

literati (*shi*) and the merchants-businessmen on this specific group of *shishang* who produced of literary culture.

Second, the expansion of the book market by literary professionals whose authority came to rival that of the official examiners. This meant a new reading of the Confucian classics but also a new literary authority was created (the *gong*), and new discursive space was opened up by the expansion of commercial publishing.

As part of the growth in commercial publishing, a boom in publishing vastly increased the size of the reading public and expanding reading publics and heterogeneous for the imperial ideology, and critics, and writers were empowered by the market of commercial publishing. In the vast expansion of the book, representing personal as opposed to imperial authority came to challenge the imperial authority of the examination system.⁴ The increase in book production provided a expansive discursive space to negotiate, challenge, and critique the authority of the officials in the examination field. Literary excellence that were at odds with the official examination system, editing critical anthologies of examination questions, and criticism of the selection process, and consequently intervened in the awarding of official positions, mobilizing public opinion of the examinees and the officials, and professional critics.

Some of the impacts of print culture in the late imperial period have been explored.⁵ Many important questions, however, have remained unexplored, or only partially explored. There are two main obstacles. One concerns the lack of a systematic approach; the other is the linguistic veil in

depends heavily on theories, concepts, and methodologies of the social sciences that, until recently, have been developed primarily in the social studies of European societies. Concepts such as the nation-state, Enlightenment, romanticism, modernity, the bourgeoisie, ritual, and the sublime have been turned into various versions of metanarrative. This is the “Eurocentric rope” that scholars who use or avoid the rope run the risk of activating their idiomatic frameworks, disciplines, and consequently misrepresenting the world. Producing Eurocentric narratives by using Western theories in writing is common in the study of premodern China. This study is therefore positioned to challenge these discourses: the history of printing in China during the Ming-Qing transition—a critical juncture in the history of the world. The enormity of the problem presented by the impact of printing in China and the world during the Ming and early Qing can be best illustrated by the recent view of the iconoclasm of Li Zhi (1527–1601):

The Enigma of Chinese Iconoclasm

“How small is the world! How immense is the pleasure!”
in a four line poem entitled, “Pleasure in Reading.”
the best-selling authors in late-Ming China.
interpret Li Zhi’s words to mean that one can find
perhaps more worlds in the books—worlds known
first hand. They can be real and imaginary worlds
one dreads even in dreams. When on a
journey across the landscape of the dream world,
reader, he indulged himself in the joy of reading
novels, plays, and Buddhist scriptures. Before
before his eyes, he encountered people and
tears. He read about things that made

hypocrisy and depravity. He was dazzled by honesty and courage in killing ignoble bureaucrats. He discovered the teaching of Wang Yangming (1472–1528). He flouted and shrined the Confucian canon as the only source of literary excellence.⁹ For de Bary, “the late Ming reached its height with Li Zhi.”

Li Zhi’s personal discoveries, made in solitude, have never ceased to fascinate his readers by his iconoclasm toward Zhu Xi’s Dao. His suicide in 1602 has been hailed as an act of “his own conviction.”¹¹ But what is the significance of his rebellion for China and for the world? How did his ideas in print that revealed themselves to Li Zhi?

Li Zhi’s “rebellious” cause did not fit the social order. Li “was reared as a Confucian and a traditionalist,” writes historian Ray Huang.¹² For Huang, not only a significant, everything that happened in the late Ming is of no consequence. Never mind Li Zhi’s hypocrisy of officials, his promotion of a “viable drive for personal emancipation,” or his Luther. He lacked even the self-confidence to rebel against tradition, Li Zhi paled in comparison with his contemporaries. Indeed, as Huang explains, since China had been imbued with traditional Chinese culture, “the ‘new culture’ not only produced a ‘highly stylized and developed’ development of the Ming empire, it rendered China ‘insignificant.’” In Huang’s view,

It no longer mattered whether the emperor was responsible, whether his (the Wanli emperor’s) counselor was enterprising or conservative, whether he was resourceful or incompetent, whether

