989, p. 131). My Cantonese second cousin, Iris Trower who grew up in Hong Kong in the 1950s and 1960s, recollected seeing children carrying dim sum trays waiting at tables in Chinese restaurants as late as the early 1970s. I.T. 10.02.03.

¹⁰¹ Informant interview: K.T.T.L. 04.11.01

¹⁰² Informant interviews: S.A.S.L. 12.10.01., D.C.C.L. 26.11.01., and: ‘[M]aybe I [have] see twelve, thirteen, fourteen-year olds, but my wife was putting loops on jeans when she was seven or eight....’ Informant interview: S.G.M.J. 24.07.01.

¹⁰³ See Salaff, *Working daughters of Hong Kong: filial piety or power in the family?* (Salaff, 1995).

¹⁰⁴ Informant interview: S.A.S.L. 12.10.01.

¹⁰⁵ Informant interview: S.A.S.L. 12.10.01. Trained as an engineer, he explained how he had begun working the fashion industry in the early 1970s when a friend and potential business partner showed him the crochet-edged elastic used on Marks and Spencer’s lingerie and asked if he could supply it: ‘So I did this calculation very roughly and then I went to her and she said ‘The deal is you have to buy out your father-in-law and then we’ll do business [as a joint venture].’ So I said ‘Okay, [a] buy out.’ And I knew already that my father-in-law was trying to sell his business: he’s always trying to sell something.’ ... ‘So I called up my father-in-law and he invited me for lunch. So I went to lunch with my wife. And afterwards when we came out my wife said ‘Why you look so serious and unhappy?’ And I said ‘It’s a deal, maybe it’s a good deal for him. I don’t believe that he will be so easy to give up [ownership of the factory], right?’ ... ‘My wife said ‘Your father-in-law is doing you a favour.’ I said ‘I think there’s a string attached.’

On inspection of the accounts he realized that the production would not be profitable due to the speed of production, and on examining the market, he learned that competitors in Japan used off-season fishing or farming labour in Hokkaido where each family operated fifty or sixty machines on an overhead-free, out-work basis: changing bobbins as required and leaving the machines running. They may also have completed the dyeing process and spooling. During the next six years producing the elastic trim, he used his engineering background to increase the speed of the machines from 250rpm to 350rpm, finally however, new machines appeared on the market capable of 750rpm. In order to remain competitive he diversified in a joint venture with an Italian technical expert making mouldings for bra cups supplying German, Austrian, and British bra industries, and later manufacturing lingerie. Custom was at risk from overseas competitors:

‘And then, when I started these lingerie pieces, the people I know from Europe said ‘We don’t need you. We can just go to Italy and buy from there. You know, every company they have their own collection: we don’t have to worry about the minimums anymore.’ I said, ‘Come on, I know the Italians: when the business is no good they want to cheat you, when the business is so good they don’t want to cheat anyone, you know?’ They are so confused. They are not organized. They have fashion for sure, but they don’t know how to use it. And they [his customers] tried for one season and they came back and said ‘You are right. We [had] better stay with you.’ And that’s how I have started my business.’

¹⁰⁶ Informant interview: S.A.S.L. 12.10.01. and tailoring press cutting archive, 05.12.67. In 1967 after the riots, Hong Kong manufacturing industries experienced an international loss of confidence and orders dropped as a result. These businesses subsequently relocated as less expensive labour markets opened up in green-field sites in the Philippines, Malaysia, and Vietnam.

¹⁰⁷ Informant interview: E.E.P.L. 18.07.01.

¹⁰⁸ Informant interview: B.W.H.H. 06.07.02.

¹⁰⁹ Informant interview: S.G.M.J. 24.07.01.

¹¹⁰ Separates were only just developing. ‘It was mid-market; there wasn’t an upper market then: there wasn’t a lower market. Everything was mid-market, and the chain stores did not have the hold that they have today. O.K., we had Etam’s, but that was quite low [end] and they didn’t do fashion at all.’ Informant interview: E.E.P.L. 18.07.01.

¹¹¹ Informant interview: S.G.M.J. 24.07.01.

¹¹² Informant interview: K.T.T.L. 04.11.01.

¹¹³ Informant interview: K.T.T.L. 04.11.01.

¹¹⁴ Informant interviews: S.G.M.J. 24.07.01., and: 'I agree a lot of them just came to the office. They saw the merchandisers, they brought the ideas they bring a load of magazine cuttings from the States or wherever, and they'd say 'I want this but with that collar and that sleeve in this colour' and so on.' Informant interview: B.V.G.S. 24.04.02.

¹¹⁵ Informant interview: S.G.M.J. 24.07.01.

¹¹⁶ 'The hong, the trading offices, managed the factories. They brought the people in and you sat down opposite the table, they showed you the kit, and they went, and I don't know if it was partly because we were busy fools: flying in, flying out, trying to get as much out of four or five days, six or seven days as possible.' Informant interview: S.S.M.L. 20.09.01. K-Mart appears to have been an exception to this practice. Informant interview: S.A.S.S. 12.10.01. 'When it started it was so cheap we didn't know how cheap it was, so when you were making a [x] in the U.K. and selling it for five pounds and suddenly this Chinaman pops up and says he can do it for two pounds fifty, you didn't actually research how much he was taking. If he was giving you a good service and the [merchandise] was coming in on time, and free of faults, then in fact, you were getting quite a good service,' and:

'What was dangerous was going to a Hong Kong buying office, and never knowing where it was actually being made.'

[Right, I understand].

'And they'd never tell you and if they did tell you it might have been a lie. So you didn't know the sourcing because all, sort of, label trickery-pokery was going on. Informant interview: R.M.S.S. 11.02.03.

¹¹⁷ '... we had an agent and in those days [...] you didn't actually go into China. They were mainly expat[riates]s there [in Hong Kong]: it was run by expats. They lived a marvellous life and they had Hong Kong people running backwards and forwards to China, and it was very difficult for expats to get across the border in those times, and one just didn't go. So of course, you didn't really know who was making the garments. There was really no Q.C. [Quality Control] as we know it today...' Informant interview: E.E.P.L. 18.07.01.

¹¹⁸ Informant interview: K.T.L.L. 04.11.01.

¹¹⁹ Informant interview: W.W.M.L. 02.11.00.

¹²⁰ Informant interview: K.T.L.L. 04.11.01.

¹²¹ Edelstein claims that there were 37,135 factories employing 773,746 workers by 1979. See Edelstein, (Edelstein, 1979). 'The factories were usually in high-rise buildings, which meant everything had to go and up and down in a huge lift.' Informant interview: R.M.S.S. 11.02.03. In addition to factories, many companies employed outworkers, one informant remembered how difficult it was to control making in the late 1960s:

'I think the other problem you have when you're dealing with two markets is the width of the shoulders: Europeans have much bigger shoulders and much fatter waists for their height. Even if you're quite small you're bigger-boned and so that was quite complicated to cater for. And your outworkers, if you weren't careful, would make the armholes too small and tight.'

[Why?]

'Because they were used to catering for the Chinese market and they were very much in the mould of making *cheongsam*, which is very fitted. So, to try and get a more Western-shape you had to really keep an eye on it because we had some fairly horrific things turn up at times.' Informant interview: A.S.U.S. 06.09.02. and:

'It was only the outworkers who worked in the most appalling sweatshops. ... I used to go down there. And we used to buy them over-locking machines, sewing machines, and things. And we'd go down and discuss: either he'd come to the office whoever... We had one or two different workshops that we used, or we'd go down there: they normally came to us and then we'd go through it. I had to be able to describe to him in Chinese, and x (her partner) too, what we wanted. And we'd do sketches for them. We used to help them with buying stuff: that was part of the deal. I don't think they were so much dirty: when I say squalid, it was more poor.' Informant interview: A.S.U.S. 06.09.02.

The secretary of the C.E.O. of a Hong Kong brand name explained when she had started work in Kwun Tong, it had smelled terrible due to the number of dye works located there. Salaff describes factories in areas such as Tseun Wan and Kwun Tong: 'The dull, monotonic sound of textile machinery matches the monochronic gray, punctuated by the screams of jets as they wing their way

overhead toward Kai Tak airport.' See Salaff, *Working daughters of Hong Kong: filial piety or power in the family?*, (Salaff, 1995, p. 46). See Wong, *Emigrant Entrepreneurs: Shanghai Industrialists in Hong Kong*, (S. L. Wong, 1988, p. 68), and Salaff: 'No one complained when I strolled through the factory doors unannounced into the work area on the arm of one of the workers after the lunch break,' (Salaff, 1995, p. 47). See Salaff, *Working daughters of Hong Kong: filial piety or power in the family?* (Salaff, 1995), and Wong, *Emigrant Entrepreneurs: Shanghai Industrialists in Hong Kong*, (S. L. Wong, 1988, p. 137).

¹²² See Ho, 'The State of the Economy' (Ho, 1989). See Wong *Emigrant Entrepreneurs: Shanghai Industrialists in Hong Kong*, (S. L. Wong, 1988, p. 9), Tsim *The Other Hong Report*, (Tsim & Luk, 1989) and Berger *Made by Hong Kong*, (Berger & Lester, 1997, p. 19).

¹²³ See Ho, 'The State of the Economy,' (Ho, 1989, p. 67), and Berger, *Made by Hong Kong*, (Berger & Lester, 1997, p. 19). One designer complained at the poor standard of accessory-matching: 'We bought all the fabrics. We brought everything and the cotton and the zips [the accessories], because otherwise the zip would end up a funny colour... an orangey-red zip in a bluey-red dress.' And: 'It wasn't bad at all, [but] they were completely colour-blind, I mean, if you said red cotton, all shades of red are the same, and the same with yellow, and orange.' Informant interview: A.S.U.S. 06.09.02.

¹²⁴ See Salaff, *Working daughters of Hong Kong: filial piety or power in the family?* (Salaff, 1995, p. 79). Names of Chinese family members denote their relationship to one another. All displayed a lack of ambition: 'There is no ladder of regular promotion to positions above lead seamstress in the Hong Kong garment industry, and Suyin [her informant], whose ambition did not even extend to this head assemblist position, expressed no desire to advance her job category.' (Salaff, 1995, p. 79).

¹²⁵ See Salaff, *Working daughters of Hong Kong: filial piety or power in the family?* (Salaff, 1995 p. 101).

¹²⁶ Informant interview: B.V.G.S. 24.04.02.:

'Everything had to go through the design room, the production room, sample room, I should say, in the correct order. So you couldn't sort of send it out and have it come back and think 'Well, perhaps I should have made in a different way.' You had to think before the process and have it assembled in the correct order within a day: you didn't have time to mess around and un-pick things. It had to be done right from the very first step, they were quite demanding really. And everyone spoke German or Chinese, and nobody spoke English.'

[How did you find that Hong Kong manufacturing compared with say, British manufacturing or European manufacturing that you'd known before you came out?]

'Very different. The main problem was that nobody holds stock of fabric in Hong Kong, so whereas in UK, you'd have the fabric suppliers coming around and you could order a couple of yards of this, and 5 yards of that, and you'd get it by the following day practically, and then you could make up your samples and if you liked it, you'd place an order and if not, [not]. Whereas there was none of that here: everything had to be ordered in bulk, so you really had to work from swatches and plan the range beforehand. And then you'd place bulk orders really.'

[That must have been scary.]

'It was.'

[Were you dealing with fabrics which were tried and tested, or did you find you'd had things which would suddenly misbehave, or didn't look like they were supposed to?]

'Of course there were some things we could order from Europe, in which case they would let us have sample orders. But the big thing with Triumph as well, was that everything had to sort of go through a pre-production run. So you would immediately order a large quantity of fabric and you'd make it up in all the sizes and you'd do all of that, and you'd do the testing: everything here was done on a much larger scale than it ever was done in England, even though the companies I worked for in England were quite large.' Informant interview: B.V.G.S. 24.04.02. See also Wong, *Emigrant Entrepreneurs: Shanghai Industrialists in Hong Kong*, (S. L. Wong, 1988, p. 70-71).

¹²⁷ See Morris, *Hong Kong: an Epilogue to an Empire*, (J. Morris, 1993, p. 168).

¹²⁸ Informant interview: S.A.S.L. 12.10.01.

¹²⁹ See Wong, *Emigrant Entrepreneurs: Shanghai Industrialists in Hong Kong*, (S. L. Wong, 1988, p. 10), and Gleason: 'Textiles have become the largest single factor in the colony's economy. Textile exports totalled \$273.5 million in 1960, or 55 percent of the colony's entire domestic exports. In 1961, textiles constituted 52 percent of all exports. The industry employs 42 percent of all workers in registered and recorded industries. It has a capacity of 614,000 spindles and 18,700 looms.'

All this is cause for rejoicing in Hong Kong textile circles, but to textile producers in England the United States and Canada, it is a problem that becomes greater all the time. The United States absorbed 31 percent of the colony's textile exports in 1960, and the British Isles were a close second with 26 percent. Textile exports to the United States took a sharp drop in 1961, while those to the British Isles showed only a slight decline.' (Gleason, 1963, pp. 141-2). See also Gleason: 'There was much concern among Lancashire mill-owners when Hong Kong cottons began to hit the English market. American textiles producers and textile union leaders joined in a protest that was echoed with lesser volume by the Canadian textile industry. In all three countries, textile men declared that if they had to compete with Hong Kong's low wage-scales, they would be driven to the wall,' (Gleason, 1963, p. 142). Faure notes cotton sales to the United Kingdom at the beginning to the period of research were 1/5th of total output, see Faure, *Economy* (Faure & Lee, 2004, p. 161). For a detailed account see Faure, *Economy*, (Faure & Lee, 2004, p. 149-157). This was a three year quota arrangement, commencing in July, 1960, holding exports to the 1959 level plus 15 percent, on a variety of garments including: cotton blouses and blouse sets, shorts and trousers, sports shirts, brassieres and pyjamas. Gleason records that during the negotiations, American importers had placed large orders with Hong Kong to ensure sufficient stock ahead of the threatened limitations. When the agreement came to nothing, they found reasons for not accepting their over-orders such as late delivery, or unsatisfactory quality. See Gleason, *Hong Kong*, (Gleason, 1963, p. 142-3).

¹³⁰ 'Hong Kong has agreed to limit textile exports to Western industrialized countries. Annual ceiling figures of export to those countries are evocated periodically, but the Hong Kong government manages to retain the autonomy to allocate quotas internally to individual manufacturers. The basic principle of allocation was originally one of productive capacity, but this was later modified to rest on the past export performance of the companies in the preceding twelve months. The more yarn a company had sold overseas in the previous year, the larger the quota. Quotas can be withdrawn or reduced if the companies fail to make full use of them. But this is unlikely to happen because the firms are allowed to sell their unused quotas to other producers. Thus, in effect, the export restrictions confer enormous advantages to textile mills which were in operation before 1960, the year when the quota system came in to being. The imposition of the quotas has more or less frozen the relative competitive positions of the mills. Each has been given a fixed share of the export market, creating a de facto oligopoly. New competitors are greatly handicapped by the lack of quotas, and have to bear a higher production cost by buying quotas from existing firms.' See Wong, *Emigrant Entrepreneurs: Shanghai Industrialists in Hong Kong*, (S. L. Wong, 1988, p. 120), and Faure, *Economy*, (Faure & Lee, 2004, p. 157).

¹³¹ See Gleason, *Hong Kong*, (Gleason, 1963, p. 128).

¹³² Also Labour advisor to the Secretary of State. See Welsh, *A History of Hong Kong*, (Welsh, 1997, p. 457).

¹³³ See Welsh, *A History of Hong Kong*, (Welsh, 1997, p. 459). John Profumo held the following positions: Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies in January 1957, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign Office in November 1958, and Minister of State for Foreign Affairs in January 1959. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Profumo#Early_life_and_career, accessed 08.08.07.

¹³⁴ Informant interview: S.C.C.P. 20.03.02. See Faure, *Economy*, (Faure & Lee, 2004, p. 166), and Mills, 'Industry and Trade,' (Mills, 1989, p. 115).

¹³⁵ Hong Kong was a full member of the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (G.A.T.T.) since 1986 able to participate directly in international negotiations affecting quota directly (Miners, 1989). See Faure for a summary of the nature of Hong Kong businesses, potential growth, sub contractors, and the employment of women, in the later part of the period, *Economy*, (Faure & Lee, 2004, p. 167-169).

¹³⁶ Informant interview: S.E.P.J. 18.07.01. See Edelstein, *Living in Hong Kong*, (Edelstein, 1979, p. 208).

¹³⁷ See Edelstein, *Living in Hong Kong*, (Edelstein, 1979, p. 16).

¹³⁸ Informant interview: S.G.M.J. 24.07.01.

¹³⁹ 'I worked for the Burton Group one of the things we had to do, we had this huge operation called Fast Flow, which was, had to be translated and transmitted up the chain to the Chinese manufacturers and to the logistics supplier to make them put boxes in orders and rules. It was a nightmare. It was, like, two years of my life. So to effectively move the distribution of product way back up the supply chain so that they came up with containers which were effectively being distributed in exactly the same way. It was taking the cost of the supply chain, and it was then delivered as people wanted it in the U.K. So you got: size 10s would come off first, followed by size

12s, followed by white, pink, blue, yellow. It would all come off in sequence. It was distribution, the art of distribution, supply chain management was another skill set we all learned,' and: '...Browns in South Molton Street, who were anyway buying imported product lines - their whole business strategy was not to buy locally-available brands - and we were their only Hong Kong-produced merchandise. We were ten or fifteen years ahead of anybody selling Hong Kong-made goods to people like Henry Bendel; Brown's in South Molton Street; Harvey Nichol's: many of the European prestige retail outlets. And we were miles ahead, when we started with people like the American department stores. Macy's and Sak's were doing their own private-label programmes but they were unbelievably basic and [bought] through their own [...] office.' Informant interview: S.G.M.J. 24.07.01. 'But it was people like Ralph Lauren: he made the factories happen, he came over here and did a deal with a company called Esquel. He basically gave them all his Polo shirts. That's how he started really.' Informant interview: S.S.M.L. 20.09.01.

¹⁴⁰ Morris indicates U.S. service personnel numbers in her comment on their impact on Wanchai: '...was like a wildly liberated Las Vegas.' See Morris, *Hong Kong: an Epilogue to an Empire*, (J. Morris, 2000, p. 57).

¹⁴¹ By the mid-1970s there were fifty-five retailers of SAGA Fur skins in Hong Kong listed in a fur advertisement in the Hong Kong 'Tatler' magazine. A young Australian mother-of-two arriving in Hong Kong in December 1979 was amazed to see local residents wearing fur coats in temperatures above 20 degrees Centigrade: 'I am not joking, we came here, it was meant to be winter. It was nearly as hot as today [August], this was on 20th Dec. And I thought people were pretending that it was winter. It was really very, very warm, and I had brought minimal clothing.' Informant interview: D.D.C.C. 13.08.99. Informant interviews: D.G.W.L. 31.01.00., S.F.T.J. 04.07.01., A.S.U.S. 06.09.02., and C.M.B.S. 22.05.02.

See Gleason, *Hong Kong* (Gleason, 1963, p. 120) and an alphabetical list of Fine Furriers selling Saga Fox: 45 stores in Tsim Sha Tsui, 5 in Central, 2 in Wanchai, 3 in Causeway Bay. December 1979, p. 76. In October 1978, journalist Neville Chesney writing in the 'Tatler,' recorded that fur exports had increased by more than 30% on the previous year to H.K.\$230million.

¹⁴² Garment manufacture still forms approximately 20% of the industries in which the prisoners are engaged. Informant interview: S.S.L.D. 17.01.03.

¹⁴³ The tailors described was on Carnarvon Road. Informant interview: C.M.B.S. 22.05.02. The demise of the majority of men's tailors over the period of research is not part of this research.

¹⁴⁴ It is a Chinese New Year tradition that people purchase and wear new clothes at his time of the year.

¹⁴⁵ See Salaff, *Working daughters of Hong Kong: filial piety or power in the family?* (Salaff, 1995, p. 232-33).

¹⁴⁶ See Hong Kong Tourist Association publication *Around and About*, (Hong Kong Tourist Association, c1970, p. 98). Trained as a tailor, Yeung owned a shop in Central, he later studied fashion in New York, worked in London, and developed his own label from 1976. See Tang, *Hong Kong Fashion Allure 50 years*, (W. Tang & Wong, 1997, p. 105). Informants able to pay top end prices were, without exception, very pleased with the garments that they had commissioned.

¹⁴⁷ See Roberts, *Evolution and Revolution: Chinese Dress 1700s - 1990s*, (Roberts, 1997).

¹⁴⁸ The *cheongsam* contrasts with all other examples of Asian dress which are composed of squares, triangles, or make-to-shape, and stored packed flat in wooden chests. The *cheongsam* required a Western wardrobe for storage. The Federation of Hong Kong Garment Manufacturers records that at its peak in the late 1950s/early 1960s *cheongsam*-making businesses employed more than 1000 tailors, see, Wu, *Hong Kong Fashion History*, (Wu & The Federation of Hong Kong Garment Manufacturers, 1992, p. 22).

¹⁴⁹ 'A small, slender Chinese beauty in a closely fitted Cheongsam strolls by with a skirt slit to the mid-thighs, and you begin to perceive the reason for the Caucasian-Chinese intermarriages in the colony.' (Gleason, 1963, p. 13).

¹⁵⁰ Informant interviews: D.D.C.C. 13.08.99. and A.B.A.L. 30.05.01. 'Smaller, less centrally located ladies' tailors carry no fabrics but will tell you how many yards to buy for a dress, suit, or pair of slacks. The price for tailoring when you provide the fabric includes the lining, zippers and buttons which the tailor supplies.' (Edelstein, 1979, p. 185).

¹⁵¹ The T.D.C. was adopted by The Federation of Hong Kong Industries in the 1970s. See Hoffman, *Hong Kong*, (W.K. Hoffman, 1970, p. 8), and informant interview: S.C.C.P. 20.03.02.

¹⁵² One informant recalled her mother's horror when she learned that her daughter wished to be a model: 'At the beginning I could not tell my mum that I was modelling.' [The local community dressed in the *cheongsam* during this period].

[Why?]

'Because she would not understand: 'what is 'modelling'?' She said, "You wear these sexy clothes and you show your body to people?". I said, "No, this is like ...", she doesn't understand. It took me so long to explain my profession.' Informant interview: D.J.M.S. 28.11.02.

¹⁵³ *Apparel* magazine was published from 1969 onwards. Exhibitions included: Pret-a-Porter, and Port-des-Versailles. Informant interview: S.C.C.P. 20.03.02.

¹⁵⁴ Informant interview: S.C.C.P. 20.03.02.

¹⁵⁵ Echoing commentators on early mass-production textiles, a former T.D.C. employee explained how he had thought the benefits of industrialisation would bring economy of production but that it didn't: it only produced different merchandise. Informant interview: S.C.C.P. 20.03.02. See Gilbert, 'Urban Outfitting: The city and the spaces of fashion culture,' (Gilbert, 2000, p. 9).

¹⁵⁶ See Edelstein, *Living in Hong Kong* (Edelstein, 1979, pp. 214, 222). Edelstein notes Hong Kong's largest exports were; 'clothing, toys, and dolls, transistor radios, watches and clocks, manufactured articles, electronics, textiles, yarn and fabrics.' See Edelstein, *Living in Hong Kong* (Edelstein, 1979, p. 208).

¹⁵⁷ Both the United Kingdom and the United States of America developed ways in which to persuade nationals to purchase locally made merchandise. Britain had a 'I'm backing Britain' campaign in the 1960s, and an American designer described an American equivalent from the late 1980s: 'They started this 'Made in America' campaign. You would turn on the TV and there would be a commercial... They panned faces, people who really looked like working people, but not bad-looking people, but not gorgeous, perfect, American-Hollywood people, and he would say something like "I sew the sleeves", "I do the buttons", and they would pan on each person, and at the end of it, with a very American accent said, "from all walks of life and every possible", because that is what America is. It is a melting pot. So they showed all these different nationalities with American accents saying "I sew side seams", "I do this", "I do that". At the end the garment is there and says "I was made in America by Americans", and - I get chills just saying this to you - I mean it was a very moving commercial and it went through America for a long time.' [Did it have any effect?] 'Absolutely, absolutely, it did.' Informant interview: S.E.R.L. 13.11.01.

¹⁵⁸ Informant interview: S.E.R.L. 13.11.01.

¹⁵⁹ Informant interview: S.P.M.J. 03.08.01.

¹⁶⁰ Informant interview: R.M.S.S. 11.02.03.

¹⁶¹ Informant interview: R.M.S.S. 11.02.03.

¹⁶² See Morris, *Hong Kong: an Epilogue to an Empire*, (J. Morris, 1993, p. 168).

¹⁶³ Informant interviews: S.G.M.J. 24.07.01., and S.P.M.J. 03.08.02.

¹⁶⁴ Informant interview: S.E.R.L. 13.11.01.

¹⁶⁵ Informant interview: S.A.S.L. 12.10.01. The only fur fabric I could find to trim ladies gloves was the type used in inexpensive children's clothes which was unsuitable.

¹⁶⁶ Informant interview: S.E.R.F. 13.11.01. 'And you would have problems with things match[ing] and somebody would have to pack an entire suitcase full of zippers and hand-carry it up to China because a[n] entire lot of things were being made with the wrong-coloured zipper. A lot of production problems. Talking to you now is very interesting because it really was backward. I had forgotten about all that. If you wanted grommets you had to buy them here and bring them. I mean, that and the trimmings. It wasn't just zippers: it was pretty much anything you wanted, you bought and brought with you.' Informant interview: S.A.S.L. 12.10.01. and my own experience.

¹⁶⁷ '... the next step was that Taiwan started to produce the fabrics. So we were then meeting up with agents in London - like Harry Boss, a South African - who was an agent for a knitting unit in Taiwan, who were then getting an order from us and shipping the stuff into Hong Kong, and onto China. And so it became a very convoluted chain of shall we say, M&S [Marks and Spencer's] asking for this, and looking for the fabric, finding the fabric, sampling the fabric, and it all became extremely tedious and tiring - that's the wrong word - tedious, and the longevity was enormous.' Informant interview: R.M.S.S. 11.02.03.

¹⁶⁸ Informant interview: S.A.S.L. 12.10.01.

¹⁶⁹ 'And in England we were going through a huge resurgence in new materials: brushed fabrics, Lycra, and derivatives of that, were all beginning to come in, in a very interesting way. So the factories were totally without this information. So people like Marks and Spencer's were saying 'We want a brushed polyester fabric, so many this and so many warps and wefts, and knitted, and stretch...' And of course we weren't able to get it anywhere.' Informant interview: R.M.S.S. 11.02.03.

¹⁷⁰ See Maynard, *Out of Line: Australian Women and Style*, (Maynard, 2001, p. 78).

¹⁷¹ South China Morning Post, Sams. 2002. Joyce boutique stocked Armani.

¹⁷² 'Note that when buying clothing made in China or in Hong Kong for local consumption the sizes are marked for Chinese. 'Small' is really small.' (Wickman, 1973, p. 89). One older informant, a prominent member of Hong Kong's civic society, explained how she had international designer items copied as the local branches of the international designer boutiques, where she would have otherwise shopped, did not have her size: 'I have a lovely little copy of a Chanel in a red suit with black piping... I had copies of the clothes, they don't have my size usually. Informant interview: L.B.F.L. 21.03.02.

¹⁷³ 'and I would have had made quite a few of these, and again I wouldn't make one: I would make six. When I go through the agony of going to a dressmaker, I don't ever have one thing made.' Informant interview: L.S.L.L. 07.11.01.

¹⁷⁴ 'This was made by the Chinese girl who had the shop called The Mandarin Chest. She made it, and we copied it from a cocktail dress that I had, which I think is in the photograph. And she said 'That is such a good design for you. We will do it in the long dinner gown,' and the material was magnificent - it is French.' Informant interview: L.B.F.L. 21.03.02. For photograph see: Morton, A., (1990) *Diana's Diary*, London, Summit Books. p. 53. ISBN 0671728830.

¹⁷⁵ One informant explained why she never commissioned a *cheongsam*; 'I think because by my nature, I like things instant.' Informant interview: A.S.V.L. 31.07.01. And informant interview: S.G.W.W. 31.01.00.

¹⁷⁶ Respectively, U.S.\$50m. per annum, and U.S.\$1.5 billion per annum. Informant interview: S.G.M.J. 24.07.01.

¹⁷⁷ Informant interview: S.G.M.J. 24.07.01. Loss if the product does not sell at sales: in a traditional manufacturing in-sequence system: \$5.3m., minus the recouped cost of reduced merchandise = \$300,000. Total loss: \$5,000,000. Loss if product does not sell in the parallel-production system: \$5,000,000, minus the costs of resold materials and cash flow benefits.

¹⁷⁸ Many computerised repeat order systems operate on this basis: for example, Littlewood's Mail Order.

¹⁷⁹ For example: B.H.S. used this method of manufacture by the early 1990s. It was suitable for fabrics which did not have a special finish, and did not have to be hand-washed or dry-cleaned due to their delicate nature merchandise or construction, i.e.: it was not suitable for pressure-dyed yarns (polyester); tailored jackets – with interlinings and shoulder pads; or garments with leather trims. In practice it was largely used for woven cotton casual clothes using care labels made of dye-resistant polyester.

¹⁸⁰ 'If you come into our cotton factory, cotton-spinning factory, at that time you find fibres in the hair. When you go in there you come out [with] your hair and your clothes all [covered] with the cotton [fibres]. And it's very noisy too: a big contrast to the environment nowadays. But in the knitting factory that I worked with, I found it quite acceptable, although there was no air conditioning as such. But I find the environment quite presentable: enough air; and then a space for you. Not so crowded; not so noisy: it's quite all right.' Informant interview: K.T.L.L. 04.11.01. And informant interview: S.P.M.J. 03.08.01.

¹⁸¹ See Knight, *Hong Kong 1986*, (Knight, 1986, p. 51), and Berger, *Made by Hong Kong*, (Berger & Lester, 1997, pp. 9, 19).

¹⁸² Informant interview: A.S.V.L. 31.07.01.

¹⁸³ This appears to be an international practice by machinists if permitted by management.

¹⁸⁴ Mills also notes the unpopularity of the bleaching, dyeing, printing, and finishing sectors that were major pollutants. See Mills, 'Industry and Trade,' (Mills, 1989, p. 103).

¹⁸⁵ Another fashion professional remembered relatively very few American companies sourcing in Hong Kong, claiming that they preferred to source from the Philippines and Central America during this time. Informant interview: S.A.S.L. 12.10.01.

¹⁸⁶ Informant interview: S.P.M.J. 03.08.01.

¹⁸⁷ See Ho, 'The State of the Economy,' (Ho, 1989, p. 85).

¹⁸⁸ The city of Shenzhen, located in a Chinese Special Economic Zone where foreign investment was encouraged, grew on the Chinese side of the Hong Kong/Chinese border. Morris, writing in 2000, observes their growing similarities, see Morris, *Hong Kong: an Epilogue to an Empire*, (J. Morris, 2000, p. 292). For a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of relocation see Berger, *Made by Hong Kong*, (Berger & Lester, 1997, pp. 22, 27, 43, 44, 54, 63); for a summary of the increasingly long production chains used by Hong Kong-based companies, (Berger & Lester, 1997, p. xiii); and a summary of intangible attributes necessary to gain the customer's order in addition to satisfactory quality of product, (Berger & Lester, 1997, p. 27).

¹⁸⁹ Ghost, the British-based women's wear design name. Informant interview: A.S.V.L. 31.07.01.

¹⁹⁰ Informant interview: R.M.S.S. 11.02.03.

¹⁹¹ See Morris, *Hong Kong: an Epilogue to an Empire*, (Morris, 2000, p. 285). Singapore and Taiwan offered competing finance and entrepreneurial centres within the region.

¹⁹² See Morris, *Hong Kong: an Epilogue to an Empire*, (Morris, 1993, p. 287). It is generally assumed that by 2047 China and Hong Kong will have grown more alike and that the two will be a seamless one.

¹⁹³ See Tsim, *The Other Hong Kong Report*, (Tsim & Luk, 1989, p. xx). See Berger on internationalism, *Made by Hong Kong*, (Berger & Lester, 1997, p. 49).

¹⁹⁴ Mills records Hong Kong's vulnerability to global trading conditions, detailing the annual trade figures as 'a Shanghai loss' for 1988, i.e.: domestic exports increased by 11% instead of 27% as the previous year. See Mills, 'Industry and Trade,' (Mills, 1989). See Faure for a summary of management structures and needs at the end of the period, (Faure & Lee, 2004, 174-178). Mills 'Industry and Trade,' (Mills, 1989, p. 99), and Ho 'The State of the Economy,' (Ho, 1989, p. 96), record global impact on political and economic confidence indices in June 1989. The manufacturing workforce peaked in 1994 at 905,000 (41.7% of active labour force). See Berger, *Made by Hong Kong*, (Berger & Lester, 1997). Sociologist, William Lee considers the decline in women's employment in the later part of the period in his paper see Lee, 'Women's Employment in Hong Kong,' (W. K. M. Lee, 1996, p. 290).

¹⁹⁵ Informant interview: S.P.M.J. 03.08.02. This concurs with my own experience.

¹⁹⁶ 'And then of course what started to happen and which we didn't follow through because we didn't have the manpower, was that importers started opening their own offices in Hong Kong: Marks & Spencer's opened an office; British Home Stores opened an office; all sorts of people opened an office. [...] 'And of course it was all office desk management nobody knew anything about making, nobody knew anything about leather. But that's what M&S found a sympathy with: they could call meetings any time of the day or night and they'd rush over from the other side of Baker Street. And this is where the whole thing became out of hand, because Marks & Spencer's had an office in Hong Kong, these people had an office in Hong Kong and the R&D (Research and Development) started up, but not sourced in Hong Kong, sourced elsewhere. Do you understand what I'm saying? The R&D and design was either sourced in the United Kingdom or by competitive buying by Marks & Spencer's, [or] British Home Stores, in the States, and it was all going back through the chain. Informant interview: R.M.S.S. 11.02.03.

¹⁹⁷ Informant interview: S.E.R.L. 13.11.01.

¹⁹⁸ Informant interview: S.P.M.J. 03.08.01.

¹⁹⁹ Informant interview: S.A.S.L.12.10.01.

²⁰⁰ Informant interview: S.P.M.J. 03.08.01.

²⁰¹ Informant interview: S.G.M.J. 24.07.01. The atelier system frequently used extended family members.

²⁰² Informant interview: S.G.M.J. 24.07.01.

²⁰³ Informant interview: A.S.V.L. 31.07.01.

²⁰⁴ Informant interview: S.E.R.L. 13.11.01.

²⁰⁵ Informant interview: A.S.V.L. 31.07.01.

²⁰⁶ *Amahs* were Cantonese domestic helpers. Informant interview: S.E.R.L. 13.11.01.

²⁰⁷ Informant interview: A.S.V.L. 31.07.01.

²⁰⁸ '... we did have magazines and we would get pages given to us with Post-it's on, things circled, ... they were very, very commercial' Informant interview: A.S.V.L. 31.07.01.

²⁰⁹ 'All the designers were English art-school-trained, [b]ecause the owners of the company were an Indian guy, and then an English couple: the wife had been trained at Kingston and was very snobbish. She only wanted to employ, if she had had her way, middle-class English girls, art-school-trained for some reason. So that was the design department; the finance guys were all Indians; and then everyone else was Chinese.' Informant interview: A.S.V.L. 31.07.01.

²¹⁰ '...the director of that department wasn't used to design work, didn't really know how to make a decision about it. And I found that more and more frustrating. And he was treating us, like, chained to the desk, and we weren't allowed to go out of the office during working hours to do research and all this kind of stuff.' Informant interview: A.E.G.L. 16.12.99.

²¹¹ Informant interview: A.S.V.L. 31.07.01.

²¹² 'It was really quite amazing. It was the first time in my life I ever worked somewhere where I was treated like a fashion designer is supposed to be treated!' Informant interview: S.E.R.L. 13.11.01.

²¹³ Informant interview: E.E.P.L. 18.07.01.

²¹⁴ Informant interview: A.F.T.L. 04.07.01.

²¹⁵ Informant interview: A.S.V.L. 31.07.01.

²¹⁶ Informant interview: S.E.R.L. 13.11.01.

²¹⁷ Seminar: 'Supply chain Innovation in the Apparel Industry,' Dr. Harry Lee, The Institute of Textiles and Clothing, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. 06.11.00.

²¹⁸ Informant interview: S.E.P.J. 18.07.01.

²¹⁹ Informant interview: S.G.M.J. 24.07.01.

²²⁰ 'In the late 1980s, people like The Gap established themselves in their own right, after they and C&A had broken up with Lee Ong Fung, they opened offices. And they said 'Why are we giving this man this percentage? Let's do it ourselves.' But you were sourcing [from] factories and having direct relationships was one of those things, you were naïve enough to think: 'Well, these guys live out here, they know what they are doing.' They are being honest, and they are only taking a very small percentage.'

[And did you still hold that opinion?]

'No, that explains why this office is here: the percentages ranged anything from 7 to 35 percent!'

Informant interview: S.S.M.L. 20.09.01.

Manufacturing employment declined from 42% in 1980; to 36% in 1985; to 18% in 1995, see the Hong Kong Government publication *Hong Kong 1996*, (Howlett, 1986, p. 50). See Berger, *Made by Hong Kong*, (Berger & Lester, 1997, p. 28). China-based production was made attractive with benefits such as tax concessions, government policy, recruitment capabilities: 'They line up their workers for you to see instead of you going to them. They even bring [them] from other parts of the country.' Informant interview: S.C.C.P. 20.03.02.

²²¹ Informant interview: E.E.P.L. 18.07.01.

²²² Informant interview: A.S.V.L. 31.07.01. Indian production suffered quality problems at this time.

²²³ She recalled pioneering sourcing from Cambodia in the mid-1990s: '... and when we first went in there: we had to walk around, and we had gunslingers behind us. It was quite interesting! ... And we now have the most marvellous factories there.' Informant interview: S.E.P.J. 18.07.01.

²²⁴ Informant interview: A.S.V.L. 31.07.01.

²²⁵ For example: denim jeans with crushed velvet (a dry clean only fabric) godets at the hem; bias-cut cotton jersey with bias-cut woven gingham (two washable fabrics constructed in such a way that it would be impossible to wash and iron the garment); or wide-wale ribbed corduroy with lace panels (heavy and light fabric weights, the lace will distort due to the weight of the wet corduroy when washed). At this point Hong Kong had no textiles trade show: performance fabrics were used by imported brands, but fabrics available to local designers and manufacturers were basic fabrics primarily from China, and luxury silks from Thailand and China.

²²⁶ See O'Connor, 'The Other Half: The Material Culture of New Fibers,' (O'Connor, 2005), Informant interview: E.E.P.L. 18.07.01. See O'Connor, (O'Connor, 2005, p. 54).

²²⁷ Informant interview: G.N.T.S. 00.12.01.

²²⁸ Informant interview: A.G.M.L. 24.07.01. See Berger, *Made by Hong Kong*, (Berger & Lester, 1997, p. 36).

²²⁹ 'The fancy spinners; the weavers: all the bastards wanted to do was produce basic stuff,'

Informant interview: S.G.M.J. 24.70.01. He continued: 'We still buy, today, all our wool fabrics, a lot of our sweater yarns, in Italy because the Italians care about the whole thing whereas for the Chinese it was a function of making money. For the Italians: it was a function of the life, you know?' 'They always had a better finish because it was hand finished, and you just can't compare garments made in this country [England] - unless they are on very automatic, expensive Shima machines - and even then they do not compare with the hand finish that you can get in the Far East. And in America they make with knives and forks. I mean it's just awful! So there is no comparison. ... DKNY come, like all of them, they are all made in the Far East. Or Italy, Italy still has, is still the crème de la crème and they still do spin the most beautiful yarns, but basically, it is so much better in the Far East.' Informant interview: E.E.P.L. 18.07.01.

²³⁰ Informant interview: S.A.S.L. 12.10.01.

²³¹ 'Factory owners are the people who swam across [from Guangdong] in the 1960s and now have three houses in the U.S. If they have children: they take over. Women take over and run factories owned by men. With women in charge there is better attention to detail: men drink brandy!'

Informant interview: S.P.M.J. 03.08.01.

²³² Informant interview: S.A.S.L. 12.10.01.

²³³ 'We call in the jobbers, but they're not the most reliable people. Sometimes they drop it off in South America, or in Eastern Europe, and that's it. We try not to have overruns. It's a headache.' Informant interview: S.A.S.L. 12.10.01. Sourcing from India was traumatic because of quality problems. Informant interview: S.P.M.J. 03.08.01.

²³⁴ Informant interview: S.P.M.J. 03.08.01.

²³⁵ 'He [Mr. x] used to work for P&O, the shipping organisation, and then he worked for x of Canada and then he set up on his own. He was the right man in the right place at the time, but he's now too expensive. We deal direct with the Chinese factory who ship direct. So what used to happen was everything was steered through Mr x, everything.'

[What margin do you think he was making on average?]

'Well, I think he was making 20% plus.' Informant interview: R.M.S.S. 11.02.03.

The knitwear supplier distinguished between semi-basic fashion and basic-garment market sectors driven by yarn, colour, or price, with the added threat to business of the presence of the end-customer's own local buying office in Hong Kong which she could usually undercut as her company's competitive edge lay in their comparative experience whereas her customers' company management practises prevented the accumulation of a rival expertise : '...and all the buyers coming in are very young and inexperienced, and indeed, the management is, and they don't know where to start. And they used to move them around: now they are starting to see that they need knitwear experts but quite honestly, they just don't have that cachet of experience.' E.E.P.J. 18.07.01.

²³⁶ Informant interview: S.P.M.J. 03.8.01. Basics are bought directly in China as the cost is lower, however the lead time required makes this difficult to source rapidly changing mass fashion items (such as those sold by the stock houses in Manchester or the French mass-market department stores).

²³⁷ Informant interview: S.G.M.J. 24.07.01.

²³⁸ Knitwear production requires relatively few skilled technicians tending machines that run continuously.

²³⁹ Informant interview: K.T.L.L. 04.11.01.

²⁴⁰ See Hong Kong Standard tailoring press cutting archive.

²⁴¹ 'Of course it is not all pleasure - it soon becomes apparent to the stranger that few smart events in Hong Kong are pure pleasure. They are nearly always viewed with an eye to the main chance, and in fact half the parties recorded in the 'Tatler' are really commercial functions, to woo clients, to cherish business associations or even frankly to plug a product.' See Morris, *Hong Kong: an Epilogue to an Empire*, (J. Morris, 2000, p. 48).

²⁴² See Ommanney, *Eastern Windows*, (Ommanney, 1962, p. 203).

Chapter 3. Retailing

‘And I just thought: ‘God, I thought these people were meant to be fashionable?’¹

My informant, a British traveller in her 20s arriving in Hong Kong from Thailand in the early 1990s, was shocked to observe a widely worn but unflattering local fashion for un-dyed linen. Her comment summarizes Hong Kong fashion: adopt whatever is fashionable and wear it with little regard to how it suits the individual.

In this chapter I examine fashion retailing in Hong Kong focusing on notable players during a period of retail development, commencing with relevant academic texts and conclude by examining some of the clothing alternatives expatriate Western women used to contribute to their wardrobes. This chapter includes a section on visual merchandising which played a critical role throughout the period in teaching the host community how to dress, and a summary of home dressmaking resources. Little has been published on fashion retailing in Hong Kong to date and what has been has become rather outdated as local department stores faded away, and local brands fought to secure their market against an influx of international luxury brands which became established over time.² Meaningfully, marketing and retail consultants Radha Chadha and Paul Husband, have examined the role of luxury brands in Hong Kong as part of their study throughout Asia.³

I have relied on my informant’s recollections of Hong Kong retailing, my own knowledge, and secondary research to complete this section. Informants’ memories, from a period in which they were aged between ten and approximately fifty years old, covered a wide spectrum of lifestyles and incomes. Despite their wide variety of incomes, informants repeatedly discussed the same stores, more clearly indicating a shortage of choice than any other single factor. Similarly, stores were repeatedly praised for particular ranges of merchandise (for example, shoes in larger sizes from Lane Crawford), indicating shared knowledge and acquired expertise.

The following sections summarise a history of retailing in Hong Kong by decade.

Retailing in the 1960s: the first boutiques

The few department stores, which catered to Western tastes in Central were flatteringly compared to those in New York and San Francisco.⁴ These included: Whiteaway, Laidlaw & Co. (see photographs of Central and Kowloon store fronts

and interiors), and Lane Crawford (see Lane Crawford's classical façade in the photographs at the end of this section). Smaller local department stores: Sincere, Wing On, Shui Hing, Tamaya (see photographs at the end of this chapter), and the Man Yee Building (a multi-site building on Des Voeux Road) offered limited choices to expatriates.⁵ Small stores located in Ocean Terminal (see store fronts and interiors in photographs) and in international hotel arcades offered evening wear, lounging pyjamas and robes (see the photographs of Dynasty at the end of this chapter) suitable for Western social events. However, shopping in 'Chinese stores' during the early part of the period remained a political act, one English society informant then in her 20s recalled:

'I was one of the first people to dare go in to the Chinese Emporium when the company was [metaphorically] covered in red, because I was curious. I wanted to go everywhere and see everything'⁶.

This curiosity was unusual in the early 1960s and '70s as the small expatriate community lived separately to the Hong Kong majority (see 'The World of Suzie Wong' for an example of the attitude to the host community).⁷ The changing name by which the Chinese-owned Chinese Resources Centre was known, reflected changing perceptions of Hong Kong's mainland neighbour. A source of Chinese-styled quilted silk jackets for cold weather use, continued to be referred to as 'The Commie Shop' by expatriate residents who arrived in the 1960s. Chinese jackets and cashmere in limited colours for winter wear were also purchased from Chinese Arts and Crafts, and The China Merchandise Emporium, both on Queen's Road.⁸ By the mid-1960s retail locations catering to expatriates included the Gloucester Building and Alexandra House on Des Voeux Road, Pedder Street, and the newly opened Japanese department store Daimaru, in Causeway Bay.⁹ Merchandise for the local market tended towards conservatism and was frequently imported from Taiwan or Japan but merchandise available in other Asian regional capitals was subject to import taxes, and as Hong Kong retailing was tax-free it attracted regional shoppers.¹⁰

Ocean Terminal, Hong Kong's first shopping mall, including camera, jewellery, and luxury-goods stores, was intended to be patronized by Western tourists disembarking from adjacent cruise liners, or staying at the adjoining Hong Kong Hotel. Chosen as the site of the first television broadcast in 1967, the location

became an inspirational icon of modernity for the host community.¹¹ In this translated quotation Yau, a local academic, describes its impact on the community:

‘... it serves the tourists, in reality it has become the locals' place for popular consumption. [...] It is difficult to see how Ocean Terminal impacted on Hong Kong society at the time. But for those growing up in the 1960s, the first visit to Ocean Terminal was like coming to a dream world - unending corridors, unlimited exhibits, and colourful displays of up-market and luxurious commodities and services. As long as you could afford the price, any person, whether tourist or local, prestigious or unknown, could dive in to this environment of material affluence. This rightly matched the psychological needs of a hard-working shrewd generation - they came to recognize the function of spending money, and learnt the social implications of conspicuous consumption, and the satisfaction and pride derived from looking and being looked at. Since then the people of Hong Kong have learnt to... follow lifestyles presented in the media advertisements, and, without a sense of loneliness, to shop in various shopping malls with the belief that 'I consume, therefore I am.'¹²

Sociologist Tai Lok Lui observed that for local people, shopping was a remote but developing practice at this time. Semiotician Morris explained this practice as a showcase for wealthier styles inspiring emulation and a taste for novelty through change within a permanent structure.¹³ As many stores, with the exception of Ocean Terminal, were not air-conditioned in the early 1970s, fashion was generally directed towards comfort. An English designer summarized: fashions were ‘tropical-destination’ rather than ‘international-destination,’ as the Western women’s sleeveless dresses in the opening sequence in ‘The World of Suzie Wong’ confirm.¹⁴ Hong Kong was at this time, one of several similar Asian colonial cities with the beginnings of a retail focus.

With Lane Crawford and its branch in The Peninsula hotel (see photograph of store), remembered for its imported quality merchandise (see photograph of fur advertisement), expatriates were accustomed to supplementing their wardrobes shopping in the international hotels (see photographs of the hotel stores published in tourist ephemera from the late 1960s and 1970 at the end of this chapter).¹⁵ Although the majority of hotel retailers stocked formal evening wear decorated with sequins or diamante affordable to an elite, one English ‘Sloane Ranger’ informant (then in her 20s), purchased an emerald green jersey trouser suit with brass rings, which she

loved in a store in The Hilton Hotel. Her recollection of the location, stock, and the garment suggests this was not an everyday purchase even for the young Hong Kong society member she was at the time. Recollecting her purchase with chagrin, she remembered her affection for it as she chose to wear it for the photograph, which accompanied her column on interior design in the newspaper of record, *The South China Morning Post (S.C.M.P.)*.¹⁶ These staid and predictable retailing formats came to an end with the opening of the first boutiques emulating those of London's swinging Carnaby Street in the mid-1960s.

Things opened in November 1968 retailing to young Westerners and locals alike, although as the local population mostly wore *cheongsam*, this was thought a daring venture.¹⁷ The impact of the first two boutiques was very different to the retailing, which preceded them. After helping start Hong Kong's first boutique Things, and seeing it close within a year, Margaret Tancock opened her own boutique – Birds on D'Aguilar Street, in the developing night-life area of Lan Kwai Fong (see photograph of D'Agilar Street at the end of this chapter).¹⁸ As young English woman, she felt the merchandise then on offer in Hong Kong was restricted: 'Either you bought imported fashion from one of the mostly, quite dreary department stores such as Lane Crawford, Wing On, Shui Hing, or Whiteaways, or, you bought a bit of fabric and took it with a picture of what you wanted, to one of Hong Kong's many tailors (and for most people, most of the time, the made-up garment just didn't turn out right)...'¹⁹ As her quote suggests, Western proportions and cut were not easily emulated by local tailors. Tancock bought samples in London, or sketched what she wanted and had a tailor make five to ten pieces (depending on the style) using fabric from Li Yuen Street in four sizes: extra-small, small, medium, or large.²⁰ She stocked merchandise for a slightly older customer designed by her friend Maggie Redfern (who also designed the store interior), from designer Susan Chan, and imported brightly coloured tights and fashionable accessories from London.²¹ Later Birds employed a designer, and commenced production in Hong Kong garment factories using imported fabrics.²² Despite having no fashion or retail background, Tancock ran a very successful business: as well as designing, buying, acting as fit model, and managing the company, she initially found time each season to design distinctive and fashionable uniforms for the store staff.²³ Tancock's success coincided with the demise of the *cheongsam*, which she was credited as causing (although in truth its

use was declining as it no longer represented modernity). Hong Kong fashion designer William Tang remembered:

‘Margaret Tancock designed some young styles and visited various factories in the factory area. She offered them a very favourable term [sic] - as long as they could manufacture a minimum of 10 dozens of quantity enough for her to sell in the shop, they could continue manufacturing the styles.’²⁴

The size of the order - in dozens (not single pieces: 120 per style) - is larger than one boutique would sell suggesting Tang’s comment applied to Bird’s later sourcing and not to the initial store.²⁵

As fashion author Marnie Fogg records, the 1960s boutiques sold clothing which differed in colour and style from the pastels and silhouettes that women had previously worn.²⁶ A staff member remembered: ‘[the first store was] very simple and striking: white with black bits (see the photograph of sales assistant in the store at the end of the chapter). It was unique because there were no other fashion stores.’²⁷ Within a year Birds moved to a larger site on the other corner of D’Aguilar Street decorated in red and black which became Bird’s corporate colours (see store photographs taken by one of the first sales assistants of her sister and colleagues in the first at the end of this chapter).²⁸ Relocation afforded consolidation situating the buying office on two floors above the store. Unlike the extended opening hours of local retailers, both Birds and Lane Crawford kept ‘British’ retailing hours: 10am to 6pm, closing on Sundays and public holidays.²⁹

Justin Jake, established in 1969 began as a supplier to fashionable London stores (including Harrods), specializing in decorated garments including: feathers, knitwear, and/or beads. Whilst Birds offered mainstream fashion, Justin Jake aimed to be truly funky. The owners, friends Suki Kinlock and Jenny Edwards both in their early twenties, used Edward’s father’s transport company to provide free (but laboriously slow) air transport for themselves and their stock to their customers in London, but the quantity of paper work required meant that for small orders the business was not viable, so they opened a store on D’Aguilar Street opposite Birds. A friend and customer of both stores also in her 20s, explained the differences:

‘Birds in D’Aguilar Street was more conservative: separates and trousers, and I wasn’t really interested in that. I felt I was beyond that. I was interested in [Justin Jake] the more sophisticated.’³⁰

The store (see photograph of initial development), which opened with a jazz band that blocked the street, initially employed a Western pattern cutter (later replaced by a local cutter) and outworkers, requiring that Kinlock learn Cantonese.³¹ Garment designs were sketched by Kinlock; purchased in London, cut up, copied, and adapted to a Hong Kong climate; or occasionally developed around a found item. Kinlock explained:

‘...on our travels we bought stuff. I remember buying a lot of antique buttons in a junk shop in England. We had wacky clothes made with these amazing buttons.’³²

These methods of development and production are an early example of methods used by many later designers sourcing internationally. Shoes and additional merchandise were purchased as personal goods in Carnaby Street and retailed in the store. Justin Jake also offered four sizes: Kinlock remembered that she, a British size eight or ten, was a medium or large size. Garments were initially made in three colours, in three sizes: and repeated if the style sold well. Brighter-coloured fabrics than would have sold in London were popular, and maintenance concerns were minimal as it was assumed that the customer would have an *amah* (a domestic helper who cooks or looks after children), to hand-wash and iron the garment immediately the wearer disrobed. Kinlock and Edwards were later joined by a third partner, Moni Narain, who introduced Indian silk scarves - a novelty in Hong Kong at that time - and opened a menswear store Om, located above Justin Jake ‘full of kipper ties, and flares, and shirts with great big collars.’³³ The young Sloane Ranger remembered:

‘...very funky [...] micro mini: they were really ‘up-your-bum.’ And they were being worn: the boots; the Courreges look. It was the first time that Hong Kong had ever seen anything like that. It was quite remarkable. They started, I wouldn’t say a big trend, but they certainly started [one], they were wearing the clothes themselves and they did bring in the mini skirt to Hong Kong.’³⁴

Kinlock, Edwards, and Edward’s younger sister Debbie, were frequently photographed in their own creations in the *S.C.M.P.* fashion pages. Kinlock promoted the store herself (see fashion spread photographs including Kinlock and

Edwards shot outside the store at the end of this chapter), organising a fashion show at City Hall and pop concerts.³⁵ Customers were young Chinese, European, and Indians, either Hong Kong-born or expatriates. The merchandise, Kinlock explained: ‘was designed to be wacky and fun, for dancing and going out’ (see photograph of fashion spread photographed in the store).³⁶ As the business became established Kinlock and Edwards joined their respective husbands travelling throughout Asia, purchasing Asian-origin fabrics and occasionally furs, from Indonesia, Thailand, and Malaysia, which they had made up in to garments retailed as ‘one-offs’ at slightly higher prices than Justin Jake in a second women’s wear store called Sophisticats.³⁷ Despite stories of board meetings held on Edward’s parents’ boat and a permanently retained table for lunch at a nearby Italian restaurant, they both worked seriously at the business: starting at 8.30am and working Saturday mornings, investing profits on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange.³⁸ Local retailers rapidly emulated the pioneer boutiques, which relied on their fast changing stock in order to stay one step ahead of the copies and ‘cabbage’ predicated on their boutiques’ creativity.³⁹

Hong Kong’s premiere international-designer retailer Joyce Ma, a member of the family that owned Wing On, started her business in 1968. The first boutique, three hundred square feet in the Sheung Wan branch of Wing On, was immediately successful. A Wing On buyer taught Ma how to buy. She initially ran the boutique with the help of two sales assistants. The boutique stocked British merchandise for the first two seasons then merchandise from France and Italy. It was immediately popular with wealthy expatriates and members of the local community. More space was added, until in late 1969/70 for reasons which remain unclear, Ma was told that she was overspending, that the boutique would be closed, and she resigned.⁴⁰ With Autumn/Winter deliveries already committed, she found space in The Mandarin Hotel and shortly afterwards, on the first floor of The Landmark.⁴¹ Describing the breadth of the ‘buy,’ retail interior specialist Rasshied Din, summarised Ma had ‘imported almost every well-known European fashion brand into Asia.’⁴² An ex-employee remembered:

‘[from]...all over Europe mainly from Italy, London, and Paris. Then later [1980s] Germany, that was time the Japanese came on board: Comme des Garcons; Issey Miyake, Yohji Yamamoto, just everybody. Most of them would show in Paris. [...] Jil Sander. [...] Remember Joop?’

[Yes, I do, the perfume more than anything. The reason I'm surprised is because of the fit, German sizing].

'They're larger, but you just had to buy one size [smaller]. But there were also European women here who needed the large size too.'⁴³

Acknowledgement of the needs of expatriate Western women together with the local population encouraged adoption of European designer-name fashion dress: Joyce customers were drawn from 'all walks of life, lawyers, ... career girls.'⁴⁴

Other boutiques and designer stockists developed in addition to suppliers of factory samples, tailored items, and garment stalls in markets.⁴⁵ Markets offered an opportunity to purchase inexpensive goods, Pope-Hennessy records Stanley, the most famous of Hong Kong markets was:

'a charming, sleazy little market-place by the shore. Here a shapeless complex of stalls kept by trousered women sell the usual assortment of goods - enamel basins, shirts, bathing trunks, cotton dresses, and children's toys.'⁴⁶

This eclectic selection appealed developing a reputation as a place to buy jeans: '...you could always try your jeans on in a funny little back room behind a curtain.'⁴⁷ If price and fit were customers' priorities this was acceptable to them.

During this period Hong Kong emulated overseas fashion and retailing developments: early local 1960s boutiques initially looked towards London for inspiration and then began to develop their own fashion looks catering to a specific sector of local and expatriate customers. As established department stores catered to local customers with little reference to popular Western fashions until the end of the decade, expatriates were only occasionally able to source suitable fashions for themselves. Similarly, merchandise retailed in Ocean Terminal intended for consumption by Western tourists, rarely contributed to the wardrobes of expatriate Western women residents. For most expatriate Western women access to production destined for retail overseas was limited to over-makes, seconds, and cancelled orders produced by local factories retailed on local market stalls.

Retailing in the 1970s: developing choice

The 1970s saw a proliferation of retail stores of all kinds in Hong Kong: Nathan Road was described in 1979 as a 'Golden Mile' lined 'with shops stocked with consumer goods of the Eastern and Western worlds.'⁴⁸ Wickman notes additional

department stores since closed (including Dodwell's, the successor to Whiteway's, see photographs at the end of this chapter), concluding: 'Compared to New York or London there is no one really large, variously stocked department store.'⁴⁹ The best women's tailors were located in the shopping areas of the luxury hotels (see photographs of Mohan's, who also had their own stores).⁵⁰ Male sales assistants were employed in Ocean Terminal and other fashionable stores, which paid their sales-staff a commission. Stores, such as Dodwells, employed female staff working slightly shorter hours without commission.⁵¹ The Certificate of Origin had an adverse impact on retailing and exports: failure to produce a completed certificate rendered goods liable to confiscation at American customs.⁵² American tourists disliked the system: the inclusion of an image of the correct certificate in advice literature, together with a warning that Americans should not be misled as to which certificate was required, suggests unscrupulous retailers offered bogus certificates when retailing non-compliant merchandise.⁵³ Despite continuing to stock 'funky' merchandise (see photographs of *Oz* and *She* magazine fashion spreads and colour magazine), Kinlock closed Justin Jake after she and Edwards had children, and Kinlock worked briefly for Tancock (see design work for Birds). Reflecting on the rapidly changing nature of retailing Kinlock summarized: 'I'm sure it would have happened anyway because it was happening in London, but we [Birds and Justin Jake] just happened to do it first.'⁵⁴

For expatriates arriving in the 1970s the China Resources Centre became 'China Prod.s' (Products), but by the end of the decade fashion for many local residents was dictated by the Japanese department stores including Matsuzakaya in Causeway Bay, and the Da Da Department stores in Kowloon and the Wah Fu Estate.⁵⁵ Apart from Joyce, the top-end of the market included The Swank Shop, which stocked international designer-name merchandise, and an Yves Saint Laurent store.⁵⁶ Many people barely understood the concept of designer merchandise. One English designer remembered the window of the Lane Crawford store in the early 1970s:

'They had a display of Christian Dior stuff which I knew was about two seasons out of date. And this horrified me because having come straight from London and being aware of fashions two seasons ahead: here we were going back to the Ice Age, practically! I was horrified. I can remember these things: they were sailor suits. Everything was in navy and white. [...] It was so fuddy-duddy and behind the time.'⁵⁷

Nevertheless, Hong Kong retail became increasingly professional during this decade as the new *Hong Kong Tatler* magazine printed in English and aimed at Western or Western-educated readers, promoted ethnic merchandise (see the unusual illustrated advertisements for J.J.'s boutique advertising in the *Tatler* at the end of this chapter, most local advertisements used photographs).⁵⁸ Exotic ethnic dress could be found in Mountain Folk Crafts, a store selling garments made up in Miao fabrics to fit Western customers in Wo On Lane (off D'Aguilar Street).⁵⁹ Fashions from boutiques were supplemented by some home dressmaking or the circulating *amahs* who made (and repaired), items in peoples' homes using a sewing machine supplied by the householder.⁶⁰ Shoemakers in Happy Valley created personal variations in styles and colours, which would not have been commercially viable although quality was not high.⁶¹ Fur and leather coats were easily available and widely worn, as local dress codes remained formal (see advertisements of fur and leather stores, a fur jacket, and examples of suitable dress in the photographs at the end of this chapter).⁶² According to Wickman, locally-produced best buys in the early 1970s included double knits, wigs, sweaters, and women's wear.⁶³ Locating hard-to-find garments like lingerie depended on local knowledge: one lingerie designer explained this was easy to find for herself as the company she worked for had in-house sales.⁶⁴

By the mid-1970s Hong Kong designers' work had developed: Benny Yeung, a tailor who had studied fashion in New York and worked in London, established a shop in Central in 1976. American Diana Freis was Hong Kong's first international-name fashion designer. She began wholesaling her collection at the Hong Kong Ready to Wear Show in 1977.⁶⁵ Mixing floral prints of different scales in dresses of easy-care polyester-georgette with layers of gathered frills, elasticated-waists and necklines, retailed as 'One size fits all,' despite the high fabric minimums required by her suppliers, she was able to obtain very different looks from a relatively narrow range of prints. The Australian mother-of-two, then in her 20s, remembered: 'everybody had one of her dresses.'⁶⁶ The store was also popular with tourists, my informant continued:

'Bored, American husbands sitting on the sofas. Frightfully stylish: she would have her 'girls' [sales staff] done [dressed] in her frocks. [Frocks were] something dreadful, limp florals and something: a little on the dowdy side - potentially dowdy. You'd go past Diane Freis and there would always be a silk-satin sofa in the middle, and there would be

a bored American husband: overweight, overstuffed sitting on this... sofa with the wife coming out - who was rather frumpy and rather large - and looking absolutely fabulous in Diane Freis-one-size-fits-all.’⁶⁷

Many expatriate informants commented on the generous fit. Other popular looks towards the end of the 1970s were Japanese. One designer summarized the increasing sophistication of the Hong Kong community in dress: ‘... Japanese fashion sort of filtered through: first of all the French [Kenzo], and then Italian fashion.’⁶⁸ A top-end retail employee recalled: ‘Japanese then was pretty hot and a lot of people [shopped in] Japan and look[ed] a little Issey [Miyake].’⁶⁹ She continued:

‘... a lot of people went to Japan because it was cheap and you [could] just go and have a wonderful time buying fashion, and whatever. They looked very Japanese-y also.’⁷⁰

Joyce was one of the first stockists of Japanese designers’ work, before they showed in Paris in 1980.⁷¹ Like many top-end boutique stores, the ‘buy’ reflected the taste of the regular customers, almost as a form of personal shopping, and endeavoured to offer something new: ‘magic.’⁷² Joyce developed a reputation for buying collections comprehensively and was, as is often the case with independent stores, frequently the original source of a design-name brand before it became established in Hong Kong and was able to open a franchised and then a directly owned, stand-alone store.⁷³ In direct competition The Swank shop offered European luxury merchandise (see advertisements).

Tancock built Birds to a group of seven to nine stores which had a huge impact on expatriate Western women residents during this period: virtually every informant who was resident in Hong Kong during the period mentioned Birds. This is a typical comment from a New Zealand lawyer, then in her 20s:

‘Birds was really good. ... we used to love it: my sister-in-law was up here at the same time as me, and we used to wait for Birds - well, when Margaret Tancock was designing - we used to wait for her stuff to come out, and go and get it.’⁷⁴

Surprisingly, given that most residents lived in apartments with neither a cellar nor an attic in which to store items, many informants still had Birds’ T-shirts or other garments. Birds’ price points were relatively low with a rapid turnover of themed

collections including: Chinese, patchwork, jungle, and Indian: all promoted in the daily press (see advertisements for T-shirt dresses and sale; stationery and gift-wrap at the end of this chapter). Without wishing to foreshadow the chapter on mediation, Tancock's clear perception of fashion change should be compared with the franchise holders of so-called international fashion brands, which repeated the same advertisement in the Tatler magazine several consecutive months. Operating in a pre-computer era, the Birds' buying projection was as that still used by contemporary Japanese department stores: each sample would be displayed at a weekly meeting of store and concession store managers, each one asked how many of that item they thought that they would sell (see the small Birds concession space in the Matsasukaya department store photograph showing a limited selection of merchandise).⁷⁵ The Beverley Centre in Austin Road, Tsim Sha Tsui, and The Island Beverley in Causeway Bay offered fledgling designers the opportunity to set up retail businesses (see photograph at the end of this chapter), besides other fashion boutiques mentioned by informants indicate the number of thriving fashion businesses in Tsim Shai Tsui, Central, and Causeway Bay. The annual editions of *Living in Hong Kong* specify a range of specialist optical, jewellery, and shoe suppliers.⁷⁶

By the 1970s Stanley had become a tourist destination. Although it stocked more denim overruns than merchandise 'with cut-out fake labels,' and continued to lack fitting rooms, it nevertheless supplied the wives of army personnel stationed at Stanley Fort nearby, and offered expatriate Western women a 'day out' as the Australian informant explained:

'Stanley market was a lot more exciting in those days. You could judge how good a day you had had by how many bags you brought back: bags and bags. ... The road hasn't changed at all to Stanley, except going through Aberdeen where it used to be shop boats to the roadway which was further in. It takes the same time... [...] We didn't have a car for first eight months [that we lived here], and we would go out there on the bus. There were a lot of factory over-runs and seconds. So you would have to go through, and go through [the merchandise] with a fine toothcomb. And hold things up to the light. Not always but sometimes there was arrow stuck on to say this was something with a hole in. Sometimes it was very, very cheap clothing, there was a variety of qualities: not very good quality, sometimes good quality. There were shops that sold without arranging their goods, and there would just be piles in corner and it would depend on your patience: you could go through piles [to find something]. There was much more of a hunt element in it.

...there might have been two shops that were air conditioned or with the little curtains that you pull[ed] around, and some shops just wouldn't have anywhere to try things on.'⁷⁷

The American relocation specialist recalled purchasing Chinese-styled velvet jackets in Stanley market as a form of entertainment:

'You just [had] to try every single possible one on, because each one was going to be different to the next, and sometimes the colour combinations were fabulous. Often that seemed to be accidental more than anything else, that was kind of the whimsy about it. You just [had] to look.'⁷⁸

Bargains were to be had if time was taken to search.

Fashion merchandise filtered through a system of consumers: those able to replace their clothing on a frequent basis gave items to the Oxfam shop or to their maids. The Oxfam shop, founded by a teacher at The Island School in approximately 1978, opened in the Gloucester Building (later the Landmark), moving subsequently to Swire House, and then to Jardine House.⁷⁹ A long term-staff member explained:

'In the beginning a lot of people thought 'This is a charity shop:' they thought we gave away clothes. So they would dump a lot of rubbish onto [the] Salvation Army and places like that. People would bring things... which we would have to throw away.'⁸⁰

Expatriate Western women were both donors and customers: the latter mostly 'middle-management, or not very-senior-government-official's wives.'⁸¹

Merchandise was accepted on a seasonal basis, and included tailored items and *cheongsam*.⁸² The store formed a source of inexpensive fancy-dress clothing for partying expatriate Western women as vintage clothing, an alternative, in Hong Kong was generally limited and of poor quality.⁸³

Superficially Hong Kong retailing appeared to be very Western, but in 1979 Edelstein still judged it worth reminding readers of *Living in Hong Kong* that sales staff would neither admit that they did not have a customer's size in stock, nor that they did not know when new merchandise would arrive, for fear of losing face.⁸⁴ For expatriate Western women fashion dress was widely supplemented by tailoring offered by both men's tailors and dressmakers (see photographs of tailors' advertisements taken from Hong Kong publications at the end of this chapter), although many expatriate Western women found this unsatisfactory. Generally,

throughout the 1970s finding fashion dress remained difficult for many expatriate Western women constrained by size or colour choice in fashion stores, which focused their offer on the rapidly modernising host community.

Retailing in the 1980s: international development

The decade commenced with the opening of the Landmark shopping mall, topped by two office blocks with a supermarket in the lower basement, the prime retail location replaced the Gloucester Building in Central. Prestigiously, security staff employed only to deter loitering local residents enjoying the free air-conditioning, prevented visitors from sitting on the edge of the central fountain.⁸⁵ The number of local and international shopping malls increased in parallel with the purchasing power of the local population.⁸⁶ Several developing local brands, many described regretfully as ‘nicer than,’ began to offer larger sizes including size eleven.⁸⁷

As a barometer of increasing local interest in Western fashion, the Joyce-operated franchise Giorgio Armani, a favourite of many older informants, opened as a stand-alone store in The Mandarin Hotel in the early 1980s.⁸⁸ Consolidation of popular boutiques commenced: the thriving Birds group which sponsored The Hong Kong Young Designers Award in 1980 (see photograph of award announcement and Ragence Lam’s winning designs), combined with Michel Rene to form The M Group with Tancock as Managing Director of retail (see photographs of advertising campaign, press cutting in Cantonese, shopping guide at entry, sale advertisement in Cantonese and English, store windows, spring promotion, M Group store and interior at the end of this chapter).⁸⁹ Tancock employed Sara Sturgeon as designer for the whole group (see photograph of Tancock and Sturgeon together and Sturgeon’s design work). The M Group opened Circles, a conservative women’s fashion store for the 40-to-60 age group, and Attitude, a cutting-edge men’s fashion brand. Circles focused on expatriate customers who found Birds too fashionable: my informant described it as ‘Marks and Spencer-ish,’ recollecting that Tancock would never have worn Circle’s merchandise herself.⁹⁰ Sports Connection, a sports-fashion label followed: described as ‘a really cool brand...: sweatshirts, tank tops, and sweatpants’ (see photographs of buying staff which indicate the scale of production).⁹¹ This was followed by a children’s store, Children’s Clothing Company: ‘...cool fashionable stuff for kids, which wasn’t the first, but you couldn’t find good clothing for children.’⁹² The group also operated The Body Shop franchise (see photograph of the

interior of the store at the end of this chapter). Dodwell's branches including one in Melbourne Plaza, Central, continued to retail Marks and Spencer's merchandise on their comparatively old-fashioned flat counters covered with folded merchandise.⁹³ The English designer then in her 30s, recalled: 'Apart from shopping at Serendipity boutique, we all headed to Dodwell's.'⁹⁴ Dodwell's also retailed private-label merchandise, the designer remembered:

'A lot of the merchandise made for export, was sourced by buyers in the Dodwell stores department for the local market. It had some expat. sizing... [...] But it was never very interesting stuff and the whole thing looked really, really boring: they had no idea how to place colours.'⁹⁵

The photographs reveal a store with little attention to paid to the display of merchandise (see photographs of Dodwells at the end of this chapter). The booming economy of the late 1980s was reflected in the increasing sales of design-name merchandise. An ex-Chanel employee remembered: 'Chanel was a label [for which] money just walked in. Anything 'Chanel' sold.'⁹⁶

Tancock was forced out of The M Group in 1988 precipitating the demise of Birds which was sadly missed, and took with her the then loss-making Body Shop, transforming it in to a profitable business.⁹⁷ Specialty chain stores, such as Giordano developed by Jimmy Lai and his English partner began to prosper. Lai's partner explained the unique advantages of manufacturing and retailing in Hong Kong at that time:

'If you have shops and factories and they are all, virtually, within a Tube [MTR] ride, if I can get round my shops on Monday, and go to the factory on Tuesday, and if I can see what the shops are performing with on Monday and by Tuesday we are doing something about it, and by ten days' time [we] have [the product]: that's the best in the world.'⁹⁸

Seeking to increase stock turnover and profitability as described above, Lai and his partner took Giordano, then an unprofitable wholesale company supplying department stores such as Isetan, and developed it to take control of the entire retail process without attempting additional originality:

'The concept was take Benetton's speed of response on colours; Marks & Spencer's selection of a key item, which in Giordano's case was a polo-shirt, and [to be] the

absolute best in the market; fastest colour turn; best price; best quality; best everything on that particular item; and The Limited's speed of response [in production and marketing].'⁹⁹

This strategy was successful but he would have enjoyed the opportunity to further develop the brand and Hong Kong retailing:

'[Hong Kong] should lead the world of retailing because they have all the same opportunities that Giordano had twenty years ago, and the opportunity still has not yet been exploited. That is: use your manufacturing base, and use your Hong Kong shops as a test bed, and then explode out through Asia, and then, very skilfully, explode into the Western markets.'¹⁰⁰

This proposition is only now becoming a reality for some Hong Kong retailers. Although new malls continued to be developed offering reasonable prices as the disposable wealth of the local residents increased, choice nevertheless remained limited for many expatriate Western women who, unable to find their size, purchased small menswear-sized merchandise for themselves (see photographs of an Anna Sui man's leather jacket at the end of this chapter).¹⁰¹ The Pedder Building, a vertical mall of bargains, included knitwear specialist, Marga Shoeni (known more recently as M.A.G.), and Anne Klein which offered unbroken ranges in all sizes. The English designer explained:

'They had a great range it was like going into a proper department store because they had everything you needed: the whole range. Say for winter: they had skirts, trousers, and jackets, overcoats and stuff. And they had a big range of sizes, a good range of colours.'¹⁰²

Finding suitable merchandise remained a problem as store buyers bought with the local market in mind, reflecting local tastes in style, colour, and size. Voluminous Japanese fashions were available in Hong Kong and the host population average size slowly increased (from size nine to eleven), but because the host population remained proportionally smaller than the expatriate population sizing continued to be a problem even for petite Western women.¹⁰³ Perceptions of top-end fashion merchandise by expatriate Western women varied. Joyce was diversifying in keeping with other top-end retailers at this time. The Australian mother-of-two remembered: 'I knew that I couldn't afford to walk in there.'¹⁰⁴ She continued:

'Joyce would choose her sales ladies to be particularly plain looking and dress them in very ugly outfits, so that anyone going in there would look better than any one else who was alive in the shop. They were in a smock with [an] elasticated-waist in pale grey with a maybe a pink-binding trim. It was very anonymous-looking clothing.'¹⁰⁵

This seems unlikely. It seems more likely that the salesladies' uniform reflected an 'avant-garde' look which was not recognised by my informant. I include her comment as an illustration of the diversity of fashion in a single location and mixed perceptions of what was 'fashion.'

By the end of the 1980s, in addition to Hong Kong's increasing number of stores, factory shopping became a popular activity for expatriate Western women with disposable leisure time.¹⁰⁶ Factory outlets were much less glamorous than the new shopping malls. An English informant who created a business as a factory-shopping tour organizer wrote in her research:

'...you're going up into all these old buildings - in Lai Chi Kok - there are areas that people can't find, and then the actual buildings are quite difficult. You go up in a lift, and it was usually up high on one of the floors. [...] Initially I found them all by foot. It was hard, hard slog.'¹⁰⁷

The amount of research required to create this viable business cannot be underestimated although areas specializing in light industrial work, such as Aberdeen (on Hong Kong island), Tuen Mun and Sheung Shui (near Fanling), and Kam Tin in the New Territories were, like the Kaiser Estate (in Hung Hom), 'completely filled with fashion.'¹⁰⁸ In some instances it was difficult to determine if the goods were genuine samples, over-makes, cancelled orders, faulty goods, or, if in warehouses, off-season merchandise, or had been manufactured for sale in these locations.¹⁰⁹ As with regularly retailed goods, factory merchandise was 'copied' as manufacturers sewed designer-name labels in to garments in order to increase their appeal.¹¹⁰ Stock turned over continuously: in some factory outlets it was not possible to try on the merchandise, in others, assistants had a good stock knowledge and would attempt to find appropriate sizes.¹¹¹ Factory shopping existed for a limited period but declined as factories relocated, and the advent of advice literature listing factory locations, which contributed to a decline in the tour organiser's business.¹¹²

Shopping at Stanley Market remained the only activity common to expatriates of all nationalities, classes and income levels. An English office manager then in her 20s, who loved fashion, described the appeal of shopping there:

‘... I liked that fact that it was all in one area. I didn’t have to walk miles and I didn’t have to cross streets and cope with loads of crowds, and the pollution, in Stanley. I always found it was quite reasonable to walk around the streets there, and if I went with girlfriends we used to make a bit of a day of it: we used to also have lunch there, [in] the outside bars, outside cafes, and that sort of thing. So Stanley was not just a shopping metropolis, it was a little bit of a day out.’¹¹³

Stanley’s seaside venue had a European air contributing an ‘out of Hong Kong’ feel.

For expatriate Western residents the traditional Chinese department stores of Yue Hwa, The China Resources Centre, and The Chinese Arts and Crafts store, continued to intrigue. Chinese textile products included silks, brocades, jacquards, cutwork, embroidery, red Cultural Revolution peony-flower-printed cotton fabric, petticoats, and wool jackets with detachable cotton collars providing a sense of serendipity in shopping. From this quirky selection this long-term English resident then in her 50s recalled:

‘Oh, yes, I bought a lot of lingerie, particularly nightdresses, and brocade slippers. And at one time I got some Chinese costume jewellery.’¹¹⁴

The layout disoriented Westerners, for example: mens-knitwear, luggage, and Chinese medicine might be found on the ground floor, and bedding on the first floor. The China Resources Centre briefly became known as *Daaih Waih* [sic. big hall] according to one informant, an indication of ‘how Chinese we had all become.’¹¹⁵ A society informant disregarded the intended gender and ethnicity of merchandise purchasing men’s white T-shirts from China Arts and Crafts, which became a wardrobe staple. She almost fetishized ‘Flying Horse’ brand T-shirts wearing them under her suits from the late 1970s onwards.¹¹⁶ In this period the price rose from H.K.\$7.00 to \$140.00 each before the brand was discontinued. When I interviewed her, her wardrobe contained nearly forty treasured white T-shirts.

At the end of the 1980s Swire developed the Pacific Place shopping mall at Admiralty. A complex of hotels, cinemas, and office space, with access to a transport interchange connected to both MTR lines, its commercial demise was nevertheless

predicted in the *S.C.M.P.* as it was thought to be too far from Central (approximately one mile to the West), the nexus of top-end retailing in Hong Kong.¹¹⁷ Tailoring had become increasingly expensive and, as the choice of ready-made late 1980s power suits widened, it became unnecessary for customers who were able to purchase off-the-peg, although local designers including Jenny Lewis prospered.¹¹⁸ Enterprising expatriates ran businesses expressly catering to expatriate Western women's needs: trunk shows in Hong Kong hotels were popular, including those that sold shawls made from *shahtoosh*, the protected Tibetan antelope (see examples in photographs at the end of this chapter).¹¹⁹

Some expatriate Western women continued to find difficulty in sourcing fashion dress despite the increasing number of shopping malls and stores, trunk shows, the fashion for factory outlet shopping, and the continuing availability of tailors and dressmakers. Hong Kong fashion dress became increasingly smart and brand name led in the 1980s reflecting worldwide fashions for formal dressing. Despite relatively high numbers of expatriate Western women (the number of army wives resident at that time contributed to this group), stores such as The M Group's Circles, were short-lived and closed as retailers focused on the local population's needs and wants.

Retailing in the 1990s: for a Hong Kong-look

In 1990 a Marks and Spencer's store, directly operated by the London-based head office rather than a concession (as were most overseas Marks and Spencer's stores), opened in Ocean Terminal. The office had three staff members: manager Stuart Elliott, a British expatriate; a human resources manager; and a buyer, both reporting to Elliott. In contrast to the advertising slogan then in use in the United Kingdom: '97% British-made,' the buyer's task was to source local merchandise, particularly lingerie, to retail in the local store (and subsequently, stores).¹²⁰ The 'buy' at that time was approximately 1,000 dozen per style.¹²¹ The buyer, a British expatriate who had worked as a lingerie designer for Triumph in Hong Kong for some years, was thought to understand the local market: Marks and Spencer's management considered they already understood the expatriate Western market. Although it was developed to service the local market, Marks and Spencer's inevitably became a resource for expatriates. This Spanish artist in her 20s described purchasing lingerie:

'I went to Marks and Spencer's for surviving.'

[What did you think of M & S's lingerie, did it fit?]

'Yes, it was like: you don't have to think too much about it.'

[Don't think about it?]

'Yes: don't waste time thinking about it.'¹²²

Her comment summarises the blandness of the product offer which was acceptable as there were few suitable alternatives. Conversely, some informants were enthusiastic Marks and Spencer customers and many contributed to the brands local success by recounting the familiar returns policy - then unknown - to local residents. As an indication of quality an English lingerie designer had kept the plaid skirts that she had purchased from Marks and Spencer's in her early 30s prior to her arrival in Hong Kong in 1980.¹²³ Knitwear and lingerie choices were valued and petite informants appreciated the size ranges, as garments did not have to be altered.¹²⁴ The C.E.O. sourcing knitwear in Hong Kong explained:

'...there was absolutely nothing for them [expatriates] to buy. I think there was a BHS there [in Hong Kong] but basically, they did have a very big problem until M&S opened up. Things like bras, and knickers, and things like that: it was impossible.'¹²⁵

An English visual merchandising manager then in her 20s, remembered Marks and Spencer's return policy with pleasure:

'Oh, that [was] wonderful. That was the one thing Hong Kong was notorious for [not] allowing you to take any clothes back or change them. For [the] Hong Kong expatriate community again, Marks and Spencer's was probably warmed to very easily because it was something they recognized, and that's human nature. You feel safe and comfortable in your purchase.'¹²⁶

Comforting, familiar retailing appealed to some when no other stores offered an exchange or refund even when a garment fault lie in the construction method. The informant above continued: 'No matter what's wrong with it they wouldn't take it back. So no, you've got it. It's yours: you deal with it.'¹²⁷

The Chinese department stores sold hard-wearing children's clothes with buttons made of uric acid, freshwater pearls, and horsehair handbags - a copy of a then desirable, fashion style.¹²⁸ Some informants had time and sufficient patience to find suitable merchandise as the American relocation specialist then in her 40s, remembered: 'The big trick was finding a fit, usually some part of it fitted and some

part of it just didn't fit, or it just hadn't really been cut properly.'¹²⁹ And this from the Spanish artist:

[Did you ever shop in the C.R.C., the Chinese department store?]

'No never.'

[You've never shopped there?]

