

Copying in Imperial China

Danielle Elisseff

“Copying”: this practice, in China as elsewhere, was and still is the first exercise of every apprenticeship at the same time as an irreplaceable technique for spreading know-how, talent, and innovation; but the place and interest accorded to it throw light on the rather special positions being taken up. Thus, when a Chinese author speaks of copy, he is thinking primarily of the “copy-image,” in two dimensions. Sculpture in China plays a religious and propitiatory role; it only indirectly gives rise to reflections about art. The copies of objects thus found themselves relegated to the sphere of the utilitarian, even of the frankly deceptive (the “fakes”); they held little interest for aesthetes, with a single exception: that of archaic bronzes, which I shall be dealing with later since they fall within the scope of an overall reflection on history, ritual, and the foundations of the state. Now the latter, like the bases of painting, flow from an original cultural context, the elements of which that are most resistant to comparison are language and writing.

The latter—still alive and well despite the arguments that have raged for nearly half a century over its possible demise¹—tends to favor associations of ideas, shifts in meaning, and resonances, without fearing a polysemy often judged reprehensible elsewhere, when measured by the yardstick of discursive thought; passion for texts and scripts, in a word, is focused around writing. In China one must never forget this preeminence of the sign, which is given such emphasis that the value of a subject—and the urgency to reproduce it to ensure its permanence—derives less from the frequency of its plastic representations than from its recurring presence in the texts.

The latter remain the supreme reference for all human activity and for all knowledge, and they stand at the source of all inspiration: historians are well aware of this fact, stressing to what a considerable extent—and no doubt more than was reasonable—Chinese critics constantly judged and categorized the arts in relation to the word and its written transposition.² And if the best authors, the most cultivated men of the Empire, never ceased vaunting, at least from the eighth century onwards, the close ties between painting and poetry, the latter always took precedence over the former, and society more than once saw to it that the plastic artists were put in their place, a respected but always secondary one.

Take, for example, those artists of the Sung period (960-1279) who spent their time watching monkeys, birds, dogs, donkeys carrying charcoal-burners' loads, and buffaloes working the paddy-fields: doubtless they were the best animal painters in the world, and remain so through the works of theirs that have come down to us.³ And yet at the same time, animals in their everyday aspect practically disappeared from poets' themes and vocabulary, the only exception being a few birds to which writers attributed a precise symbolic meaning through the association of homophones and ancient literary allusions. This particular point—about animal painting, often unjustly forgotten—is a crude illustration of the overall place of the image in Chinese culture, a place as much out of sync in relation to the dominant discourse as in relation to real life; but then it was in reflecting on and for the image that the artists of the Empire were led to ponder the issue of the copy.

The compilers of technical and theoretical treatises⁴ occasionally tackled the question, on the whole rather briefly, stressing in clear terms or by paralipsis how little the copy worthy of the name (*moxie*) can, any more than the original, do without the "movement of life" (*shengdong*), and without the "breath", "spirit" (*qi*), or without "spiritual resonance" (*qiyun*), a fundamental notion in any reflection on art but one that understandably makes translators quail when they attempt to translate it from Chinese into other languages.

Copying Images

Chinese lovers of art—especially collectors—began long ago compiling typological catalogs of images, imitating in that respect the thinkers and enquiring minds who, from the early decades of the Han empire onwards (i.e. the second century of the Christian era) drew up inventorial lists of everything that existed, a shared fundamental way of getting to grips with the world.⁵

It thus became clear that the representations, fulfilling various functions and manifesting different aspects, fell into at least three principal categories: the *xiang* rendering visible, in accordance with a conventionally accepted grammar of forms, the profound reality of beings;⁶ the *tu* setting up vast panoramic compositions; and the *hua* alone acceding to the superior status of “painting” according to the regular translation of the word (but in Chinese the term covers every type of two-dimensional work born of an artistic endeavor, the materials most often being watercolors, which as it happens are also those of writing).