The phrase “a chronicle of failure,” common in a popular book on the late Ming, succinctly captures the dilemma in writing about the history of China. The year 1587 was not only a year of no significant change, but it could be condemned as “a chronicle of failure” because it failed to improve political conditions and a reformer like Li Zhi’s tragic struggle, these endeavors could not produce any significant radical change in China. In terms of time and nature of change, they had no significant impact. To make the leap over the unbridgeable gap to modernity, “modernity.” It is in this “chronicle of failure” that “culture” met its fate. And it is in this “chronicle of failure” that joins other non-European societies as t

SINOLOGISTIC MODE OF HISTORY

As a form of narrative, history writing about failure, success, failure, narrow focus, and open-endedness. “Failure” is a common plot deployed in European societies. “Failure” and its triumph characterize the knowledge of the past in Europe, India, China, the Muslim Middle East, and the forces of postcolonial studies—the subject of this study, no exception.¹⁷ The heterogeneity and diversity of all histories are conflated into chronicles of the Other in contrast with the success of the West.

Even as chronicles of failure, the past is written in different discursive forms. Ray Huang’s “sinologistic mode of history.” To be different from the concept of “sinologistic” refers to a specific

Historicism overcomes all heterogeneity and reduces them to a single, homogenous, and unified linear and progressive—the specific term is “modernization.” Dipesh Chakrabarty has remarked: “Historicism or capitalism look not simply global but global over time, by originating in one place and spreading outside it.”¹⁸ Since the late nineteenth century, historians have begun rewriting China’s history in a “enlightenment” mode.¹⁹ In historicist narrative, History—a historical metanarrative—tells of human evolution that is condemned to be determined by Western Europe. China will pass through the same process. In historicist narrative, China acquired its underdevelopment, and absence.

Eurocentric narratives designated Western Europe with the changes that have provided the path for mankind forward on a single path. In Eurocentric narrative, the Others are relegated to an insignificant space—the periphery. The gradual diffusion of its specific forms of modernization (economic formations) as well as symbolic forms (cultural formation), the Others of Western Europe share a single destiny—modernity.²⁰

Chinese society and culture in modernity are lacking in specific forms of modern practices: capitalism, stock companies, factories, and institutions (nation-state, republican and representative government) and social formation (bourgeoisie, working class) and ideological formations (Enlightenment, liberalism, progress, public, right, freedom of expression). In historicist narratives of the imperial history, China is to receive from Europe a “cultural impetus” for modernization—without which China would be in a state of inertial inertia of tradition or change that ha-

inertia. These characteristics lend a conventional China."²¹ It is easy to understand, expressed with Li Zhi's "radical" ideas. For traditional and conformist than his contemporary side of modernity, making gestures of a Sinologistic narrative like Huang's reduces to a homogenous tradition and an ossified

We will not be able to see anything if we continue to search through a Eurocentric lens. The use of these words, has redirected "the plurality of voices to a single center."²² This lens has blocked out light on otherwise complex and diachronic patterns in the social, political, and cultural landscapes of the nineteenth century. Sinologistic narratives are not intelligible any historical difference it could have. The possible worlds found by Li Zhi in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the history of Chinese printing, which is not the general history of printing infused with Eurocentrism.

*A Technology of "No Significance":
Chinese Woodblock Printing in Sinology*

The invention of the movable type printing in the fifteenth century has been hailed as the catalyst for all major intellectual, political, and cultural developments of the Renaissance, the scientific revolution, the French Revolution, and the modern state. For historians of European printing, the invention is driven by these powerful forces of intellectual and political change. Evidence for the superiority of the Gutenberg printing as a technology of communication and its spread at the time and despite its invention and spread at

Chinese printing.²³

In the now classic work *The Coming of the Book* and Henri-Jean Martin, the significance of printing is viewed only as the "Chinese Precedent" that delayed the Western stage. While acknowledging the invention of printing in China, Febvre and Martin nonetheless attributed the delay to the peculiar nature of the Chinese characters, inferior ink technology, and the difficulty of producing copper types.²⁴ Echoing the view of Marshall McLuhan in his widely read book, *Of Typographical Man*, said: "Chinese printing was a complete block against the development of the printing culture."²⁵ The lack of development in printing refers to its presumed inability to advance to the stage of movable type printing. McLuhan thought the lack of invention of no consequence, a logical conclusion of the Chinese writing system.

