

1 Introduction

Hu Shi 胡適 (1891–1962) left Beijing in December 1948, arriving in the United States in April 1949. He was never to see his home again. But where was home? Hu was born in Shanghai, but lived until the age of thirteen in Anhui province from where he left for Shanghai in 1904 to attend one of the “modern” schools. In 1910, he went by ship to the United States to study first at Cornell, then at Columbia University, returning only in 1917 to live in Beijing, where he taught at Beida until 1927, the longest he had lived anywhere until then and would ever live again. Following a sojourn in America, he returned to Shanghai where he remained until 1930, and from 1930 until the fall of 1937 he was again in Beijing. After the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese war he went to the United States, becoming China’s ambassador in September 1938. Four years later he was replaced, but did not return to China until June 1946 as chancellor of Beida.¹ Less than three years later Hu left China for the last time. Like many other Chinese intellectuals, he had often departed, but was always able to return. Yet now, as he was nearing 60 years of age, he was permanently exiled. Hu Shi really had no ancestral home and could not claim a permanent home anywhere to which he might consider returning. China was his home but he would never go home again.

If he harbored any illusions about the return of the Nationalists and himself to the Mainland, these were quickly dispelled. By 1954, he knew it was not going to happen and said as much, unless as part of a larger strategy which he did not see occurring.² Between 1949 and April 1958, when he went to Taiwan as President of Academia Sinica, Hu may have been despondent over not finding a permanent teaching position at one or another of the American universities. Still, despite not having an official post during these years in America he lectured widely, attended scholarly conferences, and

1 Hu Shi’s letter to Professor Chen Shouyi, September 12, 1945. (The letter is in the Chen Shouyi collection at the Honnold Library, Claremont Colleges. It was kindly made available to the author by the late recipient.) Chen was a close friend, and Hu confided to him that he had accepted the appointment but reluctantly and which he considered only as a temporary measure until Jiang Monlin’s 蔣夢麟 (1886–1964) return. He would much prefer to have continued to devote himself to research rather than take up university administration. Jiang was chancellor of Beida from 1931 to 1945. He died in Taiwan.

2 *New York Times* 35.139 (April 9, 1954), 3.

received honorary degrees. Mao Zishui 毛子水 (1893–1988), a longtime friend, believed that Hu Shi never lost his optimism, either for himself or for China's future, even if he sometimes expressed momentary disappointment.³

To a large extent this optimism is reflected in the ten public lectures that Hu Shi delivered at the University of California, Berkeley, during the 1956 fall semester.⁴ He had been appointed Regents Professor for the term, starting on 10th September. The lectures were apparently not taped, and Hu's handwritten notes were never published. The notes indicate that except for the Chinese sections – in the form of reminders – they would have been delivered by him nearly verbatim. I should point out that notes, rather than lectures, can be uniquely useful to allow the reader, as it were, to think together with the writer. Emendations, additions and omissions, can often be revealing of how an author decides to present his subject to an audience.

The subject of this paper are the ten public lectures. In these Hu raised a number of questions about Chinese intellectual history, the relevancy of Confucianism at various times, and his own place in the continuum of history. The attempt will be made in this paper to analyze Hu's understanding of the present in the light of the past by means of the lectures as well as to explore the extent to which they reflect his exiled condition. This paper will also highlight the significant differences between these and the Haskell lectures which Hu had delivered twenty-three years earlier at the University of Chicago. Finally, a brief digression into the problem of exile of the German-Jewish refugees in Shanghai between 1939 and 1945 – exile in reverse as it were – as compared to his exile in America may be instructive.

2 The Lectures⁵

Hu Shi wrote the lectures during the summer months before leaving for California. That the task engaged him for about four months⁶ indicates that the lectures were not written hastily and that he invested considerable thought in their composition. It is impossible to say, however, whether he was consciously aware of using the lectures as a means of locating his own contribution within the context of history. But that this in effect happened is

3 Eber Interview with Mao Zishui, Taipei, June 25, 1968.

4 Hu gave an 11th lecture in the Colloquium Orientologicum on the research he had done in the 1940s on the *Shui jingzhu* (水經注). A summary of his research was published in Hummel 1944, 970–982.

5 I thank Yang Tsui-hua, Director of Hu Shih Memorial Hall, for permission to use the lectures, and Alexander Pevner for arranging to have the lectures photocopied.

6 Hu Songping 1984, Vol. 7, 2549.

obvious. Indeed, it is possible to discern a singular unity throughout the lectures, and the motif indicating his own position in history emerges with increasing clarity from the fifth lecture on.