They all—the *xiang*, the *tu*, and the *hua*—could be read according to different ways of seeing: *kan*, “see”; *guan*, “look”, though the word also kept the Buddhist meaning of “visualize”;⁷ *du*, “observe”; and *wang*, “contemplate”.⁸ Such subtle differences in ways of looking at objects increased the number of approaches, perspectives, and finally of things seen; they also accounted for various uses of the image—sometimes as a simple document, sometimes as a work of art—according to whether the contemplator was more interested in the subject or the form, even if the two could not normally be dissociated and only derived meaning from each other.

The Chinese critics and collectors—who had a duty to provide qualitative and monetary valuations of the works passing through their hands—often stressed how much the exercise of copying, a thankless task by its nature, in fact posed problems identical to those dogging any artist wrestling with the difficulty of creation: should one attempt to reproduce the subject in its most commonly perceived external aspects, or was it better to proceed by allusion,⁹ to imagine a kind of visual equivalent, using a semiology that the author knew would be understood in the context of a given society?

Chinese painters long ago chose essentially to follow Yao Zui, a theorist of the sixth century: "placed before the object, although the form may be limited [the painter] attains the unlimited by acting as a sounding-board for what lies beyond the form." Put plainly, the important thing was not the figurative, the "drawn," but the unsaid, the suggested; and this always refers to the profound rhythm of the world, which is the very beat of life. From the contemplator's point of view, the identification between the theme and its apparent formal truth counts less than the thought and the feeling flowing from it.

A classic example offering a good illustration of this approach is to be found in the two-dimensional representation of the progression: by nature this has no form,¹⁰ and yet its movement, such as that suggested by the great artists with the help of barely perceptible signs, is dazzling on silk or paper. In other words, a precise optical line does not always give a direct account of a reality; the artist of "uncommon talent" (*qineng*) operates indirectly, bringing intangible yet prominent sensory elements into play. Copies are not immune from these constraints: they exist only insofar as the emotion, the indirect communication characteristic of the original, gets conveyed.¹¹

If Chinese artists found these challenges fascinating, no one ever dreamed of placing copies above primary works, or even of putting them on an equal footing;¹² nevertheless, many theorists viewed the best of them with respect. What was important in art, they said, was not the object produced, but the message, the cosmic meaning, the divine origin, and the moral value that the work bore witness to: each and every one of these requirements counted for much more than the uniqueness, the pure formal "beauty," the external richness of the realization, its antiquity, and its real physical links with a particularly revered master.

What is more, not all forms of the play of representation in imperial China attained the envied status of "marvelous" works (*miao*) by virtue of their being bearers of a philosophical and moral meaning judged "divine" (*shen*). It seems even that material price and spiritual value rarely made good bedfellows. The great scenes covering the walls of monasteries and of the palaces of princes, for example, did indeed on occasion give rise to the flat-

tering judgment of a connoisseur, not to say a genuine feeling of admiration; and the moralists welcomed them because as often as not they served as the vehicle for notions useful to society. For all that, they remained, without exception and until the twentieth century, cataloged in the series of trivial, utilitarian, not to say artisanal works (*gong*: the term, in the official language of the scholar-administrators, was far from flattering). In this case, the need to find a way of distinguishing between original and copy did not even arise: all artisanal production was made in response to an order prompted by a need and a market, both of these being conditions that legitimized the current practice of reproduction; but the Chinese elites considered the latter no less trivial than the former, to the extent of casting a slur on the value attributed to the object produced, whatever its quality.

The Chinese painting beloved of the intellectual and political ruling classes—the painting whose renown ended up relegating to the background the other techniques of two-dimensional creation—was limited to ink drawings or watercolors: an economical practice, using the same materials as calligraphy (brush, pigments mixed with size and water, paper, and silk), for in east Asia the latter was and remains the mother of all the arts.¹³ The true criterion for judging a work, transcending the original/copy dichotomy, stems, in this precise technical framework, from the living power of the line accomplished in one go: ink drawings, like watercolors, recognizes only the value of the first attempt, of the “unique brush-stroke” (*yi bi-hua*):¹⁴ the watercolorist, as everyone knows, cannot go in for second thoughts or repaint things in the way an artist working in oils on canvas is allowed to do—if a stroke goes awry, there is only solution, throwing the sketch away and starting again. So a watercolor copy worthy of the name implies that the painter, working spontaneously and with an urgency imposed by the rapidity with which the pigments diffuse, has rediscovered the original piercing quality that inspired its first author to create—otherwise the effort will result merely in a drab imitation, a lifeless, useless corpse. From this it follows that no Chinese scholar’s painting, inspired by another work, can be seen as a simple replica, but rather as a re-creation.

