

Cultural Communication and Chinese Modernity in the Late Qing and Republican China Periods

Xiaosui XIAO

Abstract

Late Qing and Republican China represent two important, yet largely overlooked, periods in the Chinese history of communication. These periods witnessed a large number of communication events, at various scales, that emerged to propagate the idea of modernity. Mainstream scholarship has tended to study these two periods from an elitist perspective by focusing on great political and cultural events such as the Self-Strengthening Movement of the 1860s–1890s, the Reform Movement of the 1890s–1900s, and the New Culture Movement of 1915–1925 and by concentrating on leading figures such as Zhang Zhidong, Liang Qichao, Tan Sitong, Yan Fu, Chen Duxiu, and Hu Shi. Consequently, such studies have been blinded to the other side of modernist practice exemplified by popular journalists, fiction writers, movie makers, and many others. In contrast to the elitist approach, the mass and popular side of practice is explored in this special issue. Six studies are included, each providing a detailed analysis of a unique aspect of this mass and popular practice of the modernist campaign in the Late Qing and Republican China periods.

Xiaosui XIAO (Professor). School of Communication, Hong Kong Baptist University. Research interests: culture, society & media, media criticism, communication & rhetorical theories.