'No, I've been there but there's something that - I don't know - it scares me, it [is] kitsch, but sometimes that's okay: you feel like kitsch.'¹³⁰

The unfamiliarity of the display and merchandise remained unnerving even to curious expatriates, and the Japanese-owned department stores in Causeway Bay were considered little better as they began to retail Western brand-name merchandise which disconcertingly, had been re-cut to fit Japanese customers.¹³¹ One Hong Kong retailer maintained that with the exception of shoe sizes, which she admitted had increased, garment sizes had remained the same from the early 1970s to the end of the period of research, however it is likely that, as in Europe and the United States of America, 'vanity sizing' concealed the growing size and obesity of the population.¹³²

Fashion dress needs to be maintained. Informants appreciated the wide range of service industries providing dry-cleaning, laundry, and alterations.¹³³ In addition, the availability of ethnic-inspired garments increased: one supplier Helga Greenberg an American designer, used Japanese *obi* fabrics to make jackets and waistcoats, many of them reversible, with toggles and frog-fastenings. These were available at bazaars and fairs until the late 1990s.¹³⁴ Retailing at similar price points to Blanc de Chine (retailer of pre-modern Chinese-inspired dress), they were expensive but informants who purchased them considered them a good investment as, as a form of stylized ethnic dress, they were worn over a long period of time.¹³⁵

Retail investment became increasingly risky as rents escalated: Sternquist, compared retailing costs with those of Ginza, Tokyo's most expensive retail district, nevertheless, established players were able to consolidate their businesses.¹³⁶ The prominence of designer-name merchandise increased, especially handbags and footwear popular with local residents.¹³⁷ The Beverley Centre continued to provide a space for fledgling designers to showcase and sell their work, including the young casual fashion group Kitterick. Factory shopping remained a popular past-time: the factory-outlet tour owner developed a fashion-shopping tour, which included the Joyce warehouse in Aberdeen.¹³⁸ The increase in retail sites in the late 1990s

contributed to the decline in fashion for factory shopping, combined with continuing factory relocation over the border and an increase in the disposable income of mainland Chinese, created a local market for off-season merchandise on the mainland although Stanley market, largely a tourist destination by this time, remained a useful shopping destination.¹³⁹ Hong Kong stores were a vacation destination for Japanese tourists who came to shop with a list of purchases for friends seeking less expensive merchandise than that available in Japanese stores dogged by inefficient retail practices which resulted in higher prices.¹⁴⁰ Expatriate Western women were amazed to see customers queuing to enter top-end, designer-name stores supervised by security staff admitting limited numbers of customers at a time.¹⁴¹ Local retailers founded stores with Italian-sounding names as the Japanese liked Italian merchandise.¹⁴²

In 1994 Hong Kong's most famous brand name Shanghai Tang, initially a project of local playboy Sir David Tang, opened in the alleyway at the side of the Pedder Building (see photographs at the end of this chapter). Tang had successfully developed The China Club and a cigar shop in Hong Kong, and realized after the well-publicized sale of Gucci for eight million American dollars, that 'brand' was a developing market. Seeking to create the first top-end Chinese brand name, he recognized that the growing affluence of Asia would provide a market for a brand compatible 'with the growing affluence of Hong Kong and Asia, Singapore, Malaysia, and in particular, China: [where] people [were becoming] much more conscious of status symbol[s...]. That was something that I was interested in because it's an everyday necessity, and fashion touches us all to some degree.'¹⁴³ He recognized the opportunity to make higher margins that a designer-label brand offered having seen the prices that Hong Kong-made private-label production could command.¹⁴⁴ Proximity to Chinese manufacturing was initially intended to shorten production lead-times enabling the store to offer merchandise in the same season as that in which trend predictions were produced - although in practice this would have been too early to maximise sales given the target market.

Sales of Shanghai Tang merchandise, initially Chinese-detailed styles in silk jacquard made to fit Westerners, have been phenomenal.¹⁴⁵ Early ranges reflecting Tang's interest in Chinese pop-art, used bright colours: lime-green, orange, red, or purple. Hamstrung by the 'Made by Chinese' strap-line which demanded that fabrics be sourced from China, a new world-wide fabric sourcing policy resolved

the limitations of production as with the exception of silks and cashmere, Chinese mass fabric production of staple fabrics, was wholly unsuited for use in top-end merchandise. Customer focus was initially top-end, and middle-aged (ideally, those who were then purchasing Chanel) offering tailor-made *cheongsam*, but Tang wanted ‘to make it funky: to introduce it to a much younger age group.’¹⁴⁶ Given the opportunity, he would have organized the buying office in much the same way that historian Alison Adburgham records the early organization of buyers in the London department store Liberties. Tang explained:

‘I [would] have [sent] thirty-one merchandisers to thirty-one [Chinese] provinces and [have them] come back every two weeks and bring me either things, which have already been made, or interesting swatches, or whatever it is. And I will sit and say ‘Let’s concentrate on the Southern province first. All right, now you ten people what have you brought me back?’ And if they’re no good send them back and after a while you know whether they’ve got the eye or not. I’m not interested in people saying ‘design this.’ I’m much more interested in the basic concept of the medium...’¹⁴⁷

Tang’s intention was to develop existing merchandise but to change the colour and styling, rather than to attempt to create a new product, which did not exist - often for technical reasons. This strategy would have been unlikely to produce unique product required by top end brands but Tang remains passionate about the quality and detail of the Shanghai Tang product.

The store, designed as a charming, interesting place to visit, and for those knowledgeable about Chinese history and Shanghai’s pre-war culture, was both nostalgic and informative. Shortly after opening, the store expanded to encompass twelve thousand square feet: covering both the ground and first floor of the Pedder Building, one of the few original buildings remaining in the Central district. Shanghai Tang was used as a ‘shopping opportunity’ for celebrity visitors to Hong Kong: photographs beside the entrance recorded many famous faces. The concept was successfully duplicated in New York shortly after the Handover, after relocation to a suitable site. The store was popular with expatriates and tourists as a source of gift purchases as Din records:

‘Shanghai Tang has been a great success, in its first year alone the Tang store attracted over a million visitors [...] by the end of 1997 this had risen to over two million.’¹⁴⁸

At this time Asian ethnicity was fashionable, and other retailers attempted to copy Shanghai Tang-styled merchandise in polyester jacquard for the Handover. Blanc de Chine, developed by a husband and wife team located above Shanghai Tang in the Pedder Building, used the neutral and conservative colours of historical Chinese dress and natural fibres (silk jacquard, fine wools, and cotton) to offer ‘timeless’ garments, (that is, if timeless modernity can be derived from ethnic dress), for example: a reversible scarf with pockets to put hands in, which did not form part of Hong Kong fashion *per se*.

The sales of international designer-name retailers in Hong Kong benefited from late 1990s fabric technology developments. An ex-Chanel employee explained it had been difficult to retail tweed garments for which Chanel was famous, as the earlier fabric weights (designed for use in European climates) were too heavy to wear in Hong Kong’s humid climate.¹⁴⁹ Developing microfibre and Cool-wools were widely adopted across all product categories.

Befitting Hong Kong’s preoccupation with designer labels, a designer-Oxfam store opened in Supreme Court Drive (next to the air-raid tunnel at Admiralty) for a brief period in the early-1990s. Sadly this proved infeasible and was replaced by two ‘Designer Weeks’ each year in the original store.¹⁵⁰ Sale and closing-down-sale merchandise included garments from Chanel, Christian Dior, and Ferragamo handbags, which proved to be very profitable. Merchandise was priced according to its desirability: volunteers used fashion magazines to maintain their fashion knowledge and listened carefully to their customers’ opinions.¹⁵¹ One volunteer explained ‘some of our Chinese *tai-taais* [Cantonese: literally expensive wife] [...] only wear their clothes two or three times and that’s it.’¹⁵² Like other Hong Kong stores, Oxfam stock reflected the tastes and size of the host population with few *cheongsam* and small sizes.¹⁵³

International designer-name stores were increasingly represented in Hong Kong. Besides stand-alone developments, many were part of retail consortiums operated by sector specialists including: Joyce, Swank, Shama, Fairton, or Greenpeace, as Hong Kong became the regional centre for retail development on the Pacific Rim.¹⁵⁴ With three Joyce stores and a collection of stand-alone franchises established in Hong Kong, a new Joyce store was opened in Bangkok. Joyce and The Swank Shop were each operating nearly fifty stores in the region.¹⁵⁵ However, as long-haul flights became proportionally less expensive, expatriate Western women used opportunities

to return to their home countries or to visit other Western cities to replenish their wardrobes. The advent of grunge at the beginning of the 1990s allowed for inclusion of eclectic pieces and ethnic dress of which the region had a great wealth.

The following section examines Visual Merchandising as a means of educating the host population, distinguishing stores and brands from each other, and creating meaning in fashion dress.

Visual Merchandising

Visual merchandising is of critical importance to fashion retailing as retailers have been well aware.¹⁵⁶ It educates potential new customers adopting Western fashions, promotes seasonal fashion looks and contributes to developing and existing brand identity. The visual merchandising manager for a top-end group recalled the beginning of the 1960s:

‘The local population were definitely happy to be led because they would see something, that’s why window dressing was such a big thing then. They didn’t really have a sense of how to our things [went] together. They would rather somebody totally combined [it] for them. So, whatever they saw that worked in the window: they would buy the entire set rather than breaking it up.’¹⁵⁷

This initial independence on the creativity of the visual merchandiser developed the tendency to wear the brands as a ‘look.’ Early examples of good visual merchandising included Birds merchandising. Two members of staff described the first store in the late 1960s as a corner site with large glass windows. The open-backed windows deliberately allowed customers to see in to the store.¹⁵⁸ One assistant explained:

‘We need[ed] to change the display almost everyday: [it was an] easy one of course - not with fishing-nylon - just hanging, just like a wall... we needed to change everyday to keep it fresh.’¹⁵⁹

The large window of the D’Aguilar Street site (with a fishing-line display) was changed every two weeks and the smaller window changed weekly. The merchandise in the store was moved around weekly or whenever new merchandise was received. Inside the store, merchandise was positioned ‘face-out’ to the window: coat-hangers faced the same way; and the sales staff were taught to link-sell, i.e. to draw the

customer's attention to matching merchandise in order to increase the total value of the sale by retailing an entire outfit.¹⁶⁰

From their store in the Landmark onwards, Joyce consistently set a high standard for retail stores in Hong Kong: one visual merchandise manager headed a team of fifteen people and opened more than thirty stores.¹⁶¹ She explained her role: '...Asian people, love[d] to put everything together like a chop-suey: you had to edit it.'¹⁶² The Nathan Road store and the Queen's Road store designed by architects Geo Ponti and Peter Marino respectively were the first to retail in terms of lifestyle. Joyce also sought to capitalize on the 'avant-garde' quality of the company by using American visual merchandisers such as Ralph Raffino.¹⁶³

In the 1990s Shanghai Tang used Mao pop art as a theme to display store merchandise. In hindsight Tang regretted this, maintaining that many customers were not familiar with contemporary art: 'Their perceptions were still the golden fortune cookies. Insulting? But that's the reality you see: you can be too avant-garde.'¹⁶⁴ Tang drew a link between a museum - teaching a visitor about China - and the store, proposing an imaginary explanation of the process of merchandise development:

'The way I see it is that you have a picture or a photograph of The Summer Palace, and then underneath you have a holiday snap of the design team buying the material from the market. And the third photograph is a sketch, swatches, then a sample, then the real thing. I'm dramatizing, but let's say somebody came in that saw that process: in this information world, I want to tell the visitor who comes into the shop to be able to see how this particular garment was made.'¹⁶⁵

The link between museums and retailing is not an original idea, but Tang's proposal can also be seen as accountability, a developing retail concept.¹⁶⁶

Visual merchandising standards have developed from displays used to teach customers how merchandise should be worn, to entertaining creative fantasies developed by international visual merchandisers.¹⁶⁷ The small size of Hong Kong stores frequently curtailed the impact of the theme devised for international locations. Generally closed-back, theatrical displays as those of the United States of America were not used, due to the open-back window policies of many shopping malls and a lack of store size.¹⁶⁸ At the end of the period a new taste for clean, modernity prevailed, in comparison to traditional Hong Kong retailers' taste for clutter.

In this last section of this chapter I examine home dressmaking as an alternative source of fashionable dress.

Knitting and Home dressmaking

Throughout the period of research stores retailed dressmaking materials and knitting wool. Stalls in the lanes supplied notions and accessories, and paper dress-making patterns were available. Until the mid-1980s finishing services for tailored items such as buckle covering and grommet making, were available in Causeway Bay and Kowloon.¹⁶⁹ All informants were asked if they sewed. Initially, this seemed to me to be a means of relieving the paucity of suitable clothing. However, whilst many informants had learned to do so (either at school or as part of their professional training) and many possessed sewing machines, almost none sewed their own clothes and few knitted, although informants, or their domestic helpers, occasionally used sewing machines to sew domestic furnishings. This English fashion designer's reaction was typical:

'I never sewed and I don't think I knitted. It was too hot, and you were never in. Knitting is something I do again now when I have evenings in [in London]. I didn't cook, never alone knit or sew!'¹⁷⁰

The Australian mother-of-two in her 20s during the mid-1970s and early 1980s, knitted as she could not find 'bulky knits' in Hong Kong, explaining:

'It was just 'tinny' knits here. Could not keep me warm, nor the boys. And I like going full, head-long into a cold day with thick-looking clothing.'¹⁷¹

Her comment reflects the mildness of some Hong Kong winters, which could last a few days or several weeks. An English fashion designer resident in the early 1970s, recalled making her own patterns and clothes having despaired of local tailors' abilities.¹⁷² For the few who sewed or knitted, the motive was not so much a desire to save money, but a means of obtaining garments that were not otherwise available. Dressmaking disasters were remembered. This is by the New Zealand lawyer in the 1970s:

'I was very ambitious when I was doing sewing. I used to buy a Vogue pattern, and I remember making a boned bodice, which was a complete disaster, to wear to a ball. My boyfriend was holding my dress all night [while we were dancing, gesticulates] so it

didn't actually fall off. You're a lot braver when you're younger: I'd never even contemplate it now.¹⁷³

The necessity for suitable dress that drove my informant's attempt to create one reflected the paucity of available alternatives.

Dress historian Barbara Burman identifies the reflective self-knowledge of the body that home dressmaking induced is useful in order to think about the body, dress-making, pattern cutting, and textiles, in order to direct tailors, or when purchasing items, which for example, featured handicraft techniques.¹⁷⁴ As consumer choices increased, the need for expatriate Western women to create bespoke dress for themselves declined. Tailoring and dressmaking remained viable alternatives to ready-to-wear until the mid-1990s, when rising prices limited dressmaking for special occasions.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have documented a history of retail of fashion dress in Hong Kong during the period of research. I have recorded a changing marketplace against a background of declining use of the *cheongsam* as everyday dress and staid, conservative expatriate dress. Although initially comprised of stores with poor quality and limited selection, the developing boutiques (both local and international), fashion specialty stores, and department stores multiplied, offering fashionable merchandise to an increasingly sophisticated host community educated by the visual merchandisers of top-end stores. Fashion retailing became a Hong Kong speciality with an increasing number of boutiques and department stores, which drew shoppers from throughout the region, as shopping malls enshrined modernity and economic advancement for the local community. The increasing wealth of choice was reflected in the merchandise offer of the Oxfam store. Stanley market developed from a source of over-makes to a tourist attraction. Nevertheless, size, colour, and styling, in addition to the meaning of locally available fashion dress and the inappropriateness of some international fashions, meant that sourcing fashion dress remained difficult for many expatriate Western women.

For expatriates, dress reflected political opinions and sympathies: dressing in Chinese origin merchandise was initially a statement of defiance and later fashionable. For the host community, the *cheongsam* was a visible indication of resistance to all pervading modernity but other than this decline noted by Clark,

little previously published work on Hong Kong retailing is relevant.¹⁷⁵ Whilst not all expatriate Western women, interviewed expressed an interest in designer-merchandise or shopped in Joyce, many long-term residents purchased from Birds, Shanghai Tang, or stores retailing a copy-Shanghai Tang look. Alternative methods of creating fashion dress, including home dressmaking and knitting, were rarely employed by expatriate Western women, who lacked time to engage in craft pursuits.

I have argued that despite the burgeoning number of retail stores, many stores, with few exceptions, were not suited to expatriate Western women's tastes, contributing to their novel experience of being surrounded by fashion stores and fashion manufacturing, but being unable to find anything to wear. The following chapter discusses available alternatives in more detail.



Figure 66 D'Aguilar Street, Lan Kwai Fong 1962

'D'Aguilar Street, one of the shopping streets leading to the Peak: in the background a modern block of flats for officials.'

D'Aguilar Street prior to its transformation as the night-life area of Central. Bird's first store opened on the right side of the picture 5 years later.

(Hurlimann, 1962, p. 43).

H.K. & Kowloon APPAREL

DYNASTY
 Peninsula Hotel Branch, Map: 94-R, Tel: K-664044
 Hilton Hotel Branch, Map: 22-E, Tel: H-257426
 HOURS: 9-am/5:30-pm Mon-Sat. Closed Sunday.
 Pioneer and leader of Couture Fashion in Hong Kong.
 Dynasty is known for its adaptation of Italian, French, American and British influence in Haute Couture while making use of the world's most luxurious fabrics coupled with exquisite detailing and hand workmanship. Sold only in the world's finest stores. Dynasty Fashions may be obtained in Hong Kong at less than half of their overseas retail price.

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Figure 67 Dynasty, the Peninsula and Hilton hotels 1970

Top-end merchandise retailed without sales-tax making the price attractive for American and European tourists. Note Chinese stools.

(W.K. Hoffman, 1970, p. 117), compliments of The Mandarin Hotel.

Kowloon

Readymade APPAREL



INTERNATIONAL DRESS SHOP Tel: K-673517
 245 Lantao Gallery, Ocean Terminal, Kowloon: K-1
 HOURS: 9:30-am/6:30-pm Mon-Sat; 11-am/4-pm Sun.
 BRANCH: 57 Hankow Road, Kowloon Map: K-44
 HOURS: 9:30-am/6:30-pm M-S; Closed Sun. K-661280
 The International Dress Shop holds the largest stock
 and selection in town of Ready-Made Dresses for all
 occasions. Drip-dry cottons, silks, tricels, tetrolenes,
 brocades and jersey wools. They specialize in Italian-
 Style Double-Knit 2 & 3 piece suits European &
 American Sizes & Fashions; also rainwear. It is a
 family business (Proprietress: Pamela D. Barton)
 giving personal and courteous service with moderate
 prices U.S. Sizes 8/20, hips 34"/46"



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Figure 68 International Dress Shop, Ocean Terminal, 1970

Top-end fashion retailer Pamela Barton offered merchandise in European and American sizes.
 (W.K. Hoffman, 1970, p. 119), compliments of The Mandarin Hotel.

BOUTIQUE

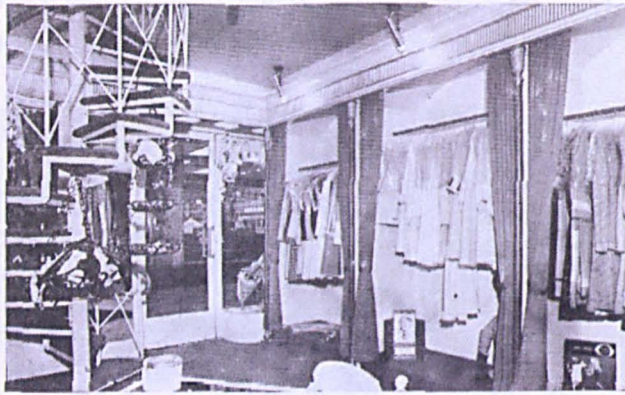
Hong Kong

**PARIS 20 ANS**

Alexandra Arcade (No. 1, East) Des Voeux Rd., H.K.
 Telephone: HK-227620 Map Position: HK-21

HOURS: 9:30-am/6:30-pm Monday to Saturday.

Paris 20 Ans brings the elegance of French fashions to Hong Kong. It is the first French Boutique in the Colony. From costume jewellery to cocktail dresses all stock is imported from the Continent, mainly from Paris. Most items are sold exclusively by Paris 20 Ans. Specialities include foundation wear from Scandale, lingerie from Delfine, Emilio Pucci's Vivara perfume, dresses from Maggy Rouff, knitwear from Virgul and fashion watches from Titus, Geneva and Sheffield Switzerland.



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Figure 69 Paris 20 Ans, Alexander Arcade, Des Voeux Road 1970

Reliance on overseas fashion and quality merchandise.

(W. K. Hoffman, 1967, p. 103), compliments of The Hilton Hotel.

DEPARTMENT STORE



Des Voeux Road, Central District, Hong Kong
 Telephone: H-232191 Map Position: HK 35
 HOURS: 9-am/6-pm Mon-Sat, closed Sunday.
 Lane Crawford is a quality British department store which was established before Abraham Lincoln became President of America. In addition to the Main Store, located in the Hong Kong Central District, there are two branches in Kowloon (see pages 118/119).

Lane Crawford

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Figure 70 Lane Crawford, Des Voeux Road, 1967

The original Central store emphasizes its origins, 'British' opening hours, and logo.

(W. K. Hoffman, 1967, p. 113), compliments of The Hilton Hotel.



Figure 71 Lane Crawford tailoring dept. Miramar Hotel branch, 1967

'Lane Crawford's Kowloon branch has the departments from the parent store that have especial appeal for tourists; selections from Oriental Galleries, China and Glass, Cashmeres, and finest men's custom tailoring are all on show.'

(W. K. Hoffman, 1967, p. 118), compliments of The Hilton Hotel.



Figure 72 Lane Crawford Mikimoto Pearl dept. Miramar Hotel 1967

'You'll find the British Manager courteous and helpful.'

Emphasis on brand name and ease of communication with sales staff.

(W. K. Hoffman, 1967, p. 118), compliments of The Hilton Hotel.



Figure 73 Lane Crawford Mikimoto Pearl dept. Peninsula Hotel

'This high-class jewellery shop specialises in the exclusive Mikimoto pearls, unobtainable elsewhere in Hong Kong. The intimate and friendly atmosphere is ideal for the careful, selective approach to jewellery buying which the wise tourist insists upon.'

Well-displayed and colour co-ordinated retail space.

(W. K. Hoffman, 1967, p. 119), compliments of The Hilton Hotel.



Figure 74 Lane Crawford fur dept. Central store 1967

'The Jacques Fur Salon, situated on the Ground floor of the main store, Lane Crawford House, has a spectacular collection of furs from the latest collection of Jacques of Canada.'

Range of merchandise includes stoles.

(W. K. Hoffman, 1967, p. 120), compliments of The Hilton Hotel.

BEST BUYS
Jacques furs




Jacques furs go to any lengths for quality

Jacques Furs of Canada are imported to Hong Kong for the truly discriminating buyer. Like you. Mink, sable, Russian broadtail, leopard and chinchilla are among the furs offered. Available only at Lane Crawford, Des Voeux Road Central. Every fur is unconditionally guaranteed.

Lane Crawford

Ground Floor, Lane Crawford House,
Des Voeux Road, Hong Kong.

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Figure 75 Jacques Furs of Canada

Emphasis on guarantee and imported quality of merchandise.

(W.K. Hoffman, 1970, p. 132), compliments of The Mandarin Hotel.



Figure 76 Lane Crawford Glass and silver ware dept.

Brand names displayed over merchandise.

(W. K. Hoffman, 1967, p. 120), compliments of The Hilton Hotel.

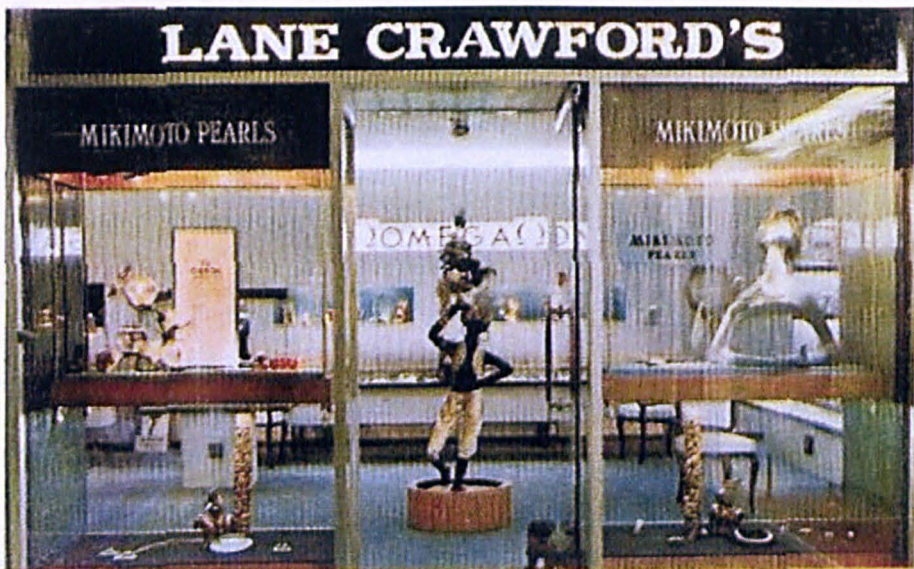


Figure 77 Lane Crawford, the Peninsula hotel branch 1967

'The Peninsula Shop also has a fully-stocked Omega watch section.'

Mikimoto Pearls on glass under Lane Crawford's fascia. The Omega watch name and logo is visible through the door.

(W. K. Hoffman, 1967, p. 119), compliments of The Hilton Hotel.



Figure 78 Lane Crawford cosmetics dept. 1967

Max Factor and Revlon brand names on fascia, with the ubiquitous chairs for customer's comfort.
(W. K. Hoffman, 1967, p. 114), compliments of The Hilton Hotel.



Figure 79 Lane Crawford jewellery dept. 1967

Mikimoto Pearl sign visible behind Japanese garden display.
(W. K. Hoffman, 1967, p. 114), compliments of The Hilton Hotel.



Figure 80 Mohan's Hankow/Peking Road, T.S.T. 1970

'Hong Kong's largest custom tailors...'

Offered to furnish a customer's wardrobe in 48 hours.

(W.K. Hoffman, 1970, p. 206), compliments of The Mandarin Hotel.



Figure 81 Mohan's interior, Tsim Sha Tsui, 1970

Men's tailoring. Women's wear is not offered.

(W.K. Hoffman, 1970, p. 206), compliments of The Mandarin Hotel.



Figure 82 Mohan's, the Hong Kong hotel arcade 1970

Store located in hotel adjacent to Ocean Terminal. Women's tailoring poster in window.
 (W.K. Hoffman, 1970, p. 206), compliments of The Mandarin Hotel.



Figure 83 Mohan's interior, the Hong Kong hotel arcade 1970

Decorated as a gentleman's club this store offered tailoring to 'discriminating ladies and gentlemen' and ready to wear.

(W.K. Hoffman, 1970, p. 206), compliments of The Mandarin Hotel.



Figure 84 Dodwell's interior, Ocean Terminal 1970

'...are laid out like a Marks & Spencer store in Britain and offers a full range of St. Michael quality merchandise. MEN: Shirts, hosiery, slacks, knitwear, pyjamas. WOMEN: dresses, blouses, slacks, lingerie, corsetry, swimwear, underwear. FOOD: coffee, tea, confectionary, jams, cakes and biscuits.'

A mixture of hanging and folded merchandise.

(W.K. Hoffman, 1970, p. 116), compliments of The Mandarin Hotel.



Figure 85 Dodwell's interior, women's wear 1970

Women's wear: merchandised by product category, single height fixtures to see across sales floor and through open-backed windows in to store at night. Prices displayed above fixture.

(W.K. Hoffman, 1970, p. 116), compliments of The Mandarin Hotel.

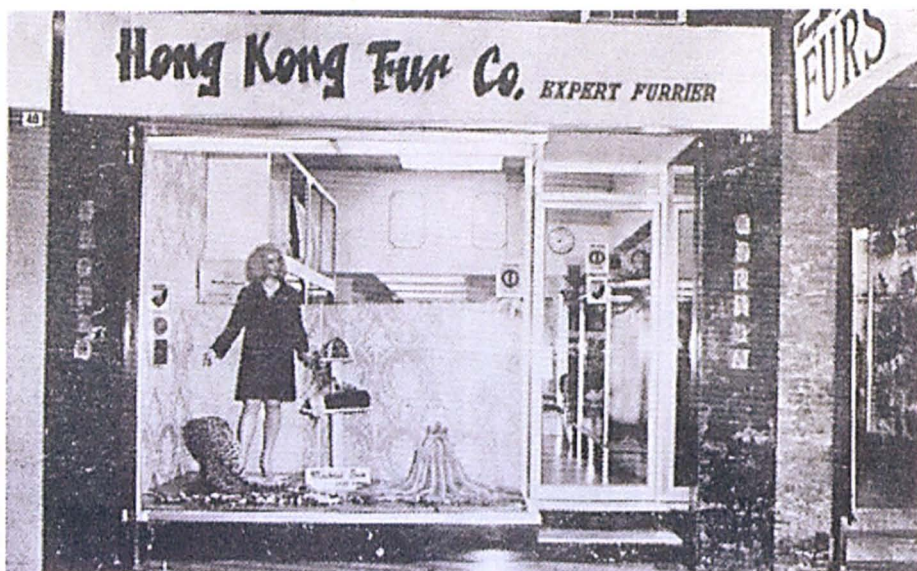


Figure 86 Hong Kong Fur Company Co. store, Kowloon 1970

'...offering imaginative creations in fashion-setting styles, all of which are individually designed by MICHAEL SUN to please you.'

Designer's name is visible in store window.

(W.K. Hoffman, 1970, p. 160), compliments of The Mandarin Hotel.



Figure 87 Hong Kong Fur Co. 1970

Examples of designer's work.

(W.K. Hoffman, 1970, p. 160), compliments of The Mandarin Hotel.

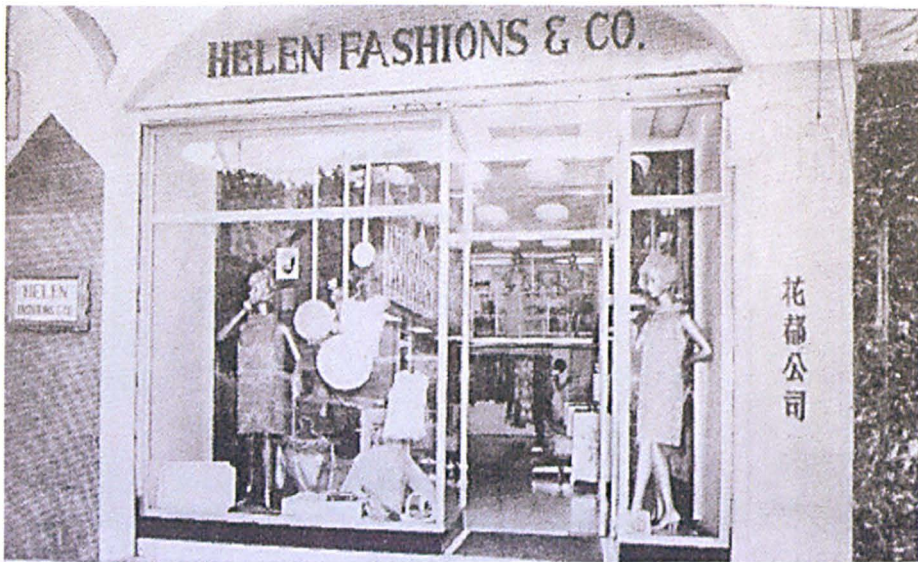


Figure 88 Helen's Fashions & Co. store front, Kowloon 1970

Ladies silk tailoring specialists offering matching shoes and beaded handbags.

(W.K. Hoffman, 1970, p. 122), compliments of The Mandarin Hotel.



Figure 89 Helen's Fashions & Co. Interior 1970

'Designs by world-famous Mr. Jackson-Kwok are available as well as latest designs from Paris and New York.' And: '2,000 readymade dresses are stocked in sizes ranging from 6 to 20.' Long dresses shrouded with plastic, shoes displayed under glass. Strangely reminiscent of interiors of stores in contemporary Indonesia, and Cambodia.

(W.K. Hoffman, 1970, p. 122), compliments of The Mandarin Hotel.



Figure 90 Nancy store exterior, The Hilton Hotel 1970

Shoes, and handbags: imported and locally made, and made to order service. Central store offered leather women's wear. A second branch in Happy Valley sold shoes and handbags. Women's wear is displayed in mirrored store window, and contemporary store fixtures are visible through the window.

(W.K. Hoffman, 1970, p. 204), compliments of The Mandarin Hotel.



Figure 91 Nancy, store interior 1970

The model's picture reflected in a fitting-room mirror gives an impression of the store.

(W.K. Hoffman, 1970, p. 204), compliments of The Mandarin Hotel.

Hong Kong

APPAREL



malcolm starr international

44-46 Hongkong Hilton, 1st Fl., Central, H.K.
 Telephone: H-244661, H-244662 Map: 22-E
 HOURS: 9-am/6:30-pm Mon-Sat; closed Sunday.

A wide variety of outfits are tastefully fashioned in "the look that is right for any occasion". This vast selection of **ready-to-wear fashions** includes such fascinating apparel as luxurious lounge wear, comfortable casual attire, jump suits, hostess gowns, cocktail dresses, after-five outfits and elegant evening wear.



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Figure 92 Malcolm Starr, The Hilton store 1970

'A wide variety of outfits are tastefully fashioned in 'the look that is right for any occasion.' This vast selection of ready-to-wear fashions includes such fascinating apparel as luxurious lounge wear, comfortable casual attire, jump suits, hostess gowns, cocktail dresses, after-five outfits and elegant evening wear.'

An unusual advertisement, focusing on the merchandise rather than the appearance of the store. (W.K. Hoffman, 1970, p. 120), compliments of The Mandarin Hotel.

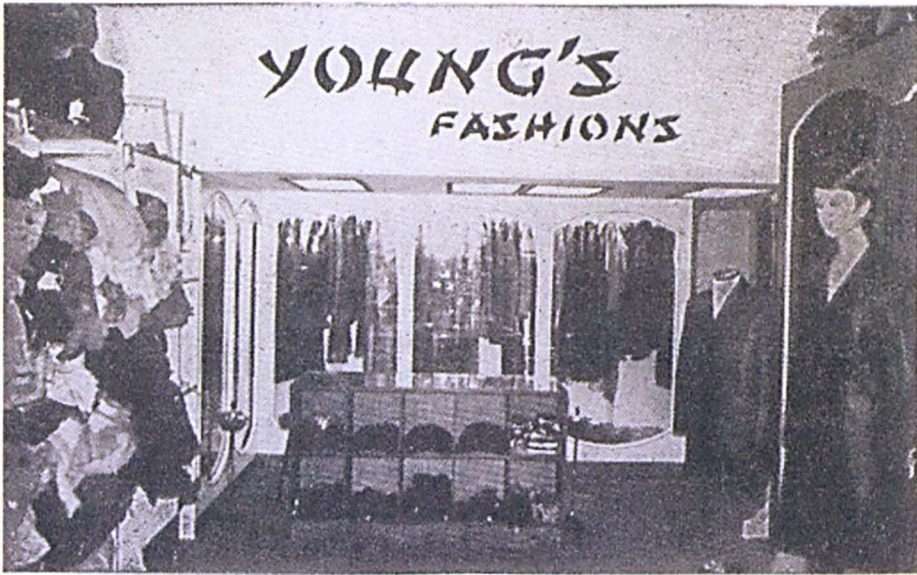


Figure 93 Young's Fashions leather supplier, 1970

Note Chinese-style font on fascia, leather skins rolled on left side.

(W.K. Hoffman, 1970, p. 222), compliments of The Mandarin Hotel.

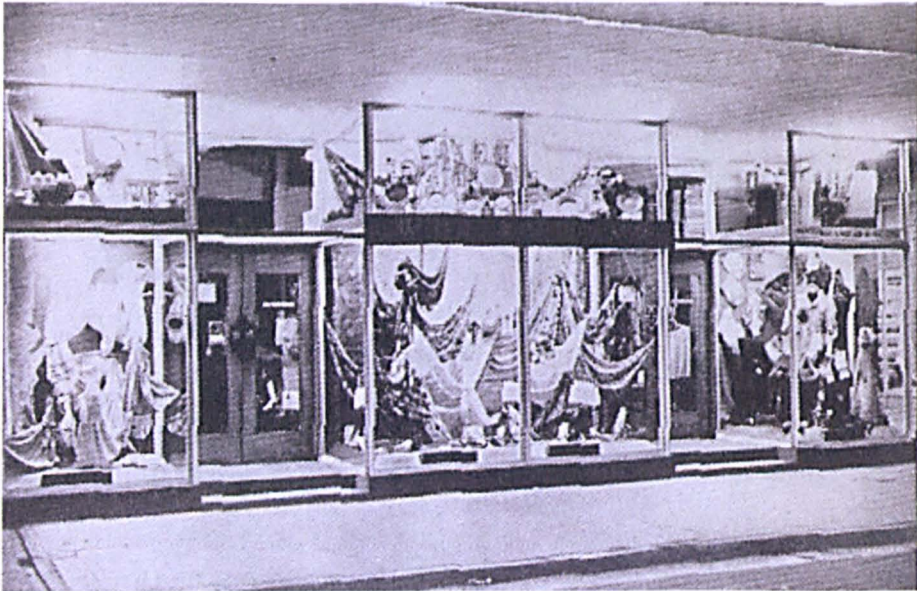


Figure 94 Whiteaways store front, Connaught Road, Central, 1967

'...in Connaught Road, conveniently situated just 3 doors from the Post Office.'

Double-height, closed-back windows, using fishing-line display method.

(W. K. Hoffman, 1967, p. 122), compliments of The Hilton Hotel.



Figure 95 Whiteaways store front, Connaught Road, Central, 1970

Store fascia to the right of 'Whiteaways' describes the business as men's outfitters. Doors have been replaced and upper section of window filled in.

(W.K. Hoffman, 1970, p. 146), compliments of The Mandarin Hotel.

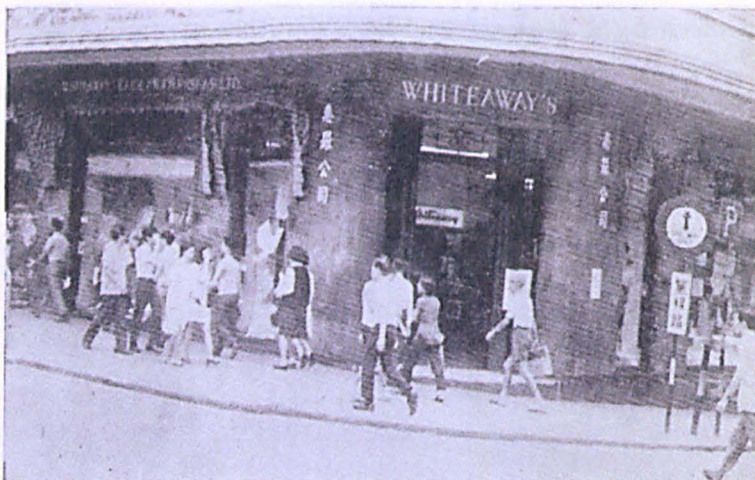


Figure 96 Whiteaways store front, Kowloon 1967

'...located in the heart of the shopping centre at the busy junction of Nathan and Cameron Roads. It is a British company offering British and other imported merchandise of the highest quality, including the finest Cashmere garments from Scotland, Perfumes from Paris, delightful and exclusive Lingerie from England, Noritake China, and all type of department store merchandise by leading makers including Fine Clothes for men, clearly marked in plain figures, offering fair prices for all.'

Copy promotes honesty and reliability. Note, blinds protect the merchandise in the window from damage by sunlight.

(W. K. Hoffman, 1967, p. 123), compliments of The Hilton Hotel.



Figure 97 Whiteaways interior, Kowloon branch, 1967

Interior of the store, Nathan Road.

Traditional cluttered retail interior with a mix of products: menswear adjacent to women's toiletries.

(W. K. Hoffman, 1967, p. 123), compliments of The Hilton Hotel.



Figure 98 Whiteaways' interior 1970

Women's wear, with chairs, and no carpet. Millinery visible in background.

(W.K. Hoffman, 1970, p. 146), compliments of The Mandarin Hotel.



Figure 99 Whiteaways women's wear Central store (?), 1967

Merchandised by size – not lifestyle; in stories; or by product category. Size rings on fixture visible behind swimwear display.

(W. K. Hoffman, 1967, p. 122), compliments of The Hilton Hotel.

HANDBAGS

Kowloon



OROTON, MADE IN WESTERN GERMANY
 Obtainable exclusively at
 SWATOW WENG LEE Co. (Selling Oriental Novelties)
 President Hotel, 41-43 Nathan Road, Kowloon
 Telephone: K-661035
 HOURS: 9-am/9-pm Mon-Sat, 2-pm/6-pm Sunday.
 OROTON'S famous METAL MESH HANDBAGS AND
 ACCESSORIES are available in Hong Kong exclusively
 at Swatow Weng Lee. These elegantly framed, long
 wearing mesh handbags, purses and many other items,
 are finished in Gold, Silver, White and Black mesh.
 PRICES are fixed and range from as little as HK\$11.75
 to several hundred.



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Figure 100 Oreton handbags 1967

More imported merchandise: a German brand of metal mesh handbags in a variety of colours, 'exclusively' retailed by Swatow Weng Lee.

(W. K. Hoffman, 1967, p. 138), compliments of The Hilton Hotel.



Figure 101 Tsim Sha Tsui 1967

'Below is the Tsimshatsui District at tip of Kowloon Peninsula which is the main tourist shopping area.'

Star Ferry piers in foreground, the transport interchange is immediately behind; Hong Kong hotel adjacent to the water to the right; mainline the station with station clock tower behind right-hand ferry pier; The Peninsula hotel is immediately behind it. Kai Tak airport runway is visible as a horizontal line in the background near the top of the picture.

(W. K. Hoffman, 1967, p. 41), compliments of The Hilton Hotel.



Figure 102 Ocean Terminal 1967

Hong Kong's first and seminal shopping mall, with a single cruise liner alongside.

(W. K. Hoffman, 1967, p. 41), compliments of The Hilton Hotel.



Figure 103 Ocean Terminal interior 1967

The Mermaid Tavern on the upper floor level provided a vantage point from which to watch other people.

(W. K. Hoffman, 1967, p. 42), compliments of The Hilton Hotel.



Figure 104 Ocean Terminal store front 1967

Stores, all with open-backed windows, were a source of fascination for the host community, and offered merchandise for tourists and the small percentage of the host community who could afford to shop there.

(W. K. Hoffman, 1967, p. 43), compliments of The Hilton Hotel.



Figure 105 Kung Brothers dept. store, Kowloon 1967

'The picture below shows the front view of their Kowloon Store, most conveniently located at Golden Crown Court, 66/70 Nathan Road.'

Kung Brothers had branch stores in hotel shopping arcades.

(W. K. Hoffman, 1967, p. 125), compliments of The Hilton Hotel.



Figure 106 Kung Brothers store interior 1967

'EVERYTHING UNDER ONE ROOF AT FIXED PRICES; you can obtain in their store everything that the 'Shoppers' Paradise' offers you with fixed prices clearly tagged.'

Focus on fair trading.

(W. K. Hoffman, 1967, p. 125), compliments of The Hilton Hotel.



Figure 107 Tamaya dept. store, Des Voeux Road, 1967

Hong Kong's largest department store in with ten floors. Note, people wander across Des Voeux Road with little traffic.

(W. K. Hoffman, 1967, p. 126), compliments of The Hilton Hotel.



Figure 108 Tamaya dept. store interior, ladies shoe dept. 1967

This picture indicates the dress of the host community: men wear long-sleeved white shirts, women wear print tops and pants, or sleeveless dresses (pre-air-conditioning)

(W. K. Hoffman, 1967, p. 126), compliments of The Hilton Hotel.



Figure 109 Causeway Bay shopping at night 1979

The Island Beverley Centre has long been the home to fledgling fashion designers. The original Beverley Centre was near Austin Road in Tsim Sha Tsui.

(Tomkins, 1979, p. 152).



Figure 110 Things' interior 1970-2

White fixtures, mirror, merchandise not colour blocked.

Informant interview: B.A.S.S. 28.08.02.



Figure 111 Birds' sales assistant, display and press cuttings 1972

Informant interview: B.A.S.S. 28.08.02.



Figure 112 Birds' sales assistant in D'Aguilar Street store 1972

Birds' retailed Mary Quant cosmetics and garments.

Informant interview: B.A.S.S. 28.08.02.



Figure 113 Birds' sales assistants 1972

Sales assistants wear Birds' colours.

Informant interview: B.A.S.S. 28.08.02.

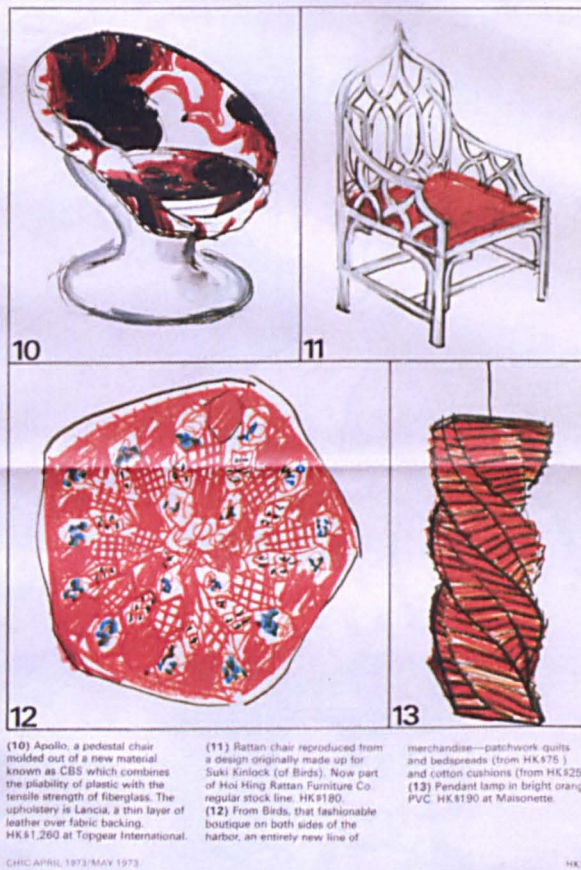


Figure 114 Susie Kinlock's design work for Birds' 1973

Chair, and patchwork quilt from Birds, Home Chic magazine, April 1973.

With kind permission of Marcus Tancock.

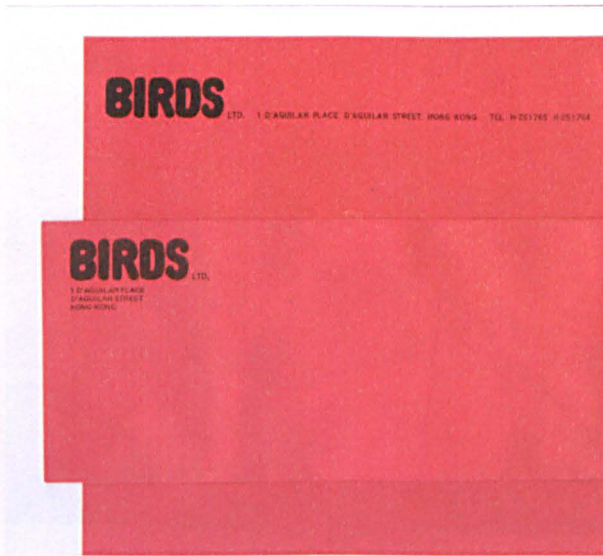


Figure 115 Birds' stationery with original store address, no date

With the kind permission of Marcus Tancock.

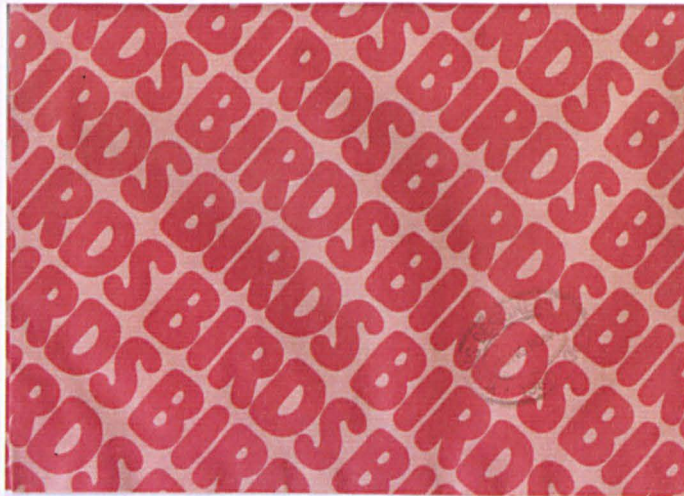


Figure 116 Birds' store wrap, no date

With the kind permission of Marcus Tancock.



Figure 117 Birds' gift-wrap stickers, no date

With the kind permission of Marcus Tancock.



Figure 118 Assistant's daughter and Birds' display, Matsasukaya 1976

'Crazy-angle' garment display with cinched waist persists as a store style in a concession space in Matsasukaya store in Causeway Bay. All displayed merchandise is priced.

Informant interview: B.A.S.S. 28.08.02.



Figure 119 Birds' sale newspaper advertisement 1977

With kind permission of Marcus Tancock.



Figure 120 Birds' Slogan T-shirt collection August 1979

Newspaper cutting. Press releases were despatched to Cantonese and English language newspapers.

With kind permission of Marcus Tancock.



Figure 121 Birds' T-shirt collection press cutting 1979

Press cutting from a Chinese language newspaper, source not credited.

With kind permission of Marcus Tancock.

SHOPPING GUIDE

BIRDS BIRDS

The answer to who's wearing short shorts this summer must be just everyone who cares about fashion. They're back and they're bright and they're available from Birds in purple and orange, shocking pink and yellow, turquoise and red. The brighter the better. Let the colours clash.

Wear your shorts with equally brilliant silky knit T-shirts and vivid viscose print shirts. And don't forget the cummerbund, an essential accessory this year. It's fun to be alive with Birds and so so inexpensive. Shorts at HK\$49.90. Silky knit T-shirts at HK\$29.90. Viscose print shirts at HK\$69.90. Cummerbunds at HK\$19.90 and those unbelievable heart-shaped sunglasses at HK\$49.90.

BIRDS

Figure 122 Birds' shopping guide entry August 1979

Colours and prices detailed.

With kind permission of Marcus Tancock.



Figure 123 Birds' advertising campaign S.C.M.P., Summer 1980

Kenzo-inspired military collection, worn with Nehru caps.

With the kind permission of Marcus Tancock.



Figure 124 Interior of Bird's The Body Shop, M Group, early 1980s

Original green-stained wood, with black and white tiled floor store-fit of The Body Shop.

M Group album, with the kind permission of Marcus Tancock.



Figure 125 Birds' sale advertisement 1981

From a Chinese language newspaper, no source credited.

With the kind permission of Marcus Tancock.



Figure 126 Bird's store, no date, Spring promotion window 1988

Fascia and spring promotion.

M Group album, with the kind permission of Marcus Tancock.



Figure 127 Margaret Tancock at the Young Designer's Competition Press conference December 1980

Sponsored by Birds, the winner Ragence Lam, became a Hong Kong design name.

With the kind permission of Marcus Tancock.

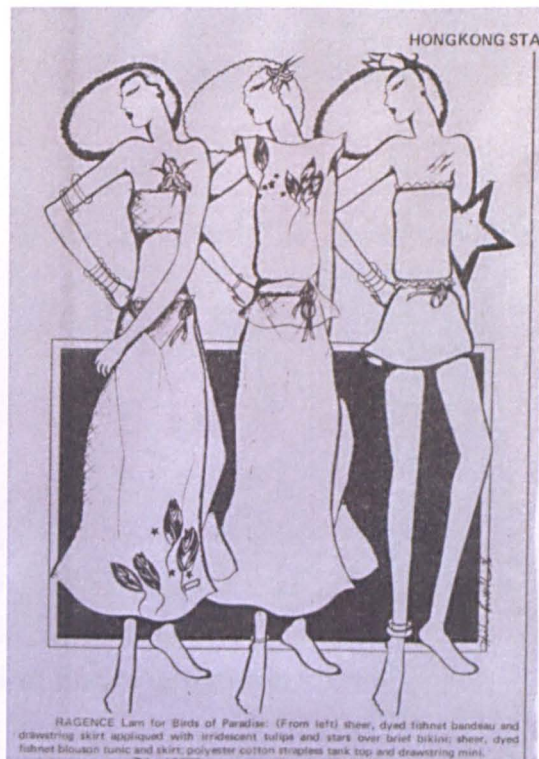


Figure 128 Ragence Lam, Young Designer's competition 1981

Ragence Lam's winning collection as shown in the Hong Kong Standard newspaper.

With the kind permission of Marcus Tancock.



Birds' founder, Margaret Tancock (right) and designer, Sara Sturgeon say each fashion company must have a distinctive look.

Figure 129 Margaret Tancock with Sara Sturgeon 1986

Although Margaret had previously employed designers, Sara's brief was to design for all the stores in The M Group. March 1986.

With the kind permission of Marcus Tancock.



Figure 130 Example of Sara's design work 1986

Dated 01.06.86.

With the kind permission of Marcus Tancock.



Figure 131 M Group store Granville Road, Tsim Sha Tsui, no date

M Group album, with the kind permission of Marcus Tancock.



Figure 132 M Group interior of store, Granville Road, T.S.T. no date.

Cacharel and The Body Shop are listed on the wall.

M Group album, with the kind permission of Marcus Tancock.



Figure 133 Circles' store-front, The Landmark, Central, 1980s

M Group-backed store in the 1st level of The Landmark basement.

With the kind permission of Marcus Tancock.



Figure 134 Sports Connection designers at work, mid/late 1980s

M Group album with kind permission of Marcus Tancock.



Figure 135 Sports Connection production

M Group album with kind permission of Marcus Tancock.



Figure 136 Sports Connection design team 1980s

M Group album with kind permission of Marcus Tancock.

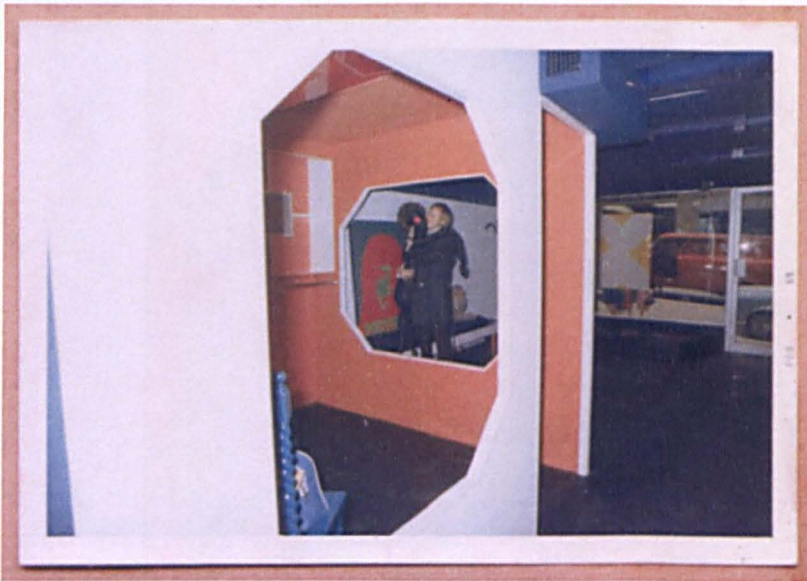


Figure 137 Justin Jake, D'Aguilar Street, store fit-out 1969

With kind permission of Suzie Kinlock.



Figure 138 Justin Jake founders Suzie Kinlock and Jenny Edwards 1969

Fluffy-trimmed transparent collection, from Central with view towards the Peak.

With kind permission of Suzie Kinlock.

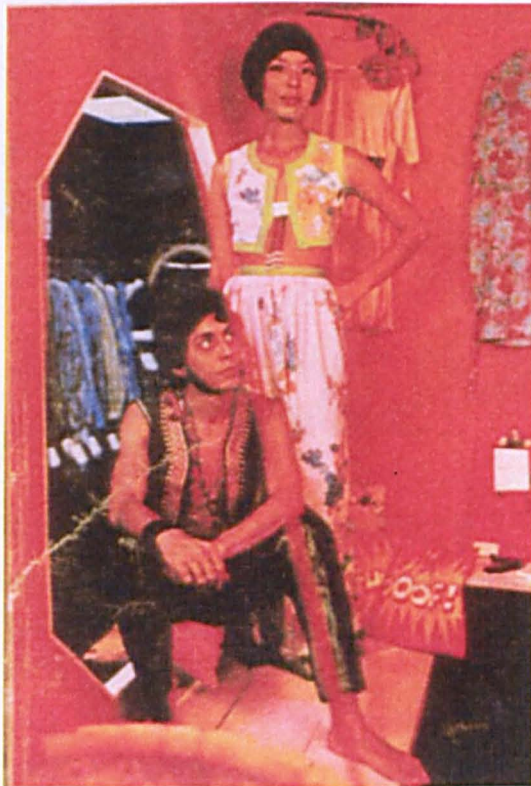


Figure 139 Justin Jake fashion spread, Asia Magazine, March 1970

Photographed in store.

With kind permission of Suzie Kinlock.



Figure 140 Justin Jake Cotton colour magazine, 1971

Compared with Birds, Justin Jake merchandise was more extreme, outrageous, or funky. With kind permission of Suzie Kinlock.



Figure 141 Justin Jake outfit, Oz magazine, Feb 1970

Pants, striped top, and scarf from Justin Jake in Oz magazine (an Australian fashion magazine, not Richard Neville's publication) edition on Hong Kong, Vol. 2, No. 3.

With kind permission of Suzie Kinlock.



Figure 142 Hong Kong fashion, Oz Magazine, Feb. 1970

Model wears merchandise from Things, Justin Jake, and Mohan's for an edition of an Australian magazine focusing on Hong Kong. No page ref.

With kind permission of Suzie Kinlock.



Figure 143 Justin Jake, She Magazine 1971, p. 16

She, a Chinese language magazine, featured Justin Jake merchandise including long dresses, shorts, and dungarees in an undated fashion spread.

With kind permission of Suzie Kinlock.



Figure 144 Justin Jake fashion spread, Way Out magazine, June 1969

Jenny and Suzie pose wearing Justin Jake merchandise for Way Out, a local bi-lingual magazine.

With kind permission of Suzie Kinlock.



Figure 145 Hong Kong Tatler magazine October 1978

An unusual illustration (rather than photograph) advertisement for a boutique. (1978d, p. -).

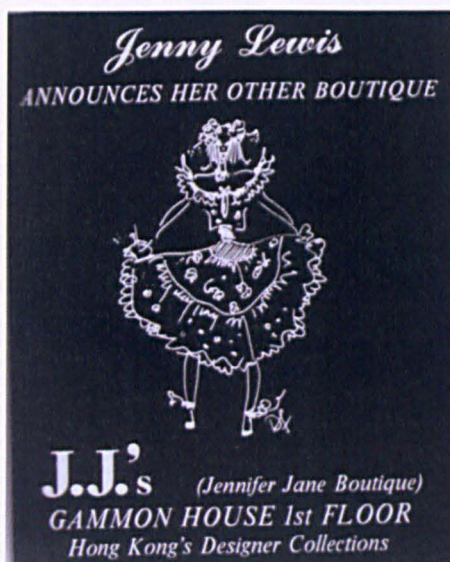


Figure 146 J.J.'s boutique illustration, Tatler magazine, July 1978

A reversed-out illustration for J.J.'s boutique. Illustrations were unusual as the host community had little experience in understanding them: reversed-out illustrations were even more unusual. (1978c, p. 95).

the swank shop Hong Kong's most exclusive source of designer fashions.

The American Heritage dictionary defines 'swank' as imposingly fashionable, elegant, grand. In Hong Kong, however, swank means only one thing — The Swank Shop, the leading shop for men's and ladies' high fashion.

From the day David Weire opened his first shop on Mody Road in 1955, The Swank Shop has more than lived up to its name in every sense of the word.

Today there are over 30 Swank Shops on both sides of the harbour offering the finest fashions from internationally acclaimed designers. Yves St Laurent, Valentino, Givenchy, Ermenegildo Zegna, Emanuel Ungaro and Gianfranco Ferré are just some of the names you'll find at The Swank Shop.



Valentino Studio

ladies' shoes provides Swank Shop customers with even more choice in their quest for a total 'look' combining fashion, shoes and accessories.

The Swank Shop's concern for their customers' needs is epitomised by Managing Director David Weire and his family who play a vital role in every facet of the company's activities.

David's wife Rosalind, for example, is in charge of ladies fashion and, together with her



Yves Saint Laurent Flirt Gauche

Figure 147 Swank shop advertisement 1979

The Swank shop advertisement indicates the variety of European luxury brand merchandise available in Hong Kong by the end of the 1970s.

(Tomkins, 1979, p. 181).

daughter Teresa, buys the ladies-wear. Son David, in addition to being Deputy Managing Director, buys the menswear.

From the very beginning, The Swank Shop had three clear goals: to provide the best service, the highest quality and the most exciting selection of high fashion in Hong Kong.

Today, their success in all three areas is apparent in the numerous new walk-ins into Swank Shop. The staff genuinely understand and appreciate the fashions they sell and the talents of the designers behind them. As a result, The Swank Shop provides a level of service and customer satisfaction unique in Hong Kong.



Gianfranco Ferré

This concern for their customers is also reflected in their choice of locations. When

ever a new Swank Shop opens, you can be sure it will be in the finest, most convenient and prestigious location possible.



Ermenegildo Zegna

And not just for adults. So many Swank customers said they wanted their children as eagerly attired as themselves, that Swank obliged with a Swank Junior Boutique conveniently located in the Ocean Terminal.

In the last 18 months, The Swank Shop has opened 13 new shops. And turnover has doubled in the past three years. Which just goes to show that in Hong Kong whenever you see a man or a woman, or even a child, beautifully dressed in the latest fashions you can be sure of the elegant that appears on every Swank Shop delivery list.

Someone's been to Swank.

Figure 148 Swank shop advertisement 1979

Copy focuses on ease of access, customer service and satisfaction.

(Tomkins, 1979, p. 61).



Figure 149 Shahtoosh, informant's collection

Made from the hair of the Tibetan antelope, the animal is illegally killed for its hair as it lives in a remote area where it cannot be farmed.

Informant interview: L.S.L.L. 07.11.01.



Figure 150 Shahtoosh embroidery, detail

Informant interview: L.S.L.L. 07.11.01.



Figure 151 Shanghai Tang Pedder Street flagship store

The original branch of Hong Kong's own international brand.

Photo VWT.



Figure 152 Shanghai Tang interior, 2003

First floor interior after re-fit, looking towards the Authentics collection, in front of the bridge and tea-room.

Photo VWT, with the kind permission of Joanne Ooi.



Figure 153 Hong Kong-made fur jacket

One example of many produced in the earlier part of the period.

Informant interview: S.F.T.J. 04.07.01.



Figure 154 Hong Kong-made fur jacket, lining

Lining uses a very Chinese figured satin with a braided edge.

Informant interview: S.F.T.J. 04.07.01.



Figure 155 Anna Sui men's leather jacket

Informant interview: B.W.H.H. 06.07.02.



Figure 156 Anna Sui label, detail

Sew-in-label based on Chinese rank badge.

Informant interview: B.W.H.H. 06.07.02.

¹ Informant interview: A.J.M.S. 21.05.02.

² See Phillips: 'Hong Kong Department Stores: Retailing in the 1990s,' (L. Phillips, Sternquist, & Mui, 1992); Ching Hwang Yen: 'Wing On and the Kwok Brothers: a case study of pre-war Chinese entrepreneurs,' (Yen, 1998); Loony Carlile: 'The Yaohan Group: model or maverick among Japanese retailers in China?' (Carlile, 1998); and T.S. Lee: *Lived Experience of Fashion and Emotion*, (T. S. Lee, Leung, & Zhang, 2002).

³ See Chadha, *The Cult of the Luxury Brand: inside Asia's Love Affair with Luxury*, (Chadha & Husband, 2006).

⁴ See Phillips: 'Hong Kong Department Stores: Retailing in the 1990s,' (L. Phillips et al., 1992), and 'Personal Styles, Cultural Values, and Management: the Sincere and Wing On companies in Shanghai and Hong Kong 1900 – 1941,' (K. K. Chan, 1998).

⁵ Informant interviews reiterated this point: L.B.F.L. 21.03.02, and A.B.R.S. 06.02.02. Whiteaway's was also described as a haberdashery by one informant: L.B.F.L. 21.03.02.

⁶ Informant interview: L.S.L.L. 07.11.01. Sincere and Wing On were established in 1900 and 1907 respectively, Pam Barton's store specializing in eveningwear in Ocean Terminal had, by the end of the period, become Peggy Boyd's located in Prince's Building. Lindy Johnson's Dynasty, a chain in the three premiere hotels offered lounging pyjamas and robes manufactured in Johnson's New Territories factory. Informant interviews: A.B.R.S. 06.02.02. and L.B.F.L. 21.03.02. Betty Clero ran a successful boutique in The Peninsula shopping arcade retailing formal occasion wear. Informant interview: B.V.G.S. 24.04.02.

⁷ See Mason: *The World of Suzie Wong*, (Mason, 1960).

⁸ Informant interview: A.B.R.S. 06.02.02.

⁹ See Gleason, *Tales of Hong Kong*, (Gleason, 1967, p. 185). Charmingly, after Daimaru closed mini-buses continued to list it as a destination. See Gleason, *Hong Kong*, (Gleason, 1963, p. 294-5).

¹⁰ For example: Singapore, Malaysia, Philippines, and Taiwan. Informant interview: W.W.M.L. 02.11.00.

¹¹ Hoffmann records: 'Cable and long distance Telephone calls can be placed at the Cable and Wireless Office in the first deck of the Ocean Term. 7.30am/midnight.' See Hoffman: *Hong Kong*, (W.K. Hoffman, 1970, p. 60).

¹² See Yau's description of 'Hoiwahn Daaihah' [Ocean Terminal], in 'Hon Ngaan Naahnmoing: Joih Heunggong Jeungdaaih [Unforgettable Experiences; Growing up in Hong Kong], (Yau, 1997, pp.107-8).

¹³ See Lui: 'The Malling of Hong Kong,' (Lui, 2001, p. 26). See Morris: 'Things to do with Shopping Centres,' (M. Morris, 1988).

¹⁴ 'People weren't particularly fashion conscious in those days: Hong Kong was a completely different place then because there was very little air-conditioning. A lot of the department stores on Queens Road weren't air-conditioned: it was more of a tropical-destination than an international-destination.' Informant interview: B.V.G.S. 24.04.02. See Mason: *The World of Suzie Wong*, (Mason, 1960).

¹⁵ 'There were practically no boutiques. The main shops were Lane Crawford, who had one branch at that stage. It was in the old Windsor House: a beautiful old building with lovely stone masonry, and then there was another shop called Whiteaways which was quite good for underwear, bikinis, and things like that.' Informant interview: A.E.G.C. 03.09.00.

¹⁶ 'Dynasty ...it was in the Hilton Hotel, and it obviously catered for overseas [Chinese] and/or people coming to visit Hong Kong. And they had extremely elaborate evening dresses with diamonds and beading, very, very elaborate... I think for the American market, I remember this outfit, this might have been the outfit that was the biggest mistake in my life! An emerald green jersey trouser suit and the sleeves had brass rings and holes all the way up the sleeves on the outside, very not 'me,' but obviously I thought it was very trendy at the time and it was a swing away from any sort of conservatism that I had ever had. And I was photographed in it in the [S.C.M.P.] newspaper column so it was obviously something that I wore with pride, and I liked it.' Informant interview: L.S.L.L. 07.11.01. This informant wrote a weekly interior design column for the S.C.M.P. in the late 1960s.

¹⁷ 'In those days they really only wore cheongsams so it was quite revolutionary.' Informant interview: A.S.U.S. 06.09.02.

¹⁸ Margaret Tancock's other partners did not need to earn their own living.

¹⁹ E-mail: X.M.T.X. 03.12.01. and informant interview M.M.T.L. 16.08.02.

²⁰ The tailor's name was Ping Kee. Informant interview: B.A.S.S. 28.08.02.

²¹ Informant interview: B.A.S.S. 28.08.02.

²² Informant interview: M.M.T.L. 16.08.02., and B.A.S.S. 28.08.02

- ²³ Informant interviews: S.G.M.J. 24.07.01., A.B.R.S. 06.02.02., and B.W.H.H. 06.07.02. And: '...she either used to sell her friends, in London, clothing, or she really advised them how to dress, [...] she worked with the Belgium Consul General, and spoke French, and German, and Russian, and her Cantonese was pretty damn good.' Informant interview: M.M.T.L. 16.08.02. Informant interview: B.A.S.S. 28.08.02.
- ²⁴ See Tang and Wong: *Hong Kong Fashion Allure 50 years*, (W. Tang & Wong, 1997). Also e-mail: X.M.T.X. 03.12.01. See Clark: *The Cheongsam*, (H. Clark, 2000b).
- ²⁵ Large quantities of merchandise are purchased in dozens as the number of zeros required unnerves buyers and can contribute to mistakes. For example, Marks and Spencers have always purchased in dozens.
- ²⁶ See Fogg: *Boutiques: a '60s cultural phenomenon*, (Fogg, 2003 pp. 21, 26). Informant interview: A.B.R.S. 06.02.02.
- ²⁷ E-mail: X.M.T.X. 20.01.02.
- ²⁸ In Lan Kwai Fong, where Century Plaza now stands.
- ²⁹ Informant interview: B.A.S.S. 28.08.02.
- ³⁰ Informant interview: L.S.L.L. 07.11.01.
- ³¹ Shirley Mowser, informant interview: A.S.U.S. 06.09.02.
- ³² Informant interview: A.S.U.S. 06.09.02.
- ³³ Informant interview: A.S.U.S. 06.09.02.
- ³⁴ Informant interviews: L.S.L.L. 07.11.01., and A.S.U.S. 06.09.02.
- ³⁵ Advertising, press releases, and point of sale material used Justin Jake's corporate colour: orange.
- ³⁶ As Suki explained: 'We partied a lot.' Informant interview: A.S.U.S. 06.09.02.
- ³⁷ 'And we'd buy wonderful fabrics, and *saris*, and *batiks*, and so we did, Sophisticats was sort of one-off more designs and sort of evening stuff, and whereas downstairs was much younger really.' Informant interview: A.S.U.S. 06.09.02.
- ³⁸ Hong Kong worked a 5 1/2 day week until after the end of the period of research.
- ³⁹ Cabbage is the traditional name given to goods manufactured over and above the order required. Using effectively, free materials from surplus fabric, the manufacturer bore only the labour costs of making extra merchandise, which he recouped by wholesaling or retailing the merchandise himself.
- ⁴⁰ An additional 250sq. ft. Informant interview: B.J.M.L. 03.12.03.
- ⁴¹ Informant interviews: B.W.H.H. 06.07.02., and B.J.M.L. 03.12.03.
- ⁴² See Din, *New Retail*, (Din, 2000 p. 122).
- ⁴³ Informant interview: B.B.G.L. 19.11.01.
- ⁴⁴ Informant interviews: L.S.L.L. 07.11.01., L.A.W.T. x.01.01., and B.B.G.L. 19.11.01.
- ⁴⁵ '...you can imagine the samples that you could get that were going to Europe, or having things tailor made?' Informant interview: L.S.L.L. 20.11.01.
- ⁴⁶ See Pope-Hennessy, *Half Crown Colony: A Hong Kong notebook*, (Pope-Hennessy, 1969, p. 117).
- ⁴⁷ Informant interview: D.G.W.L. 31.01.00.
- ⁴⁸ See Edelstein, *Living in Hong Kong*, (Edelstein, 1979, p. 14). Boutiques included: The French Touch, a store in the Hilton Hotel ran by an elderly French couple, stocking elegant, youngish-looking merchandise, but considered expensive by some informants; Crocodile, run by Chinese Adventists - who closed the store on Saturdays, the busiest shopping day; Sparkle, the forerunner of the specialty-store group Bossini and Mode Elite in Kowloon. Informant interviews: B.W.H.H. 06.07.02. and L.B.F.L. 21.03.02.
- ⁴⁹ Ding How, Kayamally's, Mohan's, Dragon Seed on Queens Road and Nathan Road. See Wickman: *Living in Hong Kong*, (Wickman, 1973, p. 85).
- ⁵⁰ See Gleason: *Tales of Hong Kong*, (Gleason, 1967, p. 176).
- ⁵¹ See Salaff: *Working daughters of Hong Kong: filial piety or power in the family?* (Salaff, 1995, pp. 20, 125).
- ⁵² See Chapter One, and Gleason, *Tales of Hong Kong*, (Gleason, 1967, pp. 290-2).
- ⁵³ See Hong Kong Tourist Association: *Around and About Hong Kong*, (Hong Kong Tourist Association, c1970, p. 37).
- ⁵⁴ Justin Jake closed in 1972 when Edwards married and moved to Bangkok, and Kinlock became pregnant, although for a while she was in partnership with Margaret Tancock, opening a store in The Peninsula Hotel. However, their methods of working were not the same: 'I think I was much more lackadaisical than she was [...] I wasn't sort of spending enough time with my baby, and I wasn't getting enough work done. It was very unsatisfactory. So I sold out to her...' Informant interview: A.S.U.S. 06.09.02.

- ⁵⁵ Informant interview: D.D.C.C 13.08.99. 'In the '70s and '80s it looked like Japanese fashion: beige sacks: straw-to-black sacks.' Informant interview: S.E.R.L. 13.11.01. See Edelman, *Living in Hong Kong*, (Edelman, 1979, pp. 166-7).
- ⁵⁶ The Swank store was founded and run as a family business in 1955 by the Hongs. Informant interview: B.V.G.S. 24.04.02.
- ⁵⁷ Informant interview: B.V.G.S. 24.04.02.
- ⁵⁸ The Hong Kong Tatler carried advertisements by department stores Wing On and Shui Hing.
- ⁵⁹ Which closed only after the end of the period of research.
- ⁶⁰ Informant interview A.B.R.S. 06.02.02., and C.M.B.S. 22.05.02. The Miao are one of the Chinese minority groups resident in Guizhou province. Informant interviews: S.F.T.J. 04.07.01., and, C.A.M.C. 01.09.99. Wickman notes Dynasty retailed quality clothing but not special sizes; Star of Siam sold Thai silk ready-to-wear and made clothes to order; Butterick's in Wyndham Street made foundation garments and swimwear to order. Li Yuen Street West and East, known as the 'Cloth Alleys,' were a source of end-of-roll fabrics and piece-goods⁶⁰. Stalls also sold 'chain belts, sweaters, blouses, slacks and handbags' and Pottinger Street, a spectacle for tourists, sold thread and other notions as did the streets behind the Lee Gardens Hotel in Causeway Bay. See Gleason, *Hong Kong* (Gleason, 1963, p. 274). A popular boutique called Serendipity was situated on the first floor in Li Yuen Street East or Li Yuen Street West, owned by a Westerner who designed her own range, she 'made for expatriates, in expatriate fabrics.' Informant interview: B.V.G.S. 24.04.02. Dressmaking was a do-it-yourself solution to fashion shortage: Wing On and Tyeb's sold Vogue and McCall's patterns; Evergreen and the Singer Sewing Centre sold Simplicity. Tyeb's, in the Man Yee Building in Pottinger Street, sold printed fabric by the yard and ready-made merchandise. Informant interview D.D.C.C. 13.08.99. Discussion VWT/X.S.A.A. 2001, and informant e-mail D.D.C.C. 13.08.99.
- ⁶¹ Informant interview: A.E.G.C. 03.09.00.
- ⁶² Informant interviews: D.G.W.L. 31.01.00., S.F.T.J. 04.07.01., and L.S.L.L. 07.11.01. Informant's socio-economic circumstances varied and it should not be concluded that they were drawn only from an elite. Wickman recommends sleeveless dresses or pantsuits as suitable dress for most restaurants and clubs, see *Living in Hong Kong*, (Wickman, 1973, p. 84).
- ⁶³ See Wickman, *Living in Hong Kong*, (Wickman, 1973, p. 84).
- ⁶⁴ Informant interview: S.F.T.J. 04.07.01.
- ⁶⁵ See Tang, *Hong Kong Fashion Allure 50 years*, (W. Tang & Wong, 1997, p. 105). Discussion X.J.G.T. 18.05.03. and Diana Freis Press Release, 1978 according to Wang, *Hong Kong Fashion Allure 50 years*, (W. Tang & Wong, 1997, p. 106). British readers may remember her advertisements in 1970s British Vogue.
- ⁶⁶ Informant interview: B.V.G.S. 24.04.02.
- ⁶⁷ Informant interview: D.D.C.C. 13.08.99.
- ⁶⁸ Informant interview: B.V.G.S. 24.04.02.
- ⁶⁹ Informant interview: B.B.G.L. 19.11.01.
- ⁷⁰ Informant interview: B.B.G.L. 19.11.01.
- ⁷¹ The initial lack of success of the Japanese designers work, specifically Comme des Garçons, was noted: 'We bought 100 pieces of knitwear and sold ten.' Informant interview: B.J.M.L. 03.12.03.
- ⁷² Informant interview: B.B.G.L.19.11.01., and B.J.M.A. 03.12.03.
- ⁷³ Informant interview: B.J.M.L. 03.12.03.
- ⁷⁴ Informant interview: C.M.B.S. 22.05.02.
- ⁷⁵ Informant interview: B.A.S.S. 28.08.02
- ⁷⁶ Sahara Club and local jeans brand Bang Bang; Reno; Sparkle; Shiva; Camberley in Kowloon Tong which sold Swire's silk over-makes originally destined for the American market; Tai Pan Row stocked Fiorucci in the Sheraton Hotel in Tsim Sha Tsui and Pearl City, Causeway Bay, see 'Fashion Attitude: Hong Kong Fashion Design' (W. Tang, & Mann, 2007). Swire's were one of the two hongs, founding trading companies, of Hong Kong. Informant interview: C.M.B.S. 22.05.02. See for example Edelman, *Living in Hong Kong*, (Edelman, 1979 pp. 178, 180, 183).
- ⁷⁷ Respectively, informant interview: A.B.R.S. 06.02.02., and informant interviews: B.V.G.S. 24.04.02., and C.M.B.S. 22.05.02. 'great bales of denim jeans and stuff, which you used to have try on hidden by the stacks of denim jeans because there was no changing room. I think there was one chap who had a changing room and he was considered very sophisticated.' Informant interview: C.M.B.S. 22.05.02.
- ⁷⁸ Informant interview: D.G.W.L. 31.01.00.
- ⁷⁹ Part of the English Schools Foundation. Locations were all owned by a premiere Hong Kong real-estate company. Informant interview: S.O.P.S. 07.06.01.

- ⁸⁰ Informant interview: S.O.P.S. 07.06.01.
- ⁸¹ Informant interview: S.O.P.S. 07.06.01.
- ⁸² The store was too small to store off-season merchandise.
- ⁸³ The limited supply of vintage dress reflected the paucity of clothing of the majority of residents in the post-war period. Informant interview: S.O.P.S. 07.06.01.
- ⁸⁴ See Edelstein, *Living in Hong Kong*, (Edelstein, 1979 p. 19).
- ⁸⁵ Personal recollection, December 1989.
- ⁸⁶ City Plaza at Taikoo Shing supplying the local population, opened in 1984. See Lui, 'The Malling of Hong Kong,' (Lui, 2001, p. 39). Austin Road and Kimberley Road in Tsim Sha Tsui were lined with fashion boutiques. The Japanese department store, Mitsukoshi, was surrounded by boutiques in Causeway Bay. Informant interview: S.F.T.J. 04.07.01. Causeway Bay had a lot of outlet stores. A fashion knitwear professional sourcing in Hong Kong recalled '...all those malls, and everyone started to discover the buying power of the Hong-Kongese [sic.]' Informant interview: E.E.P.L. 18.07.01.
- ⁸⁷ The women's wear chain Suzuya stocked size eleven. Jopez, the leather accessories brand, most memorably located on the waterside of the Star Ferry gate on Hong Kong-side at the end of the period, retailed leather bags. Windsor House, more recently a Causeway Bay computer mall, sold expensive clothes. Theme retailed linen in good shapes and styles. Informant interviews: S.E.R.L. 13.11.01. and B.V.G.S. 24.04.02.
- ⁸⁸ Informant interviews: A.B.R.S. 06.02.02., and L.A.M.L. 24.01.02.
- ⁸⁹ '...and of course it [one branch of Birds] was in The Regent [Hotel] and a walkway between the New World [mall] and The Regent where the entire [fashion] industry lived [stayed] at the time, so they would probably do quite well.' Informant interview: D.D.C.C. 13.08.99.
- ⁹⁰ Informant interview: M.M.T.L. 16.08.02.
- ⁹¹ Informant interview: M.M.T.L. 16.08.02.
- ⁹² Informant interview: M.M.T.L. 16.08.02.
- ⁹³ Informant interview: B.V.G.S. 24.04.02.
- ⁹⁴ Informant interview: B.V.G.S. 24.04.02.
- ⁹⁵ Informant interview: B.V.G.S. 24.04.02.
- ⁹⁶ Informant interview: B.B.G.L. 19.11.01.
- ⁹⁷ Informant interviews: M.M.T.L. 16.08.02., and C.M.B.S. 22.05.02.
- ⁹⁸ Informant interview: S.G.M.J. 24.07.01.
- ⁹⁹ Informant interview: S.E.R.L. 13.11.01.
- ¹⁰⁰ Informant interview: S.G.M.J. 24.07.01.
- ¹⁰¹ The New Town Plaza was opened in 1984 by Sun Hung Kai Properties, combining residential accommodation and a shopping mall in one space. See Lee: *City Between Worlds: my Hong Kong*, (L. O. Lee, 2008, p. 177). For example, the New World Mall included the popular Be for You boutique, and more reasonably-priced merchandise in Japanese-inspired boutiques. 'Theme was cheap for what you got: you would get a linen suit for, [...] say, eight hundred Hong Kong,' and 'It wasn't expensive, but there wasn't much to buy.' Informant interview: S.E.R.L. 13.11.01. Anna Sui retailed men's and women's wear in Star House in Tsim Sha Tsui. One informant then employed at the German consulate, purchased a men's leather jacket in the smallest size for herself. The leather was of a good quality, charmingly, the label sewn at the back of the collar was based on the Chinese rank badge. Informant interview: B.W.H.H. 06.07.03.
- ¹⁰² M.A.G. retailed cashmere knitwear and crepe-de-chine blouses on the fourth floor; tops and knitwear retailers were on the sixth; Anne Klein on the third. Anne Klein Two was available in Swire House, imported by Lydia Dunn at Swire's. Informant interviews: B.W.H.H. 06.07.02., and B.V.G.S. 24.04.02.
- ¹⁰³ Informant interview: S.E.R.L. 13.11.01.
- ¹⁰⁴ Joyce diversified the Joyce stores in the 1980s as an increasing buy demanded a dedicated space in order to display the designer ethos, not just the merchandise, in keeping with other fashion retailers. Informant interview: D.D.C.C. 13.08.99.
- ¹⁰⁵ Informant interview: D.D.C.C. 13.08.99.
- ¹⁰⁶ Informant interview: S.E.R.L. 13.11.01.
- ¹⁰⁷ '[They were] mainly, *real*-factories and the toilets were usually pretty bad.' Informant interview: A.S.H.C. 05.06.01.
- ¹⁰⁸ Informant interview: A.S.H.C. 05.06.01.
- ¹⁰⁹ For example; Dynasty had a warehouse store, where prices were high but considerably lower than the Central store. Informant interview: L.S.L.L. 07.11.01.
- ¹¹⁰ Informant interview: A.S.H.C. 05.06.01.

¹¹¹ 'No try, no try,' Informant interview: A.S.H.C. 05.06.01.

¹¹² The owner of the factory shopping tour company had contemplated adding a fur factory outlet to her tours. Informant interview: A.S.H.C. 05.06.01. American journalist author of *Born to Shop*, Suzy Gershman, describes the non-fashion fashion merchandise in the Diana Freis outlet factory in the Kaiser Estate which accepted charge card payment. See Gershman: *Born to Shop*, (Gershman & Thomas, 1986, p. 102).

¹¹³ Informant interviews: L.C.H.K. 03.05.01., L.B.F.L. 21.03.02., and D.S.P.C. 07.10.99.

¹¹⁴ Informant interviews: C.M.B.S. 22.05.02., and L.B.F.L. 21.03.02.

¹¹⁵ Literally: 'big serve.' Informant interview: D.D.C.C. 13.08.99.

¹¹⁶ Informant interview: L.S.L.L. 07.11.01.

¹¹⁷ Discussion with R. Dean Wilson, Jan. 1990.

¹¹⁸ Maynard notes of Australian fashion: 'The Draper said in 1954 that women no longer bothered to have clothes made for them because they did not know if they would like them; it was too expensive, and there was no longer a stigma attached to ready made clothing,' a similar process seems to have occurred in the 1980s in Hong Kong. Maynard notes that the size scales improved enabling most shoppers to buy ready-to-wear merchandise. See Maynard: *Out of Line: Australian Women and Style*, (Maynard, 2001, p. 78). My thanks to Paulene Hsia for the information on Jenny Lewis.

¹¹⁹ For example, one Western woman imported Gossard lingerie for resale. Informant interview: D.D.C.C. 13.08.99. Shahtoosh - plain and later, embroidered - were sold in hotels both before and after they were made illegal in 1979 by C.I.T.E.S. legislation. C.I.T.E.S. = The Convention on International Trade in Endangered species of Wild Fauna and Flora. Informant interview: L.S.L.L. 07.11.01. Showing in hotels was also a means of representing a brand whilst mitigating start-up costs. One informant recalled handbags being sold in this manner before the designer visiting from Australia secured an order from Dickson Poon, owner of Seibu Dept. store. Informant interview: A.B.R.S. 06.02.02.