The copyist, certainly, does not invent; he reproduces the lines and prospective colors of the model—it is the basic rule of the

exercise—but to get there it is essential for him to rediscover the speed, the rhythm, and the original movements of the artist, in a word to follow in his footsteps and to empathize with him. He does not advance bit by bit, hesitantly, but by reconstructing with a faithfulness at once finicky and inspired the initial sequence of thoughts and emotions that gave rise to the work: as Wang Wei the Elder (415-443) wrote, “such paintings cannot be carried out by the physical movements of the fingers and of the hand, but only by the spirit entering into them.” As a result the copy, though never as highly prized as the original creation, did not generally have to suffer in China from the disparagement that was so often its lot in the West.

What is more, and once again, the prestige of literature—the term covered, in east Asia, all fields of writerly activity, from poetic composition to the drafting of legal texts—also helped enhance the value of the copy more than was the case with other cultures. In its elitist forms, painting remained a scholar’s art; but what does a scholar do when he writes? He expresses himself, at least partially, through quotations: that is the academic exercise par excellence, one moreover that defines one’s membership of the educated classes. So it seemed quite natural for a painter belonging to that world and operating within that framework to go in for an identical play of allusion, not always copying a work as a whole, but putting together forms borrowed from masters past and present. Just as thinkers, historians, and poets played with authors’ words—their own and those of others—painters played with forms, in a dialogue that trifled freely with time and space, favoring encounters as virtual as they were unexpected, well hidden behind simple appearances.

Besides, recent studies¹⁵ have brought out the extent to which, for scholars, painting constituted a form of psychoanalysis, as much as and sometimes a lot more than writing, which was always laden with social value and therefore with inhibiting conventions. So to say the unsayable and cast off its shackles, scholars painted (or to adopt our criteria, they drew in ink). The forms were then assembled under their brush like the words of a language and found their meaning in the act of copying the ancients; they expressed what the individual could not or dare not say, even

in poetic (and therefore relatively unfettered) terms. Thus, though the artist seemed apparently to be copying this or that classical representation, the lines that took shape under his fingers—sometimes as if he were succumbing to automatic writing—were recounting and imitating nothing other than the path followed by the man he was momentarily identifying with; he could choose to express himself by combining, for example, the craggy, heavily inked rocks of an eleventh-century master with the elegant coldness of the waters as represented by a great fourteenth-century artist. Did not Wang Hui (1663-1717), one of the painters to achieve the greatest prominence in the early decades of the Qing dynasty (1644-1911), recommend “using the brush and ink technique of the Yuan [1279-1368], reviving the spirit of the mountains and valleys of the Sung scholars [960-1279], and permeating the whole with the spiritual resonance of the Tang [618-907]”?¹⁶

When a Chinese intellectual pondered the meaning and usefulness of a copy, he generally came to the conclusion that the exercise was a necessity: besides, the artist, whoever he is, does not create in the absolute; he copies/translates nature/expresses himself, which is a way of organizing the macrocosm he is part of. The scholar-occasional painter does not observe the world, he contemplates it,¹⁷ soaks himself in it and gives an account of it; he reproduces what he sees or thinks he sees; the resulting copy-transposition is a tool that is indispensable for knowledge; its primary purpose is education, its secondary purpose communication.

