period gave way to a centralized bureaucracy in Han times, this rhetoric remained important in court culture. As a humanizing agent, painting was often referred to in the tradition as a mirror, even long after the early (i.e. late classical and early medieval) didactic mode had been eclipsed by genre and narrative painting and other developments like landscape. Of all the genres, figure painting was the first to emerge and was understood to act like a moral mirror to the observer long into the dynastic period, as exemplified by critics' book titles such as Tang Hou's (active c. 1322) *Hua jian (Mirror of Painting*; Tang Hou 1983) and Xia Wenyan's (14th c.) *Tuhui baojian (Precious Mirror of Painting*; Xia Wenyan 1983) (see also Murray 2007). In an essay entitled "Looking in the mirror", the fourteenth-century critic Sheng Ximing declared that, looking at paintings, 'seeing the sage rulers of antiquity, everyone is filled with admiration; … but seeing venal ministers and false masters, none does not grind his teeth [in righteous indignation]…" (Sheng Ximing 1992, p. 830). The mirror here has the sense not of reflective passivity but of active agency since images have the power to illuminate, shape and change the environment and life in ways that words alone could not.

Perhaps the best known and probably the oldest Chinese old master painting, *Admonitions of the Court Instructress,* attributed to the ancestor of figure painting, Gu Kaizhi (c. 344-c. 406), in the British Museum, contains nine (of an original twelve) scenes comprising didactic text inscriptions and picture illustrations. One of the scenes depicting historical exemplars, 'Lady Ban declines to ride in the imperial palanquin' (**fig. 1**), provides insight into the role of painting and painter in the classical period. It was based upon an incident that took place at the Han dynasty court in the late 1st c. BC in which the eminent and beautiful Lady Ban turned down the emperor's request to accompany him in his palanquin on a pleasure outing, thereby losing her position of favour. Was it that she did not want to?, the text rhetorically wonders. No, it seems, she was in duty more concerned by the long-term consequences of such actions. She observed how in historical paintings good rulers were depicted with wise men at their sides, while those evil last rulers of once great dynasties were portrayed dallying with beauties. Her allusion is not so much an allegory as an admonition: it was not just that her presence should make her husband resemble a king ignominious for the loss of his realm, which was unpalatable enough, but in addition that he should reconsider his conduct and reform it to ensure that it was not his fate to be depicted with her by posterity. Ironically, he would be, for in the following centuries this scene had become so much a part of the repertoire of scenes of exemplars as to appear in a lacquer-painted screen unearthed in 1965 from a royal tomb sealed in 484 CE, the tomb of Sima Jinlong and his wife. In that portrayal, alone in his palanquin borne along by carriers, the forlorn emperor looks back at the upright Lady Ban following behind on foot.

The same scene in the *Admonitions* scroll is visually and psychologically of another order of complexity. The central message is diverted if not subverted by the upstairs/downstairs-type inventions of the artist: the laughable appearance of the emperor in the palanquin with bearers struggling under the extra weight, stamping on one another's toes, and the pubescent girl playing with a puppy beside him. (Possibly she is the new favourite, Zhao Feiyan, discussed below.) To this we might also add the visual distraction of an extraordinarily delicate ink-outline on silk technique, which further bespeaks dexterities of wit, intelligence and draftsmanship on the artist's part (see Fong 2003). How these interventions redefine the story, who had the authority to impose them and to what end, and how they transform the didactic mode are all questions which have been posed by modern art historians - questions that highlight themes like historicism and similitude in painting,

the autonomous role and trace of the figure painter, and the interpretive participation of audience in the reception of painting (see, e.g., McCausland [ed.] 2003).

What sets the *Admonitions* scroll apart from the earlier figure paintings Lady Ban refers to, and also what distinguishes its painted images as art, is amplified in one of the later scenes illustrating an abstract concept. In 'the toilette scene' (**fig. 2**), two seated women perform their toilettes looking into circular mirrors on stands, a visual illustration of the admonition in the tract inscribed on the painting to the right, in which court ladies are exhorted to cultivate their characters as diligently – indeed as forcibly - as their appearances. The text, which was at least literally addressed to the palace ladies of the Western Jin (265-316) court in a parlous moment, states (tr. after Waley in McCausland [ed.] 2003, p. 16):

> People know how to ornament their looks but none knows how to ornament her character.
> If the character is not ornamented this could confuse rites and rectitude.
> So chop it and embellish it; strive and yearn to be a sage.
>
> 人咸知飾其容，而莫知飾其性。
> 性之不飾，或愆禮正。
> 斧之藻之，克念作聖。

The familiar idea of performing one's toilette in the boudoir before a court function was a handy and effective literary image for the writer, Zhang Hua (232-300), a statesman who, in 292 CE, saw it as his duty to try to reform the conduct of palace women; but it also enabled the painter later charged with creating a visual illustration of the text to explore levels of resonance with human experience far beyond the basic illustrative function, including ideas about painting itself. Ideas and images of reflection and self-examination criss-cross the mirrored world within the scene portrayed as well as the world of interaction between the viewer and the scene, to the extent that the painting becomes the viewer's mirror, her (and no doubt also his) self-reflection as rendered by one of the great figural artists of early Chinese painting. In its didactic function, though generic, the text-and-image scene becomes a channel for individual reflection. Showing oneself one's self-image, what does she see but herself polishing her virtues as assiduously as she paints her face or combs her hair? She sees herself not only as the beautiful, fashionable, accomplished woman she is on the outside but, on the inside, as a moral work in progress with a set of goals. (Further details are provided in the other admonitions scenes.) The interior and exterior selves enter upon a kind of mirror image relationship in which the work invested in enhancing one's physical endowments, the ones we are born with, serves as the mirror-model for the cultivation of a superlative inner self.

On another, more reflexive level, the scene is a reflection on the mechanics and power of the art itself: when painting the face becomes a metaphor for the art of painting, and questions like those posed in the admonition text hold. Anyone can paint a picture, but who has really mastered painting to the extent that it is art (other than me, the painter of this picture)? Who can really wield the brush in a way that vividly portrays the inner world of the figures represented and also of the artist who presents them? Such questions outline fundamental patterns within the cultural 'package' that is China's figure painting tradition, including how the representational value of painting lies in its power to describe intangibles like humanity and how the person of the artist is inscribed or presented in the pictorial matrix.