He began by stipulating three main periods in Chinese intellectual history: the age of indigenous Chinese thought (800 BCE–AD 200), the age of medieval religions (200–1000), and the age of renaissance (1000–present).⁷ Eight of the lectures are concerned with the last period, which he defined as a “... series of movements or tendencies to break away from the shackles of the medieval tradition and to revive ... the valuable elements of an essentially indigenous thought and culture” (6281).⁸ In this lecture Hu did not say anything about indigenous Chinese thought, or the classical age.⁹ Instead he immediately addressed the issue of the 800 years of religiosity that to him primarily signified the Buddhist penetration into Chinese culture. Hu apparently had not changed his mind significantly from the views he had held twenty years earlier, namely that Buddhism represented the Indianization of China,¹⁰ and he roundly condemned the Buddhist practice of self-immolation (6288–6290). However, as will be seen below, the question of Chan Buddhism was different.

The 3rd lecture,¹¹ “Classical Revival and Book Printing,” begins by giving an indication where Hu was headed in this series, although this probably was not obvious to his listeners at the time. He tackled two major issues, among them the question of Han Yu’s 韓愈 (768–824) contribution to the classical revival and language reform, and the importance of Chan Buddhism in paving the way toward a renaissance. Han Yu, he declared, was the major architect in replacing Indianized thought and beliefs when he wrote his essay “On Dao” (I assume Hu refers here to Han Yu’s “Yuan Dao 原道,” or “Inquiry into Dao”). Indianized thought was un-Chinese: its purpose was to serve anti-social and anti-humanist ends and was aimed at personal salvation. Citing the *Great Learning*, Han Yu asserted, according to Hu, that the Confucian tradition maintained that all self-cultivation was for a social purpose (6358–6367). Han Yu’s importance

7 Only the first lecture has a typed and corrected version to which he appended the remark that the “method of presentation was effective and well-received,” though it should be rewritten and enlarged.

8 Numbers in parentheses refer to the page number of the document.

9 January 1955, Hu delivered a lecture, “Chinese Philosophy,” at the Cooper Union of New York, where he spoke at greater length about the classical age of Chinese philosophy. The lecture is in Chou Chih-p’ing 2001, 435–450.

10 Hu Shih 1937.

11 The second lecture is missing from my collection, but the beginning of the 3rd one leads me to think that Hu continued to speak about religion in medieval China.

was, however, also in the area of language use: "... he was a poet, a classical scholar and the greatest prose master of his age," who wrote in the classical style instead of the hybrid Chinese in vogue in medieval China (6382–6384). He was ahead of his time, for as a literary tool classical Chinese did not reach unprecedented heights until the eleventh century (6386). Another development took place concurrently, and this was the recording of the Chan masters' iconoclastic discourses in the spoken language,¹² in addition to professional story tellers and singers who also used the spoken language (6388–6390).

Hu apparently also spoke about the importance of book printing that he considered the real beginning of the Chinese renaissance using the term in a Western sense as the revival of classical learning, secular education, and a new spirit of curiosity and intellectual inquiry (6394–6395). No doubt, his brief stint as curator in Princeton's Gest Oriental Library in 1952 alerted him to the importance of what we today term material culture, but the notes are disorganized here and it is hard to know what he actually said on the subject.

The 4th lecture, "The Great Reformers of the 11th Century," divides the Song reform movement into two stages: the first led by Fan Zhongyan 范仲淹 (989–1052) and the second by Wang Anshi 王安石 (1021–1086).¹³ Although the first reforms were not successful, Hu devoted considerable time to the man, pointing out that he inspired subsequent generations. Significantly, he links Fan's name to Ding Wenjiang 丁文江 (1887–1936),¹⁴ who often signed his political articles with *Cong Yan*, or follower of Fan Zhongyan (6512).

Both reforms took place against the backdrop of the political crisis during the Northern Song dynasty – the threat from China's northern neighbors, the Khitan and Xi Xia – and the court's inability to offer firm resistance. Hu explained the nature of the political crisis in considerable detail in order to establish the urgency of reform in military training, government structure, finance, the educational system, and social and economic

12 Hu probably developed a growing respect for Chan Buddhism and its contribution after studying some of the Dunhuang materials in Paris in the summer of 1926, which led to the publication of his *Shen Hui Heshang yiji* in 1930.

13 Although Wang Anshi is better known, Fan Zhongyan was an important person at the time. A civil political figure and military leader, he was also an accomplished poet whose verses describing the loneliness of the frontier are still moving today. Wang Anshi, statesman and poet, attempted to institute controversial economic reforms, the so-called "new laws," which met with much opposition.