So what will be copied in the shift from three dimensions to two? Flowers, birds, insects, the natural symbols of life and of time, certainly; diverging from their primary meaning, they will operate above all as symbols. Dreams will be copied too, to give them a tangible existence. Lastly, the external forms defining a being will be copied, if it is proper to speak thereof both in depth and while maintaining a discreet distance. For a human being, for example, the expression of feelings will be conveyed by the way the clothes are rendered, with greater certainty than the face—hence the very special place the portrait occupies in Chinese art, then its frequent relegation (from the Ming dynasty, 1368-1644, onwards) to the domain of funeral ritual, and finally the interest

shown in sartorial “signs,” carefully codified, listed, and therefore reproduced from models.

Above all, copying will be practiced to help people copy more, by teaching young artists the current meaning of images, the techniques, the renderings, the feelings of times past, and especially, in the end, the value of good painting. Thus, when the great collector and esthetician Mi Fu (1051-1107) one day laid hands on a work that he believed dated from the Sui dynasty (581-617) and which he considered admirable, he tried at first to get copies made by some professional painters in his circle; but alas “there was not one brush-stroke that bore any resemblance!”, so he then suggested depositing “[the picture] in the imperial treasury, asking the official artisans to copy it, and handing [this copy] to the people so that it might be passed down for a thousand years to come...”¹⁸ Giving rise to copies remains in the end the most reliable indicator of the artist’s usefulness, of the meanings he offers different human groups over successive generations.

Much earlier, the famous theorist Xie He (fourth century) had said that past masters should be copied. He even made this one of the six essential principles (*chuanmo yixie*: “transmission by copying”) in his treatise on the “categories of ancient paintings” (*Gu hua pinlu*)—principles that are still inculcated in the academies of traditional art to apprentice artists. To copy the great masters in order to acquire their technique and assimilate their spirit remains the surest discipline for beginners.

It is also the best method of communication, since an important part of Chinese creation rests on a scholastic and academic approach to art: the expression of a revolt, for example, which is difficult to express in direct terms, will be picked up all the better for there being numerous allusions to historical facts raised to the level of symbols known to a wide public. The partial or total copy, the quotation, the visual reference—separate from an iconography endowed with a precise, quasi-pictographic meaning—operated as filters that protected the artist by placing him in a historically referenced discourse. The copy functioned in this case as a shield, like the multifunctional screens regulating space, both in actual Chinese houses and in representations of them.¹⁹ See, for example, how often, from Wang Shen (1048[?]-after 1104) onwards, scholars

composed their self-portraits through duplication: they presented themselves both in the painting and in the landscape decorating a screen that was itself reproduced within the painting;²⁰ the artists assimilated themselves in this way into the work at the same time as into the copy—generally that of an ancient painting—contained within the work. It made no difference that the conservatives placed the emphasis unequivocally on imitation and the innovators on personal expression:²¹ they all used coded graphic references and had no hesitation in making of a copy—clearly designated as such—an essential element in their creation.

The times demanded it too. Under the Sung dynasty (960-1279) it was a particularly popular thing to do to reproduce the Tang masters (618-907) whose originals survived, in the most favorable cases, in a very poor condition (most of time they had to be recreated from nothing or almost: from simple school traditions). Then the fashion declined and was revived much later, under the Qing (1644-1911): people started going mad about paintings “in the manner of,” particularly “in the manner of” the Yuan masters (1279-1368), whose influence lasted well into the twentieth century.

Copying to Make Imperishable: Engraving on Stone and on Wood

Copying can also be done to make something imperishable, but then one has to turn to special techniques. To understand this, it is perhaps enough to tell a story, that of the most famous Chinese calligraphy, to which connoisseurs today still devote articles by the dozen.

In 353, forty-one scholars met in a place called the “Orchid Pavilion” in Zhejiang province. While enjoying a pleasant drink they composed poems for which Wang Xizhi (307-365), the most famous calligrapher of the age, wrote a preface: a text of 324 characters set out in 28 lines, drawn in a superb semi-cursive with a rat’s hair brush on very beautiful paper.