Further flesh is put on the bones of this new, reflexive art of painting in a third scene worthy of note here, 'the rejection scene' (**fig. 3**), which portrays through eye contact and body language a brief but momentous communication between emperor and favourite. There is no setting as such bar the one provided by the tract to the right. It describes the rebuffing of the solipsistic beauty who knew her own beauty and counted on it to receive royal favour. Her transgression had pragmatic and systemic ramifications. Failing to curb her personal desire for gratification and power, she monopolised the emperor's favour, barring him from fathering sons by others in the harem and thereby denying him progeny and posing an existential threat to the royal house. In the illustration, she is given her come-uppance: her tresses and scarves show her gliding confidently toward the emperor; his eyes look down into hers; hers look down at his rebuffing hand gesture; his hand is directed down and across at her torso. The zigzag movements stand for the short but dramatically epic seconds of unvoiced communication. Painters like Gu Kaizhi stressed the importance of the dotting of the eyes (known as *achu*), a ritual act that, in religious painting and sculpture, summoned the spirit of a deity into its image. The narrative continues to develop through body language. Her body is portrayed coming to a halting stop and a pouting scowl is poised to emerge across her face as mixed emotions triggered by surprise, shock, disbelief and horror manifest in her body's reaction. Likewise, the representation of emperor's body and mind are as one. Like the turn of the proverbial tide his attitude toward this beautiful woman has changed from favour to disdain: he shapes to rotate right on his heel, having halted her in her tracks, and walk off the other direction. This intimate psychological drama is played out in body language and especially through eye contact. The imminent, irreversible breaking of the visual bond between these two speaks for the momentous change of attraction to repulsion and the consequences of that fact. Again, the painting lays claim to the possibility of illuminating the course of history hanging in the balance.

These elaborations of self-awareness in these scenes and throughout the *Admonitions* scroll are compelling in a painting so 'early' and help to account for the painting's historical reputation and for that of its ascribed creator, Gu Kaizhi, who was regarded as part wit and part fool. The relationship between the presentation of reality and representational realism in this painting is finely balanced, but the intervention of art criticism may add weight to the former. This painting, for example, can afford insight into what the celebrated six founding principles of Chinese painting looked like, especially the first - *qiyun shengdong* or ‘animation through spirit consonance’, meaning that the figures rendered by the painter should come alive by resonating with the figures they represent in life -- explored in this volume by [**author Xref**] (see also Hay, A.J. 1983b).

The material format of the handscroll, synonymous with the birth of painting as an art, should also be considered - for its own sake but also because of the endurance of this format and closely related ones like the album (a book of leaves) and even the garden (a collections of sites) in the imperial era. Reinforcing the sense of reality of lived experience in - rather than the ocular realism of - these images, their mirror-like quality, is the effect of serialisation and varied temporality in this scroll. Beyond the text, there are visual narrative threads behind the series of seemingly independent, standalone images. As Katherine R. Tsiang also observes [**Xref**], several scenes may be linked by interweaving textual and visual references. A lost scene at the beginning of the painting illustrated a lady curbing her husband's passion for hunting by becoming vegetarian, a story reprised by the painter in the 'mountain and hunter scene'. There, tasked with illustrating a contrast drawn in the text between the ease of causing state calamity (likened to a hair-trigger firing a crossbow bolt) and

the complexity of achieving greatness (like building a mountain from earth), the painter depicted a hunter shooting game on a pyramid-shaped mountain. Later, in the 'family scene', the use of a pyramid shape to depict several generations of the royal family served to illustrate the stability created and posterity assured by palace women adhering to the rota of receiving the emperor's favour. Another effect emphasising the reality of the viewing experience is the final scene, which shows the instructress herself penning the admonitions, a convention of the literary genre of admonition which translates effectively into the pictorial realm.

Having highlighted this self-awareness and its presentation in material form, in what follows, we explore critical ideas about figure painting. First come questions about the scope of figure painting in China – its canonical boundaries in time and place, its materiality, its society and politics. Second are ideas about the depiction of the human body and creative practice of figure painting.

Scoping the genre

This section presents a study of the contents and discontents of the genre, including various charts of the canon that is figure painting, in light of its normative function as a moral mirror to society. Like any category, figure painting is historically porous and malleable. Today, the genre is widely encompassing of once differentiated figures. Intensified communications of the modern world, seen in publishing, the establishment of museums and travel, have lent it cohesion. For an example in publishing, we may refer to a body of critical texts dating from 847 to 1897 neatly compiled under the heading 'figure painting' in the compendium by Yu Jianhua (1895-1979), *Zhongguo hualun leibian* (Anthology of discourses on Chinese painting; 1957, 1973, vol. 1, sect. 4, pp. 447-579). This selection was not exhaustive and its timespan, while broad, was curtailed (e.g., see studies in this volume on critical texts from before 847). The literati bias to be found in the anthology had become ingrained into the history of art over the latter half of the second millennium. The sense of a tradition is apparent from a cluster of issues around its transmission, including the repetition or reworking of canonical ideas and shared concerns, and of fetishized literati subjects and masters affectionately known by their literary aliases.

Museums, their collections and practices have also contributed to the conceptual and categorical coherence of the genre of figure painting. Briefly, we may also take note of the arrival of the museum in early Republican China and of the growth and development of Chinese collections in the West. Collections had long also existed outside China in Japan, which in this sense is a window on China. The acquisition in 1903 of the *Admonitions* scroll by the British Museum, which enjoyed close institutional ties with Japan, helped establish 'Chinese art history' in Britain and the Anglophone world. The foreign and domestic travels and education of some leading mid-20th century Chinese artists, now spiced by increased access to collections and the discovery of medieval murals in the Buddhist cave-temples of western China and elsewhere, spurred a domestic revival of figure painting. By 1973, western audiences were ready for an exhibition under the title *Chinese Figure Painting*, mounted by Thomas Lawton at the Freer Gallery in Washington DC (Lawton 1973). Since China began to 'open up' in the early 1980s, exhibitions on figure painting have communicated government policies through themes defining of nationhood and cultural identity, like customs and manners (Shanghai Museum 2008). The curators of exhibitions loaned abroad, tasked with

facilitating people-to-people exchanges, have adapted the Chinese category 'figure painting' to universal themes like story-telling (McCausland & Ling, 2010; www.cbl.ie/china).

Technically, the genre ought to encompass all manner of figural painting, from didactic, genre and narrative scenes to portable religious (chiefly Buddhist and Daoist) works to murals in temples and caves, and religious and secular portraits, as well as fringe subjects such as 'figures-in-landscapes'. It is a flexible genre that encompasses figural personifications of deities, planets and constellations, and arguably symbolic figures like rocks, bamboos and orchids. In practice, however, a critical preference that figure paintings should be refined and elegant, and never mean and vulgar (Han Zhuo 1992, p. 357; Rao Ziran 1992, no. 9), has served to position secular figural works at the core, while those with any obvious religious iconography and style are displaced into the category of religious art. The modern formulation inverts the religious-secular binary of the first millennium found, for example, in the early-12th century imperial catalogue, *Xuanhe huapu* (Painting manual of the Xuanhe era; c. 1120), where the hierarchy of ten painting genres starts with 'Buddhist and Daoist figures' and then 'figures', and ends with 'ink bamboo' and 'vegetables and fruit'. That schema was largely followed up to the fourteenth century, as seen in the critic Tang Hou's (active early 14th c.) *Mirror of Painting*, which at the same time reasserts the ethical function of figure paintings as ones that admonish. The topicality of foreign (steppe nomad) rule over parts or all of China across the mid-imperial era surfaces in temporary sub-genres such as figures of foreigners, and perhaps also in the recuperation by Chinese-educated scholar-painters of the Mongol Yuan dynasty (1271-1368) of figures that imaged traditional Chinese humanistic values, such as horses.