Elizabeth Eisenstein makes reference to the invention of type printing, but does so only to point out that the discussion now centers on the advantages of a phonetic graphic written language for full use of letterpress printing. Eisenstein, the "ideographic" nature of written language is a barrier to full use of letterpress printing.²⁷ The discussion is rooted in the assumption that only phonetic writing allowed the development of the modern form of movable type printing. This view is just another rehearsal of the standard narrative of Chinese printing.²⁹

Despite the fast-growing field of the history of printing in East and Anglo-American academia, the study of Chinese printing remained largely in the shadow of studies of Western printing. This approach, which stress the function of printing in the spread of ideas and ideas. In fact, this approach is still in vogue in other East Asian countries, such as Ja

sight into, the involvement of literati in publishers; the impact of publishing on the manner in which printing created new readers; texts; and sacred sites as well as communities. Nonetheless, the larger historical significance of printing in Chinese society has not been attempted in the history of printing.³³ A truly history of printing—both woodblock and movable type—must be a confrontation with the dominant discourse.

Challenging the Gutenberg Discourse

The Gutenberg press has taken on a significance as a revolutionary means of communication, the triumph of modern Europe. In his introduction to *Printing in imperial China*, the French historian Jacques Lévy “strengthened dialogue between historians of the West. Dialogue, however, will not be conducted if historians are not informed of the impact of printing in Asia. As Henry D. Smith II has aptly noted, “the sophistication and complexity that Chinese printing before Gutenberg still remain difficult to grasp.”³⁵ Indeed, without a revolutionary narrative will continue to diminish any significance of printing in East Asia. It is therefore a challenge to historians with respect to the large issue of printing in China.

Challenge to the Gutenberg narrative has come from the sinological and philological academe. Recent studies of the history of Europe have moved away from the totalizing historiography by raising new questions. A challenge to the master narrative of the agency of printing in the history of modern Europe—the so-called printing revolution—has emerged in the history of the struggle a

be achieved is to document the impact of printing in China, to demonstrate, on the one hand, the understanding of the difference between woodblock and printing as means of multiplying and disseminating knowledge in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and on the other, the impact of printing on various aspects of society. The purpose of this book is to underscore the need to investigate the relationship between which printing—both woodblock and printing—had on changes in practice in China and Europe.

CONCEPTUALIZING THE SOCIAL IN EARLY MODERN CHINA

To avoid the pitfalls of the sinologicist approach, we must immediately into a problem similar to that encountered in colonial studies. How do we write about the social—the practice of early modern China—without loaded terms such as “bourgeoisie,” “capitalism,” “modernization,” and “individualism”? Application of these categories of sociological analysis has obscured the specificity of practice, and reproduced a distorted view of China in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In a recent book on the relationship between the two, David S. G. Hall have aptly remarked, when taken as “true

Western theories centered on the relationship between state and civil society and based on the idea of individual autonomy . . . limit our capacity to understand the cultural terrain upon which relationships between social groups were constructed in late

We need new ways to map the cultural terrain of early modern China, ways that allow us not only to view its history in its own terms, but also able us to reveal the specificity of the di-

To examine the impact of commercial p
borrowed analytical tools from many c
ticularly literary and cultural studies.
Roger Chartier, and Michel de Certeau
concepts for this study. Except Bourdie
of “paratext,” they will be introduced a
chapters. However, no theoretical work
their entirety, much less as universal m

Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of “field” i
cial as a site of practice and of its symb
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a network, or configuration of
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in the determinations they impos
institutions, by their present and
structure of the distribution of sp
possession commands access to th
in the field, as well as by their ob
(domination, subordination, hom