14 Also known as V. K. Ting. He was a scientist and geologist by profession and was also known as a journalist, politician, and educator. Ding was a close friend of major figures in the New Culture movement who believed in China's orderly change toward modernity.

life (6509). The reform movements went beyond politics, however. First of all, they were part of the classical revival. They were the political phase of the Chinese renaissance, but the aim was also to revive the secular and humanistic institutions and ideas of antiquity.

Hu's argument was not entirely convincing. Classical antiquity, he seems to be saying, was secular. It was overcome by religion, which exercised a detrimental influence on Chinese culture. Now, under the threat of an external conquest, a return to secularism would lead to "modernization" and thus would render the state capable of defending itself (6518–6520). Secularism, therefore, he seems to be saying, is a prerequisite for modernity. Hu was on firmer ground when he argued that Fan and Wang advocated social, rather than individual responsibility, rejecting the value of personal salvation (6524–6528). Yet, Wang Anshi, according to Hu, also drew on Buddhism for spiritual inspiration, thus not rejecting its messages entirely, and he cited several poems by Wang in support (6529–6531). Both men were, however, opposed to the Daoist teaching of *wuwei*, 無為 inaction (6532–6534), fundamentally believing in political activism.

The 5th lecture, "Neo-Confucianism," as will be seen, clearly though implicitly reveals where Hu placed himself within the context of tradition and intellectual history – not unlike Confucius as a transmitter rather than as an innovator (*Lunyu* 7:1). This lecture also indicates, I would suggest, an initial attempt at reinterpreting intellectual history, a reinterpretation that assigns to Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200) not so much a place in the history of philosophy but a pivotal position in Chinese intellectual discourse.¹⁵

Hu began his lecture by asserting the positive contribution of Chan Buddhism to Chinese intellectual history. Echoing an article he had written three years earlier in which he referred to Chan as a "Chinese reformation or revolution within Buddhism,"¹⁶ he declared that the Chan masters had developed an educational method that made individuals learn through their own efforts. Teachers were not simply to state matters (*bu shuopo* 不說破), but to encourage students to think for themselves (6459). Neo-Confucianism saw in this method a challenge and inspiration – would neo-Confucians be able to emulate this method? Would they be able to benefit from Chan's iconoclasm and unconventionality?

15 I have not seen Yu Yingshi's work on "Zhu Xi's historical world" published 2003. However, as reviewed by H. C. Tillman in *Dao: A Journal of Comparative Philosophy* 3.2 (June 2004), 355–362, I am led to believe that the two men's views about Zhu Xi would have overlapped in a number of areas. Zhu Xi, most important among neo-Confucian philosophers, was the major figure in the *lixue* school, or the school of principle.

16 Hu Shih 1953a, 17. See also p. 20 where Hu wrote that the time of the founders of Chan was the era "of dangerous thinking, courageous doubting, and plain speaking".

Not by accident, but in search of a method, neo-Confucian intellectuals of the Song dynasty, like Han Yu earlier, were led to the *Great Learning* 大學 and its famous statement on the investigation of things and the extension of knowledge (6468–6470). In attempting to find a suitable interpretation, Cheng Yi 程頤 (1033–1107) boldly concluded that the investigation of things (*gewu* 格物) refers to all things, thus in fact formulating the scope of science (6478–6477). His formulation of scientific investigation also included the aspect of doubt (*yi* 疑), which Zhu Xi more emphatically described as the method of checking and testing. Doubt is nothing other than hypothesis, its verification, and testing, concluded Hu, of a proposed hypothesis (6483–6484). And this, of course, is what Hu advocated in the 1920s as the method of investigation: the establishing of a hypothesis, its testing and verification.

Having stated that the investigation of things and the extension of knowledge was a new and entirely different methodology from medieval religions, Hu by no means neglected the contribution of its critics who questioned its methods (6490–6492). Among those whom he mentions was Wang Yangming 王陽明 (1472–1529), a neo-Confucian philosopher, who opposed Zhu Xi's rationalism, and credited him with having asserted the independence and dignity of moral conscience (6498–6499). More than that, Wang and the idealistic phase of neo-Confucianism played a large role in fostering a critical and more scientific method in subsequent centuries which led to a new age of classical research (6500–6501).

In the course of the 6th lecture, “The Rise of a New Literature in the Living Tongue (1000–1900),” which was chaired by his old friend Y. R. Zhao [Chao Yuan-jen] 趙元任 (1892–1982), an internationally renowned linguist, he went over some of the materials he had covered in his history of vernacular literature,¹⁷ and in the several articles he had written about the great novels. He highlighted the development of the spoken language and pointed out that the common people have had an important role in rejuvenating Chinese literature, particularly poetry. In fact, new poetic forms had emerged that were inspired by popular songs and drama and these similarly flourished under the impact of widely sung tunes and storyteller recitals. Chinese theater became a popular form of entertainment both in cities and the countryside, as semi-operatic, sung and spoken parts, developed. The two main sources of vernacular prose literature are story-telling and the desire to record wise sayings. To this latter category belong the recorded conversations of the Chan masters as well as those of later sages, such as Zhu Xi. The former led in time to specialized storytelling and there were tellers of Buddhist tales in addition to tellers of fantasy, crime, or romantic stories. The great historical

17 Hu Shi 1928.

novels begin with these story-teller tales and the kind of “guide books” (*huaben* 話本) they used.