Although increasingly outmoded in the literati canon from the later 14th century on, the period of models of connoisseurly scholarship such as Xia Wenyan's (14th c.) *Tuhui baojian* (Precious mirror of painting), the genre of figure painting continued to provide, through its historiography and materiality, the basis for fundamental concepts of the history of art. An influential example of a late-fourteenth-century view of the shape of painting history is the historian Song Lian's (1310-81) essay, 'The origin of painting' (Hua yuan; Song Lian 1957), where the focus on origins and transmission is a metaphor for contemporary practice and criticism. A dyed-in-the-wool Confucian and conservative, Song Lian was the architect of the native Chinese restoration at the outset of Ming dynasty (1368-1644). The first half of the essay argues how calligraphy and painting are 'the same path' and 'originally a single endeavour'. The first reason is this: They were invented by two sages in antiquity, Cangjie (calligraphy) and Shihuang (painting), who thereby for humanity, *distinguished*, by naming, the ten thousand things. There are high and low things (heaven and earth), moving and growing things (animals and plants). In tandem, writing recorded and painting described these things. The second reason is that while writing is effective for recording and reckoning and rewarding merit, painting can be used to distinguish ranks (by dress), to warn (by paintings of exemplary figures), to demarcate rank (e.g., on carriages) and precedent (in protocol and ritual); thus, to aid in regulation and judging the worthiness of government. Painting gives things form while writing gives them sound, and both are vital to the understanding and communication of meaning in the identification of things. They are complementary and mutually dependent.

The second half of the essay is concerned with the 'purpose of the classical masters' (*gu zhi yi*) in making paintings. In antiquity the finest painters illustrated the classics, that is, recorded great affairs in images. (The value of this is self-evident and not explained.) Later, in the Han-Wei-Jin-Liang

period (i.e., early first millennium CE), a tolerable set of historical topics entered the repertoire. But at this point they saw a decline:

people's minds (or their will) became more unlike those of the people of classical times: they gradually diluted their ambition by indulging in the painted fineries of carriages, horses and fine women (one might think of Tang genre painting); they gratified their imaginations via the beauties of birds and flowers,, insects and fish; they gave reign to their emotions with the eccentricities of mountains and forests, rivers and rocks, and the purpose of people of classical times in making paintings increasingly declined. This decline can be traced through three stylistic stages: 1) the old masters Gu Kaizhi and Lu Tanwei (active later 5th c.); 2) the pre-eminent Tang-dynasty painters, Yan Liben (c. 600-673) and Wu Daozi (680-740); and 3) the landscape pioneers of the Five Dynasties-early Song period, Guan Tong (mid 10th c.), Li Cheng (919-967) and Fan Kuan (active late 10th-early 11th c.).

From Song Lian's perspective, writing in the 14th century, the degeneracy of recent painting could be likened to developments in the study of calligraphy in which the dark mysteries of the august classical scripts (seal and clerical) were lost. He lamented how shameful and frivolous the merely pretty shapes penned by vulgar hands were by comparison. Painting should be about addressing the primary purpose (*chu yi*), he argued, otherwise it would not achieve an exceptional standard capable of elevating the vulgar practices of the day. In Song's essay, the most praiseworthy time, *gu* (the classical period) corresponded to the period from the composition of the classics to the founding of the first empire (first millennium BCE down to 221 BCE), though he regarded the development of historical subjects in the Han to pre-Sui period (c. 200 BC-c. 589 CE) as tolerable. Thus, the *yi* (idea, intent, purpose, etc) of painting was the elucidation of the classics and perhaps also the commemoration of exemplary historical persons. The essay's core argument is summed up in the idea that painting today (i.e., in the later 14th century) should serve its original purpose of showing what greatness looks like and ridding the people of mediocrity. What we call figure painting is at the heart of this *apologia* for painting, despite the fact that landscape was at that moment poised to eclipse figures in the critical hierarchy.

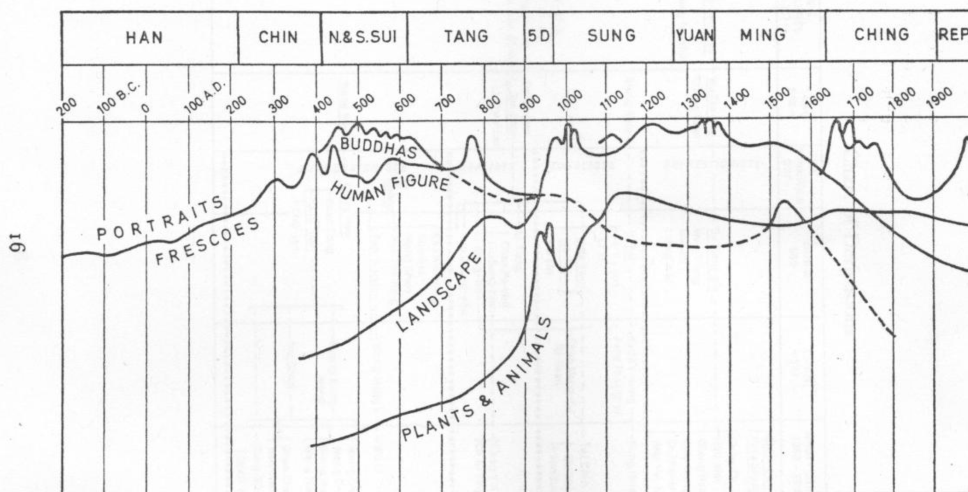
Reflecting on the genre of Chinese figure painting and minded to commit to the page some default information on the topic, I have prepared a chart and populated it with a chronicle of dates, dynastic formations and conventional historical periodizations alongside artistic modes, terms and names. There are some major discontents, like popular and religious arts, but despite its injustices, the table allows us to visualise, scale and manoeuvre around the canon of Chinese figure painting.

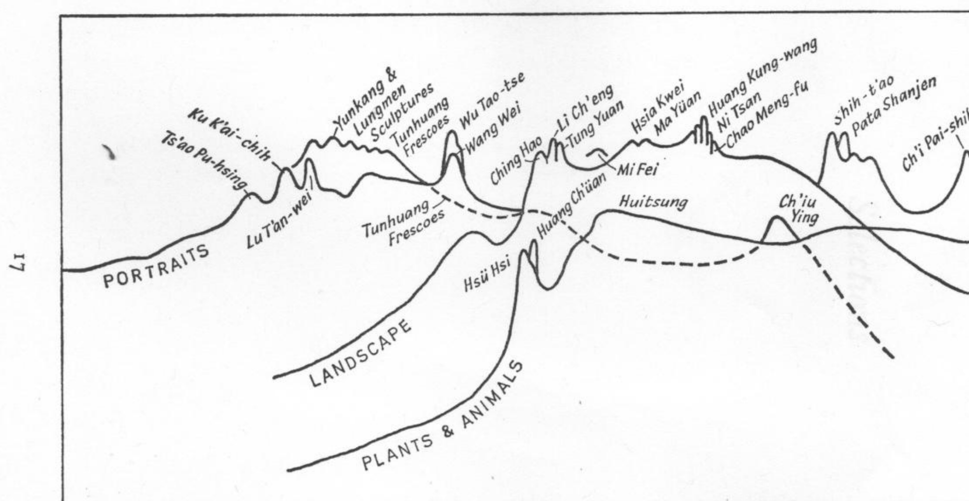
Chart: An epistemic view of Chinese figure painting