¹²⁰ Informant interview: B.V.G.S. 24.04.02.

¹²¹ Informant interview: B.V.G.S. 24.04.02.

¹²² Informant interview: A.B.A.L. 30.05.01.

¹²³ Informant interview: S.F.T.J. 04.07.01.

¹²⁴ Informant interviews: S.F.T.J. 04.07.01., and D.S.P.C. 07.10.99.

¹²⁵ Informant interview: E.E.P.L. 18.07.01.

¹²⁶ Informant interview: S.S.A.A. 11.10.01.

¹²⁷ Informant interview: A.J.M.S. 21.05.02.

¹²⁸ Informant interview: D.D.C.C. 13.08.99.

¹²⁹ Informant interview: D.G.W.L. 31.01.00.

¹³⁰ Informant interview: A.B.A.L. 30.05.01.

¹³¹ One informant described her dismay at finding merchandise which she thought would fit to discover that it didn't. Informant interview C.M.B.S. 22.05.02. Some claimed a lack of choice in merchandise that was available. Informant interview: D.G.W.L. 31.01.00.

¹³² Informant interview: B.B.G.L. 19.11.01. My thanks to Susan Rheingold for linking vanity sizing with obesity, a growing problem in the U.S and Europe. The retail manager claimed she remained a British size 10 despite increasing her weight, and proportionally her size, by some twenty pounds during the period of research, informant interview: L.B.F.L. 21.03.02.

¹³³ 'No difficulty. You always could get things like that done. They were not difficult at all. That was wonderful about Hong Kong.' Informant interview: S.F.T.J. 04.07.01.

¹³⁴ Many small, fledgling businesses used bazaars held in Central hotels as first retail opportunities.

¹³⁵ Informant interview: D.G.W.L. 31.01.00.

¹³⁶ See Phillips: 'Hong Kong Department Stores; Retailing in the 1990's,' (L. Phillips et al., 1992). For example; Dragon Seed was purchased by Japanese retailer Tokyu; Seibu was purchased by Hong Kong-entrepreneur Dickson Poon; and Toppo (latterly Episode), developed a chain of stores. Personal recollection. Popular boutiques included Dana's on Wyndham Street.

¹³⁷ Informant interview: B.B.G.L. 19.11.01.

¹³⁸ Informant interview: A.S.H.C. 05.06.01. Merchandise still had to reflect fashion in some way. She explained tours initially included Diana Freis's warehouse in Hung Hom, but 'the stock was particularly old [...] really, really old and nobody seemed to be interested in it.'

¹³⁹ Stanley market was still considered useful by a number of expatriate Western residents who remembered purchasing linen shirts, jeans, trousers, leather jackets, and polar-fleece tops there. Informants interviews: A.S.H.C. 05.06.01., A.S.V.L. 31.07.01., and A.J.M.S. 21.05.02.

¹⁴⁰ This Hong Kong retailer recalled: 'And of course there were lots of visitors then because Hong Kong was booming and people wanted to see what it's all about, people would come into the store just to check things. Between Hong Kong and Japan it was fun time.' This was particularly popular during Japanese vacations, or the Chinese Golden Week. Informant interview: B.B.G.L. 19.11.01.

¹⁴¹ 'I can remember Louis Vuitton with those crowds outside, and the [security] people just letting five in.' Informant interview: E.E.P.L. 18.07.01.

¹⁴² Over time these became successful chains of local specialty stores: Bossini, Giordano, and Baleno. Discussion A.W. 1998, informant interview B.V.G.S. 24.4.02. For a profile of Jimmy Lei, founder of top-selling Cantonese tabloid newspaper *Apple Daily*, and owner of Giordano, modelled on The Gap, see Cartledge: *Beyond the Bamboo Network: successful strategies for change in Asia*, (Cartledge, 2000, p. 32).

¹⁴³ Gucci was at that time a tired and tarnished brand name proliferating over a wide range of tawdry goods, which belonged to an Italian family who continually provoked adverse publicity. Shanghai Tang: the name was devised as the only unchanged and well-known place name in China with a historically romantic, cosmopolitan reputation, For example, with the advent of Pinyin, Peking became Beijing, and Swatow, Suzhou. The additional meanings of the English word to be Shanghai'd, to be marooned, taken, high-jacked, or kidnapped, and the logo - developed as a British coat of arms - were also significant to Sir David Tang. Shanghai was combined with Tang's own family name which signified Chinese ethnicity, it was also redolent of the Tang Dynasty, and the English phrase, tang in the air.'... 'I think U.S.\$27m. in the shop that year, which you know, is tremendous for us. Our average price [sale] is something like U.S.\$200.00.' Sales per square foot averaged U.S.\$2500.00. Interview with David Tang, 23.11.02.

¹⁴⁴ See Chapter Two.

¹⁴⁵ '...we had actually sold over a U.S.\$100m dollars worth of Chinese clothes.' Interview with Sir David Tang, 23.11.02.

¹⁴⁶ Interview with Sir David Tang, 23.11.02.

¹⁴⁷ See Adburgham: *Liberties; a biography of a Shop*, (Adburgham, 1975). Interview with Sir David Tang, 23.11.02.

¹⁴⁸ See Din: *New Retail*, (Din, 2000, p. 136).

¹⁴⁹ Informant interview: B.B.G.L.19.11.01.

¹⁵⁰ Informant interview: B.D.K.G. 09.09.00.

¹⁵¹ Informant interview: S.O.P.S. 07.06.01.

¹⁵² Informant interview: S.O.P.S. 07.06.01.

¹⁵³ '...there have been fewer and fewer Chinese ladies wearing *cheongsams* [sic.], so we don't get quite so many: they're all wearing designer European fashions,' and 'Unfortunately all those clothes are very small sizes because they come from Chinese ladies who are extremely slim, the European sizes are more difficult.' Informant interview: S.O.P.S. 07.06.01.

¹⁵⁴ Greenpeace, a local company trading as I.T., i.t., and izzue, changed its name when requested by the environmental group of the same name. My thanks to Paulene Hsia for this information.

¹⁵⁵ See Din: *New Retail*, (Din, 2000, p.122). Development failed when economic crisis hit the region shortly after the Handover, for example, the proposed Bangkok branch closed before the store opened. Informant interview: B.M.J.L. 03.12.03. Informant interview: A.E.G.L. 16.12.99.

¹⁵⁶ See Frank Mort: 'Mass Consumption in Britain and the USA since 1945,' (Mort, 1997, p. 20).

¹⁵⁷ '...what they do is, like when the boyfriend buys a huge wardrobe for them they know one time after they wear it they can get the money back by going to the second-hand store. And they would keep the money for themselves, that's how they make money.' Informant interview: B.B.G.L. 19.11.01.

¹⁵⁸ 'All glass.' 'All brick wall, and white painting, and see-through everywhere - you can see outside you see through the shop and all...' [open-backed windows] 'Yes. She [Margaret] like[d] the corner shop: you will see through this way and this way.' 'Pop-music. We played music all the time. Never Chinese [music]: only pop- music.' Informant interviews: S.S.A.A. 11.10.01., and B.A.S.S. 28.08.02.

¹⁵⁹ Informant interview: B.A.S.S. 28.08.02.

¹⁶⁰ Face-out: so that the whole of the front of the garment could be seen, as opposed to side-out.

¹⁶¹ Informant interview: B.B.G.L. 19.11.01. She worked for a top-end boutique, was trained by Robert Curry in the late 1970s (who was then responsible for the Hanae Mori store windows in Japan). She completed an exchange program with Bergdorf Goodman, where she learned to develop display concepts; learned make-up with Adel Rootstein (the leading British mannequin manufacturer); and had the opportunity to photograph London and New York store windows on a regular basis. Other

top-end visual merchandising teams were of a comparable size, including Lane Crawford, and Swank Shop.

¹⁶² Informant interview: B.B.G.L. 19.11.01.

¹⁶³ Informant interview: B.J.M.L. 03.12.03.

¹⁶⁴ Interview with David Tang, 23.11.02.

¹⁶⁵ Interview with David Tang, 23.11.02. Tang's view is reminiscent of early Philadelphia retailer, Wanamaker, described in Simon Bronner's book *Consuming Visions: Accumulation and Display of Goods in America, 1880 – 1920*, (Bronner, 1989).

¹⁶⁶ Wanamaker developed both a department store and a museum in Philadelphia.

¹⁶⁷ Informant interviews: A.E.G.L. 16.12.99., A.L.P.L. 08.02.01., and A.J.M.S. 21.05.02.

¹⁶⁸ Christian Dior's Paris flagship store on Avenue Montaigne has fourteen windows, the Landmark store had two.

¹⁶⁹ See Edelstein: *Living in Hong Kong*, (Edelstein, 1979, p. 160). In the alleys behind The Lee Gardens Hotel, and in Nam Cheong Street in Kowloon.

¹⁷⁰ Informant interview: A.S.V.L. 31.07.01.

¹⁷¹ Tinny: thin, insubstantial. Informant interview: D.D.C.C. 13.08.99.

¹⁷² 'Well, I was doing it all day long, it wasn't a big deal I had my own blocks. [...] so to make a pattern didn't take very long.' Informant interview: B.V.G.S. 24.04.02.

¹⁷³ Informant interview: C.M.B.S. 22.05.02.

¹⁷⁴ See Burman: 'What a Deal of Work there is in dress!' Englishness and Home Dressmaking in the Age of the Sewing Machine,' (Burman & Turbin, 2003, p. 80). Informant interview: L.S.L.L. 07.11.01.

¹⁷⁵ See Clark: 'Who still wears the cheung sam?' (H. Clark & Wong, 1997), and *The Cheongsam*, (H. Clark, 2000b).

Chapter 4. How fashion was worn

'I think women changed: the way they walked, the way they expressed themselves, their mannerisms changed as fashion changed.'¹

My 'Sloane Ranger' informant's comment on fashion since the mid-1960s echoes Entwistle's observation that fashion changes are not only seen in dress, but in movement and expression.² In this chapter I examine the fashion context surrounding expatriate Western women. I use their observations in order to delineate their sense of difference from other women both in their home countries and from the Hong Kong host community.

I commence this chapter with sections on time, memory, and collecting. My topic is diachronic, and relies on the memories of my informants: both those of expatriate Western women and other informants. Without the inclination and the space to collect garments, this research would have been confined to photographs and print media, and would have been considerably poorer than my findings show. I estimate that only a small number of garments in any informant's wardrobe were captured in photographs. A far greater number of garments would probably have been lost to memory, if they had not been retained.

In this chapter I include existing research on expatriates; the changing nature of the expatriate communities; and their position in Hong Kong society. I will show how Hong Kong's social and economic past contributed to a regional understanding of fashion for both the host and expatriate community. In examining fashion chronologically, I will show that fashion, be it overseas fashions, host community fashions, vintage fashions, or appropriation of the *cheongsam*, has increased in importance over time. In the final section I consider the fashion dress of transient foreigners, tourists, and business visitors in Hong Kong.

Time and memory

Time and memory can lend a rosy glow, or the experience of triumph, to what was remembered as a difficult situation. Fashions in Hong Kong differed from those worn in expatriates' home countries and provoked comment, especially those fashions which immediately conflicted with expatriate's previous notions of fashion.³ Of my informants, only one reluctant arrival failed to notice different

fashions in Hong Kong. 'Author Harriet Harvey Woods' book on memory makes clear how unreliable memory can be, but taking several viewpoints, combined with remaining evidence in the form of garments, ephemera, and photographs, allows compilation of a snap-shot of a period.⁵ Informants tended to remember wearing extreme fashions (for example, mini-skirts), and distinctive fashions, (for example, the 'Annie Hall look' of the late 1970s), whilst more complex fashions were not given names although they were described (for example, the Dynasty, power-dressing look of the late 1970s).⁶ Although informants described their past in detail including accommodation, their jobs and lifestyles, as well as their dress, no one expressed regret at the passing of their lives. Rather, they laughed at themselves for following extreme fashions, or articulated their thoughts on their life given the overview of hindsight. Garments enable memories to exist in a tangible form: Woodward explains feeling fabric on skin enables people to re-imagine themselves, explaining why people make collections of garments which are no longer worn.⁷ Some informants continued their residency in Hong Kong, others left returning to their home countries or to new countries. Kristeva's observations on remembered countries pertain to those who had left and for those whom Hong Kong residency was a 'fashion moment.'⁸

Collections

As Belk explains, the desire to possess a collection may be formed before the item is encountered: the aim of possession being psychological security, which may be subject to gender difference.⁹ Expatriate Western women's garment collections were exceptionally retained as collections; more usually they were occasionally worn. One such example was a lace collection crocheted by the American relocation specialist's grandmother, through which she remembered her family and appreciated the garments' hand-made qualities.¹⁰ Distinctions between garments suitable for multiple purchase (an instant collection) and those that were not, were the subject of careful consideration.¹¹ Having decided to make multiple purchases or purchasing what appeared to be an excessive number of any garment ('binge shopping'), informants were happy to do this repeatedly.¹² Reasons for indulging in 'binge shopping' in Hong Kong varied: informants who found sizes difficult to find in Hong Kong explained they stocked up on garments; others delighted in finding clothes that fitted; and others just delighted in the purchasing freedom permitted by

a Hong Kong salary.¹³ As Lurie notes, the comparative rarity of Asian dress when worn outside Asia adds an acceptable self-exoticizing element for Western women.¹⁴ However, as anthropologist Ann Marie Leshkovich, writing on the *ao-dai*, the ethnic dress of Vietnam, explains, this behaviour contains ambivalent meanings for local women:

'The choice to don even a modern version of 'traditional costume' does, however carry the very real danger of self-exoticizing. At the same time, women's positions as consumers of this fashion trend challenge other stereotypes that depict Third World women as participating in globalization only as oppressed laborers.'¹⁵

By the late 1970s women from the host community rarely wore the *cheongsam*, nor could they have worn other regional exotic dress without appearing to self-exoticize themselves.

Fashion in Hong Kong

As explained in Chapter One, Clark suggests the shifting symbolism of fashion is especially apparent in cities, and more recently Chan's examination of the fashion shopping behaviour of three local residents investigates 'fashion as system' or 'fashion as culture.'¹⁶ As quality of life improved in Hong Kong, a comparatively wealthy Asian city, there were few means of indicating wealth, education, or the cultural knowledge (Asian or Western) of an established middle class. High population density encouraged fashion as an expression of status and social position in an environment where most people used public transport and lived in small apartments (to which guests were not invited), precluding the use of status symbols such as cars or homes.¹⁷ Expatriate Western informants observed that, due to their generally slight build, local women were able, and perhaps chose to, wear clothes that did not suit Westerners.¹⁸ The ability to wear what Westerners could not contributed a distinctive Hong Kong fashion look, as Gilbert suggests: fashion-looks are pillaged from the appearance of others.¹⁹ Many Hong Kong desires were selected from Japanese tastes particularly in colour. Lastly, personal safety throughout the period varied considerably. This was reflected in changing practices in wearing dress and jewellery: by the 1980s Hong Kong was perceived as a safe place in which to live, and wearing conspicuously expensive items on the street a safe practice.²⁰ As previously explained, informants were selected because they had

a good visual memory developed through their occupations or had been very interested in fashion over a long period of time. Many clearly remembered garments that they had seen or worn, more than forty years ago.

The following section outlines the changing nature of expatriate Western women and the host community between 1960 and 1997.

Expatriate Westerners

Apart from Holdsworth's journalistic interviews of expatriates, research has been confined to studies of expatriate acculturation. The host community treated expatriate Westerners and tourists ambivalently as few encountered them.²¹ The Cantonese term for Westerners, *gweilo*, literally ghost-man, suggests white Westerners were terrifyingly linked to death as 'living cadavers.'²² In the 1960s, Westerners confined themselves to a few residential locations, and mixed with the host community mostly at work. The 'Hong Kong Britishry' that Morris describes, could be divided by class, their past times: junk trips, vacations in Asia, and their homes in the Mid-Levels.²³ The seniority, and therefore, the class and social life of expatriates, was reflected in the changing nature of social events. A young English designer arriving from 'Swinging London' in the late 1960s, described a stuffy social life of lunches and bridge.²⁴

Business researcher John Etheredge, discusses time as a factor in expatriate acclimatisation in Hong Kong:

'...the expatriate, who expects to stay only a set period of time, usually has no intention of acculturating within the host culture and may experience some resistance where changes - learning and using new names for familiar things, living in a different style or standard of accommodation or adopting new styles of eating or of wearing clothes - are forced by the constraints and demands of an unfamiliar environment.'²⁵

His observations explain the dress codes of Discovery Bay and Lamma, both home to large numbers of Western expatriates.²⁶ Fellow academic Eva Lee, records the Western expatriate 'trailing' spouse who, having given up friends, work, and family to set-up home for her husband, receives little orientation or help, although top-end positions included relocation packages which assisted with accommodation, school places, and removals.²⁷

Social psychologist Julia Kristeva describes the sense of autonomy and difference an expatriate experiences.²⁸ All expatriate Western women informants were asked if they felt that they dressed in the same way as ordinary women and to clarify their definition of 'ordinary women.' Irrespective of their comparison group (women from their country of origin, local, or other expatriate Western women in Hong Kong), all described themselves as exceptional. My research shows that differences in the way they dressed were important self-distinguishing features as were their differences of self-perception. This can be further defined as differences in clothes that are visible, for example: the 'Sloane Ranger' observed the effect new clothes (in this case lingerie), had on her emotions, whilst insisting that these were secondary to her optimistic love of life:

'There is something about wearing pretty underwear that gives you a feel. I don't know whether it is a sort of sassy feel, but my personality is that I am high on life and I really don't need that, and comfort is all-important. I actually will go to Marks & Spencer's and buy a brief that is in pure cotton: I am pretty ordinary really.'²⁹

This is a complex quotation: whilst my informant (who possessed an extreme wardrobe) acknowledges the impact on emotions of new clothes, she also maintains she does not require her wardrobe as, exceptionally, she is 'high on life.' However, she modestly adds that she shopped in Marks and Spencer (she was able to afford to shop anywhere she chose), as though this fact made her ordinary, although in every other respect she was anything but ordinary.

Although expatriates may be forced to leave their own country, the majority of Western expatriates in Hong Kong elected to live in Hong Kong. As psychologist Erving Goffman explains, expatriates choose this for different reasons.³⁰ Almost all informants interviewed recollected the date and circumstances of their arrival, what they wore, and their first impressions succinctly: the date of the 'death' of their former selves.³¹ Psychologist Tony Buzan's work on human memory has shown mankind has a remarkable capacity to remember detail in exceptional situations.³² Relocation to a new country, no matter the circumstances, was one such opportunity: an English designer, in her 20s when she moved to Hong Kong in the 1970s, described exactly what she was wearing on her arrival, including a pair of trousers, unaware that it was possible to wear shorts at that time of the year.³³ A

British society informant, resident since the late 1940s, explained: 'My life really started in Hong Kong, that's the way I feel.'³⁴ Relocating was a risk with an uncertain outcome for many. However the decision to continue to reside in Hong Kong was self-selecting: expatriates who felt at home in Hong Kong tended to remain if possible, whereas those who did not, sought opportunities to leave with numerous rationalizations explaining why this was necessary.³⁵ Comparisons between a home country and Hong Kong reflected preferences, for example this from an English designer:

'I felt like I had come home. I felt that that was where I really belonged, and I liked the vibrancy of the place. It was like blood flowing all the time, beating: good.'³⁶

Those who had relocated unwillingly, enshrined the event in their comments. Psychologist Mildred McCoy, examining the process of expatriate adjustment to often very different circumstances, explains that initial euphoria at the spectacle of Hong Kong is followed by bewilderment either on realising how 'foreign' Hong Kong is, or the sudden absence of the usual social rules with which an individual complies, and ignorance of others which replace them.³⁷ The 'Sloane Ranger,' then in her 20s, contrasted her behaviour in London and Hong Kong describing running the curfew (imposed after the riots in 1966) shortly after her arrival in 1968:

'I would dance in the Dorchester fountain, but I suppose at age 23 in London, I tended to be more conservative and do things the way things were expected of me. In Hong Kong I realized that, although I lived within my family home which was lovely, the riots did afford one [the opportunity] to do things. There were curfews: we used to run the curfew and find ourselves on boats and we would have to swim to shore, and do things that I wouldn't perhaps have had to have done: I wouldn't have been in that position in Knightsbridge.'³⁸

My 'Sloane Ranger' informant summarises the sense of freedom both Kristeva and McCoy describe, together with a sense of adventure impossible in Knightsbridge. Morris paraphrases McCoy, explaining that the liberating phase is followed by irritability 'sensing their own ethnic identities are challenged;' and finally, acceptance, indicating that even after Westerners think that they have acclimatised to Hong Kong, Western sensitivities may reoccur on occasion, with coping skills learned to accommodate the level of change.³⁹ For many, residency based on a two, or three-year contract, was unlikely to be renewed. For others initially intending to

remain for two or three years, the privileged existence of an expatriate life was hard to relinquish.⁴⁰ And lastly for some, city life appealed more than the rural areas from which they had come.⁴¹ Morris notes: ‘only the temporary is permanent here.’⁴² The four-part process of arrival, disillusionment, adjustment, and preparation for departure, was reflected in all expatriate’s experiences, no matter their position or their length of residency.⁴³

Expatriate Westerners took jobs in Hong Kong particularly in the earlier part of the period when there was a high proportion of expatriates in the Civil Service, and directors and managers in other companies.⁴⁴ Wives who chose to work participated in small social circles, as Holdsworth explains:

‘There is an established lifestyle for newly arrived expatriate wives to emulate. As they come from a self selected elite (they are mostly middle-class, married to men whose professional qualifications and experience command not only the overseas job in the first place but also the financial package that makes moving to Hong Kong worthwhile), there is a striking affinity of interests between them.’⁴⁵

The small homogenous expatriate community created lacked sections of the community: there were few young people without experience or qualifications, or old people. Numbers of expatriate residents varied with a sense of rareness conferred on those who arrived when expatriates were few, one German consulate official in her 20s in 1972, explained: ‘I was really the new girl in town.’⁴⁶ Not all expatriates came to Hong Kong willingly: the Australian mother-of-two recalled her reluctance to relocate, which she expressed through the clothing that she brought with her in the 1970s:

‘Denial about coming here for two years. I packed a bag, two large suitcases for three people (her husband and two sons) to come for three years. Really, I wasn’t facing the reality of coming here for a long time. [...] I didn’t like the idea of it, I didn’t know what was going to happen. I don’t like having, not having a certain grip on what’s going to happen in the future. I think that was why although I probably couldn’t have put it in to words then but, in to the unknown. [...] I didn’t have a choice! (laughs)’⁴⁷

This informant used her dress and her family’s, to manifest her concerns about her changed and uncertain future.

A small number of Western expatriate women married local residents or Overseas Chinese, although this was very unusual in the 1960s and '70s when discrimination was common.⁴⁸ The retail manager, in her 20s when she married a Hong Kong Chinese in 1972, explained she had the impression she had 'let the side down':

'...my impressions are probably a little coloured by the social situation which I was in rather than being a totally 'ex-pat-ex-pat.' I think that probably influenced some of the things that I wore at that stage.'⁴⁹

As neither part of a Western expatriate nor Hong Kong Chinese couple, her dress reflected her ambiguous position wearing Western fashions to work but, at the same time, developing a deep leisure-time interest in pre-modern Chinese dress.⁵⁰

In the 1980s and 90s, many Westerners became expatriates due to the career move of their significant other; a few because they were offered jobs in Hong Kong; or their existing jobs were relocated.⁵¹ Others became expatriates after experiencing a life-changing event such as divorce, which offered them the opportunity to move overseas. Significantly Hong Kong became their main home, in comparison to earlier expatriates many of whom had maintained second homes overseas and returned periodically to their country of origin.⁵² At the end of the 1980s, as the local population's desire to obtain overseas residency resulted in high staff turnovers, employing expatriates, even on expatriate terms, became an attractive proposition.⁵³ This influx of expatriates was increased by numbers of young travellers who, having run out of money in Thailand, came to work in Hong Kong in order to earn money to continue to travel, or just to take a break from the difficulties of living and travelling in second or third-world countries and to experience the relative sophistication of Hong Kong. They brought with them a casualness of dress (see photograph of dresses for travelling), adopted particularly by residents of Lamma.

By the 1990s, international companies had stopped sending top employees to Hong Kong. A top-end retailer considered the change:

'When [...] different countries set up their base here, ... they would pay their managing director a certain huge sum..., then lifestyle was little bit more 'over the top.' [...]
More recently you saw a more second-tier person coming and it's not like that: [they]

probably went to the Fong [Lan Kwai Fong] to have a good night out and drink a beer, and [they]'re pretty happy.'⁵⁴

Increasingly, American companies tended to relocate employees on a biannual basis, which explained the clannish behaviour of many expatriate American women in Hong Kong, and their persistence in wearing American casual dress in comparison to the dress of other expatriates, as they had little incentive to adopt Hong Kong fashions.⁵⁵ The relocation specialist explained:

'I didn't ever go to the A.W.A., [American Women's Association] and I think that people who come for two years and know that they are here for two years join something like that, stay in something like that, and they can all wear their Dockers and polo shirts and they are very comfortable.'⁵⁶

Areas with significantly high American communities retained American dress codes.⁵⁷

The nature of expatriate Western women changed over time: a large influx of younger people arriving in the late 1980s and '90s transformed Hong Kong from a colonial city to a centre for finance, services, and industry, using China as a local resource, and demanding a sophisticated social life serviced by an increasingly large selection of retail brands.

The following sections discuss fashion for the host and expatriate communities throughout each decade. The 1960s and 70s saw fewer changes and have therefore been combined.

Dress in the 1960s and 1970s

The *cheongsam* fostered a neat and conservative appearance for local women as everyday dress until the late 1970s, and the communality of dress (alike, but with minor, discrete variations) made fashions appear a uniform (see photograph of girls in *cheongsam*).⁵⁸ The fitted silhouette required a neat figure, Gleason unfavourably compares the Western equivalent to a slight Asian girl, suggesting the difficulty in wearing a tightly fitted dress, and the blue-white colour of Western skins without a suntan that contrasted poorly with the host community with, usually, darker Asian skins (see the photograph of the waitress wearing a full-length side slit *cheongsam* in The Den).⁵⁹ As Howes observes, this pastiche of 'native dress' is simplified to

meet uniform requirements and worn by hotel staff or those working in the tourism industry.⁶⁰

Few expatriate Western women experimented with *cheongsam* in the early 1960s, when their appearance was unflatteringly compared to the local population.⁶¹ A tight, fitted dress of any kind was a difficult fashion for many women to wear, and many older local women chose the semi-fitted silhouette as kinder to their figures.

Hong Kong fashions and customs lagged behind those of international cities in the late 1960s. Holdsworth quotes Allan Zeman, founder of Colby, a fashion-sourcing house, and of Lan Kwai Fong - the trendy, nightlife area of Hong Kong - describing Hong Kong on his arrival in the 1960s, aged nineteen:

'It was full of energy, hustle and bustle, people everywhere, pandemonium, but a very wonderful place. Obviously it didn't have the sophistication we have today. There were signs in the streets which said 'No spitting,' men walking in Tsim Sha Tsui around the Peninsula in pyjama bottoms, women wore cheongsam. The very British, rich expats with their short pants and their pipes spoke a language that was foreign to me: I had to listen very closely to understand what they were saying.'⁶²

Morris notes the social prominence of the Governors and their respective families: 'Governors and their ladies opened everything, presented everything, took every salute, presided over every ceremony...'⁶³ The recollection of the daughter of a former Governor assumed that expatriate Western women would involve themselves in charity work benefiting the host community, whilst retaining social exclusion from them.⁶⁴ The ethnicity of the expatriate and host communities was reflected in their formal dress as this society informant remembered:

'... the majority of people wore a hat and gloves: I mean non-Chinese [women], unlike the Japanese who wore hats everywhere. [...] The Chinese [local women] never wore hats.'⁶⁵

This distinguished the local female population from the stereotypical obedient Japanese housewife who frequently wore a hat (see photograph of a race course crowd, none of whom are wearing hats).⁶⁶ Although several informants maintained local women did not wear hats, an expatriate informant's photograph of herself at a launching ceremony for a new cross-harbour ferry in the 1960s shows all women

present, both expatriates and locals, wearing hats (see photograph at the end of this chapter).⁶⁷ Fashions for expatriates were dictated by practicality. The wife of a senior C.E.O., then in her 40s, remembered: ‘We didn’t have air-conditioning all the time [...] so we wore very light-weight cotton or silks in the summer: breathable fabrics.’⁶⁸ Echoing Kathleen Wilson’s findings on commodified craft in 19th century America, which required dressmaking knowledge in order to ensure a successful result, a boutique owner, then in her early 20s, recalled the lack of available fashion in the 1960s:

‘It was terrible: you had to have it made. You could get some wonderful things made, but you had to know how to tell them how you wanted [it or] else it ended up looking like a *cheongsam* [i.e. as tight as a *cheongsam*].’⁶⁹

It can be imagined how uncomfortable tight, lined clothing (as tight as a *cheongsam*) was in very humid conditions, but prices were reasonable: one lecturer had an entire wardrobe made of fashionable leopard print fabric (see photographs).⁷⁰ Leisure activities for expatriates, and which required appropriate dress, included: sports-car rallies; an annual Walkathon; a cross-harbour swim; the Round-the-Island yacht race; mountain climbing; and running trails.⁷¹ An English boutique-owner, then in her 20s, recalled the conservatism of expatriate society shocking her fiancé’s aunt and uncle on her arrival in 1968:

‘I remember the shock horror of people when I got to Hong Kong in my tiny little skirts, and black eyeliner, and pink lipstick. I remember walking into The Hong Kong Club and they nearly died: apparently my skirt was the shortest they’d ever seen in Hong Kong.’⁷²

My informant enjoyed the ability to shock, which her fashionable London clothes allowed. Although availability of fashion dress and local dress codes for smartness affected expatriate Western women’s dress, dress was formal by Western standards (see photographs of The Captain’s Bar and The Connaught Room restaurant reception), the English wife of a senior businessman, then in her 30s, explained:

‘At one time I wouldn’t be seen dead in The Hong Kong Club in a trouser suit, or slacks with a very pretty top. [...] If I was invited to Government House for lunch, or tea, or something, definitely: no slacks. Just something a bit smart: a little black suit.’⁷³

As my informant remembered, Government or Royal occasions required formal dress. At the opening of the first part of Ocean Terminal attended by the Queen and Prince Philip in 1967, invited guests wore matching hats and gloves, handbags and shoes (see photograph of 1967 event).⁷⁴ At the opening of the second part attended by Princess Margaret in 1968, all female guests wore a hat (see photograph of 1968 event).⁷⁵ The ‘Sloane Ranger’ then in her 20s, remembered:

‘... you never saw a woman without stockings. We all wore tights in the summer [...] although our car did not have air-conditioning: my husband had a British car - Rovers in those days didn’t have air-conditioning - I used to melt. I seem to remember we used to not feel the heat. Perhaps it wasn’t so humid? I don’t know, but we would certainly dress up: I would wear a silk dress, possibly with sleeves, and stockings.’⁷⁶

With the exception of silks described above, fabrics were generally heavier due to the limitations of textile technology (see photograph of Sir Robert Black’s family: his wife and eldest daughter both wear matching dresses and jackets). At that time, the city had a lower building density in which heat dissipated, and more colonial architecture designed to promote shade and air flow, therefore it may have felt cooler. The Governor’s daughter explained that participation in charity events demanded appropriate dress:

‘I was expected to wear a hat and gloves for most things. [...] I don’t think it’s only Hong Kong, even in Singapore, or any of these sort of colonial type-things where people perhaps got involved more with charitable events and tried to raise awareness of the less fortunate than themselves. [...] Somehow, it was the way to do things: if you were asked to do something special: you dressed up for it.’⁷⁷

Her comment reveals the smart dress code and the archaic formality of regional dress where long gloves were worn at official dinners at Government House.⁷⁸ One socially prominent informant even likened her dress to that of the Queen, whose formal portrait hung everywhere, carrying her handbag over her arm instead of using a shoulder bag (see photograph of couple attending a society wedding).⁷⁹

The paucity of local dress was apparent in the retail manager’s recollection of a visit to the beach at the beginning of the 1970s, when she and her friends, then in their 20s, collected discarded thongs (flip-flops), worn by the host community,

assembling a sculpture from the pile.⁸⁰ Living conditions for most the host community at the beginning of the period remained (by first world standards) very poor.⁸¹ Married to a local resident she recalled:

'I was shocked by the poverty. Having grown up in a very egalitarian society, I was shocked by the social, the economic disparity. [...] ...there were a number of people walking around in pyjamas: they were the only clothes they had. They were still living on footpaths in those days. [...] I looked at the general living standard of my husband and his family. And [...] the standards people had - basic standards of things, like sanitation - Government-provided standards were inferior to the norm in Australia. As a child growing up in Australia in the 50s, we had the outhouse and the night-soil man came to take the can: they were still doing that in Hong Kong in '71/'72/'73/'74. Where I lived [Shek O village], they were still growing vegetables and putting night soil on the vegetables in those days. It was stepping back in a socio-economic environment: the world in which I found myself was less developed than the world I [had] left.'⁸²

Hong Kong was twenty years behind the First World in other areas too: expatriate social life for many expatriates revolved around membership of clubs which offered relatively inexpensive dining and sports activities.⁸³ A number of interest societies flourished, and annual balls requiring formal evening dress enlivened the social scene in which dinner dances and nightclubs were a popular activity.⁸⁴ Changing for dinner or other social functions was expected in the late 1960s and early 1970s (see the photograph of expatriate Western women eating with chopsticks, standing beside a buffet in fur stoles taken inside a building). This former English banker then in her 20s, remembered:

'The International Dress shop owned by Pamela Barton, had a boutique in it called 'Cabaret' where she sold evening dresses: 'long' was in. We bought Ozzie Clarke, and stuff like that: [we] always wore long dresses at night when we went out. We used to socialize at The Den or The Eagles Nest (at the top of The Hilton Hotel) or the top of The Mandarin [Hotel] where they had a dinner-dance: we were all in to those Ozzie Clarke dresses.'⁸⁵

Shorter working hours enabled women to return home to change before going out, and partying every night was socially acceptable. An English designer then in her 20s, remembered:

'When I came here I remember being taken aside by somebody who said 'You have to have a very good choice of evening wardrobe because you go to lots of evening occasions'. We all wore long in those days. You'd go out to dinner at somebody's home and you wore long dresses.'

[In no air-conditioning?]

'People had air-conditioning in their home. But you definitely wore long.'⁸⁶

Long dresses were fashionable: Laura Ashley, Ossie Clarke, and Biba were popular. Dinner parties, which had a sense of formality, were an opportunity to dress-up displaying respect for the host. The retail manager observed changes in her appearance in photographs of herself taken after her arrival (see photograph captioned Hong Kong smartness):

'...[from] the very casual Australian approach, you see the change? I see the change very much in myself - after a year or two of Hong Kong-style: hair's cut short, in style because Australia was very much the long hair; don't wear make-up; very natural, comfortable look, from the photos. I have got my hair cut shorter. I have styled things much more. I am much less casual. Hong Kong, even in those days was more formal in fashion: a more formal style.'⁸⁷

She attributed these changes only to compliance with Hong Kong culture. The more formal appearance she comments on: with styled hair; make-up; and formal dress were significant changes for her but not associated with changing fashions, changing employment, nor status. Expatriate Western women's appearance was dictated by country of origin and national preferences: generally, Europeans looked smarter than Americans as, as suggested by Lurie, they would have done in their home countries.⁸⁸ The German Embassy official then in her 20s, accustomed to trousers as acceptable business dress, resisted pressure from her Cantonese colleagues to wear a skirt:

'...you wouldn't go to the office in jeans, definitely not. I might have been one of the pioneers with the trousers: I was asked [not to wear trousers], and I put my foot down, and said 'Even in the Foreign Ministry in Bonn it is accepted you come in trousers.' So, I think that it was really not done.'⁸⁹

My informant's comment illustrates the extreme conservatism of Hong Kong dress in comparison to European formal business dress.

Although the *cheongsam* reflected international and local fashions and was much admired, Chan suggests its decline and the adoption of Western dress was an opportunity to express greater individuality and modernity. Yet adopting Western dress was problematic as it was associated with bar girls.⁹⁰ As curators Matthew Turner and Irene Ngan explain, smartness allowed distinction between the two groups.⁹¹ Rational explanations for close attention to appearance included a desire to emulate the dress of senior staff in the workplace, and a desire for smartness, but as Schreier notes in her book detailing the acculturation of Russian immigrants to New York in the early 20th century as manifest through dress (a process accelerated by the number of women who, like those in Hong Kong, were employed in the garment industry), clothing was both a metaphor and a marker of change.⁹² Local residents window-shopped Ocean Terminal (tourism contributed the Territory's second largest industry), but purchased from Chinese neighbourhoods, suggesting emulation was desirable but prices were not affordable.⁹³ A minority whose jobs brought them in to contact with Westerners wore Western-styled clothes but for others, for example, an employee whose wages financed her siblings' education, fashion was not a high priority, yet the 'refugee mentality,' inculcated by poverty, helped promote fashion as a means of displaying wealth for Hong Kong residents.⁹⁴

The retail manager remembered the popularity of Japanese fitted shirt-waist dresses of inexpensive synthetic fabrics in the mid/late-1970s replacing the *cheongsam*.⁹⁵ In a culture directed towards keeping 'a technical jump ahead of neighbour's,' dress became a means of differentiating the host community from that of the Mainland China and Western expatriates. Overseas fashions remained popular, as Hong Kong had few designers and imported fashions implied wealth.⁹⁶ The English C.E.O., then based in Hong Kong, recalled a conversation with his Hong Kong-born wife, which illustrated the importance of appearance to the host community:

'...at the end of the day, for the Chinese, money transcends everything, when I first married my wife, I said, "I don't think you should buy that, it looks a bit too ostentatious."

She said, "What do you mean ostentatious?"

"Well, you wouldn't want people to think we were showing off."

"But," she said, "If we had money we would just want to put it on our face."

She said, "If we could have a Rolls Royce and we could have our nose converted to the Rolls Royce flying lady: that would be the way we would look."⁹⁷

Her comment reflects the limited ability of the host community to read the more subtle status cues of Western dress. Older women and Chinese *amahs* (maids), continued to wear pre-modern dress. Known as 'black and whites,' *amahs* wore black pants and white tops, and many older women wore a long skirt and a loose black jacket (see photograph of a woman in a Resettlement estate).⁹⁸ An English C.E.O. then sourcing from Hong Kong remembered a British fashion for black and white dress in the late 1970s, derived from visiting fashion buyers' observations of Chinese *amahs*' dress.⁹⁹

As Western and Japanese design labels became prevalent, recognition of Hong Kong as a fashion city rather than a sourcing centre varied: informants who lived in Hong Kong commented on the creativity of the work of David Sheekwan of David and David, who developed print for local suppliers and later his own brand name; Meg Hui, an Australian married to a Chinese; and Diana Freis (see photograph and detail of Freis mixed print dress).¹⁰⁰ However, Hong Kong designer's fashions met with little success in a city, which preferred imported brands.¹⁰¹ An English designer, then in her 20s, recalled wearing shocking mini-cocktail dresses which she designed and made herself. The modesty and conservatism of local dress surprised informants, the retail manager remembered:

'Some of my dresses shocked the staff in that I wore backless dresses which were very unacceptable. My Cantonese nickname was 'Lizard-back' I found out later, because I bared my back at work. I used to wear a halter-neck dress with a back [gestures] but not that low, roughly where my bra strap would have come.'¹⁰²

In her initial ignorance of local dress codes this informant continued to dress for the approval of an overseas, rather than host, community, despite marriage to a local resident. She saw her growing interest in Asian ethnic dress as a response to her perceptions of socially constrained fashion dress.¹⁰³ Her children's dressing-up box included items of pre-modern dress she had purchased in the 1970s: an embroidered shawl; a *huaniu*-fastened top; and Hakka undergarments (see photograph of shawl, this is of the quality now found in antique shops). As her business dress became more conservative, she continued to explore her interest in Chinese dress and culture through her leisure dress. The photograph at the end of

the chapter shows her on vacation wearing a dress of Indonesian Kain Batik (see photograph). She compared two photographs of herself taken a year apart after her arrival:

‘...you see the sort of scruffy, Australian-look: long hair, long clothes, very casual, no bra? One year later in Hong Kong: the hair is cut, the garment is more tailored.’¹⁰⁴

The difference was to her very striking, see photographs at the end of this chapter.

Dress in the mid-1970s remained formal: a senior civil servant then in her 20s recalled formal long dresses for balls; formal dress for work in a male-oriented environment; and a dress for dinner at the clubs.¹⁰⁵ Western-styled tailor-made clothes were often completely lined and even beachwear was concealing. Employment for trailing spouses on local-contract terms offered relatively poor pay for a 5 1/2 day week, with only two weeks annual vacation, therefore many chose not to work.¹⁰⁶ This allowed time to change into evening dress, having spent the day sitting beside friends’ pools on The Peak, attended by servants (see photograph).¹⁰⁷ Bars, dinner dances, and restaurants were popular, and the Cultural Centre and City Hall provided venues for concerts before the Wanchai Arts Centre was built in 1975.¹⁰⁸ An English banker, then in her 20s, recalled: ‘I went out every night. I was in The Hilton every night, without fail’ (see photograph of The Hilton, then a Hong Kong landmark).¹⁰⁹ The then balance between fashion and time was exemplified by the English designer, who recalled that, having a long journey to work each morning (she left home in the dark), she organised her wardrobe by outfit:

‘I remember having charts on the inside of my wardrobe because [I was] working in Kwun Tong [in the New Territories] and I lived on The Peak... Because we started work at 8.30 getting there took me an hour and a half - even driving. I’d wear something different everyday: being a designer... so I had these charts on the back of my wardrobe door with all my skirts drawn out, and my tops, and things. Arranged, so I could easily see, this, and this [gesticulates], in colours.’¹¹⁰

The degree of organisation and the time taken to complete this suggests a balance between work and leisure time; the relatively slow nature of fashion change; and durability of garments, in that it was worth recording all components of her wardrobe.

Many informants had problems finding garments to fit them. Most garments partially fitted, as the petite retail manager remembered:

'I could just walk in and buy the standard size. [...] I was obviously very slim, I was about seven stone (98lbs) in those days, and even then I was big at that size. The Chinese frame was a little smaller than it is today, so even at 5'2", at seven and a half stone, I was still quite a big girl. I could get things to fit me on the hips and the waist, but the biggest problem was the cut on the top because most Asian women don't have a very big bust. Although I don't have a big bust (a 32B or a 32C), there was not enough space across the back, [...] often it was tight here [gesticulates], or when you moved your arms forward there was not enough material across the back that you could bend forward. That was the biggest problem, getting products with enough arm movement and space, the width of cutting across the back. Even if you have to squash the front a bit, there wasn't enough room, and that was in the biggest size.'¹¹¹

In comparison to the slight build of many the host community, many Westerners had a broad back and relatively broad shoulders. Even for those whom merchandise fitted, there remained a problem with supply shortages if they were the same size as the local population.¹¹² Imported merchandise retailed at high prices, and some expatriates enjoyed the opportunity to save money by spending.¹¹³ Asking friends or relatives overseas to post items that were not available in Hong Kong resolved dress problems for some women: requested items included Laura Ashley dresses and maternity bras, yet few informants used mail order. Local maternity clothes provoked critical comments from informants then pregnant as purchase was unavoidable.¹¹⁴ Expatriate Western women first realized how difficult it would be to buy clothes in Hong Kong when they walked into a store. The Australian mother-of-two, then in her 20s, remembered:

'The [sales]girls looked at me and said, 'We don't think that we have anything big enough for you, but here are our two biggest skirts, why don't you try those on?' I tried them both on and they both slipped straight over my hips. I thought: 'Not only I am I big, but I look bigger than I am.' So it was go home in depression: that was a first shopping experience.'¹¹⁵

This is but one extreme example of a common experience. Difficulty in finding suitable shoes provoked similar recollections: as one local informant complained, British size four (size 37) was impossible to obtain.¹¹⁶ Selecting from a range tailored to the host population's colouring and tastes could be limiting, therefore

dressmakers were popular. Plain fabrics were easy to obtain, but prints were more difficult. The embassy official remembered the popularity of vibrant Jim Thompson silks, especially checks for evening dresses (see photograph).¹¹⁷ Jim Thompson, based in Bangkok and retailing to America customers, offered quality fabrics woven and dyed to the tastes of Westerners in an exotic fabric - silk - and Thai-inspired patterns which could be worn in the summer in Hong Kong and overseas. The meanings of colours differed from those of the West: the Australian retailer inadvertently shocked her Asian mother-in-law when she wore a white feather (white is the colour of mourning), in her hair for her wedding; some informants were aware blue symbolised death in China; and some knew of the Asian association between green hats for men and an unfaithful wife.¹¹⁸ Although purchasing new clothes (but not shoes) at Chinese New Year was customary in Hong Kong, no informants mentioned this, although one made a point of wearing red (considered an auspicious colour).¹¹⁹

American studies academic, Jeena Joselit, writing on the American fondness for furs, speculates that there is something in the American psyche, dating from the early days of the country, which explains the attraction of furs.¹²⁰ Similarly, early privation explained the prevalence of fur coats in Hong Kong - despite the relatively mild climate, as the Australian mother-of-two remembered:

'I swear that every time I went in to Central I would see one woman wearing a green-dyed fur coat. It wasn't the same woman: this was the fashion, and I said to x [her husband] "Obviously these things are not dyed green: they have gone mouldy because they are wearing them in such hot weather. They are having a pretend winter."

It was real fur, long fur, a long coat [worn with] boots.'¹²¹

Fur coats, unambiguous international status symbols at this time, could be stored in summer in Dairy Farm's refrigeration facilities (see advertisement at the end of this chapter). The *Hong Kong Tatler*, first published in 1977, recorded and reflected the importance accredited to expatriate social activities in the social pages, together with advertisements for desirable brands.

The *cheongsam* remained unusual dress for expatriate Western women. As Hoffman observes:

'Cheongsam: famous and needs no description other than a long low whistle. If you are to have one made (and why not, even if you never wear it out of your own home) then here's a tip regarding the slits at the side: some local dance-hall girls have a zipper arrangement whereby they can unzip the slit to suit the occasion. As all men notice on a windy day, some have the slit stop at just below the hip whence cometh the saying: 'It's an ill wind that shows no good things.'¹²²

This would have been a noticeable painted metal-zip. Hoffman acknowledges the pleasure in adopting others' dress, but emphasises that this can be a private pleasure. The detail about the variable length of the zip in the side slit together with the pun is deliberately suggestive and misleading: I have seen no evidence of either zips in *cheongsam*, nor slits to nearly hip height other than for coffee shop or bar waitresses in the top hotels, in which case the slit is on one side of the *cheongsam* or full-length skirt only. Wearing ethnic dress for a particular occasion was permissible (see the *Tatler* photograph of a fancy dress party, August 1978), but not for general wear.

The 1970s saw the consolidation of changes in dress begun in the late 1960s, when the host community first adopted Western fashion dress. Nevertheless, Hong Kong as a centre of regional dress continued to lag behind the world's fashion cities. Smartly worn Western designer-brands and conservative tailor-made suits replaced the *cheongsam*, as a means of indicating wealth and status for the host community. Conventional indicators of wealth such as fur coats were worn when weather permitted. Although in the 1970s locating fashion dress proved easier than in the 1960s, many expatriate Western women remained dissatisfied with the selection and sizing available, but adoption of local dress remained socially unacceptable for the majority.

Dress in the 1980s

Fashion developed unevenly in this decade: whilst local working-class residents wore pyjamas (a Shanghainese custom) in the street in hot weather, strangely colourful civilian uniforms (for example: banana-yellow and milk-chocolate brown, with purple trim) were developed for bank employees, information-counter staff, contract cleaners.¹²³ This taste for brighter dress than would have been worn in Europe or the United States of America was invariably compared by expatriate Western women with the fashions of their home countries, and seemed part

inspired by the freedom of anonymity: that no one knew ‘who you were.’¹²⁴

Throughout the period the predominance of unfamiliar Japanese-inspired fashions provoked comment from expatriate Western women.¹²⁵ Locally sourced prints from China drew criticism:

‘...it’s not that they are loud: it’s that they are unsophisticated or something, it’s just like: [gesticulates] flower, flower, flower. It is not particularly interesting... there is a carelessness about it.’¹²⁶

Yet an English designer recollected that local fashions at this time were more advanced than in England.¹²⁷ This observation reflects expatriate Western women’s acculturation, nevertheless, fashion became a greater pre-occupation for the host community than it had been for expatriate Western women either in their home countries or in Hong Kong. Even if a Hong Kong woman did not wear designer clothes, she would frequently carry a designer-name handbag.¹²⁸ As a fashion journalist observed, fashion dress was carefully considered before leaving home each morning, demonstrating a concern for appearance and personal grooming.¹²⁹ A Hong Kong retailer and socialite explained the importance of fashion and how it occupied customers’ time:

‘They [local *tai taais*] were very social: to go out for lunches, high-teas, and to be seen. The Mandarin [hotel] would be totally packed when you got [there] for lunch, tea, or whatever. To be seen going into the store to shop was a big thing then, and people would meet in the lounge [at The Mandarin Hotel]. There wasn’t too much of a night/night-time thing, and also, clientele-wise, I think there were a lot of bored wives, definitely, [it was] a great pastime for them. Because you could probably sit at a stall for three to four hours with your friends, have lunch, sit over at the jewellery counter and then, off you go.’¹³⁰

This accurate description is of a select group able to shop in top-end stores on a regular basis, filling their day by socialising at mid-day and early evening, and shopping with appointments for personal maintenance. Hats were omitted by agreement on formal occasions, a society informant remembered: ‘the invitation would include the phrase ‘No hats’ as the female Chinese guests didn’t wish to wear a hat.’¹³¹ The Hong Kong retailer explained their ambiguous appeal:

'Lots of Chinese 'though: they love it [a hat]: probably just keep it in the top of the wardrobe. [...] ... because we're not a really hat city. We're not like the Japanese.'¹³²

This desire not to be mistaken for Japanese women seemed to be age dependent: young Japanese fashions, including soft hats (for example, sun hats), were desired by the host community, but not millinery worn by older women. However, society guests invited to the 1989 opening of the Cultural Centre by Prince Charles and Princess Diana all wore millinery (see photograph). This English fashion designer, then in her 20s, remembered the advantages of her hat and small stature:

'If I wore a [sun]hat or something, they couldn't tell the colour of the hair, and I was short, so I could get the taxis!'¹³³

Taxi drivers, wary of potential language difficulties, stopped with reluctance for Western customers at this time.

Hong Kong fashions did not please every expatriate Western woman: the New York ex-model expressed her disappointment when she arrived in the late 1980s (see photograph):

'...I really felt like I was ten years ahead of everybody. I thought: 'They are not even last year, they are last decade.' I didn't think it was a fashion city at all. I thought it was a manufacturing city because we used to just go to down in to Wanchai and go to shops where you would get your bum sweatshirts and Nautica-things for twenty dollars. I thought of it [as] a way to get things that were made here for the American market but not as a design place at all.'¹³⁴

For this informant, fashion dress was a metaphor for the cultural status of the city: a source of cabbage, over-makes, and cancelled orders. A side effect of Hong Kong's *parvenu* mentality was the continued tendency to dress smartly, or to over-dress by American, British, or Australian standards.¹³⁵ Club archives, such as those of The Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club and The Jockey Club, with formal dress codes, record the smart dress of expatriates and the host community at social and charity functions. The host community's preferences for designer labels (real or fake), and to dress smartly, were recalled by many. The ex-New York model remembered:

'...when I moved here, my husband's boss's wife at the time said that she was very uncomfortable going to the supermarket, because she just wanted to wear her jeans and

a T-shirt but she always felt undressed, that in Hong Kong everyone had to look so nice. And I still feel that way: that there is a certain amount of casualness that has not reached Hong Kong yet. It's not O.K. to wear your cut-offs and a tank top; you could never go without a bra here; you can't really be unkempt unless you are trying very hard to prove your point...'¹³⁶

This summary was true of mixed and formal occasions, nevertheless dress for junk trips, or for those who lived on the South-side (in Repulse Bay, Stanley, or Tai Tam), was more casual. The photographs of The Prive and trendy Lan Kwai Fong restaurants record fashionable dress of the 1980s (see photographs). For some the change in circumstances between their home country and Hong Kong was luxurious: larger apartments, and domestic help for the first time.¹³⁷ For others it was an opportunity, which they worked hard to make succeed.¹³⁸ To Western eyes, local residents sometimes lacked restraint in their fashion choices, as the Australian mother-of-two recollected:

'Local people [would] turn up with too much 'frill and froth.' Little-girl. Little-girl 'tinny.' Little-girl cheap. I never saw this but a friend of mine described this to me, and it's left a lasting impression on me - but it's lasting impression in my head and I think that [is] superimposed [on] anything that I actually saw. One parent's meeting at one of the schools: one of the Chinese ladies turned up grossly over-dressed. She had on a tulle outfit on with a full skirt, and what made it worse was that her name Puding [Pudding]. Now, I still look at [overdressed] people and think 'Must be called Puding.'¹³⁹

With hindsight this appears racist, but I think my informant was trying to illustrate the importance of dress in Hong Kong in comparison to Australia's casual dress, and how this became incorporated into her memories of local dress. From the beginning of the period, many observed how smartly the host community dressed.¹⁴⁰ One fashion journalist commented:

'It was a white society when I moved here in the [19]'80s, and it was Diane Butler, Crystal Lee, and people like that, who were just these over-the-top white people who wore outrageous, very colourful, strange clothes, but over a couple of years, in to the [19]'90s, society became Chinese society: a Hong Kong society.'¹⁴¹

The celebrities listed were dressing for an audience, however this was still more flamboyant than would have been the case, for example, in New York.

Fabric weights became lighter as technologies improved, differing from those to which Western expatriate women were accustomed. The Australian mother-of-two explained fabrics were: ‘Tinny - something very tinny about; it wasn’t based in firm substance and ‘classic’ kind of gear.’ Lighter-weight fabrics and thinner knit constructions would account for this.¹⁴² New expatriates underestimated how cool it became in winter and Chinese Arts and Crafts continued to be a source of cashmere knitwear for use in unheated buildings.¹⁴³ Lingerie designed for the local market drew numerous comments. The focus on an impressive designer outer-appearance contrasted with local women’s taste in lingerie, including heavily-padded, prudishly concealing bras.¹⁴⁴ A coy representation of Hong Kong morality, lingerie was neither attractive, nor worn in matched sets, nor attractively displayed: beige was a popular choice and trays of foam-padded polyester were displayed like buns on market stalls and in Chinese department stores.

As Schreier found in New York of the 1900s, local garment production (combined with wide access to copy merchandise) helped increase the speed of fashion change. Despite the fashion for a succession of designer names, not all fashion purchases were worn, the journalist remembered the early 1990s when ‘everyone’ wore a given designer’s fashions (with the correct bag and shoes), when the designer was in Hong Kong, and, as soon as they had gone, reverted to safe dresses and suits.¹⁴⁵ This illustrates the host community’s taste for consensual dressing: to look too individual was undesirable and the ‘safe suit’ replaced the *cheongsam* as the new conservative dress. Echoing fashion journalist Nicholas Coleridge’s work on fashion as a form of money, an ex-Chanel employee explained few people wore designer fashions, but many liked the kudos that their obvious cost bought: an obvious logo was therefore important and offered the opportunity to resell the garment the following season.¹⁴⁶ In this unsophisticated society, visible wealth was of paramount importance: desirability included brand names and current models or styles. Unsurprisingly, as Clark notes, sales of relatively unworn wardrobes by local celebrities realized money initially for charities and, later, cash for the celebrities concerned.¹⁴⁷ A shifting hierarchy of dress was initiated by *tai-tais* who gave their discarded fashions to their maids and helpers, for whom the ‘Hong Kong handbag’ (a designer brand shopping bag discarded by the original owner) represented status.

During the late 1980s and early 1990s, a younger group of Western expatriates came to work in Hong Kong in order to earn money or whilst travelling.¹⁴⁸ Hong Kong's smart dress surprised many (see photograph of long-term residents, mother and daughter wearing matching red). An English designer, then in her 20s, remembered formal Hong Kong business dress as though she were wearing someone else's clothes:

'It was a sort of Episode: neat little skirts and silk blouse, silk shirts – Oow! It was a bit 'Working-girl.' [...] we were trying to be something that we weren't.'¹⁴⁹

My informant identifies the process of adjustment to local norms, likening her dress in Hong Kong to dressing up, which seemed to her to be too formal.¹⁵⁰ Her failure to comply with local dress codes underlined their complexity: relative formality for business wear; relative informality for formal social occasions (such as weddings); and the opportunity to fulfil dress fantasies by having garments tailored (see photograph of a Western woman wearing a full-length *cheongsam* with her Asian husband). Irrespective of informants' origins, some assimilation of local fashion was desirable to avoid excessive attention from the host community.¹⁵¹ Australian restaurateur Michelle Garnaut, describes how different this new generation of expatriates was from established expatriate families: how their appearance differed; their relatively low pay; and frequent overseas vacations to renew their work permits.¹⁵²

Shifting perceptions of smartness altered informants' views of the dress of their friends and relatives in their home country. This English teacher's recollection of her dress, and the discomfort which she was prepared to tolerate in order to wear her chosen outfit to a family celebration in an English church hall, mirrored in her criticism of the other guests' dress, is worth quoting in full:

'... it was winter, February... I spent the whole time with my back against a radiator... and, everybody, people in England, were so badly dressed. I thought they were really badly dressed. For an event: this was a 'do', some of them came in tatty jeans, trainers, and sweaters, and I thought 'But this is an event!' And the hall where it was was lovely and warm – my father had the heating on all day. It was snowing outside. The item that I wore, everyone commented on it, but of course, I love fashion anyway. It was burnt orange with navy blue edging on the jacket. It was a Chinese [sic. Actually a Japanese kimono] style jacket, not with a mandarin collar, doesn't do up: 'edge-to-edge' I

suppose. And it was a slight A-line, ...but straight sleeves, if I remember correctly. It had a long navy blue cummerbund-type belt and a pair of very wide leg, navy blue bell-bottom trousers and a straight skirt to go with it and a persimmon coloured... - it was called persimmon, I remember on the tag - silk blouse. I bought them here in Hong Kong. The blouse was Thai silk, from a shop that no longer exists called Dana's which was in Wyndham Street. She specialized in Thai silk, Western style fashions: everybody went there.'¹⁵³

The quality of description allows the event to be imagined: a church hall in snowy countryside and an exotic, rarely-seen daughter with long Raphaelite red hair dressed in orange and navy silk (see photograph of jacket). My informant was oblivious to the rural environment, or the travel difficulties experienced by other guests, when she criticised their choice of dress for her father's birthday and wedding anniversary celebrations. Her determination to wear the outfit she had selected for the event, despite the weather, is admirable. The amount of discomfort which she was prepared to experience in order to look as she intended contrasts with the practical dress choices of fellow guests.

Shopping formed a significant part of expatriate residency: dressmaking and tailoring remained affordable. Reasonably priced local leather and fur production enabled an American designer, then in her 30s, to develop a wardrobe of leather garments, including her leather wedding dress; another used leather and fur as trims on tailored clothing; and a third created a collection of fur coats.¹⁵⁴ The office manager, then in her 30s, recalled winning H.K.\$60,000 to spend within one hour in Pacific Place Mall. Her enthusiasm for shopping with a large amount to spend was conveyed in her description of the experience, which is transcribed below in full, reflecting the importance of retailing to both the host and the expatriate Western community:

'I won [...] along with 5 other people we had an hour to spend \$60,000 [per person] in Pacific Place.' [Wow!] 'We had \$10,000 to spend in 6 different stores, Marks and Spencer's, Seibu, and I bought that jacket [indicates to photograph] which I love and I've still got.'

[How did you decide what to wear for this day?]

'I'm just wearing trousers and a shirt and I actually remember coming from the office. Actually, that's a very unusual thing for me to wear in an office. I know that I was wearing it specifically because I knew I had to run around. ... that's what I'm saying,

that's not the sort of thing I would have worn to an office. I must have, yeah, because I went to the office in the morning, because I said to them I wasn't coming back because I've got this prize in the afternoon, and I must have worn a simple white top and very simple trousers because I knew I would have to run. Because when you've only got an hour, you've got to.'

[What did you buy?]

'I bought loads of things, most of which I've still got. That's where I got the red jacket, There was a jewellery store, which I still have the jewellery from which was Kai Yin Lo... I bought two pieces of jewellery from there.'

[Did you have to queue up and pay for each of these things?]

'...They gave us a week, so what we all did was in that week, I spent one evening in each store prior to the day and I knew what I wanted from each store because they almost had the stuff ready for me and they would have done that with the others as well I think. I was the only Westerner, the other people were Chinese... and I bought a pair of earrings and a ring from Kai Yin Lo both of which I still have. I bought heaps of things from Marks and Spencer's, I bought all sorts things for me, I bought something for my sister; my Mum; and my Dad; bought my Mum a lovely coat, I bought my sister a jacket and my Dad a suit. I also had \$10,000 to spend in a sports shop, which I spent on a bag, a jogging suit, Nikes' for everybody in the family, tennis racquets. [At] Seibu I bought luggage; I bought a leather handbag for my Mum, and I bought an orange cashmere stole for myself which I've never worn but I just love it, and I've never got rid of it, it's somewhere... I just love it, I'll never wear it. A baby shop which I bought all stuff for my sister [...] and the sixth store must have been Lane Crawford, I bought a Villeroy and Boch tea service, dinner service for \$10,000, I virtually got all the pieces. And we had an hour to do this, and obviously we had all done our homework and if we didn't get back to the finishing line within an hour we would have had to forfeit everything, so we all made sure that we were back.'

[Did you enjoy it?]

'I loved it: I had a ball. I was the one that, people said, that I was the only one that actually looked like I having a good time. But I think that's a Western thing, isn't it? You know, I think the others were a bit, a bit more like 'Just give me this and I've got to go.' Whereas I was 'Oh, look at this, I want this,' 'Oh, I want that,' 'Oh, I want this,' 'Oh, I love this, I'll come back' you know? My photograph appeared in one of Marks and Spencer's magazines, which I never saw, but somebody said I was in there.' [...] 'It was a great afternoon, it was really fun, I came home with loads of things. It was a really good job that I bought some luggage because [...] everything in suitcases and we all piled in to a taxi and went home. And then Mum hung everything on a rail: 'Oh, look at all this stuff...' I bought things for my parents and my sister and we hung it all up and had a look at it.'¹⁵⁵

My informant contrasts her pleasure in shopping and her novel experience with other contestants for whom this was a more serious event, and shares her good fortune with her family afterwards: they reflect on her success together as they look at the items she selected. The memory of the event remains special: even the stole, which was unworn, was treasured because it was a reminder of this good fortune. In a Hong Kong context this opportunity was unalloyed pleasure, and the prize money (equivalent to approximately two months salary for my informant) was sufficiently high to attract a crowd of onlookers and publicity as intended.

Local residents wore Western fashions differently to expatriate Westerners: the host community was prepared to spend more than expatriates on clothing, and many expatriates developed strategies to economically update their wardrobes such as purchasing top-end merchandise at reduced prices in sales.¹⁵⁶ When informants realized that copy merchandise emulating famous brand names at a fraction of the price of the original was obtainable, many enjoyed this inexpensive form of designer shopping. Brand-name logos, either real or fake, were popular as a means of conveying identity for informants and copy merchandise was acceptable to many, as one fashion journalist observed: 'People can't tell.'¹⁵⁷ However, as Skov makes clear, some members of the local community developed a detailed knowledge of the differences between fake and original merchandise.¹⁵⁸

Informants who were petite or working in the fashion business, enjoyed greater access to fashion merchandise than many 'company wives' who had more time in which to create their wardrobes.¹⁵⁹ Expatriate Western women of all sizes complained that local sales assistants offered them the largest size, or denied that they had stock that would fit at all, having a seemingly distorted view of Western women as being larger than they actually were.¹⁶⁰ The English designer explained how this made her feel:

'...I did at times... feel very clumsy, very big, and ungainly. I think we were lucky or because of our discipline and the fact that we were designers, we had a much broader [view].'¹⁶¹

Other expatriate Western women, accustomed to vanity sizing (retailers selling garments with the same size labels although the size of customer and the garment has increased), may have found this experience more distressing, but designers were more likely to understand and accept variations in sizing scales. Informants

recounted how these experiences made them feel uncomfortable and, in some instances, completely miserable. Occasionally, they were deterred from shopping in Hong Kong.¹⁶² Disappointment was a repeated experience. An informant forced to patronize the shoemakers in Happy Valley commented sadly: 'But they never came out quite as you expected them to.'¹⁶³

Desirable dress for some expatriate Western women appeared to be at variance with then fashionable dress, as it seemed some women had never learned to dress fashionably, or to use colour. For eyes accustomed to Hong Kong fashions this was puzzling, but I believe it can be explained by Woodward's exploration of (English) fashion as creating a composite identity through dress.¹⁶⁴ In Hong Kong, fashion dress was a complete look; in the United Kingdom for example, it was compiled with pieces, each of which represented the individual, irrespective of season, therefore, to Hong Kong-eyes, the English accreted look did not look fashionable. The need to comply with an inherited, or unchanging concept of fashion was apparent in the Australian mother-of-two's description of clothes shopping in her home country:

'I went cruising around the dept. stores and (some) garment shops. I felt as if I had come home. Such a large percentage of the clothing appealed in: style; cut; finish; colour; and construction. It was as if the garments were speaking to me in my own language - as if a code had been set earlier in my life.'¹⁶⁵

Her recognition of a familiar fashion look is also illustrated in her anecdote demonstrating her (and her husband's) acceptance of colour, and reveals expatriate Western notions of suitable dress. My informant continued:

'Finding bras and finding underwear has been a great problem. [...] I came home with three bras: a very pretty white bra with lace down here [gesticulates], I said to x [her husband]: "Only \$50, I couldn't resist. There were only two others, but they were in pink." And they were in this pretty baby-pink. And he said: "Don't wear the others out." And I said: "Like I couldn't be tramping my body around town in the pink bras, but it's alright in the white one?"'¹⁶⁶

Whilst white was an acceptable colour for lingerie for this couple, pink, even in a situation of shortage, was not.

In the mid-1980s colour and power-dressing was introduced in to women's working wardrobes.¹⁶⁷ The office manager ruefully recollected her colour experiments purchasing three suits of mint-green, peach, and turquoise with pink cabbage-roses (see photograph at the end of this chapter), respectively:

'I thought they were gorgeous when I bought them. I thought they were lovely. I thought they were bright, smart, pretty, and elegant, and now, I wouldn't be seen dead in any of them to be quite honest. I really wouldn't. It's not the sort of thing I'd wear now.'¹⁶⁸

Whilst this informant remembered how her fashion choices made her feel, it is unclear if her taste or fashions have changed. Colour differences were subtle but distinctive, the ex-New York model explained:

'The first outfit I ever purchased, when I visited Hong Kong [from New York] was a skirt and a matching tank top in a pale yellow jersey with a faint sort of floral print, just very simple and summery, I really liked that.'

[Was it to wear here because it was hot?]

'It wasn't. And so I never wore it 'til I came back here, ... I really liked it, and I might wear the top with jeans or something but I never wore it as an ensemble until I came back here.'¹⁶⁹

Appropriate dress varies from city to city: light-coloured monochromatic dress would not be appropriate in New York but in Hong Kong, a city in which women wore pastel and brightly coloured conservatively-styled monochromatic suits (and prior to that *cheongsam*), this was desirable. The red suit with gold buttons made famous by Nancy Reagan in the 1980s, formed an acceptable, conservative choice of dress, annually reinvented by various designers or local tailors. Colour Me Beautiful was remembered but without enthusiasm by the 'Sloane Ranger' then in her 40s:

'All my friends were doing it and I was longing, longing to be the person who could wear black, but instead I got the 'Polly Peck' and Next-coral and a dingy sort of bluey-green, and never to wear black (which actually I do agree with).'¹⁷⁰

The same informant resolved her disappointment with colours by creating a wardrobe of white or near-white suits (see photograph). Efficiently 'binge shopping,' she explained her sensitivity to small gradations of colour:

'I [would] go and pick out five or six beige or in different tones, walking down the line of suits. I would pick one that has got soft shoulders, and it just makes me feel better than another one might because it might have a different cut or it may not feel so comfortable. The colours make you feel so different.'¹⁷¹

Married to a local resident, yet ignoring the association of white with death, she customarily wore white but found it impractical in the United Kingdom.¹⁷² White was also associated with Raja Yoga Centre practitioners.¹⁷³ The ex-New York model wore lighter and brighter colours in Hong Kong than she had previously worn in New York, combining black with fashion colours (a very late '80s look).¹⁷⁴ She explained that the sunlight in Stanley Market, on the Southside of the Island, affected her purchasing behaviour:

'I found myself always getting more colourful things than I would actually want to wear. But it seems as though you were in a beach-y, sunnier side of town and you feel like you are in Capri or something, buying all the wrong things.'¹⁷⁵

The association of light and vacation is particularly strong in Hong Kong, as in Central most homes face Northeast.¹⁷⁶

A fashionable look was imperative for expatriates working in the Hong Kong fashion industry. Given the fashion awareness of the local population, identifiable previous season's fashions, or, as this visual merchandising manager, then in her 20s, explained, 'classic' clothes were not an option either:

'...I had a clothing allowance and there were lots of opportunities to buy something that was very seasonal, that could not be worn [in the next season] ...and [I] would be condemned for life [by other store employees] for wearing three-seasons-ago Kenzo. When you are working with principal companies and there are people coming over to visit, you really have to buy seasonal pieces. So I would always buy something that wasn't obvious - none of the prints - something that was dark that would match with other things that were in my wardrobe, that weren't necessarily one of the x brand names. But classics: no, I tried to get away from that.'¹⁷⁷

Company expectations and her own taste constrained her appearance: whilst she wore casual clothes for everyday work, V.I.P.-work events required black. Having a clothing allowance was an acknowledged temptation, but this informant (the only Westerner in the company) recognised the exacting expectations of her colleagues and the host community. Expatriate dress was sufficient to indicate a customer's destination to a taxi driver, according to journalist Liam Fitzpatrick:

'Take me to...' you would begin. 'Lan Kwai Fong?' they would respond enthusiastically, eyeing up your spandex turtleneck and buzz cut in the rear-view mirror.¹⁷⁸

The formality of Hong Kong dress, as dictated by the host community's preferences, required co-ordination of all international designer fashion purchases.¹⁷⁹

Copy merchandise remained legal in Hong Kong: Coleridge describes an accident on the 'Lacoste' hairpin bend between Stanley and Tai Tam when a van delivering clothes exploded, overturned, killing the driver and passengers.¹⁸⁰ The van doors were prised open and the contents, 11,000 counterfeit T-shirts, were immediately stolen.¹⁸¹ Although the goods were traced to a market stall in Seoul, Korea, the government decided neither to prosecute the implicated brother of the stall-holder for theft of the T-shirts, nor the Hong Kong manufacturer for intellectual property theft, as little sympathy was accorded the brand-name for commercial damage suffered in being copied. However, eventually copy merchandise was made illegal and relegated to discrete sale.¹⁸² The prevalence and temptation of brands, real or fake, was continual, although for some informants their position in the fashion industry was too visible to enable them to purchase copy merchandise.¹⁸³

By the late 1980s the overseas-educated Chinese and 'returnees,' as Holdsworth describes them: 'the sons and daughters of locals who had acquired their university degrees and Western tastes in London or Los Angeles, and were as dedicated to pursuing fun as their expatriate counterparts,' together with the younger Western expatriates, formed a sophisticated social group keen to celebrate Western cultural events, and the *cheongsam* was appropriated by expatriate Western women proclaiming Asian-knowledge or origins at local or overseas social functions.¹⁸⁴ Although Hong Kong featured on world and regional

cruise routes, the majority of tourists arrived by air.¹⁸⁵ Apart from the resident expatriate Western community, other Westerners visited Hong Kong on business or were tourists, often a first step towards later residency. Fashion professionals preferred The Regent Hotel in Tsim Sha Tsui. That Hong Kong had a ‘fashion hotel’ was indicative of its fashion-city status. At peak seasons during the 1980s, this hotel and many others shared total occupancy and the lobby was a fashionable place to meet people and entertain clients.¹⁸⁶ Informants visiting on business remembered the opportunity to shop for merchandise not available in their home country.¹⁸⁷ Hong Kong appealed to fashion professionals because it was at once work-related; a pleasurable place for personal shopping; and an exotic destination with which one could become knowledgeably familiar, as long-haul flights remained expensive at this time.¹⁸⁸ Central and Tsim Sha Tsui remained popular shopping destinations, and Western Market, originally a source of fabrics for local residents in Sheung Wan, was redeveloped as a tourist themed-site.¹⁸⁹

This decade can be summarized by major differences between the host community and expatriate Western women, although both wore Western dress, including: smartness; the use of concealing clothing; and the use of accessories (real or copy merchandise) to convey fashion conformity. Colour, awareness of fashion, and the speed of fashion change differed in each group: fashionable Western dress for the host community revealed an overseas knowledge and sophistication.

Dress in the 1990s

By the early 1990s top-end Hong Kong fashion was dictated by heavily-promoted international designer names which, in the words of one fashion journalist, resulted in immediate adoption by the host community of any newly promoted name: ‘... if Christian Dior was having a good season: it was all Christian Dior; if it was Gucci: it was Gucci.’¹⁹⁰ This relentless cycle of promotion and adoption left no opportunity for personal expression: fashion *was* whichever designer was being promoted at that moment. This reflected insecurity on the part of the wearer who adopted the designer’s look from head-to-toe announcing wealth and status although it lacked creativity.¹⁹¹ The fashion journalist observed:

'...people [...] would literally take an ad. out of a magazine and go in to a shop and want exactly that look. They almost wore their clothes inside out so that you could see the label. Friends who come visit here would say 'Gosh, that person is wearing Gucci or Prada' and it's so recognizable because they go and get the thing that is most recognizable! It's a very new-money attitude to fashion: that you have to prove yourself.'¹⁹²

Wearing designer-name clothing for many Americans in their home cities would have been too formal, but in Hong Kong this was both appropriate and desirable. Even leisure activities including water sports, especially junk trips, required appropriate dress as Lanchester's character describes.¹⁹³ A junk trip not only provided the opportunity to socialise with a similar group of people in an exclusive environment but it furthered networking, therefore dress was important.

An ex-fashion journalist, then in her 30s, explained her decision to purchase copy merchandise as well as designer garments, as she realised others would assume everything was 'real.'¹⁹⁴ This informant belonged to a small group of people who seemed to be able to wear copy or inexpensive merchandise, yet continue to look as though they purchased from high-quality brand names. This illusion seemed to be created by a good haircut, manicure, and quality accessories, combined with the onlooker's knowledge of their employment.

For an English fashion designer, appropriating designer-label dress, combined with her customary 'art-student' look, produced a striking appearance:

'We were real fashion victims.'

[Why do you say that?]

'Because we had money to spend, and we were a small group of fashion designers who all worked together. I think we became sort-of, rather famous: it was like living on a stage. Once you got used to being stared at, it became normal, in some ways you almost thought you should do something to earn it.'

[Why did you get stared at particularly?]

'Well, I got stared at because I was very tall. [...] Well, you know what it is like in Hong Kong: if we travelled around as a group, there was four or five of us, we would all look quite eccentric, and we just got stared at.'¹⁹⁵

Becoming accustomed to celebrity status further developed her eccentricity of dress. Whilst resident in Hong Kong this was the only time that she or her friends

purchased designer labels. In addition, they shopped in Granville Road factory outlets, which stocked generously sized merchandise originally intended for the American market; local boutiques; copy merchandise in The Lanes and markets; and Chinese-styled garments in China Arts and Crafts, Yue Hua, and other Chinese department stores.¹⁹⁶ *Cheongsam* became unusual but appropriate evening dress for expatriate Western women (see photograph). Lan Kwai Fong, the centre of fashionable nightlife, demanded more revealing and attention-seeking dress than would have been appropriate during the day.

The visual merchandising manager, then in her 20s, summarized the fashion consequences of her long working hours and busy lifestyle:

‘...’though you could complain about Hong Kong sometimes, generally, there was so much to see. It’s just that you didn’t get the time to get out there. And I kind-of complain, but my square mile of shopping probably stretched from Causeway Bay to Wanchai and I complained that I couldn’t find anything, but I didn’t actually get up and look much further than that.’¹⁹⁷

Long working hours generated lethargy in those in full-time employment. This was a common reaction to the large numbers of stores developing in what were now the twin cities of Hong Kong and Tsim Sha Tsui, as brands opened duplicate stores in response, gaining a new loyal group of shoppers who rarely crossed the harbour.

Although Lavender Patton’s life was ‘transformed’ from the lawyer she had been in Britain to an official patroness, expatriates became socially less prominent as the prominence of local residents in locally published society magazines increased.¹⁹⁸ Social status conferred by wealth was to be photographed in the society pages of the Hong Kong Tatler magazine.¹⁹⁹ Apparent membership of a social group was valued in the host community as the top-end Hong Kong retailer explained:

‘Whether you spent a lot or little that’s how you start. By buying a few accessories, and you go back to the store and the salesgirl knows you and [...] these people would love to start to be part of a certain group.’²⁰⁰

In a culture with a small middle-class (as Mathews reminds us), purchasing one’s way in to top society was both possible and desirable. Fashion dress became more sophisticated as top-end local fashion magazines such as ‘B International’ encouraged mixing and matching. An ex-B International journalist alluded to the

fashion conservatism of the majority in describing the conspicuousness of the few individuals with fashion confidence: 'In a room full of Chanel suits, one notices.'²⁰¹ This young Spanish informant described her experience of Hong Kong style in 1997:

'I went to French Connection and looked at shoes. Some of them were very nice: but they had got an ugly one in white leather and some perforations, and then some orange there [gesticulates], with a little bit of high heel, and tied up, and there's no stock in those shoes (i.e. they have sold out). I can't understand why. I asked, out of curiosity, and they said 'No, we don't have that size in those shoes.' And they're the most ugly shoes in the all the shop. They've got very nice slippers, and sandals with high heels, but those ones: sometimes they don't understand.'²⁰²

This can be interpreted as one individual's understanding (or misunderstanding) of fashion, but it also reflects the store buyer's success in appealing to the local market. My informant, who was puzzled by the obvious appeal of an ugly shoe whilst she understood the appeal of the remainder of the range, experienced a similar reaction to locally available suits.²⁰³ Maternity wear drew a similarly varied response: although the French maternity shop *Formes* had opened, some thought the local selection and quality good, others, including the fashion journalist (see photograph of pregnant expatriate Western women), railed at the virginal styling:

'Why do they think you should look like a virgin if you are pregnant? These big bows; polka dots: stuff you would just never wear in your normal life suddenly became acceptable when you were pregnant and have obviously had sex.'²⁰⁴

I suggest these fashions showcased youth. In a community where a 45-year old could almost pass for a 25-year old, these clothes celebrated youth and fertility, prioritizing Chinese family values.

Local designer collections remained a minority interest: local residents with money wanted to buy European labels and non-residents perceived Hong Kong fashions as irrelevant, as most, using light-weight fabrics or brighter colours than were acceptable elsewhere, were unsuitable for use overseas.²⁰⁵ Having become accustomed to lightweight clothing, one expatriate Western woman claimed she could no longer wear her fur coat as it was too heavy.²⁰⁶ Retail success in Hong Kong was proportional to the size of marketing budgets, and much, a means of

entertainment and a leisure activity for the host community, was 're-exported' by individuals to the Mainland.²⁰⁷

By the mid-1990s dress reflected the approaching Handover, a comment on Chinese culture, and modernity. An American fashion journalist explained the community's emulation of New York dress:

'...what happened around 1997 was very interesting, because there was a lot of in-your-face fashion before that, but Hong Kong society started to almost calm down the approach to showing off because there was so much new money from the Mainland coming, and it was a way to set themselves apart. So it was like: 'You people need to have the showy feathers and sequins on your *cheongsams* and everything: we can just have the nice black dress.'²⁰⁸

The host community expressed their ambivalence about the Handover through dress. The same journalist paraphrased Mainland dress as metaphorically proclaiming a 'new-money' look, which said: 'I have to fit in, I have to spend more money, it has to look like I'm rich.' Whereas, she explained, the truly secure people metaphorically say: 'I don't have to be as in-your-face about it.'²⁰⁹ This summary of conspicuous consumption relies on the observer's recognition of expensive merchandise, and is limited to the most obvious pieces in collections. The prevalence of black for office fashions enabled the local population to avoid making a statement about themselves for fear of being misunderstood or making a fashion mistake, as well as practicality.²¹⁰ Dismissing the practical explanation for wearing black yet recognising the refuge of anonymity of dress, colour was nevertheless fashionable in a climate conducive to bright colour and print.²¹¹ Some expatriate Westerners purchased clothes, which were part of local fashion looks, for example, the English designer who purchased an Italian dress and coat to wear to a wedding, which, as formal evening wear, could also have been worn to a cocktail party or a fashion show in Hong Kong (see photograph of dress).²¹² Sometimes these were not to informants' taste: this English visual merchandiser described prevalent colours when she arrived in the mid-1990s:

'I found everything very, quite cutesy - in places like The Beverley Centre - either cutesy or mushy colours. How can I describe mushy colours? You can imagine the colour of mushy peas, or beige, and a sort of dirty-green. With pale skin it doesn't look good.'²¹³

Appropriating Japanese tastes, these colours complemented dark hair and eyes. Everyday dress remained concealing, despite the late 1990s fashion for transparency: if a local girl wore a transparent shirt, she would wear a T-shirt or vest-top underneath in a series of layers with heavily padded lingerie underneath.²¹⁴

The initial shopping expeditions of many expatriates were provoked by the unexpected heat and humidity of the Hong Kong summer. Others brought limited formal or casual wardrobes with them necessitating initial purchases.²¹⁵ Conversely, the ever-present air-conditioning of the late 1990s demanded women carried or wore a shawl. The relocation specialist compared this to the past:

‘...the air-con was on so high. When I grew up in Asia, and when I worked in Indonesia in the early ’80s, I didn’t own a garment with a sleeve in it. This was no longer the case; you wore the same garments everywhere - then you layered - and the shawl became the great uniform.’²¹⁶

Pashminas, and occasionally the illegal *shahtoosh*, became classic Hong Kong fashions, not least because of the availability of supplies from India, Pakistan, and Tibet.

For expatriate Western women, dressing incorrectly for an occasion undermined confidence, as the Spanish informant described at a Handover party at Unity, a popular night club:

‘The first time I went a rave party was in Hong Kong... I asked my husband, ‘What should I wear?’ ‘Oh, whatever is good.’ So I wore white trousers and a blue T-shirt. So when we went to that party: it was wide eyes because everybody was very wild: mini skirts, and leather, and open shirts. I looked like a nun there. I said ‘Why didn’t you tell me?’

My husband said ‘But you look great.’

‘No, I don’t look great.’

[So you were too casual?]

‘Yes.’

[You should have dressed up more?]