The 7th lecture, “Development of a New Methodology in Classical Studies (1600–1900),” is as important as the fifth in revealing Hu Shi’s self-perception of being in the mainstream of Chinese intellectual history since Zhu Xi, despite the catastrophe that had befallen his country. According to Hu, the Cheng-Zhu orthodoxy was a mixed blessing. As interesting and stimulating as it had been throughout the centuries, by becoming the official orthodoxy, it repressed free thinking and stifled non-conformism (6598). Small beginnings of non-conformity, such as that of the notorious Li Zhi 李贄 (1527–1602), quickly disappeared following the Manchu conquest.¹⁸ Nonetheless, the suppression of intellectual freedom never entirely succeeded as a new age of secular criticism and revision of neo-Confucianism dawned during the nearly three centuries of Qing rule. The classical revival, argued Hu, led to a conscious “critical and essentially scientific method of investigation” (6602–6603).

The figure of Yan Yuan 顏元 (1635–1704) was significant in that he rejected book learning and insisted on “learning through doing” as well as the practical application of all learning (6607–6610). Yan was uncompromisingly opposed to the Cheng-Zhu school and believed in a return to the thought of Confucius and Mencius (6611). Yan Yuan’s pioneering efforts were followed in the 17th century by the method that has been called “evidential investigation” or examination on the basis of evidence (*kaozheng* 考證). Evidential investigation can be traced back to the practice of judges who determined guilt or innocence on the basis of evidence and, indeed, Zhu Xi had not only been a judge, but he also practiced the method in his studies of classical texts (6615). In Hu’s view, philological studies, and especially the study of ancient pronunciation by Gu Yanwu 顧炎武 (1613–1682), produced a significant new method in which the role of hypothesis and verification played an important role (6619). Proposing a hypothesis, testing and verifying it is what Hu most persistently advocated and what he ascribed to Zhu Xi in the fifth lecture. In this, the seventh, pivotal lecture Hu, on the one hand, stipulated the continuity of Chinese intellectual history and, on the other, asserted that the imposition of re-

18 Li Zhi and Gu Yanwu (mentioned below) are two entirely different personalities who lived and reacted to different realities. Li died by his own hand in jail before the catastrophic end of the Ming dynasty. Gu, a Ming loyalist, lived through it to become with others the initiator of a new intellectual orientation. Li’s non-conformity, unconventionality, and rejection of orthodoxy are singularly attractive. But so are Gu’s intellectual independence, his rejection of abstract learning, and his critical method of insisting on evidence.

pressive orthodoxy necessarily produced a reaction. Within the Chinese context this took the form of a secular search for the meaning of tradition.

The 8th lecture, “A Conscious Movement for a Chinese Renaissance in the Modern World,” significantly points out why the renaissance in the twentieth century is different from previous ones: it is different because it is a conscious result and attempt at a revival. Stressing again that the age of Chinese renaissance began in about 1000 AD, he defined it as a “... series of movements or tendencies to break away from the shackles of the medieval tradition, and to revive or vitalize what were conceived in each case, as the valuable elements of an essentially indigenous Chinese thought and culture” (6623). Hu Shi was not the first to speak in terms of a renaissance. Liang Qichao 梁啟超 (1873–1929), a major intellectual in the modern period, had said as much earlier, considering the last two hundred-years or so of Qing scholarship a renaissance (*fixing* 復興).¹⁹ In this lecture, however, he stressed the element of consciousness and, as we shall see, he again identified the Chinese with the Western Renaissance.

He began by recapitulating the several movements for change: Chan; the first, second, and third classical revival; the neo-Confucian movements for a philosophical renaissance; and finally, the phase of the classical revival, the age of evidential investigation. To these he added the evolution of literature in the vernacular by the common people (6623–6631). But these periodic renaissances, according to Hu, were not conscious revolutions, they were more like the natural processes of historical evolution (6635).