Dates AD/CE	**Dynastic formations**	**Periodisation**	**Mode(s), terms**	**Names, sites etc**
3rd c. BCE-2nd c. CE	Qin (221-206 BCE) and Han (206 BCE-220 CE): founding of the empire	late classical	Confucian didactic illustration, omen paintings	Terracotta army; Wu Family Shrine
3rd-6th c.	Three Kingdoms; Period of Disunion; Northern and Southern dynasties	early medieval	founding masters, scroll painting; arrival of Buddhism; *qiyun* (breath-resonance) & 'six laws'	Gu Kaizhi , Lu Tanwei
6th-9th c.	Sui (589-618) & Tang (618-907): reunification of the empire	late medieval	genre painting; 'international' styles	Yan Liben, Zhou Fang, Wu Daozi
10th c.	Five Dynasties (907-960)		narrative scroll painting; landscape	Gu Hongzhong
11th-13th c.	Song dynasties (960-1279) and non-Chinese regimes: Xixia, Liao, Jin and early Mongol period	early modern	monumental landscape; super-realism; scholar's ink-outline; antiquarianism, lyricism	Li Gonglin, Ma Hezhi, Liang Kai
13th-14th c.	Mongol conquest and reunification as Yuan dynasty (1271-1368)		discovery of pictorial surface; calligraphic values; *guyi* (purport from antiquity)	Zhao Mengfu, Ren Renfa, Wang Zhenpeng
Late 14th-mid 17th c.	Ming dynasty (1368-1644), restoration of a native Chinese polity	early modern	expressionism, commercialism, individualism	Wu Wei, Tang Yin, Qiu Ying, Chen Hongshou
17th- 20th c.	Qing (1644-1911), a Manchu conquest dynasty		Orthodoxy, early globalisation, 'hybrid' Sino-European styles; regionalism, eccentricism	Shitao, Castiglione, Luo Pin, Ren Bonian
20th c.	Republic (1911-); People's Republic (1949-)	modern, late modern	neo-classical realism, Asian expressionism (*xie yi*); socialist realism etc	Xu Beihong, Fu Baoshi, Zhang Daqian et al

Making this chart, I was reminded of the similar ones published in a modernist survey of Chinese art for the Western audience by the well-travelled Chinese artist Lin Yutang (1875-1976) (Lin 1967: 16-17):

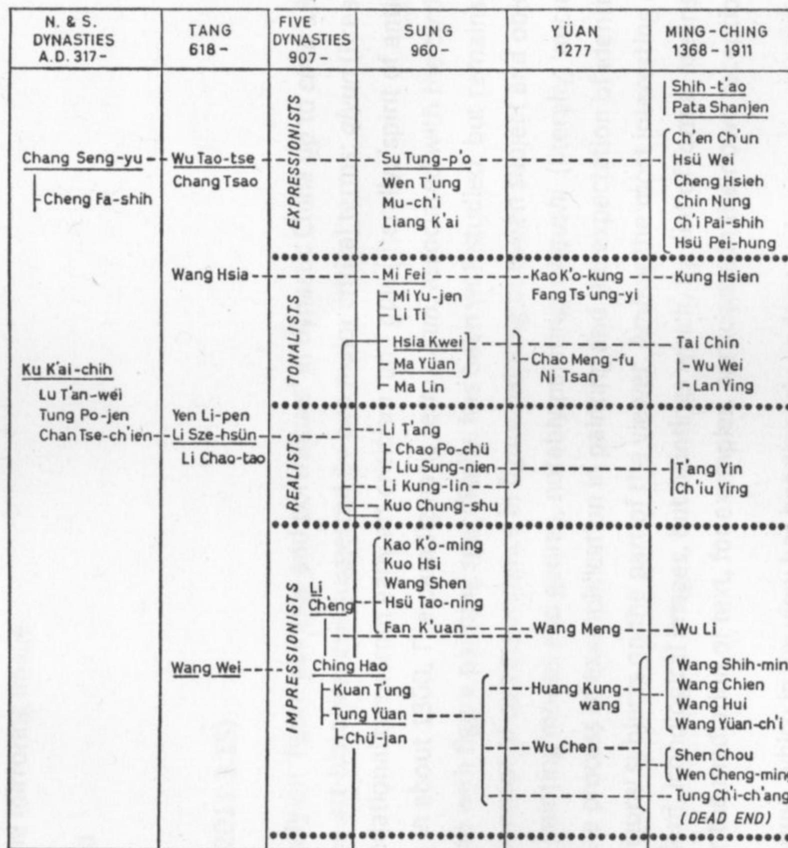
[Lin Yutang's 'Charts of Development':] [Tidy up CHARTS below, leaving titles but cutting out page numbers and gutter]





Notice how, compared to landscape and plants and animals, figure painting in this schema is a complicated and changing entity that morphs from portraits and frescoes into Buddhas and human figures in the early medieval period, and which after the 10th century traces a dotted line before dipping and summarily ending in 1800. The peaks in the upper diagram may be cross-referenced to specific masters (the names are given in the Wade-Giles system of Romanisation in use at the time) in the lower diagram. Although figure painting is conceived of typologically in relation to the other genre lineages in painting, it is the only one stated to encompass paintings from outside the scroll-painting tradition. In another diagram, Lin reproduced a Chart of Derivations:

[Lin Yutang's 'Chart of Derivations':]



Here, the names of artists (which were plotted on the previous pair of diagrams in terms of their artistic achievement) are now ordered horizontally in historical lineages originating with specific masters. This map is overlaid with another taxonomy - one European in origin - whereby the same artists are also grouped into the four categories of Expressionists, Tonalists, Realists and Impressionists. In fact, this pattern of unfettered cross-cultural comparison of genres and movements was not uncommon in European writings on Chinese art history between about 1800 and this point in the mid 20th century, when they seem to have stopped abruptly, but particularly so in the early twentieth century when the concept of East Asian art history was itself under construction by pioneers of cross-cultural study like Ernest Fenollosa (1853-1908; Fenollosa 1912).

These diagrams scope out the canon in its late-modern formation, pointing toward an intrinsic discourse and also a set of discontents. As noted, Lin Yutang's charts blurred the boundaries and timeline of figure painting like he did for no other genre, allowing specific religious pictures and sculpture to belong in the category and consigning it to an uncertain decline across the early modern period. Lin's genre formulations have the merits of being realistically neither neat nor straightforward. We will touch again below on some of the fringes of the genre.