The concept of field underscores the fa
constructed in relation to one another.
think relationally.”⁴⁰ Human agents tal
cial action: “the field of power,” “the fi
literary field,” and “the field of economi
where agents compete for different typ
linguistic. In advanced societies, acces
nomic goods and services is important t
ital.⁴¹ Fields can multiply as new forces
of practice, hence the field of education

trajectories that traverse many fields.⁴³ As intensified commercialization resulted in who took up positions in both the political and cultural fields, significantly changing the relationship between the two. The opening up of the “cultural field” to a wider range of actors and fields. Struggling examinees received responses from an expanding public of patrons for their work. The rise of professional writers, critics, editors, and publishers created new positions in the field of cultural production. The authority of professional writers and critics challenged the imperial authority over interpretation and the standard of literary excellence. They became part of the field of cultural production, which intersected with the examination field.”

Unique to China in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was the examination field. The civil service examination field, which included institutionalized Rites, the three levels of periodic examination systems, educational intendants, and all other aspects of examination, through which political power was exercised, was an arena where the quest for formal political power by agents from various social classes—officials, scholars, men, and peasants—struggled for access to power. It is the site of resistance as well as domination by the imperial government. It intersected with the field of education, the literary field, and the economic field. This is one of the fields where the rise of publishing had made a great impact in the sixteenth century.

Paratexts, Discursive Space, and the Trajectory of the Field

Another key concept of this study of the field is the “paratexts” formulated by Gerald Genette.

Genette proposes to analyze the “paratexts” of a text—the physical medium of a text—title page, structure, comments, and intertextual references. Outside of the text, these surplus texts are often called marginalia. Genette points out, these marginalia are

Genette divides paratexts into “peritexts” (outside the book). It includes things like the format, series, cover, appendices, illustrations, paper, and binding. Other paratexts include the author, title, intertext titles, prefaces, dedications, and notes.

Paratexts are protocols for reading. Many authors. The publishers in their attempt to create a great variety of textual and nontextual elements. In the theoretical examination of the paratexts, it is appropriate to study the various contributions to the creation of paratexts with the authors and the publishers sought to convey their intentions. Before the study of the production, circulation, and reception of texts requires the investigation of the various activities.⁴⁴ Precisely because the production of texts involves several contributors—the author or editor, the proofreaders, the copyists—that the “paratext” is “fundamentally heteronomous” and “in the service of something other than its own *d’être*.”⁴⁵

The concept of paratext also helps to understand the social in late-Ming China, namely the change in the representations of practitioners and themselves. It enables the tracing of the careers of those who were involved in commercial publishing. The study of the literati routinely and systematically through “poetic reductionism” and ex-

mon allusion to selling one's literary labors. The literati clearly had chosen to remain in the traditional mode when a literatus was willing to mention his name. It was usually made with self-pity. But many did not. This voluntary "forgetfulness" of economic interests was especially difficult to understand the special case of the literati who interacted with the publishers, the organization of individual bookshops, and the distribution and prices of books.

This problem notwithstanding, we can see the impact of involvement in commercial publishing on the development of prefaces, postscripts, commentaries, titles, and other genres of literary works. The overall context of the development in commercial publishing can be gauged by the amount of information, writings of the literati, bibliographies, and the paratext of extant Ming-edition books. In the Ming period, literati, some of the paratext of commentaries, and titles for their literary value. Severed from the traditional mode, the writing was lost. In light of the theories of the literati about the general practice of erasing in the Ming period of publishing.

The concept of paratext also facilitated the development of the impacts of printing on the formation of the literati. The practice in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries of commercial publishing contributed to the expansion of the book through an increase in paratext and titles. The expansion with the elevation of the genres of fiction and drama. In the undertakings, paratext offered the writers a space for comment, dissent, and even subversion. The space as well as government policies.⁴⁶ This new "public" (*gong*) realm for the *shishang* and the literati. The literati, writers, publishers, and critics came together in a public connected by print.

Scholars argue whether China had developed a public sphere in the nineteenth century comparable to what we know of the modern period. This has been a source of controversy. The applicability of Jürgen Habermas's theory of the public sphere to the Chinese sides of the controversy expended much of the energy of the debate. How flexible one should be in defining the public sphere to get around this debate requires the employment of the word "gong," which registers the difference from the modern concept at the same time its similarity with the word.