‘Yes. You know the Chinese dress very tight and very short, like, something very, very different... And I feel like a lost... ‘What am I doing here?’²¹⁷

The revealing and outrageous dress code contradicted my informant's expectations based on her everyday observation. Dressing up for clubs and bars enhanced local girls opportunities to find an expatriate boyfriend. The inexpensive cost of dressmaking allowed informants to indulge in fantasy dress. The office manager recalled that she and her partner wore formal eveningwear when dining at The Bella Vista hotel, the former Mandarin Oriental hotel in Macau. Her long formal dress (see photograph) cost approximately £70.²¹⁸ Some Hong Kong professional women replaced their entire wardrobe each season, as complete replacement accommodated wardrobe change rather than attempting to match or replace particular items.²¹⁹ This speed of change was reflected in rapidly changing, inexpensive, local fashions.²²⁰

Fashion provided a backdrop against which expatriate Western women's fashion dress choices were viewed, creating a unique fashion situation in which, over time, the host-population appropriated and outshone the expatriate Western population.²²¹ The formality of dress continued. Expatriate Western women's dress choices for work or formal occasions, were summarized by the relocation specialist:

'It was just black: I didn't think too much more about it. Either you do the *tai-tai* thing which is in its own world of inspirational Chanel suits and what-have-you - the real ones and the inspirational version, and people who look fabulous in them - or a solid black: very sensible and attractive kind of wardrobe, which when you have a small closet [wardrobe] and maybe not much storage, makes a great deal of sense...'²²²

Her comments explain the popularity of black as a professional capsule wardrobe for local women with strong dark colouring, who mostly commuted on public transport, in an environment with high particulate pollution, rather than travel by car. Black formed a coherent, smart, wardrobe base, which indicated professionalism in comparison to the colourful tastes of the *tai-tais* and Mainlanders. Expatriate Western women were aware of and felt constrained by Asian women's modest dress.²²³ The relocation specialist remembered:

'Hong Kong was a very formal city, and a sleeveless garment, separate from the issue of whether you look decent in a sleeveless garment or not at the office aside, but not being able to wear a sleeveless vest [top], or something that is expensive and tailored... that doesn't have your underwear showing when you have it on. And for that not to be

acceptable was really quite astonishing to me: they took themselves so seriously here.'²²⁴

She continued:

'It's not all that explicit: there is a certain look to the company, in public, or if you are making business calls. It's quite tailored - which isn't a problem - but in summer that's a lot harder to do here just to be comfortable, and not constantly wet [from perspiration].'²²⁵

Wearing a sleeveless top in the city, whilst acceptable on the beach, immediately suggested visitor status, even in July and August. Nevertheless, national variations on 'cod Englishness' (as identified by Ribiero), were adopted by overseas nationals whose formal dress conventions persisted.²²⁶ The Spanish informant complained:

'Because Spanish people here are too [few], so [at] the Consulate the people like suits...so you have to go in a suit. You cannot wear anything else.'²²⁷

Conformity of dress indicated residency and Asian experience. My Spanish informant described wearing a cropped-top shortly after her arrival:

'I feel different because everyone was covered but it was my clothes. At the beginning it was a little bit embarrassing because I didn't know what's happened, maybe the cultural shock. [...] My [thought] was: 'Why are the people looking at me? It's not because I'm pretty? No, it's because there is something really different for them, like showing the belly. Maybe for their cultural background it's like: 'No.'" So [that] ... was my thinking.'²²⁸

Her growing awareness of Hong Kong dress codes was tempered by the knowledge that people did not know her, as the research on expatriate behaviour makes clear. It is likely that she would have found this revealing style of dress increasingly uncomfortable if she had persisted in it. Conversely, struck by her observation that 'mini, mini, mini-skirts' were fashionable when she arrived in Hong Kong in 1996 and, experiencing exhilarated liberation from former dress codes as a newly arrived expatriate, she had one made:

[What was the first thing you purchased to wear in Hong Kong?]

'Maybe a mini skirt.'

[That's interesting. Tell me about that because if you were wearing long skirts in Barcelona, and you suddenly come to somewhere where everyone's wearing short skirts, you felt you also had to wear short skirts?]

'No, it's not because of that. I was still wearing long skirts. But it was like: why not? Because when you wear something different in a city that you are working or something, everybody is looking at you: 'What are you wearing?' But here nobody knows you, so you can wear what you like.'²²⁹

The anonymity of the city, where the individual was unknown, afforded short-term cultural liberation for this expatriate, which she explored through fashion dress. After a time, the conservative dress codes of the local population prevailed and were adopted by informants: for the relocation specialist, even denim was too casual for leisure dress in Central; a society informant wore a formal but unlined jacket when going to the flower market; and tennis-wear was too casual: an interior designer then in her 40s, recalled running to purchase icing sugar at the supermarket five minutes from her home in the mid-Levels whilst wearing a sweatshirt and jogging pants. She met an acquaintance who, looking her up and down, asked icily: 'What *are* you wearing?'²³⁰ The habit of dressing formally became deeply embedded for one informant who began to work at home in the 1990s, but nevertheless continued to buy formal work clothes. Ruefully regretting the cost she admitted: 'I could [have] worn tracksuits.'²³¹ Hong Kong smartness became customary for informants even when they were not in Hong Kong: one showed me photographs of herself taken in the early 1990s, outside a friend's new home in rural Scotland (see photograph). Her friends (also in their sixties), wore mid-calf length skirts and sweaters. My informant wore a printed silk dress with long sleeves, court shoes (she was standing in a field), and a straw hat with a matching hatband as though she were attending a garden party.²³²

As Hong Kong began to develop as a service and banking centre, its earlier reputation as a source of seconds, over-runs, and cheaply copied goods persisted, provoking unrealistic expectations. Lanchester's main female character describes her preconceptions of appropriate dress when she arrived in Hong Kong in the early 1990s:

'Incidentally, my ambition to stock myself out with a brand-new wardrobe at eye-bulgingly, knicker-combustingly low prices - I saw myself dressed top to toe from this

madly cheap Prada factory outlet I just so happened to have discovered - came to grief on the fact that Hong Kong was by now one of the most expensive cities in the world. Real estate again: if the shops in Central are paying more rent than they would be on Fifth Avenue, the Champs Elysees, or Bond Street, your frock will not tend to be such great value. Now, fake designer clothes - that was a different story.²³³

Lanchester accurately records visitors' out-of-date preconceptions and ignorance of the fashion industry (Prada is vertically integrated and makes its own production in-house). Purchasing in the sale period remained an option for expatriate Western women reluctant to pay Hong Kong prices, as the Spanish fine artist, oblivious to the importance of seasonality in Hong Kong fashion, explained: '...you can wait until they have 80% off and you can get good things at good prices.'²³⁴ Informants customarily replenished their wardrobes when visiting their country of origin, yet also purchased garments in Asia with the intention of wearing them overseas. An ex-fashion journalist, then in her 30s, explained how she would wear Hong Kong designer fashions overseas:

'[I] would buy... to wear at a function in the U.K., [I] would buy Walter Ma, Lulu Cheung, Barney Cheung, taking East to West: [I] would buy in the Commercial Rise [Building], Vivienne Tam.'²³⁵

Although Hong Kong designers' work was in line with international fashion trends, she felt that they expressed an Asian or Oriental understanding. Deliberately exoticising herself, she did not wear these in Hong Kong.

Size continued to be a problem. This visual merchandise manager described shopping after her arrival:

'When I first came out here it was that realization that nothing fitted. When I had gone through my third year [of college], I had put on a lot of weight. Walking in to shops the assistant would look you up and down, even before you had looked at anything, and say 'Mmm, nothing here for you.' Nice, didn't really give you confidence, so for the first months I used to buy from Marks and Spencer's because that was the only place that would say: 'Hi, come in, welcome.'²³⁶

Expatriates experienced particular difficulties when shopping in areas that stocked inexpensive, locally sourced fashions for local customers, provoking unflattering comparisons with the host population.²³⁷ The amount of effort involved in sourcing

suitable dress was reflected in the size of the order when it fitted. The ‘Sloane Ranger’ explained: ‘...I like buying in multiples. We don’t buy one, we buy three...’²³⁸ Saving time by ‘binge shopping’ was important for those who had full-time occupations (see photograph of collection of embroidered wool slippers). Although Lane Crawford stocked a limited range to European size 41 at the end of the period, few stores stocked shoe size 39. Expatriate Western women reacted to limited ranges of shoes as they did to limited sizes of clothing, aware that the sales assistant might be laughing at them, which made shoe shopping an unpleasant experience.²³⁹

Marks and Spencer, a source of clothing for larger expatriates, opened a directly operated store in Ocean Terminal in the early 1990s. The English designer recalled:

‘...when it opened in Hong Kong it was just brilliant, because you could get long tights. Oh, the thick black tights! Oh, that was joy the day that opened and the thick black tights were in stock. And just, very simple, anonymous things: I mean, they were quite expensive... whatever, but they did the Ghost-y type rip-off things, which I bought heaps of, and it was just, I suppose, one, it was a little bit of England, and it seemed very different to everything else we had there [in H.K.]. It was kind of quieter and plainer, and more down-to-earth than everything else that we were buying and looking at, and wearing. And the sizes were big and it was kind of comfort-clothing, I think.’
[That’s an interesting phrase.]

‘I think that’s what it was, and when I think of the food that they had in there - which was only a tiny amount - it was comfort food. It was: biscuits, and crisps, and marmalade, and things you didn’t need but reminded you of home maybe.’²⁴⁰

Her summary of Marks and Spencer’s product range as ‘comfort clothing’ was succinct: plain merchandise appealed to expatriate Western women able to extend their wardrobes with basic purchases and purchase near-copy designer merchandise. The English designer continued:

‘I had a big-crinkle, it was when the crinkly-sort-of-things had just hit Marks and Spencer’s out there [in H.K.], so I had a couple of pairs of those, black, just like pyjama trousers, really, fake Ghost...’²⁴¹

An alternative to the luxury look offered by Joyce, grunge was popular with the younger host community in the early 1990s.²⁴² Although my informants worked in fashion or fashion-related industries, not all informants claimed that they dressed

fashionably. The ‘Sloane Ranger,’ who nevertheless wore striking dress, even described fashion as torture.²⁴³ As a strategy to avoid their customers being thought poor, Clark observes several vintage shops popular in the early 1990s marketed their stock as composed of seconds, samples, and cancelled orders, suggesting an awareness of local sensibilities and an attempt to blur the source of the merchandise.²⁴⁴ In addition, as a form of reverse exoticism, Clark notes that stores admitted importing vintage clothing.

Having been made to feel large in Hong Kong, many informants explained their pleasure in discovering that they were a relatively small size on their return visits to their home country. This visual merchandising manager remembered:

‘I went to Warehouse and everything fitted, and it was only a medium as well, and it was like: ‘Bloody hell, I’m not as fat as I thought I was.’²⁴⁵

Ease of fit after a long period of difficulty was a wonderful relief, but for some, purchasing overseas, or using a tailor, was the only means of obtaining fashion dress. The general helpfulness of Hong Kong sales assistants was praised in comparison to those of other countries, where customers were kept waiting before being admitted in to designer stores, or ignored by sales assistants.²⁴⁶

Informants understood the ‘buy’ was selected to meet the needs of the local market despite its American or European origin. The relocation specialist described the ‘buy’ in Joyce in the 1990s:

‘... they have been buying for the bimbos - you know: the Chinese mistresses - and that’s hardly a look that most of the rest of us are able to wear, or afford. I will go occasionally but most of that stuff is just folly clothes, not real...’²⁴⁷

Fashion for this informant was dialectical: to be worn by mistresses or by everyone else. Coleridge explained the use of fashion to maintain the lifestyles of mistresses, and ex-top brand employees in Hong Kong confirmed the volume of this market.²⁴⁸

Mindful of local conservative attitudes to revealing clothing, expatriate Western informants who had appropriated local customs sometimes felt tourists’ choice of dress to be overtly sexy and offensive. An interior designer, then in her 20s, commented:

'...[I was] aware that this is Asia and I saw some people walking around, and I just thought... 'Westerners!' You know: really offensive. I've seen very offensive people [...] a [revealing] T-shirt up to here, and all this [gesticulates, midriff] exposed, and then a little miniskirt, and strappy shoes, it's O.K. but it's a bit embarrassing.'²⁴⁹

It is a truism that foreign residents adopt the habits of their adopted countries more seriously than local nationals. Whilst the designer might have dressed as she describes when in the United Kingdom (she had a wardrobe of clothes purchased in Portobello market which she never wore in Hong Kong), she was critical of expatriate Western women wearing similar garments in Hong Kong. Her sensitivity to local sensibilities was underlined by the changes, which were required to make her own dress compliant with Hong Kong dress codes.

During the 1990s the size and availability of Western fashions increased. However, many expatriate Western women continued to complain of a lack of choice and sizing difficulties. The host community became increasingly sophisticated in their knowledge of Western designer brands, out-classing the expatriate Western women in spending volume and sophistication (for example: producing a magazine cutting of the next season's collection and requesting immediate purchase of that garment), as reversion to Chinese rule neared and the hegemony of expatriate Western women declined.²⁵⁰

Conclusion

In this chapter I have indicated the spectrum of expatriate Western women residents in Hong Kong and their nationalities; their opportunities and difficulties in locating appropriate dress; the consequences of the differences in their intended lengths of stay reflected in their interest in their surroundings; their social and cultural activities for which appropriate dress was required; and how these changed over time.

Palmer shows Canadian conservatism is reflected in regional dress; similarly in Hong Kong the conservatism of the minority group of expatriate Western women was manifest in an additional emphasis on formality and smartness, fewer hats, and, in the 1980s and 90s, more designer labels.²⁵¹ For expatriate Western women, this was experienced as both a freedom from the dress codes of the Western fashions of their home countries, and a curtailment of their sense of appropriate dress. Hong Kong's smart dress code preferences were noted by almost every

expatriate Western woman interviewed throughout the entire period of research, however, this was not so much due to a change in fashion from that of the informant's home country, but to a change in how any given fashion was worn in Hong Kong.²⁵² The host community's taste for modesty, conservatism, and smartness was appropriated by expatriate Western women and formed prevailing dress codes throughout the period; even at the end of the period when 'wild' dress was uniform for a special occasion, smartness was a consistent dress code. National variations in Western dress were perceptible, but drew disapproving responses from other expatriate Western women if they were revealing or overtly sexy.

Despite their higher level of disposable income than most of the host population, many expatriate Western women sought to save money on dress. Strategies for minimising expenditure on fashion dress included: purchasing in sales; buying from factory outlets; entering competitions; wearing samples and vintage clothing; and purchasing from their home country. Although many expatriate Western women disingenuously claimed they did not 'follow fashion,' many anecdotes concerned attempts to maintain fashionable dress. Definitions of fashion varied: some were prepared to compromise fashion for a 'classic' look not subject to rapid change; relatively few informants recognised and partook of distinctly local fashions.

Expatriate Western women's use of colour was affected by stronger sunlight and their skin tone which, by virtue of the climate, was always slightly more tanned than it would have been in the United States of America or Northern Europe, offering the opportunity to wear brighter and lighter colours.²⁵³ Colour choice was not thought prescriptive by expatriate Western women, despite general awareness of the bias of a store 'buy' towards the local market, which was also reflected in the quantity of imported European merchandise available.²⁵⁴ The need for smartness made attention to colour co-ordination a priority.

The hegemony exerted by the established fashion cities, London, Paris, Milan, New York, and Tokyo, made it difficult for any other city to gain credence as a site of cultural production, although Gilbert suggests that this may no longer be the case.²⁵⁵ Although the *cheongsam* was rarely worn by expatriate Western women at the beginning of the period, by the 1980s and 90s it had been appropriated by them as evening wear, as conversely, the local population discarded the *cheongsam* and adopted Western designer fashions. The changing environment reflected changing

notions of suitable dress: the development of air-conditioning resulting in covered-up dress and the prevalence of the *pashmina*.

Informants who reported least difficulty in locating dress tended to be those who had become permanent residents (either married to local families, for example, or who had developed successful strategies for finding suitable fashion dress). All expatriate Western women experienced some difficulty in finding merchandise to fit them, irrespective of their size, and although this ameliorated during the period of research, Hong Kong continued to be a 'hardship posting' in terms of clothing for many.

This chapter has considered how fashion was worn by expatriate Western women, both resident and tourist, and the host population in Hong Kong during the period of research, noting the relative formality of Western dress and its origins in Hong Kong. The *cheongsam* has been included in this chapter as it was widely adopted as formal dress by expatriate Western women in the later part of the period. Mediation of Hong Kong fashion is considered in the following chapter. Local 'smartness' was observed, appropriated, internalised, and practised even when overseas, despite the cost of fashionable dress; the difficulties in obtaining suitable colours and sizes; the prevalence of copied merchandise; and the temptations of 'binge shopping.' Expatriate Western women's appropriation of the *cheongsam* as a form of self-exoticizing dress, does not adequately explain the large-scale acquisition of pre-modern Chinese and regional ethnic dress which is considered in Chapter Six.



Figure 157 The Hong Kong Hilton Hotel 1970

'900 rooms, A/C, facing Cricket Club, view of the harbour...'

Built on the site of what is now the Bank of China, The Hilton was an institution for guests and local expatriate residents alike.

(W. K. Hoffman, 1967, p. 11), compliments of The Hilton Hotel.



Figure 158 The Den, the Hong Kong Hilton Hotel c.1963

'In the Hong Kong Hilton is a bit of 19th century China. The Den is a triumph of effective design. Lovely Oriental girls, dressed in the provocative cheongsam, serve the patrons. Buffet luncheon is served and at other times the Den is a lounge and night-club. Dancing 8.30 to 2am is a nightly feature. There is also tea dancing every afternoon.'

Photographs as original 1963 opening photographs according to local sources.

(W. K. Hoffman, 1967, p. xiv), compliments of The Hilton Hotel.



Figure 159 The Captain's Bar, The Mandarin Hotel 1970

Smart places to meet in the early part of the period included the restaurants and bars of Hong Kong's leading hotels.

(W. K. Hoffman, 1970, p. xv), compliments of The Hilton Hotel.



Figure 160 The Connaught Room restaurant, The Mandarin Hotel 1970

'This new room on the first floor of the Mandarin occupies the entire length of the hotel, overlooking the harbour. As a single room, The Connaught Room can accommodate up to 900 people. However, it can also be divided into six separate rooms for smaller functions and more intimate entertaining.'

Text inside the cover explains: 'Feel free to take this book with you as a souvenir. Should you desire additional copies to send to friends, they will be supplied in envelopes ready for mailing (postage 65¢HK via Sea Mail to all parts of the world). If the hotel is out of stock, additional copies may be purchased at any magazine stand at retail price of HK\$6.00 or STg£0/8/0 or A\$1.00 or ¥360 or US\$1.00 which includes postage on mail orders to the publisher A-O-A, 1302 Manson House, Kowloon, Hong Kong.

Photograph shows appropriate dress for an event in the main restaurant.

(W. K. Hoffman, 1970, p. x), compliments of The Mandarin Hotel.



Figure 161 H.K. tailored leopard-print dresses early 1960s

Teacher's wardrobe with two leopard-print dresses (centre and top right).

Informant interview: C.H.P.F. 29.01.00.



Figure 162 H.K. tailored leopard-collared coats early 1960s

Teacher's wardrobe with ocelot fur-collared coats in two colours.

Informant interview: C.H.P.F. 29.01.00.



Figure 163 The *cheongsam* as everyday dress 1962

‘Hong Kong style’

Local residents wear the *cheongsam* with Western accessories as everyday dress in Central. The old Bank of China is in the background.

(Geis, 1962, p. 29).



Figure 164 Pre-modern Chinese ethnic dress for older women 1962

Woman dressed in black or indigo blue cotton with baby carrier looking after children on a Resettlement estate.

(Geis, 1962, p. 37).



Figure 165 Opening of Ocean Terminal 1967

The opening of Ocean Terminal: The Queen and Prince Philip with senior members of Hong Kong's dignitaries. All women wear hats. Informant interview: L.B.F.L. 21.03.02.



Figure 166 Opening of Ocean Terminal extension 1968

Princess Margaret; Sir John and Lady Keswick (owners of Jardines, one of Hong Kong's hongts), and David Newbiggen (a Jardine taipan, and chairman of the Wharf Company), and his wife Caroline. All invited guests and some on-lookers on the balcony wear hats.

Informant interview: L.B.F.L. 21.03.02.



Figure 167 Attending a society wedding 1970s

Expatriate Western member of Hong Kong society wears a hat and a fur jacket to a winter wedding at St. John's Cathedral. Informant interview: L.B.F.L. 21.03.02.



Figure 168 Hong Kong society reception 1960s

Expatriate Western women wear fur jackets although they are in a reception room. Standing beside the buffet, they pose for the photographer whilst holding chopsticks and bowls with customary ease. These women enshrine the hybrid world that privileged expatriate Western women in Hong Kong inhabited throughout the period: observing Western social practices whilst drawing on Asian customs. Informant interview: L.A.M.L. 24.01.02.

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Figure 169 Dairy Farm advertisement Tatler 1978

'Give your winter clothes and furs a summer vacation.' Dairy Farm.

Dairy Farm, part of the Jardine group, advertised its under-used refrigeration facilities to store unused winter garments during the summer months. Tatler, May 1978. p. 74.



Figure 170 Life beside the pool 1967

Days beside the pool were a pleasant way of spending time for expatriate Western women whose husbands generous salaries ensured that they did not need to work. Informant interview: L.B.F.L. 21.03.02.



Figure 171 Bright colour and padded shoulders late 1980s

Expatriate Western women wearing bright colours as worn by prominent women in the host community together with the fashion for padded shoulders. Note: the padded shoulder of the cardigan. Informant interview: L.B.F.L. 21.03.02.



Figure 172 New expatriate wearing black New York fashion dress late 1980s/early 1990s

'I think that I didn't care what was fashionable here when I first got here. It was my own intuition and what I knew from New York. I did not think in terms of what would be O.K. in Hong Kong but then as I became more aware that it was important to assimilate.' Informant interview: L.C.H.K. 30.05.01.



Figure 173 Diana Freis dress 1970s

Print dress, Hong Kong Museum of Heritage, temporary exhibition, April 2003.

Photo VWT.



Figure 174 Diana Freis dress. Detail of the above.

The combination of two or more matching prints, usually of differing scales, was a key Diana Freis technique enabling her to produce a broad collection using a limited range of fabrics. The use of elasticated waists, wrists, and necklines enabled the dresses to be offered as one size, reducing stock levels. Hong Kong Museum of Heritage, temporary exhibition, April 2003. Photo VWT.



Figure 175 Maternity dress for expatriate Western women 1992

‘Because I was pregnant in the spring/summer I needed cool things: lots of big old shirts that we bought in the knock-off shops and that sort of thing. ...they brought out the Pregnancy Survival Kit and the Belly Basics, between 1992 and 1996: leggings; tube-tops; everything that could be 12 different outfits in one box.’ Informant interview: L.C.H.K. 30.05.01.



Figure 176 Dresses for travelling early 1990s

‘...I loved all my dresses, when I first came to Hong Kong from Thailand, these ones. I think one of them has got a massive hole in the bottom somewhere, but those ones I just loved, that's all made from sari material.’... ‘I loved [that] one: I wore that a lot. That was my smart-hippy [look] when I was still poor and travelling if I needed to dress-up a bit ‘smarter.’’ Informant interview: A.J.M.S. 21.05.02.



Figure 177 Expatriate Western resident in *cheongsam*. No date (1980-1997)

'I had it made. We used to wear a lot of these type of things [for] a dinner or something. It has a jacket to go with it.'

[And how did you feel being a Westerner wearing a cheongsam?]

'I didn't feel anything. I just liked it: it fitted nicely. I had several fittings and the tailor was very good.' 'I think we had it made at China Products, Yue Hwa, in North Point. I think it was North Point before it changed hands, now it is China Resources. It was very, very good.' Informant interview: S.F.T.J. 04.07.01.



Figure 178 Governor Sir Robert Black and family 1963-4

'His Excellency the Governor, Sir Robert Black, G.C.M.G., O.B.E., and Lady Black, with their two daughters, Barbara and Kathryn, photographed in the grounds of Government House. His Excellency, who has been Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Hong Kong for the past six years, will leave the Colony on retirement in April, 1964.' (Hong Kong Government, 1964), colour plate, no ref.



Figure 179 Hong Kong Tatler August 1978.

Shanghai 1850. 'Les Mus de Cartier held a Shanghai 1850' costume ball at The Repulse Bay Hotel.'

'Right Mrs. Brenda Chau arriving in her sedan chair with Mr. Kai Bong Chau on the left.'

A mixture of Hong Kong society and expatriate Westerners at a fancy dress party hosted by the luxury watch company. Chantal Miller, wife of Robert Warren Miller, founder of Duty Free Shops, (D.F.S.). The Charriols had a prestigious jewellery business. The Chaus were the famous owners of a gold Rolls Royce. (1978g, p. 46).



Figure 180 Society reception early 1960s

'That was sixty something? It must have been, I think. I am wearing a black linen dress there and I am wearing a hat of fluffy pink.'

The styles of the guests' hats vary between late 1950s and early 1960s fashions at the lunch for the Twinkling Star cross-harbour ferry launch. Informant interview: L.B.F.L. 21.03.02.



Figure 181 Shatin racecourse race mid-1980s

Leisure activities. No race goers are wearing hats.

(Moores, 1986, p. 209).

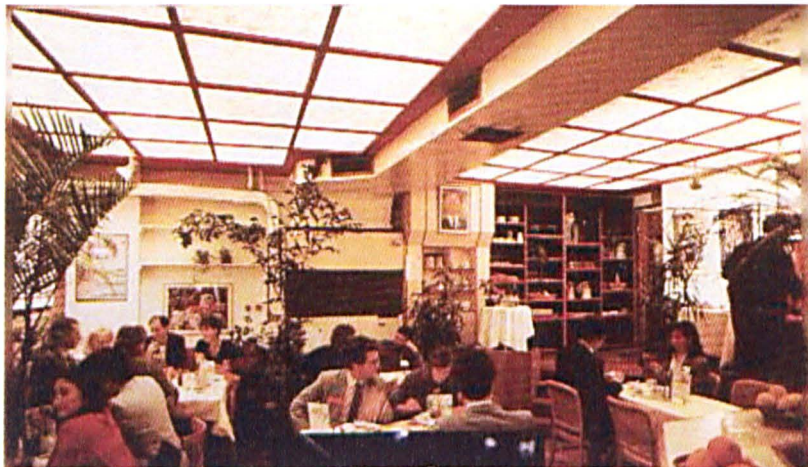


Figure 182 The Prive, 1997 Group-owned restaurant 1985

Popular Lan Kwai Fong restaurant run by Michelle Garnaut.

(Fitzpatrick, 1993, p. 41).



Figure 183 1997 Group people in the 1980s

Fashionable dress in Lan Kwai Fong restaurants and bars was similar to that worn in other first world cities.

(Fitzpatrick, 1993, p. 86).



Figure 184 At The Mandarin Bella Vista Hotel, Macau 1993

'x took me there for a long-weekend and we had an absolutely lovely time... I said to x 'Look we are never going to go there again. So, let's, for one of the evenings that we were there dress up.' We really went mad and I wore this long dress. We were dressed so over-the-top, no one else was, I didn't care because I knew we looked good.'

'I had this made especially for New Year: my girl friend and I went to the Cricket Club [New Year's Eve Ball]. We had our frocks made ... I must have been in to Thai silk then.' Informant interview: D.S.P.C. 07.10.99.



Figure 185 Wearing regional textiles early 1970s

Expatriate Western woman wearing Kain-batik patterned dress from Indonesia/Malaysia shortly after her arrival.

Informant interview: S.K.B.B. 20.09.01.



Figure 186 Hong Kong smartness 1 year later early/mid 1970s

'One year later in Hong Kong, the hair is cut, the garment is more tailored. This [picture top above] was Australia: beachy, no bra, lots of long skirts. We didn't tend to wear long skirts so much here. Definitely I stopped wearing them. Very beach-style type of clothing in Australia, and then totally conventional months later.' Informant interview: S.K.B.B. 20.09.01.



Figure 187 Hong Kong smartness overseas mid-1980s

This informant continued to dress with customary Hong Kong smartness even when travelling overseas. Here she poses for the camera wearing a silk dress made by a Hong Kong dressmaker, with straw hat and court shoes, whilst visiting friends' new house in Fyfehire, Scotland. Her friends are dressed in casual clothes suitable for rural Scotland. Informant interview: L.B.F.L. 21.03.02.



Figure 188 Silk kimono-styled outfit worn for U.K. celebration February, late 1980s/early 1990s

This Asian-styled outfit; designed to be worn in warm weather, required that the informant spend the entire evening standing against the radiator when worn in a U.K. church hall in February. She was shocked that other people did not appear to have bothered to dress up.

Informant interview: C.A.M.C. 01.09.99.



Figure 189 Fashion for the host community 1990s

Black chiffon dress worn with a matching black chiffon coat with a button fastening. Made in Italy. Asians liked Italian merchandise which was stylish, proportioned to suit their small frame, and vivid colouring.

Informant interview: A.S.V.L. 31.07.01.



Figure 190 Colour in working women's wardrobe mid-1980s

Colour-Me-Beautiful fashions: bright blue, rose-patterned suit with translucent spangles, purchased in Causeway Bay and worn in a Central office. Informant interview: D.S.P.C. 07.10.99.



Figure 191 ‘Binge shopping:’ bespoke white or near-white suits, with multiple purchase be-spoke shoes

Informant interview: L.S.L.L. 20.11.01.



Figure 192 Southeast Asian embroidered silk shawl

Purchased in Hong Kong a market in the 1970s, this would now retail in an antique shop.

Informant interview: S.K.B.B. 20.09.01.



Figure 193 Jim Thompson Thai-silk suit 1973

Made by a Hong Kong dressmaker, worn on the evening her husband proposed at dinner.

Informant interview: B.W.H.H. 06.07.02.



Figure 194 Cheongsam of pale jade green silk jacquard 1990

‘I wanted to wear something Chinese even although I’m Western.’

Using silk purchased in Beijing, tailored in Hong Kong, this *cheongsam* was worn at a presentation at an exhibition for Canadian properties in Hong Kong. Informant interview: C.A.M.C. 01.09.99.



Figure 195 'Binge shopping' bespoke wool-embroidered slippers

'These come from Istanbul... I like buying in multiples. We don't buy one, we buy three...'

Informant interview: L.S.L.L. 07.11.01.

¹ Informant interview: L.S.L.L. 07.11.01.

² See Entwistle: *The Fashioned Body; Fashion, Dress and Modern Social Theory*, (Entwistle, 2000).

³ For example, wearing stockings even in summer, wearing knee-high stockings with a skirt, and a Chinese fashion for ankle-high flesh-coloured tights with bare legs skirts, or wearing white tights. Informant interviews: S.F.T.J. 04.07.01., A.B.A.L. 30.05.01., and L.C.H.K. 30.05.01.

⁴ See informant interview: D.S.P.C. 07.10.99.

⁵ See Wood: *Memory: An Anthology*, (Wood & Byatt, 2008).

⁶ Informant interviews: L.S.L.L. 07.11.01., A.S.U.S. 06.09.02., S.F.T. J. 04.07.01., and D.S.P.C. 07.10.99.

⁷ See Woodward: *Why women wear what they wear*, (Woodward, 2007, p. 65).

⁸ In fashion terms, 'a fashion moment,' a term famously coined by Donna Karan, describes wearing a particular look, or exploring a particular mood.

⁹ '...the process of actively, selectively, and passionately acquiring and possessing things removed from ordinary use and perceived as part of a set of non-identical objects or experiences.' See Belk: *Collecting in a Consumer Society*, (Belk, 1995, pp. 67, 73-4, 90). Belk suggests collections are gendered and quotes Baekeland: '...women's collections tend to be personal and a historical, men's impersonal and historical, just as, traditionally, women have tended to have a relatively greater emotional investment in people than in ideas and men to some extent the reverse.' (Baekeland: 1981, 47), (Belk, 1995, p. 97).

¹⁰ 'They belonged to my grandmother but am I going to get rid of them? Absolutely not! They are hand-made, probably by [my] grandmother, or her sister.... Every once in while you just look at them and if you ever put them on they would shred in a minute.' Informant interview: D.G.W.L. 31.01.00.

¹¹ 'I guess the other thing that I don't do sometimes to my regret, I very rarely but occasionally, will buy duplicates of something or maybe in a couple of colours at the same time as opposed to going back. I think that's quite an art to know how to do that and when to do it and whether it is viable for you, but I think that most of us don't know do that we are going to love a garment nearly as much as we end loving it or wearing it such that we want it in one or more colours or fabrics or something, see ourselves wearing it over a period of time something, we just don't know that in advance.' Informant interview: D.G.W.L. 31.01.00.

¹² '...with my fisherman pants, I've had the luxury of going back and back, I buy them every time I go to Bangkok and I give them away, you know, I have them in buckets. I may still wear the same three pairs of them but the truth is that I have more...' Informant interview: D.G.W.L. 31.01.00. Imelda Marcos is a widely documented binge shopper. However, this is not only a contemporary phenomenon: Josephine Bonaparte was reputed to be a binge shopper.

¹³ 'At Neiman Marcus, ... it's all on sale and then at Christmas it was all 75% off of that, how can you not buy? [...] I had started a new job in this last April and certainly wear the similar clothes but there were some other things about colour that I thought I needed: more clothes in certain colours. You know, in starting something new I did need some extra clothes. A couple of these garments I haven't worn at all. You know they weren't really work clothes but they seemed a good idea because they were Richard Tyler, and they were this, and that, and so on, and I got them for a song. So there was a bit of that in there, a little bit of folly. But usually I will get around to wearing them but that was my excuse that I had a new job and that I needed to flesh out some aspects of the wardrobe.' Informant interview: D.G.W.L. 31.01.00. And: 'God, there's things that fit.' Informant interview: A.J.M.S. 21.05.02. And: 'I just headed to Bloomingdale's and I just go crazy...' Informant interview: L.C.H.K. 30.05.01.

¹⁴ See Lurie, (Lurie, 1981, p. 151). Informant interview: A.B.R.S. 06.02.02., and conversation with informant: B.W.H.H. 16. 06.05.

¹⁵ See Leshkowich: 'The Ao-dai goes Global,' (Leshkowich, 2003). See Leshkowich: 'The Ao-dai Goes Global,' (Leshkowich, 2003, p. 81).

¹⁶ See Clark: 'Fashion, Identity and the City; Hong Kong,' (H. Clark, 2000a), and Davis: '...through symbolic means to resonate exquisitely with the shifting, highly self reverential collective tensions and moods abroad in the land.' (Davis, 1992, p. 18).

¹⁷ In Asia from the early 1970s onwards Hong Kong average wages were second only to those of Japan, see Endacott: *A History of Hong Kong*, (Endacott, 1958), and Morris: *Hong Kong: an Epilogue to an Empire*, (J. Morris, 1993). Informant interviews: L.B.F.L. 21.03.02, L.S.L.L. 20.11.01, A.B.R.S. 06.02.02. and Morris: '...nowhere else was so small a possession so intensely

populated, so dominated by an ancient alien culture, and as years went by, so sophisticated and so rich...' See Morris: *Hong Kong: an Epilogue to an Empire*, (J. Morris, 1993, p. 215).

¹⁸ For example, a skirt with pants, or a below-knee length skirt with flat shoes Informant interview: A.B.A.L. 30.05.01.

¹⁹ See Gilbert: 'Urban Outfitting: The city and the spaces of fashion culture,' (Gilbert, 2000). See Gilbert: 'The elite fashion of these cities still regularly creates 'new looks' through crass pillaging of stylistic tropes from other cultures, but the 1990s also saw the local development of transcultural fashions, directly related to the emergence of new forms of social and cultural identity,' (Gilbert, 2000, p. 17).

²⁰ This appeared to be correlated with the wealth of Hong Kong: an informant marrying a local resident in the late 1960s explained how she only wore the traditional gold coronet of the wedding dress inside the building where her wedding reception was held, and related an apocryphal tale of her supervisor who was attacked in The Tiger Balm Gardens when a would-be thief attempted to cut off her finger in order to steal her ring. Informant interview: S.K.B.B. 20.09.01.

²¹ Mathews quotes an academic who recalls that he was frightened of white foreigners as a child 'because of their size, because they belonged to the ruling class, because they spoke a language we didn't understand.' See Mathews: *Global Culture/Individual Identity: searching for home in the cultural supermarket*, (Mathews, 2000, p. 131).

²² As film academic Richard Dyer suggests in his book *White*, (Dyer, 1997). See Dyer: *White*, (Dyer, 1997, p. 209). Western women are *gweipo* + ghost woman.

²³ See Morris: *Hong Kong: an Epilogue to an Empire*, (J. Morris, 1993), and Holdsworth: *Foreign Devils: Expatriates in Hong Kong*, (Holdsworth & Courtauld, 2002, p. 204).

²⁴ Informant interview: A.S.U.S. 06.09.02. Tsang likens The Peak to the summer retreat of Simla, home of Colonial Indian civil servants, as the preserve of the Westerners, see Tsang: *A Modern History of Hong Kong*, (Tsang, 2004, p. 48).

²⁵ See Etheredge: *The Expatriate Experience: toward a model of cultural adjustment*, (Etheredge, 1989). See Etheredge: *The Expatriate Experience: toward a model of cultural adjustment*, (Etheredge, 1989, p. 2).

²⁶ See Chapter Six for further discussion.

²⁷ See Lee: *The perceptions of expatriate spouses on organisational assistance in International Transfers*, (E. Lee, 1991).

²⁸ See Chapter One and Kristeva: *Strangers to Ourselves*, (Kristeva, 1991, pp. 6-7).

²⁹ Informant interview: L.S.L.L. 07.11.01.

³⁰ See Goffman: *Stigma: notes on the management of spoiled identity*, (E. Goffman, 1963). 'Once the core of social deviancy is established, one can proceed to peripheral instances; community-based political radicals who not only vote in a divergent way but spend more time with those of their own kind than is politically necessary; the traveling rich who are not geared into the executive's work week, and spend their time drifting from one summering place to another; expatriates employed or not, who routinely wander at least a few steps from the PX [Army stores office] and the American Express; the ethnic assimilation backsliders who are reared in the two worlds of the parent society and the society of their parents, and resolutely turn away from the conventional routes of mobility open to them, overlaying their public school socialization with what many normals will see as a grotesque costume of religious orthodoxy; the metropolitan unmarried and merely married who disavail themselves of an opportunity to raise family, and instead support a vague society that is in rebellion, albeit mild and short lived, against the family system.' See Goffman: *Stigma: notes on the management of spoiled identity*, (E. Goffman, 1963, pp. 171-172).

³¹ Authority on the brain and creativity Tony Buzan, explains this as an event as so out-of-the-ordinary that the memory 'freeze-frames' the event, allowing greater recall than would be usual. 'Good Thinking Seminar,' Hong Kong Management Association, Hong Kong, 16.09.02.

³² See Buzan: *The Mind Map Book*, (Buzan & Buzan, 2000).

³³ 'And I was coming from the cold, so I remember, I had a skirt which was, ... grey with a maroon check and it was wool, pure wool, and it was pleated, and it was stitched down to about here [indicated hip], and then pleats. And I had matching shoes, maroon shoes, very high heels, and a matching top. I had the same colour maroon top: that is what I arrived in. I had a mackintosh, and I took a coat which was a maroon check as well.'

[Maroon was big that season?]

'Yes, but they were not garish. They were neat checks, and I took trousers because I thought it would be cold. I didn't think [that] you could wear shorts at that time of year: I didn't think anything like that.' Informant interview: S.F.T.J. 04.07.01.

³⁴ Informant interview: L.B.F.L. 21.03.02.

³⁵ 'I had come to the end of job I was in, and, in fact, I had just resigned, and I was fairly unhappy in that job, and it came up and I had been out to Hong Kong on short business trips once or twice several years earlier, and it was kind of a bug, so I took a risk.' Informant interview: A.S.V.L. 31.07.01.

³⁶ Informant interview: S.F.T.J. 04.07.01.

³⁷ See Moores: *Living in Hong Kong*, (Moores, 1986, pp. 41-5). See Alan Moores: *Living in Hong Kong*, (Moores, 1986). Shirlee Edelstein's examples of difference include: describing the amount of litter; pushing for a position on an elevator; abrupt questions about money; the education system. See Edelstein, *Living in Hong Kong*, (Edelstein, 1979, p. 19).

³⁸ Informant interview: L.S.L.L. 07.11.01.

³⁹ See Morris: *Hong Kong: an Epilogue to an Empire*, (J. Morris, 2000, pp. 68-9).

⁴⁰ American commercial practice particularly in the later part of the period, and Civil Service positions, for example. 'Everyone was just passing through. Expats were all on short-term contracts, even the ones who'd been there for twenty years. Even the locals seemed to be passing thorough, on their way to Canada or Australia.' Deborah Glass, Australian lawyer working in banking, 1989. See Holdsworth: *Foreign Devils: Expatriates in Hong Kong*, (Holdsworth & Courtauld, 2002, p. 216).

⁴¹ '...I only came home once a year and because my family [were] up in North Wales and that is often where I spent my time, [...] and after Hong Kong it was, ugh: dead.' Informant interview: A.S.V.L. 31.07.01.

⁴² See Morris: *Hong Kong: an Epilogue to an Empire*, (J. Morris, 2000, p. 70).

⁴³ See Morris: *Hong Kong: an Epilogue to an Empire*, (J. Morris, 2000, pp. 68-9).

⁴⁴ Of the early 70s: there was a dearth of professionals. Informant interview: S.K.B.B. 20.09.01. Morris records that there were still 1,800 expatriates employed in the Civil Service in 1996, (J. Morris, 2000, p.101, 218). From an early period Tsang records that expatriates were more likely to obtain jobs with a management component despite their lack of qualifications, (Tsang, 2004, p. 63).

⁴⁵ See Holdsworth: *Foreign Devils: Expatriates in Hong Kong*, (Holdsworth & Courtauld, 2002, 207).

⁴⁶ Informant interview: B.W.H.H. 06.07.02. A comparison of expatriate numbers during the early, middle, and later part of the period reveals a significant decline in expatriate numbers during the middle part of the period of research. Non-Chinese speaking residents in Hong Kong at the 1961 census numbered 48,153, of a total population of 3,129,648, or 1.5% of residents, of these 20,298 were women, 27,855 were men. See Barnett, (Barnett, 1961). The prevalence of men reflected the members of the Armed Forces based in Hong Kong. In 1979, 2% of the population were expatriates, of these 17,000 were British, 7,000 Indian, 7,000 American, and 6,000 Japanese, with smaller groups of Australian, French, German and Swiss. See, Edelstein: *Living in Hong Kong*, (Edelstein, 1979, p. 18). In a later part of the period the Census and Statistics Department recorded the population by nationality and place of birth. This distinguished expatriates from local residents with overseas nationality. The 1996 publication shows that of 371,713 expatriates (excluding those born in China or Macau), 30,302 were British, forming 8% of the total population. 18,502 were from America, 7,777 were Australian, and 10,816 were Canadian. See Hong Kong Census & Statistics Dept.: *Population By-census Main Report*, (Hong Kong Census & Statistics Department, 1996). See Morris: *Hong Kong: an Epilogue to an Empire*, (J. Morris, 2000, pp. 106-110, 112).

⁴⁷ Informant interview: D.D.C.C. 13.08.99.

⁴⁸ Informant interview: S.K.B.B. 20.09.01.

⁴⁹ Informant interview: S.K.B.B. 20.09.01.

⁵⁰ And significantly, used as dressing up clothes by the children of her second marriage to a Westerner.

⁵¹ Informant interview: A.E.G.L. 16.12.99.

⁵² Informant interview: D.S.P.C. 07.10.99.

⁵³ 'In 1988, it is estimated that some 45,817 people left Hong Kong to resettle overseas. A quarter of this number belong to the executive, managerial and professional grades. Their leaving created a significant number of vacancies, mostly at the middle management level. The need to replace well-educated and experienced personnel is a major headache for many companies.' See Tsim: *The Other Hong Report*, (Tsim & Luk, 1989) and, 'It was estimated that 62,000 people have left Hong Kong every year since 1987.' See Lo: *Hong Kong*, (Lo, 1992, p. 28), and Chapter 2.

⁵⁴ The Fong: Lan Kwai Fong. Informant interview: B.B.G.L. 19.11.01.

⁵⁵ Informant interview: A.S.H.C. 05.06.01.

⁵⁶ She continued: 'But because I've been here longer, and know that I'll be here longer, I have tried not to be with such a transient crowd.' [...] 'And I think part of is 'Well gosh, you know what we have in America and don't you really miss that kind of orange juice?' and 'Oh, I really loved it here.' And 'Who else would understand what a big beautiful house you have, and how many cars, and what a soccer-Mom is?' Because I never had that life when I lived there, and I intentionally moved away from where I could have had that life [...] Even if they are American, we can talk about the same movies but we have a very different take on life. And I'm happy to give people directions to Wing On and tell them where they can get laundry baskets and lunch boxes but that's not conversation I usually engage in [or find] very gratifying. Informant interview: L.C.H.K. 30.05.01.

⁵⁷ For example: Tai Tam, Repulse Bay, Discovery Bay.

⁵⁸ Ellen Melinkoff claims in her book: *What We Wore: An Offbeat Social history of Women's Clothing, 1950 – 1980*, that in the late 1950s women in America spent less money on clothes than they did by the 1980s: being neat and serviceable was sufficient effort, see Melinkoff: (Melinkoff, 1984, p. 15). If this was fashion in the wealthiest country in the world in the 1950s, Hong Kong a relatively poor relation, was unlikely to be more sophisticated less than a decade later.

⁵⁹ 'A sexpot Western actress, striving for the same effect [as a cheongsam] in a skin-tight dress is more often ludicrous than alluring, looking like a side of beef waiting for the meat market to open.' See Gleason: *Tales of Hong Kong*, (Gleason, 1967, p. 20)

⁶⁰ See Howes: *Epilogue*, (Howes, 1996, p. 187).

⁶¹ 'European women, too, adopt the cheong-sam and some even look quite well in it, though not many, for most of them are either too overflowing or too bonily angular.' See Ommanny: *Eastern Windows*, (Ommanney, 1962, 30).

⁶² See Holdsworth: *Foreign Devils: Expatriates in Hong Kong*, (Holdsworth & Courtauld, 2002, p. 155).

⁶³ See Morris: *Hong Kong: an Epilogue to an Empire*, (J. Morris, 2000, p. 217).

⁶⁴ Youth is not a pejorative noun, nor an adjective in Hong Kong English. 'I had to do quite a lot of things the daughter of the Governor. [...] I started up [the] Junior Red Cross, my Mother got it going and I sort of, I wouldn't say it's largely my responsibility or anything, but I got very involved in that. People asked me to open things, and I had things for youth.' Informant interview: A.B.R.S. 06.02.02.

⁶⁵ Informant interview: A.B.R.S. 06.02.02.

⁶⁶ Informant interview: L.B.F.L. 21.03.02. Immediately before relocating to Hong Kong, I worked for a British based accessories manufacturer. We completed trade shows in Osaka and Tokyo, selling mostly hats, as part of the B.K.C.E.C., the British Knitting and Clothing Exhibition Council, which part-funded small companies exhibition costs as part of a drive to increase British fashion exports. Informant interviews: S.O.P.S. 07.06.01.

⁶⁷ Informant interview: L.B.F.L. 21.03.02.

⁶⁸ Informant interview: A.B.R.S. 06.02.02.

⁶⁹ Informant interview: A.S.U.S. 06.09.02. See Wilson: 'Commodified Craft, Creative Community; Women's Vernacular Dress in Nineteenth Century Philadelphia,' (K. E. Wilson, 1999).

⁷⁰ Informant interview: C.H.P.F. 29.01.00.

⁷¹ See Gleason: *Tales of Hong Kong*, (Gleason, 1967). Sports races were held in the New Territories in the earlier part of the period, and continued to be held in Macau during the later part of the period. The yacht race was around Hong Kong Island. The Maclehorse trail became particularly popular.

⁷² Informant interview: A.S.U.S. 06.09.02.

⁷³ Informant interview: L.B.F.L. 21.03.02. Women wearing trousers were not allowed in to The Hong Kong Club. Informant interview: A.S.U.S. 06.09.02. Equally, men complied to a dress code banning safari suits, informant interview: L.S.L.L. 07.11.01. 'I wouldn't say casual [...] but I wouldn't have been seen in a pant-suit,' informant interview: L.B.F.L. 21.03.02.

⁷⁴ 'I was expected to wear a hat and gloves for most things. Informant interview A.B.R.S. 06.02.02., and : '...my husband said 'You cannot go out on that' and sent me upstairs to change. Informant interview: A.S.U.S. 06.09.02.

⁷⁵ Informant interview: L.B.F.L. 21.03.02.

⁷⁶ Informant interview: L.S.L.L. 07.11.01.

⁷⁷ Informant interview: A.B.R.S. 06.02.02.

⁷⁸ '...it was really quite formal. I mean, you had dinners: black tie and long dress, with long gloves.' Informant interview: A.B.R.S. 06.02.02.

⁷⁹ Informant interview: L.B.F.L. 21.03.02. See Morris: *Hong Kong: an Epilogue to an Empire*, (J. Morris, 2000, p. 203).

⁸⁰ Informant interview: S.K.B.B. 20.09.01.

⁸¹ This was largely caused by the continuing influx of immigrants from China after the establishment of the Communist Party and a lack of adequate accommodation. See: Endacott, *A History of Hong Kong*, (Endacott, 1958, pp. 20-21, 311); Gleason: *Hong Kong*, (Gleason, 1963, p. 31-2); Edelstein: *Living in Hong Kong*, (Edelstein, 1979, p. 20, 21); Morris: *Hong Kong: an Epilogue to an Empire*, (J. Morris, 1993, p. 232, 234); and Salaff: *Working daughters of Hong Kong: filial piety or power in the family?* (Salaff, 1995, p. 25). These describe Hong Kong's shanty towns, bungalows, Government resettlement housing schemes, working conditions, and living costs during the earlier part of the period.

⁸² Informant interview: S.K.B.B. 20.09.01.

⁸³ The Hong Kong Club, The Cricket Club, The Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club, The Hong Kong Country Club, The Football Club, The Ladies Recreation Club (the L.R.C.), and The Helena May. The old Hong Kong Club had a bowling alley but the new one, opened in 1984, has an exercise room as well as squash courts and bowling facilities. Discussion with X.C.H.B., member, 09.05.03. The Helena May does not have sports facilities. 'In May 1967, we were admitted as members of the prestigious Hong Kong Country Club after a short waiting period, and paid a HK\$1,000 entrance fee, [...]. The monthly subscription fee was H.K.\$250 per family. Living in the confines of a flat as most us do, we found membership of such a nice Club with outdoor facilities a necessary luxury. Certainly an international, multiracial club with a nice swimming pool, seven tennis courts, a huge lawn overlooking the South China Sea, a bowling alley, squash courts, bars and various excellent dining areas, a coffee shop and mahjong/card rooms. It proved a paradise for parents and children alike to spend their weekends and holidays; a healthy oasis of peace and quiet in Hong Kong's overcrowded environment.' See Litmaath: *Far East of Amsterdam*, (Litmaath, 2003, p. 33). Holdsworth suggests the appeal of a shared consciousness was to be found in club membership, *Foreign Devils: Expatriates in Hong Kong*, (Holdsworth & Courtauld, 2002, p. 8).

⁸⁴ These included the Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club Ball and the St. Andrew's Ball, in addition to those held by the British armed forces stationed in Hong Kong. See Edelstein: *Living in Hong Kong*, (Edelstein, 1979, 126-131), and Morris: *Hong Kong: an Epilogue to an Empire*, (J. Morris, 1993, p. 48-9). 'Social life is transformed by the existence of domestic help. Expatriate dinner parties, for one thing, would be less polished affairs without Filipino or Thai amahs to cook and serve.' See Holdsworth: *Foreign Devils: Expatriates in Hong Kong*, (Holdsworth & Courtauld, 2002, p. 200-201). The American Women's Association, and The Hong Kong Toastmistresses Club. See Wickman: *Living in Hong Kong*, (Wickman, 1973). As well as national societies such as The Lusitano Club (whose members were of Portuguese or Mekanese origin). The Jockey Club, particularly at Happy Valley, has long been a source of social and business entertainment. The A.W.A. was a focus of social events particularly for newcomers and non-working wives. These contributed to local retailers' and tailors' product offer, sometimes necessitating a ball gown as an initial purchase on arrival in Hong Kong. Informant interviews: B.B.G.L. 19.11.01., A.B.R.S. 06.02.02. 'There weren't many restaurants *per sae*, [...] but you went out for dinner and dancing, and there were quite a few nightclubs,' informant interview: A.B.R.S. 06.02.02.

⁸⁵ Informant interview: A.E.G.C. 03.09.00.

⁸⁶ Informant interview: B.V.G.S. 24.04.02. This informant remembered, having been told that she would need evening wear in Hong Kong, counting twenty-two evening wear outfits in her wardrobe shortly after she arrived in the late 1970s.

⁸⁷ Informant interview: S.K.B.B. 20.09.01.

⁸⁸ 'I would say continental Europeans are always - may I say so - smarter. Had more the *chic* about them mostly,' informant interview: B.W.H.H. 06.07.02., and from the early 1990s: 'a lot of very English-looking clothes,' and, 'I suppose if they are 'Marks & Spencer's'-like: [three-]quarter-length skirts, quite amusing; sensible of shoes, and then of course Americans, who I think always dress pretty casually in general. My [female] French friends dressed as though they could have been in Paris and they still wanted to wear an elegant couture suit and new Levi's jeans: I don't think that people change a great deal.' informant interview: S.S.A.A. 11.10.01. See Chapter One and Lurie: *The Language of Clothes*, (Lurie, 1981, p. 109).

⁸⁹ Informant interview: B.W.H.H. 06.07.02. One informant recollected she always wore tights during the first year after her arrival in 1973. Informant interview: B.V.G.S. 24.04.02.

⁹⁰ Informant interviews: L.S.L.L. 20.11.01., C.M.B.S. 22.05.02., B.W.H.H. 06.07.02., and A.B.R.S. 06.02.02. Ommanney records local women wearing the *cheongsam* 'achieve[d] heights of elegance

and chic which European women in the East cannot rival.' See Ommanney: *Eastern Windows*, (Ommanney, 1962, p. 30), and Chan: 'Shopping for Fashion in Hong Kong,' (A. H. Chan, 2001, p. 151).

⁹¹ See Turner: *Hong Kong Sixties Designing Identity*, (Turner & Ngan, 1995). See Turner: *Hong Kong Sixties Designing Identity*, (Turner & Ngan, 1995, p. 38).

⁹² Informant interview: A.S.V.L. 31.07.01. See Schreier: *Becoming American Women: Clothing and the Jewish Immigrant Experience: 1880-1920*, (Schreier, 1994).

⁹³ Valued at \$120 million-a-year (assume \$ U.S.), see Gleason: *Hong Kong*, (Gleason, 1963, p. 133). The Hong Kong Tourist Association was established in the early 1960s in order to police attempts to fleece tourists so as to preserve Hong Kong's reputation as a desirable destination. Hong Kong had six million visitors in 1990, more than half of whom were from Asia. See Morris: *Hong Kong: an Epilogue to an Empire*, (J. Morris, 2000, p. 163). Tourists who could afford the long-haul airfare to Hong Kong were inclined to spend liberally when they arrived: unaccustomed to bargaining in the early part of the period, American tourists would unhesitatingly pay the named price for any article. See Salaff: *Working daughters of Hong Kong: filial piety or power in the family?*(Salaff, 1995, p. 124). Yau in his paper 'Ocean Terminal' describes how Ocean Terminal taught: 'the social implications of conspicuous consumption, and the satisfaction and pride derived from looking and being looked at.' See Yau: 'Hoiwahn Daaihah' [Ocean Terminal], (Yau, 1997, p. 35). Ocean Terminal also contained a Cable and Wireless Office on the first deck, open 7.30am/midnight.' See Hoffman: *Hong Kong*, (W.K. Hoffman, 1970, p. 60).

⁹⁴ Salaff discusses varying local resident's wardrobes, recording this comprised of two dresses for one informant, see Salaff: *Working daughters of Hong Kong: filial piety or power in the family?*(Salaff, 1981, p. 179). For example, rejecting social or community responsibility and political activity in order to obtain their goals. See Salaff: *Working daughters of Hong Kong: filial piety or power in the family?*(Salaff, 1995, p. 108).

⁹⁵ Informant interviews: S.K.B.B. 20.09.01., B.V.G.S. 24.04.02., C.M.B.S. 22.05.02., and B.W.H.H. 06.07.02. On a visit to Tokyo in Spring 2007 I observed many vintage stores offering 1970s fashions made from early synthetic fabrics.

⁹⁶ See Morris: *Hong Kong: an Epilogue to an Empire*, (J. Morris, 1993), and informant interview: B.W.H.H. 06.07.02.

⁹⁷ Informant Interview: S.G.M.J. 24.07.01.

⁹⁸ Literally 'paternal grandmother,' generally, maids who also cooked. Ethnic dress fascinated some expatriate Western informants. Informant interview: S.K.B.B. 20.9.01. Dress historian, Valery Garrett describes the ethnic dress of Hong Kong in detail in her many books, the first of which she commenced whilst working as a lingerie designer in Hong Kong in the 1970s. See, for example: *Traditional Chinese Clothing in Hong Kong and South China, 1840-1980* (Garrett, 1987).

⁹⁹ In general, those expatriates interested in Asian culture were not thought highly of: Morris cruelly describes a social engagement with a group of expatriate Chinese enthusiasts. See Morris: *Hong Kong: an Epilogue to an Empire*, (J. Morris, 2000, pp. 102-3). See Morris: *Hong Kong: an Epilogue to an Empire*, (J. Morris, 2000, p. 100), and David Browning, H.M.O.C.S. member, District Officer: *Foreign Devils: Expatriates in Hong Kong*, (Holdsworth & Courtauld, 2002).

Informant interview: S.G.M.J. 24.07.01.

¹⁰⁰ Informant interview: A.E.G.L. 16.12.99.

¹⁰¹ Informant interviews: A.E.G.L. 16.12.99., S.G.M.J. 24.07.01., and D.D.C.C. 13.08.99. See also Bullis: *Fashion Asia*, (Bullis, 2000). My informant spelled this Hoi but it is more likely to be spelled Hui. My thanks to my colleague Konstantine Kouros for the opportunity to meet David Sheekwan in June 2008.

¹⁰² Informant interview: S.K.B.B. 20.09.01.

¹⁰³ 'Having been a more casual flower-power-type child in Australia, I came here and became a conventional-dresser for work, but I found in my recreational clothing that I was much more influenced by Chinese garments.' Informant interview: S.K.B.B. 20.09.01.

¹⁰⁴ For example, swimsuit sales have never been good as tanned skins were not prized. Informant interviews: B.B.G.L. 19.11.01., and S.F.T.J. 04.07.01. See also Lurie: *The Language of Clothes*, (Lurie, 1981). 'The crowds at the developed beaches will exceed the imagination of anyone who has thought Bondi, Malibu or Waikiki Beaches were dense. There were estimated to be 10,000 people on weekend days at Repulse Bay Beach in 1973. [...] The sand is filled with the remnants of plastic flower making aboard fishing junks, and the garbage from the vessels as well as oil and other pollutants from freighters in the waterways. Red-tide, an explosive-growth algae-like substance, occasionally makes some beaches hard on the swimmer's eyes.' See Wickman: *Living in Hong*

Kong, (Wickman, 1973, p. 123-4). Informant interview: C.M.B.S. 22.05.02., quotation: Informant interview: S.K.B.B. 20.09.01.

¹⁰⁵ Informant interview: C.M.B.S. 22.05.02.

¹⁰⁶ See Edelstein: *Living in Hong Kong*, (Edelstein, 1979, p. 210).

¹⁰⁷ Informant interviews: A.S.U.S. 06.09.02., B.W.H.H. 06.07.03., and B.V.G.S. 24.04.02.

¹⁰⁸ The Academy for Performing Arts and The Fringe Club were venues for contemporary dance. Outside the central districts of Hong Kong and Kowloon, Government-run facilities brought forms of Asian and Western culture to the host community. *Living in Hong Kong* recorded lists of cinemas, events staged of a number of venues were listed as 'Things to do - Alone or in Groups' including S.E. Asian exploration. For example, see Edelstein: *Living in Hong Kong*, (Edelstein, 1979, p. 118-9,144-5, 151-3).

¹⁰⁹ 'The Godown was of course, which was where we all lived and breathed. [...] [T]he original godown was in the basement of Sutherland House, that's where all the action was: the young ex-pats. They had a back bar, so the restaurant closed at 2 and the back bar went on to 4, so wherever you went in Hong Kong you ended up in the back bar afterwards.' Informant interview: A.E.G.C. 03.09.00.

¹¹⁰ Informant interview: B.V.G.S. 24.04.02. Her wardrobe was arranged by outfit, not by garment type. The Peak has always been the most expensive location in which to live on Hong Kong island.

¹¹¹ Informant interviews: S.K.B.B. 20.09.01. and D.S.P.C. 07.10.99.

¹¹² Informant interview: B.W.H.H. 06.07.02.

¹¹³ One informant married to a professional, recollected of Lane Crawford in the early 1970s: 'I could never really afford Lane Crawford and anyway, the stuff there was so boring.' Informant interview: B.V.G.S. 24.04.02. Informant interview: D.G.W.L. 31.01.00.

¹¹⁴ Informant interviews: C.M.B.S. 22.05.02., D.D.C.C. 13.08.99., C.A.M.C. 01.09.99., and C.M.B.S. 22.05.02.

¹¹⁵ Informant interview: D.D.C.C. 13.08.99.

¹¹⁶ Informant interview: B.B.G.L. 19.11.01.

¹¹⁷ '... all the [expatriate] women would buy silks in Jim Thompson because in Hong Kong you [couldn't] get the right things. You could get the crepe-de-chine [if] you took something [plain with a weave pattern], but other than that, the designs were not very nice. So Jim Thompson, with his vibrant [colours] - and especially those small and big checks were very popular for formal cocktail dresses...' Informant interview: B.W.H.H. 06.07.02.

¹¹⁸ Informant interview: S.K.B.B. 20.09.01. The informant was later divorced. Informant interviews: A.E.G.L. 16.12.99., C.A.M.C. 01.09.99., and L.C.H.K. 30.05.01.

¹¹⁹ The Cantonese word for shoe, *haaih*, sounds like a sigh and is therefore unlucky at Chinese New Year. Red is an auspicious colour to wear at New Year. Informant interview: C.A.M.C. 01.09.99.

¹²⁰ See Joselit: *A Perfect Fit: clothes, character, and the promise of America*, (Joselit, 2002). See Joselit: *A Perfect Fit: clothes, character, and the promise of America*, (Joselit, 2002, p. 169).

¹²¹ Informant interview: D.D.C.C. 13.08.99.

¹²² See Hoffman: *Hong Kong*, (W.K. Hoffman, 1970, p. 209).

¹²³ Informant interview: S.F.T.J. 04.07.01.

¹²⁴ 'We felt like grown-ups for the first time. It was interesting: you could manufacture who you wanted to be because nobody knew you.' Informant interview: L.C.H.K. 30.05.01.

¹²⁵ These were particularly visible in prints: greyed pinks, blues, or taupes, and probably inevitable given the strength and impact of the Japanese economy. Informant interviews: L.C.H.K. 30.05.01. and S.F.T.J. 04.07.01.

¹²⁶ Informant interview: L.C.H.K. 30.05.01.

¹²⁷ '...some garish stuff, really garish stuff, very Chinese influence: the colours, but on the whole if I went Central or Causeway Bay the fashions, I thought, were very much up, in fact possibly more advanced than here [the U.K.]' Informant interview: S.F.T.J. 04.07.01.

¹²⁸ Informant interview: A.E.G.L. 16.12.99. American fashion journalist Teri Agins records the importance of the designer-handbags in New York during this period, see Agins: *The End of Fashion: how mass marketing changed the clothing business forever*, (Agins, 2000, p. 48).

¹²⁹ Informant interview: S.S.A.A. 11.10.01.

¹³⁰ Informant interview: B.B.G.L. 19.11.01. *Tai taai*: Cantonese word for 'Mrs,' wife, usually 'expensive wife.'

¹³¹ Informant interview: L.B.F.L. 21.03.02.

¹³² Informant interview: B.B.G.L. 19.11.01.

¹³³ Informant interview: S.F.T.J. 04.07.01.

¹³⁴ Informant interview: L.C.H.K. 30.05.01.

¹³⁵ Informant interviews: L.S.L.L.. 07.11.01., A.J.M.S. 21.05.02., A.B.A.L. 30.05.01., E.E.P.L. 18.07.01., and D.S.P.C. 07.10.99.

¹³⁶ Informant interview: L.C.H.K. 30.05.01. See also informant interviews: A.S.D.S. 13.06.01., S.F.T.J. 04.07.01., D.S.P.C. 07.10.99., A.S.V.L. 31.07.01., and S.S.A.A. 11.10.01.

¹³⁷ Informant interview: L.C.H.K. 30.05.01.

¹³⁸ 'It gave me an avenue to see the world, and coming out to Asia was brilliant - which is what I wanted to do. ... but I found with the job, the frustration of the job, my self-confidence became quite low after one year - I was dealing with a lot of emotional problems - but I didn't want to go back to England.' Informant interview: A.E.G.L. 16.12.99.

¹³⁹ Informant interview: D.D.C.C 13.08.99.

¹⁴⁰ Informant interview: S.F.T.J. 04.7.01. It also been suggested that as the female host population abandoned the *cheongsam* and adopted Western dress, which had previously been worn by prostitutes, that they dressed particularly smartly in an attempt to distinguish themselves from these earlier users of Western dress. See Turner: *Hong Kong Sixties Designing Identity*, (Turner & Ngan, 1995, p. 38).

¹⁴¹ Informant interview: L.C.H.K. 30.05.01. Those names were Hong Kong celebrities.

¹⁴² Informant interview: D.D.C.C. 13.08.99.

¹⁴³ Informant interview: B.W.H.H. 06.07.02.

¹⁴⁴ 'All the bras would be standing up by themselves because they were so padded. [...] they were practically fake breasts.' Informant interview: L.C.H.K. 30.05.01. 'My memory of the underwear was that it really summed up the prudish-ness of the Chinese girls really, or the society that they were living in. [...] in the underwear shops they used to sell these things which concealed your nipples, and all the underwear was just solid, big, well, small-sized but covered a lot of flesh. It wasn't sexy: just very unappealing, and generally, way too small. [...] Flesh-coloured, my memory. [...] In trays, big trays of it! [...] Dreadful!' Informant interview: A.S.V.L. 31.07.01.

¹⁴⁵ Informant interview: A.E.G.L. 16.12.99. 'It was funny, you could buy *Comme Des Garçons*, but I never saw anyone wearing it except when Rei Kawakubo was in town. Then everybody would be wearing it, but before that you would see just the same, very safe suits, dresses, but once somebody was in town then they suddenly they were all carrying the correct bag and wearing the right shoes.' Informant interview: L.C.H.K. 30.05.01. And Informant interviews: L.C.H.K. 30.05.01., and S.G.M.J. 24.07.01.

¹⁴⁶ See Coleridge: *The Fashion Conspiracy: a remarkable journey through the Empires of Fashion*, (Coleridge, 1988). 'Only small amounts of people will really touch it [designer fashions]. But most people want the status: how much it is.'

[So the logo is important?]

'Very important, extremely. Or else it wouldn't be worth anything if you took it to a seconds store would it?' Informant interview: B.B.G.L. 19.11.01.

¹⁴⁷ See Clark: *Old Clothes, New Looks: Second Hand Fashion*, (H. Clark & Palmer, 2005b). Miller observes that a similar process in India allowed women to purge their wardrobes and buy anew. See Miller: *The Sari*, (Miller & Banerjee, 2003, p. 59).

¹⁴⁸ For British residents neither a visa nor a work permit were required to work in Hong Kong.

¹⁴⁹ Informant interview: A.S.V.L. 31.07.01.

¹⁵⁰ 'I think it was that thing of the time it takes you to adjust to a different culture and a way of working, so my memory of this was all sort of 'dressed.' Rather like children dressing up, you know, in their Mum's clothes trying to look very smart and chic, and [of us] being straight out of London, and not quite pulling it off.' Informant interview: A.S.V.L. 31.07.01.

¹⁵¹ Informant interview: L.C.H.K. 30.05.01.

¹⁵² '...a magnet for an influx of young independent people who happened to be passing through, [...] As foreigners, we were all a bit radical. I remember walking down the street with orange hair, dressed in a mini-skirt and getting stared at. We were young, international, and we were a very different class to the expatriates who were already here. For one thing we were paid absolutely nothing, and every three months you had to spend money to go on holiday somewhere to renew your visa.' See Holdsworth and Courtauld, quoting Michelle Garnaut: *Foreign Devils: Expatriates in Hong Kong*, (Holdsworth & Courtauld, 2002, p. 162).

¹⁵³ Informant interview: C.A.M.C. 01.09.99.

¹⁵⁴ Informant interviews: D.G.W.L. 31.01.00., S.E.R.L. 13.11.01., and A.F.T.L. 04.07.01.

¹⁵⁵ Informant interview: D.S.P.C. 07.10.99.

¹⁵⁶ Informant interviews: B.B.G.L. 19.11.01., and A.S.H.C. 05.06.01. Informant interview: L.C.H.K. 30.05.01. Informant interview: B.W.H.H. 06.07.02. Bargain shopping was a high priority, so much so that even if the weather deteriorated (i.e. a Black rain warning was issued) and she suggested returning to the city, they wished to continue to shop. Informant interview: A.S.H.C. 05.06.01.

¹⁵⁷ 'Everyone in Hong Kong wore T-shirts didn't they? With their little names you know: Dolce and Gabbana; or Christian Dior; or Chanel; or something, maybe not the real things.' Informant interview: D.S.P.C. 07.10.99. It took time for some to comprehend availability, as this informant who arrived in Hong Kong in 1973 remembered: 'I noticed lots of Gucci handbags, and I was amazed to think that these office girls could afford Gucci handbags. It took me a long time to twig - you know, the old-fashioned Gucci with the red/green strip.' Informant interview: B.V.G.S. 24.04.02.

¹⁵⁸ See Skov, *Stories of World Fashion and the Hong Kong Fashion World*, (Skov, 2000, p. 44).

¹⁵⁹ 'Company wives:' a more polite term for trailing spouses. One lingerie buyer recollected biannual roof top sample sales after extensive fit samples were completed: 'everybody would buy for one dollar, two dollars, three dollars, for bra's and pants and things.' She explained '...you'd be allowed to go up at 12 o'clock [...] there were some Westerners working there: there were quite a lot of ex-pat Germans,' Informant interview B.V.G.S. 24.04.02.

¹⁶⁰ Informant interviews: S.K.B.B. 20.09.01., and A.S.V.L. 31.07.01.

¹⁶¹ Informant interview: A.S.V.L. 31.07.01.

¹⁶² Informant interviews: D.D.C.C. 13.08.99., L.S.L.L. 07.11.01., and D.G.W.L. 31.01.00.

¹⁶³ Informant interview: A.B.R.S. 06.02.02.

¹⁶⁴ 'With fashion you've got to have a bit of fun with it and, you've got to know, I suppose, really what suits you. A lot of women, I don't know if you've found this, they don't know. [...] One of the places I went to, which is I suppose fashion related, it's great: there's an Indian girl she has this wonderful jewelry made in Singapore, and it was quite reasonable, but really funky stuff. I loved it. And then she closed down because the shop became too expensive. And she said 'x, you could try and sell it on the bus'. I used to wear it all the time and people used to say to me 'Oh, x that's lovely where did you get that from?' And I said 'Well, here it is,' and then back on the bus they would never buy it.'

[Oh, really?]

'And then they'd say 'Well, it suits you 'cause you can get away with it. [...] 'But you think 'Well, it does look great on you.' Informant interview: A.S.H.C. 05.06.01. And: 'I ran [...] for [the] A.W.A something called 'Chat'. [...] And it was a voluntary thing and because you didn't have to sign in or register anything it was a great way [of meeting people], you know: there's a lot lonely people in Hong Kong. And nearly every week I was told 'Oh x, you're so vibrant with your colours'. And I think!! 'Yes,' And someone said to me 'Oh, I don't like sitting next to you 'cause you're always in such strong colours'. But you see, that's how they perceive me as being. But anyone could wear those colours, couldn't they? Anybody.' Informant interview: A.S.H.C. 05.06.01.

See Woodward: *Why women wear what they wear*, (Woodward, 2007, p. 65).

¹⁶⁵ Informant interview: D.D.C.C. 13.08.99.

¹⁶⁶ Informant interview: D.D.C.C. 13.08.99.

¹⁶⁷ This was the period in which image consultancy such as Colour Me Beautiful, was popular. The Colour Me Beautiful representative in Hong Kong during this period was the most successful of all C.M.B. representatives worldwide. Conversation Lucy Barratt/VWT, April 1999. See: Entwistle: 'Power Dressing' and the Construction of the Career Woman,' (Entwistle, 1997, p. 320).

¹⁶⁸ Informant interview: D.S.P.C. 07.10.99.

¹⁶⁹ Informant interview: L.C.H.K. 30.05.01.

¹⁷⁰ Informant interview: L.S.L.L. 07.11.01.

¹⁷¹ Informant interview: L.S.L.L. 07.11.01.

¹⁷² Informant interview: L.S.L.L. 07.11.01.

¹⁷³ Informant interviews: D.S.P.C. 07.10.99., and L.S.L.L. 07.11.01.

¹⁷⁴ A very 1980s look. Informant interview: L.C.H.K. 30.05.01.

¹⁷⁵ Informant interview: L.C.H.K. 30.05.01.

¹⁷⁶ This is the most auspicious way for a building to face and is reflected in market prices.

¹⁷⁷ Informant interview: A.E.G.L. 16.12.99.

¹⁷⁸ See Fitzpatrick: *Rats Liked It Well Enough: the 1997 story*, (Fitzpatrick, 1993, p. 39).

¹⁷⁹ '...then I would be much more conscious of how I looked. So I would have worn the skirt, and the sandals, and some nice little top. Nice shorts. Something coordinated.' Informant interview: L.C.H.K. 30.05.01.

¹⁸⁰ See Coleridge: *The Fashion Conspiracy: a remarkable journey through the Empires of Fashion*, (Coleridge, 1988).

¹⁸¹ See Coleridge: *The Fashion Conspiracy: a remarkable journey through the Empires of Fashion*, (Coleridge, 1988), and: 'They had been machined in an attic factory in Kowloon during the previous fortnight, had their fake green trademark crocodiles sewn on the night before, and were en route to Stanley market to be sold.' (Coleridge, 1988, p. 283).

¹⁸² One informant recalled how copy merchandise was obtained in the early 1990s:

'...and I guess when I came here was when Chanel bags were really huge, and people would want to get to get the quilted bag with the gold chain strap and that was a big, big deal. And you had to know which lane to go, and which guy to ask for, because they couldn't have them on display.'

Informant interview: L.C.H.K. 30.05.01.

¹⁸³ Informant interview: B.W.H.H. 06.07.02. 'Well you [couldn't] help it, it [was] being stuffed down your throat.' Informant interview: L.C.H.K. 30.05.01. 'I bought one copy Chanel bag that I bought in Seoul, Korea, but I could never carry it, because when I started working I was in the fashion industry and my job was to meet [people] from Chanel and Vuitton, and stuff, and I could never ever have anything fake because they would know if I had been in the store.' To do this would have offended the top-end store marketing staff and made her job more difficult.

¹⁸⁴ See Holdsworth and Courtauld: *Foreign Devils: Expatriates in Hong Kong*, (Holdsworth & Courtauld, 2002, pp. 151, 153).

¹⁸⁵ Hong Kong's infamous airport at Kai Tak airport situated to the East side of the city of Kowloon opened in 1958, with a runway which projected in to the harbour. See Gleason: *Hong Kong*, (Gleason, 1963, p. 132).

¹⁸⁶ Now The Intercontinental. One informant recollected that when she arrived in 1978, this hotel with its adjacent mall of stores was 'where the entire industry lived at the time' Informant interview: S.E.R.L. 13.11.01. The Canton Fair is held in Spring and Autumn each year in Guangzhou attracted international buyers who flew to Hong Kong, travelling on to Guangzhou by train. China researcher, Roberta Stallberg notes that in 1985, The Canton Fair received 27,000 participants purchasing \$3 billion worth of Chinese products. See Stallberg: *Shopping in China*, (Stalberg, 1988, p. 65-66).

'The garment industry was a real party scene,' Informant interview: S.E.R.L. 13.11.01.

¹⁸⁷ Informant interview: S.P.M.L. 03.08.02., and: 'I stayed in The Shangri-la [in Tsim Sha Tsui East] since it was up really, and they know me really well there. And I have watched the shops opposite, how they have progressed. And we used to have this marvellous shop that had all the Calvin Klein's and the ...' [...] 'opposite there was a shop and they had all the Donna Karan and, my God, that was marvellous. We used to run in there and buy all of that, and go to the market and get our goodies. Absolutely. And they were bargains at the time. They really were.' Informant interview: E.E.P.L. 18.07.01.

¹⁸⁸ A number of fashion industry professional informants have been pleased to recount examples of their detailed Hong Kong knowledge to me. Many visited Hong Kong to travel to the Spring and Autumn Canton Fairs held in Guangzhou. The Canton Fair - the largest fair of its kind - showcasing products from heavy machinery to fashion, offered the opportunity to source new manufacturers, see new products, and to meet existing suppliers. '...we used to buy samples, used to be exciting, opposite the Shangri-la, [in The] Landmark, Pacific Place, Granville Circus, and the Commercial Rise [Building].' Informant interview: E.E.P.L. 18.07.01.

¹⁸⁹ Informant interview: L.C.H.K. 30.05.01.

¹⁹⁰ Informant interview: S.S.A.A. 11.10.01.

¹⁹¹ 'Initially, [it was] very much top-to-toe designer dressing which was rather distressing: top-to-toe Chanel, and I mean: Chanel earrings, Chanel necklace, Chanel ensemble, Chanel shoes, Chanel bag, and probably, Chanel make-up and perfume. So you really were hit - full-on - with something that was almost one of their [Chanel's] publicity spreads, and which I think is actually what a lot of women did because they would look at the models and they would then go out, because they had the finance, financially they were able to do it, with no problem at all. They would just say 'I would like that, please,' and they would get the whole look, and it was a safe look and yet for a lot of people, a very enviable look: 'Gosh, you know: to go out to buy a whole Chanel ensemble.' Informant interview: S.S.A.A. 11.10.01.

¹⁹² Informant interview: L.C.H.K. 30.05.01.

¹⁹³ 'Young executives [H.S.B.C. expatriate employees] were quickly inducted into community life through boating on the company junks, weekends at company bungalows on the outlying island of Lantau or in the Portuguese enclave of Macao, and sessions of inter-hong sports.' [...] 'Until the early eighties all those perks were for expatriates only' Harry Wilken recalls, 'the logic was that

being away from home they were the ones who needed the succour and relaxation.' [...] 'Junk parties hosted by Hong Kong Bank staff, who could lay on a chicken curry lunch for twenty just by ordering it from the office mess, were particularly jolly.' See Holdsworth: *Foreign Devils: Expatriates in Hong Kong*, (Holdsworth & Courtauld, 2002, p. 16). Morris cruelly describes a social engagement with a minority group of expatriate Chinese enthusiasts (J. Morris, 2000, pp. 102-3). See Morris: *Hong Kong: an Epilogue to an Empire*, (J. Morris, 2000, p. 100). 'Do not be deceived by the faux-Asian term: this meant going out on a big boat to spend time drinking, boasting, schmoozing, and showing off with other gwaillos and (sometimes) a few carefully chosen locals. It was fun, and it got you off Hong Kong island, which is one of the world's great places for cabin fever.' Lanchester: *Fragrant Harbour*, (Lanchester, 2002, p. 38). See also Morris: '... you may see, bobbing offshore beside Queen's pier at Central, or in the harbour at Aberdeen on the island's southern coast, the launches, yachts and shiny motor-ized junks that take the well-off to their Sabbath pleasures. Some fly the flags of great banks or merchant companies, some belong to lesser concerns - even law partnerships maintain pleasure-junks in Hong Kong. Some are just family craft, or love-boats. Whatever their ownership, they are likely to have trimly uniformed Chinese boat crews, and awnings over their high poops, and probably white-clothes tables already laid with bottles, coolers and cutlery. Off they go, one after the other, towing speedboats sometimes, with laughter ringing out across the water. Girls are stretched out for sunbathing on the prow, owners in blazers and white slacks are already sharing a first Buck's Fizz with their guests, who are very likely visitors from overseas, and look at once jet-lagged, red-faced from the sun and elated by the lavishness of it all.' See Morris: *Hong Kong: an Epilogue to an Empire*, (J. Morris, 2000, pp. 46, 48).

¹⁹⁴ 'A lot of people also make assumptions that perhaps [...] it's a real one because they don't think I'm the sort of person who would buy a copy bag. They don't know me well enough, or have never been shopping with me. They just see the image, and so they assume.' Informant interview: A.S.D.S. 13.06.01.

¹⁹⁵ Informant interview: A.S.V.L. 31.07.01.

¹⁹⁶ Informant interview: A.S.V.L. 31.07.01.

¹⁹⁷ Informant interview: A.J.M.S. 21.05.02.

¹⁹⁸ Mathews maintains the middle classes remained a minority: 'Hong Kong has been widely regarded as a 'cultural desert,' where culture is not much appreciated. Because its population is so fluid, and because of its recent rapid rise in wealth and its colonial status, for much of its history, no large, stable middle class has had the chance to develop, one whose membership could be based on criteria such as intimate familiarity with high culture.' See Mathews: *Consuming Hong Kong*, (G. Mathews & T-L. Lui, 2001), and Holdsworth: *Foreign Devils: Expatriates in Hong Kong*, (Holdsworth & Courtauld, 2002, p. 159), and Aslet: *Portraits from Hong Kong*, (Aslet, 1997, p. 57).

¹⁹⁹ 'A mark of being socially accepted, admired even, was to be on a ball committee. If you were on a committee, you were in, you were part of the social fabric. And because balls were organized to raise money for charity, you could bring royalty out from the U.K. or get a movie star to come, and if you were on the committee you could hobnob with all these people. Gradually more and more locals wanted to be part of it. But what took over was the using of the event socially, in terms of photographs, to establish that you'd arrived. The actual event itself is really immaterial - you give a bit of money to the charity concerned, of course, but the most important thing is you were seen with your trophy wife, that she's in the latest Dior or Valentino, or whatever, with jewels or furs, and that she's fabulous looking. That's how the nouveaux riche did it - by paying for a table and being seen in the photographs published afterwards.' Karen Penlington quoted by Holdsworth: *Foreign Devils: Expatriates in Hong Kong*, (Holdsworth & Courtauld, 2002, pp. 159-160).

²⁰⁰ Informant interview: B.B.G.L. 19.11.01.

²⁰¹ Informant interview: S.S.A.A. 11.10.01. Despite an annual Arts Festival, Hong Kong expatriates were reputed to have little interest in cultural events and were described as 'Outer Barbarians or cultural Philistines,' See Morris: *Hong Kong: an Epilogue to an Empire*, (J. Morris, 2000, p. 65).

²⁰² Informant interview: A.B.A.L. 30.05.01.

²⁰³ 'Sometimeswell, most of the time, the suits that people wear are very ugly...because of the pattern...not even my Mum is going to wear that suit.' Informant interview: A.B.A.L. 30.05.01.

²⁰⁴ Informant interview: L.C.H.K. 30.05.01. And informant interview: S.F.T.J. 04.07.01. '...I even passed on one of my maternity dresses, a winter one, to my sister-in-law and she wore it, so that shows you how good they were.'

²⁰⁵ Informant interviews: A.E.G.L. 16.12.99., and E.E.P.L. 18.07.01.