Like any tradition, the tradition of Chinese painting has powerful tendencies toward continuity, co-option by imperia and conservatism which mask genuine change. Despite the displacement of figure painting by landscape in the canonical hierarchy from the 14th century, a process in which embodiment shifts from the figure to those quintessential forms of nature, mountains and water, the critical rhetoric of figure painting continued into the early modern period in that landscape, was thought capable, by some, to instruct humanity about a range of civilized feelings and emotions. The Northern Song court painter Guo Xi writes: 'A tall pine … should in its disposition be like the Confucian gentleman [in the Classics], noble in character, in the prime of his career, one who all lesser men serve, and without a privileged or overbearing attitude.'[3] Particular painting topics, for example, continued to be seen to afford profound insights into nature and its effects, like extremes of temperature and emotion. A picture of a cat killing a mouse reveals its true nature of the feline as predator and rodent as prey – and stands for the censorate rooting out corruption; one of a great man in a deadly storm at sea highlights the potential of nature to affront humanity with injustice – an idea from classical poetry of courage in adversity. A painted dragon flying off when its eye was dotted, an echo of the medieval Buddhist eye-dotting ceremony that brought statuary to life, is awesome and delightful, but also serves as a reminder of the magical power of the painter (Tang 1984). Despite these claims in text, the visuality in the increasingly regional production of artworks from the 16th and 17th centuries on, points to a dulling of the genre's moral edge in its social function as a tool to transform the individual and hence society, as romance and entertainment value grow. Partners of the spread of literacy into merchant classes and among women from the 16th century were commodity and entertainment cultures and aspirations to autonomy (the term is Jonathan Hay's; Hay, J.S. 2001) rather than sagehood.

The body

Recent research on figure painting has highlighted the theme of the body (Wu and Tsiang 2005). There are both representational and presentational aspects to the body, and we begin with the former. One of the questions sometimes posed about Chinese painting from without the China cultural sphere concerns the absence of a tradition of nude painting (Jullien 2007). Just as calligraphy was not considered an expressive art form in the West until Roger Fry (1886-1934) introduced the idea by reference to China in the early twentieth century, so the nude was not an intrinsic category in Chinese art until imported in the late imperial/modernist context, e.g., the oil painting of Li Shutong (1880-1942) and the photography of Lang Jingshan (1892-1995).[4] Even in the study of western art the nude - whether regarded as classical, heroic or even as artistic pornography for the

[3] Guo 1975, 7: 10; translation after Powers 1998, p. 19.

[4] As this essay goes to press, the eighteenth-century genre of 'paintings of beauties' (*meiren hua*), rediscovered and championed by the late James Cahill (1926-2014), is celebrated in an exhibition, *Beauty Revealed: Images of Women in Qing Dynasty Chinese Painting* (Berkeley CA: University of California, Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, 2013). The genre does occasionally feature female figures clad only in transparent robes, which might be compared to 'nudes', as well as conventions such as one whereby the layered silk sleeves of a well-dressed woman's robe serves to describe her vulva, as in *Woman in a Brothel Being Presented to a Client* in Berkeley Art Museum.

early modern aristocracy - raises a complex and contentious set of problems that is not easily summarised in broad strokes.

Considering the question of 'the body invisible in Chinese art?', John Hay has drawn attention to issues such as the cultural constructedness of the body and figures, China's correlative world view, the development of figure painting, sexually explicit literary descriptions of the female body and the ways that literati painting, with its emphasis on monochromy, lineament and landscape (especially in the second millennium), displaced other modes and genres (Hay, A.J. 1994). He has also written extensively about embodiment in art, investigating the special cultural role of rocks as concentrations of cosmic energy (Hay, A.J. 1983a, 1985). Indeed his work seems to call for the writing of an interdisciplinary history of the body that would attend to exemplary and ideal images (skin like jade, for instance), fashion, rank and status, disciplining (such as foot- and breast-binding among the Chinese female of the upper class in the second millennium), health and well-being, and representation, to name but a few themes.

So, how were observers conceiving of the body as imaged in painting? Although neither the nude nor nakedness were intrinsic categories in figure painting, states of dress and undress were considerations in defining the status and humanity of figures. As regards status, (Guo Xi's son and co-author) Guo Ruoxu suggests that artists should portray accurately different kinds of social status, including the different gestures and attitudes one finds among adults or children, farmers or scholars (see Powers 1998).

Partial or full nakedness was an appropriate early modern way of depicting the earliest humans in legends and origination narratives. The male early human pioneers of medicine, writing, painting and so on in antiquity typically appear naked in these painting except for a skirt of leaves. The figural forms of these individuals are also often mildly contorted or grotesque - but never to the extent that figurations of demons were. (Demons were often said to be easy to paint since no one knew what they looked like.) From the time of earliest figural art in the 4th-5th century CE, however, historical figures who walked about naked while drunk, like the self-rusticated dissidents known as the Seven Worthies of the Bamboo Grove (Zhulin qixian), were depicted in pictures in a state of partial undress. Paintings of similarly half-naked men in early modern painting often reference similarly anti-establishment scholars, as in paintings of scholars returning from village festivities in a drunken state (Cheng 2005). Babies could be depicted naked but as a rule fully naked adult figures are only seen in religious figure painting, where male and female souls awaiting or undergoing punishment (in Daoist hell scenes of the 12th-14th century, for example) appear so, as were figures suffering execution (e.g., by decapitation or dismemberment) in later printed images. We may posit that the extent to which a body is clothed or unclothed, which may also relate to a sliding scale of beauty/grotesqueness, references proximity to the normative centre of adult humanity in classical antiquity, a situation not terribly different from Victorian norms in the West. That may be why anti-establishment intellectuals were often portrayed partially naked.

Erotic encounters in early medieval poetry (1st millennium CE) eschewed male or female nudity when illustrated and copied into the late medieval period, e.g., the *Goddess of the Luo River* picture-scrolls. Status and consequence were important for both genders, but female beauty became a subject in its own right, as Song Lian lamented, where it was typically enhanced in painting by a

woman's proximity to natural metaphors like lotus and peony in flower, or willow, as these plants shared haptic and visual qualities with her body. Thus, gardens were sometimes charged erotic spaces.

Coeval with the introduction of foot-binding for upper class Chinese women in the early Song dynasty (960-1279) was a cultural shift from didactic and genre painting toward narrative and romance, as seen in paintings like *The Night Revels of Han Xizai* attributed to Gu Hongzhong (Palace Museum, Beijing). It is notable how the protagonist, Han Xizai – a statesman who has rejected conformity in protest at the current, corrupt regime and is thus depicted partially naked --, is always painted larger than other figures in this painting, a consistent feature of high status and imperial male figures up to the 18th century. (In the eighteenth century, the emperor was still larger and not proportionate, despite the royal appropriation of Baroque 'realism' at that time.) The petite female figures alert us to a repertoire of female body types that expands over the course of the dynastic era, a function of fashion and social change.

The four-character literary idiom 'Yan shou Huan fei' (the swallow is slender and the jade disc round), which dates to the eleventh century or earlier, refers to two contrasting female body types: the slender swallow, referring to the Han-dynasty empress Zhao Feiyan (Zhao the Flying Swallow; c. 32-1 BCE), and the fat jade disk, referring to Yang Guifei or Precious Consort Yang (whose name was Yuhuan) in the Tang. Both *femmes fatales* or, in the Chinese idiom, women such as ruin kingdoms, these exemplars are still household names and bywords for beauties in China. Late medieval images of their bodies are potent triggers for the cultural imaginary. Consider how the 'slender swallow' conjures not just the image of a willowy female body, but also of the figure in a dress with wide fluttering sleeves and hems that moves or indeed dances as lightly and gracefully as a little bird in flight. Historically, in the late 1st century BC, the young woman who would become Empress Zhao was a servant who first attracted the emperor's attention through her dancing. Consider how the 'fat jade' evokes a plump, fleshy woman with round silhouette - the body type of Yang Guifei, who could not mount a horse unaided[5] - also refers the textures, qualities and cultural values of nephrite as well as to the story that the emperor became smitten by her as she stepped ever so frailly out of the hot springs at Huaqing near Xi'an. Through her new look and extravagant royal lifestyle, Yang Guifei not only reshaped fashion in mid-eighth-century China, she also (in Bai Juyi's famous ballad, 'Song of Lasting Sorrow') made couples yearn to have daughters - and generated some of the richest subjects in the repertoire for later figure painters.