Hu next pointed to his own role in 1916, contrary to that of some other Chinese students at American universities, when he first attempted to write vernacular poetry.²⁰ He acknowledged the influence of John Dewey (1859–1952), a leading philosopher of the American school of pragmatism, and the importance of pragmatism and experimentalism advocated by the American philosopher (6657). The real importance, however, of this literary revolution, he asserted, lies in the establishment and standardization of a national language for all of China. Similar to the rise of modern languages in Europe, when

19 For the several uses of the term together with the proponents and opponents of a Chinese renaissance, see Eber 1975.

20 Hu mentions an episode about a capsized boat that led the Harvard student H. C. Zen to write a poem which he sent to Hu who severely criticized the classical and vernacular mixture (6650). I cannot help but immodestly appending my own poem which I wrote when first reading about this incident many years ago: “A capsized boat / Is all a Buddhist chain? / Hu and his friends were caught by rain – / Thus was the renaissance begun / From lecture notes read in Taiwan.”

men like Dante and Giovanni Boccaccio²¹ began to write literature in Italian, in China too the development of a national language can be attributed not only to the utilization of the most widely spoken dialect but also to literary creation (6663).

Although not the last, the 9th lecture, “Re-Examination and Re-Appraisal of China’s Cultural Past,” concludes Hu Shi’s statement of how and in which area he saw his greatest contribution and how he wanted this contribution to be seen. Literature and language are important, but the re-examination of Chinese culture or the reorganization of the national past (*zhengli guogu* 整理國故) movement are far more important.²² Hu confined himself in this lecture to tracing the beginnings and growth of the movement and the support it received from students and professors at Beida. He highlighted for his listeners the similarity between the Chinese and Italian renaissances; in both the same men had led the revival of learning and had written in the vernacular (6683). However, a major difference exists between the two events. Whereas men such as Francesco Petrarca (1304–1374), the Italian scholar and poet, considered the “father of humanism,” were founders of the humanist movement, the Chinese leaders were “inheritors of a long [underlining in original] continuous classical tradition,” as well as the heirs of a critical and scientific methodology (6684).

Hu’s emphasis on inheritance and continuity must be understood from the perspective of his view of Chinese history and those of John Dewey’s ideas on the philosophy of history, which were congenial to Hu. According to Dewey, an “[i]ntelligent understanding of past history is to some extent a lever for moving the present into a certain kind of future.” Present needs, therefore, modify interpretations of the past. More than that, the principle according to which data is selected for interpretation exists only in the present and is not inherent in the historical data.²³ The historian’s existential involvement in present concerns is thus necessary for discerning the relevancy of past historical phenomena.

But the significant element here is the continuity of history and, to jump ahead for a moment to the final lecture, Hu was unwilling to regard Mao’s victory as a break in Chinese history. Nor was he unaware of perhaps being accused of not standing in direct succession, considering that he attended American universities. There were others, he said, who had studied under scholars, heirs to the Qing tradition of classical scholarship

21 Dante Alighieri (1265–1321) is one of the most important European literary figures and is best known for his *Divine Comedy*. Giovanni Boccaccio (1313–1375), author and poet, is famed for his fictional work, *Decameron*.

22 For a discussion of the movement, see Eber 1968.

23 Dewey 1938, 235, 237–239. See also the perceptive article Blau 1960.

(6685–6686). His own efforts were concerned with popularizing the spirit and method of scientific research, and he emphasized that this consists in the “disinterested inquiry in the search for truth for its own sake” (6696).²⁴

Perceiving the importance of Qing research meant by no means its uncritical acceptance. Hu pointed out that the scope of the older scholarship was too narrow, being limited to orthodox Confucian texts and excluded neo-Confucian thought of later periods. Another grave limitation was excluding vernacular literature from systematic investigation. (6699–6700). Similarly, though through no fault of theirs, oracle bones and Dunhuang manuscripts were as yet not available. Therefore, the research of Qing scholars was woefully incomplete (6701–6705). It would have been good to have Hu’s conclusion to this important lecture, but unfortunately pages are obviously missing and his argument concerning linguistics stops in mid-sentence.

“What Has Become of the Chinese Renaissance?,” the final lecture in the series, is both a summary but also a vindication of his lifetime’s task. On the one hand, the most recent renaissance has made fiction in the spoken language respectable. On the other, it is a revival of learning by means of the systematic study of the cultural past (6714–6716). That this renaissance has not been in vain and obliterated by the Communist conquest is revealed by the large-scale purging of literature that has happened on the mainland in the past three years, and includes the persecution of Yu Pingbo (俞平伯 1900–1990) for his work on the *Dream of the Red Chamber*, the “ghost of Hu Shi,” and the disappearance of Hu Feng (胡風, 1902–1985) and people associated with him (6721).