Three centuries later the Tang emperor Taizong, who ruled from 626 to 649, employing ruses that were certainly not very commendable but being convinced that the end justified the

means, ended up getting an old monk to hand over the original kept in his monastery. Beside himself with joy, the ruler ordered the text to be engraved on stone from which he would have prints made which he would give to those around him; but as soon as he had handed a few copies to his close friends, he had the stone destroyed; the mold thus disappeared. Did it appear to him unseemly to distribute such a masterpiece so widely? When Taizong died, his son Gaozong (649-683) had the original sealed in a jade casket and placed in the tomb of the dead emperor.²²

The story is one of those always taught to poets and novice calligraphers. If it gives credence to the idea that an inspired copy—in the present case, one that was engraved on stone—can have practically the same value as an original, there remains a technical constraint which precludes equality: epigraphy lends itself to only a limited number of calligraphic styles;²³ so, from the manuscript to the stele, there is a loss of emotional impact—that tremulous feeling which only ink can convey—even where the meaning remains intact, since the latter depends on words and not on the beauty of their delineation. That is perhaps the reason why Taizong came to suppress the stone.

On the other hand, engraving on xylographic plates, which represented the most common form of Chinese printing before the nineteenth century, made possible the wide distribution of didactic or recreational narratives in pictures: from scenes in the life of Confucius²⁴ to illustrations of sentimental or cloak-and-dagger novels, the multiplication of images became a reality as early as the fifteenth century and became a veritable torrent from the sixteenth century onwards.²⁵ This did not fail to have an impact on the meaning of the images itself: the artist did not necessarily copy what he saw, but what his client suggested he should see.²⁶ What is more, certain themes were readily transferable from one object to another—the illustrated books inspired, for example, the painters on porcelain—but the meaning of the subject changed, not only because of the material nature of the object (wood, silk, and porcelain do not produce identical effects), but also in accordance with the use of the latter.²⁷

Prints and novels in pictures that reproduced paintings and enabled them to be diffused nonetheless contributed largely,

under the Ming dynasty, to the creation and development of a spiritual community—in the vast entity that was China—between individuals who, because they came from different backgrounds, had no chance of meeting each other. On the other hand, it became clear to the authorities and to moralists that the copy, or the reproduction, was not innocent and had to be controlled. The hunting down of heterodox images—especially erotic ones—from about 1600 onwards soon resulted in the marked impoverishment of the artists' repertoire: nearly all the narrative elements found themselves being gradually eliminated from the best-known painting genres, so suspicious were the elites of the images, of their evocative power, of their secret language, and of their repercussions, which could not easily be controlled.²⁸ This hue and cry over the mechanical techniques of copying ended up affecting the very way in which the copy was perceived, though the latter existed in other forms which did retain their value.

Copying Objects of Ritual Value: The Archaic Bronzes

From the middle of the eleventh century onwards it became a mark of good taste among scholars to take an interest in certain, very ancient remains—bronzes—discovered at the time and thought likely to confirm the information in the canonical texts underpinning the organization of society and of the imperial state. At the end of the nineteenth century this tradition was to provide a springboard for the early discoveries of modern Chinese archeology: for eight centuries, the studio of every scholar worthy of the name had already contained at least a small copy of an archaic bronze.

Now, by definition a bronze work combines the qualities of the original and of the copy, indeed of the multiple. In order to create a bronze, it is of course necessary to make a molding first—a mother work—from which the sculptor and the bronze-founder build a mold, from which in turn one or more specimens are taken, depending on whether the artist or the craftsman uses a one-off mold of disposable wax or a sectional mold that can be

dismantled and reused to cast multiples that, apart from the odd accident of manufacture, are all identical.

It so happens that casting in sectional molds was favored very early on by the Chinese bronze-workers, who usually had at their disposal—thanks to the geological nature of the country—excellent heat-resistant clays and ingenious high-temperature kilns perfected by their Neolithic potter ancestors at least three thousand years before Christ. Sectional molds allowed the rapid manufacture of a fair number of replicas, and the craftsmen got into the habit of keeping the one-off mold for pieces that were small in size or had a rare iconography. So how is one to situate, in such a context, the original and its copy?