By around the 13th century, images of the so-called Four Beauties of Ancient China appear in a Jin-dynasty woodblock print (Hermitage, St Petersburg) at the same time as syncretic images of the three patriarchs of Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism. By late imperial times, the numbers are neatly rounded up so that there are The Hundred Beauties, just as there are The Hundred Horses, The Hundred Deer and The Hundred Boys - all subjects in figure painting which spoke in the language of auspicious metaphor for collections of women, men of talent, oldsters and male progeny. The literary genre of 'biographies of exemplary women' (*lienü zhuan*) appeared shortly after the time of Zhao the Flying Swallow and became an early painting subject but at the end of the imperial era we can speak of a dramatic expansion of the categories of figure types and of their

[5] See, e.g., *Consort Yang Mounting a Horse* attributed to Qian Xuan (c. 1235-c. 1307) in the Freer Gallery, Washington DC (F1957.14).

contents as new subjects entered the repertoire, and were regrouped, and in this process all subjects were laid and overlaid with contemporaneous values.

The word nudity might be appropriate for the way that these iconic women were depicted in print and painted illustrations of mildly erotic stories in the context of an early modern urban visual culture (e.g., late Ming Suzhou). Displays of nudity in these pictures are generally related to the narrative, be it historical or, as often in the case of erotica, seasonal, or both. In a sixteenth-century narrative depiction of the life of Flying Swallow Zhao, the future empress appears naked once in twelve scenes when her lover, a huntsman, knocks on her door one snowy night. Her nudity here matters to the story, illustrating not just her corporeal beauty (the huntsman takes her for a goddess) and bearing (she had no fear of the cold) but also her poverty and susceptibility to sexual 'deviance' (she shared a bed with her sister in the frozen servants' quarters) – as seen in You Qiu's (after Qiu Ying) *Spring Morning in the Han Palace* handscroll in the Shanghai Museum. In the penultimate scene, her sister (who displaces her as the emperor's favourite) is spied on while bathing by candlelight by the emperor, a voyeur from behind a screen, like the viewer. The point in this latter case is to illustrate her charms: her body was the most naturally fragrant in the land and her skin outshone the candles. In the seventeenth century, partial female nudity, such as the portrayal of an open gown revealing the breasts, was not inappropriate for the depiction of erotically-charged goddesses or immortals, such as the 'jade women' of Daoist popular religion, e.g., in Cui Zizhong, *Jade Woman among Clouds* in the Shanghai Museum. For the modern viewer such images appear tame by comparison with contemporary literary descriptions of the male imaginings of sexual encounters with female beauties, although this literature gives some idea of how the paintings might have been regarded, at least by readers of novels like the *Plum in the Golden Vase (Jin ping mei)* (see Hay, A.J. 1994). Recently, James Cahill has identified a category of later imperial-era paintings whose function is unabashed erotic pleasure (Cahill 2010). In the above sampling, states of undress reference figures that are very ancient (pre- or proto-human), new born, deceased (post-human), deified (super-human) or demonic (sub-human), or are otherwise exceptional in being not ordinary or socially normative, on account of their beauty for instance, or their heroic defiance of establishment values.

Why ink-outline?

When we come to the counterpoint, the clothed figure, two issues may be identified for discursive purposes: the different social condition of painted subjects and the ink-outline technique, a creative and performative aspect. Let us shift attention from the body as a subject to the body as seen in its traces in painting.

Prior to the establishment of silk and paper grounds mounted into scrolls as the artistic media of choice, exemplified by that unique survivor from medieval China, the *Admonitions of the Court Instructress* scroll, only ancient figural depictions incised into stone (e.g., the Wu Family shrine in Shandong) or stamped into clay (e.g., the Seven Worthies in a Nanjing tomb) survive, so we have little idea what paintings in ephemeral media looked like prior to that. Then, after the establishment of scroll painting, and xylographic printing on paper, which developed widely from about the 10th century, figure painting retained this link with line carving. The first half of the historical span of

figure painting (4th-13th century) saw not just the emergence of the picture-scroll medium but, in parallel, a whole taxonomy of ink-outline modes related to individual pictorial idioms, as the brush arts became accomplishments of the educated. The ancestral master of figure painting, Gu Kaizhi, was the creator of high classical and floating silken outlines (*gaogu yousi miao*). Around 1300, Tang Hou evoked new nomenclature for linear expression with the freshness and delicacy of his lines described as 'spring silkworms spitting silk threads' (*chuncan tusi*) (McCausland 2003a). Other early masters pioneered outline modes in which the drapery would cling to the body in densely layered folds like wet 'clothing [on a figure] emerging from water' (*Caoyi chushui*), (possibly a distant remnant of Hellenistic or South Asian conventions introduced via Buddhist imagery), while others used a line that called to mind 'iron wire' (*tiexian*), 'zither strings' (*qinxian*) or 'orchid leaves' (*lanye miao*), all of which may be construed as performative types.

On one hand these figure painting idioms, each identifying the deictic outlines of an individual artist's brush, functioned as metaphors for specific sets of human values -, as in calligraphy with which painting was repeatedly identified (again, see Song Lian, above). Lineament likened to 'iron wire' would be supple and not brittle, taut and not slack, vigorous yet flowing and coherent, whereas orchid-leaf line would be altogether more florid and lush. The potency and expressiveness of brush traces, seemingly inexhaustible, was able to displace critical interest in light and colour. It is notable, also, how even after the arrival of Baroque European techniques of realism including *chiaroscuro* from the seventeenth century, portrait painting in China retained the look (dating from at least the Song period) of a collaborative venture, with faces rendered using shading technique, often by specialist portraitists, while figure painters continued to describe the body via its proxy, drapery, in ink-outline mode.

If in the early tradition the distinctions of court dress and royal or official rank were paramount, from the time of the formation of literati painting between the 11th-14th century, the emphasis in the developing canon of figure painting shifts towards distinctions between educated and courtly status, and concomitant ethics and values. A whole group of subjects emerged, matching critical and formal changes in the presentation of literati painting, problematising these differences as 'men of culture' sought to position themselves in the everchanging social-political sphere through innovative identification with historical models, from dissenting rustics like the Seven Worthies of the Bamboo Grove to statesmen in exile or at in office like the literati hero Su Shi (1037-1101).