Hu devoted considerable time to the recapitulation of the Hu Feng case, the man’s outspoken and courageous stand and his eventual disappearance.²⁵ But the fact that his role and interpretations of Chinese intellectual history had been essentially correct Hu saw in the extensive purging of literature that was published about him in China.²⁶ To his audience he said:

24 I should point out here that Hu probably became aware of the importance of Qing scholarship while writing his dissertation in America and later, while revising his dissertation for Chinese publication. See his essay, “Qingdai xuezhè de zhixue fangfa” 清代學者的治學方法 (The scholarly method of Qing scholars), written in 1921 and reprinted in Hu Shih 1953b, I, 383–412.

25 Yu Pingbo, poet, essayist, and literary critic was criticized in 1954 for his work along with Hu Shi, and he suffered especially during the Cultural Revolution. For a recapitulation of the profoundly sad case of Hu Feng, see Goldman 1962.

26 *Hu Shi sixiang pipan*, Beijing 1955. See also Grieder 1970, 367, who remarks, “If Hu believed that the Communist attack upon him somehow proved, retrospectively, the fitness of his philosophic principles, he was, I think, deceived.”

... as I read and analyze the two and a half million words of this vast literature of persecution and condemnation of me and my ghost, I cannot help feeling re-assured that the Chinese renaissance is not dead, but still alive and at work. Ladies and gentlemen, all was not lost (6756–6757).

Hu Shi had maintained this position even earlier when, for example, his younger son, Hu Sidu 胡思杜 (1921–1957), attacked him in his self-criticism in 1950,²⁷ and when one of his closest associates, Gu Jiegang 顧頡剛 (1893–1980) did likewise a year later. He believed that neither was free not to say this.²⁸

3 A Brief Comparison with the Haskell Lectures

Hu Shi had delivered the six Haskell lectures twenty-three years earlier at the University of Chicago under the title “Cultural Trends in Present-Day China”.²⁹ The question is: were the 1956 lectures similar to the earlier ones; did Hu repeat himself, or is there a marked difference between the two series thus justifying the assumption that Hu intended in the later lectures to clarify his role despite (or because of) his exile condition?

Although in 1933 Hu did not neglect his own role in the literary revolution, he did point out that it was he who rediscovered, as it were, the vernacular poetry and other matters. At the time, he wanted his audience to know that the Chinese people eagerly accepted Western scientific attitudes and technology and that there was nothing in Chinese tradition inimical to this acceptance. In this regard he wanted to clarify why Japan’s response to Western civilization was different from China’s and he explained some of the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century interpretations of the West by men such as Wang Tao 王韜 (1828–1897)³⁰ and Liang Qichao. Hu did speak briefly

27 The translation from the *Hong Kong Standard*, issue September 24, 1950, is printed in Hunter 1951, 303–307.

28 “China Seven Years After Yalta,” speech delivered February 4, 1952 at Seton-Hall University, in Chou 2001, 372–381. Gu Jiegang was one of the most significant historians of twentieth-century China. He pioneered major studies not only in ancient texts but also in folklore and literature and was an active participant in many intellectual controversies of his day.

29 The lectures were published as *The Chinese Renaissance: The Haskell Lectures, 1933* (Hu Shih 1934). Apparently, Hu had given considerable thought to the subject. While in England seven years earlier he delivered five lectures at various universities on the subject of the Chinese renaissance.

30 Wang Tao was a translator and reformer. He worked with missionaries from the London Missionary Society and helped with the translation of the New Testament into Chinese. In-

about the humanist movement of the Chinese renaissance and the tentative beginnings of the scientific spirit in the Cheng-Zhu school, nonetheless, the development of scientific methodologies by men like Galileo Galilei (1564–1642), a major figure in the scientific revolution, or Isaac Newton (1642–1727), the English scientist and theologian, set the West apart from China.³¹ In this connection he did not stress the continuity of tradition nor did he indicate what his own place in a continuing tradition since Zhu Xi might be.

Hu did speak about the “imported religion from India” and how Buddhism had swept medieval China, but he did not refer to Chinese indigenous secularism and its link to modernity. Finally in 1933, Hu did not mourn the breakdown of the old society and its disintegration in the cities, if not yet in the countryside; for the new to arise, he argued, the old must go to pieces first. To conclude, Hu had two rather different agendas in 1933 and 1956. In the first he was intent on explaining China and the social processes conducive to modernity. In the second, however, not China but he was the protagonist. More to himself than to his Western audience he needed to explain his place in and contribution to Chinese history.

