

evidence against his misrepresentation of my thesis. Having oversimplified my thesis, Ch'eng proceeds to dismiss it as both tautological and overblown. I may claim too much or too little for the eighteenth century as "early modern," but how can I defend myself against the contradictory charge that I do both at once?

The reviewer took special offense at my first chapter, which was written primarily for the nonspecialist. I believe his charge that I reintroduce "generally familiar secondary literature, especially in English," can only be applied in fairness to that first chapter. Ch'eng is far more accurate and detailed in his discussion of what I did not do than he is in describing what I did. In lamenting my failure to delve more deeply into social history, he ignores the bulk of my book, which discusses *Rulin waishi* from a variety of intellectual perspectives.

I agree with Ch'eng that "rigorous research and finer analysis are in order," but there is much to be said for simple accuracy in a book review.

PAUL ROPP  
*Memphis State University*

### A Response to Paul Ropp

If "simple accuracy" in reading the thesis of his book is Paul Ropp's main concern, his letter has done little to help us achieve it. Besides easy charges of "exaggeration" and "oversimplification," Ropp makes no attempt to show how his "real" thesis differs from the "misrepresented" one. While an author can always appeal to complexity after unresolved tension is found in his work, the question is whether his "recognition of complexity" is reflected in the conceptualization of his thesis.

As to the charge of contradiction, I should mention that the "too much, too little" dichotomy does not exist in my review, and that any work can be—if found to be so—at once "tautological and overblown," for it may be overblown in effort and tautological in effect.

The first chapter is a scapegoat. My impression is that many parts of the book read like review essays. And since the book contains clear claims to be "social history," especially in the introduction, the reviewer is not to be blamed for criticizing its failure to fulfill the original promise.

I-FAN CH'ENG  
*Howard University*

### On the Review Article, *Stability and Prosperity in Hong Kong*

Being accused of "oversimplifications, distortions, deliberate omissions, and even outright denials of known facts" by Ming K. Chan is an unexpected honor. It clearly indicates that my book *Hong Kong: Capitalist Paradise* is somehow different from the ones he has chosen to praise in his review article (*JAS* 42 [May 1983]:589–98).

Indeed it is! I stress such salient facts as exceptional growth rates, creation of modern industrial and service sectors, expansion of employment, rise of per capita

income, and so forth. This is what distinguishes Hong Kong most sharply as an economic success, one of pitifully few in the developing countries. Yet, these are the facts Chan slurs over.

Obviously, there are also weaknesses. I admit that they exist, and I devote whole sections to them. There is unemployment . . . but far less than elsewhere, despite the need to absorb untold thousands of refugees. There is inequality . . . but, again, less than elsewhere. There are rich and poor . . . but in the past there were only the poor, and the poor today are better off than in most of the Third World.

Who is guilty of “oversimplifications, distortions, deliberate omissions, and even outright denials of known facts”? Mr. Chan or myself?

JON WORONOFF  
*Tokyo*

### A Response to Jon Woronoff

In my *JAS* review article I did *not* “slur over” Hong Kong’s remarkable economic growth, but mentioned it prominently. Authors, however, must address the social and other issues created by the spectacular, but uneven growth.

I would like to illustrate the book’s “oversimplifications . . .” with two points. First, Jon Woronoff says that those who talk of democracy and opposition to colonialism are mostly “journalists, radical academics and students” (pp. 45–46). If so, the overwhelming majority of university students should be classified as “radical” at the same time that the recent government efforts to promote the district board system with elected members to give “the people more democracy” and to eliminate the terms “colony” and “colonial” from official documents should also be regarded as “radical.”

Second, Woronoff writes, “It is strange to reflect that the exploited labor of Hong Kong has done so much better than the pampered labor of the developed world” (pp. 110–11). If this were true, then the local industrial and commercial elite, the labor unions, and the workers themselves must all have been behaving in a most “strange” manner when they supported the government’s introduction of labor legislation patterned after the “developed world.”

Woronoff does not confront my major criticism of his book—his outdated and inaccurate picture of the Hong Kong government as a good example of “laissez-faire.” In fact, the Hong Kong government is much more directly involved and “interventionist” in many areas than it was a decade ago. As the uncertainty over the 1997 “China Syndrome” becomes stronger, one can see the government assuming an increasingly “interventionist” approach to maintain the “stability and prosperity” of Hong Kong.

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