- ²⁰⁶ Informant interview: L.S.L.L. 07.11.01. Other informants had leather wardrobes, acquired whilst Hong Kong was a leather-manufacturing centre, informant interviews: S.E.R.L. 13.11.01., L.S.L.L. 07.11.01., and S.F.T.J. 04.07.01.
- ²⁰⁷ Informant interview: B.B.G.L. 19.11.01.: 'But I think Chinese people' especially here in Hong Kong, they're very fickle. Whatever is hot for the moment, let's say Gucci, let's say Prada, whatever: they have to have one. Let's say Louis Vuitton, they have to have one. So I think people can be pretty fickle to fashion, to whatever is hot, because they want to be 'in' too. And the key to do[ing] business is to maintain you know, and always come up with new things good things and hype yourself up. I mean basically there's a lot of very creative young designers around but I'm afraid the big designers take up everything [advertising] more. Even if it's a nothing little blouse, or handbag, and just because they've punched in millions to promote it: you'd want one.' Sociologist Lise Skov has read papers and published research on the position of Hong Kong designers as entrepreneurs, i.e. seminar. 08.12.2000. Sociology Dept., University of Hong Kong. Informant interview: A.E.G.L. 16.12.99.
- ²⁰⁸ Informant interview: L.C.H.K. 30.05.01.
- ²⁰⁹ Informant interview: L.C.H.K. 30.05.01.
- ²¹⁰ '...sometimes I asked to my English [language class] colleagues why they are wearing black all the time. And they told me if it has stains nobody can see it. [...] I think that they're wearing black because if they have to go to the office, they're afraid to make [up] their own minds. So black is always good.' Informant interview: A.B.A.L. 30.05.01.
- ²¹¹ Informant interview: A.S.V.L. 31.07.01.
- ²¹² '...this was one of my local fashion things [a chiffon dress], and, in fact, I did have a coat that went with it as well, a chiffon coat, which I bought for a wedding [...] it was actually made in Italy, but [...] it was aimed at the local Chinese [or Cantonese] customer with money, and there was a coat that went with it with a little button, again in a chiffon.' Informant interview: A.S.V.L. 31.07.01. And informant interview: S.F.T.J. 04.07.01.
- ²¹³ Informant interview: A.E.G.L. 16.12.99.
- ²¹⁴ In British English: a singlet. In comparison to the more revealing dress of Singaporean girls, informant interview: A.B.A.L. 30.05.01. 'When I saw in the local market a basket with bras, I thought they were balls: all on a palette, I saw a round thing and I thought 'What are they selling there? Bras?' I couldn't believe it.' Informant interview: A.B.A.L. 30.05.01.
- ²¹⁵ Informant interview: A.S.D.S. 13.06.01.
- ²¹⁶ Informant interview: D.G.W.L. 31.01.00.
- ²¹⁷ Informant interview: A.B.A.L. 30.05.01.
- ²¹⁸ Later returned to use as the Portuguese Embassy. Ex-journalist describing the Bella Vista ball: 'In those days [1991], what's more, money was no object and you were limited only by your imagination.' Informant interview: A.K.P.C. 22.04.99. Informant interview: D.S.P.C. 07.10.99. Smart-casual was the usual dress of the other diners.
- ²¹⁹ Conversation VWT/RDW. Dec. 1997. One informant described how she was given a ball dress, clearly made at some cost, to wear to a murder mystery evening by a local colleague in the early 1990s. Informant interview: D.S.P.C. 07.10.99.
- ²²⁰ As one informant noted: 'It was for wearing for one year only'. Re shopping in the Lanes: 'And then I thought 'You buy too many things that you only wear for one year.' Informant interview: A.B.A.L. 30.05.01. Maynard notes that the Australian fashion market was unusual due to its small size and voracious appetite, demanding that continuous development '[b]ecause it is so small one thing cannot be sold over and over again - 'it's one that needs ideas, eats ideas,' See Maynard: *Out of Line: Australian Women and Style*, (Maynard, 2001, p. 87).
- ²²¹ '100 Years Hong Kong Fashion Exhibition' curated by William Tang, Hong Kong Arts Centre, 12 – 29.8.00., reflected a local preoccupation with fashion dress.
- ²²² Informant interview: D.G.W.L. 31.01.00.
- ²²³ Informant interview: A.B.A.L. 30.05.01.
- ²²⁴ Informant interviews: D.G.W.L. 31.01.00. and S.K.B.B. 20.09.01.
- ²²⁵ Informant interview: D.G.W.L. 31.01.00.
- ²²⁶ Ribiero notes the dress of Orange men in Northern Ireland: 'Other examples of this kind of cod-Englishness (a heightened and out-of-date perception) might be seen in some aspects of the dress (blazers, panama hats, and so on) worn by certain types of expatriate English communities, in places like the Algarve or Southern Spain, where either there is little identification with the host nation, and clothing is used to define the self through difference.' See Ribiero: *Dress and Morality*, (Ribiero, 2003, p. 25).

²²⁷ Informant interview: A.B.A.L. 30.05.01.

²²⁸ Informant interview: A.B.A.L. 30.05.01.

²²⁹ Informant interview: A.B.A.L. 30.05.01.

²³⁰ 'In Hong Kong that if you are planning to go to town you are supposed to be quite dressed even on a weekend, and that is something that is not quite so true in a place like Los Angeles. Certainly, it's a much dressier town at all times. I wore a pair of black jeans, or pants like the ones I have on now, and maybe a T-shirt or something, maybe a tailored T-shirt, or a shirt, or a sweater and flat shoes or boot shoes, nothing too special but trying to look at least 'I don't have my sweats on.' Informant interview: D.G.W.L. 31.01.00. 'If I [went] to the Flower Market, which I [did] very often, I'd normally wear a loose jacket. I'd tend not to go looking totally casual. I would be casual but I would wear a non-lined, soft jacket.' Informant interview: L.S.L.L. 07.11.01. Informant interview: A.B.M.C. 04.09.03.

²³¹ Informant interview: B.V.G.S. 24.04.02.

²³² Informant interview: L.B.F.L. 21.03.02.

²³³ See Lanchester: *Fragrant Harbour*, (Lanchester, 2002, p. 36).

²³⁴ Probably a literal translation of Cantonese advertising: a 20% discount would be promoted as 80% of original price, easily misread as 80% off. Informant interview: A.B.A.L. 30.05.01.

²³⁵ Informant interview: S.P.M.L. 03.08.02. The Commercial Rise Building is a location for young designer stores.

²³⁶ Informant interview: A.E.G.L. 16.12.99.

²³⁷ 'I started to discover the places like The Beverley Centre and Granville Road, because we weren't being paid much when we first got here either, so it was finding outlets. I used to wear a lot of menswear when I was first here, because of the bigger sizes, I mean I wasn't that big but I felt it, but it was something that I was very, very conscious of because of all these delicate Chinese figures.' Informant interview: A.E.G.L. 16.12.99.

²³⁸ This informant experimented with shoemakers in Happy Valley, at Meyer's in Princes Building, and finally a shoemaker on Hollywood Road, until she found a satisfactory supplier in order to have larger-sized, Chinese-styled shoes made in multiples. Informant interview: L.S.L.L. 07.11.01.

²³⁹ 'Horrible. I feel like a big-foot. Horrible experience. It's the first time: the sales assistant started laughing.'

[Really why?]

'Well, I need a bigger size: 'A bigger size, Wow! Sorry: we don't have.'

[What size shoes do you take?]

'38. My feet: it's too wide. And here is, like, a very narrow. And you don't have sizes for the width.'

Informant interview: A.B.A.L. 30.05.01.

²⁴⁰ Informant interview: A.S.V.L. 31.07.01.

²⁴¹ Informant interview: A.S.V.L. 31.07.01.

²⁴² 'It was fashionable, yes. Probably because we [Hong Kong] were manufacturing most of it.'

Informant interview: A.S.V.L. 31.07.01.

²⁴³ Informant interview: L.S.L.L. 07.11.01.

²⁴⁴ See Clark: *Second Hand fashion, Culture and Identity in Hong Kong*, (H. Clark & Palmer, 2005a, p. 164).

²⁴⁵ Informant interview: A.J.M.S. 21.05.02.

²⁴⁶ 'Designer clothes shops [were] more relaxed than in the U.K. [I will n]ever forget waiting to walk in to the Paris store of Issey Miyake or Yohji Yamamoto, ... ringing the door-bell and having to stand there for a minute before being let in.' Informant interview: A.E.G.L. 16.12.99. Informant interview: D.D.C.C. 13.08.99.

²⁴⁷ Informant interview: D.G.W.L. 31.01.00.

²⁴⁸ See Coleridge: *The Fashion Conspiracy: a remarkable journey through the Empires of Fashion*, (Coleridge, 1988). 'We had a lot of people like mistresses and whatever. It was very interesting how people spent money.' Informant interviews: B.B.G.L. 19.11.01., and A.E.G.L. 16.12.99.

²⁴⁹ Informant interview: D.D.W.L. 12.01.01.

²⁵⁰ Conversation with X.M.P.S. 10.05.01.

²⁵¹ See Palmer: *Culture and Commerce: The Transatlantic Fashion Trade in the 1950's*, (Palmer, 2001, p.289.)

²⁵² Informant interviews: D.S.P.C. 07.10.99., D.D.W.L.12.01.01., and S.F.T.J. 04.07.01.

²⁵³ Informant interview: D.G.W.L. 31.01.00.

²⁵⁴ Informant interview: A.E.G.L. 16.12.99.

²⁵⁵ 'The elite fashion of these cities still regularly creates 'new looks' through crass pillaging of stylistic tropes from other cultures, but the 1990s also saw the local development of transcultural fashions, directly related to the emergence of new forms of social and cultural identity.' See Gilbert: 'Urban Outfitting: The city and the spaces of fashion culture,' (Gilbert, 2000, p. 17).

Chapter 5. Cultural Context and Representation

'The whole Colony of Hong Kong constitutes a great big department store...'¹

As Hoffman observes, Hong Kong and the Kowloon peninsular appeared to be totally comprised of stores offering a wide variety of goods. In this chapter I look at how these goods were mediated, and how local and expatriate Western women learned of fashionable looks, new designs, and stores. The mediation of Hong Kong fashion reflects the culture of the host community and expatriate Western women, often using themes of Orientalism in popular culture.² This chapter commences with a general background to theories of mediation followed by sections on newspapers; magazines; advice literature (including factory shopping advice); fiction; television; film; and exhibitions showing how fashions were disseminated to expatriate Western women and suggests why, in many instances, they chose not to use them.

Background

There is little reflective material published on Hong Kong: Morris's book covers a larger time span than of interest here with little relevant material, although of work published to date, this rather journalistic book comes closest to an examination of Western expatriate's lives in Hong Kong.³

Although colonialism prevailed worldwide, conditions differed widely: Hong Kong's colonial period was relatively brief. Its rapid industrialisation has frequently been contrasted with that of the older sleepy Portuguese colony of Macau on the other side of the Pearl River delta.⁴ Whilst Maynard recognizes Hong Kong as an international fashion centre she notes all locations, excepting established fashion cities, are regarded as peripheral and Niessen reminds us, fashion is a Western notion.⁵ From a global perspective, Hong Kong situated in the Far East, could neither have its own fashions, nor could it credibly lead Western fashion thinking. Skov explains Hong Kong designers' creativity was undercut by locally-employed Western designers, who were preferred by local employers anxious to ensure commercial acceptability, and the erroneous assumption that designers from the host community were representative of their culture.⁶ Hong Kong's reputation as a fashion centre was further marginalized in the 1990s by the

marketing promotions of Shanghai Tang, which (contrary to local designers' ambivalence in using 'Asian styles' - notably the *cheongsam*), positioned its Western dress with pre-modern Chinese-dress detailing in the media as representative of local fashion.⁷ Therefore, it was not only difficult for the Hong Kong media to promote its own designers who never achieved a position of prominence within Hong Kong, it was made increasingly difficult for them to do so by the advertising of Shanghai Tang, one of the very brands which they may have chosen to support, which insisted that its merchandise was representative of local fashion, which it clearly was not.

Whilst many expatriate Western women claimed not to purchase fashion magazines, they were informed of new trends by newspaper articles and fashion displays in retail stores. Marketing academics Jacob Jacoby and Wayne Hoyer in their book *The Comprehension and Miscomprehension of Print Communications* note that communication is an active process, which includes the inference from explicit content.⁸ The importance of any advertising lies in how it is interpreted rather than the advertisement itself.⁹ Dress represents specific communities, for example: Shrieber describes the reactions of immigrant Eastern European women to New York fashions - who on observing the fashion for pointed shoes believed they had arrived in the land of people with pointed feet. In much the same way, Hong Kong was the land of (and represented by) the *cheongsam*.¹⁰

In his study of a Japanese advertising agency examining Japanese marketing sensibilities and why advertisements are as they are, Moeran observes print is used to convey precise information, whereas television advertising is used to convey mood.¹¹ He observes that Japanese media has been a means of promoting what he terms as a 'counter-Orientalism' as a new hegemonic discourse, that is the use of Japanese cultural traits (teamwork, corporate spirit, and non-verbal communication), to successfully enter and succeed in Western markets. Equally, the rapidity with which images and text are consumed (Japanese newspaper articles are commonly limited in length), means that in the haste to describe and explain a topic, existing classifications that are readily understood by their targeted audiences are used.¹² Thus the use of clichés can appear to Westerners as a lack of creativity. Similarly, cultural concerns overrode prevailing dress codes for a Western C.E.O. in Hong Kong. One of the first companies to relocate their top-quality, brand-name production to the Mainland in the 1990s, he remembered:

‘I did employ one or two Western women but we all lived in chinos and T-shirts because we had a whole ethic about being in the factories with our sleeves rolled-up.’¹³

In this quotation chinos and T-shirts parallel Mao suits, representing a hands-on work ethic, conveyed through dress.¹⁴

The small Indian, Nepalese, Filipino, Indonesian, Hakka and Hoklo minorities, and Mainland residents dressed differently to the host community, the New York fashion journalist recalled:

‘...and even here when I saw people walking down the street: there’s the Hong Kong girl and the mainland Chinese girl, and you could always tell them apart by which colours they were wearing; the style; because [of] the insecurity of the Mainland people.’¹⁵

Insecurity was revealed in copy or easily identifiable printed, brand name handbags (of which the brand name could be read), or a surfeit of designer merchandise (again with brand-name text), which mindful of Moeran’s observation above, can also be read as a sartorial shorthand for prosperity. By the 1990s Hong Kong could no longer be neatly divided in to local and expatriate Western communities: when local residents returned to Hong Kong they brought with them changed ideas about appearance, identity, and the nature of their home country be it overseas or Hong Kong.¹⁶

Hong Kong residents used newspapers, magazines, television, film, and/or exhibitions to keep themselves informed on fashion.¹⁷ Magazines portrayed Hong Kong as a ‘happening city;’ Western-made films focused on a colonial city with a lively, exotic local community, a form of Orientalism; and novels included Orientalist ‘East meets West’ themes. The following sections examine specific media forms available to expatriate Western women between 1960 and 1997.

Newspapers

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Hilary Alexander now fashion editor of *The Daily Telegraph*, worked as a fashion journalist for Hong Kong newspapers.¹⁸ She maintained a close friendship with the owners of an early boutique and often featured their designs (see Chapter Three). By the early 1970s, 275 publications were published in Hong Kong per annum, of these, four were English language

newspapers: *S.C.M.P.*, and *The Hong Kong Standard* were morning papers, published six days a week.¹⁹ Both included film criticism and fashion pages, Wickman commented: ‘Both have some world and excellent local news coverage.’²⁰ *The Sunday Post Herald* and *The Sunday Standard*, owned by the *S.C.M.P.* and *The H.K. Standard* respectively, were published on Sundays.²¹ *The China Mail* and the tabloid *The Star*, which headlined ‘crimes, natural disasters, accidents, social ills, and spectacular and fearsome occurrences’ were English language evening papers.²² Zelda Cawthorne wrote a fashion column for *The S.C.M.P.* throughout the 1970s, recalling a Hong Kong with few fashion stores, and small sizes.²³ *The Asian Wall Street Journal* first printed in Hong Kong in September 1976, focused on Asian activities in the region.²⁴ Informants recollected women’s pages in the newspapers but little fashion coverage even in the colour supplement during this period. To compensate for her sense of fashion isolation a lawyer, then in her 30s, subscribed to British magazines and newspapers including *Vogue*, *Nova*, *The Sunday Times*, and *The Sunday Telegraph*.²⁵ Fashion advertising included sales information, and promotional photographs (see Justin Jake and Birds advertisements in previous chapters).

Fashion news was widely disseminated in newspapers but little was outstanding: informants did not recollect anything they had learned about fashion. I conclude, as Moeran suggests above, that newspaper advertising in Hong Kong was mostly used to convey information, not to promote brand. At best they form a visual record of dress as it was worn at various social functions including at the races (see photograph at the end of this chapter), and at formal events (see original photographs of the opening of Ocean Terminal in Chapter Four).

Magazines

In this section I will first consider literature on magazines, then diachronically examine magazines available to expatriate Western women in Hong Kong. Academic Judith Williamson notes in her examination of advertising in women’s magazines that people become signified and summarized by the things that they consume, this notion was rapidly embraced by those of the local community who could afford it, hence the rapid development of international designer-names (see Chapter Three).²⁶ Winship in her examination of 1980s British women’s magazines explains the financial viability of magazines: a mix of the cover price, editorial

content, and advertising.²⁷ A source of private pleasure for busy female readers whose lives give them no other private space, the idealized features, with their 'double-edged fiction of visuals' - are vehicles of optimistic hope for the gratification of specific desires which the reader is persuaded, are the daily labours of femininity.²⁸ Winship records, specific magazines had specific focuses: *Cosmopolitan*, with its focus on sex and the independent woman, added sex to readers' personal, domestic, and beauty work.²⁹ *Honey*, in comparison, focused on fashion as a means of expressing individuality.³⁰ This Western notion of fashion as a means of expressing identities, contrasts with the consensus-style Asian concept of fashion dress as something which is worn because it is fashionable and discarded when it is no longer fashionable. Whereas, if fashion manifests identities, the wearer may retain a specific fashion and continue to wear it.³¹

Academic Ellen McCracken, observes desire is commodified in the editorial third of a magazine, explaining magazines are 'an important semiotic tool whereby the encoders of magazine texts strive to anchor a preferred social accenting in the grand tale that they construct about reality.'³² Moeran notes advertising is calculated to be a half-pace ahead of society, making people want to catch up with what they perceived going on.³³ Hong Kong magazines portrayed Hong Kong as a fashion city although most expatriate Western women did not perceive their fashion leadership. Gilbert explains the allure of fashion cities and their inclusion in fashion magazines as distant objects of aspirations and dreams: this is demonstrated in both *The Hong Kong Tatler* (see the Louis Vuitton advertisement listing regional locations in Singapore, Hong Kong, and Guam), and in Hong Kong shopping advice literature, which promotes Hong Kong overseas as 'shopping-heaven' (see photograph of the cover of *Shopping in Exotic Hong Kong*).³⁴ 'The East meets West' 1979 *Tatler* fashion spread (see photographs at the end of the chapter), in which Chinese or Chinese-inspired garments combined with Western accessories were photographed on Western and Asian models, in colonial or industrial buildings suggests the desirability of ethnic or ethnic-inspired dress (including Chinese embroidery; the side slits of a *cheongsam*; and the edge-to-edge fastening of a *sam fu* jacket), manifests Hong Kong's position as the city in which East meets West. This would at first seem to be a visual example of Orientalism however, the photographs include Western icons such as the motorcycle.

The glossy *Tatler* followed by *Eve* in 1979 (see photographs), were amongst the few locally published magazines available in Hong Kong, but American, Australian, English, and European magazines were retailed at news-stands.³⁵ Occasionally these were current editions but more usually one or two months behind the publication date. If mailed from an overseas address by subscription, they arrived six weeks later. In comparison, the *Tatler* strove to make its publication local: recording the female owner of a winning horse (see photograph), and a 1978 fashion spread using Asian-inspired dress photographed at a resort in Bali (see photographs). It included notice of future fashion events (see photograph of Pierre Balmain show), and a regular local 'girl-with-the-pearls' feature reflected the intended readership alternating Western and Asian girls, with occasional Indian girls (see photographs). Generally they were overseas educated; practiced some form of the arts; were either part of Hong Kong society or married to Westerners; and often related to a glamorous part of the Hong Kong fashion industry.

Tatler included fashion-industry related economic news and promotional material, for example: the fur fashion spread coincided with the Canada Fur Store's advertising page.³⁶ Westerners were featured in marketing and merchandising Hong Kong fashion products, particularly as models in early fashion spreads and advertisements which were frequently slightly salacious, perhaps reflecting an assumed male readership (see photograph of Rodenstock sunglasses advertisement).³⁷ Fashion-spread themes followed a Western calendar: a *Tatler* 'Spring is in the Air' spread mentioning St. Tropez (see photograph), ran in February, the coldest, dampest month in the Hong Kong year. Some advertisements for international designer-name merchandise placed by local franchisees in early editions ran unchanged in sequential issues conflicted with a Western understanding of fashion change (see photograph of Pierre Balmain advertisement).³⁸ Over time the ratio of advertisements to copy increased becoming more sophisticated. Photographs remained the main source of images, as illustrations were infrequently used.³⁹

By the late 1970s *Vogue*, *Elegance*, *Town and Country*, *Queen's*, *Good Housekeeping*, *McCalls*, *Glamour*, and special interest magazines were available.⁴⁰ Some bookshops stocked weekly specialty magazines (such as *The New Yorker*), but these were more reliably purchased by subscription. In addition to being out-of-date, overseas journals and periodicals retailed at approximately 150% of their

cover price.⁴¹ Although fashion enthusiasts and professionals claimed they never bought them, they were a recognized source of fashion information informants.⁴² This informant's view summarized that of many:

'I think they are a bit of waste of money because so many of them are ads. They don't really have a lot of depth to them,'⁴³

The economic production of magazines was frequently misunderstood by my informants, nevertheless they sold widely forming a source of fashion information which in turn, informed tailors and dressmakers. Woodward observes that images can be thought of as depersonalized which may explain their apparent lack of importance.⁴⁴

The premier hotels and bank published their own magazines: these included *The Peninsula Hotel Magazine*; *The Hilton Hotel Magazine*; and *The Hong Kong Shanghai Bank* magazine which was distributed to all Visa cardholders in Hong Kong during the 1970s and included fashion journalism.⁴⁵

Eve, the first English-language women's magazine published in Hong Kong in July 1979, was based on a format similar to *Cosmopolitan* magazine. It included fashion, beauty, employment, and advice on reader's social lives. Interviews with ex-journalists who worked on it revealed the magazine sought to emulate British publications.⁴⁶ The publication became bi-lingual, remained successful throughout the period of research.

Fashion journalists working for local magazines between the 1970s and the 1990s recalled the difficulties in presenting international fashion stories, which had been only partially bought by local retailers. A fashion journalist explained the difficulties in creating a fashion story when the local stockist had not bought a given look judging that it would not be well received by their customers. For example, Max Mara, mostly purchased by bankers, therefore focused their retail offer on black, white, and grey suits.⁴⁷ Unlike overseas retailers, local retailers did not purchase merchandise for display or promotional use.⁴⁸ Magazines had limited editorial staff, consequently: one fashion editor sourced and selected merchandise; styled the spread; and selected the final images.⁴⁹ As Winship similarly records in her book, local magazines in Hong Kong balanced advertisers' requirements with editorial integrity, one journalist remembered:

'...if I was doing a fashion spread that has a certain theme, and that advertisers' clothes just didn't have a place in that fashion spread, then no. It would be: 'It just wouldn't make sense.' So you know it was just: work with some; or use them in another capacity, either in the same issue or another issue.'⁵⁰

As the host community was relatively unsophisticated, use of additional merchandise as used in overseas magazines was precluded. This included army surplus, vintage, to models' own clothing in order to maintain clear divisions between the publisher's stable of magazines each targeted at a particular audience.⁵¹

Study of *Tatler* reveals a focus on accessory advertisements supporting Hong Kong's reputation as 'Designer-handbag City.' Handbags were not size specific and no adjustment for Asian sizing was required to retail European or American brand-name merchandise. In addition, in order to sell one handbag, required stock was one handbag, offering a lower buying risk than size-specific merchandise. A top-end retailer described the large volume of merchandise purchased by the host population, remembering the importance of matching accessories to the local community: particularly shoes and handbags.⁵² Joyce had a deliberate policy of obtaining and showcasing merchandise that had been featured in international magazines thereby enhancing their fashionable status.⁵³ For local and expatriate residents, travelling and shopping, both heavily promoted in fashion magazines, were pleasurable and desirable pastimes.

Hong Kong designers' work remained virtually absent from the pages of locally published magazines throughout the period of research. Even in the 1990s local fashion journalists maintained Hong Kong designers' work was too parochial to include in a publication, which sought to stand with top international magazines, with the exception of Barney Cheung whose craftsmanship and flair positioned him as an international name.⁵⁴

Over time, the use of local and other Asian models increased as the use of Western models declined, although some better-end retailers continued to use Westerners in their advertising as an indication of high class, or of international outlook. The society pages, which had initially reflected the activities of the expatriate Western community, began to reflect the activities of the local population.⁵⁵ Examination of *Tatler* over a period of three decades reveals an

increasing prominence of Japanese and Western brands: Joyce, Swank, and their respective licensed brands advertised regularly.

In addition to magazines, ephemeral literature on living and shopping in Hong Kong was widely available. The following section examines distinctions between that intended for expatriate Western women's and tourists' use.

Hong Kong Advice Literature

Hong Kong was the subject of much advice literature. Unlike tourist guides, which are relatively unchanging advice literature is ephemeral focusing on transient items of interest.⁵⁶ Used by the local expatriate population they are an invaluable shopping and instructional resource describing notable places, events, and festivals, and familiarising would-be residents with the customs and behaviour of both the local and expatriate population. Advice literature taught newly arrived expatriate Western women how to shop and provided a blueprint for appropriate behaviour; aligning expectations; appearance and social relations; creating and maintaining social hegemony as an information resource for both tourists and local residents alike.⁵⁷

Ephemeral literature portrays Hong Kong as a sophisticated first world city. The Hong Kong Hotels Association produced a handbook available free of charge, from Association members which listed fashion retailers (see photographs). A comparison of editions forms a record of changing social practices and a changing city, for example: photographs of the restaurants in the 1970 copy record fashion dress suitable for hotel guests in then fashionable bars.⁵⁸ In all publications, tailors, fashion, and department stores are listed with a description of their merchandise and services, together with a photograph of the premises.

In the 1960s Gleason disabuses his American-based readers of Hong Kong's reputation as an inexpensive place to shop noting Whiteaways and Lane Crawford's 'fairly high to forbidding' fixed prices.⁵⁹ In a city as strange looking as Hong Kong for many visitors and newly-arrived expatriates, advice was taken literally as tourists explored recommended stores and locations (see lists and map from *The Hilton Hotel* publication).

Travel writer J.G. Vondra summarizes Hong Kong's reputation in the 1970s:

'...when in Hong Kong, one invariably spends money on gifts of every conceivable shape and form for relatives and friends at home who think of the colony only as a sort of huge, ridiculously cheap and exotic eastern supermarket.'⁶⁰

This view, similar to Hoffman's, represented a small part of Hong Kong and perpetuated tailors' work (see photograph).⁶¹ The Hong Kong Tourist Association guides advised tourists on suitable areas in which to shop; warning the unwary of unscrupulous traders; and offered a reassuring guarantee of satisfaction to tourists shopping in the stores recommended in the guide-book.⁶² It even occasionally, suggested places in which Hong Kong residents could be seen picturesquely shopping - a form of Orientalism, (see photograph).⁶³ Advice literature reflected the exotic, social and cultural norms of the period (see cover of *Living in Hong Kong* showing a man selling dried fish hanging on strings from a yoke). Wickman claims:

'You won't need a fur coat in Hong Kong (although local people who possess them wear them at the slightest provocation) but winter weight suits and warm coats are useful and wearable.'⁶⁴

Embedded in this quote, reprinted in consecutive publications of *Living in Hong Kong* during the 1970s, are assumptions about who expatriates were, and how they should behave. Ethics aside, newly-arrived expatriates who formed the readership of this book were not expected to wear fur coats.⁶⁵ Wickman implies that readers of the period could afford fur coats, but that they would not reside in Hong Kong long enough to become accustomed to the high summer temperatures and, conversely, to feel cold in Hong Kong's relatively mild winters.⁶⁶ He advises on appropriate clothing:

'Since it is humid, sticky, and constant for five months, Hawaiian muu-muus or any long casual dresses of cotton or polyesters are good wear for women in the evening.'⁶⁷

Ignoring the stickiness of synthetic fabrics in humid conditions but tactfully indicating the level of formality required by Hong Kong dress codes, Wickman also suggests that the availability of fashion dress may be problematic:

'You may find however that many of those lovely things you saw in New York, Sydney or London are not available here, much less at half the price. Some clothes are made specifically for export and without an entre to the factory, you cannot buy them.'⁶⁸

Note the conditional: ‘may find,’ and the promise that with the right contacts this was still possible. In truth this was rarely possible even for those who worked in garment manufacturing. Tourists and newly arrived expatriates were also warned in detail of attempts to exploit their naivety. The 1970 edition of *Around and About Hong Kong* published by the Hong Kong Tourist Association, warned:

‘In Hong Kong bargaining is still practiced to a certain extent, particularly at road-side stalls and in shops which cater to native residents. Reputable stores charge uniform prices to all, and foreign visitors, unless, they like to bargain or haggle are advised to patronize only well-known establishments. Look for the emblem of the Hong Kong Tourist Association when you shop, it is your assurance of reliability.’⁶⁹

Reliance on pre-selected stores was encouraged. This advice from Wickman was for both expatriates and tourists:

‘I asked my Cantonese teacher, a scholarly elderly gentlemen ‘How do you know if you’re being cheated?’ He answered re-phrasing the question; ‘How do you know how much you are being cheated?’⁷⁰

This practice was common, Wickman baldly states: ‘Westerners will be charged more than Chinese,’ when shopping in the market.⁷¹ Hoffman warns tourists and expatriate Western women when purchasing *cheongsam*: ‘...local Chinese women buy the material separately and take it to the tailors who charge around HK\$68 if lined and HK\$60 if unlined, but Gwai-lo women will be charged more.’⁷² The dual price system for locals and ‘gwai-los’ [sic.] was a fact of life. Tailoring, the alternative to ready-to-wear dress, drew on Hong Kong’s longstanding reputation promoted in advice literature as a place in which to have garments tailor-made. In the early 1970s Wickman warns of wide variation of prices, and varying notions of fashion (see photograph of ‘modern’ tailors with early 1960s hairstyles published in 1970).⁷³

The Le Beau Handbag Ltd., advertising in the Hong Kong Tourist Association publication ‘Around and About,’ includes an image of the Eiffel Tower in the advertisement (see photograph). If as Williamson suggests the individual is the receiver of the advertisement, an advertisement in Hong Kong advice literature with the drawing of the Eiffel Tower (symbol of Paris), links Paris, the city of

fashion, with Hong Kong.⁷⁴ It flatters the reader as it presumes he or she is well travelled: not only is the reader in Hong Kong, reading a publication about Hong Kong, but the reader also knows, or at least knows of, Paris. The reader is invited to fill an 'absence' in the advertisement by imagining themselves in Paris - presumably with a Le Beau handbag - yet the copy makes no reference to the image. Gilbert suggests:

None the less, the fashion press in almost all consumer cultures has routinely presented selective readings of London and New York alongside more generalised interpretations of Paris, Milan and Rome as the distant objects of aspirations and dreams.⁷⁵

Le Beau Handbag Ltd. is an example and also suggests that by including the symbol of the capital of couture their handbag range is imbued with Paris style, and Hong Kong visitors and residents shopping for clothing are partaking in an ideology of global capitalism. This is an example of 'bricolage,' as Moeran suggests, which uses existing classifications that are readily understood by their targeted audience are used rather than create complicated or complicating issues.⁷⁶

Taste was problematic in all advice literature: suggesting suitable dress and sources was in part the Hong Kong hotel guides' function. Hoffmann advises what the well-dressed Western expatriate woman in Hong Kong needed in her wardrobe in 1970, describing the selection of Malcolm Starr, a small boutique:

'A wide variety of outfits are tastefully fashioned in 'the look that is right for any occasion.' This vast selection of ready-to-wear fashions includes such fascinating apparel as luxurious lounge wear, comfortable casual attire, jump suits, hostess gowns, cocktail dresses, after-five outfits and elegant evening wear.'⁷⁷

Today, this would be read as an ironical overstatement alluding to overstocking, less-than-fashionable merchandise, and including dress for now irrelevant specific events or times. Perceptions of quality were relative: Hoffman hints at potential problems in his comments on tailoring fit, suggesting that wool garments and light-coloured linings were likely to be more successful.⁷⁸ His advice on using easy to handle fabrics, good quality silk, employing Hong Kong expertise to best advantage - especially in using low-cost decoration such as beading (then completed on wool jersey) - and the practicalities of washing is good.

It became common practice for the garment manufacturing industry to offer seconds, over-makes, and cancelled orders in factory-outlet stores in Hong Kong, rather than ship them to the United States of America for distribution through the discount industry, but by the end of the 1980s Hong Kong's reputation as a bargain centre was over: Hong Kong had become a first-world city with matching prices.⁷⁹ Money and value for money was a concern and generated warnings, American journalist Suzy Gershman explained:

'You are a rich American and will never miss what you overpay, according to many vendors. Some of these people want to make enough money to emigrate before 1997 - watch out!'⁸⁰

Whilst it was true that Hong Kong residents were attempting to obtain overseas passports, many tourists had little idea how inexpensive some items were. As women's magazines are written with a mixture of fatalism and hope without any analysis, so advice literature was written with a mixture of fatalism and encouragement: in 1986 Diane Freis reminds Westerners coming from fixed-price countries who assumed all prices were fixed, that they were not.⁸¹ Western expatriate women were in no doubt that they should be careful when purchasing goods on a buyer-beware basis in Hong Kong: warnings of seconds and scams were repeated in much advice literature. In Stanley market (see photograph), customers were unlikely to be told that the merchandise was seconds, i.e: imperfect merchandise.⁸² One guide warns of a scam using plastic wrap:

'You are assured that everything is correct and you have just been given exactly like the sample in every way - except that the silk is of an inferior quality. Feel the goods. Not everyone will cheat you. But many will try.'⁸³

The warning 'But many will try' undermined the welcoming persona of Hong Kong with its frantic activity, mysterious items for sale, incomprehensible customs, and reiterated its alien non-Western thinking, yet Edelstein is careful to be positive in his description of Hong Kong shopping, making it clear a wide, fashionable choice was available in the late 1980s:

‘Nevertheless, there are clothes to be purchased ready-made in Hong Kong, both local and imported. New boutiques spring up weekly, and they carry bits and pieces of whatever is most fashionable in Europe, the U.S. and Japan.’⁸⁴

Neither Edelstein, nor any other authors, warn that size of ready-made merchandise remained a difficulty for many expatriate Western women. The factory-shopping tour organizer describing one warehouse outlet belonging to a local group of stores, explained that although they had larger sizes, they were not very large and not suitable for all customers.⁸⁵

Gershman lists premiere Hong Kong hotels as suggested places to stay including: The Peninsula; The Mandarin Oriental; The Shangri-la; The Marriot; The Conrad; The Regent; The Ramada Renaissance; The Hyatt; and The Omni, yet the greater part of the book details factory-shopping outlets, where women - the publication is addressed to women - could shop for reduced price merchandise which was off-season, faulty goods, or overmakes (see Chapter Four).⁸⁶ This contradictory advice is further underlined in her explanation of American customs import limits (U.S.\$400 per person in 1986), and a suggestion that the reader bring her entire family with her to Hong Kong in order to maximize the value of the factory-shopping goods which she could legally export to America.⁸⁷ If the reader felt unable to negotiate Hong Kong by herself, she was advised to hire a guide (at a cost of H.K.\$200 for three hours) thereby considerably increasing the cost of saving money by shopping in Hong Kong.⁸⁸

Just as magazines indicated personal work, so journalist Jo Reimier’s book *Shopping In Exotic Hong Kong: your passport to Asia's most Incredible Bazaar*, presents shopping in Hong Kong and the subsequent paperwork on clearing American customs as a form of work.⁸⁹ The book includes grid-prototype forms entitled: Daily Planning and Scheduling Form, Comparative Shopping Form, Customs Declaration Form (see photographs).⁹⁰ The meticulously recorded, rigorous research which the reader is instructed to complete in order to accurately assess bargains and fulfil a wish-list of purchases, is expended on the trivial savings to be gained factory-shopping.⁹¹

Gershman’s book suggests a shopping conspiracy theory, she claims:

'The good stuff is often hidden. Either it's put away or it goes to those who have custom work done and know how to go after real value. You have to go back to the same places constantly and hope to get lucky. Or you have to hit it just right.'⁹²

This forewarns readers of potential disappointment, by suggesting that specific knowledge, which is not substantiated elsewhere in the book, was required for success.

Many areas such as the main street of The Walled City, looked intimidating, it was unusual for expatriates or visitors to explore these areas (see photograph).⁹³ Factory-outlet shopping could be a miserable experience: one English designer working in a factory area explained how the merchandise in factory outlets was not presented as fashion merchandise, underlining the importance of visual merchandising in providing the visual pleasure of shopping.⁹⁴ The tour leader explained there was no air-conditioning: it can be imagined what an dispiriting experience it was to walk hot traffic-filled streets, up endless flights of tiled concrete stairs, to be confronted with out-of-date merchandise.⁹⁵

Many shoppers followed advice literature closely.⁹⁶ Emphasizing the scary alienness of shopping in Hong Kong, (and thereby reinforcing the need for a reliable guide), Gershman recounts what was the usual process of purchasing a copy watch in Tsim Sha Tsui as though it was a dangerous adventure:

'Apprehension set in after we ascended the second set of back staircases in a rickety poured concrete [sic.] shopping mall above Nathan Road. When the guide led us down a deserted hallway and opened the door to a broom closet filled with Chinese youths we thought it was over. Time stopped.

Who needs a watch in the Twilight zone?...

Time passed. ... finally the door opened: a young man walked in, his shirt stuffed with packages. The door shut behind him, and he opened his shirt to reveal five watches, including the two Chanel models we had asked to see.

The watches were almost perfect fakes, and said 'Chanel' on the face, but the gold on the chain-and-leather strap was too yellow; \$100 [U.S.] was out of the question.

We offered \$35. The door opened. 'Don't waste my time,' said our host. We were free to run.'⁹⁷

Inconsistently, the poured concrete staircase is rickety (bleak might have been more accurate), nevertheless, this is described as an empowering activity restoring the

confidence of the author and her friend, but note the watch seller has the face-saving last word.⁹⁸ Gershman warns of copy-factory-outlets:

'Some manufacturers have done so well in the factory outlet business that they now produce their goods solely for their tourist and local clients - they don't even export! While most of the outlets listed in the various guides are fun to visit, many of them are rip offs. Or, to put it more kindly, are in business just to be in business.'⁹⁹

Rather simplistically, this alludes to other unexplained motives for being in business, hinting at triad-related activity, money laundering, or merely a means of claiming a tax loss, and yet again it forewarns of potential disappointment. The possibility of 'fake' factory-outlet stores was broached by the tour-leader who explained she had since learned an outlet she had used 'weren't 'real' [sic].'¹⁰⁰ Similarly, Gershman advises caution when asking tailors to copy existing garments:

'Comparison-shop carefully before commissioning a 'designer' outfit. Many tailors are very conservative and will not have the kind of flair necessary to pull off a high-fashion look. Beware cheap looking Chanel-style suits, which abound. Bring your own buttons and trims to pull off the proper look.'¹⁰¹

Whilst Chanel's merchandise has always been fashionable for a number of customers, in 1986 the Chanel suit was not high fashion: Gershman is addressing women intent on dressing classically rather than fashionably. Once the potential consumer either resident or tourist, learned to value Asian-produced craftwork, a new position as an expert or 'Old Hand' is promised: 'Once you have seen finely made, handbound cut work or drawnwork you will laugh at what is generally sold in markets, Chinese department stores, and craft stores.'¹⁰² This is mystifying as quality examples of cut-work (Broderie Anglaises and others), or drawn-thread (counted-thread) work were not local to Hong Kong although there were flourishing businesses in Swatow, Chiu Chou, using Irish linen (present day Shantou, in Southwest China), before the Second World War (see photograph of Swatow Drawn Work Co. Ltd.), yet the numerous Chinese embroidery techniques are not mentioned.¹⁰³

Lastly, sometimes advice literature presupposed out-of-date Western expectations. For example, Gershman recounts her bargaining experience in the market in Shanghai:

'I became confident and ruthless. I started to bargain fiercely, paying about 25% of the asking price in each negotiation - I may have a Big Nose (Chinese call Westerners Big Noses), but I am also an old China hand. As Confucius undoubtedly once said: The true price of any item offered to a foreigner is a fraction of the asking price, not half price.'¹⁰⁴

At the end of the period of research to be called an 'Old Hand' was slightly derogatory, suggesting an out-of-date knowledge of Asia.¹⁰⁵

By the early 1990s local stores were publishing their own advertising material: such as Joyce's illustrated magazine with an imaginary fairy story (see photographs). By the 1990s, travel writer Simon Parkes, provides sufficient detail for readers to explore the Territory on their own:

'Kaiser Estates Factory Outlets: Factory outlets are one of Hong Kong's more famous shopping experiences. Most are either connected to the factories that produce the goods or simply sell goods purchased from the factories. First stop should be the three large blocks of buildings in the factory complex called Kaiser Estates. Take a bus, taxi, or walk to Hung Hom just beyond the train station. Prices have risen sharply in recent years (group shopping tours are responsible), but bargains can still be found on silk clothing, carpets, brass, and furniture. Double-check all merchandise; much is excess stock, over-runs, and quality control rejects. Most outlets have twice-yearly sales during summer and near New Year's.'¹⁰⁶

Note the informative factual tone in comparison to Gershwin's dramatic one.

Hong Kong advice literature educated both visitors and newly-arrived expatriates, whilst conveying the authors' Western assumptions and prejudices. Journalists based overseas were prone to making erroneous assumptions about acceptable behavior often disguised as a pseudo-familiarity with Asia, whilst advice literature inculcated a sub-text of appropriate behavior and acceptance. The fashion for factory shopping for those with the leisure time to pursue it, remains enshrined in advice literature.

Fiction

Of all media, fiction best reflects a contextualized view of the Territory, depicting meaning. Novels based in Hong Kong describe local social and cultural practices and descriptions of Western women's clothing, unfortunately, the best known are not from the period of research: in Suyin Han's a finely-crafted and moving love story *Love is a Many Splendored Thing*, the story of a passionate affair between a widowed Eurasian doctor and an American journalist stationed in Hong Kong which ends in tragedy when the journalist is transferred to report on the Korean war, Han, the narrator, rarely describes her dress although as a hospital doctor, she is most likely to be wearing a white coat.¹⁰⁷ It remains one of the best-known novels of Hong Kong, but was published a little earlier than the period of research, as was Richard Mason's *The World of Suzie Wong*: the Orientalist male fantasy of a good-hearted bar-girl with her cute pidgin-English phrases: 'Me good girl,' and 'Me no talk.'¹⁰⁸ The narrative of both books explores the (then) unusual relationship between an expatriate Western man and a local Asian woman. Both books were filmed and *The World of Susie Wong*, best remembered as a film, is discussed in the film section below. Novelist E. Arnot Robertson's post-war story *The Strangers on My Roof*, of an English expatriate speech-therapist and her understanding of the illegal immigrants who lived on the roof of her house in Kowloon whilst her marriage ended as her husband fell in love with her best friend and she with another expatriate, details the shortage of accommodation for the immigrant Cantonese and colonial complacency.¹⁰⁹

As previously mentioned, John Lanchester's novel *Fragrant Harbour*, set in the 1990s, includes recognizable descriptions of places, acceptable dress, and cultural customs in the later part of the period have been reproduced in relevant chapters of this thesis.¹¹⁰ Characteristic of its period, it tells of a clever English girl who comes to Hong Kong to make good and succeeds beyond her wildest dreams.

Two other books characterize Hong Kong although they are not of the period: Joseph Conrad's *Lord Jim*, the dispiriting Victorian tale of dishonor and attempted redemption, and Marco Polo's *The Travels of Marco Polo*, a Medieval buyer's handbook of oriental riches. In conclusion, fiction plays a minor role in representing Hong Kong.¹¹¹ The following section on radio and television represents the host community more effectively.

Radio and Television

Radio and television services included two English-language radio stations: Radio Hong Kong and commercial radio, and two television services: Rediffusion Television (R.T.V.) screened American and British-made programmes, the news at 9pm., and movies; Television Broadcasts Ltd. (T.V.B.) screened American and British-made programmes including children's television, old movies, and news at 7pm, on Pearl, the English-language channel in the late 1960s.¹¹² In the earlier part of the 1960s and '70s two of the four channels screened English language programmes by law, although at that time English was spoken by less than one percent of the population.¹¹³

Lui describes a row of shops in a government-tolerated squatter area behind Shep Kip Mei resettlement estate in the early 1960s, which included a television shop whose customers paid H.K.\$0.10cents each to watch television in the shop.¹¹⁴ Television represented modernity for the local community. The symbol of Hong Kong peoples' aspirations contrasted with the housing problem.¹¹⁵ Local television newscasters and presenters were celebrities and a source of fashion information for both host and expatriate Western women: informants remembered variety shows with presenters in unlikely-coloured costumes.¹¹⁶ In the early 1970s, Jade, the Cantonese-language channel, screened popular American programmes including: 'Perry Mason;' 'Bonanza;' and the 'F.B.I.' - dubbed in to Cantonese.¹¹⁷ The quality of output varied considerably: a 1970s American-made Hong Kong adventure serial for the American market used spliced-in film clips to lend authenticity to a Hong Kong of otherwise unrecognizable people, places, and customs.¹¹⁸ By the late 1970s, television penetration had exceeded 90%; by 1988 it was 98%; and in the 1993 edition of her book Morris describes it as ubiquitous.¹¹⁹

Satellite channels developed in the 1990's broadcasting American fashion programmes each evening.¹²⁰ The importance of television as a means of communication was mirrored in the increasing size of television screens throughout the period of research. Innovative fashions worn by television soap-opera characters such as white stockings, or small scarves tied at the throat, were widely emulated by local office ladies as television replaced film as the main form of entertainment.

The following section considers the role of film as a means of disseminating fashion information.

Film

Hong Kong was a centre for local film production but the focus of this section is the use of Hong Kong in international movies. Portrayed as an exotic location in movies produced for international consumption, these contributed to expatriate Western women's perceptions of the city.¹²¹ Professor of cinema Geoffrey Novell-Smith, explains our preference for constructing a story to explain a particular scene: films can be explained by their Saussurian signification; and by semiotics; but he notes:

'Finding meaning has become an academic exercise, in both good and bad senses of the phrase.... Films mean. But they do not just mean. Because they can be described with the aid of language we can be led to think that description can substitute for the film. This is the perennial temptation of what I have called the linguistic analogy. But films also work in less describable ways. They work as painting or music do, partly through meaning but partly in other ways; partly in ways that have linguistic equivalents and partly in ways that do not.'¹²²

Dress has been used as a short-hand to describe character in film, and the impact of film on women's fashion dress has been recorded both in Hollywood and Bollywood film.¹²³ By the early 1970s there were nearly a hundred cinemas in Hong Kong, of which one-third showed American or British-made movies. The remainder showed Hong Kong, mainland, or Taiwanese movies, and one screened Indian movies. Wickman records attendance figures were amongst the highest in the world.¹²⁴ In addition Studio One, a movie club, screened art or minority-interest movies.

By the early 1980s cinemas had declined to 89, however that still averaged more than twelve visits per annum per member of the population.¹²⁵ In the 1990s, Broadway Cinematique and The Cine Arts Centre provided a location for minority interest movies. Films located or made in Hong Kong for an international audience, released just before and during the period of research, include the following listed in chronological order:

'Love is a Many Splendored Thing' based on the novel above, captured fashions of the late 1950s, focusing on the difficulties of maintaining a relationship accepted by neither the local or the Western communities, a situation perpetuated in the movie by older Western women.¹²⁶

'Soldier of Fortune' starring Clark Gable and Susan Hayward, also features 1950s fashions. The story of an American journalist's wife looking for her husband, a prisoner in China, with the help and romantic interest of expatriate American, Hank Lee (Gable), Hayward, as Jane Hoyt, wears mid-1950s low-necked, waisted, and draped dresses, with full skirts and tight three-quarter length sleeves.¹²⁷ Her outfits are accessorized with pearls, a small clutch-bag, and wrist-length white gloves.

'Ferry to Hong Kong' made partly in the United Kingdom, partly in Hong Kong in the late 1950s, was based on a true story of an individual who boarded the Macau/Hong Kong ferry and lacking the appropriate papers, found himself neither welcome in Macau nor Hong Kong.¹²⁸ The main character Conrad (the name is linked through the author's name with Asia, see above), statelessly-shuffles from one country to another, with a Laurel and Hardy repartee with the ferry captain.¹²⁹ The movie is notable for its technical shots and for the now embarrassing pigeon-English spoken by several Chinese characters whose names are similarly simplified.¹³⁰ Sylvia Sims plays the part of Miss Ferris, a schoolteacher ferrying her pupils between Hong Kong and Macau, and the romantic interest who finally 'saves' Conrad. Her 1950s European dress has narrow, fitted waists, full skirts, criss-cross draped necklines, and a one-shoulder style evening dress. Her headscarf is firmly tied, Queen-style, under her chin.

Sylvia Sims, later better known for her parts in the 'Carry On' movies, played a significant part in the movie most associated with Hong Kong: 'The World of Suzie Wong.'¹³¹ This movie put Hong Kong 'on the map' as an exotic vacation destination for first-world holidaymakers. In this East-meets-West romance similar to 'An American in Paris,' William Holden plays Robert Lomax, a struggling American artist who's down on his luck.¹³² Eurasian actress, Nancy Kwan, plays a beautiful Chinese prostitute, Suzie Wong, who captures his heart. The movie opens with shots of the Star Ferry and is set largely in the Nan Kok Hotel and its adjacent bar, supposedly in Ladder Street in Wanchai.¹³³ Like 'Soldier of Fortune,' it

includes film of narrow streets filled with traders, and local details: such as the street-barber, and the hotel's (rather unlikely) rice-eating tabby cat.

The bar-girl, wearing a tight *cheongsam* or Western dress, represented the exotic aspect of colonial conquest and was both admired for her boldness and reviled for her profession to which she had little alternative, as Suzie says: 'What would I do to survive? Steal?'¹³⁴ A local female resident recollected the anger amongst the local population which Nancy Kwan generated as a Eurasian - but not Chinese - representation of Hong Kong women.¹³⁵ Suzie wears a *cheongsam* in all but three scenes: in the opening scene on the Star Ferry she is off-duty wearing casual but appropriate Western dress, where Lomax accepts her self-description as the daughter of a wealthy man. Secondly, when they lunch in Aberdeen in the floating restaurant (see photograph). Later in the movie when she and Lomax split up, her new boyfriend pays for her new Western wardrobe rather inconsistently overdressed (complete with hat), and Lomax claims she looks ridiculous. Sylvia Sims plays Kay O'Neill, the daughter of the British bank manager, Suzie's rival for Lomax's affections. Kay wears Western fashions of the late 1950s: waisted-dresses, and full skirts. 'The World of Suzie Wong,' filmed in Hong Kong, provides detailed footage of prevalent racist and class assumptions, and the extent of, and difficulties of living in, the shanty towns which covered the hillsides in Hong Kong during this time.¹³⁶ Gleason observes Mason also created a new mythology for Hong Kong bars: '[n]ow [1967] there are perhaps a dozen local girls who claim to be the original Suzie Wong.'¹³⁷ The *cheongsam*, also worn in China and Taiwan during this period, became known as the 'Suzie Wong dress' (see photographs).¹³⁸

The strangest costume in a Western movies set in Hong Kong belongs to Diane, the female lead in 'The Road to Hong Kong,' played by Joan Collins, who wears an extensive Chinese-styled wardrobe.¹³⁹ This movie was one of a comedy series supposedly set in exotic locations starring Bob Hope, Bing Crosby, and Dorothy Lamour, was filmed in Shepperton Studios but set in Calcutta, Tibet, and Hong Kong. As an agent of a group seeking world domination, the Third Echelon, Collins wears a strange amalgam of the *cheongsam*, and late 1950s and early 1960s Western fashion dress with science-fiction futuristic uniform-elements. Her dress closes with an asymmetrical fastening similar to that of a *cheongsam*, and has a *cheongsam*-style contrast binding matching the logo of the group sewn on the right

breast, but combines the tight-fitted bodice with a full gathered skirt of late 1950s/early 1960s Western dress. The appearance of her *cheongsam*-wearing assistant (played by Mei Ling), is clearly appreciated by the two male leads, Bob Hope and Bing Crosby. The movie was one of the least successful of this series.

Like 'The Road to Hong Kong,' 'The Sand Pebbles' reflects a stereotypical view of China.¹⁴⁰ Filmed in Sai Kung, New Territories, it is supposedly set near Shanghai in post-war China. Starring Steve McQueen as Jack Holman, a frustrated American naval ship's engineer with a heart of gold, whose altruistic attempts to treat his subordinates with integrity end in disaster. Candice Bergen plays Shirley Eckert, a missionary with some romantic interest in McQueen, but there are no fashionable female characters.¹⁴¹

'Coming Home,' an examination of the changing society which Vietnam veterans found on their return to the United States of America, contains a brief film clip of Hong Kong where the Marine husband of Sally, the female lead, is sent to 'R+R.'¹⁴² Sally, engrossed in the sights of Hong Kong, carries a camera and wears a Hakka hat, having purchased Hong Kong mementoes, whilst her husband fails to communicate to her his horrifying experiences fighting in Vietnam.

Lastly, 'The Return of the Pink Panther,' the third of the Peter Sellers series, was filmed in The Excelsior Hotel in Causeway Bay.¹⁴³ Although it was made in the late 1980s, the film features 1960s fashions but its impact if any, on the local or expatriate population is unclear. Promoting Hong Kong as an exotic location, these movies promoted tourism, as did documentary reports on the colony fronted by American film, television and radio personalities.¹⁴⁴

By the 1990s Hong Kong movies made by local directors received wider acclaim: the Shaw Brothers work became seen as a genre and Hong Kong action movies as uniquely, un-gendered.¹⁴⁵ Wong Kar-wai's movie 'Chung-king Express,' documenting the forthcoming handover was set in Chungking Mansions, the hostel and restaurant complex catering for travelling Westerners.¹⁴⁶ The movie focused on the passage of time and the repetition of co-incidence, but is not noted for its fashion dress.¹⁴⁷

Movies that had an impact on expatriate Western women's fashion dress during the 1960s included 'Joanna' generating a Joanna-collection retailed by Justin Jake.¹⁴⁸ The adventures of a girl who moved to London, it provided glamorous and fun backdrops in which to wear 1960s fashions. 'Isadora' based on the life of

Isadora Duncan, was also predicted to inspire fashion dress in Hong Kong.¹⁴⁹ Mick Jagger's white outfit for 'The Stones in the Park' concert was copied by Justin Jake firstly in silk, which was widely available, and later in a synthetic fabric, similar to the original.¹⁵⁰ As anthropologist and fashion author Kaori O'Conner observes, synthetic fibres enjoyed popularity in the 1950s and 1960s, before a taste for natural fibres returned to fashion in the 1970s.¹⁵¹ Justin Jake's royal-blue version of the outfit worn by a Hong Kong disc jockey achieved local press coverage.¹⁵²

Apart from popularising the *cheongsam*, Western-made movies featuring Hong Kong had little impact on expatriate Western women's fashion dress between the 1960s and the Handover. Hong Kong locations have been confined to 'East meets West' Oriental roles featuring the exotic and unfamiliar, similarly fashions reflected an amalgam of Asian dress - mostly the *cheongsam* - and contemporary Western dress of the time.

The following section considers fashion exhibitions and catwalk shows as a means of demonstrating Hong Kong's self perception through dress:

Exhibitions and Catwalk Shows

Promotional department store and trade fair fashion shows were an entertainment and spectacle during the 1960s and '70s as the novelty of barely clad models attracted male viewers.¹⁵³ Fashion shows received wide coverage in the Hong Kong tabloid papers dissimilating the fashion look and ensuring further exposure for the brand.¹⁵⁴ Skov describes the political use made of Hong Kong fashion designers and fashion shows by the government to front trade delegations and makes an analogy between the Young Designers contest of 'up-and-coming' designers and Hong Kong's fashion industry also 'up-and-coming.'¹⁵⁵

The Hong Kong Museum of History has a collection of pre-modern Chinese dress, approximately four hundred *cheongsam*, and some additional items of Western dress, but collection of Western garments is not part of the museum's curatorial policy.¹⁵⁶ The Museum of History includes a few items of pre-Modern Chinese dress, and near contemporary Chinese opera costume. A small light-needle industry workshop in Room Eight of the Museum of History is the only evidence of Hong Kong's fashion manufacturing past.

An exhibition by William Tang of fashion from the post-war period to the Handover was staged in 2000 at The Hong Kong Arts Centre. It included garments

lent by a number of Hong Kong designers for example: Peter Lau, and Judy Mann, mirroring a Western fashion history in inexpensive, locally-available fabrics (for example, acrylic or wool mixes - not wool), but unfortunately this diachronic history of fashion dress in Hong Kong lacked contextualization.¹⁵⁷ A small collection of Hong Kong designer dresses at The Hong Kong Museum of Heritage was shown in April 2003. The garments were credited with the name of the designer but with no other information. A further similar exhibition, curated by Tang and Judy Mann, was shown in September 2008.¹⁵⁸

Exhibitions have yet to achieve a discourse, which reflects a history of Hong Kong through dress for the host community or for expatriate Western women. Nevertheless, representations of Hong Kong women have helped to create a role for Hong Kong.

Representations

Images of exotic Asian women were popularized as an icon of the 1960s, as in Tretchikov's classic kitsch painting 'The Green Girl.' Turner claims that this image was employed to sell Hong Kong overseas, as was Suzie Wong's *cheongsam*.¹⁵⁹ Internationalism and quality were represented by the deliberate use of Westerners' images on goods intended for local consumption.¹⁶⁰ Many local fashion stores used Western models for publicity campaigns and fashion shows, using Western-looking mannequins in store windows. By virtue of their presence British stores reflected the standards and priorities of British colonialism, which persisted until the Handover.¹⁶¹

Initially, the 'Made in Hong Kong' label represented cheaply made, inexpensive goods. Eventually Chinese attention to quality and standardization established a reputation for Chinese production as consistent, and by the end of the period, quality products, particularly designer-name knitwear, were labelled 'Made in Hong Kong.'¹⁶² David Tang contributed to this changing status by promoting a 'Made by Chinese label' in Shanghai Tang merchandise.¹⁶³ Fashion writer, Douglas Bullis briefly summarizes the work of contemporary Hong Kong fashion designers.¹⁶⁴

To conclude, the popular images and representations of Hong Kong have reflected shifting perceptions of exotic fashion dress, and the quality of fashion

production. British production declined in esteem as the quality and sophistication expected by the host community rose.

Conclusion

The growing fashion knowledge of the host-population; increasing sophistication in advertising techniques; and availability of international print media have reflected the increasingly sophisticated local community who form a background to this research. Print and film reveal early Orientalist attitudes and representations which were quickly outmoded and replaced with sophisticated international advertising. Whilst the earliest glossy magazine included many expatriate Westerners playing on the 'East meets West' role of Hong Kong, by the late 1990s the focus of Hong Kong society had switched to the increasingly confident host community. Few expatriate Western women interviewed apart from fashion professionals claimed to read magazines or to remember newspaper articles, but fashions inspired by popular films or later as featured in international fashion magazines, were available in local boutiques. Magazines were precluded from using army surplus, vintage, or the models' own possessions in fashion spreads in order not to confuse the Hong Kong readership.

From the late 1960s onwards the exotic and ethnic become fashionable and was reflected in all media, however local media persisted in using Western models to set the tone of advertising and suggest internationalism. The 1970s saw the development of the first English language glossy magazines and increasing prominence of Western designer brands. Handbags were the first item to be heavily promoted in designer stores advertising.

Representations of Hong Kong changed during this time from a metaphor for inexpensive goods to high quality complex fashion products - particularly designer knitwear - as the city changed from a colonial outpost to a first world city with high rise buildings and service industries. Advice literature for tourists and would-be residents record a changing city and cultural norms: many disabuse readers of Hong Kong's reputation as a centre for bargains especially during the 'factory shopping' years of the 1980s by stressing the skills required in bargaining and where to shop. Difficulties in locating appropriate sizes for Westerners were sometimes indicated but not explored in depth - the purpose of such guides after all, is to 'talk up' the city. Hong Kong was promoted as an international city (linked

with Paris in advertising). Taste was a variable notion yet was generally discussed in positive terms. Warnings of various scams and overcharging were mentioned and visitors were frequently advised to patronise recommended stores.

Much is made of Hong Kong's unfamiliar appearance: many parts of Hong Kong appeared intimidating, and even the process of purchasing a copy watch is described as an adventure, in keeping with an Orientalist illusion that even factory-outlet stores could be fake, and tailoring and embroidery work required experience in order to obtain value for money. Representations of Hong Kong included the *cheongsam* which became internationally known through its use in the film 'The World of Suzie Wong' when it became known as the 'Suzie Wong dress,' and the label 'Made in Hong Kong' which changed during the period from something representing inexpensive merchandise to high quality, usually knitwear. In parallel, the confidence of the host community increased and exceeded that of expatriate Western women in fashion dress.

The following chapter will examine what expatriate Western women did with the opportunities that they had to collect ethnic dress and to use tailoring to create fantasy in a situation of apparent shortage of fashion dress.



Figure 196 Advertisement for 1st edition of Eve magazine June 1979
Advertisement for maiden issue of Hong Kong's first women's magazine, June 1979. (1979a, pp. 72-3).



Figure 197 Advertisement for Eve magazine Nov. 1979
Advertisement for November issue of Eve. (1979b, pp. 104-5).

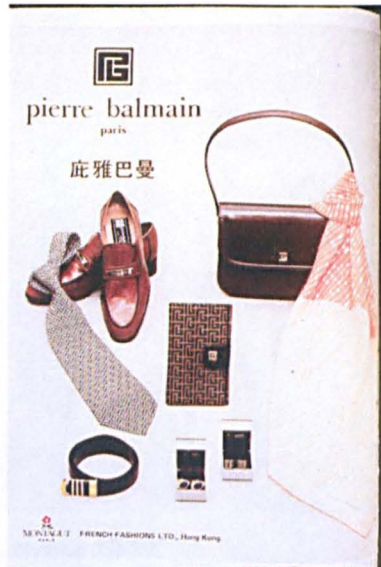


Figure 198 Unchanging fashion advertisement 1979

Example of an unchanging fashion advertisement. This advertisement for Pierre Balmain was repeated in the Hong Kong Tatler for several consecutive months. (1979b, p. 112).



Figure 199 Fashion spread Tatler magazine February 1980

Fashion articles reference the West.

‘Spring is in the Air, resort clothes, St. Tropez.’

(1980, p. 97).



Figure 200 Race owner's dress 1979

Race horse owner in conservative tailored suit and court shoes.

'Tucker, Oram & Gribben's Castlereagh with Gary Moore after winning the Cooke Handicap (2nd section)' April 1979.

(1979d, p. 88).



Figure 201 The Girl with the Pearls in fashionable dress 1979

The Girl with the Pearls, Joyce Ma. Contrast her dress with that of the racehorse owner above. June 1979.

(1979f, p. 64).



Figure 202 Tatler magazine: sexy content 1978

Sexy revealing advertisement for sunglasses by German manufacturer, Rodenstock, intended for Westerners? September 1978.

(1978f, p. 44).



Figure 203 The East meets West fashion spread 1979

Fashion spread using pre-modern styled Asian ethnic dress.

'The East Meets West, mandarin jacket...' Nov. 1979.

(1979e, p. 90).



Figure 204 The East meets West cheongsam cont. 1979

'The East Meets West, cheongsam with a patterned...' Nov. 1979.
(1979e, p. 92).



Figure 205 The East meets West cheongsam, cont. 1979

'The East Meets West, A disco cheongsam... Chinese embroidered... high slits.' Nov. 1979.
(1979e, p. 91).

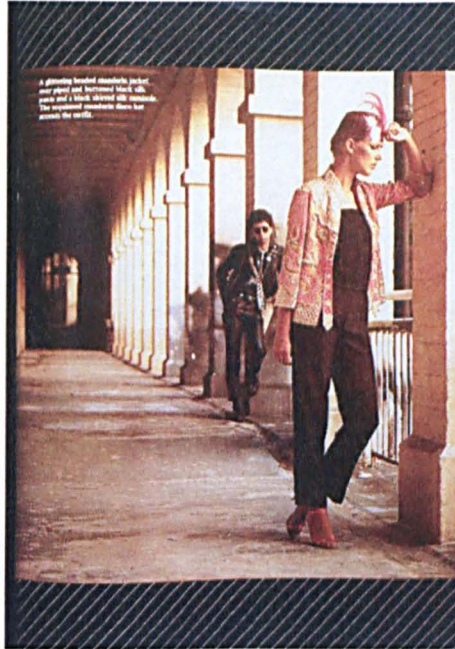


Figure 206 The East meets West mandarin jacket 1979

'The East Meets West, mandarin jacket...' Nov. 1979.

(1979e, p. 90).

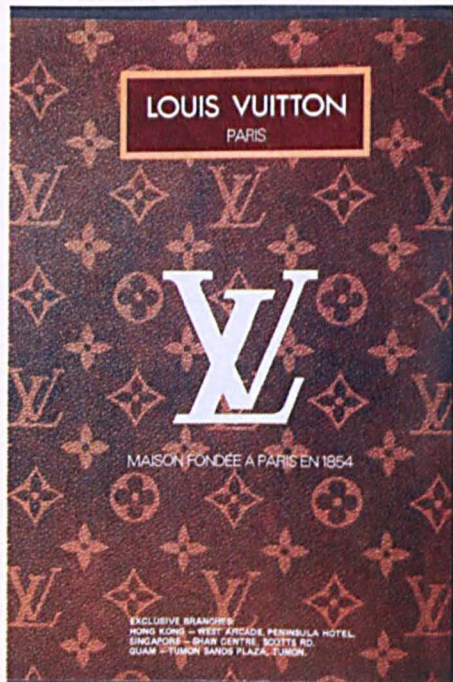


Figure 207 Advertisers list regional locations 1979

Advertisers listed regional locations including addresses in Hong Kong, Singapore, and Guam.

Louis Vuitton advertisement. Dec. 1979.

(1979c, p. 140).



Figure 208 Asian-styled fashion spread 1978

Fashion spreads reflected regionally available materials and skills.

'Evening outfit. The material is Cashmere and hand embroidered.'

Laura Boulter's boutique, Furama hotel. April 1978.

(1978a, p. 26).



Figure 209 Asian-styled fashion spread cont. 1978

'Bright blue silk long skirt and jacket worn over a Chinese silk blouse with a tie neck. The jacket has antique embroidered panels.' April '78.

(1978a, p. 27).



Figure 210 Asian-inspired resort fashion 1978

'Pearls of the East.' 'These photographs were taken on location in Bali by Dinshaw Balsara for Pearl City Development Store. All these fashions and more for keeping cool can be found at Pearl City in Causeway Bay.' May 1978.

(1978e, p. 78).



Figure 211 International-brand fashion show 1978

The Tatler included future notice of visiting international designer brand collections.

'Pierre Balmain will be in Hong Kong for the showings of his spring/summer 1978 high fashion collection which will be at the Furama Inter Continental hotel on the 24th and 25th of April. He will bring eight models from Paris and one can expect the show to be 'faithful to a certain high idea of elegance.' April '78.

(1978b, p. 97).



Figure 212 The Girl with the Pearls in ethnic dress 1978

The Girl with the Pearls, Mrs. Farinada Mohindar, this feature included women of different nationalities each month.

'Farinada Mohindar, who is married to Mr. M (Boya) Mohindar, was born in India and has travelled extensively. She has lived in Hong Kong for the last seven years. Convent educated with a B.A. degree in English, she is also an accomplished artist with several exhibitions to her credit. Although Faridar is an Indian, she is the grand niece of M. A. Jinnah the founder of Pakistan. Farinda is something of an amateur palmist and enjoys entertaining friends to home cooked Indian meals at which she is an expert.'

(1978i, p. 89).

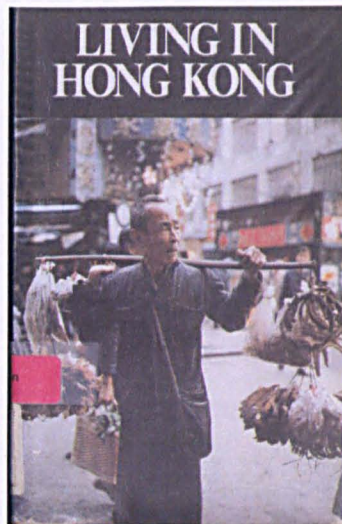


Figure 213 Advice literature for would-be residents 1973

This publication produced annually by the American Chamber of Commerce Amchan, was sporadically updated however, the cover sought to emphasise the difference between Hong Kong and potential readers' home countries.

(Wickman, 1973), cover.

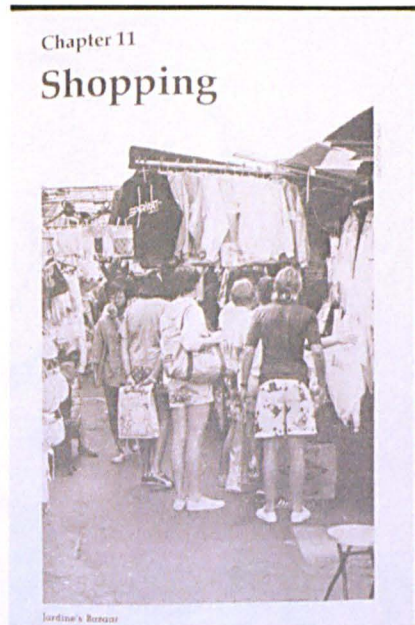


Figure 214 Expatriates/tourists shopping in the market 1986

Shopping – Jardine's Bazaar.

(Moore, 1986, p. 159).

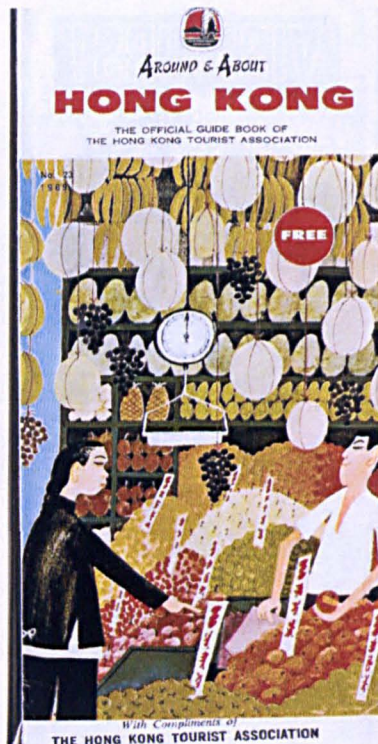


Figure 215 'Around and About' c. 1970

The cover of the monthly publication of the Hong Kong Tourist Association shows an *amah*, dressed in black and white, shopping (c.1970).

(Hong Kong Tourist Association, c1970), cover.

E.Y.

Le Beau

**GENUINE LEATHER
HAND MADE
IMPORTED**

SHOP OPEN
SEVEN DAYS
A WEEK.

Le Beau Handbag Ltd.
178, NATHAN ROAD & HILLWOOD ROAD JUNCTION
KOWLOON, TEL: K-679135, K-679136

Figure 216 Handbag advertisement c. 1970

Advertisement using Western images to suggest fashion awareness and reassurance.

'Le Beau Handbag Ltd. Genuine Leather, Hand Made Imported, Shop Open seven days a week,
(Hong Kong Tourist Association, c1970, p. 10).

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Hong Kong has a well-earned reputation for being the shopping centre of the Orient, but tourists rarely take full advantage of the real bargains to be had. It is unfortunate, but true, that most tourists return home with a lot of junk. There are, however, a few (especially those making repeat trips to Hong Kong) who make **wise investment purchases**.

This book lists shops in the "wise investment" category. For the most part, their main clientele is local residents rather than tourists which, in itself, is significant. The purchases you make from them, whether clothing, accessories, jewelry, household items or curios, will be quality items of which you will be proud. **Since the firms listed have been carefully selected, the publisher stands behind all transactions. Feel free to phone 671166 to request assistance should it ever be required.**

ATTENTION AMERICAN SHOPPERS:

It is of extreme importance that you read page 92 regarding CCO's which are official Hong Kong Government documents issued to certify that certain items are made in Hong Kong and not in Red China or North Korea. Many items do not require a CCO, but many others do so be sure to check the list.

Figure 217 List of suggested stores 1967

Suggested store list and merchandise including: Antiques and curios, apparel, cameras, radios, carpets, pearls, diamonds, silver, ivory, jade, optical goods, Thai silk, tailoring, watches, and wigs.

The copy suggest shopping is an investment in 'the shopping centre of the Orient.'

(W. K. Hoffman, 1967, pp. 94-95), compliments of The Hilton Hotel.

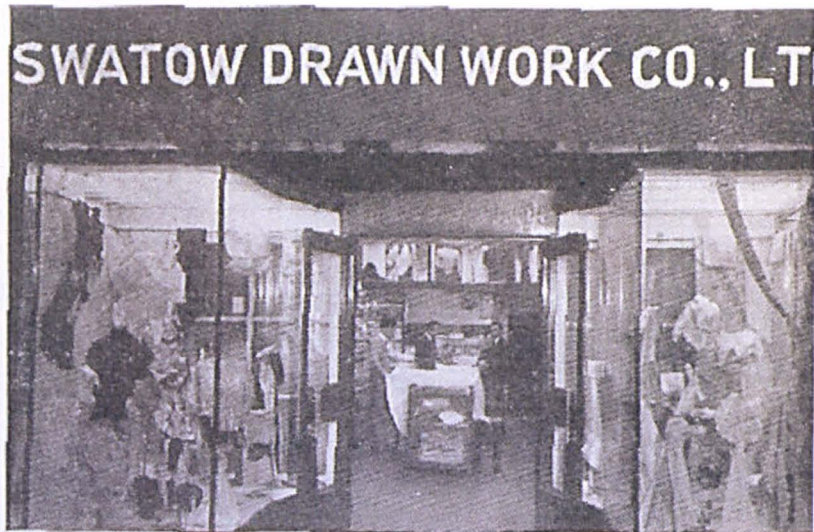


Figure 220 Swatow drawn thread-work store, exterior 1970

It is this kind of merchandise which tourists were promised offered bargains once they had developed an eye for the quality of the merchandise. Note the fixed price message.

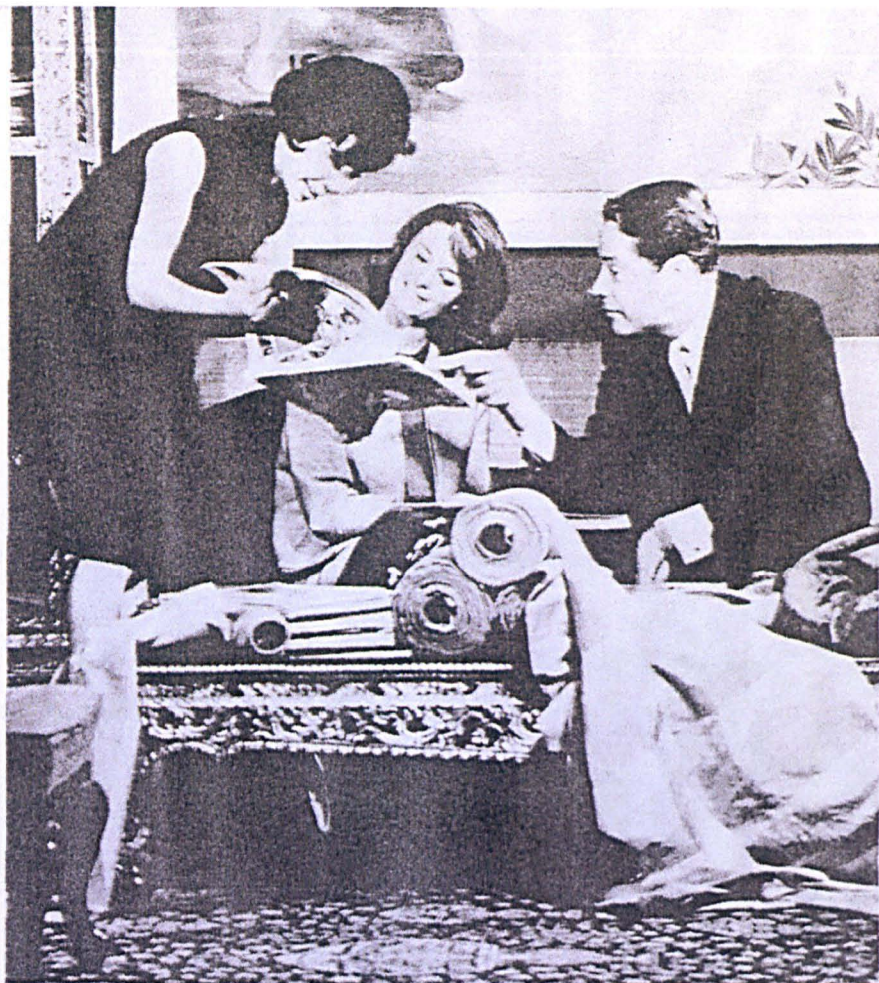
'The Swatow Drawn Work Company Ltd. was established in 1907, and is the oldest, largest and leading store in Hong Kong for fancy embroideries. It is a fixed price shop. They specialise in hand-embroidered table linens, handkerchiefs, blouses, brocade house coats, jackets, pyjamas, beaded sweaters, children's wear, etc. They also export all kinds of Hong Kong products to all parts of the world. Mail orders are also taken.'

(W. K. Hoffman, 1970, p. 155), compliments of The Mandarin Hotel.



Figure 221 Swatow drawn thread-work store, interior 1970

(W. K. Hoffman, 1970, p. 155), compliments of The Mandarin Hotel.



Tourists in a modern tailor shop

Figure 222 Tailors marketed as fashionable 1970

Table strewn with rolls of Thai silk, sales assistant and customers examine magazines. Note the clothing and the hairstyles resemble mid-1960s fashions.

‘Tourists in a modern tailor shop.’

(Vondra, 1970, p. 10).

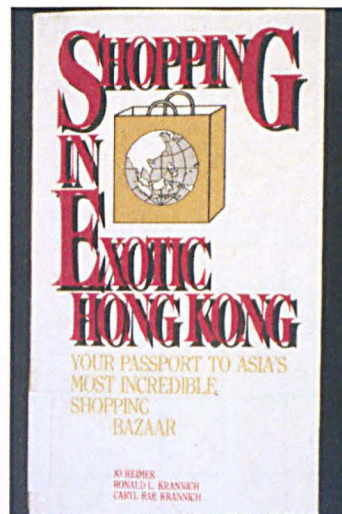


Figure 223 Advice literature promoting Hong Kong as an exotic destination 1989

This advice literature publication proposes detailed work in pursuit of a bargain. (Reimier et al., 1989), Front cover.

Conduct Research And Network For Information 31

— DAILY PLANNING AND SCHEDULING FORM —

Dates: _____

City: _____

Desired accomplishments (prioritize):

1. _____ 6. _____

2. _____ 7. _____

3. _____ 8. _____

4. _____ 9. _____

5. _____ 10. _____

	Where I will be	What I hope to be doing and accomplishing
9:00 am - 12:00		
12:00 - 3:00 pm		
3:00 - 6:00 pm		
6:00 - 9:00 pm		

Summary of today's accomplishments in reference to my 10 priorities:

Figure 224 Daily planning and scheduling form 1989

Daily planning and scheduling form.

(Reimier et al., 1989, p. 31).

COMPARATIVE SHOPPING FORM						
ITEM	Store A	Store B	Store C	Store D	Store E	Store F
30" 6mm pink pearl necklace						
4 x 6 handwoven area rug						
Watercolor — 24" x 36"						
Cloisonne lamp — 24"/12"						
Geo. Jensen silver tea service (5 pieces)						
Anne Klein II silk blouse						

Figure 225 Comparative shopping form 1989

Comparative shopping form with suggested shopping items, some saving U.S. sales tax. (Reimier et al., 1989, p. 38).

CUSTOMS DECLARATION RECORD FORM			
RECEIPT #	ITEM	PRICE (HK\$)	PRICE (US\$)
1	white sweater	HK\$350	
2			
3			
4			

Figure 226 U.S. Customs declaration record form 1989

Customs declaration Record Form. (Reimier et al., 1989, p. 39).

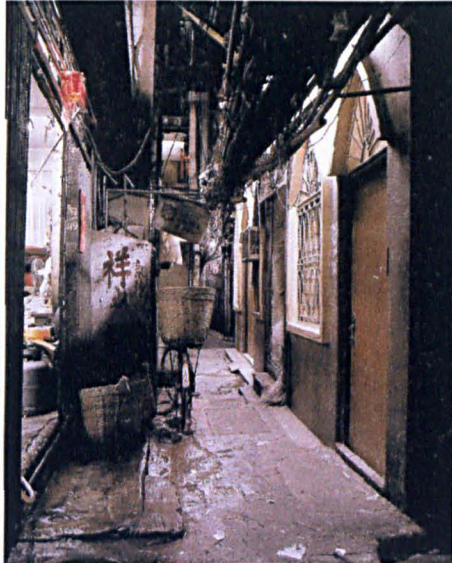


Figure 227 Factory shopping areas

The Walled City, a no-man's land in Kowloon (demolished in 1993), was an extreme example of the unsavoury-looking areas which factory shoppers were asked to visit in pursuit of bargains. (Girard & Lambot, 1993, p. 43).



Figure 228 The World of Suzie Wong 1960

William Holden and Nancy Kwan starred in the Paramount movie. Kwan wears the *cheongsam*, a 'Suzie Wong dress.'

(Mason, 1960), cover of L.D.



Figure 229 ‘Suzie and Robert’ catch a sampan to the floating restaurant
 Suzie wears Western dress. The movie included the exotic sites of Hong Kong: the floating restaurants; the communities living on board sampans; the street life; and the shanty towns. (Mason, 1960).



Figure 230 Suzie wears *cheongsam* whilst ‘working’

Susie wears a cheongsam whilst ‘working,’ here she accepts Lomax’s invitation to pose as his model.

(Mason, 1960).



Figure 231 Fashion fairy story, Joyce Magazine 1993

The fairy story references Western fashion models: Princess Kate; Princess Claudia; Lady Christy; Lady Naomi; published in Joyce Magazine, Autumn 1993.

Reprinted in (Perint Palmer, 2003, p. 1388).

FASHION FAIRY TALES | 390



Figure 232 Fashion fairy story, Joyce Magazine cont. 1993

Assumes knowledge of Western fashion and beauty products.

(Perint Palmer, 2003, p. 1390).

¹ See Hoffman: *Hong Kong*, (W.K. Hoffman, 1970, p. 43).

² See Said: *Orientalism*, (Said, 1985).

³ See Morris: *Hong Kong: an Epilogue to an Empire*, (J. Morris, 1993, p. 31).

⁴ See Turner: 'We share the experience of more than three quarters of the people living in the world today whose lives were once shaped by colonialism, and who must now come to terms with new realities and new identities,' *Hong Kong Sixties Designing Identity*, (Turner & Ngan, 1995, p. 30).

⁵ See Niessen: *Re-Orienting Fashion: The globalisation of Asian Dress*, (Niessen et al., 2003), and Maynard: 'By the 1960s the cycle of fashion change, focused on an exclusive design centre, was superseded by a plethora of centres such as New York, London, Milan, Hong Kong, and Tokyo, each projecting its own particularities of taste and influence, as well as offering new markets for Australian products,' *Out of Line: Australian Women and Style*, (Maynard, 2001, p. 50). Discussing Australia's reputation in the 1990s as a fashion follower rather than leader, she observes this 'positions real fashion as something generated offshore' (Maynard, 2001, p. 66). As she explains, this relegates local designers to the role of copyists, or unusual stylists, and disallows views of fashion which differ from those of supposed fashion centres. Similarly, Hong Kong, despite its position as a global garment manufacturing centre, was not recognised as a centre of fashion. One informant commented on local designers tendency to copy other designers: '...where I usually spot the first copy is when I usually go to a Hong Kong designers shop.' ... 'If you've gone through the entire collection, well, I'm a multi-brand person, I was. I saw so many shows, and I can tell you where that inspiration, or that little touch came from, but I think it is very important not to put, Asian people, love to put everything together like a chop-suey, you know?' Informant interview: B.B.G.L. 19.11.01.

⁶ A position not thought true of Western designers working in the West, see Skov: 'Fashion-Nation: A Japanese Globalisation Experience and a Hong Kong Dilemma,' (Skov, 2003). Many companies employed Western designers, visual merchandisers, management staff, models, or journalists. Informant interviews: S.A.S.L. 12.10.01., B.B.G.L.19.11.01., A.E.G.L. 16.12.99., M.M.T.L. 16.08.02., L.S.L.L. 07.11.01., S.E.R.L. 13.11.01., S.F.T.J. 04.07.01., B.V.G.S. 24.04.02., A.S.D.S. 13.06.01., and L.C.H.K. 30.05.01. Following this reasoning Julian Macdonald would be representative of Welsh fashion, and Alexander McQueen a representative of English, or East London, fashion.

⁷ See Skov: 'Fashion-Nation: A Japanese Globalisation Experience and a Hong Kong Dilemma,' (Skov, 2003, p. 230).

⁸ See Jacoby: *The Comprehension and Miscomprehension of Print Communications*, (Jacoby & Hoyer, 1987, p. 23).

⁹ See Jacoby: *The Comprehension and Miscomprehension of Print Communications*, (Jacoby & Hoyer, 1987, p. 32).

¹⁰ 'I never saw high toe shoes before, but the toes are pointy like... the foot only had one toe. And I was thinking to myself, my God, what's wrong here what... kind of country is this? People have pointy feet.' See Schreier: *Becoming American Women: Clothing and the Jewish Immigrant Experience: 1880-1920*, (Schreier, 1994, p. 63).