4 Some Reflections on Exiles and Exile

Is Hu Shi unique in attempting to establish both the continuity of tradition and his own place within it? Or is this attempt a more general phenomenon? After all, can it not be argued that a poet, writer, or intellectual in exile attempts to carry on the tradition he has brought with him.³² Keeping familiar traditions alive for the duration, at least, seems to be especially true of German-Jewish and Yiddish-writing intellectuals from Poland who found themselves in Shanghai in 1939 and 1941.³³ By the end of 1941, when the Japanese occupied all of Shanghai, they had, for example, established nine German and five Yiddish papers and journals. Many were, to be sure, short lived, but their existence testifies to the importance the writers ascribed to asserting their cultures. The poetry they wrote was not always nostalgic or backward looking. Indeed, German poets like Egon Varro (1918–1975) tended to write satiric verses about polyglot Shanghai while, in a more somber mood, Yiddish poet, Yosl Mlotek (1918–2000)

vited to join James Legge (1815–1897) in his scholarly work in Scotland, Wang Tao leisurely traveled from China to Europe, later writing a travelogue.

31 Hu Shih 1934, 69–70.

32 Werner Vordtriede, “Vorläufige Gedanken zu einer Typologie der Exilliteratur,” in Koepke and Winkler 1989, 38.

33 A brief background of the Jewish communities is in Eber 2005, 235–256.

captured the fate of Chinese in Shanghai.³⁴ Aside from poetry, the papers published essays on a variety of topics: news about the European war, useful tips on how to manage in Shanghai, as well as Chinese politics, and literary pieces. Homesickness, “Heimweh,” is not a major theme in either poetry or prose and is almost completely absent in the works of Yiddish writers. They saw Shanghai as a way station to somewhere else and they had no illusion about returning to Poland.

Yet Jewish culture is not what these exiles had in common, nor did they have much in common with the Baghdadi and Russian Jewish communities in Shanghai. Cultural assertion in their case meant asserting the culture they had brought along from Poland, Germany or Austria. The assertion of their own cultural traditions took place in another area as well, namely the theater. Despite the dire lack of finances for sets or costumes, in fact, even a lack of scripts and a proper theater stage, a German language theater flourished in Shanghai from 1939 onwards.³⁵ Yiddish theater had its real beginnings somewhat later with the arrival of around 1000 Polish Jews from Kobe in 1941 that included actors and singers. More modest than the German stage, it nonetheless provided another means of cultural expression.³⁶ Both cases, publishing and the theater, are akin to what Czeslaw Milosz described as the exiled person having to “... assign to his work a function in a movement which leads from the past to the future. This implies a constant reassessment of tradition in search [of] vital roots as well as [a] critical observation of the present.”³⁷

But the similarity in cultural assertion between these Jewish intellectuals and Hu Shi cannot be taken too far. Exile has many faces and, is experienced differently by groups and individuals. The term exile alone is problematic. Whether in the German or Yiddish papers, the Jews did not refer to themselves as exiles or refugees but as immigrants, as if they had come to settle in Shanghai, which, of course, the large majority had had no intention of doing. Jost Hermand suggests that the term “exile” is ambivalent and should be

34 Varro 1939 and Mlotek 1942. Egon Varro arrived as a twenty one year old in Shanghai, where he applied himself with singular energy to a journalistic career. In 1941, he managed to join a group of refugees bound for Australia, continuing to work as a journalist in that country. Yosl Mlotek fled from Poland after Germany invaded the country. He went first to Lithuania, then with a group of Polish Jews to Japan, and finally in August 1941 to Shanghai. He left Shanghai in 1947, going first to Canada and then to New York. In New York he pursued a successful career as an important figure in Yiddish education and publishing.

35 A valuable contribution to the subject is Philipp 1996. I thank Hartmut Walravens for making the book available to me.

36 An assessment of the Yiddish stage in Shanghai is still lacking. Glimpses may be had in the excellent diary by Rose Shoshana Kahan published 1949 in Buenos Aires.

37 Czeslaw Milosz, “Notes on Exile,” first published in 1976, republished in Robinson 1994, 37.

used cautiously, perhaps in the sense of an ideologically motivated political expulsion.³⁸ Leszek Kolakowski takes a somewhat different approach by stating that modern expatriates "... were not physically deported from their countries ... they escaped from political persecution ..." Maybe, he concludes, there is such an ambiguous state as "half-exile".³⁹

This is not exactly voluntary exile and though both the Jewish intellectuals and Hu Shi left voluntarily, both fled for their lives from persecution. According to Leo Ou-fan Lee:

The closest equivalent in traditional China for voluntary exile is eremitism, or voluntary withdrawal from political service in order to maintain one's own integrity or for the more practical reason of survival in time of great upheaval ... Often, however, an elegant way of seeking eremitism from the political center of power was, in fact, a return to one's home region, to indulge in such cultural pursuits as art, literature, and scholarship.⁴⁰

Neither dislocation nor alienation was part of this withdrawal. I am, furthermore, not certain that the Chinese term *liuwang* 流亡, "wandering in escape," conveys the intent of exile as it is customarily used. It more strongly suggests an existence not anchored to a domicile because the person has fled.