Most of the thousands of archaic Chinese bronzes discovered today are not sculptures, even if connoisseurs admire the monumental balance of their proportions and the beauty of some of their decoration in the round; they were cast to form the tableware needed at the ancestors' banquet, the chief ritual in funeral ceremonies. Nowadays, as the poor have been doing for centuries, the feast is limited to a few dishes laid out on the graves, accompanied by gifts of paper and imitation silver that are burnt to enable the dead to pay their way in the next world. But in former times the great and the good got themselves buried with an impressive array of funeral furniture and even—as everywhere in the bronze age—with human and animal sacrifices.

These antique bronzes possessed a strong political significance: Sima Qian (145[?]-86[?]), the creator of the Chinese dynastic histories, told of the existence of such receptacles in ancient China, every sovereign possessing nine and each of his representatives a lesser number according to a descending hierarchy; he also explained how these cauldrons had disappeared, for lack of debauched and bloodthirsty rulers.

Their almost miraculous reappearance around 1050 at the Anyang site in Henan province, where the kings of the Shang period (ca.1700-ca.1100 BC) were buried, shook scholars and politicians to the core: in it they saw the expression of a blessing bestowed by heaven on the reigning dynasty, and they promoted the compilation and distribution of the first catalogs. These rapidly became prescriptive for the manufacture of innumerable

copies—the ancient bronzes found at Anyang remaining in the imperial collections.

The *Kaogutu* and the *Bogutulu*²⁹ thus established at the beginning of the twelfth century the traditional morphology of the archaic pieces whose forms they carefully indexed, making a distinction, still employed to this day, between vases (used for keeping food and alcoholic drinks) and miscellaneous objects (musical instruments, weapons, tools, utensils, and small items of furniture).

On the other hand, the iconographical data covering the decoration of the bronzes gave rise to few in-depth studies before the scientific excavation of the site in 1928. Traditional scholars read in that ancient figures, whose complexity they grasped poorly, only various forms of dragons, cicadas, and masks of protective glutons (*taotie*), all being motifs mentioned in the texts having a strong symbolic value: they alone were endlessly copied, so much so that their multiplication ended up pushing into the background all other forms of animal representation³⁰—a good example of the influence reproduction can exercise over creation.

Finally, the connoisseurs of bronzes pondered at length the question of fakes. Of course painters of forgeries had long since been cheating fools whenever the opportunity arose, but the debate raged only within the relatively small circle of buyers of expensive paintings, and they could refer, if they were true connoisseurs, to the writings and treatises of collectors who did not disdain—whatever was claimed by scholars cloaking themselves in their principled disinterestedness—to give precise expert advice, even attaching approximate figures to it.³¹

The bronzes posed a quite different problem, if only because no one, apart from the emperor and a few privileged people, could boast of owning authentic archaic bronzes; this was not in any case a serious consideration since what had to be passed on once again was the form, an echo of the past, and not the molecules themselves. Provided it was well made—which was not always the case—and so long as it was not sold as an original, the copy then came legitimately into its own.

Under the Sung dynasty many copies were made, but few deliberate fakes. Under the Yuan, forgerers suddenly proliferated, whereas under the Ming and the Qing there was a return to obvious

copies and to “in the manner of” pieces embellished with gold and silver inlays; the inscriptions were most often incised and not cast in the mass. It was around those bronzes, openly inspired by antiquity but not claiming to be a substitute for it, that there developed by predilection an approach that partook of connoisseurship.

To Conclude: The Copy Today

The copy is as alive as ever in China, for better and often, too, for worse. In the name of the education of the masses, the pedagogical services of the cultural administrations reproduce in quantity and deposit in local museums replicas of all the archeological treasures discovered in the last half-century: the original remains in the provincial capital it comes from and copies are distributed elsewhere. The advantage they offer in theory is to replace simple photography, not vivid enough for the masses of adults whom successive cultural revolutions (1966-1976) deprived of all education during a crucial period of their development, but the copyists are not always very inspired, and besides do not in all cases have—for common economic reasons—the time, the materials, or the necessary technical knowledge to produce a work of very great quality.