Scholar-painters invested heavily in line quality, as it were transferring cultural capital - and values - from calligraphy into painting, while also revising and personalizing the concept of the moral mirror. One figure-in-a-landscape handscroll painting by the early Yuan scholar-painter, Zhao Mengfu (1254-1322), is a self-portrait, masquerading as a lost work by Gu Kaizhi (*The Mind Landscape of Xie Youyu*, Princeton University Art Museum; McCausland 2003a). The painting depicts a scholar in loose, rustic attire seated among symbolic pines, which double for ethically minded statesmen. Depicting himself as an ancient 'recluse at court', as the maverick Gu Kaizhi had once portrayed a statesman patron, enabled the Yuan artist-statesman Zhao Mengfu to conjure a highly nuanced and possibly pre-emptive response to critics of his controversial 1286 decision, as a scion of the recently deposed royal family of the Song dynasty (960-1279), to serve the Mongol conqueror of China, Khubilai khan (r. 1260-94). The visual edge in Zhao Mengfu's painting, part of its allegorical value, is its pioneering antiquarian feel, conjured by self-conscious effects of primitivism, which masks aspects of innovation

and topicality, like the centred tip of outlines, echoing early calligraphy. In addition, the tipped-up spatial arrangement; the muted green colour scheme; and frontal shapes of trees, flattened in the picture plane evoke early painting of the 4th-10th century.

This calligraphic mode of painting, part of the contemporary taxonomizing of outlines, is connected to the bodies of individual masters. with Its potential as a repertoire for formal referencing and hence signification, privileges Chinese intellectual and calligraphic culture and works in a lyric voice in contrast with naturalistic modes favored at court.

In sum: reflections on the narratives of figure painting

The current post-formalist moment in 'Chinese art history' enables us to rethink the grounds for the inherited narrative of naturalism in painting that enabled predecessors to make sense of history and determine the historical moment of an object's creation (Cahill 1998). We still want to distinguish the figures of the early, middle and late imperial eras; to reach consensus about important but problematic artworks like the *Admonitions*; to define how that painting differs formally from, say, the ink traces of the scholar-painter Li Gonglin or the Baroque-informed realist figures of the 18th-century Manchu Qing court. All employ ink-outline and belong in that type. Reflecting back on the genre, is a grand narrative of realism still justified or should other intrinsic narratives prevail, like correlations with the development of calligraphic form?

There is visual evidence for an intrinsic sense of the development of realism, one also supported by textual sources. In *Lidai minghua ji*, Zhang Yanyuan presented a systematic historicization of the painting tradition, echoed later by Song Lian (Zhang Yanyuan in Acker 1954, p. 198): Over 'the three [phases of] antiquity' (*san gu*) leading down to the present, form developed from the 'summary' or primitive quality of works of the high classical period to the graceful quality of works in the middle classical period, e.g., those by Gu Kaizhi and his peers to those of the late classical period, whose qualities were noted as being relatively easy to distinguish. But we note the context of this narrative. Additionally, painters were compared with famous calligraphers, thus producing a correlative hierarchy of masters, while the actual collecting of paintings bore comparison with collecting books (Zhang Yanyuan in Acker 1954, pp 15-96; p. 199). Thus, works by the top tier of painters (Gu, Lu, Zhang and Wu) were on a par with the Confucian classics; those of the second tier (Yang, Zheng and Dong) with the Histories; and miscellaneous paintings with the Hundred Masters. The underlying development of form from less to more naturalistic is complemented by concerns that form should be stylish or graceful (i.e., be of high status subjects) and resonate with literary and moral qualities (i.e., act like a mirror to society). Even so, critically, Song scholar-artists in the eleventh century, led by Su Shi, famously rejected naturalism at a moment when court-sponsored painting represented its acme.

The practice of naturalistic rendering, or the presentation of reality in painting, thus appears as a theme alongside others, including the formal referencing of classical subjects and styles and a self-conscious, historicist use of style, as well as the critical construction of genre boundaries and hierarchies. Its relative significance, within the development of figure painting could be compared with the development of calligraphy where, the forms being non-figurative, there is no commanding

logic of ocular realism. Within a calligraphic model of art history, the interventions of topicalities of the politics, intellectual life and the development of technology apply more aptly than naturalism. This becomes particularly clear in light of the intellectual scepticism of the late Qing period, when the aesthetics of new, non-canonical calligraphic models from antique stone inscriptions translate into the ink-outline mode of figure painting, as in the work of Jin Nong (1687-1763/4) and Luo Pin (1733-99).

So, how far can ink-outline be seen to develop as a function of the narrative of realism? It can from the perspective of the representation of the body as implied flesh and bone within ink-outline drapery. Comparing the implied bodies of figures from Gu Kaizhi to Tang painters, to Li Gonglin and up to masters at the Qianlong court, like Jin Tingbiao (d. 1767), they are all executed in ink-outline mode, but the sense of the human physique within is increasingly palpable in response to changing visualities of the figure, from early brush calligraphy, to *baimiao* (ink-outline) monochromy, to a Baroque-informed visuality in the eighteenth century. The art-historical narrative of realism is effective, so long as applied in context, and as long as cultural biases about the relative degree or 'success' of realism in China and post-Renaissance Europe are defused. It might be apparent to the late-modern *eye* of the reader that the earlier paintings are relatively simpler in the formal and - lest we forget - culturally constructed terms of Baroque or neo-classical European realism, with its underpinning of projective linear perspective and shading. But, as when viewing a Manet, we need to balance this against the performative function of the idiom and its link with the body of the master. As elusive as the ink-outline may seem to some, nonetheless in historical context, that is the mirror of the genre of figure painting.

[Xrefs:] See CHAPTER ([Dora Ching's on portraiture])

Keywords: figure painting; Gu Kaizhi; *Admonitions of the Court Instructress*; ink outline; the body; the nude; genre painting; narrative painting

Author bio: Shane McCausland is Reader in the History of Art of China at SOAS, University of London. He has published books, edited volumes and articles, and organized exhibitions on many aspects of Chinese and Japanese art, including most recently *The Mongol Century: Visual Cultures of Yuan China, 1271-1368* (London: Reaktion Books, [2014]).

References

Acker, W.R.B. (tr.) (1954). *Some T'ang and Pre-T'ang Texts on Chinese Painting*. Leiden: E.J. Brill.

Cahill, J. (1998) Chinese Painting*:* Innovation After "Progress*"* Ends. In Lee, S. (ed.), C*hina*: *5000 Years*: *Innovation and Transformation in The Arts*. Exh. cat., New York: Guggenheim Museum, pp. 174-92.

Cahill, J. (2010). *Pictures for Use and Pleasure: Vernacular Painting in High Qing China.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Cheng, Wen-Chien (2005) Drunken Village Elder or Scholar-Recluse? The Ox-Rider and Its Meanings in Song Paintings of "Returning Home Drunk'. *Artibus Asiae*, vol. 65, no. 2, pp. 309-37.

Fenollosa, E. (1912). *Epochs of Chinese & Japanese Art: An outline history of East Asiatic design*. London: W. Heinemann.

Fong, Wen C. (2003) Introduction: The Admonitions Scroll and Chinese Art History. In McCausland, S.F.M. (ed.) 2003, pp. 18-40.

Goodall, J.A. (selected and annotated) (1979). *Heaven and Earth: Album Leaves from a Ming Encyclopedia, San-ts'ai t'u-hui, 1610*. Boulder CO: Shambala; New York: Random House.