Hu Shi was not an exile in the way Shanghai's Jewish Central Europeans were. They came to a totally unfamiliar city with unfamiliar languages and ways. Hu, on the other hand, came to New York, a city he knew from having previously lived there; neither American ways nor the English language was foreign to him. The Central Europeans in Shanghai were refugees, even if they did not like to refer to themselves as such: some of whom expected to go back home, others hoped to go elsewhere. But there is no indication that Hu's self-perception in America was that of a refugee. If some of his American friends had called him that, he probably would have rejected the appellation. Expatriate might fit him best, someone who has been banished from his native country and, whose hopes for a return no longer exist.⁴¹ No doubt, the refugee intellectuals in Shanghai felt lonely, alienated, and longed for the families they had left behind. Still, there was a small group of them, which meant they were not alone. During the ten years that he was in the United States Hu Shi seems not to have belonged to, or identified, with a particular group or

38 Jost Hermand, "Schreiben in der Fremde," in Koepke and Winkler 1989, 62–66.

39 Leszek Kolakowski, "In Praise of Exile," first published in 1985, in Robinson 1994, 188–192.

40 Leo Ou-fan Lee 1991, 212.

41 After all, had not Mao Zedong 毛澤東 (1893–1976) in August 1949 identified him as well as Qian Mu 錢穆 (1895–1990) and Fu Sinian 傅斯年 (1896–1950) as "running dogs" of imperialism together with China's reactionary government? "Cast Away Illusions, Prepare for Struggle," Mao 1961, 427. I thank Gad Isay for directing me to this article.

party. To be sure, he was in close contact with other expatriates in various parts of America, even with the so-called China Lobby – perhaps less so with his erstwhile American friends – but in many ways he was alone. Although Hu had pointed out the importance of biography much earlier, I might mention here that the loneliness of exile no doubt sharpened his perception of the need to preserve personal documents, letters and diaries for historical research. Thus in the 1950s he was increasingly concerned with the individual, his personality and development.⁴² This concern is especially mirrored in a letter of 1956 in which he mentioned that the recently deceased Wang Jingchun's 王景春 (1882–1956) biographical materials must be deposited somewhere or donated to a library.⁴³ Still, the journey to Taiwan in 1952, where he remained for two months, addressing countless groups on a variety of topics, may have shown him the extent to which his popularity was undiminished.⁴⁴ This visit may have also contributed to his decision to ultimately move to Taiwan.

To answer my earlier question, whether Hu's attempt to define the continuum of history and his place within it was unique, I would say that it was a remarkable undertaking, taking the characteristic form of lectures where he was able to speak directly to his listeners. We might regret that he did not choose a more permanent expression, memoir or autobiography, but that would have required a less active, more withdrawn activity. The last lecture, "What Has Become of the Chinese Renaissance?," raises the question that must have been very much on his mind: was the recent renaissance in which he was a vital participant in vain? Was it obliterated by the political events of the Communist victory? Would it be a forgotten page in Chinese history, as he knew other pages were?

Hu cannot be faulted for giving a seemingly lame answer in the last lecture to the question he posed. All he could and did say was that his ghost is apparently very much alive if it is in need of purging. But supporting this statement, whether his audience was aware of it or not, was Hu's concept of history for which he was largely indebted to John Dewey. History was open-ended, always moving on toward a future in which the present will be the past, and will be evaluated from the standpoint of that future's present. Past, present, and future are interconnected, but, "at most, it is the reconstruction of a segment

42 See Howard 1962, 475.

43 Unpublished letter from Hu Shi to Chen Shouyi, August 15, 1956. The Pettus Archival Project, Claremont Graduate University. I thank Professor John Regan for making this letter available to me. Wang Jingchun was an old friend since Hu's Shanghai days. Hu Songping 1984, Vol. 2, 624.

44 The speeches were collected in Hu Shih 1953c. According to Chen Shouyi, the major purpose of Hu's visit was to help reduce the tension between Taiwanese and Chinese. Interview with Chen Shouyi, February 18, 1965.

of the past from a present perspective, with an eye to control future possibilities.⁴⁵ Unlike 1933, when he delivered the Haskell lectures, in 1956 Hu Shi was unable to see any future possibilities either for China or for himself. However, significantly, and highlighted in the fifth lecture that he considered himself a transmitter and not an innovator, he pointed out in the ninth lecture that the men before him as well as he were heirs and not creators. It may very well be that Hu intended to indicate with this the necessity for other heirs to carry on; for others to inherit now the tradition he has transmitted.

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45 Blau 1960, 99.

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