What is more, how are they to copy? By artificially reproducing the patina? Or by not taking that into account and reconstructing the work in its supposed original shininess? These issues crop up in all civilizations where people think about art and where an art market exists; in the rich and the rapidly developing countries the new cultural forms of tourism and of leisure give such debates an added and highly topical urgency. In China, an immense country the size of a continent, the problems raised take on, as always, a connotation which they do not necessarily have elsewhere.

Finally, a general conceptual bias, as old or even older than the Empire, gives the problem of the copy and of the multiple in China a particular flavor: the aims and the outcomes of acts have always interested Chinese thinkers more than dogma. Connoisseurs were only mildly interested, for example, in whether a ceramic object—a field in which fakes and copies have long proliferated, but in the

framework of a huge market, which poses other problems—was made of clay or kaolin paste; all that counted were the look of the finished product, the thinness of the surface, the subtlety of the color, even, in the last resort, simply the presence or absence of a glaze, because, depending on its existence or non-existence, the use of the object changed: the one kept liquids, whereas the other, being porous, let them escape. The intrinsic nature of the piece mattered little. It is the same with the copy: the material authenticity of the flask is of little consequence so long as there is intoxication of the spirit!

Translated from the French by John Fletcher

Notes

1. See Vincent Durand-Dastès, "Disputes dans la maison de Cang Jie. Le regain des querelles idéologiques sur l'écriture chinoise dans la presse et l'édition de Chine populaire," *Revue bibliographique de sinologie* (1998), pp. 329-344.
2. See the recent work by James Cahill, *The Painter's Practice: How Artists Lived and Worked in Traditional China* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1994).
3. Danielle Elisseeff, "Le rapport homme/animal. Quelques vérités premières à la source des croyances chinoises," in Boris Cyrulnik (ed.), *Si les lions pouvaient parler... Essais sur la condition animale* (Paris, Gallimard, 1998), pp. 1476-1485.
4. François Cheng, *Souffle-Esprit: Textes théoriques sur l'art pictural* (Paris, Seuil, 1989).
5. Karine Chemla (ed.), "La Liste," *Extrême-Orient/Extrême Occident*, 14 (1992).
6. The word *xian* corresponds to two characters: the first, including the key of man, refers to an image graphically faithful to its model, which, according to the ancient texts, corresponds to a ritual image; the second, lacking the key of man, is often rendered by "symbol."
7. Anne Cheng, *Histoire de la pensée chinoise* (Paris, Seuil, 1997), p. 342.
8. Craig Clunas, *Pictures and Visuality in Early Modern China* (London, Reaktion Books, 1997).
9. See Zhang Yanyuan (810?-880?): "It is not the unfinished one should distrust, but rather the finished, since the unfinished does not mean the unaccomplished" (quoted in French translation by Yolaine Escande, *Guo Ruoxu: Notes sur ce que j'ai vu et entendu en peinture* (Brussels, La Lettre Volée, 1994), p. 19).
10. Kathlyn Liscomb, "The Power of Quiet Sitting at Night: Shen Zhou's (1427-1509) 'Night Vigil,'" *Monumenta Serica*, 43 (1995), pp. 381-403.
11. On the distinction between "photographic" painting and "visual equivalent" painting, see Valerie Hansen, "The Mystery of the *Qingming* Scroll and Its