¹¹ See Moeran: *Ethnography at Work*, (Moeran, 2006, p. 91).

¹² See Moeran: *Ethnography at Work*, (Moeran, 2006, p. 104).

¹³ Informant interview: S.G.M.J. 24.07.01.

¹⁴ Otherwise he remembered expatriate Westerner's drab conservative dress - with the exception of fashion professionals. Informant interview: S.G.M.J. 24.07.01.

¹⁵ Informant interview: L.C.H.K. 30.05.01.

¹⁶ Nyaw, Vice President of Lingnam College, and Li, Professor of Geography at Baptist University, claim in their Introduction to *The Other Hong Kong Report*:

'Hong Kong is more than a Chinese society. Globalisation, which is most evident in what have been called world cities or hubs of economic and social activities, is both an economic and a cultural process. The number of foreign nationals in Hong Kong now exceeds 400,000, accounting for some 7 per cent of the population.' See Nyaw, 'Introduction,' (Nyaw & Li, 1996, p. xxxv).

¹⁷ See Chan: 'Shopping for Fashion in Hong Kong,' (A. H. Chan, 2001, pp. 156, 161).

¹⁸ See Chapter Three. Informant interview: A.S.U.S. 06.09.02.

¹⁹ Including: sixty-seven daily papers, trade publications, weekly news reports, Asian editions of world-wide periodicals, art magazines and academic journals. See Wickman: *Living in Hong Kong*, (Wickman, 1973, p. 101).

- ²⁰ See Wickman: *Living in Hong Kong*, (Wickman, 1973, p.101). The SCMP was, effectively, the paper of record for the colony. Although Hoffman complained it was: '...somewhat pro-British due to the large number of British on staff, it succeeds in being less biased than any other newspaper in the Colony.' See Hoffman, (W.K. Hoffman, 1970, p. 12). Unfortunately, the newspaper management took a decision to destroy the S.M.C.P. picture archive in the late 1970s. Discussion Chris Maden, art editor, S.C.M.P. 18.01.04.
- ²¹ See Wickman: *Living in Hong Kong*, (Wickman, 1973, p. 101). The Standard covered fashion. Informant interview: A.S.D.S. 13.06.01.
- ²² The breadth of the wealth/poverty divide in Hong Kong at that time indicated by Fairclough: 'Some newspaper stands lend papers and magazines to those who cannot afford to buy them. Most families own several radios and a television set, for which no license is required. There are ten radio stations and four television channels, broadcasting in both Chinese and English.' See Fairclough: *We live in Hong Kong*, (Fairclough, 1985, p. 59).
- ²³ She credited the School of Design in helping to produce graduates who were 'courageous' students: it took courage to defy parental preference to study fashion, and on graduation to seek jobs in a fashion industry that copied everything and 'didn't want to know about designers.' Informant interview: C.Z.C.C. 22.04.99.
- ²⁴ See Edelstein: *Living in Hong Kong*, (Edelstein, 1979, p. 102).
- ²⁵ Informant interviews: D.B.H.C. 00.00.99., and C.M.B.S. 22.05.02. 'I used to feel a bit isolated because, although *The South China Morning Post* has always been quite a good paper, you just feel cut away from the outside world.' Informant interview: C.M.B.S. 22.05.02.
- ²⁶ See Williamson: *Decoding Advertisements: ideology and meaning in Advertising*, (Williamson, 1978). See Williamson: (Williamson, 1978, p. 179). Informant interview: S.D.T.T. 23.11.02.
- ²⁷ See Winship: *Inside Women's Magazines* (Winship, 1987).
- ²⁸ See Winship: *Inside Women's Magazines*, (Winship, 1987, p. 58).
- ²⁹ See Winship: *Inside Women's Magazines*, (Winship, 1987).
- ³⁰ See Winship: *Inside Women's Magazines*, (Winship, 1987, p. 62).
- ³¹ This helps to explain British Vogue's long established and unique practice of including vintage, or the models' own clothing, in its fashion spreads. See Woodward: *Why women wear what they wear*, (Woodward, 2007, p. 62), and Wilson Trower: (V. P. Wilson Trower, 1997).
- ³² See McCracken: *Decoding women's magazines: from Mademoiselle to Ms.*, (McCracken, 1993). See McCracken: *Decoding women's magazines: from Mademoiselle to Ms.*, (McCracken, 1993, p. 229).
- ³³ See Moeran, (Moeran, 2006, pp. 94-5).
- ³⁴ See Gilbert: 'Urban Outfitting: The city and the spaces of fashion culture,' (Gilbert, 2000).
- ³⁵ See Wickman: *Living in Hong Kong*, (Wickman, 1973, p. 102). Interestingly, Wernick records a cigarette brand called Eve was advertised in the American edition of *Cosmopolitan* magazine at this time, see Wernick: *Promotional Culture: advertising, ideology, and symbolic expression*, (Wernick, 1991, p. 26).
- ³⁶ Fur article: October 1978, pp. 24-6, fur fashion spread: October 1978, pp. 74-5, 77-8, 82-83. Canada Fur Store advertisement: Oct 1978, p. 27.
- ³⁷ Chan observes that at the end of the period many chain stores [specialty stores] '...still use predominantly non-Chinese models' claiming that this was based on emulation of Benetton by local brand Bossini. She observes that most local brands 'seem more intent on obfuscating their Hong Kong origin rather than establishing a distinctively Hong Kong identity.' See Chan: 'Shopping for Fashion in Hong Kong,' (A. H. Chan, 2001, p. 148). For example, one spread of bikinis photographed on models lounging on the deck of a small yacht moored in Causeway Bay. *Tatler*, July 1979. p. 62 - 64. See also the popularity of fashion shows and the reputation of models in the late 1960s and early 1970s, discussed in Chapter Three.
- ³⁸ See for example, New World Centre display of Christmas merchandise, *Tatler*, December issue, and *Tatler*, Jan 1980, p. 118. Seasonality does seem to have been discretionary in the earlier part of the period, as Hoffman described the stock of The International Dress Shop: 'Summer and Winter stock is displayed all year through' See Hoffman: *Hong Kong*, (W.K. Hoffman, 1970, p. 119).
- ³⁹ An average frequency of one advertising illustration every three years: see J.J.'s 1/4 page ad. *Tatler*, December 1978, p. 125, as an example. I believe this reflects the lack of sophistication in the readership: a photograph could be understood as real. A drawing that caught the mood of the merchandise was far more difficult to read.
- ⁴⁰ For sports enthusiasts, model builders, drag-racers, skin divers, gardeners, see Edelstein: *Living in Hong Kong*, (Edelstein, 1979, pp. 102 -3).

- ⁴¹ See Wickman: *Living in Hong Kong*, (Wickman, 1973, p. 102).
- ⁴² Informant interviews: D.S.P.C. 07.10.99., A.S.V.L. 31.07.01., and A.S.D.S.13.06.01.
- ⁴³ Informant interview: D.S.P.C. 07.10.99.
- ⁴⁴ See Woodward: *Why women wear what they wear*, (Woodward, 2007, p. 119).
- ⁴⁵ Collection in The Hong Kong Polytechnic University library.
- ⁴⁶ Billed as the 'Maiden issue,' a 'collector's item' it offered articles entitled: 'Are you multi-orgasmic?', 'Should you go to bed with a friend?' but also offered fashion advice: 'In Eve, fashion is more than just good clothes, it's good taste.' *Tatler* ad. July 1978. p. 60–61. Informant interview: C.A.M.C. 01.09.99.
- ⁴⁷ Informant interview: S.S.A.A. 11.10.01.
- ⁴⁸ One journalist explained that as the period ended, realization that retailing was going to get more difficult, produced an increase in offers of loans of merchandise for fashion spreads, as retailers perceived the benefits of this form of free publicity. Informant interview: S.S.A.A. 11.10.01.
- ⁴⁹ My informants, a team of 4 people, formed the total editorial staff of one monthly magazine. L.C.H.K. 30.05.01., A.S.D.S. 13.06.01., and S.S.A.A. 11.10.01.
- ⁵⁰ Informant interview: S.S.A.A. 11.10.01.
- ⁵¹ Informant interview: S.S.A.A. 11.10.01.
- ⁵² Informant interview: B.B.G.L. 19.11.01.
- ⁵³ Such as 'Harpers Bazaar, or W, or Vogue.' Informant interview: B.B.G.L. 19.11.01.
- ⁵⁴ 'We used a lot of international designers. I would say it was an 80/20, 80 percent international and 20 percent local.' Informant interview: S.S.A.A. 11.10.01.
- ⁵⁵ Comparison of the social pages during the 1970s and 1980s reveals a focus on a changing community. For example, The St Andrew's Ball. *Tatler*, Feb '78, includes one Asian woman. In comparison, 'The Social Month' in February 1980 edition includes only two Westerners: designer Hubert de Givenchy, and Sir Jack Cater, Acting Governor. *Tatler*, February, 1980. p. 12. Morris makes a similar point, see (J. Morris, 1993, p. 47).
- ⁵⁶ For the past 155 years tourists visiting Hong Kong have been told to visit The Peak, the mountain above the Central district of Hong Kong. Today, tourists still visit The Peak to admire the view of Hong Kong and its harbour, although the view itself has changed considerably.
- ⁵⁷ In much the same way that visual merchandising taught customers how to dress. Informant interview: A.B.A.L. 30.05.01.
- ⁵⁸ Dressing for dinner was a uniform practice.
- ⁵⁹ See Gleason: *Hong Kong*, (Gleason, 1963, p. 293).
- ⁶⁰ See Vondra: *Hong Kong: city without a country*, (Vondra, 1970). See Vondra (Vondra, 1970, p. 20).
- ⁶¹ 'He shops, gawks, eats at a few restaurants which are more tourist-oriented than Oriental, and is gone, leaving nothing but the click of the shopkeepers' abacuses to mark his passage.' (Gleason, 1963, p. 244) and: 'Something happens to the spending habits of all tourists when they reach Hong Kong. Wallets fly open, purse-strings snap and money gushes forth in a golden shower.' See Gleason: *Hong Kong*, (Gleason, 1963, p. 289). See Hoffman: *Hong Kong*, (W. K. Hoffman, 1967), *Hong Kong*, (W.K. Hoffman, 1970), and the Hong Kong Tourist Association, (Hong Kong Tourist Association, c1970).
- ⁶² 'Hong Kong has a well-earned reputation for being the shopping centre of the Orient, but tourists rarely take full advantage of the real bargains to be had. It is unfortunate, but true that most tourists return home with a lot of junk. There are, however a few (especially those making repeat trips to Hong Kong who make wise investment purchases [wise investment purchases in bold type].' See Hoffman: *Hong Kong*, (W.K. Hoffman, 1970, p. 111) and: 'This book lists shops in the 'wise investment' category. For the most part, their main clientele is local residents rather than tourists which, in itself, is significant. The purchases you make from them, whether clothing, accessories, jewelry, household items or curios, will be quality items of which you will be proud. Since the firms listed have been carefully selected, the publisher stands behind all transactions. Feel free to phone 671166 to request assistance should it ever be required.' See Hoffman: *Hong Kong*, (W. K. Hoffman, 1967, p. 95).
- ⁶³ Re 'Shaukiwan': 'Foreigners neither live there nor shop there, but it is of interest to tourists, being typically Chinese.' See Hoffman, *Hong Kong*, (W.K. Hoffman, 1970, p. 30).
- ⁶⁴ In his 1973 edition of *Living in Hong Kong*, Wickman notes an expanded and up-dated edition of the *Hong Kong Shopper* by Kay and McWhirter, which it has not been possible to trace to date. See Wickman: *Living in Hong Kong*, (Wickman, 1973, p. 84).

⁶⁵ 'Interestingly, in the text of his book Hoffman, advises: 'Winter months of Dec./Jan. Feb require a topcoat occasionally.' See Hoffman: *Hong Kong*, (W.K. Hoffman, 1970 p. 3). However in the advertising space in the same book he suggests the opposite:

'Although its summer for eight months of the year in Hong Kong, the four months of cold weather are decidedly nippy by comparison. With the dry cold winds sweeping down from China, local residents and visitors alike start to think about warm clothing.

In the evenings between November and March, the well-dressed women in Hong Kong wear their furs. Because Hong Kong is a duty-free port, the fur selection available to them is one of the world's largest. As well as the very best North American and Canadian furs, pelts are imported from the cold weather countries in Europe, Asia and Russia. These furs are usually the dark glossy evening furs while the furs worn during the day come, in most cases, from the warmer countries of Africa, South America and Australia.' *Hong Kong*, (W.K. Hoffman, 1970, p. 133).

⁶⁶ See Chapter One for a consideration of climate. The same edition offers a plethora of advice including telling small children that the wet market is the zoo - because of the number of live animals to be found here - and how to decorate one's home:

'Don't hesitate to ask friends and acquaintances who have lived here for a while for recommendations and directions.

Once you have the needed housewares, you can explore the alleys for bamboo birdcages, porcelain or lacquer opium pillows, or shop for Tibetan handicrafts, crystal animals, leatherdesk sets and the huge variety of luxury items, curios, and decorative objects which abound in Hong Kong.' (Wickman, 1973, p. 83).

⁶⁷ See Wickman: *Living in Hong Kong*, (Wickman, 1973, p. 84).

⁶⁸ See Wickman: *Living in Hong Kong*, (Wickman, 1973, p. 85).

⁶⁹ See Hong Kong Tourist Association: (Hong Kong Tourist Association, c1970, p. 35).

⁷⁰ See Wickman: *Living in Hong Kong*, (Wickman, 1973, p. 78).

⁷¹ See Wickman: *Living in Hong Kong*, (Wickman, 1973, p. 78).

⁷² See Hoffman: *Hong Kong*, (W.K. Hoffman, 1970, p. 111).

⁷³ See Wickman: *Living in Hong Kong*, (Wickman, 1973, p. 86).

⁷⁴ See Williamson: *Decoding Advertisements: ideology and meaning in Advertising*, (Williamson, 1978, pp. 51, 77).

⁷⁵ See Gilbert: 'Urban Outfitting: The city and the spaces of fashion culture,' (Gilbert, 2000, p. 21).

⁷⁶ See Moeran, *Ethnography at Work*, (Moeran, 2006, pp. 96, 104).

⁷⁷ See Hoffman: *Hong Kong*, (W.K. Hoffman, 1970, p. 120).

⁷⁸ 'There is more of a saving in silk garments than in cotton garments since Hong Kong weaves outstanding silk while the finest cotton fabrics are imported. Also, wool garments are good buys (coats as well as dresses, since they are easier to cut and therefore involve less risk of a poor fit). It is best to concentrate upon wool and/or silk dresses, especially in top qualities and also when a lot of hand work is involved such as beading and embroidery. ... On any garments you intend to wash, make sure the lining, as well as the outer material, is preshrunk and colourfast; this is especially important when the lining is silk and of a darker shade than the outer layer.' See Hoffman: *Hong Kong*, (W.K. Hoffman, 1970, p. 209).

⁷⁹ Informant interview: S.G.M.J. 24.07.01.

⁸⁰ See Gershman and Thomas: *Born to Shop*, (Gershman & Thomas, 1986). See Gershman and Thomas: *Born to Shop*, (Gershman & Thomas, 1986, p. 11).

⁸¹ See Winship: *Inside Women's Magazines*, (Winship, 1987, p. 70). 'Of course, half the fun of shopping in Hong Kong is bargaining. Everyone knows the price is negotiable, and its a poor sport who doesn't go in prepared to argue.' See Diana Freis, Introduction, (Fries, 1986, p. xv), the preface of *Born to Shop*, (Gershman & Thomas, 1986).

⁸² 'It's unlikely that you will be warned that the merchandise didn't make the grade.' See Gershman: *Born to Shop*, (Gershman & Thomas, 1986, p. 35).

⁸³ See Gershman: *Born to Shop*, (Gershman & Thomas, 1986, p. 48)

⁸⁴ See Edelstein: *Living in Hong Kong*, (Edelstein, 1979, p. 166).

⁸⁵ 'But it was a question of people's sizes again, even though they did have the bigger sizes, sometimes they weren't as big as the women I had.' Informant interview: A.S.H.C. 05.06.01.

⁸⁶ See Gershman: *Born to Shop*, (Gershman & Thomas, 1986, p. 12). Also Goetz: *Hong Kong Guide to Factory Bargains*, (Goetz, 1986, p. 10). Local expatriates also factory shopped, informant interviews: D.S.P.C. 07.10.99., A.S.H.C. 05.06.01., and B.V.G.S. 24.04.02.

⁸⁷ See Gershman: *Born to Shop*, (Gershman & Thomas, 1986, p. 55).

⁸⁸ See Gershman: *Born to Shop*, (Gershman & Thomas, 1986, p. 43).

⁸⁹ See Winship: *Inside Women's Magazines*, (Winship, 1987, p. 112, and Reimier: *Shopping In Exotic Hong Kong: your passport to Asia's most Incredible Bazaar*, (Reimier, 1989).

⁹⁰ See Reimier: *Shopping In Exotic Hong Kong: your passport to Asia's most Incredible Bazaar*, (Reimier, Krannich, & Krannich, 1989, pp. 31, 38, 39).

⁹¹ These pages are not to be confused with the blank page-filler used by Hoffman: 'Use space below for notes on items to be purchased.' See Hoffman, (W.K. Hoffman, 1970, p. 70, etc.).

⁹² See Gershman: *Born to Shop*, (Gershman & Thomas, 1986, p. 5).

⁹³ A theoretically-lawless ghetto close to Kai Tak airport demolished in 1993. Gleason records that 'the Hong Kong tourist is a highly localized phenomenon. Except for a fast motor tour through the main roads of the New Territories and a short whirl around Hong Kong Island, he rarely wanders more than one mile from the island and Kowloon terminals of the Star Ferry.' See Gleason: *Hong Kong*, (Gleason, 1963, pp. 243 - 4).

⁹⁴ Informant interview: S.E.R.L. 13.11.01.

⁹⁵ 'Most of them are run down in the sense of no air conditioning and very basic. ... they're cheaper because their overheads are not so high so they can keep the prices down.' Informant interview: A.S.H.C. 05.06.01.

⁹⁶ One of Holdsworth's informants describes her first impressions of Hong Kong: '...and there I was, standing in a multi-storey car park dripping with sweat, as twisting sheets of rain sheered the unfamiliar world outside. Life, I felt at once, was here. The sense of having dropped in to another dimension was borne in on me quite physically by the air. In London air simply isn't there; in Hong Kong it has a dense, humid, perpetual presence - you wade through it in your daily life, steaming and sweating. It smells of fuel, soy sauce, and joss and never in three years ceased to fill me with a primal joy!....' and I felt I'd tumbled on to the set of *Bladerunner*. On all sides slender, umbrella'd figures bent into the wind, struggling through dark canyons of tenements lit in places by vast neon signs; and between the buildings old and new, odd primitive outcrops of rock, concreted over against landslips, with shrubs pushing up between the cracks, and bursts of blossom against shiny wet leaves.' Carolyn Watts, re her arrival in 1984. See Holdsworth: *Foreign Devils: Expatriates in Hong Kong*, (Holdsworth & Courtauld, 2002, p. 214).

⁹⁷ See Gershman, *Born to Shop*, (Gershman & Thomas, 1986, p. 46).

⁹⁸ Fashion professionals sourcing trims in the mid-1980s will recognise the distinction between the two yellow gold finishes described here. Retailers were slow to appreciate the impact of the right colour gold had on merchandise sales for a fractional increase in component cost. The counter offer price is correct: approximately 1/3 of the initial asking price.

⁹⁹ See Gershman: *Born to Shop*, (Gershman & Thomas, 1986, pp. 37-8).

¹⁰⁰ Informant interview: A.S.H.C. 05.06.01.

¹⁰¹ See Gershman: *Born to Shop*, (Gershman & Thomas, 1986, p. 47).

¹⁰² See Gershman: *Born to Shop*, (Gershman & Thomas, 1986, p. 236).

¹⁰³ Bali has a tradition of making cut work, but not Hong Kong or China.

¹⁰⁴ See Gershman: *Born to Shop*, (Gershman & Thomas, 1986, p. 175).

¹⁰⁵ Its use was limited to witty English-language newspaper captions. English academic John Flowerdew uses the politically correct term 'friend of China' to describe those familiar with China in his book *The Final years of British Hong Kong: The Discourse of Colonial Withdrawal*, see Flowerdew: (Flowerdew, 1998) i.e. Richard Nixon, or British politician Edward Heath.

¹⁰⁶ See Parkes: *Southeast Asia Handbook*, (Parkes, 1990). See Parkes: *Southeast Asia Handbook*, (Parkes, 1990, p. 161).

¹⁰⁷ See Han: *Love is a Many Splendored Thing*, (Han, 1952).

¹⁰⁸ See Mason: *The World of Suzie Wong*, (Mason, 1957).

¹⁰⁹ See Arnot Robertson: *The Strangers on My Roof*, (Arnot Robertson, 1964).

¹¹⁰ See Lanchester, *Fragrant Harbour*, (Lanchester, 2002).

¹¹¹ See Conrad: *Lord Jim*, (Conrad, 1926), and Masefield: *The Travels of Marco Polo*, (Masefield, 1957a).

¹¹² A 405-line service television cable station established in 1957, charged H.K.\$17.00 per month to view their output in 1973. See Wickman: (Wickman, 1973, p. 100). Over 60,000 sets were in operation by 1970. See Hoffman, (W.K. Hoffman, 1970, p. 13).

¹¹³ Less than 50,000 people. See Chan, (K. C. Chan & Choi, 1989, p. 294). Informant interview: L.S.L.L. 07.11.01.

¹¹⁴ 'There is one main street lined by two or three storey wooden or brick houses, and the ground floors are all used as shop-fronts. These shops provide the residents with most of their needs, from

fresh fish to entertainment in the form of television (customers pay 10 cents each to watch television in the shop).' See Lui: 'The Malling of Hong Kong,' (Lui, 2001 p. 30).

¹¹⁵ 'On the steep, scrub-covered mountains of Hong Kong Island and on the barren, dusty hills behind Kowloon wretched shacks of corrugated iron, scraps of planking and beaverboard and canvas, cover the hillsides like a pox. They serve to house the driven poor, who are thankful for even that much shelter. They look down on the ever-rising geometrical blocks of flats with their lifts and built-in garages, the 'hi-fi', the rediffusion, the 'telly' and other horrors. Many of these are empty because their rents are so high and the landlords can get their money back if only a few in each block are let.' See Ommanney: *Eastern Windows*, (Ommanney, 1962, p. 205).

¹¹⁶ 'T.V. presenters are celebrities, like all public personalities in the goldfish bowl that is Hong Kong, and after a week or two in the colony you may well find yourself gawping like everyone else when you see one of the European or American newsreaders (getting practical experience in Hong Kong, very likely, as a step to bigger things at home) striding star-like in to Jimmy's Kitchen).' See Morris: (J. Morris, 1993, p. 157). Also informant interview D.B.H.C. 00.00.99., and: 'I can't even describe how bad the clothes were, they were like costumes but just over-the-top costumes and really bad colours: 'Lets do all rainbows,' just really bad stuff. And that one guy who kept changing his hair colour: one week it would be purple and then it would be yellow, and they would always have melon-coloured blazers or something, just really horrible... just horrible low-class tacky stuff.' Informant interview: L.C.H.K. 30.05.01.

¹¹⁷ A UHF 625 line service using PAL colour system, broadcast in English and Cantonese In the early 1970s television sets could be rented from R.T.V. at a cost of H.K.\$35.00 for 19inch portable set. See Wickman: *Living in Hong Kong*, (Wickman, 1973, p. 100). Very large sets became prevalent at the end of the period.

¹¹⁸ See Gleason: *Hong Kong*, (Gleason, 1963, p. 133).

¹¹⁹ 'Their audience is estimated at 5.1 million, which means that virtually all Hong Kong families, even those living on board sampans or in shanties of plywood and corrugated iron, possess a television set.' See Morris: *Hong Kong: an Epilogue to an Empire*, (J. Morris, 1993, p. 157). See also Chan: 'Communications and the Media,' (K. C. Chan & Choi, 1989, p. 294).

¹²⁰ Informant interview: L.C.H.K. 30.05.01.

¹²¹ For example, Hong Kong an exotic alien landscape, features in a number of James Bond movies.

¹²² See Novell-Smith, 'How films mean or, from aesthetics to semiotics and half-way back again.' See Geoffrey Novell-Smith: 'How films mean or, from aesthetics to semiotics and half-way back again,' (Novell-Smith, 2000, p. 16).

¹²³ Academic Richard Dwyer, records that Indian girls ask tailors to make outfits for family occasions, based on garments worn by the stars in Bollywood movies. See Dwyer: 'Bombay Istyle,' (R. Dwyer, 2000, p. 188).

¹²⁴ See Wickman: *Living in Hong Kong*, (Wickman, 1973, p. 119).

¹²⁵ See Leo Ou-fan Lee: *City Between Worlds: my Hong Kong*, (L. O. Lee, 2008, p. 263).

¹²⁶ See Patrick: *Love is a Many Splendoured Thing*, (Patrick, 1955).

¹²⁷ See Gann: *Soldier of Fortune*, (Gann, 1955).

¹²⁸ See *Ferry to Hong Kong*: (Harris & Gilbert, 1958). See Gleason: *Tales of Hong Kong*, (Gleason, 1967).

¹²⁹ Orson Welles plays Captain Cecil Hart.

¹³⁰ The pirate, Johnny Sing-Up is an example.

¹³¹ See Mason: *The World of Suzie Wong*, (Mason, 1960).

¹³² See Lerner: (Lerner, 1951). A more contemporary equivalent narrative would be that of 'Moulin Rouge.' See also Philips: *Film: an introduction*, (W. H. Phillips, 1999, pp. 236, 268-9).

¹³³ See Hoffman: *Hong Kong*, (W.K. Hoffman, 1970, p. 34).

¹³⁴ See Mason: *The World of Suzie Wong*, (Mason, 1960).

¹³⁵ Conversation with Iris Trower, Dec. 2002. Hong Kong business man, H.K. Kwan, married an English woman he met in the Astoria Dance Hall, Charing Cross Road, his daughter movie actress, Nancy Kwan; played Suzie Wong. See Holdsworth: *Foreign Devils: Expatriates in Hong Kong*, (Holdsworth & Courtauld, 2002, p. 195).

¹³⁶ See the dinner party on The Peak.

¹³⁷ See Gleason: *Tales of Hong Kong*, (Gleason, 1967, p. 22).

¹³⁸ For example: 'In the 1960s Australia's beaches also witnessed the emergence of a new alternative cultural style. This was the freedom-loving dress of the surfies, worn by women who also wore the

Suzie Wong shirt and bermuda shorts with bleached hair.' Maynard: *Out of Line: Australian Women and Style*, (Maynard, 2001, p. 157).

¹³⁹ See Panama and Freak: *The Road to Hong Kong*, (Panama & Frank, 1962).

¹⁴⁰ See McKenna: *The Sand Pebbles*, (McKenna, 1966).

¹⁴¹ McQueen's romantic interest, the female missionary, does not wear notable fashion dress.

¹⁴² See Salt and Jones: *Coming Home*, (Salt & Jones, 1978).

¹⁴³ See Waldman and Edwards: *The Return of the Pink Panther*, (Waldman & Edwards, 1989).

¹⁴⁴ American '...television, radio and film personalities - Arthur Godfrey, William Holden, Jack Paar, Ed Sullivan, and David Brinkley - presented documentary reports on the colony. There was also a television adventure serial about Hong Kong, but with the exception of a few on-the sport film clips spliced in for authenticity, dealt with people, places and customs unknown to any colony resident.' See Gleason: *Hong Kong*, (Gleason, 1963, p. 133) See also Gleason, (Gleason, 1963, p. 132).

¹⁴⁵ 'H.K. cinema may be the only place in the world where men and women fight as equals.' p. 49, and 'In this context of the lither hero, the heroine was also masculinized, proving that heroism does not relate only to force or physical size, but involves others skills.' See Hammond: *Sex and Zen and a bullet in the Head*, (Hammond & Wilkins, 1997, p. 69).

¹⁴⁶ See Wong: *Chung-king Express*, (K. W. Wong, 1994).

¹⁴⁷ See Marchetti: 'Buying American, Consuming Hong Kong; Cultural commerce, fantasy and identity and the cinema,' (Marchetti, 2000, p. 289). Parkes succinctly describes Chungking Mansions: 'Chung King [sic.] Mansions: For over a decade this dilapidated complex has served as accommodation centre for legions of budget travelers. Somehow these decaying dormitories, hostels, mini-hotels, doll factories, rug weavers, and Indian restaurants have escaped the wrecker's balls but every year seen new rumours about its immanent demise. Five separate towers, designated A,B,C,D, and E, are served by ridiculously small and slow elevators festooned with plastic signs advertising what is upstairs. Listings change frequently, but the Traveller's Hostel on the 16th floor of A block remains a useful starting point. Dorms cost from H.K.\$35 and rooms from H.K.\$100. This noisy, dirty, crowded place may not suit everybody, but it remains a good place to meet other travellers and exchange information. If you stay in the Traveller's Hostel, avoid the room next to the obnoxious television and be prepared for all night parties.' See Parkes: *Southeast Asia Handbook*, (Parkes, 1990, pp. 151-2).

¹⁴⁸ See Sarne: *Joanna*, (Sarne, 1968). Source: Justin Jake archive.

¹⁴⁹ See Bragg: *Isadora*, (Bragg, 1968). Source: Justin Jake archive.

¹⁵⁰ See Woodhead: *The Stones in the Park*, (Woodhead, 1969).

¹⁵¹ See O'Connor: 'The Material Culture of New Fibres,' (O'Connor, 2005, p. 53).

¹⁵² The free concert, 07.05.69. was planned to showcase the Stones new guitarist, Mike Jones, but actually commemorated the death of former guitarist, Brain Jones.

¹⁵³ See Skov: 'Seeing is Believing: World Fashion and the Hong Kong Young Designers' Contest,' (Skov, 2004, p.170). Informant interviews: D.J.M.S. 28.11.01., and S.C.C.P. 20.03.02.

¹⁵⁴ Apple Daily is an example.

¹⁵⁵ Seminar: Lise Skov, 'Hong Kong Fashion Designers as Entrepreneurs,' Department of Sociology, University of Hong Kong, 08.12.2000. and Skov: (Skov, 2004, p. 190).

¹⁵⁶ Conversation Naomi Szeto, curator of Dress, Hong Kong Museum of History, 1999.

Interestingly, the museum does have small collections of other items that Hong Kong was equally famous for making especially: torches, tin clockwork toys, and thermos flasks.

¹⁵⁷ As for example, the Victoria and Albert Museum exhibition *Streetstyle* (1995) did.

¹⁵⁸ i.e.: Diana Freis.

¹⁵⁹ See Turner: *Hong Kong Sixties Designing Identity*, (Turner & Ngan, 1995, p. 41).

¹⁶⁰ Turner gives an example of Western children pictured on a box of Mooncakes. He claims that the impact of these images was to further separate Hong Kong from mainland Chinese culture. See Turner: *Hong Kong Sixties Designing Identity*, (Turner & Ngan, 1995, p. 49).

¹⁶¹ Chan described her informant's response to a local branch of Marks and Spencer's: '... she described it [the fashion department], as being 'for old ladies and fat women - women who can't buy clothes that fit anywhere else.' 'These prices are ridiculous! They're more expensive than Marks and Spencer's in Britain! They really think Hong Kong people think British goods are best! They're joking... but I suppose many people still think that.' See Chan: (A. H. Chan, 2001, p. 159).

Hoffman's 1970 edition of *Hong Kong* included a Whiteaway's advertisement as a supplier of British merchandise. See Hoffman: *Hong Kong*, (W.K. Hoffman, 1970).

¹⁶² Donna Karen's S/S 1997 collection featured machine-made knitwear made in Hong Kong.

¹⁶³ Informant interview: S.D.T.T. 23.11.02.

¹⁶⁴ Such as Pacino Wan, Peter Lau, Walter Ma, William Tang, Rowena U, and Benny Yeung. See: Bullis: *Fashion Asia*, (Bullis, 2000), Parkes: *Southeast Asia Handbook*, (Parkes, 1997, p. 256), and informant interview: D.S.P.C. 07.10.99.

Chapter 6. Looking Different

'I always felt I belonged there [Hong Kong]. Although I was a foreigner, people were very kind and I just felt at home.'¹

As my informant, a long-term resident, observes, Hong Kong eventually became 'home' to all long-term residents.

Introduction and literature

Further to the comparison of expatriate Western women's and the host communities' dress explored in Chapter Four, in this chapter I draw together the threads explored in previous chapters to demonstrate expatriate Western women's use of dress as a means of manifesting identities in Hong Kong. In this chapter I particularly examine the appropriation of Southeast Asian ethnic dress by expatriate Western women as a means of distinguishing themselves from the increasingly affluent host community. The two chapters are distinguished by perspective: in Chapter Four I record the changing fashion dress situation surrounding expatriate Western women, including their views of the host community's dress or general Western fashions. In this chapter, I record their meaningful experiences and reflections. I commence the chapter with a review of secondary literature and an examination of expatriate Western women's perceptions of themselves. I examine the differing conceptions of fashion dress of expatriate Western women using a decade-by-decade format in keeping with the preceding chapters.

Chan maintains Hong Kong fashion is not a marker of freedom, and claims shoppers merely select from the ranges presented to them. In this chapter I demonstrate this is not the case, explaining some expatriate Western women's extreme efforts to create a fashion look.² In his work on *saris*, Miller notes selection of *sari* fabric is affected by: the social position and educational background of the wearer, family conventions, and mastery of wearing *sari* dress. Similarly, expatriate Western women described pleasure in their mastery of Hong Kong fashion dress codes.³ Miller distinguishes between the Japanese *kimono*, which demands that the wearer conforms to the constrictions of the garment, and the *sari* which demands a partnership with the wearer, paralleling the dialectic of

fashion dress: either as a uniform, or an expression of individuality.⁴ In Hong Kong, many of the host community saw fashion as a uniform, wearing whatever was fashionable, in comparison to expatriate Western women's view of fashion as a form of self-expression, a partnership. African art professor John Picton, in his research on Anio dress, observes that ethnic dress reminds the wearer of nationality.⁵ The *sarong*, the other icon of Asian dress popular in Southeast Asia has, as Maynard notes, a history from the mid-20th century as a signifier of the exotic and a sign of relaxed, or alternative lifestyles and, as I show, the *sarong*, Thai fishermen's pants, and the *cheongsam* reminded expatriate Western women of their unique position in Asia.⁶

In this chapter I will consider expatriate Western women's dress and identity, and concepts of gender and fashion.

In Chapter One, I considered Said's writing on Orientalism, describing the Orient as fixed in time and place, as viewed from the West, a view which could not be sustained amid the rapid development of contemporary Asia. Nor was it possible for the Orient to retain its strangeness when it was experienced daily and that strangeness became familiar.⁷ Yet Said's reasons for residing in the Orient are reflected in the comments of the informants quoted in this chapter.⁸ Niessen, Leshkovich, and Jones' exploration of Said's work in the context of fashion and textiles, notes the tendency of individuals to 'self-exoticize:' adopting non-Western dress, and, assuming an Orientalist view of fashion as an Occidental activity, observing that the global production of fashion forms part of a hierarchy.⁹ As my research shows, this was not the case: expatriate Western women resident in Hong Kong developed their own fashions. The following section considers secondary literature on collecting in order to theorize the ethnic dress collections made by my informants.

Academic Susan Stewart observes that the souvenir (Western fashion dress and/or ethnic dress in this case) collapses time and space between the location of acquisition and the personal life in to which the souvenir is brought, contracting the world in to domestic space and possession.¹⁰ Part of a calendar of experience, where each item is nostalgic (being distant from present time and space), the souvenir is imbued with the properties of the antique and the exotic. Stewart observes that the collection is often organised to make its own sense, making visible otherwise indiscernible themes and limits: I have found informants

construct their wardrobes similarly. Belk distinguishes between those who collect by ordering (organising), and those who collect by aesthetic, noting the strong attachment which collectors develop for their collection. Again, as shown in this chapter, this is reflected in the collections in my research.¹¹ Museum studies academic, Susan Pearce, notes the idiosyncratic style in which collectors, especially those with an interest in mass culture, fragment culture and the past in creating new collections.¹² Drawing on her British-based research, Pearce observes few collectors have any interest in the origins of their collections, contextualizing them, or finding out more about them, although many used them in some way: '...objects are seen not just as simple epistemological signs - carriers of information about what happened - but rather as mystical bridges between imagination and the past regarded as eternally present and presentable through its physical traces.'¹³

Southeast Asian garments and textiles link my informant collectors with the exotic past and strange present. Similarly, as writer Bruce Chatwin argues, the acquisition of the object becomes the focus of travel.¹⁴ His description of: the chase; the quarry; the decision to purchase; the calculation of risk; the difficulties of transportation; and the gratification of acquisition, can be applied to the purchase of longed-for items of fashion and ethnic dress. As Maynard notes, the adoption of the *sarong* in Australian fashion is associated with 'honest' textiles: 'shell necklaces, fibre bags, and sandals,' complementing ethnic dress.¹⁵

Woodward and sociologist Saulo Cwerner point out clothes spend much of their time at rest in wardrobes or cupboard drawers.¹⁶ The word wardrobe, a repository of imagination and identities, connotes both a collection of clothes and the space in which they are stored.¹⁷ A wardrobe is a physical collection of garments and evidence of a persona, an entity, a life, human preferences, activities, and lifestyles.¹⁸ By the late 1980s, the choice of possible wardrobes of fashion dress in Hong Kong was sufficiently wide that an American visual merchandiser, then in her late 30s, explained that she felt like Edina, the character from the B.B.C. television series, 'Absolutely Fabulous' standing in front of her wardrobe asking: 'Who am I? Who am I going to be today?'¹⁹

The desire to purchase new clothes was not so much driven by the need to replace garments that were worn out, but rather those with which the wearer had become bored (see Chapter One).²⁰ Cwerner proposes that the wardrobe is where the multiplicity and ephemerality of fashion and dress codes reside.²¹ A wardrobe is

a place in which garments are stored, contributing to their organization, and for structuring, delimiting, and organizing clothes, and as I show, collections, and identities.²²

The following section examines informants' recollections of arrival and their immediate impressions of fashion dress.

Arrival

The nature of the expatriate community, in terms of profession, social class, and reasons for coming to Hong Kong, has been examined in Chapter Four. This chapter will examine the expatriate's experiences. Gilmour and Lanchester allude to the 'out-of-time' quality of expatriate experience, and conversely, the irrelevance of the months and years spent in Hong Kong on return to a home country: Lanchester's character describes a former colleague who returned to his home country to find that this time away was meaningless to others.²³ Change in social group was reflected in changing dress, as informants complied with changed dress codes with some resistance, as the 'Sloane Ranger' remembered in her 20s, in the late 1960s: 'I bought accessories there [Justin Jake]. I still had a bit of that Sloane Ranger left in me and I was resisting looking a little too off-beat, so I accessorized from there.'²⁴ In this case, resistance to local fashions and dress codes was expressed through dress although accessories complied with fashion. This is from the English designer, who arrived in 1980 in her 20s, and who describes the elation of dress freedom after her arrival: 'I felt I was [different]. I felt I blossomed. I felt like I had found my niche... I could be who I wanted to be.'²⁵ Return visits to a home country enabled expatriate Western women to compare Hong Kong and their country of origin's fashions. An English visual merchandiser in her late 20s in the early 1990s recalled:

'I've noticed [here] more than anywhere else, that everywhere has its own fashion. I remember I was living in Hong Kong, [I had] been living here for a couple of years, and we went back to England for about three months. And all my friends were so in-a-completely-different-fashion. It was when all of the little girlie hair-clips were in, and I wasn't into girlie hair-clips. And they treated me like I was the [alien] and I was like: 'No, this isn't [fashion], what are you doing?' I really feel that fashion is so local to where you are. And I try and fit in with...I'm a bit of a: 'I don't want to stand out and

have my own style.' I do try and dress to where I am. So if I'm travelling, I'm very much the quintessential traveller, and when I'm in Hong Kong: I'm a bit 'label-y.'²⁶

Her fascinating quote explains how she realised fashions differed in different places; and her self-awareness: that her choice is to fit in; to adopt local fashions; and that in Hong Kong meant to be designer-label-aware. Clothes and concepts that did not quite fit in were conspicuous, as an English teacher in her 40s, when she first arrived in the 1970s, explained:

'I have a 3/4 length reefer jacket coat which I brought with me. I had bought [it] just before I came, so it was definitely the fashion of the time. I still wore it in the winter. Navy blue, very, very expensive wool: ideal for interviews; ideal if you drive; and I felt very happy in that. But people did tell me that it was British-looking, because it [was] a very British style.'²⁷

As previously mentioned, few people drove in Hong Kong: a driving coat was unnecessary. I found this comment and similar ones, which re-occurred in many interviews, perplexing: informants acknowledged that they dressed fashionably but then explained that they continued to wear particular garments, which presumably, were no longer fashionable. They clearly had an understanding of fashion, and the idea that they could knowingly wear something 'old-fashioned,' whilst the rest of their appearance was fashionable, was intriguing. This can be seen as evidence for dress as a manifestation of identity, ambivalent conservatism, a lack of fashion leadership, or as Woodward suggests and I conclude that these informants, as much as they liked fashion, did not consider their appearance as a cohesive whole as a fashion professional might, but an accretion, or of post-modern parts. The unfashionable part contributed to their total appearance, in which for them one (or more) unfashionable element was acceptable, if the overall look could still be deemed by them to be fashionable.²⁸ The C.E.O. of the knitwear supply company commented on the expatriate Western women of her acquaintance: 'They are a different breed. They become very different: it is a whole new world and they develop... They could never come back and live here [in the U.K.].'²⁹

New clothes were important for all informants irrespective of their means or background, and were something that all informants attempted. Nearly all complained about the selection and fit, even if they eventually concluded that shopping in their home country was preferable to shopping in Hong Kong. The

following sections will examine expatriate Western women's dress decade by decade focusing on their experiences.

Identities through dress in the 1960s

Freedom from domestic duties, child-care, or the need to work, increased expatriate Western women's shopping opportunities.³⁰ The 'Sloane Ranger,' then in her 20s, recalled her wardrobe in London, how she looked when she arrived, and the look she developed after experiencing a stronger desire to follow fashion in Hong Kong:

'When I came to Hong Kong I think I was quite conservative in my dress. I was used to having tailoring my mother had put me into. I was used to Gucci shoes, the Hermes scarf. I was also used to [the] classic dress and jacket: that style, very much [a] tailored look.'³¹

And:

'[B]ecause I came from London, married, I did have a *trousseau* - a very old-fashioned word - when I arrived, I arrived with a hat box, which I was very proud of, and it had about four hats in it.'³²

And:

'I wasn't a great Leonard or Gucci fan, but Gucci [Burberry?] checks came back and Courreges: the loopy chain-belts, but one followed fashion to a certain extent. I wouldn't say that I have ever followed fashion completely: I also had my own style...'
[...] 'the hemline went down to the ankles, and course I had to have mine at the ankles, and if it went up to the thigh: I would never have believed that I would have been in a micro-mini-skirt but I was.'³³

From being a woman who complied with her mother's taste in dress, to a woman who wore thigh-high mini-skirts within two to three years, was a significant change reflecting her autonomy as a married woman, and the relative freedom that life in Hong Kong afforded her. This could also be attributed to the social group that she mixed with in Hong Kong, which was likely to have been broader than that in London.

The notion that fashion dress should reflect or contribute to an informant's personality was well understood but difficult for informants to articulate. The 'Sloane Ranger' summarised this difficulty best, explaining: 'When I got here I would only buy things that were fashionable, and therefore they reflected my personality.'³⁴ The closest acceptable question was more casual: 'Did you feel that you could be 'you' in Hong Kong?' This was not entirely satisfactory as those who continued to be residents agreed readily that they could, as did those who seemed to lack introspection. A few informants used this question as an opportunity to criticise the host community preferences for designer clothes or inappropriate fashions. A further question on fashion as a means of manifesting identities or reflecting the adoption of a uniform: 'Did the clothing you selected reflect your identity, or did you select something because it was fashionable?' also produced ambivalent responses. I concluded the close examination of dress purchases and informants' comments elicited a more meaningful conclusion in some instances.

Access to fabrics which were uncommon in their home countries and the intensity of fabric colours, partly due to stronger sunlight, and partly due to an awareness of a new aesthetic which differed from the one to which they had been accustomed, gave expatriate Western women the opportunity to see fashion with fresh eyes.³⁵ The 'Sloane Ranger' recalled how her dress changed after her arrival in Hong Kong. She saw this as a reflection of her changing identity:

'... when I came to live in Asia, I definitely started becoming Asian: Asian in mind, I mean. I started to love the fabrics: in the evening I would always wear a Chinese pyjama suit, silk, quite casually formal.'... 'I began to wear a lot of Asian clothes.'³⁶

In this amalgam of English society behaviour and Asian opportunity, my informant dressed for dinner as she would at home in England (as Callaway observes), but instead of English clothes she used this as an opportunity to experiment with Asian fabrics and styles.³⁷ Partners and husbands formed an audience for expatriate Western women's dress but were rarely mentioned in interviews. The wife of the C.E.O. resident since the 1940s, remembered that her husband always commented appreciatively on whatever she chose to wear:

'And my husband always paid attention to what I was wearing: 'I do like...,' 'I like the colour...' whereas some men, I believe, don't even notice if they [their wives] have rags on.'³⁸

Expatriate Western women occupied a distinctive and elite social niche, which was reflected in their dress. Their dress, particularly smartness, was coloured by their social position and the host community even if it was not recognised as fashion knowledge. Even informants who claimed that they did not 'follow fashion' described attempts to follow the fashionable dress of the period, for example, the Governor's daughter from the 1960s: 'I suppose one did buy things like short skirts, because every girl did. And pointed shoes, which were absolutely hell, and high heels.'³⁹ Other informants described borrowing a friend's new London purchase for a local tailor to copy: when local fashions were not suitable or were ignored, expatriate Western women appropriated fashion through women they knew.⁴⁰

The available selection was not appealing: the wife of a senior businessman, resident since the late 1940s, remembered tailors and dressmakers and their lack of design flair: 'It was like school uniform' (see photograph of the laboriously-constructed neckline of a tailored linen dress at the end of this chapter).⁴¹ Occasionally, a Hong Kong fashion became a global fashion, for example: the late-1960s fashion for beaded clothes allowed informants to enjoy a Hong Kong-origin fashion when they travelled overseas:

'... we all wore beaded clothes: beaded clothes were fantastic, and so cheap; I suppose it was all relative, really, and Dynasty [the boutique] did beautiful beaded clothes. The beaded clothes were the rage here long before...'⁴²

This labour-intensive fashion was widely available and adopted.⁴³ Informants in Hong Kong commissioned elaborate formal gowns which were essentially prototypes, and embarrassing difficulties in wearing dress were remembered and recounted. Fashion boutiques stocked sequinned and beaded merchandise.⁴⁴

Western informants who married local people frequently adopted elements of Asian wedding dress in their own weddings. These included changing dresses (customarily, five times) to include a *cheongsam* and a Phoenix and Dragon gown,

all with matching Chinese wedding jewellery.⁴⁵ Surprisingly, given the scarcity of attics and cellars (traditional places for clothing storage) in the apartments of Hong Kong residents, many informants retained clothing. Many of these items were rarely worn, if at all. These included vintage dress and theatre costume. The wife of the C.E.O. recalled wearing her Chinese Opera gown (see photograph at the end of this chapter):

‘... my Chinese theatre coats which I wore when I was in London to the theatre when we were on leave. Anywhere that I wore it everybody gawped: now they are ten a penny, but their quality is not the same.’⁴⁶

Note, this was purchased to be worn overseas, not in Hong Kong. Garments were retained despite owners’ knowledge that they would never be worn again as a memento of an experience, often as a memento of travel (see jacket constructed from a Bhutanese door hanging fabric at the end of this chapter).⁴⁷ The *cheongsam* was an opportunity for expatriate Western women to dress-up in other peoples’ cultural clothing as a fun activity even if, as Hoffman suggests, it was never worn outside the home, either by tourists or expatriate Western women.⁴⁸

A lack of air-conditioning in many homes and stores was reflected in expatriate fashions for inexpensive sleeveless simple shift dresses, followed by the Western popularity of strappy-sundresses with a shirred-elastic bodice in the early-1970s.⁴⁹ High humidity in the summer months affected appearance: one informant complained that her hair, which she laboriously straightened before going out each evening, curled as soon as she left home.⁵⁰ Another remembered curling her hair and completing her make-up before stepping in to her dress in order not to crush it in the heat.⁵¹

Expatriate Western women used dress as a memento of travel and used tailors and dressmakers extensively to complete their wardrobes with an eye to practicality. If local boutiques could not supply suitable fashion dress, informants borrowed fashionable garments from their friends for local tailors to copy. Theatrical pre-modern Chinese dress was worn overseas or sometimes for a mixed-marriage wedding, but generally expatriate Western women attempted to follow Western fashions. The following section considers expatriate Western women’s dress during the 1970’s.

Identities through dress in the 1970s

Realising that they were in a situation of difference, both from the host community and their former peers in their home country, some expatriate Western women chose to accentuate the differences in their appearance:

'I knew I was different. I would wear things that other girls wouldn't wear. Don't ask me why, because of my own individual personality or something. I don't know. ... Yes, it was a pleasure, it is a pleasure to be nicely dressed and to be admired.'⁵²

This visible difference nevertheless conformed to local dress codes as expatriate Western women's awareness of local sensibilities grew: the retail manager described wearing a short-sundress with an elasticated-band top purchased in Australia, as a more conservative skirt worn with a top in Hong Kong.⁵³ Tailor-made clothing was a part of Hong Kong's reputation: the Australian mother-of-two had a suit made shortly after she arrived in Hong Kong in 1979, as she explained: 'The inspiration for having it made was: you have things made in Hong Kong.'⁵⁴ Not all were successful, many tended to be skin-tight like a *cheongsam*, as an English designer, then in her 20s reported:

'Made of cardboard: cut with a knife and fork. Just sort of out here (gesticulating size), and stand[ing] up on their own! Horrible things.'⁵⁵

The effort involved in commissioning tailored garments resulted in an end product more closely bound to the identity of the informant, contributing to, and reinforcing a sense of self. Wearing the host communities' dress was unusual. The foreign office informant recalled her reaction to her German host's *cheongsam* when she first arrived in the early 1970s:

'She bought this short *cheongsam*, and we were going out to the French [social event], and I felt absolutely horrified and embarrassed to go around with a Westerner wearing a *cheongsam*. And she thought it was great, and she always wanted to wear it during *Karneval*, which is a big thing in Germany.'⁵⁶

This was the closest any informant came to describing the overt sexuality of the *cheongsam* and her discomfort at the appropriation of another culture's dress, both in Hong Kong and overseas.

Many expatriate Western women working in fashion or related professional fields developed a keen interest in Asian textiles, purchasing and wearing Southeast Asian dress on vacation or when the opportunity arose locally.⁵⁷ The retail manager was delighted by the choice of ethnic dress available in Hong Kong in comparison to what was available in her home country (see photograph of Hong Kong ethnic dress at the end of the chapter):

'I would buy some old Chinese embroidery-work blouses, and I bought Chinese-embroidered shawls, because in Australia we never saw this amount of detailed work in a garment. Australians are very practical: washable, lots of cottons, and very cool fabrics, and I had never seen this mix of silks, with lots of embroidery on them and I found it very interesting because [of] the detailed work. Because I made my own clothes I knew how much work goes into producing something like this. So I guess my casual gear was either informal, that sort of hippy era, the sort of colourful, very loose styles or by this increasing Chinese influence because I was, personally, very interested in the garments and the fabrics.'⁵⁸

Her appreciation of the fabrics and understanding of the workmanship came from her own dressmaking knowledge. Not all informants wore ethnic dress: one informant felt unable to wear Indian dress even when Indian 'looks' were fashionable (as they were in the late 1960s and early '70s), as though the distance between the original dress and its use as a re-appropriated part of a fashion identity was too small. If Orientalism was acceptable from a distance (something that seemed exotic when viewed from Europe or the United States of America), it was uncomfortably real, and close, when viewed from within Asia.⁵⁹

The developing fascination of the host community with designer clothing conflicted with some expatriate Western women's understanding of fashion, the latter delighting in continuing to wear garments which reflected their identities purchased many years previously in their home countries, as though a fashion had strangely become unchanging when they left their home country.⁶⁰ Vintage clothing offered expatriate Western women an opportunity to side-step local fashions, and to adopt a relatively inexpensive style of dress promoted in the international fashion

press as unique, alternative, yet creditably desirable.⁶¹ This was a counter-culture activity for the host community and in addition, imported vintage merchandise was more likely to fit expatriate Western women than the host community who were more able to select from local fashions.

Younger informants found it easy to buy clothes that fitted as boutiques catered for both Westerners and local customers (see Bird's T-shirt at the end of this chapter). By the mid-70s as speciality stores catering for local residents developed, many expatriate Western women found only some part of a collection fitted.⁶² With the exception of Birds, or Anne Klein, there were few stores where they could buy complete collections, and similar problems remained with shoe collections.⁶³ Limited suitable lingerie created fit problems for many expatriate Western women: Whiteway's and later Dodwell's were remembered with indifference.⁶⁴ Locally made shoes were reputedly of annoyingly poor quality.⁶⁵ Some informants had successful garments remade by local tailors in their favourite silhouettes or colours, and were occasionally lucky enough to find tailors of good quality. However, the majority of tailors seemed to specialise in 'a-fashionable' garments (see advertisement at the end of this chapter).⁶⁶ Tailoring continued to be a means of using textiles, which were purchased as mementoes of travel (see photograph of a Hungarian *szur* (shepherd's coat) felted collar and cuffs added to a 1970s blue woollen crepe swing-back jacket at the end of this chapter). Other expatriates such as this English designer, were frustrated by tailors:

'I never patronized the tailors: they drove me mad because they wouldn't be up to my standard: they'd put in white zips; or put in white overlocking; or something. I never found their standards, or the fitting, and the boxy Chanel-type suits, which are totally...[here my informant became speechless with anger and frustration]. They just can't see between the real thing and their own interpretation of it.'⁶⁷

Her comments founded on her experience of tailors' professionalism suggest expatriate Western women remained aware of international fashions even if they were not available. The 'Sloane Ranger' whose identical twin continued to reside in London after she had moved to Hong Kong, confirmed this: when my informant bought fashion clothing for herself, she frequently bought a second item for her twin: '...there was only a short period of time [in the early 1970s] when we [Hong

Kong] were a little bit out of ‘synch’ in terms of knowledge about fashion.’⁶⁸ Her twin acted as both a gauge of fashion awareness and a source of fashion knowledge.⁶⁹

As expected, most expatriate Western women purchased *sarongs* in Bali, Punjabi suits, and *saris* in India, or fishermen’s pants in Thailand.⁷⁰ In contrast to Western fashion dress valued for its design or brand name, these garments were frequently valued for the amount of handwork they contained, the ‘Sloane Ranger’ explained:

‘This is one of my favourites.’ (a white nightdress) ‘It is Indian, and they make tablecloths. It’s all hand stitched and I love it. I absolutely love it’.... ‘This is a little Indonesian [shawl] and lovely fabric and I wear that in the evenings over my white suits. So, very much an Asian ‘feel’ about my eveningwear when I dress at night. Again, it is white. It is Egyptian cotton and they are hand-tasselled.’⁷¹

The opportunity to experiment with Asian garments, to dress up, even for bed, continued to be an opportunity for experimentation. One of the most important findings of my research has been the quantity of ethnic dress, which has been purchased and worn by expatriate Western women in Hong Kong. I had anticipated a few *sarongs* purchased on vacation but I found multiple collections of garments worn at home or on vacation.⁷² *Sarongs* were worn as complete ethnic dress outfits with the *kebaya*, the Balinese matching *broderie anglais* top, or combined with Western dress.⁷³ As with fashion dress, the popularity of ethnic dress had the effect of increasing the number of potential wearers, one informant recalled:

‘I was travelling to Bali and Jakarta, and I bought some *batik*: *batik* was very much the rage. I didn’t like it, but somehow when you see it all around you, you sort of think: ‘Well, maybe it’s all right.’⁷⁴

As Polhemous notes, anything can become fashionable, however its meaning changes.⁷⁵ As the host-population abandoned the *cheongsam* and wore increasingly sophisticated Western dress, some expatriate Western women adopted the *cheongsam*, for special events. There was ambivalence in wearing what was described as ‘other peoples’ clothing’ as one society resident, then in her 30s, remembered:

'I had a *cheongsam* made here [...] I had it made for a concert. It was quite comfortable but I did feel that for me it was a 'fancy-dress' dress. I felt that perhaps, it's not something I'd wear because I'd be embarrassed in a way, because my figure is certainly not the same as the Chinese. Well, perhaps embarrassed is the wrong thing to say but just uncomfortable.' [...] 'Yes. I mean I certainly wouldn't have worn it going down town, or I wouldn't have worn it as a piece of general clothing. Not in those days anyway.'⁷⁶

Her discomfort, the ambiguity of 'fancy dress,' and appropriation of another's dress is evident. Although she rationalises her discomfort on the basis that she would be unflatteringly compared to Asian women wearing the *cheongsam*, this only partly explains her discomfort: for this informant, appropriating another's dress crosses a code of behaviour. Her comment reveals a change in perceptions over time. The retail manager discussing a Chinese embroidered fringed-shawl purchased in the 1970s (see picture at the end of Chapter Four), explained wearing it was somehow incorrect, and that Westerners who wore Chinese dress were very conspicuous.⁷⁷ In Hong Kong, appropriation of Asian dress during the colonial period as described by Callaway was not desirable, unlike that worn in the West as described by Lurie.⁷⁸

Whilst informants agreed that most fashion dress was obtainable in Hong Kong with specific exceptions (mostly size related) they continued to 'binge shop:' taking the opportunity to shop when they found something that they liked in Hong Kong or overseas as though Hong Kong was a 'hardship posting' devoid of fashion stores.⁷⁹ The very *idea* that Hong Kong contained a limited choice of fashion merchandise seemed to produce a desire to stock-up whenever the opportunity arose, in anticipation of a lack of choice of fashion clothing. The office manager saw this as a personal weakness: 'I spent all my money on clothes: I can't resist them, I think in another life I must have been deprived or something. I must have had no clothes in my other life.'⁸⁰ This informant and others were reminiscent of Scott Fitzgerald's character Gatsby in *The Great Gatsby*, although my informant did not seem to be purchasing clothes to impress anyone, but only to please themselves (see photographs at the end of this chapter showing informant's wardrobe and shoe collection, and informant's jacket collection).⁸¹ Similarly, as previously discussed in Chapter Four, the 'Sloane Ranger' had a collection of more than forty white men's T-shirts (see photograph at the end of this chapter), and had shoes made four pairs at a time. One informant had retained a collection of hats,

and another a collection of shoes, which had been made to match a particular dress in colour combinations, which were not commercially viable.⁸² Whilst many informants acquired collections of dress unusually, only one able to afford to dress very well was able to extensively accessorize her clothing with fine jewellery. Like The Queen, she effectively used clothing as an accessory to match her significant jewellery collection.⁸³

To summarise, the 1970s saw the beginnings of liberalism in expatriate use of Southeast Asian and Chinese pre-modern and traditional dress. Tailors and dressmakers continued to be used, although the boutiques offered fashionable dress, as a means of using fabrics which were mementoes of travel, yet some informants remained unhappy at the idea of appropriating the dress of another culture. 'Binge shopping' was justified on the grounds that shortage or fit problems made clothes shopping to express identity through dress difficult. Vintage clothes were a popular means of dressing economically for Western women, which women from the host community would not attempt. The following section describes the changes in the dress of expatriate Western women in the 1980's.

Identities through dress in the 1980s

Asked to consider themselves and their appearance prior to their arrival in Hong Kong, many informants were critical of their former selves and their appearance. The marketing manager then in her 20s, remembered: '... it wouldn't have been very fashionable, I don't think. Probably, almost the opposite: it would have been quite conservative I think, what I brought from the U.K. ... I would have said that I would have been dressing quite differently...'⁸⁴ Partly this was due to the new and different wealth of local merchandise, which appealed to informants although the size might not have been available. For example, the English visual merchandiser with a fashion background, then in her 20s, remembered attempting shoe shopping:

'I always wanted to buy shoes because I'm really in to them, but I couldn't buy them in Hong Kong because they didn't do my size ... I remember thinking 'What an amazing range of shoes compared to Europe.' And I wanted to buy, not just buy black shoes: they had khaki-green shoes, and orange shoes, and I wanted to buy them, and I couldn't. There was envy there, I think, of all the kids.'⁸⁵

It was doubly frustrating for someone with a fashion background to see a range far wider than would normally have been available to her, yet to be unable to purchase from it.

From the 1980s onwards expatriate Western women tended to come from a wider range of social groups, many capitalising on their professional skills in order to remain in Hong Kong. In Hong Kong society where appearance was one of the few indicators of status, to carry a designer handbag suggested that the outfit worn was also from an international designer label, as the ex-New York model remembered:

‘...my normal handbag would be as thin and as small as possible: like clutches, and things that didn’t have straps, that were big [fashionable]. There was no way to carry it, and you would lose it through your arm and people would bump it out.’⁸⁶

My informant recognised a handbag as a trope of success and, in order to maintain both her own uniqueness and as a badge of resistance, refused to adopt a recognisable designer-brand handbag. Her concern that it could be stolen probably derives from her New York background rather than the unusual possibility of theft in Hong Kong, although the density of people on the street may have been similar.

Zeman, aware of the lack of good Western restaurants in Hong Kong and seeking to diversify, bought a supermarket in the area behind Central in 1981 and transformed it in to a restaurant initially as a strategy to retain the skills of his chief designer who was threatening to leave as she missed her boyfriend, an American-based chef.⁸⁷ As restaurant businesses proved to be more profitable than the supermarkets, flower shops, and offices previously located in Lan Kwai Fong, the area became a venue for bars and vertical blocks of restaurants. Holdsworth claims Zeman helped change the culture of Hong Kong by introducing Western celebrations such as Halloween, providing Hong Kong with a performative space in which to socialise; to dress up; and to be seen.⁸⁸ The importance of appearance as a statement of identity is apparent in the office manager’s description of her friends, all in their 20s, who frequented Lan Kwai Fong:

‘Shortly after I arrived I met a group of girls who were a lot younger than I was: six years: that’s almost a generation gap, but I got on really well with them and they were all very different. One was Indian and she tended to wear quite loud, bright-coloured clothes. One, she had short hair, bit of a tom-boy: just trousers and a shirt, and then the

other one was quite a plump girl who was part Spanish, so she had nice dark hair, dark skin, and dark eyes, and she used to wear a lot of bright colours, like bright reds, or she used to wear black, and would always dress for attention. One of my other girlfriends was always very smart, always immaculate, immaculate hair, immaculate nails, immaculate make-up and quite conservative in the way that she dressed, very Lady-Di.⁸⁹

For this informant her appearance and that of her friends was the means of identifying themselves. She also took the opportunity to dress flamboyantly when possible (see photograph of her in a full-length evening dress which was given to her, worn at a Cluedo-evening at the end of this chapter). Similarly the wife of the C.E.O., then in her 40s, was comfortable with the notion that her personality was expressed through her dress. She compared herself to her sister-in-law (also interviewed):

'I do think it [clothing] did [express my personality] at one time, yes. Everybody seemed to think so!' ... 'I mean, the difference between, for example: x and myself. x was very tailored, very subdued in her clothing. Well, I wasn't!'⁹⁰

Part of the same social circle and aware of the differences in their tastes, she deliberately played on them. Age coloured informants' views of fashion dress, but many were also critical of their shopping behaviour before their arrival in Hong Kong, as this English fashion designer, then in her late 20s, remembered: '[I shopped from] the High Street, mainly, and thrift shops, and because I worked in design, I occasionally got things [samples] through the companies that I was working for. ... It wasn't good.'⁹¹ This suggests Hong Kong residency taught some expatriate Western women how to shop and how to dress. Without exception, expatriate Western women were well aware of the differences that their mostly privileged position gave them in comparison to the host community. The expatriate salary package together with the knowledge that they would retire to a considerably less expensive country than Hong Kong, enabled them to live in ways which would have been unthinkable in their home countries. An English fashion designer remembered that expatriate Western women dressed in a younger way than she had anticipated: 'Brighter, garish, [they] look[ed] younger. Clothes [were] made [tailored] for functions - [because of] size availability, daywear was bought

locally.⁹² The strong sunlight, the comparatively youthful appearance of the host community, and the formality of dress may have accounted for this. Sometimes informants copied the fashion choices of another family member: a daughter interviewed admitted emulating the colours her mother wore and could be said to be experimenting with the appearance of her mother or at least maintaining the connection with her mother.⁹³ In terms of identity construction this emulation was more than a compliment: Woodward records a friend trying out being another friend when trying on her clothes.⁹⁴ Clothes shopping formed a recognizably different part of informants' former and subsequent changed lives but it had disadvantages. This American visual merchandiser remembered the annoying aspects of the affluent 1980s:

'There never was a sale, nobody looked at the price tag. Nothing was on sale: never ask the price; never try things on. Seibu [had a policy of] 'No returns;' expensive, difficult. I didn't enjoy shopping then: sales assistants walk[ed] five miles with a charge card. I didn't enjoy shopping here [in Hong Kong]: I only enjoyed shopping where I knew the shop assistant.'⁹⁵

The arrogance of retailers caused annoyance rather than the store systems. All informants were aware that living in Asia had changed their perceptions of beauty and fashion dress. The ex-New York model summarised: 'Being here [in Hong Kong] has made me aware of silhouettes, fabrics, and different concepts of beauty.'⁹⁶ Nevertheless, local conservatism impacted on expatriate dress, for example: the ex-New York model ceased to wear her more revealing clothing.⁹⁷ For those on corporate packages such as the ex-buyer, then in her late 20s, the luxuries this afforded were undreamed of:

'We were on a completely different [employment] package: reckless extravagance! But when we first got here x [her husband], was on quite a different package to the one that he is on now, I think most people were. The company paid for everything, so I did have a lot of disposable income.'⁹⁸

The change in appearance this allowed could be unnerving for informants' family members: the American visual merchandiser whose husband worked in the fashion industry, remembering her husband's preference for top-end, 'safe, calm clothing,'

revealed that he would look askance at her more extreme looks and ask: 'You are really wearing that to work today?''⁹⁹

The physical size of some expatriates, no matter how they dressed, was sufficient to draw the attention of the host community. In this instance, some informants chose to accentuate the differences between their dress and that of the host population.¹⁰⁰ The ex-New York model, whose husband was Cantonese, found this continually drew the host community's attention, she complained: 'I was six feet tall, wearing a short skirt, and a hat! And I couldn't deal with everyone looking at me. Also, I had a Chinese husband and so it was: 'Not only that [the hat], but it's a white girl with a Chinese man.'¹⁰¹ Breaking known Hong Kong dress codes required courage even if informants were not breaking their own dress codes. Sometimes this required too much effort: the same informant elaborated, justifying giving up her passion for wearing hats: '[I]t was 'O.K.' to be the other way around: we often found it was very acceptable for a Chinese or an Asian woman to be with a white man but not the other way around. So, sometimes it [giving up wearing a hat] was a way of wanting to blend in.'¹⁰² This did not constrain all expatriate Western women's experiments with dress but it did create unexpected consequences, for example: the same informant claimed she never wore pants in Hong Kong as nothing available was long enough.¹⁰³ As noted in Chapter Four, celebrities frequently dressed to attract the attention of the press, and some expatriate Western women found tailoring could be a creative, imaginative outlet for self-expression given the host communities' evident preoccupation with appearance. The English fashion designer remembered the late 1980s: '...we'd dress up: whatever was fashionable at the moment within our little gang.'¹⁰⁴ The American visual merchandiser (originally from middle America), observed that Hong Kong was an opportunity for American women to wear designer clothing which was inappropriate in their hometowns.¹⁰⁵ The ex-New York model explained:

'When I first started going to more formal things [events], I didn't have anything to wear and had no way to buy them. Being a big fan of old movies, I watched 'Funny Face,' - Audrey Hepburn - and I would sketch the dresses that Monsieur Givenchy had designed. I would [select] fabric and I would say 'This is the dress I want' [to the dressmaker]. And so I have a very beautiful faux Givenchy gown in emerald green, with a train, with velvet buttons. She would [say]: 'Are you sure?' I would just have a

sketch of it, and she would have to figure out what I wanted, and people would say:

'That's a beautiful dress, where did you get it?'¹⁰⁶

This takes emulation of film (Hollywood and Bollywood) dress a step further as my informant drew the dress that she wanted, knowingly copying an international designer's work, and deliberately selecting a different fabric before she passed it to her dressmaker (see photographs at the end of this chapter). It is interesting to note that, although this informant had studied fashion at college, she employed the dressmaker's creativity by choosing not to micro-manage the dressmaker's work, although she had both time and the opportunity to do so. Not all expatriate Western women seemed to want to put themselves on display in this manner.¹⁰⁷

Local tailors who copied much-loved garments or designer-label merchandise, were viewed by expatriate Western women with fascination or revulsion. An exploration of tailors: 'That a little touch of *haute couture*, the affordable *haute couture*, ' had long been part of living in Hong Kong for many informants, despite occasionally disappointing results.¹⁰⁸ Some informants purchased fabrics on vacation or had favourite fashion styles remade by local tailors in their favourite silhouettes, although tailored items were rarely retained after they ceased to be worn, perhaps indicating their low status as much-loved garments.¹⁰⁹ Most informants blamed themselves for the shortcomings of the tailors that they used, and attempted to rectify them to justify the amount of effort that the garment represented.¹¹⁰

A lack of congruence between the individual's perception of her identity and her imagined identity of the wearer of the tailored garment caused disappointment for which tailors were blamed. An English lingerie designer, then in her 30s, described having a winter coat made which she had kept (see photograph at the end of this chapter). However, she wore it reluctantly:

[Were you pleased with the coat?]

'No, I don't think so.'

[Why?]

'Because it was too mannish, because he [the tailor] made a coat for my husband at the same time, and I felt it was cut too much.'¹¹¹

As the garment could not be tried in advance, and anxiety about its suitability was not removed by the reassuring presence of a designer label, bespoke garments

could be disappointing. The gender of the coat accounts for the owner's ambivalence: as the men's tailor had made a similar garment for her husband, the coat was a facsimile of her husband's. As academic Joanne Finkelstein observes, women's dress may resemble men's but the 'significant little differences reinscribe gender categories.'¹¹² Therefore, when wearing it, my informant became a male clone - with an added detachable fox-fur collar. This garment, imbued with incorrect gender, produced an indefinably-wrong tailored garment that could not be remedied, she explained:

'Yes, beautifully made... but I don't think I ever felt comfortable in it and so in the end I never really, never wanted to wear it. You know what I mean? You just don't feel you want to ...'

[It wasn't right, somehow?]

'No. Something you just can't put your finger on. My husband's coat was very nice. I have got it here somewhere. Yes, this is it.'

[He was happy with his?]

'Sure.'¹¹³

Brand conveyed reassurance of appropriate dress and dress for gender which tailored garments lacked. The informant above explained that the tailor customarily made women's wear as well as men's wear yet, although her husband's coat was suitable for him, her own faultlessly constructed coat was unsuitable. That her husband had a similar coat with which he was pleased, cast additional doubt on the suitability of her coat for her own use: the coat was too masculine to be congruent with her perception of her own identity. Gender was subtly embedded in clothing at a barely perceptible level which was not articulated, yet nevertheless prevented the owner from successfully wearing the garment: the coat was too masculine to match the informant's identity and self image.

The decision to wear (or carry), copy merchandise (as discussed in Chapter Four), was an individual one for expatriate Western women: some expatriate Western informants felt that because of their professional fashion jobs they would be risking their reputation.¹¹⁴ Others believed that because of their position, they were assumed to be wearing or carrying the genuine article, irrespective of its provenance.¹¹⁵ The bargain price of copy merchandise provoked occasional regional 'binge shopping' as the marketing manager remembered: 'There are quite a few

[copy bags] mainly from Bangkok, actually. I just happened to be there, and I did have a bit of a bag-spree that's true: I bought five...'116 My informant explained her decision to purchase copy merchandise was based on her fashion look which included designer garments, as she realised others would assume everything was 'real.'117 This informant belonged to a small group of people who seemed to be able to wear copy or inexpensive merchandise, yet continue to look as though they only purchased from high-quality brand names. This illusion seemed to be created by a good haircut, manicure, and quality accessories, combined with knowledge of their position. Although informants often sought means by which they could save money on fashion dress, only one informant described how she would save for an item that she wanted.118 Sometimes informants were encouraged by their friends to make multiple purchases: the same marketing manager purchased three pairs of slippers whilst on vacation with friends in Korea, because they were inexpensive and she was the only person whose feet they would fit (see photograph at the end of this chapter). A few informants reported that they recycled items of clothing over a long period of time: putting the item away, and then bringing it out again at a later date.119 Wearing vintage clothing continued to prove a surprisingly popular choice for expatriate Western women. This was a surprising finding as Hong Kong, a relatively poor city in the earlier part of the period, lacked choice in vintage dress.120

By the late-1980s the selection of shoes had not improved. Several informants likened themselves to Imelda Marcos, famed for her large shoe collection, as this English visual merchandiser explained: '...every time I went back to England, once a year, I came back looking like Imelda Marcos through customs, because I couldn't buy [shoes locally].'121 An American textile historian spoke highly of locally-sourced shoes: based for a while in Singapore, she complained that shoes which she purchased in the United States of America would fall to pieces in Singapore's high humidity, whereas locally-made shoes were more robust.122 The height of heels was a consideration for taller informants who were already taller than the host community and, conversely, for Western informants with smaller than average feet, shoe shopping in Hong Kong was a delight.123

Locality had other effects on dress: in the 1980s Lamma and Lantau became leisure destinations and alternative residences to Hong Kong associated with

weekend relaxation. For the English designer who lived on Hong Kong Island, choice of clothing reflected the outlying islands' vacation status:

'...we often used to go at weekends-off [alternate Saturdays] to the other islands. And either [wore] *sarongs* and big linen shirts, or leggings and big linen shirts! The photographs confirm that: very, very loose, holiday clothes, I suppose, really. We didn't dress up at the weekends.'¹²⁴

This casual dress contrasted with the casual-dressiness of the same informant, as required for an evening junk trip to one of the fish restaurants on Lamma which was another form of business networking (see photograph at the end of this chapter). Conflicting dress demands, created by travelling from one island to another, were remembered by a Discovery Bay resident who commented on the low temperature of the ferries to Hong Kong Island which made sleeveless dress, acceptable in Discovery Bay, inappropriate *en route* to and from Central.¹²⁵ Similarly, the embassy official explained how she would change her dress on the ferry to Lantau, rather than walk from her home in the mid-Levels through Central to the ferry terminal, in inappropriate dress.¹²⁶ Dress was important in suggesting residence, from which lifestyle, employment, and social status could be deduced. This was relative: an English designer, a long-term resident of The Peak (one of the most expensive areas in which to live), revealed: 'I didn't bother dressing up for Central' as for her, local dress codes were unimportant.¹²⁷ The marketing manager, a resident of Discovery Bay, also barely recognised local fashion trends and wore 'classic' clothes supplemented during occasional visits to the United Kingdom.¹²⁸

Given time spent living in Asia, informants noted re-occurring garments in their wardrobes: *cheongsam*-style detailing (stand-collars; edge-to-edge closure with frogging; button-and-loop style fastenings; or side slits), reoccurred, be the garments from Hong Kong, Vietnam, Bali, or Thailand.¹²⁹ Given the possibilities of fashion change it is inevitable that silhouettes reoccurred, but fabrics and colours changed: therefore a 'new' garment was sometimes a variation of something already contained in a fashion wardrobe. The success of a previously similar garment was sometimes used as a reason to justify purchasing duplicate garments.¹³⁰

The decision to wear the *cheongsam* in the 1980s or not remained a personal one, but they became acceptably fashionable as the office manager recalled:

'Being small and slim, I thought they suited me. I felt the style did a lot for me. I would even consider having a *cheongsam*, if I were to get married ... I would consider having that style made as a wedding dress: the little high collar, going in at this angle, because I think that suits me...' ¹³¹

Whilst the office manager considered self-exoticizing, she also recognised that her petite appearance would be complemented by the *cheongsam*. Asian ethnic dress was successfully combined with Western fashion dress by an English designer who wore it both in Hong Kong and overseas.¹³² Another English designer designed and wore copied pre-modern Asian dress, in the late 1980s:

'This was probably my big look, you know, because I used to have longer hair so I used to wear it in pom-poms, and I have got quite a lot of traditional pairs of really big Chinese [Miao] earrings as well. So I used to quite enjoy that. I suppose it was a sort of, it was more the old [pre-modern] Chinese-look that we were interested in, I think, than the new.... it was all those beautiful films, and the sort of exoticness of it, and [the] *Crouching Tigers*[, *Hidden Dragon*-look], the hairpieces [kingfisher headdresses], and that sort of ornamental, ornamented look.' ¹³³

She explained the appeal of additional meaning embodied in the decoration:

'The thing I liked about the Chinese clothes was they were almost, not written on, but there was so much meaning in terms of the pattern [symbolization]: the fruits on them, and the birds, and things. I quite liked that things had a story to them.' ¹³⁴

The *cheongsam* could be worn fashionably styled. My informant described how she wore one from The China Arts and Crafts store:

'I used to wear it with thick black tights and boots. I don't think I have ever worn it in a truly glamorous way, but I just think they are the sexiest, most exotic form of clothing, and I wish I had bought more, but now [in London] I never wear it.' ¹³⁵

For my informants, either fashionably dressed members of the fashion industry, or those who had developed their own distinctive fashion looks (which were not immune to fashion change), ethnic dress was worn mixed with fashion dress and accessories as the *cheongsam* has always been worn. The designer's final comment can be explained by habit and by the differing fashions of different cities.¹³⁶ The

English designer attempted to reflect her interest in pre-modern Chinese dress in her design work (see the photograph of the denim waistcoat at end this chapter):

‘... this is another one which was actually a sample, which of course they [the U.S. department store client] didn’t buy. In fact I probably designed it knowing they wouldn’t buy it! I still love and wear [it].’¹³⁷

For those with a keen interest in fashion dress, often as a result of their employment, a Hong Kong salary offered an opportunity to acquire fashion collections: the English designer described her amazement at being able to afford two dresses by Ghost, the British design name.¹³⁸ As designer handbags were not affected by changing body shape they held a continuing appeal: the marketing manager found that whilst clothing ceased to fit over time, handbags remained useable when that particular style was in fashion.¹³⁹ The relocation specialist remembered her handbag purchases of the early 1990s, which formed both a collection and an example of ‘binge shopping:’

‘...I bought good ones: on sale. Usually by the gross and then I have them for quite a long time. Bottega Veneta, was my favourite and Loewe I liked as well ... those are probably my two favourites. My taste got a little more classic: I used to have more colours of handbags, I still have many of them. When I was in Indonesia you could buy snakeskin bags for an absolute song so I had buckets of them, but over time they get stiff. You know: the tanning process just isn’t quite there? They don’t smell or anything but they just get stiff: they are just not quite right, so I’ve gotten rid of most of those now after many years, but I used to use them a lot. I just rely on more the ‘old faithfuls’ as it were.’¹⁴⁰

Revealing how handbags had always been of interest to her from the time she lived in Indonesia, she describes the shortcomings of production techniques, and her insistence on getting a ‘deal’ by purchasing in the sale.

To my surprise, the ‘Sloane Ranger’ revealed an unexpected secret passion: a collection of *shahtoosh* shawls.¹⁴¹ Weavers in the Indian states of Jammu and Kashmir continued to produce hand-woven illegal *shahtoosh* shawls transporting them to Delhi from whence they were exported worldwide. The ‘Sloane Ranger’ remembered their initial attraction:

'I would never wear lambswool or anything sharp. Fabrics are important to me. The luxury of all luxuries, I mean, I am not going to use that naughty 'S' word, the *shahtoosh*. We now wear *pashminas*, but of course the wonderful thing is to wear the mix of silk and cashmere. It is so fine you hardly know you are wearing it.'¹⁴²

She had purchased *shahtoosh* for many years before she learned that the method of collecting the wool cost the *shahtoosh* its life, but was undecided as to what to do with those she possessed. Ironically, she had only ever worn them in her own home or travelled with them, as she considered the hopsack, balanced-weave with its plain-fringed ends had a homespun appearance, too unsophisticated for fashionable use (see photographs at the end of Chapter Four). Her collection included un-dyed and dyed *shahtoosh*, plain, and with Kashmir embroidery.

The Asian practice of bargaining for everything, to obtain 'a deal,' had a lasting impact on informants raised in Asia. Whilst others purchased goods at bargain prices at markets or factory outlets, the shopping-trip organizer recalled some individuals would bargain compulsively even when she had already arranged a discount for the group.¹⁴³ 'Binge shopping' at outlet stores in Granville Road was relatively inexpensive as this English designer recalled: 'I remember coming home with six carrier-bags full, stuffed!'¹⁴⁴ The serendipity of bargain hunting for sample merchandise appealed to many including the ex-New York model, who despite living in an expensive Central apartment block, purchased Gap seconds in Wanchai:

'It was so cheap, it was a joke not to buy it even though we probably wore maybe, a third of the stuff we bought but it was too cheap to resist. It was: 'This would cost [U.S.]\$40 in the U.S. and it's [H.K.]\$3 here. I have to buy it because I'd be a fool not too.' And so we had stacks of stuff that we don't even have any more because it never got worn but [we] had to buy it.'¹⁴⁵

Informants 'binge shopped' at all levels of the market: irrespective of the amount of money that they spent. A pair of blue and white *batik* pants purchased by the marketing manager whilst on vacation in Bali, were a memento of travel (see photograph at the end of this chapter). Other purchases were driven by shortage: overseas lingerie shopping was a particular temptation, the ex-New York model remembered: 'I just headed to Bloomingdale's and... go crazy, in the Calvin Klein

Department or something.’¹⁴⁶ To my surprise many informants ‘binge shopped’ ethnic dress creating their own collections. The relocation specialist, then in her 30s, estimated she owned eighteen pairs of Thai fishermen’s pants (see photograph of her wearing Thai fishermen’s pants).¹⁴⁷ The ‘Sloane Ranger,’ an ex-resident of Thailand, described her collection of twenty pairs of Thai fishermen’s pants in Hong Kong (with uncounted additional pairs in her British wardrobe), explaining how she created hybridised pants with some pride:

‘This I bought because of the fabric, and I would wear that antique fabric and I would spend a lot of money. It’s slightly ‘from the sublime to the ridiculous.’ The trouble is, the ones like these get loved so much, but they wear out. I am sure someone showing you a Chanel wardrobe would be far more limited...[...] This is really what I call a simple, simple wardrobe.’¹⁴⁸

Purchasing expensive regional textiles and having them made in to Thai fishermen’s pants (worn by peasants and simple fishermen) was, as she explains, ‘ridiculous,’ but it enabled this informant and others to create wardrobes of interesting garments which reflected their interests in the region, and satisfied their desire for creativity, ensuring unique dress. My informant dis-ingenuously describes this as a simple wardrobe, and in terms of garment construction and idea, not unique to this informant, these hybrid garments were simple (see photograph of flattened pants). However, the textiles from which they were made included hand-loomed fabrics with complex dyeing and patterning techniques including *ikat*, batik, and supplementary weft.

To summarise, the expatriate Western women interviewed felt that their interest in fashion blossomed in the 1980s: in the early 1980s the opportunity to learn how to dress up for display in performative spaces gave expatriate Western women an opportunity to develop their identities through dress, although tailors revealed occasional shortcomings including gender ambiguity. Throughout the decade their high disposable income, an increasing number of stores, and developing regional travel, enabled expatriate Western women to exercise their imaginations to create fantasy dress, which was both more formal or more casual, than they would have worn in their home countries. Nevertheless, ‘binge shopping’ in a situation of perceived shortage - necessary for those with larger-than-average feet or dress size - and the use of vintage dress, continued to set expatriate Western women apart

from the host population. Designer handbag and other collections developed, and the dress choices of family members were appropriated, whilst local discreet dress codes were frequently emulated. Finally, the decade saw a continuation of the development and variations of Asian or exotic dress as a fashion theme, as appropriation of pre-modern and Asian ethnic dress became increasingly acceptable. Jones and Leshkovich describe the process of self-orientalising, describing a reversal of the imbalance of power between the West and elsewhere, producing and consuming exoticized images of non-Western cultures by non-Westerners as a technique for asserting control.¹⁴⁹ Expatriate Western women's appropriation of Asian dress, specifically the *cheongsam*, but also Thai fishermen's pants, *sarongs*, and Punjabi suits, initially suggests that wearing Asian dress allowed expatriate Western women to assume an exoticized position within their own Western cultures: the teacher who wore the orange and navy silk outfit in an English church hall in the snow (see Chapter Four), epitomises this desire to proclaim difference. As copy merchandise of Western brands enabled local Asian women to adopt a wealthy and international persona, the adoption of Southeast Asian ethnic dress, both original and copied in costly fabrics, did the same for expatriate Western women.

