

Strait surely came from his failure both to induce surrender by the offshore islands and to interdict Nationalist supply efforts, however he rationalized it. Again, Hong Kong's future economy is more likely to be determined by Guangzhou than Beijing, given the regional interdependence and prosperity. But these are minor judgment calls that in no way detract from this impressively lucid and comprehensive analysis of relations between the United States government and its people, on the one hand, and two important Chinese societies, on the other hand.

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Boundaries of the Self: Chinese Portraits, 1600–1900. By RICHARD VINOGRAD. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992. xv, 191 pp. \$95.00.

The period from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries saw a vast production of painted portraits in China. The majority were posthumous ancestor portraits, anonymous and hieratic images that had currency all the way down to the village level. At the level of the urban elite, however, there was also an explosion of informal portraits, commissioned by or for living people, which offered them an opportunity to engage actively in the construction of self. Richard Vinograd's dense and thoughtful, if at moments cloudy, book is primarily concerned with portraits of the latter type, variously painted by specialist portraitists, nonspecialists, or the two in collaboration. Following an introductory chapter that raises general questions about the practice and history of portraiture in China, one chapter is devoted to each of the three centuries covered. The choice of portraits is heavily weighted toward portraits of other artists (and sometimes cultural professionals of other kinds) and to artists' self-portraits.

In addition to a helpful discussion of portraits as events rather than objects, the author argues in his first chapter for a theoretical opposition between the portrait as effigy, verisimilar by definition, and the portrait as emblem, revelatory of the sitter's personality. On the one hand are ancestor portraits, state icons, and such; on the other, informal portraits, whether of the living or the dead. This effigy/emblem opposition is useful in accounting for the rhetorical status of portraits. As regards their (re-)cognitive status, however, it glosses over the fact that for ancestor portraits, the portrait identification may depend more on an identifying label than on any resemblance to the dead person; and that informal portraits, by contrast, almost always do preserve a likeness—in the first instance, it is this likeness, and not any revelation of personality, that makes them portraits.

Taken together, the subsequent historical chapters demonstrate informal portraiture (and self-portraiture) to have consistently been an occasion for dressing-up of both sartorial and metaphorical kinds. Vinograd nicely draws this out within the framework of the emblematic revelation of personality, and he is also extremely sensitive to the loss of moorings implicit in such role-playing. For the politically troubled seventeenth century, he often associates it with the construction of a concealing screen that permitted an escapist retreat into the private realm of the psyche. For the eighteenth century, he highlights the cultural issue of "lateness": the quandary "that the value of artistic production resided in something fundamentally other than itself, in a justifying communion with or inhabitation by a predecessor." Finally,

for the nineteenth century, he focuses on social issues around "the uncertain positions of the modern age." Vinograd's combination of exegetic and symptomatic readings of the portrait as emblem thus points to a historical shift in the contexts for portrait practice, from the political to the cultural to the social.

The author's view of the reflexive concern with the construction of self in portraiture (whether we consider this to be a "late" or a "modern" phenomenon) is strikingly pessimistic. I was left with the impression that the self was increasingly embattled; as the public situation of artists and intellectuals became more and more uncertain, it became correspondingly more difficult to establish a secure identity. Yet, along the way, the author presents a great deal of evidence that points in a different direction when he notes such developments as: the strategic use of portraiture by artists and sitters; an in-group practice of portraits of fellow cultural professionals, including artists; and intertextual connections that show one generational grouping of artists looking back to another.

Vinograd's subordination of professional calculations leads him to some debatable assessments. Yu Zhiding's efficient displays of moral, cultural, and political capital for the late seventeenth-century political/cultural elite are blandly presented as "consoling visualizations of their ideal identities." Jin Nong's boldly written, boldly stated, erudite, and original art historical framings of images are read as "a kind of desperate, incantatory invocation of lineage." Ren Bonian, the most successful painter and portraitist in late nineteenth-century Shanghai, is improbably presented as haunted by a sense of social inferiority. Vinograd makes much of the unequal relationship between the figures of Ren Bonian and the fan-shop owner Zhu Jintang in Ren's collective portrait, *Three Friends*; however, the figure identified by Vinograd as Zhu has been taken by others to be Ren, and vice versa.

Beyond narrow issues of portraiture, in *Boundaries of the Self* we see the demise of the romantically conceived "traditional" Chinese painter, secure in his social and cultural identity. If Vinograd replaces this construct of postwar historiography with something suspiciously close to its mirror image—an embattled, anxious, insecure, deracinated figure vainly trying to hold on to a lost ideal—his stimulating book is still a significant and helpful complication of the story: definitely not business as usual.

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Resistance, Chaos and Control in China: Taiping Rebels, Taiwanese Ghosts and Tiananmen. By ROBERT P. WELLER. Seattle: University of Washington Press; London: Macmillan, 1994. viii, 255 pp. \$49.50.

The book joins the anthropological discussion about indirect cultural forms of resistance through the analysis of three Chinese examples: the early phase of the Taiping rebellion between 1844 and 1850, the Taiwanese Temple of the Eighteen Lords, which came to sudden popularity around 1980, and the events on Tiananmen in April-June 1989. Pointing to a richly saturated "stew" of potential meaning in all of these events, it argues against hermeneutical, structuralist, or sociological attempts to construct an internal logic or single meanings for them. Reading these events within their social and institutional environment, it stresses the factual importance and attractiveness of diffuse meaning in a departure from the