- Subject: The Case Against Kaifeng," *Journal of Sung-Yuan Studies*, 26 (1996), pp. 183-200.
12. Nicole Vandier-Nicolas, *Le Hua-che de Mi Fou (1051-1107), ou le Carnet d'un connoisseur à l'époque des Song du Nord* (Paris, PUF, 1964). Mi Fu constantly classifies the paintings into two big categories: the "authentic" and the "copies," good or bad, but he never says on what criteria he is basing his judgment, other than habit for someone who like him was brought up surrounded by ancient and modern paintings in a rich family of collectors. As for the famous theorist Xie He (4th century), he wrote bluntly that "transmitting without creating is not the best of things for a painter" (William Reynolds Beal Acker, *Some T'ang and Pre-T'ang Texts on Chinese Painting*, Leyden, Brill, 1954, p. xl).
 13. On the enhanced value (or lack of it) of the written in India and the Far East, and the effects flowing from it, see Viviane Alleton (ed.), *Paroles à dire, paroles à écrire: Inde, Chine, Japon* (Paris, École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 1977).
 14. See, for example, the treatise by Shitao (1641-1719?) translated by Pierre Ryckmans, *Les Propos sur la peinture de Shitao: Traduction et commentaire pour servir à l'étude terminologique et esthétique des théories chinoises de la peinture* (Brussels, Institut Belge des Hautes Études Chinoises, 1970; new edition, Paris, Hermann, 1984).
 15. John Hay (ed.), *Boundaries in China* (London, Reaktion Books, 1994); see especially John Hay's own contribution, "Boundaries and Surfaces of Self and Desire in Yuan Painting," pp. 124-170.
 16. Yu Zhonghang, "Yun Shouping Wang Shigu hezuo shihuace [An Album of Paintings and Poetry By Yun Shouping and Wang Shigu; in Chinese]," *Wenwu*, 1 (1996), pp. 81-89.
 17. Gao Jianping, *The Expressive Art in Chinese Art: From Calligraphy to Painting*. Uppsala, Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 1996).
 18. Nicole Vandier-Nicolas, op. cit., pp. 154-155.
 19. Wu Hung, *The Double Screen: Medium and Representation in Chinese Painting*. (London, Reaktion Books, 1996).
 20. Peter C. Sturman, "In the Realm of Naturalness: Problems of Self-Imaging by the Northern Sung Literati," in Maxwell K. Hearn and Judith G. Smith (eds.), *Arts of the Sung and Yuan* (New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1996), pp. 165-185.
 21. Sewall Oertling, *Painting and Calligraphy in the Wu-tsa-tsu: Conservative Aesthetics in Seventeenth-Century China* (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Center for Chinese Studies, 1997).
 22. Nicole Vandier-Nicolas, op. cit., p. 155.
 23. Hua Rende, "Ping tiexue yu beixue [Considerations on the Study of Manuscripts and the Study of Steles; in Chinese]," *Shufa yanjiu*, 1 (1996), pp. 12-21.
 24. Julia K. Murray, "Illustrations of the Life of Confucius: Their Evolution, Function and Significance in Late Ming China," *Artibus Asiae*, 57, 1-2 (1997), pp. 73-134.
 25. On the history of publishing in China and the vigorous development of illustrated editions under the Ming dynasty, see Michela Bussotti, "General Survey of the Latest Studies in Western Languages on the History of Publishing in China," *Revue bibliographique de sinologie* (1998), pp. 53-68.

26. Julia K. Murray, "Water Under a Bridge: Further Thoughts on the Qingming Scrolls," *Journal of Sung-Yuan Studies*, 27 (1997), pp. 99-107.
27. Craig Clunas, *op. cit.*, pp. 25-76.
28. William P. Alford, *To Steal a Book Is an Elegant Offence: Intellectual Property Law in Chinese Civilization* (Stanford, CA, Stanford University Press, 1995).
29. Vadime Elisseeff, *Bronzes archaïques chinois au Musée Cernuschi / Archaic Chinese Bronzes* (Paris, L'Asiathèque, 1977).
30. Michel Cartier, Danielle Elisseeff, Georges Métailié (eds.), "Les animaux dans la culture," *Anthropozoologica*, 18 (1993).
31. On the market value of paintings and calligraphies, and for a critical examination of the received ideas surrounding them, see the iconoclastic article by Yolaine Escande, "Classements et évaluations à partir du *Shuduan* (Critères de la calligraphie) de Zhang Huaiguan," *Études chinoises*, 16, 2 (1997), pp. 39-113.