The following section considers the dress of expatriate Western women in the 1990s.

Identities through dress in the 1990s

Morris scathingly describes Western women in *cheongsam* however, the acquisition of pre-modern regional dress continued.¹⁵⁰ Several informants had large collections of ethnic regional dress as the relocation manager explained:

'In the summer time my idea of an at-home garment... was a *sarong* either tied around my top or tied around my waist with a T-shirt ... I would wear it to a dinner party: a *sarong* with a top of some kind, certainly a more casual one I would do that. Or an at-home where other people are coming in, I considered that somewhat 'dressing up' in a more casual environment. And I loved them, I had many of them and I thought that they were great garments: they are fabulous for travelling and for camping. I've given them away as gifts to friends who do a lot of camping because they can change your clothes in them; you can use them as a blanket; you can change your bathing suit while you are swabbed in one - like a little tent - you can wear them with some sort of shirt and dress

them up; and you can wear them just to sleep in. It's the most versatile garment there is.'¹⁵¹

This informant's home in an old colonial building, decorated with furniture and mementos from many parts of Asia, enabled her to use ceiling fans rather than air conditioning, adding to the tropical environment. Wearing a *sarong* in this setting was in keeping with her surroundings.¹⁵²

A reluctance to wear ethnic dress persisted in some social circles, and *sarongs* were rarely worn in public. My informant explained the reaction a *sarong* provoked when she wore one to work:

[...you don't feel free to walk around in Hong Kong [in a *sarong*]?)
 'Oh, God, no, and I did wear one tied around my waist: very nice, traditional, striped Thai [silk], once with - almost a cap sleeve - Cacharel cotton top, its old, and that was deemed to be far too ethnic, and it was July [in hot weather]: I was a bit stunned. So you go back to the basics, you find your little way and anyway, it was a *sarong* done like a skirt, and it was long, there was nothing bad about it, it was alright for the circumstance but that wasn't necessarily shared [by my boss].'¹⁵³

This anecdote underlines the formality of Hong Kong fashion dress. Whilst this might have been acceptable in Lantau or Lamma, it was not in Central. This was complicated by ethnicity. The former fashion journalist, who worked for a fashion magazine in the early 1990s before becoming a designer in her 30s, explained:

'I think they [expatriate Western women fell] into the trap trying to dress in a more oriental way when we know our bodies just weren't made for it.... I think *cheongsam* are beautiful, but not suitable. My mother-in-law wears them immaculately, and she looks a picture of elegance but I would never wear one. This is very personal because my parents-in-law are Singaporean Chinese, I married in to that family. As I say, my aunties and my in-laws dress beautifully, sometimes in *cheongsam*. It is something to do with their bone structure, the way that they walk and carry it, and I think that very few Western women can carry that off. I think if we are talking about just wearing a mandarin collar, or something from Shanghai Tang, I tell them that it is a personal choice, but again I personally wouldn't do so. I think that there is a time and place for everything, in designing I love working with Chinese fabrics but I just wouldn't wear one. ... For me it's the equivalent of going to The Mandarin [Hotel - of the Hong Kong-based Mandarin Oriental hotel chain] in central London.'¹⁵⁴

Although my informant was slim, she explained that, in direct comparison to the fine bone structure of her husband's Asian family, the *cheongsam* would not be a flattering choice. It is interesting to note that she distinguished between *cheongsam* and Shanghai Tang's Western dress with pre-modern Chinese detailing, which she would not wear either. One of the characters in E. M. Forster's novel *A Passage to India* observes how his actions become awkward in ethnic dress in comparison to the beauty of his local friends' appearance in their customary dress.¹⁵⁵ In the company of her husband's family, wearing *cheongsam*, for this informant, would either appear as parody or as fancy dress: as she understood, neither would be well regarded. Habitual wearing of the *cheongsam* instilled a grace in the wearer that was absent in the movements of those who occasionally wore it.

The nuances of understanding which expatriate Western women brought to the dilemma of dress varied: self-exoticizing is but one explanation, in much the same way as the opportunity to dress-up when attending a fancy dress party is appealing; proclaiming local cultural knowledge is a second; part of a strategy of assimilation, to pass as Asian; or a desire not to offend, by for example, adopting less-revealing clothing than they would usually have worn. Lastly, it may have been in direct response to the appropriation of the *cheongsam* by other designers in other fashion cities in order to create new looks.¹⁵⁶ These collections of ethnic dress were nevertheless purchased, stored, and added to, as occasion allowed, and worn when opportunity permitted. In response, expatriate Western women appropriated ethnic regional dress, both in its original form and to create hybridized Asian dress, as a means of distinguishing themselves from tourists and to proclaim local knowledge both in Hong Kong and overseas.

Self-exoticizing is a partial explanation for extensive collections of original ethnic dress and hybridized garments. Ethnic dress in the context of Southeast Asia was adopted as a means of reducing the anxiety provoked by a multiplicity of contemporary dress choices as identified by Clarke, in a situation with no recognisable Western fashion leadership.¹⁵⁷ It also allowed expatriate Western women the opportunity to demonstrate apparent familiarity with Asia, and in some instances to 'fit in' with the host community.

The residential alternatives of Lamma and Lantau attracted distinctly different groups of expatriate Westerners. This is from an English visual merchandiser then in her 30s:

'Before '97, Lamma, especially, was full of English people who didn't need a visa and were basically just doing bar work: just cutting through on their way to another travelling trip. And that was very much Lamma before [19]'97, God, on Lamma then it really was like a hippy commune: it was dreadlocks and split...'¹⁵⁸

Hinting at the values of the resident alternative community's tastes in dress, this informant described her perceptions of peer pressure of location-specific dress in Lamma and Central:

'Lamma was like its own little eco-system of fashion... a law unto itself. I think on Lamma the funniest thing was that sometimes I woke up in the morning, I put something on and I felt so overdressed as I walked down to the ferry pier. And I got over to Central and I got into work, and I suddenly felt completely under-dressed in exactly the same outfit.'¹⁵⁹

This '*Alice's-Adventures-in-Wonderland-like*' transformation was achieved by getting on and, thirty minutes later, getting off a ferry.¹⁶⁰ Considering the effect of location on dress she elaborated:

'... there's virtually nothing I would have worn in Hong Kong that I would [have worn] here [Lamma]. Here it [was] always flip-flops [thongs]: everything else was very overdressed. Even a pair of jeans: I probably wouldn't [have] worn to go round to a friend's house on Lamma. I'd probably just [have] worn a dress: a loose fitting hippy-ish-type dress, or T-shirts. If it's in the evening maybe a little bit different but certainly for daytime: the less dressed you are the better. If you've got a bikini top and a pair of shorts, that's Lamma: you were done. That's all you needed.'¹⁶¹

My informant succinctly describes the casual dress code of island residents. This Lamma resident was critical of the Lantau residents, especially those living in the sanitised settlement of Discovery Bay built around an open plaza: 'It was just like Pampers-city.'¹⁶² This may give the impression that Lamma residents did not have children, this was not so: many did, but their children seemed almost incidental to their lives in comparison to the attention devoted to children by Discovery Bay parents.

Discovery Bay residents also had a wardrobe worn specifically during their leisure time on the island. The office manager then in her early 40s, described hers:

'Either shorts or pedal-pusher things; tops; or little sun-dressy-type things. Cotton, a variety of colours: pink, blue - I am quite a colourful person - leopard-print.'¹⁶³ This informant had a collection of leopard-print clothing, which she viewed as a classic look. She added: 'I tended to dress very casually for going down [to] the Plaza or sitting around the house, or going to peoples' houses: I was very casual in Discovery Bay.'¹⁶⁴ Without generalising, both informants are representative of many of the residents of Lamma and Lantau respectively. The comparison between the casual dress of Lamma and the rather cute look of Lantau situated in the same climate, just a few miles from each other, was striking and a visible manifestation of residents' identities, priorities, and concerns.

In addition to the life described above, at the bottom of the scale were the economy of Chung-king Mansions in Tsim Sha Shui together with a traveller's lifestyle.¹⁶⁵ Residence in Chung-king Mansions offered proximity to the small stores on the ground floor, but more importantly, a chance to 'swap' clothes with other residents, usually other Western travellers. It is worth recording a description of this method of exchange in detail, as I believe it has yet to be researched. This is from an English traveller now a resident interior designer, then in her 20s:

'... you live in the hostels: there are seven towers. There are endless hostels in the towers: you could get completely lost. I moved twice and you just got to know people, and once you got to know them, you'd just say 'I like your T-shirt do you want to swap it for these trousers?' or something like that. You would never swap a T-shirt for a T-shirt.'

[Why?]

'You just wouldn't. Normally someone would see something that they liked on someone else. I mean, you have been wearing these clothes day-in and day-out for months.'

[So they don't look that new?]

'But to swap a T-shirt for a T-shirt. It would be very rare that you get two people who would want to swap. They wouldn't necessarily like the person's T-shirt but they would like something else, the trainers, or whatever.'

[So it was a higher value item for a lower value item?]

'No, it was just one item for one item. They were valueless. They weren't worth anything: the T-shirt and a pair of khaki trousers.'¹⁶⁶

As can be seen from my questions, the value of the garment was irrelevant: its value lay in that fact that someone wanted it, this made it an equivalent to any other

garment irrespective of its age, condition, or type of garment. In fact, it was unlikely that two garments of the same type would be swapped. Swapping was a device to facilitate social interchange and extend social networks, using the medium of garments devised by young travellers. Presumably this was not unique to Hong Kong or Southeast Asia, and although this idea has been extended in the West as a series of events (for example, for children's clothes or charity promotions), this topic would benefit from further research. My traveller informant arrived in Hong Kong with a wardrobe that she had acquired whilst travelling: a badge, or rather a 'skin' of passage. She elaborated:

'I set off [from England in the early 1990s] with a pair of trousers, a pair of leggings, one T-shirt. I didn't even have a jumper I don't think. Minimum, minimum, clothes. People buy things - scarves and things like that - so that you can actually 'swap' a scarf for a T-shirt. I bought a scarf in India and I 'swapped' it for a T-shirt. And I wore this T-shirt - I remember it was green, it had no sleeves, it was so comfortable - and I wore that T-shirt for 2 years, not constantly, but I had it in my wardrobe because it was so comfortable and it was one of those things that you put on, you look O.K., and you don't have to worry about it.'¹⁶⁷

The notion that it was possible to wear a T-shirt for two years in Hong Kong was almost inconceivable to the host community and most expatriate Western women, whose detailed knowledge of fashion allowed them to accurately identify the launch season of designer-brand merchandise.

As local dress codes continued to be appropriated, expatriate Western women often became critical of other tourists' and expatriate Western women's dress, as the same ex-traveller remembered of the early 1990s: 'I can't tell you the [number of] times I went out at night [and saw that] they [expatriate Western women] try[ed] to wear the same clothes as local people but in a most 'European-way,' you can imagine!'¹⁶⁸ Further questioning revealed she was not criticizing wearing pre-modern Chinese dress or the *cheongsam*, but fashions in the local boutiques, which had been selected by the buyer with the slim silhouettes of the host community in mind, but were worn by expatriate Western women. An English designer then in her 30s, understood fashion dress as a combination of her own identity and current fashions: '...there are photos of us in the Grunge period, which are very, very definitely fashion-led, dictated.'¹⁶⁹

Shopping itself could be a new experience as the office manager remembered in the early 1990s, given her relative wealth and the availability of inexpensive garments.¹⁷⁰ The ex-New York model, who described herself in the early 1990s as being ‘thin and into fashion,’ was completely absorbed by her new ability to shop and to have items tailor-made.¹⁷¹ Some expatriate Western women appropriated the host population’s passion for designer clothes. The relocation specialist observed that for American women from the mid-West coming to Hong Kong, it was the first time that they had seen designer fashions.¹⁷² For other informants designer brands were an indulgence.¹⁷³

Similar to Woodward’s findings in England: the relocation specialist admitted she tended to wear the same few items repeatedly, both in Hong Kong and in her home in the United States of America, and the English visual merchandise manager inexplicably retained gifted garments even if they were unsuitable, or were acknowledged fashion mistakes. She explained of a white top: ‘That one’s one [top] that had one outing and looked absolutely horrible on me: so, that never saw the light of day again,’ (see photograph of the white top at the end of the chapter).¹⁷⁴ Mindful of Forty’s comment on the conscious act of discarding items as part of a process of remembering or forgetting, this was very unusual.¹⁷⁵ I suggest she retained this garment in order to remind herself not to repeat the same mistake. As she observed with chagrin, local sales assistants could be undermining and brutally honest when invited to give their opinion on expatriate Western women’s dress.¹⁷⁶ For this informant there was a correlation between the perceived importance of the item and the importance of the brand name:

‘But there were certain things where I’d like brand names, not absolutely top designers, but I would like Nike trainers if I was going to have any trainers. I’d get Birkenstock sandals if I were going to wear sandals. But I’m kind of a bit of a ‘label person’ when it comes to certain things but not others. Like my glasses: I’ve got Dolce and Gabbana sunglasses, and I prefer them just because they were Dolce and Gabbana over another pair that I probably liked the style better but I’m a ‘label person’ when it comes to things like that.’¹⁷⁷

Brand names were predominant over style. Even garments that had fallen out of favour were retained:

'I used to love this jacket. This is from Hennes [H&M] and I wore it, and wore it, and then a guy that I actually had a bit of a crush on said to me: 'Oh, it looks like country and Western. You look like Dolly Parton,' and I've never put it on since. That wasn't what I thought it looked like. I absolutely loved that, and then I hated it so much that I was embarrassed that I ever had it.'¹⁷⁸

Again, this seems a particularly unusual action: to like a garment very much and then to intensely dislike it, but still to retain it. Woodward explains this as an aspect of self identity, while I propose that in this instance my informant was flattered by the attention she received when wearing it and therefore retained the garment as an unexplored aspect of herself.¹⁷⁹ However, generally, garments that were not associated with good memories were not retained. A repository of memories, wardrobes sometimes contained garments, which had little use in Hong Kong, because the fabric was too heavy, making it too hot to wear in Hong Kong's high humidity; or it was lined, again making it too heavy to wear in Hong Kong. The same visual merchandiser, one of many who retained inappropriate clothing, commented on a leather coat:

'I really like[d] that and I've never really worn it out here because [there is only] about a month when you can possibly wear it. And it's just sat in my cupboard since I got back [from London].... I've had it for years, and I bought it over: I don't know why.'¹⁸⁰

This underlines the suitability of fashion for a particular city: what was successful in one city did not work in another. Some garments held a promise that they might be worn in the future: '...and it's one of those things you think 'I'll wear that again' but I don't think I've even worn it once,' which was unfulfilled.¹⁸¹ The young artist kept the clothes that she no longer wore, with the deliberate intention of allowing her daughter to dress-up in them, a game that she had enjoyed using her mother's discarded clothing when she was a child.¹⁸²

Miller describes shoppers for whom shopping was dominated by 'saving money by spending money.'¹⁸³ For many expatriate Western women, ways of saving money on the cost of fashion dress were important: a deal; dressmaking; and the purchase of over-makes or seconds, were strategies employed (sometimes needlessly) to reduce the expense of fashionable dress. The price paid for garments was crucial to the pleasure of ownership for the relocation specialist, now in her late 40s, who explained bargaining was a way of life for her:

'I was born in Asia, I've bargained for everything for all my life. The first time I came to Hong Kong at ten, I went to Lane Crawford and bargained and bought a dark-green cardigan sweater, which was so useful in Manila [where she was living], and got my 10 or 15% off in 1965. Quite proud of myself: first time I'd bought anything by myself, I think; first time I'd bought a garment; first time I'd been shopping without my mother; first time almost I'd had anything that wasn't made by a seamstress. Almost the first time I'd had anything with a sleeve in it, let alone wool, in a colour I had never worn.'¹⁸⁴

Her comment illustrates the difference between the casual Western tourist shopping for pleasure, and the expatriate Westerner determined to purchase - even at ten years old - in view of an anticipated famine of suitable dress. She continued, describing the purchase of a pair of black pants in the 1990s:

'I always like to have a deal! I bought them [a pair of pants] from a wonderful shop in Los Angeles that I had never bought anything in, and I went with a girlfriend of mine from New York who had been in fashion and different things. I had been on a diet and I was thin and I bought all these clothes. None of the rest of them, [except one pair of pants] might I add, can I get in to, having never got in to them except in that moment of frenzy at the shop. They're still in that closet, awaiting their special moment. But these pants have become a uniform and I'm sorry I didn't buy two pairs but I thought 'Oh, I'll never wear those: they are far too this, or far too slinky, or far too, not quite stove pipe, they're going to look terrible on me' but I wear them all the time.'¹⁸⁵

Miller's second finding, shopping as an act of love, is illustrated here: in this instance love for oneself.¹⁸⁶ In the first quotation my informant is determined to obtain a bargain as a treat for herself, in the second she hints at the desirability of purchasing in multiples, again for herself. My informant was unmarried and lived alone: shopping was a form of loving herself. The ex-New York model described the urge to treat herself in the 1990s:

'There are times [when] you just need something new? I was on my way to the movies ... to Pacific Place and I had been stuck in to the same outfit all day and just feeling miserable, so I just popped in to the Calvin Klein: bought a T-shirt, bought a jacket, threw it on, and there: I had a new outfit to go to the movies in. That's just pathetic, that's very sad.'¹⁸⁷

Immediately indulging a craving for a new appearance could be easily satisfied in Hong Kong in the 1990s, as it was necessary to walk through a shopping mall to reach almost every cinema. It is ironical that this outfit was purchased in order to be seen sitting in a darkened cinema. My informant is critical of herself, and sees herself as weak-willed in indulging in shopping for this reason, but is also pleased that she has the skills to be able to effortlessly change her appearance.

For some informants, the specific article was key, for example: copy watches were acceptable when they were fashionable in the mid-1980s, but a copy handbag of the 1990s was neither fashionable nor acceptable.¹⁸⁸ Armani, mentioned more than any other contemporary Western designer, was especially popular with older informants.¹⁸⁹ In an ethnic twist, the marketing manager shopped not from Western designers but from Ann Pinkerton, the Singaporean designer.¹⁹⁰ In Lanchester's novel his main character comments on appropriate dress, and the use of designer brand merchandise:

'I had already worked out that, as a general rule, Hong Kong required you to be one and a half notches more dressed up than you would be in England. This applied not just to men's having to wear jackets and ties in the permanent sauna of Hong Kong's summer, but to things like drinks parties and junking. In England, on a day like today, the boat trip would be a nightmare of exposed lard-coloured, mottled and pimply flesh - unless the weather had already been good for a few days, in which case you could throw in some lobsterish burns for good measure. Here though, there were crisp white ducks, imperial-purple Agnes B slacks, John Smedley sea island cotton tops - and that was just the men. I had on my lightest English long trousers (Joseph, in all-too-easily-stainable-cream) and a too-cheap-not-to-be-fake Marc Jacobs dark blue silk shirt from a new shop in Tsim Sha Tsui arcade - and I was only just getting by. My secret weapon was a new black Gucci one-piece swimsuit.'¹⁹¹

Informants shared a common grief when a garment that they loved was deemed so worn that it was no longer possible to wear, the buyer then in her 30s, remembered:

'I got very sad when things wore out, very sad. In fact, in the office I have got a couple of things that have worn out. The lining, there is one pair of trousers completely gone on the bum, really, but I loved the style so much, if I could find the fabric I would do [make] them again because they were so timeless.'¹⁹²

Most informant interviews contained similar statements of regret. Despite Gurel's work on dress as a skin, regret was always confined to the garment and not extended to the former selves that wore the garment.¹⁹³ Ambiguously, in these statements fashion was based on change and was acknowledged as inevitable, but was also seen as something that could be circumvented.¹⁹⁴ Therefore a second opportunity to purchase an extra garment accounted for some multiple purchasing or 'binge shopping':

'... but there was a skirt: I liked so much I bought two. This is really fab. [holds up Thai-silk skirt]. It is a French designer and I got it in Browns, but it wasn't very expensive for Browns: it was about a hundred quid [pounds]. You tie it in at the back and it is really dead simple, then you have got like a bustle. I wore it to a wedding... That look, I think, I really like and I reckon I could wear that sort of stuff for ages. I really liked this so much that I went back on the next trip and they had put it in the sale, this one, but I don't wear this one so much but I will, one day I will wear this.'... 'it's French: Noir Ebene.'¹⁹⁵

This informant describes her second colour purchase which, as was often the case, was not as successful as her first colour choice.¹⁹⁶ The ex-New York model, who had developed 'feast and famine' practices of 'binge shopping' in outlet stores, went on to practise the same shopping techniques wherever she shopped:

'I would go in to Marks and Spencer's and they'd just have a new shipment of shoes, so I'd buy every size 41 shoe that they had and then I'd bring them home and go: 'Well those aren't really great,' and I'd throw them away, literally, or give them to my maid and say: 'Do you have any big-footed friends?' It was horrible, it was really bad.'¹⁹⁷

As for my informant above, 'binge shopping' was justified by the 'Sloane Ranger' as time saving: it simplified her wardrobe choices and minimized her indecisiveness in choosing dress:

'Oh, I don't buy ones, that's another thing I haven't mentioned. I don't buy in ones. When I had my own shoes made, when I had them made I have four pairs at a time, all the same colour, same thing. I was in ... I bought twelve pairs, 'binge buying,' yes, but ... I tend to see what I like, I know myself well, and go for it.' ... 'I should think I am an example of buying in multiples. I mean, not just dozens, I will buy dozens and dozens!'¹⁹⁸

Tailoring and dressmaking was by this time relatively expensive, yet 'binge shopping' was justified by her mother's advice: 'Something my mother always taught me was: 'Never go out and buy a single piece.' I mean, if you are going to buy a pair of trousers, buy a top to match it because you will spend a lot more time trying to work out what goes with what.'¹⁹⁹ This classic piece of fashion wardrobe advice works for busy women. As a form of rationing the impulses of 'binge shopping,' the American visual merchandise manager revealed she allowed herself one item per month from a specific designer store.²⁰⁰ Generally, 'binge-shopping' was completed with self-awareness but, occasionally, the idea was reluctantly acknowledged.²⁰¹ Exclusivity remained important even for those purchasing in outlet stores as one informant explained. She was happy to shop in inexpensive stores overseas as long as the same garments were not available in Hong Kong.²⁰² The importance of exclusivity was in the country in which it would be worn, not the country in which it was purchased.

The ex-New York model, reflecting on her former self, observed how disinterested she had become in fashion due to the difficulties she increasingly faced in purchasing from a limited selection:

'... [fashion] was just endlessly fascinating to me, and also I was really thin, and so I could wear anything. Seriously, as choices become limited: your interest wanes. It's like; I don't buy shoes here: I've lost interest in shoes because I cannot buy shoes in Asia. Your interest follows what's available to you.'... 'I remember being nine months pregnant and buying a pair of size 8 shorts and the [sales] girl thought that I was crazy, and I was like: 'Really, I'll be able to fit in to these when this child is out.'²⁰³

Her example of being so interested in fashion that she would buy speculatively if she saw something she wanted, is a good illustration of how fascinated she was by fashion all the time - even whilst pregnant.

The marketing manager showed me her shoe collection dating back more than ten years: each pair in their box, with a photograph of the shoes (taken by her husband) fixed to the end of the box (see photograph at the end of this chapter).²⁰⁴ It is interesting that her husband had attempted to catalogue them for her. It seems unlikely that this was an attempt on his part to contain her purchasing, as she purchased shoes from middle-market retailers and could have spent considerably more had she wished. She had accepted his help and was content that he had

attempted to help her, but was not very concerned about the cataloguing: it was something that he was concerned about, but not a matter of great importance to her. As wardrobes and shoes were catalogued, so too were women. The ex-New York model remembered the fashion for cuteness, particularly marked in Hong Kong, as it originated in Japan and was therefore widely emulated, in the early 1990s:

‘We would be at these events for the magazine, if a camera [photographer] came over we’d all just automatically go: tilt our heads and smile, because everyone of them, all the Pearl Poons and Yvette Yeungs, all did the same: head tilt, long hair, same look: the hair had to be long, and straight, and thick. The make-up was just so, and the clothes were what I call the ‘Balbino-Wong-suit.’ She is the woman who runs Lane Crawford, and over the years she’s allowed her buyers to bring in more and more interesting designers, but they still buy the same pieces from those designers so you’ve [still] got the red gabardine suit with gold buttons.’²⁰⁵

Effectively, the identical suits and poses catalogued women as being fashionable, and reinforce the notion that fashion is a uniform: the red gabardine suit varied from designer to designer each year but it was effectively a fashionable uniform.

As an alternative Hong Kong fashion look, Shanghai Tang became popular when it opened although, as shown above, it was not an original concept.²⁰⁶ Many informants distinguished between wearing Asian-inspired clothing (particularly from Shanghai Tang), in Hong Kong, and wearing it in their home countries, where it appeared to contribute to self-exoticization.²⁰⁷ A private-label supplier used Shanghai Tang product as source material for her business, observing that the British High Street chain, Monsoon’s Oriental-look, was often ‘very Shanghai Tang.’²⁰⁸ The same informant explained that there would be an expectation amongst her social circle that her dress would reflect her life experience: ‘...most of our friends will know that we lived in Hong Kong and they will expect me to pull out something like that.’²⁰⁹ She anticipated needing Shanghai Tang-style dress in future in order to be able to continue to identify herself to people in her home country as someone who had lived in Hong Kong:

‘So the Shanghai Tang stuff is all back in England, and the *cheongsams* [sic.], which is why I think - I was brought up literally never to waste anything - I sent back the velvets and the Shanghai Tang suit with the rolled-up sleeves, and I know that I will wear it - as long as it is alright - but I will wear it in future... I wouldn’t throw them away. I have

got an archive, I do keep an archive collection [of garments] from which some of these have been pulled out, this one, I won't wear this now. Most of that I would still wear, I still wear, but velvet's a little bit more interesting, and I might need these in future.'²¹⁰

This was not just self-exoticizing: this was an attempt to create a unique and memorable look, or image, for herself in the future as a fashionable person, despite her anticipated relocation to what she saw as a relatively unfashionable country. As Pearce suggests above, the garments form a mystical bridge linking personal history, the past and present, and act as carriers of information about her interests and occupation.²¹¹ My informant continued:

'I do wear Chinese-type clothing and Chinese-styled clothes but they are not necessarily antiques or old, and I never wear them here: I rarely wear them here. I usually wear them in England where it is more interesting to wear them.'²¹²

This informant distinguished between wearing dress that was commonplace in Hong Kong because it was identifiable and easily available:

'Shanghai Tang type stuff... that sort of thing you can wear very comfortably overseas. But most expat.-wives have got it here, if I wore it here, for me it wouldn't be good as you would bump in to so many other Caucasians in it, whereas there [the U.K.] it is much better because it cuts much more of a dash because people sort of think, 'Oh, is that Hong Kong?''²¹³

As museum curator Verity Wilson commented in her paper at the Costume Society conference: 'Dressing up in other people's clothes was often best done when you were safely back in your own country.'²¹⁴ Similarly, an English designer wore an 'I love Hong Kong' T-shirt on leaving the Territory, metaphorically taking part of Hong Kong with her (see photograph at the end of this chapter).²¹⁵

Even informants who claimed not to like Asian-inspired dress frequently owned a garment from Shanghai Tang (see photograph at the end of the chapter of one of the classic designs: velvet with a bright silk-satin jacquard lining). Sometimes this was justified as having something exceptional about it: one informant described purchasing a navy cardigan, apparently a colour Tang did not like.²¹⁶ Shanghai Tang customers were loosely referred to as 'non-working expatriate Western wives

who shopped' by other expatriate Western informants, as this English visual merchandiser who worked for the company in the mid-1990s observed:

'I remember thinking: 'All the women who go in there, I never see them really around the streets, I never see that type women there, they're probably always married to finance men.' And I remember thinking, 'What they're wearing - quite frumpy shoes, the clasp handbag, sort of Maggie Thatcher style - and I remember thinking: 'Where do these people go? Where do they live?'

[What were they wearing?]

'Apart for apart from Shanghai Tang at that time? They wore little Chanel style suits, actually that was probably more the *tai-tais*, I'm grossly generalizing now.'

[Back to the group you describe: what where they doing in Shanghai Tang anyway?]

'Probably buying gifts for people back home? No? [Laughs] But, often when I got to social events where it was a society gathering, there was always somebody wearing a Shanghai Tang jacket or a Shanghai Tang scarf. It became a bit of a cliché.'²¹⁷

Festivals such as St Andrew's Day, Burn's Night, Valentine's Day, Halloween, and Thanksgiving (particularly popular with Hong Kong Chinese educated in the United States of America), were celebrated with balls, dinners, or events in Lan Kwai Fong, each demanding a particular dress code - for which *cheongsam* from Shanghai Tang was widely acceptable.²¹⁸

A few informants retained self-consciousness of the dress of their home countries. The English visual merchandiser, then in her 30s, felt self-conscious irrespective of the people who surrounded her, believing this was reflected in her dress:

'So I dress more 'normally' than I probably would if I was a different shape and had a different lifestyle. If I was some young, rich, skinny-thing that had a yacht parked outside, I'd probably wear [designer fashions] all the time, but in reality corner ... I think I've always stood apart from everybody else because of my upbringing: I had quite a strange upbringing, and I so wanted to be part of a crowd that I was never that 'alternative.' Whereas, maybe I like the style to be that 'alternative,' but for me I always want to blend-in much more than I want to stand out. So I tend to wear very neutral clothes.'²¹⁹

Neutral colours and styles enabled her to claim that she reduced the effect of her appearance although she wore her blonde hair long and wavy: unusual in a city of women with dark straight hair, and she was therefore, nevertheless, conspicuous.

Unaware of this, she regretted not having what she saw as the fortitude to ‘stand-out from the crowd,’ and to refuse to comply with local fashions.²²⁰ Aware that this decision contributed to her overflowing wardrobe, she perceived this idiosyncrasy as a lack in her character and the reason for the quantity of her fashion purchases. Whilst rationally describing her wardrobe, the ‘Sloane Ranger’ explained her personal idiosyncrasies:

‘Actually you really ought to come and see my wardrobe because you would laugh. No-one would believe it.’ ... ‘You would be able to see in a nutshell. It is quite, quite unusual. One side is a walk-in closet which is a dream to have: one side is, all, forty, I should think, suits, trouser suits, all of which, I would say ninety percent are from white to beige, to beige to beige. Then I have three black [suits]. On the other side I have my evening wardrobe which is white, whiter than white: silk, and then I have, next to that I have orange, bright green, and fuchsia, and they are what I call ‘things to be worn occasionally.’²²¹

This informant describes the luxury of space; how her wardrobe is organised; and her taste in colours which she attributed to age, but which has simplified her decisions about dress.²²² Blaming fashion for the shortcomings of all dress, this informant summarized her simplified wardrobe as a ‘release’ from fashion, like the unburdening of a donkey enjoying its sudden freedom.²²³ As Woodward’s findings suggest, this informant has found a means of dressing which enabled her to look very stylish whilst at the same time claiming that she did not follow fashion.²²⁴ My informant reveals her increased self-confidence in her appearance, the result of highly individual shopping and wardrobe strategies, which nevertheless complied with broader dress codes and fashions.²²⁵ When forced by a lack of space, necessity, or relocation, informants emptied their wardrobes but those able to retain garments did so. The same informant anthropomorphised the contents of her wardrobe, describing her feelings about one suit she explained:

‘I was not comfortable with this [suit]. The colour isn’t quite right with this jacket, [it was] the second time I wore it only, so I didn’t know very well, I tend not to complicate my life, for instance if I was going to see someone about a big sponsorship, the most important thing to me was to wear an old favourite friend that you feel really comfortable in. Occasionally, like [for] this large gala, Greg from The House of Siren made me a leather dress with studs. It was Harley Davidson: it was off-the-shoulder and very, well, very way-out. I only collected the dress the day of the event and I had a last

fitting the day before, and I had to wear a body... I had to go to one of the Japanese department stores and haul myself into one of these bodies. I wasn't as comfortable in the dress even though it fitted beautifully and did the business satisfactorily, but because it wasn't an 'old friend,' I wasn't as comfortable as I might have been. So my motto is, I have said to myself, any big event where I have to get up and speak, I think: 'You should walk around the house so you know how it sits when you sit down.' Every outfit you have has a personality of its own.'²²⁶

This informant's unease with fancy-dress clothing contrasted with the experiences of other informants, who welcomed an opportunity to wear exotic clothing. The favoured dress solutions of expatriate Western women were criticized not only by the host community, but also by expatriate fashion professionals: the ex-buyer summarized: 'Bigger girls complain of the size: American/Australian. [The] little ones [wear] Capri pants and mini skirts.'²²⁷ For her, Mums, school nurses, and bankers were 'terrible frights.' She observed: 'The older ones dressed with even less skill than the younger ones.'²²⁸

Although fashion dress is part of a system embodying the period to which it belongs, many informants justified their purchase of fashion dress as 'buying for the future.' This suggests a rather confused or naïve thinking about fashion, yet this justification was even repeated by the ex-buyer, who became a successful entrepreneur supplying trendy young-fashion merchandise to the British High Street:

'I will always wear it sometime but I always buy it as an investment in mind. Something that is inexpensive, a T-shirt I don't mind, but something that is expensive then I would buy it as an investment, but I would wear it year after year after year!'²²⁹

The notion of investment dressing reappears in periods of recession, and is used to promote 'classic' or 'basic' fashions which appealed to some informants. It can be used as a means of justifying expensive purchase, in that it will theoretically last a longer period of time than something, which is more fashionable. Many expatriate Western women bought from less-expensive ranges, particularly from Stanley Market.²³⁰ With the passage of time, informants gained an objective view of their actual appearance. An English visual merchandiser in her 30s remembered:

'I remember one pair of trousers that I absolutely loved and they were so horrible. They were almost like curtain fabric: they were stripy. Where did I buy them? I think I might

have bought them in India, but they were more like a Nepalese kind-of-thing. They were very fitted and then like bellbottoms. And they were quite hideous because there were a lot of different colours, and not a very nice fabric. I wore them until the crotch had completely gone in them, but I still wore them with a really long T-shirt. I didn't even sew them up: they were that scraggy and horrible. And when I look back now I think 'God why did I like them?' I just wore them, and wore them, and I loved them so much.'²³¹

This difficulty in recognising the true appearance of a garment perhaps explains why late adopters continue to wear garments for a longer period of time than it is fashionable, that is, not because they are not aware of the new up-coming fashion, but because they are still in love with a former fashion, or a specific garment, or because of a specific circumstance in a given city. For example: the constant low temperature at which air-conditioning was set surprised expatriate Western women relocating to Hong Kong from temperate climates. As a consequence, the use of the *pashmina* continued, even though its fashionable status had declined in other cities.²³²

Very practically, many informants kept a limited number of cold-weather clothes for use on return visits to the cooler-climates of their home countries. Inevitably, friends and relatives tired of seeing informants wearing the same clothes on each return visit.²³³ The difficulty of storing infrequently-used bulky items of clothing, prompted sharing as a gesture of friendship between informants.²³⁴

Expatriate Western women continued to develop a keen interest in regional ethnic dress.²³⁵ Rationalising their choices, some informants who travelled extensively claimed the flat nature of regional Asian dress appealed as it facilitated ease of packing.²³⁶ An English designer in her 40s explained she wore Asian-detail inspired clothes on her return to her England, citing a Liberty print Tana-lawn quilted waistcoat with a stand-collar and frogging closure from the late 1970s, as an example of Asian-inspired dress.²³⁷ Some informants had a vacation wardrobe or a wardrobe of clothes for a specific festival, for example: two informants had tartan wardrobes, of (as Lou Taylor explains) imaginary 'Scottish' ethnicity, which they wore from the beginning of December to Christmas (see photograph at the end of this chapter).²³⁸ Again this was a form of 'binge shopping' or dress collecting, as neither was Scots nor married in to Scottish families. 'Ethnic-look' designer-jewellery and accessories were worn by expatriate Western women, some of whom

‘collected’ regional, ethnic silver jewellery.²³⁹ These jewellery collections were purchased with the intention that they be worn as decorative accessories.

Informants working in creative industries wore some regional ethnic dress; for others there was an opportunity to wear ethnic dress on vacation within the region. One Asian dress historian noticed that expatriate Western women attending the Asian Civilisations Museum talks in Singapore, wore woven lengths of fabric of South or Southeast Asian ethnic origin as shoulder cloths, or ethnic jewellery as a badge of experience and a talking point.²⁴⁰

Appropriation of ethnic dress was not confined to ready-made merchandise: many informants purchased ethnic textiles whilst travelling and had them made in to contemporary Western fashion garments. Sometimes this was not completed by tailors as in the past, but rather by a designer’s sample machinists, as failure to achieve the desired garment was blamed on language difficulties.²⁴¹ Sometimes this deliberate conflation was intended to create a hybrid garment as this English designer, then in her 30s, explained:

‘I bought *saris* in India, [which] I have still got here. They are at work in order to make, not a *sari*, but in order to make something. I haven’t decided what, but probably a little Chinese jacket with trousers, I would think. So, it is sort of Eastern styling, but it is made out of *sari* fabric.’²⁴²

This deliberate hybridization explores two distinct cultures combined with the viewpoint of Western contemporary fashion dress - as that of international couture designers. Three informants had their Thai fishermen’s pants copied in a range of silk fabrics creating hybridised ethnic dress: styled as Southeast Asian ethnic dress but constructed using, for example, Italian silks, or regional textiles (see photograph at the end of this chapter).²⁴³

In addition to a growing interest in ethnic dress, some informants developed an interest in Asian religions, which was reflected in their dress. This growing interest in spirituality changed the appearance of one informant who adopted white as her ‘colour.’ However, another, adopting the same beliefs, made no change in her appearance.²⁴⁴ The appeal of ethnic dress became pervasive: the ‘Sloane Ranger’ also shopped in Egg and Shirin Guild (fashionable-ethnic dress brands) when in London.²⁴⁵ The very stylish American visual merchandiser, then in her early 40s,

explained the relationship between personality and appearance as she experienced it:

'I try to wear things [that are] fashionable but look like 'me.' I really like fashion, but [I] just pick up the things that really suit me otherwise it doesn't feel right... Because I think that the clothes are part of your personality, so if you don't feel comfortable with your outside, you cannot feel great inside.'²⁴⁶

Describing how she balanced a fashion look with garments congruent with her perception of her personality, my informant has learned that if she did not feel physically (and mentally) comfortable she could not feel, as the French say: *Bien dans sa peau*.²⁴⁷ Garments worn during identity-forming experiences were treasured above all else. This English visual merchandising manager commented on the contents of her second wardrobe full of no longer worn garments: 'These are the things I can't get rid of: all travelling things. That would be me when I first arrived in Hong Kong [indicating a dress]... and I'll never ever get rid of it: these are like memory-clothes.'²⁴⁸ Sometimes these were clothes which could not be worn anywhere in Hong Kong, but which were perfect for travelling through India (see photograph of kaftan at the end of this chapter), and sometimes these were garments which would have been acceptable in Hong Kong (see photograph of the Thai silk top at end of the chapter). The garments represented memories in the same way that photographs do. As Woodward observes, clothing is 'a medium that relates surface to depth is as much the fibres that conduct the judgements of others to the inside, as the intentions of the self to the outside.'²⁴⁹ Similarly, travellers' dress was purchased, worn, and retained as embodying a desired identity, despite, or sometimes because of, its poor quality. The English visual merchandiser continued:

[Holding up an Indian garment] 'It's got that look hasn't it? That's what I was saying about local fashion: that if you're wearing anything other than this in India you do look a bit odd, you know, if you're [dressed] in really nice stuff? At the point when I was there it was definitely the case that anything that looked reasonably well-made was just so naff.'²⁵⁰

Poor quality dress was less obtrusive in relatively poor areas of the Asian region, where good-quality fashion dress seemed offensively inappropriate to this informant.

The ex-buyer enjoyed the opportunity to create and expand her collection of Asian textiles, initially purchased when she visited Hong Kong on business in the 1980s from the antique shops of Hollywood Road; The China Arts and Crafts department store; and over-makes from Chinese garment factories.²⁵¹ Conflating time, she saw adopting pre-modern Chinese dress as an opportunity to be a 'visual ambassador' for Hong Kong in the West: 'I quite like that idea, yes, because I think it is quite fun. Why not? So it is quite nice, not as ambassador-ess, but that sort of thing.'²⁵² Mindful of notions of Orientalism, self-exoticizing, and a shorthand means of declaring familiarity with Asia (see earlier Chapters), I believe she was nevertheless visually declaring her familiarity with the contemporary Chinese garment production system, as a means of underlining her knowledge and her uniqueness, to her British customers. In an interesting twist on the adoption of Asian-inspired clothing, this informant also collected Asian-inspired dress from the collections of Western fashion designers: 'Some of what I have got is authentic Chinese, but some of it is what designers have done, which I bought because it has got a Chinese 'flavour.'²⁵³ Examining her collection, I understood a 'Chinese flavour' could be the design of the print, the weave, the colour, the cut of the garment, or the detailing. She showed me items from her wardrobe with enthusiasm (see photograph of a Prada willow-leaf woven brocade suit at end of this chapter):

'This is Prada [1997 collection]. They did the trousers in Chinese brocade and they did this top, and I just think this is fantastic, actually. I loved this. It is great because it is Chinese but it is not Chinese - sort of thing. Everyone ripped it off: Marks and Spencer's had it too. This sort of thing, this, I loved.'²⁵⁴

Much of her collection of Asian-inspired Western-made dress was made using Asian fabrics: Thai silks; silk satin jacquard; referencing Chinese pre-modern dress. Other garments included stand-collars, frog-fastenings, or rectangular cutting techniques, for example: one Armani jacket with stand-collar detailing was clearly an Armani product: it was Armani-coloured, and made of an Armani-preferred fabric: a fine woven Italian wool, yet the stand collar added a Chinese element to its obvious Italian origin.²⁵⁵ The informant classified Vivienne Tam as a Western designer; for her, ethnicity had little to do with place, but rather lay in the spirit of the garment or its ethos. My informant purchased and wore contemporary Chinese

pre-modern dress available in Chinese cities at reasonable prices. These were frequently decorated with embroidery, beading, or made from *ikat* fabrics, and were usually worn with Western jeans.²⁵⁶ Part of the appeal of adopting Asian ethnic dress lay in its novelty: as Ribiero observes, there is no European equivalent.²⁵⁷ The closest comparable European dress has been appropriated by the fetish industry: the corset, the *basque*, and maids' uniforms suggest meanings quite different to that of wearing Asian dress.

The lack of garments for expatriate Western women who did not fit easily in to locally available merchandise provoked a 'feast and famine' attitude to fashion dress. The ex-New York model explained that by the 1990s she rarely purchased garments in Hong Kong, but shopped in the United States of America and had her purchases shipped: 'It was like Christmas when they arrived,' she explained.²⁵⁸ The opportunity to purchase clothes with ease was greeted with elation when it occurred but was usually salutary. Concerns about how fashionable garments were, were eclipsed by concerns about fit: 'Fashionable has gone way down on the priority list, fit is way up high: 'Does it fit? I'll take it.'²⁵⁹

To summarise the 1990s, in self-fulfilling prophecy, size was experienced as a problem if it was perceived as a problem. Without exception informants rejected implied criticism of their size by either seeing their profession (fashion) as giving them a wider view of aesthetic shape than the host community, or by continuing to use their Western compatriots as a benchmark. Nevertheless, the formality of Hong Kong dress and the desire for unique or exclusive dress continued at all levels of the market. Copy merchandise was worn by some expatriate Western women when it was fashionable, and by other women at their personal discretion. Of the informants who stored clothing, many were emphatic that they would never part with various items (from a T-shirt to Nepalese pants) because of their sentimental value, and much was retained for many years, including garments, which were disliked or no longer worn.²⁶⁰ 'Much-loved' clothes defied rationale, their meaning overrode styling, fabric, colour, and condition in the eyes of their owner, suggesting that late adoption is a more complex phenomenon than previously proposed. It was, in fact, an example of continued love. Disliked garments were rarely retained. Informants increasingly purchased from designer brands and 'binge shopping' persisted at all levels of the market: purchasing Shanghai Tang-styled, regional ethnic, and pre-modern dress, some of which was deliberately worn in the

West in order to display various Asian expertise. Fashions specific to Hong Kong varied from those of other cities: these were sometimes observed by expatriate Western women and sometimes unrecognized. As a result some informants maintained that they dressed with freedom from fashion. Other informants remained self-conscious about their dress choices. The Lamma and Lantau islands had their own dress codes, which contrasted with those of Central, where the sales assistants could be particularly critical. The 'swapping' of dress is noted as phenomenon deserving more attention.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have shown how identity was embedded in the fashion dress of expatriate Western women informants in Hong Kong. From first arrival; first shopping experiences; to an increasing understanding of the community in which they found themselves, fashion dress played a key part in establishing their identities. However, unlike other parts of my interviews to which informants responded easily, it proved difficult to elicit a direct response from most expatriate Western women on how their dress reflected their identities.²⁶¹

Recognition of local fashion dress on arrival was a keen and memorable experience: as though they were seeing distinctive fashion dress for the first time, rather than a slowly evolving process of which they had previously been part. For some, an appreciation of local fashion developed rapidly, while for others this was something that they did not recognise. When they could not identify with local fashion leaders they used other women whom they knew.²⁶² Dress fulfilled expatriates' needs for: smartness, travel, cold weather, and air-conditioned environments, together with a desire to look fashionable (in their own terms) at an acceptable price. For all informants, fashion remained important or became more so than it had been for them in their home countries.

Many of the dress and accessory collections made by expatriate Western women were opportunistic vacation purchases rather than part of an ethnographic methodological project, but, without doubt, their purchases helped to perpetuate regional craft skills, and, as Stewart suggests, formed mementoes of travel.²⁶³ Despite limited storage space available to many Hong Kong-based expatriate Western women, the significance of these items for their owners literally made their owners different, and were therefore not easily relinquished. Whilst most

informants agreed that dress reflected identities, this was difficult to illustrate in ways which were not simplifications as Finkelstein notes.²⁶⁴ Retention of clothing indicated significance, as though, as Horn and Gurel propose, informants had retained the skins of their former selves.²⁶⁵ The importance of manifesting identities through dress was demonstrated by examination of the garments that informants chose to keep: those no longer embodying an informant's identity were sometimes discarded; those in which identity was (and continued to be) embodied were retained. Ethnic dress was purchased to wear on occasion, but mostly with the intention of maintaining a distinctive appearance on return to a home country, where dress could be used to link the past and the present.

First clothing purchases in Hong Kong were for some expatriate Western women an opportunity to explore tailoring and dressmaking, a form of fun, or desperation driven by necessity.²⁶⁶ Expatriate Western women's concepts of appropriate dress changed as they became accustomed to Hong Kong regional dress codes. The distinctive smartness and a later preference for cuteness of the local population formed a background against which expatriate Western women dressed. Lamma and Lantau had their own dress codes which contrasted with those of Central, where the sales assistants could be particularly critical. The 'swapping' of dress is noted as a phenomenon deserving more attention. After a period of adjustment, expatriate Western women's changed appearance and identities generated a sense of re-birth, as they supplemented their wardrobes with tailored or, occasionally, homemade garments. Despite difficulties in finding suitable fashion dress, expatriate Western women continued to attempt to maintain a fashionable appearance, using their own ideas of fashion, whilst selectively rejecting local fashions that they considered inappropriate.²⁶⁷ When Hong Kong regional fashions occasionally became globally fashionable, informants aware of international fashion change delighted in early adoption of these styles. Again, selective recognition and adoption of international fashions contrasted with informants' tendency to ignore inappropriate local fashions. Copy merchandise was worn by some expatriate Western women only when fashionable, and at their personal discretion by others. Whilst tailored garments were judged successful, they were rarely highly esteemed or retained. The difficulty in predicting the success of a tailor's work lay in how well the identity of the individual, including

gender, was embodied in the actual garment. If this was not the case, despite high standards of technical construction and fit, the garment was never esteemed.

Of all Southeast Asian ethnic dress, the *cheongsam* achieved unique recognition as an icon of Asian sexuality, and was widely appropriated by expatriate Western women when the host community ceased to wear it as everyday dress.²⁶⁸ For some expatriate Western women, the *cheongsam* was a form of dress to enjoy and with which to experiment. For others, it represented the dress of a section of the host community which they would never appropriate: informants who had married in to Asian families were less likely to adopt Asian dress than those who had relocated to Asia for other reasons, claiming it felt physically and mentally uncomfortable.²⁶⁹ If the *cheongsam* is considered as an anti-fashion symbol, as Polhemous explains: 'Anti fashion symbols represent society as it is, or it ought to be in the case of dystopian style, as it should not be.'²⁷⁰ He continues: 'Anti fashion styles are always social symbols.'²⁷¹ The *cheongsam* should be seen as an exotic self-advertisement and anti-fashion alternative to Western fashion dress. Other Southeast Asian garments, particularly Thai fishermen's pants, were worn at home, on vacation, or formed a separate wardrobe worn as occasion demanded.²⁷² Several informants created collections of Thai fishermen's pants and hybridized pants, from locally produced craft-textiles or antique fabrics. The appropriation of Asian dress, particularly the *cheongsam* and Southeast Asian clothing, allowed expatriate Western women to announce their expatriate status to their social group. The *cheongsam's* reputation as a sexy dress from the 1960s was replaced by its use in the 1980s and '90s as either self-exotizing dress, or conservative compliance depending on context, reducing the anxiety of the wearer on special occasions in Hong Kong and overseas, just as the tailored suit had fulfilled a similarly conservative choice in the 1960s and '70s. No longer socially predominant, and out-classed in dress by the host population, expatriate Western women developed ways of projecting their Asian knowledge through ethnic dress and through the appropriation of local brands. Dress strategies were both a source of creativity and a means by which to increase their knowledge of Asia.

Informants generally remembered where and when they had purchased garments and accessories and were keen to describe their collections.²⁷³ Fashion, textiles, accessories, or ethnic dress collections made by informants firstly reflected opportunity and interest, and secondly, borrowed the authority of academic

research, even those collections created with the intention of being worn. These included: accessories; jewellery from a specific region; a particular ethnic textile or garment; and either original or hybridized copies of originals. Whilst collections did not arouse envy or jealousy, conspicuous consumption of fashion merchandise did.²⁷⁴

The price of fashion dress was for some expatriate Western women, more than they felt comfortable paying, and may explain 'investment' rationalizations. Expatriate Western women experienced specific problems in finding suitable fashion dress, but overcame them using a number of strategies: shopping overseas or in multiples mitigated constraints caused by a lack of choice, therefore 'binge shopping' was rationalised as a necessity by informants able to indulge time and money in this practice. Informants were aware how easy it was to purchase merchandise that was subsequently never worn, but this was seen as an inevitable cost of fashionable dressing. For some informants, 'binge shopping' provided a form of entertainment, which for others it was a strategy in order to maintain a creditable appearance in a situation with few alternatives. Size was a prevailing problem for some women, but the mid-part of the period ironically offered more opportunity for informants, who were generally well able to afford quality merchandise, to purchase seconds and over-makes from local manufacturers who made garments for Western overseas markets. The prevalence of 'binge shopping' as a form of treating oneself, and as prevention of possible shortage, was near universal. The opportunity to 'binge shop' was taken by every informant with the exception of the three oldest: one who grew up in the United States of America. in the 1930s, nevertheless had large collections of tailor-made clothes (this could be called 'binge-dressmaking'); and two who were newly-married whilst rationing was current in the United Kingdom, one of whom had an extensive jewellery collection.²⁷⁵ Although this sample is very small, I suggest it is possible that the ideology of rationing may have continued to have an impact on these informants' fashion choices.²⁷⁶

Expatriate Western women retained items that they no longer wore because: they persuaded themselves that they would be able to wear them in the future; they saw fashion as a cyclical phenomenon and believed that the garment would, in the course of time become fashionable again; and sometimes because the garments so closely represented the collectors in terms of identity that they could not conceive

of not being able to wear them.²⁷⁷ Particular garments remained meaningful for late adopters for a longer period of time than for other informants. Much-loved clothes defied rationale, their meaning overrode: styling, fabric, colour, and condition in the eyes of their owner, suggesting that late adoption is a more complex phenomena than previously proposed, and can in fact, be seen as an example of continued love.

A background to this chapter has been the decline in the hegemony of expatriate Western women as, conversely, the host population became increasingly sophisticated in their adoption of Western dress. This was paralleled by an increasing number of expatriate Western women who developed a keen interest in ethnic Asian dress. Throughout the period, the expatriate Western women interviewed believed themselves to be more adventurous in their choice of fashion dress after relocation to Hong Kong. An interest in ethnic dress reflected their interest in regional communities, embodying their interest and pleasure in being resident in Southeast Asia, becoming the backbone of a collection for some, but nevertheless present in all informants' wardrobes. I show that the desire to retain the individuality experienced during the period of residence in Hong Kong, due to a lack of acceptable fashion leadership, explains both the adoption of Southeast Asian dress and the quantity of dress collected: informants achieved uniqueness through its adoption and were loathe to relinquish it. The accumulation of ethnic dress, bridging an Asian past and their future return to their home countries, enabled them to continue to maintain their unique, visual individuality on their return to their home countries. Lurie suggests the 'non-fashion' status of Asian dress lends an aura of timelessness, a characteristic of Orientalism, but this is to see ethnic dress as unchanging and of 'timeless' technology (an impossibility). Yet, as an alternative to, or combined with, conventional fashion dress, ethnic dress offered uniqueness, and suggested Asian knowledge.²⁷⁸

My findings raise some further questions: why were some expatriate Western women informants more self-conscious than others? What impact did their husbands or partners, as observer or critic, have on the process of their dress, if any? If expatriate Western women were the target market of Shanghai Tang, and bright colours made them self-conscious, why was Blanc de Chine, (the company retailing Chinese-detailed clothing for Westerners available in core colours: black, brown, navy, beige, or cream) not more popular?²⁷⁹

Expatriate Western women who wore unfashionable dress were partaking in their idea of fashion as much as those who were keenly aware of fashion trend. Nevertheless, a distinctive regional fashion 'look' for all expatriate Western women was perceptible throughout the period, in comparison to the ways in which fashions from their home countries were worn, and in comparison to each nationality's dress. The dialectic of dress, as identity or as a uniform, was visible in informants' collections: whilst some retained dress in order to wear it in a particular season, others wore only what was fashionable.



Figure 233 Informant's wardrobe showing shoe cataloguing system

This informant's husband had photographed her shoes and placed a picture on the end of each shoe box.

Informant interview: A.S.D.S. 13.06.01.



Figure 234 Informant's wardrobe, jacket collection

This informant had a similar amount of space for her collection of pants, and more for scarves, belts, bags, and jewellery,

Informant interview: A.S.D.S. 13.06.01.



Figure 235 Junk trip dress 1990s

The photographs on the left and at the bottom both taken on junks, show the casual dressiness required for a fish supper on Lamma on a week-night.

Informant interview: A.S.V.L. 31.07.01.



Figure 236 A mistake: white top

'It looks like a nightie.'... 'I think I bought it in Causeway Bay: it's the only place I go. And I put it on and in the shop I thought 'Oh, it looks really nice.' I put it on and honestly it looks like a winceyette nightie [napped flannelette cotton fabric, brushed on both sides, used to make a short nightdress]. It just looks absolutely horrible.'

Informant interview: A.J.M.S. 21.05.02.



Figure 237 Chinese theatre robe

Worn as evening dress to attend the theatre in the U.K. by a Hong Kong resident.

Informant interview: L.B.F.L. 21.03.02.



Figure 238 Western dress inspired by Asian dress, late 1990s

Prada silk jacket with contrast cuffs and hem, worn with matching willow pattern pants.

Informant interview: S.P.M.L. 03.08.02.



Figure 239 Thai-fishermen's pants

'They are pyjamas for many people but I wear them all the time until they are in shreds.' Informant interview: D.G.W.L. 31.01.00.



Figure 240 Detail of Thai-fishermen's pants above

'I have them in multiple colours: they are mostly all silk, some cotton, indigo cotton.' Informant interview: D.G.W.L. 31.01.00.



Figure 241 Shanghai Tang stand-collar velvet coat with contrast lining

Styled as the earlier collections from what would now be called 'The Authentics collection.'

Informant interview: S.P.M.L. 03.08.02.



Figure 242 'I love Hong Kong' T-shirt 1990s

T-shirt worn by resident on leaving Hong Kong as a declaration of her affection for her former-home.

Informant interview: A.S.V.L. 31.07.01.



Figure 243 Bird's T-shirt 1970s

No longer worn, but retained by owner.

Informant interview: C.M.B.S. 22.05.02.



Figure 244 Travelling clothes 1990s

[You can tell it's made in India.] 'Yes it's got that look hasn't it? That's what I was saying about local fashion: if you're wearing anything other than this in India you do look a bit odd. If you're in really nice stuff: at the point when I was there it was definitely the case that anything that looked reasonably well-made was just so naff.'

Informant interview: A.J.M.S. 21.05.02.



Figure 245 Jacket of Bhutanese door cloth 1960-1970s

This Bhutanese fabric, usually used to make door hangings and furniture coverings, has been made into a jacket by a Hong Kong tailor. The straight edge-to-edge trim joined at the centre-back of the neck, and the matching-cotton fabric pocket lining suggests that there was only just enough fabric available to make the jacket.

Informant interview: C.H.P.F. 29.01.00.



Figure 246 Jacket with Hungarian shepherd's coat collar and cuffs 1970s

This blue woollen jacket, which has a shoulder shape and patch pockets suggesting a construction date in the mid-1970s, was made by a Hong Kong tailor for an informant who could no longer remember from where she had obtained the collar and cuffs. Made of felted coarse wool, the sailor-style collar and cuffs are from a *szur*, a Hungarian shepherd's coat, see dress historian Max Tilke's book *Costume Patterns and Designs* (Tilke, 1990, plate 42), and Guyla Hankoczi's article 'Men's Clothing in Szentistvan and Tard, Two Matyo villages in Hungary,' (Hankoczi, 1991, pp. 67-9). I am indebted to Lou Taylor for her initial identification.

Informant interview: C.H.P.F. 29.01.00.



Figure 247 Hong Kong tailored linen dress, 1962-4

The neckline of this tweed linen dress reveals a rather odd method of manufacture: the wool has been used to cut a self-facing bound with cream coloured, satin acetate; the garment has then been completely lined. It would be more usual to make the outer and inner shells, sew them together at the neckline/back-opening and the armholes inseam, and turn the garment through. The dart visible in the back shoulder lining would usually be swung in to the centre back seam, suggesting that the pattern cutter was not very familiar with constructing women's wear. It is also the wrong way round: the fabric of the dart should be on the concealed side of the lining, adjacent to the outer fabric shell. Remembering that tailors who made waistcoats and pants were responsible for completing women's tailored garments, the neckline construction is very reminiscent of the waistband of a pair of pants. Even folding the centre back seam allowance over the neck-facing is exactly as men's pants would be constructed to allow for waist alteration: a woman's dress would usually have the neck-facing folded over the centre-back seam. The metal-toothed zip, metal hook-and-eye closure, and round-necked, sleeveless style - very Jackie Onassis - suggest completion in the early 1960s.

Informant interview: A.J.L.K. 00.07.99.



Figure 248 Hong Kong ethnic dress, early 1970s

This garment was one of several purchased by an informant whose interest in ethnic dress increased as she was forced to become increasingly conservative in her everyday dress in her position in a Hong Kong company. Many of her purchases were from a market passed on her way home each evening.

Informant interview: S.K.B.B. 20.09.01.



Figure 249 Denim fashion sample with frogging and stand collar, 1980s

This sample designed by an informant employed as a fashion designer, reflected her interest in pre-modern Chinese dress: the waistcoat has a stand collar and *huanliu* closure similar to that of a long gown. The client was not interested and the designer retained the sample for her own use.

Informant interview: A.S.V.L. 31.07.01.



Figure 250 Tartan wardrobe

Tartan wardrobe worn each December by my informant. Her family also dressed in tartan each December.

Informant interview: A.S.V.L. 31.07.01.



Figure 251 Appropriating the host community's clothing

Part of an informant's collection of appropriated dress: white cotton vests, worn under suits.

Informant interview: L.S.L.L. 20.11.01.



Figure 252 Hybrid Thai fishermen's pants remade in silk

Using fishermen's pants as a pattern, this informant had the pants remade in the luxury fabric of her choice.

Informant interview: B.W.H.H. 06.07.02.



Figure 253 Ethnic dress and regional fabric: batik pants

Informant interview: A.S.D.S. 13.06.01.



Figure 254 Tailor's advertisement c.1970

Advertisement showing men's and women's 'a-fashionable' (rather than fashionable or unfashionable) tailored clothes. (Hong Kong Tourist Association, c1970, p. 8).



Figure 255 Thai silk top, early 1990s

Informants continued using regional fabrics to have garments made throughout the period of research. Silk purchased in Thailand, garment made in Hong Kong.

Informant interview: A.B.A.L. 30.05.01.



Figure 256 Dressmaking: making fantasies 1980s

The dress, made by a dressmaker, was given to the informant by a colleague. The informant wore it to a Cluedo-party game evening.

Informant interview: D.S.P.C. 07.10.99.



Figure 257 'Binge shopping:' slippers in every colour 1990s

'...and these are Korean that I picked up when I was in Korea.' ...'I have got pink, blue and black. And they were really cheap. I couldn't resist it: three pairs.' ...'But I was with a group of people and I was the only one who could fit the slippers so they encouraged me to buy them.'

Informant interview: A.S.D.S. 13.06.01.



Figure 258 Mannish coat tailored in Hong Kong

[Were you pleased with the coat?]

'No, I don't think so.'

[Why?]

'Because it was too mannish.'

Informant interview: S.F.T.J. 04.07.01.



Figure 259 Faux Givenchy gown, front, back, 1980s

‘The other thing I did was when I first started going to more formal things I didn’t have anything to wear and had no way to buy them. being a big fan of old movies I would watch, I watched ‘Funny Face,’ – Audrey Hepburn and I would literally sketch the dresses that Monsieur Givenchy had designed. And then I would have fabric and I would say [to the dressmaker] ‘this is the dress I want.’ And so I have a very beautiful faux Givenchy gown in emerald green, with a train, with velvet buttons, and she would be like ‘Are you sure?’ I would just have a sketch of it and she would have to figure out what I wanted, and people would say ‘That’s a beautiful dress where did you get it?’

Informant interview: L.C.H.K. 30.05.01.

¹ Informant interview: S.F.T.J. 04.07.01.

² See Chan: 'Shopping for Fashion in Hong Kong', (A. H. Chan, 2001, pp. 166, 167).

³ See Miller: *The Sari*, (Miller & Banerjee, 2003, p. 53). Informant interviews: D.S.P.C. 07.10.99., S.K.B.B. 20.09.01., and L.S.L.L. 07.11.01.

⁴ Physical constraints include: the straight skirt part of the kimono which limits the size of the stride; the *obi* which limits the flexibility of the torso; and the cord looped around the wearer's knees to ensure a mincing gait. Miller judges the *sari* a more difficult garment to wear successfully but notes that it, nevertheless, oppresses its wearer: even women who wear the *sari* everyday in adulthood find difficulty in 'inhabiting' it properly. See Miller: *The Sari*, (Miller & Banerjee, 2003, p. 237). See also Entwistle: *The Fashioned Body; Fashion, Dress and Modern Social Theory*, (Entwistle, 2000).

⁵ See Picton: 'What to wear in West Africa: Textile design, Dress and Self-Presentation,' (Picton, 2004). See Picton: 'What to wear in West Africa: Textile design, Dress and Self-Presentation,' (Picton, 2004, p. 45).

⁶ See Maynard: *Out of Line: Australian Women and Style*, (Maynard, 2001, p. 150).

⁷ See Said: *Orientalism*, (Said, 1985, pp. 21,108).

⁸ See Said: *Orientalism*, (Said, 1985, pp. 157-8). He suggests Westerners live in the Orient for one of three reasons: to pursue scientific research; to write; in order to fulfill a dream or desire.

⁹ See Niessen: 'Fashion globalisation is about the *production* of anti-fashion outside the West, not just - as Polhemous and Proctor saw it - the labeling of non-Western clothing as anti-fashion.'

'Afterword: re-orienting Fashion Theory,' (Niessen, 2003, p. 258). See also Polhemous: *Fashion and anti fashion: anthropology of clothing and adornment*, (Polhemus & Proctor, 1978).

¹⁰ See Stewart: *On longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*, (Stewart, 1993). See Pearce, *Collecting in Contemporary Practice*, (Pearce, 1998). See Stewart: (Stewart, 1993).

¹¹ A and B respectively. See Belk: *Collecting in a Consumer Society*, (Belk, 1995, pp. 63, 66-7).

¹² See Pearce, *Collecting in Contemporary Practice*, (Pearce, 1998, p. 3).

¹³ Female collectors were slightly more interested in remembering where an item of their collection originated. See Pearce: *Collecting in Contemporary Practice*, (Pearce, 1998, pp. 85, 104, 110, 119, 139, 161).

¹⁴ See Chatwin: 'The Morality of Things,' (Chatwin, 1996).

¹⁵ See Maynard: *Out of Line: Australian Women and Style*, (Maynard, 2001, pp. 150, 151-2).

¹⁶ See Woodward: *Why women wear what they wear*, (Woodward, 2007, pp. 45 and 51), and Cwerner: 'Clothes at rest: Elements for a Sociology of the Wardrobe' (Cwerner, 2001), See Cwerner, 'Clothes at rest: Elements for a Sociology of the Wardrobe,' (Cwerner, 2001, p. 79).

¹⁷ See Cwerner: 'Clothes at rest: Elements for a Sociology of the Wardrobe,' (Cwerner, 2001, p. 73).

¹⁸ That is not to say that garments are forgotten whilst in storage in a wardrobe, Cwerner notes: 'Most people seem to spend a great deal of their time arranging, sorting out, washing, transporting, storing, choosing, and trying on their clothes around their homes.' 'Clothes at rest: Elements for a Sociology of the Wardrobe,' (Cwerner, 2001, p. 82). One informant L.S.L.L. 07.11.01., had the doors of her wardrobe removed so that she could see her wardrobe at a glance.

¹⁹ Informant interview: A.B.M.C. 04.09.03.

²⁰ Cwerner maintains that 'Stored clothes may remain 'dormant' for years before their use is dictated by new circumstances.' See Cwerner: 'Clothes at rest: Elements for a Sociology of the Wardrobe,' (Cwerner, 2001, p. 83).

²¹ See Cwerner: 'The wardrobe is on the one hand, a constant reminder of the rule of fashion over consumption. On the other hand, the wardrobe is also a sign of the multiplicity and ephemerality of fashion and dress codes: it houses not only the up-to-date dress requirements, but also relics of the sartorial past. Because fashion is both diverse and temporary, the wardrobe also becomes a station for sartorial waste: it stores not only the clothes in which we dress, but also those that we almost inevitably decide to throw or give away.' 'Clothes at rest: Elements for a Sociology of the Wardrobe,' (Cwerner, 2001, p. 83). 'Oh, I've got three pairs of boots that I never wear here. I've still got those boots and I never wear them,' informant interview: D.S.P.C. 07.10.99.

²² See Cwerner: 'Clothes at rest: Elements for a Sociology of the Wardrobe,' (Cwerner, 2001, p. 73). 'I have got two sets of wardrobes. This is the overflow.' Informant interview: A.S.D.S. 13.06.01.

²³ See Gilmour: *The Ruling Caste: Imperial lives in the Victorian Raj*, (Gilmour, 2005, p. 320), and Lanchester: 'He was talking about himself, about his feeling that his English family had no idea what he had done, who he had been. Here he was somebody else, and his past didn't matter. It was

the reason for leaving home put in to reverse. People left England so that it wouldn't matter who they had been, but if they returned home, it also didn't matter who they had been when they were away.' *Fragrant Harbour*, (Lanchester, 2002, p. 205-206). I suggest this was, and continues to be, created by a paucity of international news coverage in some expatriate's home countries. If there is little awareness of international events, prevailing parochial views dismiss events beyond national borders as irrelevant. A contemporary example might be the Indonesian tsunami of Dec 24th 2004, repercussions of which continue to impact on some Hong Kong resident's lives, long after it ceased to be a topic of conversation in England.

²⁴ '... once I arrived in Hong Kong and met young people, and started going out here, to the clubs here in Hong Kong, I would have probably been dressing less conservatively, and more to be noticed, and a lot younger.' Informant interview: D.S.P.C. 07.10.99., and 'I would never wear anything outrageous to a formal-do. But then again I used to wear some pretty outrageous Lycra dresses when I went in to the bars, I guess... and then I wore nice suits when I went to work ... I wore what went with a particular function, what I felt was suitable, appropriate.' Informant interview: D.S.P.C. 07.10.99. Informant interview: L.S.L.L. 07.11.01., and: 'I think because when I first came here I preferred to wear a long tailored jacket. I became more casual.' Informant interview: A.E.G.L. 16.12.99.

²⁵ Informant interview: S.F.T.J. 04.07.01.

²⁶ Informant interview: A.J.M.S. 21.05.02.

²⁷ Informant interview: C.A.M.C. 01.09.99.

²⁸ Informant interview: C.A.M.C. 01.09.99. See Kaiser: 'Fashion Postmodernity, and Personal Appearance: A Symbolic Interactionist Formulation,' (S. Kaiser, Nagasawa, & Hutton, 1991, p. 167), and Woodward: *Why women wear what they wear*, (Woodward, 2007, pp. 65, 66). Millar makes a similar point with regard to the decoration of homes in his book *The Comfort of Things*, (Miller, 2008, p. 109).

²⁹ Informant interview: E.E.P.L. 18.07.01.

³⁰ 'I haven't done any work. I have done a lot of social work! Charity work, but no, I had no intention...' Informant interview: L.B.F.L. 21.03.02.

³¹ Informant interview: L.S.L.L. 07.11.01.

³² Informant interview: L.S.L.L. 07.11.01.

³³ Informant interview: L.S.L.L. 07.11.01.

³⁴ Informant interview: L.S.L.L. 07.11.01.

³⁵ Respectively: informant interview: C.A.M.C. 01.09.99., informant interview: D.G.W.L. 31.01.00., and informant interviews: S.F.T.J. 04.7.01., S.K.B.B. 20.09.01., and L.S.L.L. 07.11.01.

³⁶ Informant interview: L.S.L.L. 07.11.01.

³⁷ See Callaway: 'Dressing for dinner in the Bush: Rituals of Self Definition and British Imperial Authority,' (Callaway, 1992), in Chapter One.

³⁸ Informant interview: L.B.F.L. 21.03.02.

³⁹ Informant interview: A.B.R.S. 06.02.02.

⁴⁰ Informant interview: A.E.G.C. 03.09.00. See also Woodward: (Woodward, 2007, p. 123).

⁴¹ Informant interview: L.A.M.L. 24.01.02.

⁴² Informant interview: L.B.F.L. 21.03.02.

⁴³ The sleeveless wool jersey top with a V-neck and a opening metal zip at the back, completely covered in bugle beads and plastic sequins donated to the Hong Kong Design Institute Gallery collection by Edith Cheung is a good example.

⁴⁴ 'Do you remember a dress like a tulip? It came out (gesticulates), then a very tight band at the bottom. I remember because I was at Government House when I wore this dress for the first time. This girl had made it for me. It had a tight band at the bottom, and of course I went to the loo and you couldn't pull it up, so I had to have it unzipped, and I had to get somebody to help get me zipped up! Now that dress I remember. Funnily enough, that was a style that came into fashion and I wore that. I was the only one to wear it to at Government House for a tea party, one of their annual parties on The Queen's birthday. I don't know what design that was. ... It had a wide band at the bottom and of course to pull it, because I had never tried to, I had never had to go to the loo until I wore it the first time. I remember that very well.' Informant interview: L.A.M.L. 24.01.02. The owners of Justin Jake also modelled for their wholesale beaded dress manufacturer's catalogue. Informant interview: A.S.U.S. 06.09.02.

⁴⁵ Informant interviews: L.S.L.L. 07.11.01., L.C.H.K. 30.05.01., S.K.B.B. 20.09.01., and A.L.P.L. 08.02.01.

⁴⁶ Informant interview: L.B.F.L. 21.03.02.

- ⁴⁷ Informant interview: C.H.P.F. 29.01.00.
- ⁴⁸ See Hoffman: *Hong Kong*, (W. K. Hoffman, 1967, p. 168).
- ⁴⁹ Informant interview: D.D.C.C. 13.08.99.
- ⁵⁰ Informant interview: A.E.G.C. 03.09.00.
- ⁵¹ Informant interview: L.A.W.T. 15.01.00.
- ⁵² Informant interview: L.B.F.L. 21.03.02.
- ⁵³ Informant interview: S.K.B.B. 20.09.01.: 'I did wear it several times in Hong Kong, but I stopped wearing it after the first couple of years because it was too revealing.'
- ⁵⁴ 'The first proper outfit, was really pretty horrible. [I had a] suit tailored, it was a fawn woolen suit, not quite fawn: it was one of those beige-pinks, like a small herringbone, tweedy-kind of thing. Not very successful. Quite tailored in at the waist for the jacket. A long skirt; mid-calf skirt, self-covered buttons, lapel, single breasted, no pockets. Straight skirt, in fact I prefer when I wear a straight shirt if I'm having it tailored, I prefer it tapered-in, [pencil] and far too-fitted: it's a very Chinese tailored thing to do, the 'far too-fitted garment'. This was all too-fitted. Skirt with a waistband and lined. [To wear it felt] dreadful: with the acetate lining, it would move and the skirt would stay still. Awfully like the old swimming costume with the hard bras and you could see the bras stay still as the person moved and it didn't. [I wore it at] our son's christening, that was 1981. I think it was made for \$400-500.' and 'I've never learnt my lesson from one experience; it usually takes several with clothing things. And it [a suit] was much the same problem [again]: far too fitted. The concept, to get two people to come up with the same thing, is extremely difficult. I would never have anything made again unless it had a prototype.' Informant interview: D.D.C.C. 13.08.99.
- ⁵⁵ Informant interviews: D.D.C.C. 13.08.99. and B.V.G.S. 24.04.02.
- ⁵⁶ Informant interview: B.W.H.H. 06.07.02.
- ⁵⁷ For example, entrepreneurial individuals held trunk shows in Central hotel rooms which were advertised in the classified advertisements of The S.C.M.P. Garments were also retailed at the annual Christmas fairs held in the Ritz-Carlton hotel. In Singapore, the specialty-chain the British Colonial Clothing Company, retailed faux-colonially-inspired fashion dress.
- ⁵⁸ Informant interview: S.K.B.B. 20.09.01.
- ⁵⁹ Informant interview: L.S.L.L. 07.11.01.
- ⁶⁰ Informant interviews: A.S.D.S. 13.6.01., and C.A.M.C. 01.09.99.
- ⁶¹ British Vogue was unique amongst its stable-mates in promoting the use of vintage dress. See Wilson Trower: (V. P. Wilson Trower, 1997).
- ⁶² Informant interviews: L.B.F.L. 21.03.02., and S.K.B.B. 20.09.01.
- ⁶³ 'Anne Klein Two: they had summer and winter stuff, and spring, and autumn. But it was just great because it was like being in England: you could go and buy a full range of clothes. You knew everything would fit; they had a good choice of colours; you weren't scrabbling for a bit of this, and a bit of that.' Informant interview: B.V.G.S. 24.04.02. Also informant interviews: D.D.C.C. 13.08.99., C.M.B.S. 22.05.02., and B.V.G.S. 24.04.02. Informant interviews: L.B.F.L. 21.03.02., C.A.M.C. 01.09.99., L.S.L.L. 07.11.01., and S.F.T.J. 04.07.01.
- ⁶⁴ 'By that time, the late '60s, Shui Hing (a department store) had arrived, and, of course, Whiteaway's... there wasn't much choice.' Informant interview: A.B.R.S. 06.02.02. Many informants used the opportunity to discuss lingerie to criticize Marks and Spencer's merchandise.
- ⁶⁵ 'They [Hong Kong made shoes] were horrible. They say 'We have them in two days,' and you know that they were making your shoes in two days using crazy glue and cardboard. They were not supportive: they were really horrid.' Informant interview: L.S.L.L. 07.11.01. '... shoes were very much a nightmare... again [I] bought my shoes in London when I was over there.'
- ⁶⁶ Informant interviews: C.H.P.F. 29.01.00., and L.S.L.L. 07.11.01., Informants that were not a standard size used tailors for alterations. Informant interviews: D.S.P.C. 07.10.99., S.M.C.R. 24.12.00., and S.F.T.J. 04.07.01.
- ⁶⁷ Informant interview: B.V.G.S. 24.04.02. Another reported: 'I gave it up as a bad job because they don't cut with any fluidity, I think: boxed shoulders. I managed to get one coat where I stood over the guy and made him repeat it, but its not worth doing it...' Informant interview: C.M.B.S. 22.05.02.
- ⁶⁸ Informant interview: L.S.L.L. 07.11.01.
- ⁶⁹ A second informant made a similar observation about this period. Informant interview: S.F.T.J. 04.07.01.
- ⁷⁰ And sometimes shoes, informant interview: S.P.M.L. 03.08.02. One informant had a wardrobe of clothes from India and Southeast Asia including the *ao dai*, (pronounced: ao-yai) a front opening, knee-length, coat-like garment with a stand collar and splits from hem to waist level at each side

worn in Vietnam. The *ao dai* is tailor-made for summer from plain or printed cotton, or for special occasions, silk, often using fabrics mixed with polyester to reduce creasing. The *ao dai* worn in the winter is made from wool, or a wool/polyester mix. The *ao dai* is always worn over *quan*, zip-fronted pants with two buttons at the waist. *Quan* may be black or white depending on the *ao dai*: women wear matching *ao dai* and *quan* if wealthy or for special occasions. See informant interview: L.S.L.L. 07.11.01.

⁷¹ Informant interview: L.S.L.L. 20.11.01.

⁷² 'I have a huge collection of *sarongs*, ...which are antique.' 'I do like dressing up on holiday: my swimsuits are very boring and ordinary, my husband wishes that I would travel light, but I will take twenty *sarongs*. I will change my *sarong* three times a day.' And: '[W]hen you go on holiday, the *sarong* is all part of the wardrobe; is all part of saying 'hallo' to things you see when in the sunshine and so that's all part of the package.' Informant interview: L.S.L.L. 07.11.01.

⁷³ Informant interview: L.S.L.L. 07.11.01.

⁷⁴ Informant interview: B.W.H.H. 06.07.02.

⁷⁵ See Polhemous: *Fashion and anti fashion: anthropology of clothing and adornment*, (Polhemus & Proctor, 1978, p. 18).

⁷⁶ Informant interview: A.B.R.S. 06.02.02.

⁷⁷ 'There weren't that [many] occasions: they weren't actually that right [correct] to wear, people [did] not tend to wear Chinese things. In an expatriate context, it was a bit 'off' to wear something Chinese. That wasn't very popular, if you did it, it stood out like a sore thumb. Pre-Shanghai Tang-type, China-style dressing was not a fashion: you were out of the 'sync.' totally.' Informant interview: S.K.B.B. 20.09.01.

⁷⁸ See Chapter One, and Lurie: *The Language of Clothes*, (Lurie, 1981), and Callaway: 'Dressing for Dinner in the Bush: Rituals of Self Definition and British Imperial Authority,' (Callaway, 1992).

⁷⁹ Hardship posting: the Foreign Office classifies the locations to which its staff are posted given the availability of entertainment, shopping, and other facilities.

⁸⁰ Informant interview: D.S.P.C. 07.10.99.

⁸¹ See Scott Fitzgerald: *The Great Gatsby*, (Fitzgerald, 1926).

⁸² Informant interviews: L.B.F.L. 21.03.02., L.S.L.L. 07.11.01., and S.F.T.J. 04.07.01.

⁸³ The Queen, as the Bath and North East Somerset Museum of Costume exhibition (Dec. 2001 to Nov. 2002 showed), had dresses made to match various pieces of jewellery. Informant interview: L.B.F.L. 21.03.02.

⁸⁴ Informant interview: D.S.P.C. 07.10.99.

⁸⁵ Informant interview: A.E.G.L. 16.12.99.

⁸⁶ Informant interview: L.C.H.K. 30.05.01.

⁸⁷ Informant interview: S.E.R.L. 13.11.01.

⁸⁸ See Holdsworth: *Foreign Devils: Expatriates in Hong Kong*, (Holdsworth, 2002, p. 158), Gilbert: 'Urban Outfitting: The city and the spaces of fashion culture,' (Gilbert, 2000, p. 12), and Fitzpatrick: *Rats Liked It Well Enough: the 1997 story*, (Fitzpatrick, 1993).

⁸⁹ Informant interview: D.S.P.C. 07.10.99.

⁹⁰ Informant interview: L.B.F.L. 21.03.02.

⁹¹ Informant interview: A.S.V.L. 31.07.01. One older informant associated pashmina shawls with the shawl that her grandmother had worn. She was the only older informant to liken her dress to that of the Queen. Informant interview: L.B.F.L. 21.03.02.

⁹² Informant interview: S.P.M.L. 03.08.02.

⁹³ My informant explained her mother had passed away since the period she was describing.

⁹⁴ Informant interview: D.S.P.C. 07.10.99. Emulating her mother who had had her 'colours done.'

See Woodward: *Why women wear what they wear*, (Woodward, 2007, p. 101).

⁹⁵ Informant interview: A.B.M.C. 04.09.03.

⁹⁶ Informant interview: L.C.H.K. 30.05.01. Some informants maintained that they were not necessarily fashionable. Informant interviews: C.M.B.S. 22.05.02., and L.S.L.L. 07.11.01.

⁹⁷ 'I remember it because I had some things that were quite sexy: they were 'O.K.' to wear in New York, and when I wore them here I was uncomfortable because it was too much for people to deal with.' Informant interview: L.C.H.K. 30.05.01.

⁹⁸ Informant interview: S.P.M.L. 03.08.02.

⁹⁹ Informant interview: A.B.M.C. 04.09.03.

¹⁰⁰ Informant interview: A.S.V.L. 31.07.01.

¹⁰¹ Informant interview: L.C.H.K. 30.05.01.

¹⁰² Informant interview: L.C.H.K. 30.05.01.

¹⁰³ Informant interview: L.C.H.K. 30.05.01.

¹⁰⁴ Informant interview: A.S.V.L. 31.07.01.

¹⁰⁵ 'It's almost like they don't want to put themselves on display. ... It's like they don't want to be noticeable maybe?' The factory shopping tour leader noted the process of identity construction, observing that larger American women, aged between forty and fifty, were particularly conservative in their use of style and colour, dressing to reflect their self-esteem. Informant interview: A.S.H.C. 05.06.01. The informant was from Minnesota. Informant interview: A.B.M.C. 04.09.03.

¹⁰⁶ Informant interview: L.C.H.K. 30.05.01.

¹⁰⁷ 'But I found people that, it's almost like they don't want to put themselves on display.' Informant interview: A.S.H.C. 05.06.01.

¹⁰⁸ Informant interviews: D.D.C.C. 13.08.99., C.A.M.C. 01.09.99., A.E.G.L. 16.12.99., C.H.P.F. 29.01.00., L.S.L.L. 07.11.01., S.P.M.L. 03.08.02., D.M.K.L. 20.01.02., L.A.M.L. 24.01.02., L.B.F.L. 21.03.02. and: '... I was given the recommendation of a wonderful tailor in Kowloon, and I took it. This is some years ago before I lived here, an old blind tailor, and I took my Armani jackets in, fabulously cut things and I said 'Copy these,' and use his fabric, which was mostly English wool, very nice but mostly men's English wool, if truth be told. And I got a whole bunch of stuff, and I finally asked the price thinking this is all going to be very reasonable. And he told me, I thought that he meant H.K. dollars and later I found that they were U.S. I was so stunned. Of course, it's not like I hadn't been in Asia for a long time, and couldn't figure out exchange rates. But I thought he couldn't really mean that but, in fact, he did. I should have bought Armani things and be done with it. I thought he couldn't really mean that. They are fine but they are not Armani... It's a fabric issue: they did quite a good job of cutting, but when you have a little peplum back on this or that, it's very hard to duplicate that line and that cut. So, a lesson: don't rush right back.' Note: H.K.\$ 1.00 = U.S.\$7.80. Informant interview: S.G.W.W. 31.01.00.