Gong and Gonglun: Literary Public Sphere

Contrary to common view, the term "gong" is not synonymous with other than "official."⁴⁷ There are two meanings of "gong" relevant to our study. First, "gong" means "public" in the sense of a text or painting. Second, "gong" designates the public as the opposite of private or personal.

Books had been regarded as vehicles of the public. As Ge Shihe remarked: "Books are the realm" (*shuji tianxia gongqi ye*).⁴⁸ In late imperial China, "gong" was to print it for the reading pleasure of the public. The editions of books printed in the late Ming and early Qing were often of printing the book for the public. In a preface to a book on statecraft, the editor referred to its "public nature" (*gong ren*) "carve it on wood for the public to read" (*gong ren*) (carve it on wood for the public to read). The compiler explained that he "wishes to share the same interests" (*yuan gong tong hao*).⁴⁹ Chen Jiru (1558–1639), decided to publish his collection of essays the public could appreciate them" (*yi gong xin*). Chen Jiru's *Dushu jing* (Mirror in reading) was published in terms of "public through print" (*ke er gong zhi*).⁵⁰ In an afterword, the publisher was praised for his effort to r

purpose of “publishing [the book] to make the public under the realm will know” the truth (2). Another compendium of commentaries on the late Ming publication as “*gong zhi hainei*” (to make public) (Figure 3.1).⁵⁴

The above examples make it clear that the term “publishing” required the meaning “to make public,” and not “to print.” It applied to both printing a text or publishing a text. “*gong*” signifies a public space shared by the public. In the process of adopting Habermas’s term, “public sphere,” the term “literary public sphere,” first, to distinguish it from Habermas, and second, to underscore the centrality of the public—a community of readers scattered across the local space of China and yet connected by the availability of access printed texts.⁵⁵ One can argue that the concept of public in the late Ming whose membership was limited to printed materials, and mostly, but not exclusively, to the public sphere.

As the significance of *gong* changed with the expansion of publishing had also undergone subtle change with the expansion of publishing in the late Ming. Hai Rui said that “to publish the schools” (*gonglun chu yu xuexiao*) (Figure 3.2). This statement does not require print and cannot be limited to a community whose members knew and have access to printed materials. As *gong* was used increasingly to mean “to publish,” it was extended to denote opinion articulation. The term *gonglun* or *gongyi* circulated in print and the English concept of “public opinion” with its connotation in either language.

Gonglun was generated not only in print but also in oral and places. The expansion of commercial publishing beginning in the sixteenth century coincided with the “literary public sphere” with different support structures (*wenshe*), paratext, poetics of the text, and the

Chapter 1 discusses various aspects of woodblocks, and carving. It addresses the rise of book prices and their economic significance in the late Ming. I argue that books were sold at low prices. Chapter 2 discusses the process of obtaining manuscripts, strategies in ensuring a secure supply of materials, methods of distribution, and the distribution of books. The importance of Suzhou is underscored in the discussion of the growth of the rise of Suzhou as a cultural and publishing center and the specialization of Huizhou publishing. An analysis of how the simplicity and operational flexibility of woodblock printing explained why inter alia woodblock printing remained dominant despite the growing use of movable type. Chapter 3 seeks to explain the expansion of the publishing industry and the abundant supply of literary labor from the rise of the civil service examination, while holding up the example of officialdom, kept the examinees in the examination system. The expenses incurred in running a publishing house or the capital prompted talented candidates to become publishers, many of whom were publishers.

Chapter 4 examines how commercial publishing challenged the official interest in the Four Books. Commentaries contributed to an intellectual approach to the Confucian canon, challenging the officialdom by criticizing political abuses by the emperor. Chapter 5 traces the gradual shift of literary authorship from the officialdom to the commercial market population. It emphasizes the growing importance of publishing writings in the generation of literary fame, rather than that of the examiners of the civil service examination. The Restoration Society was presented as a group of individuals who first carved out their niches in the

ing on the examination field and the fee
vide an elaborate discussion of the differ
and European publishers operated.