Guo Xi (1975). *Lin chuan gao zhi (Lofty Ambition Amid Forests and Streams*; 11th c.). In Huang Binhong and Deng Shi (comps.), *Meishu congshu (Compendium of the Fine Arts)*, 4 series, 160 vols. Shanghai, 1911-36; reprint ed. Taipei, series 2.

Han Zhuo (1992). *Shanshui chunquan ji* [c. 1125]. In Lu Fusheng (ed.), *Zhongguo shuhua quanshu.* Shanghai: Shanghai shuhua chubanshe, vol. 2, pp. 354-59.

Hay, A.J. (1983a) The Human Body as a Microcosmic Source of Macrocosmic Values in Calligraphy. In Bush, S., and C.F. Murck (eds.), *Theories of the Arts in China*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 74-102.

Hay, A.J. (1983b) Values and History in Chinese Painting, I: Hsieh Ho Revisited. In *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, no. 6 (autumn 1983), pp. 72-111.

Hay, A.J. (1985). *Kernels of Energy, Bones of Earth: The Rock in Chinese Art.* New York: China Institute.

Hay, A.J. (1994) The body invisible in Chinese art?. In Barlow, T., and A. Zito (eds), *Body, Subject and Power in China.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 42-77.

Hay, J.S. (2001). *Shitao: Painting and Modernity in Early Qing China.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Jullien, F. (2007). *The Impossible Nude: Chinese Art and Western Aesthetics.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Lawton, T. (1973). *Chinese Figure Painting*. Exh. cat., Washington DC: Freer Gallery of Art.

Lin Yutang (1967). *The Chinese theory of art; translations from the masters of Chinese art by Lin Yutang.* London: Heinemann.

McCausland, S.F.M. & Ling Lizhong (2010). *Telling Images of China: Narrative and Figure Paintings, 15th-20th Century, from the Shanghai Museum.* London: Scala.

McCausland, S.F.M. (ed.) (2003). *Gu Kaizhi and the Admonitions Scroll.* London: British Museum Press in association with the Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art.

McCausland, S.F.M. (2003a) 'Like the gossamer thread of a spring silkworm': Gu Kaizhi in the Yuan renaissance. In McCausland, S.F.M. (ed.) (2003).

Murray, J.K. (2007). *Mirror of Morality: Chinese Narrative Illustration and Confucian Ideology.* Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

Powers, M.J. (1998) When is a landscape like a body?. In Yeh, Wen-hsin (ed.), *Landscape, Culture and Power*. Berkeley: Centre for Chinese Studies, pp. 1–22.

Rao Ziran (1992). *Huizong shier ji (The Twelve Faults in the Tradition of Painting*; c. 1290). In Lu Fusheng (ed.), *Zhongguo shuhua quanshu.* Shanghai: Shanghai shuhua chubanshe, vol. 2, pp. 952-3.

Shanghai Museum and Liaoning Museum (2008). *Shimao fengqing: Zhongguo gudai renwu hua jingpin ji (Highlights of ancient Chinese figure paintings from the Liaoning Provincial Museum and the Shanghai Museum)*. Exh. cat. Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe.

Sheng Ximing (1992). *Tuhua kao* (14th c.). In Lu Fusheng (ed.), *Zhongguo shuhua quanshu.* Shanghai: Shanghai shuhua chubanshe, vol. 2, pp. 828-41.

Song Lian (1957) Hua yuan (The origin of painting; 1381). In Yu Jianhua (ed.), *Zhongguo hualun leibian (Discourses on China's Painting by Category)*. Beijing: Zhongguo gudian yishu chubanshe, 1: 95-96.

Tang Hou (1983). *Hua jian* 畫鑒 *(Mirror of Painting*; c. 1322). Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan.

Tang Zhiqi (1984) Qiyun shengdong. In *Huishi weiyan* 繪事微言 *(Painting Matters in Subtle Words*; 1651); cited in Yu Anlan 于安瀾 (ed.), *Huashi congshu* 畫史叢書 *(Compendium of Painting Histories).* Taipei: Huazheng shuju, vol. 1, p. 114.

Wang Qi (1988). *Sancai tuhui (The Three Realms, Illustrated*; 1607*)*. Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe.

Wu Hung and Tsiang, K.R. (eds) (2005). *Body and Face in Chinese Visual Culture*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Xia Wenyan (1983). *Tuhui baojian (Precious Mirror of Painting*; 14th c.). Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan.

FIGURES

1. 'Lady Ban declines to ride in the imperial palanquin' from *The Admonitions of the Court Instructress* attributed to Gu Kaizhi (c. 344-c. 406; a probable 5th-6th c. copy after). Detail of a former handscroll now mounted on two panels; ink and colours on silk, (the painting panel:) 24.37 x 343.75 cm. © Trustees of the British Museum (Asia OA 1903.4-8.1, Chinese Painting 1).

2. 'The toilette scene' from *The Admonitions of the Court Instructress* attributed to Gu Kaizhi. © Trustees of the British Museum.

3. 'The rejection scene' from *The Admonitions of the Court Instructress* attributed to Gu Kaizhi. © Trustees of the British Museum.

Chinese characters:

achu 阿堵

Bai Juyi 白居易

baimiao 白描

Ban *jieyu* 班婕妤

Cangjie 倉頡

Caoyi chushui 曹衣出水

chao yin 朝隱

chu yi 初意

chuncan tusi 春蠶吐絲

Cui Zizhong 崔子忠

Deng Shi 鄧實

Fan Kuan 範寬

gaogu yousi miao 高古遊絲描

Gu Hongzhong 顧閎中

Gu Kaizhi 顧愷之

gu zhi yi 古之意

Guan Tong 關仝

Guo Ruoxu 郭若虛

Guo Xi 郭熙

Han Xizai 韓熙載

Han Zhuo 韓拙

Huang Binhong 黄賓虹

Jin Nong 金農

Jin ping mei 金瓶梅

Jin Tingbiao 金廷標

Lang Jingshan 郎靜山

lanye miao 蘭葉描

Li Cheng 李成

Li Gonglin 李公麟

Li Shutong 李叔同

lienü zhuan 列女傳

Lu Tanwei 陸探微

Luo Pin 羅聘

meiren hua 美人畫

qinxian 琴線

Qiu Ying 仇英

qiyun shengdong 氣韻生動

Rao Ziran 饒自然

renwu hua 人物畫

sancai 三才

Sheng Ximing 盛熙明

Shihuang 史皇

Sima Jinlong (d. 484) 司馬金龍

Song Lian 宋濂 (1310-81)

Su Shi 蘇軾

Tang Hou (active c. 1322) 湯垕

Tang Zhiqi (1579-1651) 唐志契

tiexian 鐵線

wang 王

Wang Qi 王圻

Wu Daozi 吳道子

Xia Wenyan 夏文彥

Yan Liben 閻立本

Yan shou Huan fei 燕瘦環肥

Yang Guifei 楊貴妃

You Qiu 尤求

Yu Anlan 于安瀾

Yu Jianhua 俞劍華

Zhang Hua 張華

Zhang Yanyuan 張彥遠

Zhao Feiyan 趙飛燕

Zhao Mengfu 趙孟頫

Zhulin qixian 竹林七賢