¹⁰⁹ Informant interviews: A.E.G.L. 16.12.99., C.H.P.F. 29.01.00., L.S.L.L. 07.11.01., D.G.W.L. 31.01.00., D.S.P.C. 07.10.99., L.B.F.L. 21.03.02., D.D.C.C. 13.08.99., D.M.K.L. 20.01.02., and A.B.A.L. 30.05.01.

¹¹⁰ 'Most of them, a few disasters, but I managed to get them changed. A lot of the time it was the details that got missed, it was really bad buttons or a stitch, too much stitch detail or, I that I asked them to omit, and maybe it was a communication problem or it was just something that didn't quite communicate in the first place. The items that I had made that were direct copies of the garments that I had were fine, but, the ones that I had asked for slight alterations; the collar was different, or maybe the hemline was different or a pleat at the back some of them were wrong. The fabrics, some there they were supplied by the tailor and I'd look through the books and one was my fault because I had chosen the wrong fabric for the type of garment that it was and he made it up anyway.'

[What was it?]

'It was quite heavy fabric, and I was making a shirt, it was too heavy and it was too itchy. It was the wrong fabric, in the weather of Hong Kong.'

[Too humid to wear?]

'Yes.' Informant interview: A.E.G.L. 16.12.99. and: '[So that i]t looks better, I just always try to make something to change it, even if I don't like it, because you chose the fabrics, you chose the style: it has to fit, because you put a lot of things in [to] that thing.'

[A lot of effort?]

'Yes. So it has to work.' Informant interview: A.B.A.L. 30.05.01. The selection of weights and colours of fabrics was focussed on male requirements.

¹¹¹ Informant interview: S.F.T.J. 04.07.01. The tailor selected made both men's and women's wear. A Singaporean informant also made the same comment: S.J.S.R. 23.12.00.

¹¹² See Finkelstein: 'Chic - a Look That's Hard to See,' (Finkelstein, 1999, p. 382).

¹¹³ Informant interview: S.F.T.J. 04.07.01.

¹¹⁴ Informant interview: L.C.H.K. 30.05.01.

¹¹⁵ Informant interview: A.S.D.S. 13.06.01. This was also true of informants who lived in Singapore, informant interview: S.J.S.R. 23.12.00.

¹¹⁶ Informant interview: A.S.D.S. 13.6.01.

¹¹⁷ 'A lot of people also make assumptions that perhaps [...] it's a real one because they don't think I'm the sort of person who would buy a copy bag. They don't know me well enough, or have never been shopping with me. They just see the image, and so they assume.' Informant interview: A.S.D.S. 13.06.01.

¹¹⁸ Informant interview: S.F.T.J. 04.07.01.

¹¹⁹ Informant interview: S.P.M.L. 03.08.02., and A.J.M.S. 21.05.02.

¹²⁰ A show of hands at a Textile Society of Hong Kong seminar for Hazel Clark's book on vintage clothing, attended by approximately thirty female Hong Kong residents, mostly long term, nearly all Westerners, revealed all present had worn, or continued to wear, vintage clothing. 25.06.04. The staff of a vintage clothing store in The Rocks, Sydney, N.S.W., explained to me that they regularly sold merchandise to Hong Kong retailers, Jan. 2003. '... the other thing I used to do was get vintage handbags. And that I missed here, you could not get anything vintage here. You could get junk but not vintage. I didn't buy a lot of handbags here. In Thailand I got a couple of straw bags but not in Hong Kong so much.' Informant interview: L.C.H.K. 30.05.01.

¹²¹ Informant interview: A.E.G.L. 16.12.99. Lane Crawford and Kenneth Cole stocked a limited range from size 39 to 41. The same informant complained the selected styles were 'frumpy.'

¹²² Informant interview: S.M.C.R. 24.12.00.

¹²³ 'Shoes for me were the biggest problem so that affected what I wore in some ways because of the shoes I was able to wear. I wouldn't have worn high heels in Hong Kong because I was already so much taller than most of the other people.' Informant interview: A.S.V.L. 31.07.01. '...so I'm a 35 sometimes I'm a 36 in the European sizes. I could have gone a lot madder on shoes than I have done.' Informant interview: D.S.P.C. 07.10.99.

¹²⁴ Informant interview: A.S.V.L. 31.07.01. Employment in Hong Kong is a 5 and 1/2 day week, working alternate Saturday mornings.

¹²⁵ '...I wore a lot of sleeveless things. On the ferry sometimes I made a mistake and went to work wearing a sleeveless dress and then I got on the ferry and thought 'Oh God, should have worn something around my shoulders,' but I suffered in silence, and was dying to get off.' Informant interview: D.S.P.C. 07.10.99. Only since 2007 have the ferry temperatures increased as a result of mass complaint and increased energy-saving consciousness.

¹²⁶ 'I changed to shorts because it was a very hot day. I changed on the ferry, but of course, it was freezing cold [because of the air-conditioning], and also, to this day I don't like to walk around Central in shorts.' Informant interview: B.W.H.H. 06.07.02.

¹²⁷ Informant interview: C.M.B.S. 22.05.02. Also informant interview: S.F.T.J. 04.07.01.

¹²⁸ Informant interview: A.S.D.S. 13.06.01.

¹²⁹ Informant interviews: D.D.C.C. 13.08.99., and L.S.L.L. 07.11.01.

¹³⁰ Informant interview: D.G.W.L. 31.01.00.

¹³¹ Informant interview: D.S.P.C. 07.10.99.

¹³² Informant interviews: S.P.M.L. 03.08.02.

¹³³ The movie 'Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon' was released after the end of the period of research. Informant interview: A.S.V.L. 31.07.01.

¹³⁴ Informant interview: A.S.V.L. 31.07.01.

¹³⁵ Informant interview: A.S.V.L. 31.07.01.

¹³⁶ See Woodward: *Why women wear what they wear*, (Woodward, 2007, p. 95).

¹³⁷ Informant interview: A.S.V.L. 31.07.01.

¹³⁸ 'This is my Ghost. These are things I bought fashion, or designer-wise. The two Ghost dresses I [have] only ever worn together.'

[I think it is very hard to find Ghost in Hong Kong: it is much more popular in the UK.]

'I know, it's funny, isn't it? And yet I look at it now and think it seems dreadfully expensive, and the thought of buying two at once: how luxurious would that be in London? Certainly for me.'

Informant interview: A.S.V.L. 31.07.01.

¹³⁹ Informant interview: A.S.D.S. 13.06.01.

¹⁴⁰ Informant interview: D.G.W.L. 31.01.00.

¹⁴¹ Also called *chiru* (*Pantholops hodgsonii*). The hair of the Tibetan antelope measures three-quarters the width of cashmere and a fifth that of the width human hair. Shawls made from shahtoosh wool are so fine that they can be slipped with ease through a ring, which accounts for their popular name "ring shawl." Prices for shawls, which can be intricately embroidered, range in price from US\$1,000 to \$5,000 and up (estimate 2000). The animal is found on the Tibetan plateau, an area of such limited vegetation that it would be impossible to farm them. They are therefore hunted at night usually whilst they are in calf as they move more slowly at this time, rounded up in the headlights of off-road vehicles, and shot for their pelt. Source: Royal Geographic Society Lecture, Hong Kong, 1998. I have been offered shahtoosh shawls at prices ranging from £650 to £1,500 in Rajasthan (Jan. '05). There is said to be limited production of ecological shawls from the wool collected from the plants and trees that the animals have rubbed themselves against.

¹⁴² Informant interview: L.S.L.L. 07.11.01.

¹⁴³ Informant interview: A.S.H.C. 05.06.01.

¹⁴⁴ Informant interview: A.S.V.L. 31.07.01.

¹⁴⁵ U.S.\$40.00 = H.K.\$312.00, H.K.\$3.00 = U.S.\$0.38c. Informant interview: L.C.H.K. 30.05.01.

¹⁴⁶ Informant interview: L.S.L.L. 07.11.01.

¹⁴⁷ Informant interview: D.G.W.L. 31.01.00. 'I the other thing I love to wear are Thai fishermen's pants, they are like the Chinese fisherman's pants, again it's like wearing your pyjamas. They are pyjamas for many people but I wear them all the time until they are in shreds. I have a bunch of them: I buy them in Thailand in the market. I have them in multiple colours they are mostly all silk, some cotton, indigo cotton.'

¹⁴⁸ Informant interview: L.S.L.L. 07.11.01.

¹⁴⁹ See Jones and Leshkowich, 'Introduction,' (Jones & Leshkowich, 2003).

¹⁵⁰ See Morris: *Hong Kong: an Epilogue to an Empire*, (J. Morris, 2000, p. 62).

¹⁵¹ Informant interview: D.G.W.L. 31.01.00.

¹⁵² Using wooden furniture from tropical woods which were suited to the high humidity, and not using fitted carpets, and heavy soft furnishings, which were more suited to temperate climates and required air conditioning to make tolerable in high temperatures.

¹⁵³ Informant interview: D.G.W.L. 31.01.00.

¹⁵⁴ Informant interview: S.S.A.A. 11.10.01.

¹⁵⁵ See Forster: *A Passage to India*, (Forster, 1936). 'Fielding, who had dressed up in a native costume, learned from his excessive awkwardness in it that all his motions were makeshifts, whereas when the Nawab Bahadur stretched out his hand for food, or Nureddin applauded a song, something beautiful had been accomplished which needed no development.' *A Passage to India*, (Forster, 1936, pp. 222-223).

¹⁵⁶ Particularly at the end of the period in the work of John Galiano, and Vivienne Tam.

¹⁵⁷ See Clarke: 'Fashion and Anxiety,' (Clarke & Miller, 2002).

¹⁵⁸ Informant interview: A.J.M.S. 21.05.02.

¹⁵⁹ Informant interview: A.J.M.S. 21.05.02.

¹⁶⁰ In Lewis Carroll's book Alice falls down the rabbit hole from one world to another.

¹⁶¹ Informant interview: A.J.M.S. 21.05.02.

¹⁶² My informant continued: 'I saw all these buggies and lots of expat[riate] wives with nothing to do, who have been shipped out [t]here and sort-of made friends, because they didn't have any other opportunity with anybody else. ... so they just group together with other Europeans.' Informant interview: A.J.M.S. 21.05.02.

¹⁶³ Informant interviews: A.S.D.S.13.06.01., L.B.F.L. 21.03.02.

¹⁶⁴ Informant interview: D.S.P.C. 07.10.99. The Plaza with its picnic tables, benches, and umbrellas, and was the social centre of Discovery Bay.

¹⁶⁵ See Chapter Three.

¹⁶⁶ Informant interview: D.D.W.L.12.01.01. This informant, a few years younger than me, was exasperated at my questions and incredulous that I had not experienced clothes-swopping - for her an everyday experience - in my previous travels. See Clark: *Old Clothes, New Looks: Second Hand Fashion*, (H. Clark & Palmer, 2005b), for a discussion of similar practices.

¹⁶⁷ Informant interview: D.D.W.L. 12.01.01. See also: C.A.M.C. 01.09.99.

¹⁶⁸ Informant interview: D.D.W.L. 12.01.01.

¹⁶⁹ Informant interview: A.S.V.L. 31.07.01.

¹⁷⁰ '... and I remember when I first found Giordano's here: God, I would buy a sweater in every colour in the store. I think I must have been clothes deprived when I arrived because, once I started earning money, I went mad on clothes. I didn't have to pay rent when I got here of course [she lived with her parents], so I had a lot of money to spend on clothes.' Informant interview: D.S.P.C. 07.10.99.

¹⁷¹ '... we had stacks of stuff [from the Lanes] that we don't even have any more because it never got worn but [we] had to buy it. On the other hand, I would go into Central [the most up-market retail area] and buy hats or bags; not a lot, and... have things made by my tailor.' Informant interview: L.C.H.K. 30.05.01.

¹⁷² Informant interview: S.M.C.R. 24.12.00.

¹⁷³ Informant interview: A.J.M.S. 21.05.02., A.S.V.L. 31.07.01.

¹⁷⁴ 'I would wear them in Los Angeles and I wore the same things here. I tend to wear the same things, despite having four closets full of clothes most of which never see the light of day.' Informant interview: D.G.W.L. 31.01.00. Gifted items such as a West Ham football-strip nightdress and a mistake purchase re retained. Informant interview: A.J.M.S. 21.05.02. See Woodward, *Why women wear what they wear*, (Woodward, 2007, p. 45).

¹⁷⁵ See Forty: *The Art of Forgetting*, (Forty & Kuchler, 1999, p. 3).

¹⁷⁶ 'I wore it to one of the fashion shows that we had. And I went in and one of the girls looked at me, and I said 'This doesn't suit me does it?' and she said 'No. Come on, and I'll get you something that does.' You know what they're like: they're so blunt, and you're just like 'Yeah, well, thanks for the honesty.' Informant interview: A.J.M.S. 21.05.02.

¹⁷⁷ Informant interview: A.J.M.S. 21.05.02.

¹⁷⁸ Informant interview: A.J.M.S. 21.05.02.

¹⁷⁹ See Woodward: *Looking Good: Feeling Right - Aesthetics of the Self*, (Woodward, 2005, p. 67).

¹⁸⁰ Informant interview: A.J.M.S. 21.05.02. Also informant interviews: D.D.W.L., 12.01.01., A.J.M.S. 21.05.02., and S.P.M.L. 03.08.02.

¹⁸¹ Informant interview: A.J.M.S. 21.05.02.

¹⁸² 'I remember the shoes: [I felt] like a princess.' Informant interview: A.B.A.L. 30.05.01.

¹⁸³ See Miller: *A Theory of Shopping*, (Miller, 1998).

¹⁸⁴ Informant interview: D.G.W.L. 31.01.00.

¹⁸⁵ Informant interview: D.G.W.L. 31.01.00.

¹⁸⁶ See Miller: *A Theory of Shopping*, (Miller, 1998, p. 18).

¹⁸⁷ Informant interview: L.C.H.K. 30.05.01.

¹⁸⁸ Informant interview: L.B.F.L. 21.03.02.

¹⁸⁹ Informant interviews: L.S.L.L. 07.11.01., L.A.M.L. 24.01.02., D.G.W.L. 31.01.00., and L.A.W.T. 15.01.00. Armani was the first franchise opened by Joyce Ma and had been available in Joyce stores since the late 1970s.

¹⁹⁰ Informant interview: A.S.D.S. 13.06.01.

¹⁹¹ See Lanchester: *Fragrant Harbour*, (Lanchester, 2002 p. 42).

¹⁹² Informant interview: S.P.M.L. 03.08.02.

¹⁹³ See Horn and Gurel: *The Second Skin: an Interdisciplinary Study of Clothing*, (Horn & Gurel, 1981).

¹⁹⁴ Informant interview: D.S.P.C. 07.10.99. '... they are knee-length boots, they're nice, they are possibly not the sort of thing that would go, terribly out of fashion.'

¹⁹⁵ Informant interview: S.P.M.L. 03.08.02.

¹⁹⁶ Informant interviews: L.B.F.L. 21.03.02., D.S.P.C. 07.10.99., and C.M.B.S. 22.05.02.

¹⁹⁷ Informant interview: L.C.H.K. 30.05.01.

¹⁹⁸ Informant interview: L.S.L.L. 07.11.01.

¹⁹⁹ Informant interview: L.S.L.L. 07.11.01. The price of fashion dress was significant at all income levels, although informants rarely mentioned prices when discussing fashion dress.

²⁰⁰ Informant interview: A.B.M.C. 04.09.03.

²⁰¹ 'I can't say I have ever been out, and spent hundreds of thousands of dollars - it is just not my style - on clothes. Maybe on shoes? I have been known to buy a dozen pairs of shoes before, so yes, I have.' Informant interview: A.S.D.S. 13.06.01.

²⁰² '... but what I did more often [in the 1990s] is go back to the States. My sister now almost moves to places where she knows I'll be happy shopping, her husband is in the Navy and they keep getting reassigned. She'll say 'Don't worry, there is a huge outlet here,' or 'There is an Old Navy,' or 'There is ...whatever.' So what I [would] tend to do totally depends on where I was in the States, but basically there was usually one outlet involved. Often a Nordstrom, which tended to carry large size shoes, and I buy, let's say: 8 or 10 pairs of shoes. And I ship them here, but there I carefully try them on. And they are inevitably black: things that I know I will use for a long time. It's quite boring, I never have the 'in' footwear because I have to be practical: what's going to last? What's going to fit? What's going to be comfortable in Hong Kong where my feet are a size bigger because of the heat? And then I go to an Old Navy and Gap, and get lots of stuff. And I especially liked The Gap because you could get things that are a bit trendy: I have a printed skirt, which I bought, but no one in Hong Kong has The Gap. I would never have bought it if I lived in America but because nobody here has Gap stuff except for the odd baseball cap, you can get away with it. I like getting Old Navy and The Gap: it's cheap.' Informant interview: L.C.H.K. 30.05.01.

²⁰³ Informant interview: L.C.H.K. 30.05.01.

²⁰⁴ Informant interview: A.S.D.S. 13.06.01. Another informant had also attempted to distinguish between her shoes: she had labelled each box 'New Shoes' as she had purchased them and had therefore made a collection of shoe boxes all labelled New Shoes.' Informant interview: D.B.H.C. 00.00.99.

²⁰⁵ Informant interview: L.C.H.K. 30.05.01. Pearl Poon and Yvette Yeung were local celebrities. Many Cantonese women do not have thick hair.

²⁰⁶ The 'Sloane Ranger' who had a longstanding interest in Asian dress, even claimed to possess the prototype-Shanghai Tang wardrobe. Informant interview: L.S.L.L. 20.11.01.

²⁰⁷ See Niessen: *Re-Orienting Fashion: The globalisation of Asian Dress*, (Niessen et al., 2003).

²⁰⁸ Informant interview: S.P.M.L. 03.08.02.

²⁰⁹ Informant interview: S.P.M.L. 03.08.02.

²¹⁰ Informant interview: S.P.M.L. 03.08.02. This fashion professional maintained that she would wear her Asian dress archive in the future as 'vintage clothing' classifying them as 'classic merchandise.' However, she would have been pleased to see an increasingly stylised 'funky' version of Shanghai Tang merchandise to add to her collection.

²¹¹ See Pearce: *Collecting in Contemporary Practice*, (Pearce, 1998, p. 143).

²¹² Informant interview: S.P.M.L. 03.08.02.

²¹³ Informant interview: S.P.M.L. 03.08.02. For example: a velvet jacket with rolled cuffs displaying bright-contrast silk jacquard lining.

²¹⁴ Held in Oxford, 2001. Later published in the Journal of The Costume Society, 'Western Modes and Asian clothes: Reflections on Borrowing Other People's Dress', (V. Wilson, 2002, p. 151).

²¹⁵ Informant interview: A.S.V.L. 31.07.01.

²¹⁶ 'I do have one sweater that is very nice, very unusual: navy blue, it's unheard of ...

[Explain that?]

'At Shanghai Tang it's unheard of because their colour schemes are very bright and very limited, generally speaking. But this is a navy wool cardigan, that is a long cardigan and it has a grey blue silk 1" wide placket trim running all the way around it and around the wrist, and frog toggles.'

Informant interview: D.G.W.L. 31.01.00.

²¹⁷ Informant interview: A.E.G.L. 16.12.99. This informant was employed by a contractor to Shanghai Tang, supplying a visual merchandising service.

²¹⁸ See Fitzpatrick: *Rats Liked It Well Enough: the 1997 story*, (Fitzpatrick, 1993, pp. 39, and 44).

²¹⁹ Informant interview: A.J.M.S. 21.05.02. This informant found the cultural norms of her youth particularly constraining: 'I went to maybe seven or eight different schools and I lived in Devon, I lived in Essex. I think the hardest thing, especially going to Essex, was being part of that little tribe and you've got to fit in. If you don't fit in you are such an outcast. All I wanted to do was, frantically, blend in as quickly as I could and sink into the background, so that I wasn't drawing any attention to myself whatsoever. So, I've kind of, always been a little bit like that.'

²²⁰ 'Maybe someone with a stronger character just says 'Stuff it, I'm staying in what I'm wearing.' But it's not really me, unfortunately. I wish I could but I don't: I bend to the general consensus of what's fashionable at the time.' Informant interview: A.J.M.S. 21.05.02..

²²¹ Informant interview: L.S.L.L. 07.11.01. 'I hunted because I needed more hangers. "Oh, I should cull some of this.'" Informant interview: L.S.L.L. 07.11.01.

²²² 'My life is so wonderful. At one point in my life: it could have been age; it could have been confidence; but I used to pull out clothes: they used to go on the chair. I couldn't make up my mind what to wear. I couldn't get the coordination going. My husband was saying to me "Are you ready, darling?" and I kept saying, "No, I'm not", and as I went out I said, "I am not happy in this", and I would go and change [again]. I haven't experienced that for as long as I can remember. I am so cool: I can go home; I can change very often at the [traffic] lights: my driver will pick me up and I am in the front of the car with him. I am changing my trousers in the car. My leg goes up and someone says "You-hoo" [Hello] as the car stops at the lights! I am so relaxed that I am comfortable in what I like to wear.' Informant interview: L.S.L.L. 07.11.01.

²²³ '...there is an amateur cartoon with a donkey with a huge [load], going up a hill and then the rope breaks, and the clutter goes down, and he skips off. I feel a little bit like that in a way: I do not spend hours in the morning thinking about what to wear, and I am the same in the evenings. It is very easy.' Informant interview: L.S.L.L. 07.11.01.

²²⁴ See Woodward: 'Looking Good: Feeling Right - Aesthetics of the Self,' (Woodward, 2005, p. 38).

²²⁵ For example, wearing high heels shoes for evening occasions. Informant interview: L.S.L.L. 07.11.01.

²²⁶ Informant interview: L.S.L.L. 07.11.01.

²²⁷ Informant interview: S.P.M.L. 03.08.02.

²²⁸ Informant interview: S.P.M.L. 03.08.02.

²²⁹ Informant interview: S.P.M.L. 03.08.02.

²³⁰ 'You can get it in Stanley with a designer label too but cheaper. I always look for something, I'm very curious so I just like to see what they are selling, what they are having, even if I don't buy anything.' Informant interview: A.B.A.L. 30.05.01.

²³¹ Informant interview: A.J.M.S. 21.05.02.

²³² Informant interview: L.B.F.L. 21.03.02.

²³³ Discussion with Helen Clark, Singapore, 01.05.04. Helen visited her brother in the United Kingdom each February. After seeing her wear one sweater for several consecutive years he asked her to throw it away.

²³⁴ For example, one expatriate offered to lend a ski-jacket to me on learning that I was proposing to visit Beijing in January. Discussion, Sophie Wright, Hong Kong, 14.10.1998. See also Woodward: *Why women wear what they wear*, (Woodward, 2007, p. 114).

²³⁵ The Textile Society of Hong Kong invited contemporary producers of Southeast Asian ethnic textiles to talk about their work and gave them the opportunity to sell merchandise at the Society's events.

²³⁶ Informant interview: D.G.W.L. 31.01.00.

²³⁷ Informant interview: A.S.V.L. 31.07.01.

²³⁸ See Taylor: *Establishing Dress History*, (Taylor, 2004, p. 133). Informant interviews: L.S.L.L. 07.11.01. and B.W.H.H. 06.07.02.

²³⁹ Informant interviews: D.D.C.C. 13.08.99., and D.M.K.L.. 20.01.02.. Collections, for example, from Miao, Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia, Indonesia, and India. Informant interviews: D.D.C.C. 13.08.99., D.G.W.L. 31.01.00., L.S.L.L. 07.11.01., and D.M.K.L.. 20.01.02.

²⁴⁰ Informant interviews: D.D.C.C 13.08.99., and S.P.M.L. 03.08.02. One wore Thai dress, the other mostly Chinese. Informant interview: S.M.C.R. 24.12.00.

²⁴¹ Informant interviews: C.H.P.F. 29.01.00., S.P.M..L. 03.08.02., and A.B.A.L. 30.05.01.

²⁴² Informant interview: S.P.M.L. 03.08.02.

²⁴³ Informant interviews: D.G.W.L. 31.01.00., and B.W.H.H. 06.07.02.

²⁴⁴ Informant interviews: L.S.L.L. 07.11.01., and D.S.P.C. 07.10.99.

²⁴⁵ Informant interview: L.S.L.L. 07.11.01.

²⁴⁶ Informant interview: A.B.A.L. 30.05.01.

²⁴⁷ Comfortable in one's own skin.

²⁴⁸ Informant interview: A.J.M.S. 21.05.02.

²⁴⁹ See Woodward: 'Looking Good: Feeling Right - Aesthetics of the Self,' (Woodward, 2005, p. 37).

²⁵⁰ Informant interview: A.J.M.S. 21.05.02.

²⁵¹ Informant interview: S.P.M.L. 03.08.02.

²⁵² Informant interview: S.P.M.L. 03.08.02.

²⁵³ Informant interview: S.P.M.L. 03.08.02.

²⁵⁴ Informant interview: S.P.M.L. 03.08.02.

²⁵⁵ In comparison, garments from London-based ethnic dress designers Egg and Shirin Guild, continue to produce a fashion product closer to contemporary ethnic dress, using ethnic fabrics and a specific fashion season's colour, each season. Armani's merchandise is always tailored to the fashion buyer. Egg and Shirin Guild retail merchandise which is occasionally fashionable, but service a particular ethnic fashion-dress market niche. Anokhi, with production in Jaipur, Rajasthan, fill a similar niche. See: Claire Dwyer, 'Fabrications of India: Transnational Fashion Networks,' (C. Dwyer, 2006, p. 227 - 233).

²⁵⁶ Informant interview: S.P.M.L. 03.08.02.

²⁵⁷ See Ribiero: 'On Englishness in Dress', (Ribiero, 2003, p. 17), and Taylor, *The Study of Dress History*, (Taylor, 2002, p. 201).

²⁵⁸ '[It was] terrible... I used to have some things made, I don't do that anymore, I will occasionally go to the Marks and Spencer. Most places do not have my size, and even if I were thin, there are huge length issues, [and] sleeve-length issues. I can't buy shoes. I'm not a big shopper here in terms of clothes. I [would] occasionally go to Calvin Klein and get a T-shirt or something, but I don't get very many things, more accessories. I shop on the internet and I shop at home [the United States of America]. When I go back to the States, I literally I buy everything I see, and then I ship it here, and it's like Christmas.' Informant interview: L.C.H.K. 30.05.01.

²⁵⁹ 'I went to the sale [at Margeurite Lee, a top end lingerie store], because they were like: 'We're going to have everything: 90% off sale.' Well, nobody else is my size in Hong Kong, so when all the girls go they are fighting over 32A's and I'm the only person who can say 'I need 36C, I'll take

it,' and all matching because no one else was my size. I was a big Margeurite Lee sale-shopper.' Informant interview: L.C.H.K. 30.05.01.

²⁶⁰ Informant interviews: S.P.M.L. 03.08.02., and L.S.L.L. 07.11.01. Also informant interviews: D.D.W.L. 12.01.01., A.J.M.S. 21.05.02., L.B.F.L. 21.03.02., and L.A.M.L. 24.01.02. Some clothing was stored in their overseas homes.

²⁶¹ As Cwerner has suggested: 'As bedrock of intimacy, identity, and memory, the wardrobe developed into an *alter ego* of modern personae.' 'Clothes at rest: Elements for a Sociology of the Wardrobe,' (Cwerner, 2001, p. 87).

²⁶² Woodward makes a similar point, see Woodward: *Why women wear what they wear*, (Woodward, 2007, p. 123).

²⁶³ See Stewart: *On longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*, (Stewart, 1993, p. xii).

²⁶⁴ See Finkelstein, 'Chic - a Look That's Hard to See,' (Finkelstein, 1999, p. 379).

²⁶⁵ See Horn and Gurel: *The Second Skin: an Interdisciplinary Study of Clothing*, (Horn & Gurel, 1981).

²⁶⁶ Respectively, informant interviews: D.D.C.C 13.08.99., A.B.A.L. 30.05.01., and L.S.L.L. 07.11.01.; C.H.P.F. 29.01.00.; and: A.E.G.L. 16.12.99., and D.D.W.L. 12.01.01.

²⁶⁷ Dress codes were summarized in the words of one informant who described a visit to New York in the early 1960s and her decision not to comply with a New York Dress code (the little black dress): '... on my first visit to America, to New York, they said "Now, don't forget your little black dress, your single strand of pearls, and your mink stole." So I said, "Right," and I went and got this fabulous coffee-brown dress. I can remember it now - tiered cocktail dress - and I wore it to this wedding in San Francisco and Bill Blass came up to me and said "What a stunning dress". I didn't know who he was of course - apparently he was a very well-known dress designer - but I think it was because I was different: I was wearing a coffee brown dress and it was rather fashionable. I had chosen it out of some magazine, I can't remember, and I got this girl to make it up for me'.

Informant interview: L.B.F.L. 21.03.02. Also informant interviews: D.G.W.L. 31.01.00., and D.M.K.L. 20.01.02.

²⁶⁸ As previously mentioned it is distinguished by name, the 'Suzie Wong dress.' Similarly, in a conflation of Asian regions, the staircase entrance to the Buddha Bar in Paris is decorated with pictures of Thai (Buddhist) or Indian (Hindu) stupas, on the turn of the staircase female greeters wearing knee-length red satin *cheongsam* (Hong Kong) meet guests, who are seated in front of a giant golden Buddha (similar to those in Bangkok), in the restaurant which has a Vietnamese menu.

²⁶⁹ 'Never had anything Chinese made here... never feel right about it: not comfortable doing that: not my place.' Informant interview: L.C.H.K. 30.05.01. Also informant interview: A.S.D.S. 13.06.01.

²⁷⁰ See Polhemus: *Fashion and anti fashion: anthropology of clothing and adornment*, (Polhemus & Proctor, 1978, p. 25).

²⁷¹ See Polhemus: *Fashion and anti fashion: anthropology of clothing and adornment*, (Polhemus & Proctor, 1978, p. 25).

²⁷² Respectively: informant interview: D.D.C.C 13.08.99.; 'I have always changed for dinner whether I am at home with the family, or whatever. It is something that my family have always done. It is respect for the dinner and it breaks the day. And I like to dress up but I like to be comfortable, and it is not really dressing up, it is really dressing down. A lot of the time I wear Thai fishermen's trousers.' Informant interview: L.S.L.L. 07.11.01.

²⁷³ See Pearce: *Collecting in Contemporary Practice*, (Pearce, 1998).

²⁷⁴ 'I was not out to have the biggest rope of pearls because the other girl at the A.W.A. does, because all these other people are far too nouveau in their expatiate experience among other things, and/or their financial ability to acquire. They were just on this bandwagon and I understand that, but I don't feel I have to participate.' Informant interviews: D.G.W.L. 31.01.00., and informant interviews: D.G.W.L. 31.01.00., D.D.C.C. 13.08.99., and L.B.F.L. 21.03.02.

²⁷⁵ Informant interviews: C.H.P.F. 29.01.00., L.B.F.L. 21.03.02.: this informant had reached early adulthood in Scotland during the period of the Second World War, and L.A.M.L. 24.01.02.

²⁷⁶ For example, American. Informant interview: C.H.P.F. 29.01.00. This particular informant considered fashion dress as a backdrop for jewellery, matching her clothes to her jewellery collection. Informant interview: L.B.F.L. 21.03.02. Pearce suggests that growing up with an abundance of toys combined with an education which encouraged individuality, form pre-conditions for collecting. See Pearce: *Collecting in Contemporary Practice*, (Pearce, 1998, p. 15).

²⁷⁷ Respectively, informant interviews: C.A.M.C. 01.09.99., and D.G.W.L. 31.01.00.; and: C.A.M.C. 01.09.99., D.G.W.L. 31.01.00., A.S.V.L. 31.07.01., B.W.H.H. 06.07.02., S.P.M.L. 03.08.02., and A.S.D.S. 13.06.01.

²⁷⁸ See Lurie: *The Language of Clothes*, (Lurie, 1981, p. 95).

²⁷⁹ It was almost never mentioned by my informants, ironically, Blanc de Chine was located in Pedder Building, Central, the ground and first floor of which forms Shanghai Tang's flagship store.

Conclusions

'If [my] looks are more extreme [than most women's], cheap clothes can look [like a] cheap look.'¹

My informant, an American visual merchandiser, perceptively summarizes the sometimes, narrow distinction between fashion and a failed fashion look, as I have distinguished between apparent Orientalism and a strategy to maintain fashionable dress in a situation of rapidly evolving fashion sophistication. Extreme dress can be misinterpreted as complete failure in dress, or seen as a successful look, depending on the viewpoint of the audience and the situation. In adopting unconventional dress, especially if not overtly costly, my informants risked the incomprehension and possible censure of other members of the expatriate and the host communities.

In this thesis, mapping the development of the Hong Kong fashion system across time between 1960 and 1997, I have examined the experiences of expatriate Western women in their use of dress in manifesting identities against a background of increasing fashion-awareness of the host community. I have sought to show that in a near-contemporary period, with a limited choice of fashion dress and a lack of recognized leadership, expatriate Western women resident in Hong Kong (the dominant, yet minority group) developed strategies to cope with, and exploit the availability of dress in a situation of declining hegemony, and in so doing, developed their own version of regional dress. Conversely, during this period, fashion became seen as increasingly important.

In addition, I have explored the topic of Orientalism through dress, be it worn or collected (see Chapter One) in a near contemporary situation. In Chapter One I identified relevant literature documenting socially dominant groups through dress over time and place, the effects of colonialism, and an oral history methodology. For expatriate Western women resident in Hong Kong, the exotic became commonplace. It was impossible to maintain Orientalist thinking in the fast-changing cities of Asia, where fashion change was but one example of transformation at a rate more rapid than anything expatriate Western women had experienced prior to their relocation to Asia. Against a background of rapid economic growth, they demonstrated their familiarity with Asia to other Western expatriates through the exploration and appropriation of ethnic dress.

This thesis is about fashionable women, and whilst I (and nor would they), claim that my informants were average expatriate Western residents of Hong Kong in respect of their fashion dress, and I do not wish this qualitative research to generalize from the particular, their activities were undoubtedly echoed by a wider group of expatriate Western women who, for various reasons, had neither the time nor the resources to devote to creating their wardrobes that my most of informants enjoyed. Whilst many expatriate Western women in Hong Kong appropriated some of the traits, behaviours, and strategies that my fashionable informants adopted, some experiences remain unique to particular individuals. I have sought consensus on remembered events, experiences, and customs, in order to record an impartial view of expatriate Western women's fashion dress and its use as a means of creating identities during the period of research. I have used an oral history methodology to reveal what fashion dress was like in Hong Kong through a series of received histories and images. This research is not intended to be judgmental but I know from subsequent conversations with my informants that they have used it as an opportunity to review their experiences, and in some cases to throw out, or to value more highly, their fashion and ethnic dress collections. I believe that these considerably assisted their recollection of dress events. Time colours memory and whilst as far as I can ascertain, my informants were truthful in their replies to my questions, hindsight occasionally reveals information which changes the light in which what had seemed to be an incontestable fact, appears.

Hong Kong's Fashion Background

Hong Kong's supply of inexpensive labour together with its young, enterprising companies keen to expand produced a manufacturing community quick to respond to changing market conditions. Product category followed product category, as global markets, reassured by trade agreements, demanded a succession of fashion goods including: artificial flowers, wigs, leather and fur garments, tailored suits, knitwear, and lingerie from Hong Kong. In this thesis I have summarized the remarkable development of Hong Kong's textiles and fashion industry and the decline of manufacturing over a period of thirty-seven years, from the experience of the host community, overseas customers' experiences, and expatriates employed in the industry. Notably, this explains the origin of the international fashion industry's concerns in employing child labour. By the end of the 20th century, Hong

Kong was a wealthy country: the second wealthiest in Asia after Japan. Personal safety was excellent and expensive dress could be worn the street without provoking attention.

In Chapter Two I summarized the development of the textiles and fashion industry in Hong Kong and the specific role of dress in an environment where other means of stating individuality was absent. Educated by an array of fashion magazines and targeted by fashion marketing strategies, the host community was well able to afford merchandise imported from the fashion capitals of the world, and Hong Kong became host to Asian visitors who came to purchase genuine designer fashions. It would not be possible to complete this work without including the fashions of the host community. Local dress preferences included: unusual combinations of colour and print, rapid appropriation of Western designer fashions (and eventually, a detailed knowledge of contemporary collections), copy merchandise, fur and leather dress, an absence of millinery, and later, the appropriation of black.

Expatriate Western women's dress in Hong Kong

Expatriate Western women were fashionably dressed throughout the period despite their distance (more than 8,000 miles), from a recognized fashion centre such as London (only in the later part of the period did Tokyo achieve status as a fashion city). Given the limited access to fashion information of most women for much of the period, this considerable achievement reflects the importance with which fashion was credited in Hong Kong, as the community derived the major portion of its income from fashion and textiles production.

The role of expatriate Western women throughout this period changed significantly. Initially, privileged by their husband's position as a *tai-pan* (local entrepreneur) or a civil servant, some completed charity work (compatible with the social role demanded by their husband's position), others worked in traditional female employment, particularly teaching. Early leisure time, which allowed women to change for evening events, declined over time as communications improved and working hours increased. When the service industries developed in Hong Kong attracting a mercenary international community accustomed to the 'good things in life,' and earning the means to enjoy them, Hong Kong's social scene and dress became significantly more fashionable. Simultaneously, Hong

Kong attracted travellers seeking casual employment in order to continue to explore South and Southeast Asia. Hong Kong fashion dress varied from social occasion-wear, to luxury products, to inexpensive casual clothes, throughout the period of research.

The *cheongsam* and other ethnic or pre-modern dress, was initially unacceptable to expatriate Western women, but after the host community discarded the *cheongsam* for all but special occasions, expatriate Western women appropriated it and other garments. By the end of the period of research the *cheongsam* formed a safe conservative choice for expatriate Western women attending social functions. The adoption of the conservative, often brightly coloured, tailored suit immediately replaced the *cheongsam* as distinctive conservative dress for socially prominent members of the host community. The tailored two-piece suit (loosely based on a 1960's-Jackie Onassis look) was also used to enhance expatriate Western women's wardrobes: partly due to necessity, partly as an opportunity to experiment with a new form of shopping which many hoped would be 'affordable haute couture,' and partly as a means of using exotic regional fabrics which had been collected whilst exploring Southeast Asia and elsewhere.² Mostly utilitarian and lacking a sense of brand, tailored garments made little contribution to the wearer's identity. On occasion, tailored clothes inadequately contributed to gender identity, in which case they were rejected although the reason for rejection was not consciously recognised. More successfully, and somewhat ironically given Hong Kong's reputation for copied merchandise, expatriate Western women employed tailors to duplicate existing garments. This strategy avoided reliance on the customer's or the tailor's, creativity. The need or fashion for tailoring declined in the last decade of research, as the availability of local ready-to-wear merchandise increased; long-haul travel became less expensive allowing expatriate Western women the opportunity to shop overseas; and local labour rates increased, changing tailoring from a creative project into a costly experiment. Notably, in comparison to many ready-to-wear garments, tailored clothes were rarely retained after the end of their useful life. Dressmaking and knitting were occasionally used to supplement wardrobes. Clothes 'swapping,' a phenomenon of a Western sub-group of 'travellers' deserves more investigation.

Hong Kong's fashion history has been closely bound with the system of production: fashions, which would have been impossible to realize elsewhere, were

made possible by the availability of inexpensive labour (sequinning, beading, or embroidering), and access to regionally available exotic fabrics (particularly hand-wovens: including *ikats*, *batiks*, silks, jacquards, and brocades). For much of the period, tailoring mitigated the paucity of fashion choice for expatriate Western women at a cost of increased fashion anxiety. Local tailors, with their limited language skills with which to comprehend their client's instructions, could not reassure customers that they were constructing garments which would be viewed as desirable by other expatriate Westerners. The compliment implied in desirability, such as borrowing a friend's garment to be copied by a dressmaker for personal use, was proof that fashion dress, be it ethnic or fashion derived, acted as a 'social fact' or a social 'glue' which provided a means of interpreting the appearance of individuals irrespective of their origin and their opinion of fashion. An informant's appearance contributed to their individual understanding of who they were, their unique life experience, and their situated knowledge of Hong Kong in relation to their home country, and frequently, to the rest of Southeast Asia.³

Expatriate Western women saw their wardrobe as reflecting their life experience and conferring security. After an initial period of illusionary freedom, they realized Hong Kong dress was, in some respects, more conservative than that of the countries from which they had come. However, it was also more fashionable. It said 'who they were' in their new location, expressing changed status, signaling acceptance of expatriate experience, and most importantly conveying Oriental experience and cultural knowledge to the middle classes on their return visits to their home countries. Garments were sometimes purchased to be worn in a home country in order to demonstrate life experience.

Finding Fashion

Irrespective of the date of expatriate Western women's arrival in Hong Kong, and the number of fashion stores in the city, Hong Kong was perceived to be a 'hardship posting' in fashion terms throughout the period of research. Hardship was perceived in terms of garment fit, colour, quality, shoe size, or price. Expatriate Western women's search for suitable fashionable dress reflected their attempts to determine and comply with what they perceived to be desirable dress in order to reduce fashion anxiety, and to achieve cultural security.

Hong Kong's regional fashions tended towards conservatism and modesty with a focus on 'smartness.' This was somewhat ironical given the humid climate in which hair was inclined to frizz, and expatriate Western residents to perspire. Expatriate Western women, lacking fashion leadership in Hong Kong, adopted conservative local dress for formal or charity events: a conservative Western dress (usually, a locally tailored suit), which was worn by established, high-status members of the host community throughout the period of research as appropriate formal dress, or after the 1980s, the *cheongsam* for evening wear.⁴ This strategy enabled expatriate Western women to reduce the anxiety they experienced in selecting appropriate dress in a context which for them lacked acknowledged fashion leadership, and to enhance their feelings of security in the knowledge that they were well-dressed.⁵ Expatriate Western women married to local residents rarely appropriated the *cheongsam*, suggesting their security of dress lay elsewhere. The number of *cheongsam* and the huge volume of other ethnic dress purchased and worn by expatriate Western women indicated that this was more than mere experimenting and self-exoticism. I suggest that the *cheongsam* was not an exotic 'badge' but, conversely, in the later part of the period of research it was a statement of conservative formal dress for both the host community and expatriate Western women, and an expression of desire for expatriate Western women for conformity and security.⁶

Pre-modern Chinese dress was used as inspiration by local brands (Shanghai Tang and Blanc de Chine, for example), and was occasionally adopted by international fashion designers (a form of Orientalism). These local brands persistently traded on a pre-modern Chinese-look as part of their corporate marketing strategy, irrespective of its fashion status. Whilst many expatriate Western women happily appropriated pre-modern Chinese dress and were happy to adopt the *cheongsam* as part of their new-found identities, unlike immigrants to other countries, they had no desire to become, or be mistaken for, Asian nationals (except for a short period when trying to obtain taxis). This may have been in part due to the pejorative manner in which the host community was treated by expatriate Westerners during the earlier part of the period, or as a result of the privileged social position, which all Westerners enjoyed throughout the period of research.

Recognition of Hong Kong local fashions

Few expatriate Western women perceived the host community's vibrant dress as fashionable during any part of the period of research because it did not resemble what they understood to be fashionable dress, which they had experienced in their home countries. Many were openly critical of the local communities' dress. Others were critical of expatriate Western women's dress in the smaller communities of Lamma and Discovery Bay. Many were reluctant to spend on fashionable dress despite having a generally higher level of disposable income than most of the host community. Fashion remained a Western notion created in specific fashion cities for many expatriate Western women. This viewpoint contributed to a perception of fashion shortage, and therefore, for many expatriate Western women opportunistic indulgence in 'binge shopping' was an insurance against future shortage, made possible by a Hong Kong salary, despite the increasing numbers of Hong Kong retail stores opened during the period of research. Simultaneously, 'binge shopping' created opportunities to bargain and to interact with the local community, especially tailors and dressmakers. The rationale for 'binge shopping' was exacerbated by many expatriate Western women's experiences of poor garment fit, outdated ideas of what was fashionable and inherited notions of quality, taste, and appropriateness, combined with the availability of Southeast Asian ethnic dress. For those using fashion dress as a vehicle for personal distinction, a means of distinguishing their dress (and therefore themselves), from local fashion dress, was critical to informants' continued self-recognition as being uniquely and distinctively fashionable. They were therefore, literally, unable to recognize local fashion trends, as compliance with these would dissipate the unique distinctiveness, which they cultivated in their appearance. Conversely, the host community could not 'self-exotize' through dress without risk of being misunderstood, however there is some evidence that they wore Western dress in a way that Westerners could not.

Whilst an abnegation of fashion - an 'a-fashion' position - was sometimes adopted as a theoretical position (especially by those adopting ethnic dress), the appearance of expatriate Western women was evaluated by themselves and others, using the criteria of fashionable or acceptable dress. Adopted ethnic dress complied with this aesthetic despite an apparent freedom of choice. This was as much a function of how the body was worn, as much as what was worn, for example:

combining ethnic dress with Western accessories, a fashionable hairstyle, or fashionable shoes. Only fashions, or ethnic dress, which contributed to anxiety reduction were adopted. One of the most unusual collections was of Western designer fashions inspired by Asian themes. Opportunities to wear ethnic dress were carefully evaluated, garments likely to be appreciated by the intended audience were selected: errors in judgment were notable and provoked comment. Extensive hybridization of ethnic dress was particularly combining expensive Western fabrics with simple peasant shapes. Expatriate Western women used far wider means of completing their wardrobes than the host community throughout the period of research. In retrospect it is not possible to determine if this was due to necessity; cultural curiosity; opportunity; differing conceptions of fashion; a quest for individuality rather than communality, or an expression of creativity. Further contemporary research is required to explore these possibilities.

Many expatriate Western women enjoyed wearing 'fancy dress' - *sarongs*, *Punjabis*, and the *ao-dai*, - whilst resident in Hong Kong. These borrowed the status accorded collections but were almost all mementos of travel, whilst they announced expatriate tribal membership and local situated knowledge. To the casual observer, this activity appeared to unwittingly perpetuate ideas of Orientalism, but as I show, these formed a means of establishing individuality for informants who on initial arrival, were deprived of the employment, friends, and family who had contributed to their sense of self. It also allowed expatriate Western women an opportunity to demonstrate apparent familiarity with Asia, sometimes at the cost of considerable discomfort to themselves, and in some instances to 'fit in' with the host community. In some instances collected items were not worn but most were worn combined with Western dress.

The use of vintage clothing, as an alternative to contemporary fashion dress, was widely adopted by expatriate Western women, despite the paucity of local supply. As vintage clothing transgressed local cultural sensibilities, this added to its appeal as a unique form of dress that was unlikely to be appropriated by the host community, who in so many other respects, out-performed expatriate Westerners as they adopted Western fashions with their far 'deeper pockets.' Menswear (retailed to the host community), was sometimes adopted by expatriate Western women in order to accommodate their size difference. In the 1990's, the *pashmina* was

adopted on a semi-permanent basis to help combat the icy chill of all-prevalent air conditioning.

Informants' differing conceptions of fashion have been a consistently surprising finding of this research. What constituted fashion and how it was perceived as being fashionable (or more usually: in the process of returning to fashion), suggested that for expatriate Western women in Hong Kong, the topic of fashion provoked little agreement. The only fashion trend that was consistently recognized by all informants throughout the period of research was that of smartness. Cuteness was also recognized but rarely emulated in the later part of the period. Hong Kong residents learned to dress as *completely* fashionably, in comparison to the *partially* fashionable dress that prevailed elsewhere.

Wearing fashionable dress in a home country

I have shown that expatriate Western women in Hong Kong used ethnic Asian dress as a means of perpetuating their newly manifest identities on return to their home countries.⁷ For those women who had limited contact with the host community, the adoption of local or regional ethnic dress conferred discrete knowledge, suggesting expatriate residency in their Western home country and contributing to the illusion of knowledge of language and local customs.⁸ Expatriate Western women's mobility combined with increasing transnationalism enabled what was once a minority experience to become a social norm in Hong Kong. Stone reminds us that a change of title is indicated by a change of dress.⁹ It would be unreasonable to expect expatriate Western women to remain unchanged either in terms of identity or in appearance after their residence in Asia. This finding became more apparent as time progressed: the appearance of those who remained only briefly in Hong Kong was less affected.

Expatriate Western women asserted their expatriate status, together with their expatriate inferred knowledge to their compatriots in their home country through their appropriation of local or regional dress. Having developed a strategy to compensate for a situation which lacked acknowledged fashion leadership, they became collectively 'uniquely fashionable' whilst in Hong Kong and continued to maintain their 'uniqueness' by wearing Asian dress in their home country. By adopting this practice they became, in their own eyes, individually 'uniquely' fashionable, irrespective of the fashion status of the countries to which they

returned. The acquisition of ethnic dress to form a collection contributed to their attempt to make sense of the new Asian world in which they found themselves and later, provided a link between their future and past selves. Finally, both physically and psychologically they recognized themselves as expatriates, in Kristeva's words:

'A paradoxical community is emerging, made up of foreigners who are reconciled with themselves to the extent that they recognize themselves as foreigners.'¹⁰

Kristeva suggests expatriates form a community of foreigners, content with the status, which they have chosen. Lunt reminds us that the appropriate level of consumption is a social process rather than something that occurs in isolation.¹¹ If the host community's hobby was shopping, it is reasonable that this interest was reflected in the activities of the community of expatriate Western women residents in Hong Kong. Inevitably, shopping and creating their own diverse collections of clothes became a privilege of expatriate Western women.

Some questions remain unanswered: why for example, although Shanghai Tang was universally worn and commented on, was Blanc de Chine not better known and worn given the conservatism of some informants? Did husbands or partners have a significant impact on their wives or partner's dress? Did nationality have a significant factor - I think not, but it was impossible to interview enough women of given nationalities across time to determine this. And lastly, why in a situation where expatriate Western women were by default different, why did some retain the self-consciousness which they were accustomed to in their home countries but others lose it, finding 'comfort in their own skins'?

Contribution

The situation of the expatriate Western women in Hong Kong has probably been unique, in that they were a relatively wealthy expatriate community deprived of clothing, as witnessed by an increasingly sophisticated and wealthy host community. It is unlikely that their reactions differed from those of other individuals who found themselves in similar circumstances, even without a changing host community, where a persistent desire for uniqueness may have been attributed to eccentricity.

In a post-colonial world this experience is likely to be repeated in different locations in different communities given the economic development of a changing host community. However, I suggest the special circumstances of Hong Kong's densely packed host community, makes it likely this will remain an extreme example. It would be a useful exercise to re-evaluate the chronology and dress of English and American female eccentrics past and present including: Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, Lady Hester Stanhope, Edith Sitwell, and Umm Seti. Similar findings might also be expected of expatriate Western women resident in pre-Communist Shanghai or post-colonial Singapore. However as with the individuals above, both locations lacked the context of an increasingly wealthy host community interested in dress. In Shanghai the White Russians who might have formed such a group fled Communism with other Asian nationals, or were absorbed by the host community. Famously, Singapore was deprived of the liberalizing impact of Western travellers due to conservative government policy during the period of research.¹² Near contemporary research conducted since the Handover on Shanghai or Beijing's expatriate Western residents living with increasingly affluent host communities may have provided a more accurate comparison.¹³ The attitude of irrelevant expatriate absence may also be changing, given increased communications and travel.

More usefully, the methods used in this research reveal a more complex understanding of the use of dress as a means of manifesting identities than has previously been documented in Southeast Asia. The rich resource of ethnic dress found in Southeast Asia has allowed expatriate Western women to realize unique visual identities. Palmer, Tarlo, Tulloch, Maynard, and Woodward's research examines regional dress but none of the communities investigated include a changing host community as a backdrop to their activities.¹⁴ I suggest a paucity of ethnic dress in other regions may be replaced by other mediums: jewellery, or perhaps, domestic items - if for example, the culture to which the individual returns recognizes the role of hostess. Therefore, I suggest my findings on the use of fashion dress as a means of conveying life experience and values, combined as unique qualities of the individual, are likely to be replicated using other mediums. My research also questions the assumptions that late adopters are merely continually behind in the fashion cycle. It has shown how many informants adopt dress as part of their identities and suggests that the extreme situation in which this

was acquired or worn, means that for some women specific dress remained meaningful longer. 'Late adopters' may instead be those for whom some fashion dress achieves the status of 'much loved.' After all, if they recognized a given fashion, it is illogical to assume they do not recognize when it is no longer fashionable and is replaced with something else. The retention of dress is currently receiving some attention but I believe my work adds a further aspect to previously published findings.¹⁵

The near universal adoption of 'binge shopping' rationalized by a 'hardship posting' is also interesting. The only three women who did not indulge in this activity (although one purchased quantities of jewellery) had in common direct experience of rationing. This also deserves further study.

To conclude, an examination of this unique group of women, located in what was perceived as a situation of fashion-hardship, and resident amongst an increasingly fashion-literate host community, has revealed strategies through which they have sought to maintain difference through dress. I have shown how expatriate Western women's appropriation of Asian ethnic dress has enabled them to take control of their lives in a situation of significant change and, having learned how to dress distinctively, this has enabled them continue to retain their distinct identity both in their adopted country of residence, and/or on return to their home country in the anticipated future. It has allowed them to wear not only a badge-of-rank recognized by their peers, in their home country but a visible qualification given the expectations of an international class of tourist and armchair travellers for whom travel, Oriental or otherwise, is equated with knowledge. And in this respect, in this instance, dress has formed both an identity and a uniform for expatriate Western women.

¹ Informant interview: A.B.M.C. 04.09.03.

² See Chapter Three.

³ See Miller: *The Sari*, (Miller & Banerjee, 2003).

⁴ See local politician Anson Chan.

⁵ The ethnic dress adopted conformed to Western notions of modesty and propriety: Hakka hats, grass raincoats, and baby carriers were not suitable for adoption. See also Clarke: 'Fashion and Anxiety,' (Clarke & Miller, 2002).

⁶ Niessen proposes self-exotizing as a motive, but this is too general, 'Afterword: re-orienting Fashion Theory,' (Niessen, 2003, p. 260).

⁷ See stages of expatriate understanding in Chapter Four: the experience of arrival and its sense of freedom; disillusionment on perceiving restrictive local cultural norms; the process of adjustment; and finally, anticipation of return to a home country.

⁸ My thanks to Anthony Adames for this suggestion.

⁹ See Stone: 'Appearance and the Self,' (Stone, 1998).

¹⁰ See Kristeva: *Strangers to Ourselves*, (Kristeva, 1991, 195).

¹¹ See Lunt and Livingstone: *Mass Consumption and Personal Identity*, (Lunt & Livingstone, 1992, p. 14).

¹² Singapore for example, permitted entry to male travellers extant on their agreeing to a conservative haircut.

¹³ This period has already ended, for example: Shanghai with its new airport, trendy hotels, lively restaurant scene, and yoga studios is no longer classified as a 'hardship posting.'

¹⁴ See Maynard: *Fashioned from Penury: dress as cultural practice in Colonial Australia*, (Maynard, 1994), Tulloch: 'Fashioned in Black and White; Women's dress in Jamaica, 1880-1907,' (Tulloch, 1997-8), Palmer: *Culture and Commerce: The Transatlantic Fashion Trade in the 1950's*, (Palmer, 2001), and Woodward: *Why women wear what they wear*, (Woodward, 2007).

¹⁵ See Woodward: *Why women wear what they wear*, (Woodward, 2007).

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Appendices

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D.B.H.C. 00.00.99. Long term resident, originally from England. Teacher.

C.Z.C.C. 22.04.99. Long term resident. Fashion journalist, contributor to WGSN.

A.K.P.C. 22.04.99. Long term resident, originally from England. Marketing Manager.

A.J.L.K. 00.07.99. Resident in the early 1960's, wife of a senior manager of a multinational company.

D.D.C.C. 13.08.99. Resident since the 1970s. Australian mother-of-two.

C.A.M.C. 01.09.99. Resident since the 1970s, originally from England. Teacher.

D.S.P.C. 07.10.99. Resident since the 1970s, originally from England. Office Manager.

A.E.G.L. 16.12.99. Resident since the 1980s, originally from England. Visual merchandiser.

L.A.W.T. 15.01.00. Long term resident. Worked in a top-end retail company.

C.H.P.F. 29.01.00. Long term resident, originally from the United States of America. Promoted American universities, cruise director, retired.

D.G.W.L. 31.01.00. Born in Asia, of American nationality. Resident in Hong Kong since 1980s. Relocation specialist.

X.W.T.L. 17.08.00. Member of the host community. Fashion designer and writer.

A.E.G.C. 03.09.00 Long term resident, originally from England. Originally a banker, more recently runs own fashion-related business.

B.D.K.G. 09.09.00. Long term resident, originally from Wales. Medical professional.

W.W.M.L. 02.11.00. Resident since the 1970s, originally Foreign Office staff from Germany.

C.H.L.L. 06.11.00. Member of the host community. C.E.O. of large international chain store supplier.

S.J.S.R. 23.12.00. Hong Kong and Singaporean resident, originally from America.

S.M.C.R. 24.12.00. Long term Singaporean resident, originally from America.

D.D.W.L. 12.01.01. Resident since the 1980s, originally from England.

Interior Designer.

A.L.P.L. 08.02.01. Resident since the 1980s, originally from England. Visual Merchandising Manager.

X.M.P.S. 10.05.01. Member of the host community, director of a top-end retail store.

L.C.H.K. 30.05.01. Resident since the 1980s, originally from America.

Fashion journalist and ex-New York model.

A.B.A.L. 30.05.01. Resident since the mid 1990s, originally from Spain. Fine artist.

A.S.H.C. 05.06.01. Long term resident, originally from England. Ran her own Factory-visiting business in the 1990s.

S.O.P.S. 07.06.01. Long term resident. Charity shop volunteer.

A.S.D.S. 13.06.01. Resident since the late 1980s, originally from England. Ex-Fashion journalist, Marketing manager.

S.F.T.J. 04.07.01. Resident since 1980, originally from England. Fashion designer.

E.E.P.L. 18.07.01. C.E.O. of a British knitwear company supplying private label.

S.G.M.J. 24.07.01. Ex-Hong Kong resident, originally from England. C.E.O. of a British top-end label, supplying independents.

A.S.V.L. 31.07.01. Resident since the early 1990s, originally from Wales. Fashion Designer.

S.S.M.L. 20.09.01. Long term resident, originally from England. Senior Manager of a British chain store office in Hong Kong.

S.K.B.B. 20.09.01. Long term resident, originally from Australia. Retail Manager.

S.S.A.A. 11.10.01. Resident since the late 1990's. Ex-fashion journalist.

S.A.S.L. 12.10.01. Member of the host community. Owner of Hong Kong-based lingerie company.

K.T.L.L. 04.11.01. Member of the host community. Knitwear factory employee, lecturer.

L.S.L.L. 07.11.01. Resident since the late 1960s, originally from London. 'Sloane Ranger' and society member.

S.E.R.L. 13.11.01. Resident since the late 1970s, originally from America. Fashion designer.

D.C.C.L. 26.11.01. Member of the host community. Senior manager of yarn and textile producing company.

D.J.M.S. 28.11.01. Member of the local community. Model, fashion designer.

G.N.T.S. 30.11.01. Member of the local community. Senior Manager of local denim brand.

J.J.E.J. 20.12.01. Long term resident, English national. Co-owner of early boutique.

B.B.G.L. 19.11.01. Member of the host community, Visual Merchandise manager.

X.M.T.X. 03.12.01. Long term resident, originally from England. Founder of an early boutique and chain of fashion stores.

D.M.K.L. 20.01.02. Long term resident, originally from America. Senior Manager for international publishing group.

L.A.M.L. 24.01.02. Long term resident, originally from England. Society member.

A.B.R.S. 06.02.02. Long term resident, originally from England, daughter of a previous Governor.

S.C.C.P. 20.03.02. Member of the host community. Early employee of the T.D.C.

L.B.F.L. 21.03.02. Long term resident, originally from Scotland. Society member.

B.V.G.S. 24.04.02. Resident since the early 1970s, Fashion designer, lecturer, author.

A.J.M.S. 21.05.02. Resident since the 1980s, Visual Merchandise manager.

C.M.B.S. 22.05.02. Resident since the mid-1970s, originally from New Zealand. Legal professional.

S.P.M.L. 03.08.02. Resident since the early 1990s, originally from England. Buyer then Owner of own private label manufacturer.

M.M.T.L. 16.08.02. Long term resident, son of early boutique owner and Senior Manager of a chain of retail stores.

B.A.S.S. 28.08.02. Member of the host community. Employee of early boutique.

A.S.U.S. 06.09.02. Resident since the 1960s, originally from Scotland. Owner of one of the early boutiques.

S.D.T.T. 23.11.02. Member of the host community. Founder of a top-end retail store.

S.S.L.D. 17.01.03. Member of the host community. Civil servant.

I.T. 10.02.03. Iris Trower, second cousin(in law), of Eurasian descent, grew up in Hong Kong.

R.M.S.S. 11.02.03. Owner of British-based accessories manufacturer importing for British chain stores.

A.B.M.C. 04.09.03. Resident since the early 1990s, originally from America. Visual Merchandise manager.

B.J.M.L. 03.12.03. Member of the host community. Founder of a top-end retail store.

Questions for Fashion System Informants

Name:

Date:

When were you in H.K.?

What was your part in the H.K. fashion system?

Where you/the company that you were working with supplying the H.K. market as well as an overseas market?

How do you remember the fashion system:

Fabrics

Manufacturing

Distribution

Retailing

How has it changed over time?

How would you describe it post 1990 – 1997?

How did H.K. manufacturing compare with U.K./U.S.A./European production in terms of quality of finish /design/speed of production/ dealing with merchandisers, etc?

Did you cancel orders/control overmakes/seconds etc?

What differences were there between H.K. fashion and U.K. fashion?/ What was unique /different about H.K. fashion?

What fashion do you remember being available to expatriate women (any one other than local people)?

Describe how ex-pats dressed in H.K.?

Describe how the local population dresses in H.K.?

Do you remember any comments about H.K. fashion/availability?

Was H.K. manufacturing a bargain basement for Westerners/smaller sizes/ outlet /Stanley?

If you were to summarize H.K. fashion, what would be your summary?

VWT/July '01

Questionnaire for expatriate Western women The fashion choices of expatriate Western women in Hong Kong from 1960 – 97.

Name:

Date:

Month and year of arrival in H.K.:

Age on arrival?

Status; single/married/with partner. Employment?

Visa?

Where came from?

What was fashionable?

What did you wear? Where and how did you shop?

What did you think of it then? How do you think of it now?/What did you think of it last time you went back?

In H.K. Where lived?/What sort of person were you?

What was fashionable?

What fashion did you wear?

Describe the first outfit purchased in H.K.? Date? Photograph?

What did you think of it then? How do you think of it now?

Did you sew/knit? How many clothes for casual/formal?/ Who were you?/Where you the same person?/ Did you feel that you could be yourself?

Impression of Hong Kong Fashion? Conform to dress codes, what where they?
Neat/prosperous/etc.?/What did you say and want to be that you couldn't?/How has your appearance changed since coming to H.K.?

Does the clothing you selected reflect your identity? Who dressed for? Did you dress you to suit yourself, to reveal your personality or was it more important for you to be fashionably dressed irrespective of whether you liked the fashion or not?

Where clothes purchased? Did you shop at Stanley market or CRC? Why go to Stanley Market and not a tailors?

Was it easy to obtain your size? For shoes? Lingerie?

Colour preference/meaning?

Still have 1st outfit? Photographs? Drawing? What fashion magazines did you buy? What other sources of fashion information did you use?

Describe how you dress for Discovery Bay/Central, Mid Levels /Central, Lamma/Central?

'Binge shopping'?

21. Average person?

22. Anything else you would like to tell me?

Further questions in future.

VWT/July '01

Glossary

Accessories

Any part of the garment not including the fabric: zip, thread, buttons, and ribbon and so on.

Acetate

An early synthetic fabric derived from cotton or wood pulp. Acetate or diacetate (or also triacetate) is a crisp, lightweight fabric (usually satin, brocade or taffeta) with a smooth, shiny surface. It dyes well, has few heat retention properties, and poor tensile strength. Frequently used as a lining fabric for women's clothes.

'A-fashion'

Term used to denote garments, which are not related to fashion: not *unfashionable*.

'Antique fabric'

My informant means pre-modern or early 20th Century regional textiles.

Ao-dai

Ethnic Vietnamese women's dress comprising of a bespoke, unlined, fitted, knee-length coat with side slits to the hips, fastened from the bust to the waist. Worn over a pair of matching, or white or black, pants (*quan*) and a short-sleeved top. Pronounced: *ao-yai*.

Asian

Generally used in Hong Kong to describe anyone of Chinese origin, be they nationals of another country or, in many cases, brought up overseas. It is also used to describe people from South and Southeastern Asia (respectively: Nepal, India, Pakistan, and Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore), and anywhere from Mongolia, to Japan. The term is not pejorative.

'Atelier' system

Garment production system in which employed highly skilled versatile workers, many of them family members, could complete many tasks to a high standard. Production was small and exclusive. The French couture houses are an example.

Backless dress

Halter-necked.

Balanced weave

Basic plain weave fabric, where even amounts of warp and weft result from alternate over-and-under patterning.

Batik

Wax resist method of dyeing fabric many colours, with characteristic cracked bleeding. Used in Indonesia.

Bespoke

Tailor-made for one person

Bhutanese door cloth

Vertically striped, hand-woven fabric traditionally used as a door hanging in Bhutan.

'Binge shopping'

To purchase multiples of an item of merchandise.

Blocks

Card patterns, which represent the surface of the skin in a two-dimensional form, from which a garment pattern is developed.

Bound foot/shoe

Pre-modern Han Chinese practice of binding women's feet to restrict growth, thus impeding mobility and adding to erotic appeal.

Brand

Goods sold under the name of one person or a company as an assurance of quality.

British High Street

U.K. retail stores, usually found in most town and city High Streets.

Broderie anglais

Woven cotton fabric covered with small machine-made holes, each edged with self-coloured thread. Used for women's collars, blouses, and children's clothing.

Buckle covering

Method of covering belt buckles in self-fabric.

Bulk production

The majority of any order.

Bulk-pack

This is a distribution method using a pre-specified mix of sizes and colours of a given line of merchandise to optimise sales. This also reduces on-site storage for multi-site store groups.

Button-loop fastening

Self-fabric tube stiffened with wire to make a knot button and matching loop for use on pre-modern Chinese dress and *cheongsam*. Shape matches fabric, age of customer, or occasion of use.

Butylated hydroxytoluene-free (B.H.T.-free) bags

Packaging which does not contain this cancer-causing agent.

'Buy'

The amount of money a buyer has to spend for a given season or period.

Buyer

The person who selects merchandise for a store.

Cabbage

Remaining fabric left after the completion on of an order by a supplier. This is usually made up in to merchandise which the supplier sells to market-stall owners.

Cancelled orders

The 'buy' for any given line is time sensitive, calculated on how many the retailer will sell in a given season. If the merchandise is delivered late, the period in which to sell it is reduced, therefore the retailers will reject a proportion (or all) of the buy, maintaining that they will be unable to sell it in the given season.

Cantonese

Han Chinese from South China, previously Canton Province, now Guangdong. The capital Canton, is now known as Guangzhou. Also the language of the people of Southern China around the Pearl River delta.

Chanfu

The long gown, pre-modern Chinese dress, worn by men.

Chinese theatre

Chinese Opera.

Cheongsam

Modified pre-modern dress which evolved in Shanghai to become shorter and more fitted as the wearer desired. Represented 'free China' in Mao period. Worn as everyday dress in Hong Kong until

the late 1970s. Also known as the 'Suzie Wong dress.' Usually short-sleeved with a stand collar, asymmetrical front fastening, side slits at hem.

Chop-suey

English description of Chinese (Cantonese) food. Pejorative.

Clutch bag/clutches

Envelope-shaped handbag without a strap.

Comfort clothing

Clothing worn at home in inclement weather in front of the fire, watching a movie, drinking a glass of wine.... Also called 'cocooning' - term originated by trend forecaster, Li Edelkoort.

Comprador

Local employee who acted as go-between and guarantor of good faith and financial integrity between the Western boss and the Chinese employees. This position was open to considerable abuse.

Comprehensive Certificate of Origin

Applied to all items manufactured in China during the Korea War including: silk, linen, cotton, jade, furniture, Chinese antiques and handicrafts. Neither Chinese raw materials nor finished goods were to be imported in to the United States of America.

Computerised Fabric Cutting

To achieve maximum economy of fabric use, trial fabric layouts are modelled on a computer before transferring the layout to fabric. Contemporary machinery can also cut the fabric following the computer model.

Concubine

Traditional Chinese practice of each man simultaneously having more than one wife.

Convention on International Trade in Endangered species of Wild Fauna and Flora (C.I.T.E.S.)

Legislation covering the illegal use of banned species of animals and plants.

Cool wool

Fine weight wool, developed in the mid-1980s. Popular for men's suits.

Copy merchandise

Merchandise bearing the apparent logo or print of luxury brand merchandise, sold illegally.

Copy watch

Watch containing usually a Seiko movement, with an outer case designed to copy a Rolex, Cartier, or other luxury brand name watch. Purchased illegally on the streets of Tsim Sha Tsui.

Correctional Services Department (C.S.D.)

The Hong Kong prison system.

Closed-back (and open-back)

Description of the back of a window in a store. Closed-back windows allow the creation of a stage-like set, open-back windows are often subject to regulations of the shopping mall owner and allow customers to see in to the store.

Crazy glue

Super-glue.

Crepon/Crepe/Crape

Thin wool, silk, rayon, or cotton fabric, with a dry handle and gauzy, matt, wrinkled appearance. Used for women's wear, and headscarves. Crepe de Chine, from Canton was made using two yarns twisted in opposite directions, when the fabric was boiled the crepe surface became apparent. Worn for mourning in the Victorian period.

Cut, Make, Trim (C.M.T.)

Trade description of most garment manufacturers.

'Deeper pockets'

Wealthier, richer.

Designer brand

Retail fashion brand using the name of the original or owner's name, i.e.: Ralph Lauren.

Dim-sum

Cantonese speciality cuisine, meaning little heart, composed of small dishes of wrapped ingredients, served at lunchtime.

Dozen

Large orders are frequently purchased in dozens rather than single units. This reduces the number of '0's at the end of the number leading to fewer mistakes, and is less 'scary' for buyers: 15,000 dozen is a lot of product... (15,000 x 12 = 180,000 items).

Dressmakers

Used to make bespoke dress for women and children. Customers usually supplied their own fabrics.

Edge-to-edge collar

A 'Stand' collar meeting at the centre front, similar to Indian men's dress.

English wool

My informant means men's weight suitings, designed for English-style tailoring.

Ethnic dress

Regional dress, not derived from Western fashions.

Eurasian

People of Chinese and Western (usually European), descent.

Factory shop/outlet

Small retail store on the site of the manufacturer selling over-makes, cancelled orders, and seconds.

Fashioned/Fully fashioned

Describes weft knitted fabrics or garments, which are partly or wholly shaped by widening or narrowing the width of the fabric being knitted. A form of 'make-to-shape,' completed by increasing and decreasing the number of stitches.

Filial piety

The Asian practice of honouring one's parents, as the givers of the gift of life to their children.

Fishing line

Transparent plastic line used to secure bait to a fishing rod, also used for store display.

Flannelette

(U.K.) Napped twill or plain weave, woven cotton fabric. Used for nightdresses, pyjamas, and dressing gowns. Known as flannel in United States of America.

Flares

Men's and women's trousers, which were tight from the hip to the knee and flared to the ground. Fashionable in the late 1960s.

Floating restaurant

Large multi-story ornate building built on a floating platform serving Cantonese food (Copenhagen has one, also see the film: The World of Suzie Wong).

Fortune cookies

A sweet pastry folded to conceal a lucky printed message, frequently handed out at the end of a meal in Chinese restaurants in the United States of America.

Garment label

One or more (usually) sewn-in labels, detailing the name of the brand, fabric composition, and care instructions for the garment. Sometimes also includes its country of origin. The composition and care information is required to be included by law in many countries.

Grass raincoat

Protective clothing made of woven straw or grasses, worn by farmers in bad weather in the New Territories in the earlier part of the period of research.

Greg, The House of Siren

Hong Kong based designer, famous for making outrageous theme outfits.

Grommet

Metal eye set in to garment or accessory, for decoration, to allow fastening, or ventilation.

Grunge

Early 1990s fashion for scruffy, unkempt clothes, following the dressy fashions of the late 1980s.

Gweilo

Cantonese, literally: ghost man, or more politely: foreigner. *Gwei-po* is ghost woman but used less often.

Hakka

Minority people of Hong Kong resident since the 17th century. Women wear distinctive black fabric-edged straw hat many living in walled villages in the New Territories.

Han Chinese

The majority people of China

'Hardship posting'

To accept employment in a location with no access to (habitual) cultural necessities or conveniences.

Hand-flat knitting machine

Using a hand operated carriage, this machine allows semi-automated knitwear production. A flat machine has a flat bed of latches, a tubular machine is circular.

Haute couture

French, literally 'high fashion,' women's top-end bespoke merchandise.

Hoklo

Minority people of Hong Kong. Traditionally fishing families, many lived on boats.

Hopsack

A variation on plain weave, where two or more ends and picks are woven as one. Even quantities of warp and weft are visible on both sides of the fabric. Also called basket weave.

Horsehair handbags

Previously fashionable pony-skin-like hide processed to retain the hair.

Huaniu

Literally: flower-button fastening. Ornamental button made of a tube of fabric stiffened with wire, used on pre-modern Chinese dress and the *cheongsam*.

Ikat

Fabric of wrapped warp or more usually weft yarn, usually cotton or silk, which is dyed to a given pattern before weaving, the pattern emerges as the cloth is woven. Originating in China, Indonesia, and elsewhere.

Indigo

Blue dye from plant material used to dye cotton throughout Asia.

International Standardization for Organisation (I.S.O.) certificates

A Europe-wide system of quality control and standardisation. Compliance with which became mandatory criteria in order to supply many retail companies.

Jacquard

Usually woven, but sometimes knitted, weft-patterning on one face of the fabric. Created using a series of punch cards on a jacquard loom enabling error-free repeat patterning. Knitted jacquards are either flat-patterned or the pattern is raised as a blister.

Jim Thompson

Bangkok-based fabric and garment retailer using locally made silk. Set up by an American resident who was most famous for his unexplained disappearance.

Kain batik

Wax-resist patterning on cotton fabric, with distinct diagonal patterning, from Malaysia and Indonesia.

Kebaya

White lace, crochet or cotton cut-work or *broderie anglais* top, worn with a *sarong*, a wrapped bustier-style top, and a waist cloth by Indonesia women.

Kimono

The long wrapped gown worn by Japanese women as traditional dress.

Kipper ties

A 1960s fashion for wide men's ties, named after the English breakfast fish whose shape they resembled.

Kowloon

Literally 'nine dragons,' (*gau-leung*) referring to the nine peaks, the area behind the tip of the mainland peninsula.

Lab-dip

Sample of fabric for colour approval by customer before bulk dying for production.

Lambswool

100% wool from young sheep (up to the age of weaning). Soft, but with a short fibre length.

Letter of Credit

Guarantee of payment endorsed by a bank.

Mainlander

Han Chinese and/or Manchu, from Mainland China.

Mama-san

The 'madame' in a brothel (Japanese). Also used to describe women who sought to find young female employees for a factory.

Manufacturing-in-parallel system

Garment manufacturing system in which commitment is made to a total order, but a minimum amount of raw materials are trialled to determine the best selling potential before the bulk is dyed and made in to garments. This allows maximum flexibility to capitalise on new trends and minimises

losses as un-dyed materials can usually be resold if necessary. Now commonly used by large retailers and their suppliers.

Margin

Difference between the cost of merchandise and its retail value minus selling costs, that is, the profit.

Mecanese

People descended from the Chinese and/or Portuguese residents of Macau.

Merchandise

Fashion industry word for garments and other products sold by boutiques, department stores, and speciality stores.

Merchandiser

Fashion industry professional responsible for liaising between the buyer (the client) and the supplier (manufacturer).

Metameric match

The acceptable match of two colours (to create a garment collection or used in the same garment) under a set of lighting conditions: daylight, artificial daylight, store lights (when the light used is specified, i.e.: TL84).

Miao earrings

Chinese minority group famous for their use of pressed silver jewellery.

Microfibre

Extremely fine polyester woven yarn of 1decitex or less, so closely woven it is waterproof as the water molecules are larger than the spaces between the warp and the weft. Problematic to sew. Popular for outerwear and sportswear since the mid-1980s.

Millinery

Women's structured hats, made using a wooden block, of straw, felt, or other fabrics, trimmed with feathers, flowers, net, and other materials.

Narrow fabrics

Ribbon, tape, or any narrow-width fabric, knitted or woven, used as a fillet, or trim on garments.

Obi

The waist sash worn over a kimono in Japan.

Off-site manufacturing

Production completed in a less expensive labour country than the skilled job of specifying and producing the prototype. For example: Hong Kong may retain Head office status but production may be made in China, Vietnam, or Malaysia.

'Open Door' policy

Post-Mao, Chinese economic policy, welcoming economic trade with other countries.

One-offs

Making only one of a garment, usually due to a shortage of raw materials to allow further replication.

Over-makes/Over-runs

In order to complete the exact order required, a manufacturer usually allows 1% extra for damaged, substandard goods. If these are not required by the retailer, they are sold to market stall holders or through a factory shop.

Pashmina

A blend of silk and wool used to make a lightweight shawl.

Peony-flowered printed cotton fabric

The only fabric print permitted during Mao's reign in China. The peony is the national flower of China. The brightly coloured fabric comes with a red (traditional), blue, green, or yellow ground.

Phoenix and Dragon gown

Red top and black skirt completely covered with heavy metallic embroidery symbolising the union of the male (Dragon) and female (Phoenix), in which it was impossible to move, worn at Cantonese weddings. Popular until the late 1990s.

Pin-yin

The simplified written characters developed by the Communist Chinese government based on the Beijing dialect to implement a single written language across the People's Republic of China.

Polyester georgette

Woven fabric of crimped man made synthetic polymer yarn having two sets of a highly twisted pattern in the yarn creating a matt surface fabric with a lightweight, soft handle, suitable for dresses, and blouses.

Polyester jacquard

Woven fabric of man-made synthetic polymer yarn creating a shiny ground with a self-coloured satin pattern on the face side. Used for inexpensive eveningwear, and linings.

Pom-poms

Balls of wool worn used to decorate garments and accessories.

Pre-modern dress

Ethnic dress, not derived from Western fashions, worn prior to local adoption of Western dress.

Pre-production run

Pilot or sample quantity (10-100 dozen depending on merchandise value), made as a trial before bulk production of a new line in a factory to determine piece rates, fabric usage, and other possible problems. Used for specialist merchandise, especially lingerie.

Punjabi suits/Shalwar Kameez

Indian women's dress, alternative to the *sari*. Worn by schoolgirls consisting of a knee or hip-length top, matching pants, and a *dupatta* (a matching scarf), in cotton, polyester, or silk. Subject to fashion change as is Western dress.

Punti

Minority people of Hong Kong

Putonhua

The spoken language of the People's Republic of China, based on the Beijing dialect.

Quality control (Q.C.)

Technicians/technologists employed by large retailers to check quality of production during production period.

Quota

Import restriction agreements designed to prevent importing country's own industries from competition from low labour cost countries. These nevertheless guaranteed the exporting country a continuing market.

Repeat order

A second order from a retail customer within the same buying season, either due to a too cautious initial order, or unforeseen popularity. This practice risks lost sales as the factory may be unable to produce a second order within the required time period. Over-makes are often accepted as repeat orders.

Resettlement estate

Government owned residential apartment blocks, built to accommodate the people living in shanty towns which surrounded most towns across the Territory until the late 1970s.

Sample production

Initial sample for sales, development, or fit purposes. Often produced in a sample unit, not on the factory floor.

Sampan

Small covered boat propelled by an engine, often helmed by women.

Sari

Indian women's dress made from six or nine yards of wrapped fabric.

Sarong

Rectangle of cotton or silk worn wrapped around the hips by men and women in Indonesia, often decorated with *batik* or using *ikat* fabrics.

Sea Island cotton

Type of cotton with the longest and finest fibres. Used for fine quality knitwear.

Seconds

Sub-standard merchandise, rejected by manufacturer's Quality Control at production stage, suitable for sale at reduced price on market stalls or in factory shop.

Shahtoosh

The Tibetan antelope, or *chiru* (*Pantholops hodgsonii*). This animal cannot be farmed and use of its coat for shawl production is only made possible by its slaughter. Also known as a ring shawl. Retail has been illegal under C.I.T.E.S. legislation since 1989.

Shan

Outer top garment worn by women in late pre-modern China. Winter versions were fur-lined.

Shenzhen

Chinese city located just over the Hong Kong/China border in a Chinese Special Economic Zone where foreign investment is encouraged.

'Sloane Ranger'

Upper class resident of South West London, (near Sloane Square), named from Peter York's 1982 book: *The Official Sloane Ranger Handbook*.

Soft hats

Caps, beanies, knitted hats, and berets. Not millinery.

Special Administrative Region (S.A.R.)

The name of the territory of Hong Kong within China after the Handover. Post-colonial Macau is also a S.A.R., having a different legal and constitutional system to the remainder of China.

'Stand' collar

Vertical part of a collar, without a 'fall,' (the part that folds over on a man's shirt collar).

Star Ferry

Famous passenger ferries connecting Hong Kong Island to the Kowloon peninsula.

Supplementary weft

The insertion of an additional yarn across the width of a hand-woven fabric as it is woven, in order to create a pattern.

Supply chain

Order of suppliers required to create one garment line: for example: fabric supplier, trims supplier, manufacturer, distribution specialist.

Szur

Hungarian shepherd's coat, worn in the 1940s but its use has now declined.

Tailor

Usually male, maker of bespoke men's suits. Trade is divided between specialists in jackets or specialists in waistcoats and trousers. Sometimes will also complete women's formal wear. Tailors offered a range of men's suit fabrics for customers to choose from.

Tanka

Minority people of Hong Kong.

Thai-fishermen's pants

Simple men's trousers cut in four pieces, the front folds over itself and is secured with a self-fabric tie. Usually made in inexpensive cotton or linen, often indigo dyed, currently worn by Thai fishermen.

Thai silk

Woven silk fabric from Thai silk worms, with a pronounced slub-warp thread (like tussah silk). This silk is characterised by contrast colour warp and weft threads producing a *changeant* effect when held to the light.

The Handover

The transfer of sovereignty from the United Kingdom to the People's Republic of China, marking the end of colonial rule and reversion to Chinese rule, on July 1st 1997.

The Peak

The mountain in the centre of Hong Kong Island.

The Peg

The Hong Kong dollar was pegged to the U.S. dollar, the world's major currency, in 1983. The exchange rate to the end of the period remained H.K.\$ 7.8 = U.S.\$1.00.

The Summer Palace

The summer residence of the former imperial family in Beijing, now open to the public.

The Territory

'Territory,' the mandatory euphemism for the 'colony of Hong Kong.'

Toggles

Wooden button fastening, often used on duffel coats.

Trunk show

Sale of a (usually visiting) designer's collection from a range displayed for a limited period in a hotel bedroom.

Tulle

Lightweight, fine netting fabric of silk, nylon or rayon, often starched. Used for party dresses, and ballet tutus.

Uric acid

Previously used to make inexpensive buttons, frequently used for school uniform or other inexpensive garments. Characteristically, they smelled.

'Vanity sizing'

Increasing garment size used in the West to conceal the growing size and obesity of the population.

'V' back

Flat hand or machine-operated knitting machine with two beds, capable of carrying two sets of stitches (purl and plain) at the same time.

Vertically integrated

A company producing and retailing its own merchandise. For example: Zara.

Victoria

Old name for Central, the Central Business District of Hong Kong on Hong Kong island.

Victoria Harbour

'W'-shaped secure harbour between Hong Kong Island and the tip of the mainland peninsula.

Visual merchandiser

Specialist store staff responsible for store display, interior, exterior and often promotions, fashion shows, special events, etc.

Western

Meaning a Caucasian (or part-Caucasian) member of the cultural, economic and political systems of North America, Europe, or Australasia.

Winceyette

Napped flannelette cotton fabric, brushed on both sides, used to make children's nightdresses.

Wool jersey

Used as a base for sequinned or beaded women's eveningwear in the 1960s.