Gu Hongming as a Cultural Amphibian: A Confucian Universalist Critique of Modern Western Civilization*

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> Here we stand face to face with a really extraordinary phenomenon, who has by no means been adequately taken note of: a man who had absorbed and digested Western culture in the most thorough manner, who knows Goethe just like a German, who knows Carlyle, Emerson, and other Anglo-Saxon writers just like an Anglo-Saxon, who is at home with the Bible like the best Christian, but whose independent, clear mind has possessed the power, not only to maintain his own peculiarity, but also to see that for their self-preservation it is necessary for Oriental people to stand firm upon the ground of their own ancient, tested culture, and not to allow Western culture, tailored for completely different circumstance, to impose itself upon them, for its modern materialistic civilization could work on them merely as a subversive, killing poison.[1]
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> —Heinrich Nelson (1920)

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[1] Heinrich Nelson, "Translator's Foreword," in *Vox clamantis; Betrachtungen überden Krieg und anderes*, by Ku Hung-ming (Leipzig: Reinhold, 1920). I use Tianhu Hao's translation of Nelson from German. See Tianhu Hao, "Ku Hung-Ming, an Early Chinese Reader of Milton," *Milton Quarterly* 39, no. 2 (2005): 93–100.

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THE PERIOD around World War I has been identified as a critical moment in world history, when intellectuals from many different cultures debated the implications of the crisis of Western society for human civilization.[2] In particular, they attacked the "civilizing mission" ideology that had justified Western domination in modern times, by pointing to the destruction and brutality the Great War had brought about. They also anxiously sought alternatives to Western approaches to reconstruct the moral and philosophical foundations of civilization. This article reexamines the life of the so-called "Chinese sage" Gu Hongming/Thompson Ku[3] 辜鴻銘 (1857–1928) and the critical implications of his philosophy for global intellectual debates about civilization. Born and raised in British Malaya, Gu grew up as an English-educated Romanticist but ended as a loyal Qing official and anti-Western Confucian propagandist. Despite his Western upbringing, Gu devoted his life to defending and popularizing Confucianism and the traditional way of Chinese life while sharply criticizing modern Western civilization. His intellectual career has posed a challenge to a scholarly consensus and often provoked polarized responses inside and outside China. During his lifetime, Gu's numerous writings and their translations into Western languages, his lecture tours in the Japanese empire, and his interactions with renowned world critics of modernism including Rabindranath Tagore and Leo Tolstoy stimulated heated debates in Europe and Japan on the values of "Eastern traditions," where scholars hailed him as "Chinese Tagore."[4] In contrast, late Qing and Republican-era Chinese intellectuals portrayed him as "reactionary"[5] and "crazy"[6] with little understanding of what China needed in modern

[2] For example, see Michael Adas, *Machines as the Measure of Men: Science, Technology, and Ideologies of Western Dominance* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1989); Prasenjit Duara, "The Discourse of Civilization and Pan-Asianism," *Journal of World History* 12, no. 1 (2001); and Cemil Aydin, *The Politics of Anti-Westernism in Asia: Visions of World Order in Pan-Islamic and Pan-Asian Thought* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).

[3] See Francis Borrey, *Un Sage Chinois: Kou Hong Ming* (Paris: Marcel Rivière, 1930). Gu Hongming's name was also spelled as Kaw Hong Beng and Ku Hung-Ming in English, depending on the transliteration system. To avoid confusion, I use Gu Hongming in the main text, while using Ku Hung-ming in footnotes as the author of his books because it was the way his name was spelled when they were written.

[4] For example, see Herbertz Richard, "Philosopher or Mystic," *The Living Age*, no. 4019 (16 July 1921). It was originally published in the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung (Swiss Liberal Republican Daily)*, 20 May 1921.

[5] Chen Duxiu, "Ji yi Gu Hongming san ze," in *Kuangshi guaijie: mingren bixiade Gu Hongming, Gu Hongming bixiade mingren*, ed. Huang Xingtao (Shanghai: Dongfang chuban zhongxin, 1998), pp. 16–18.

[6] Hu Shi, "Ji Gu Hongming" in Huang, *Kuangshi guaijie*, pp. 19–24.

times. After being excluded from historical discussions in mainland China for decades after the Communist revolution in 1949, recently a renewed interest in Gu has emerged among academic and popular audiences. Gu is today celebrated as a guru of national learning, as China seeks to build a new "traditional" identity in the face of continued and accelerated globalization.

Much scholarship refers to critics like Gu as "cultural conservatives" because of their "traditional" ideas or "anti-Western" stances. The concept highlights the variety of intellectuals in a worldwide intellectual movement of the early twentieth century. Nevertheless, it can be problematic to apply the original definition of conservatism, which is closely associated with the European aristocratic reaction to the French Revolution in contrast to liberalism and radicalism, to the nineteenth- and twentieth-century non-Western world. A pioneering volume published in 1976 defines conservatism in Republican China and remains the most comprehensive work on the subject.[7] While pointing out "the limits of the notion of conservatism as an explanatory concept" in modern China,[8] Benjamin Schwartz in an introductory note identified two distinctive characteristics of modern Chinese conservatism. First is "the unquestioned priority of nationalism over conservatism," and second is the predominance of a cultural conservatism rather than "sociopolitical conservatism committed to the prevailing sociopolitical status quo."[9] He then proposed an elastic definition of conservatism that can be applied to a wide variety of people in twentieth-century Chinese history, even including some political revolutionaries and social reformers.

The case of Gu, which the volume does not include, further complicates the framework of conservatism in the Chinese context. Gu strongly opposed not only modern Western learning as an intellectual enterprise but also the validity of Republicanism as the form of government appropriate for contemporary Chinese society. As such, he appeared closer to the prototype of European conservatives who viewed and defended the old sociopolitical order as a whole rather than a typical Chinese conservative identified in the aforementioned influential work. In addition, Gu's approach to civilization and his influence went beyond the "nationalist" narrative of Chinese conservatism. As a for-

[7] Charlotte Furth, ed., *The Limits of Change: Essays on Conservative Alternatives in Republican China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976).

[8] Benjamin Schwartz, "Notes on Conservatism in General and in China in Particular," in Furth, *Limits of Change*, p. 17.

[9] Ibid., pp. 3–21.

mer colonial elite and advocate of Romanticism, his conservatism was a reaction both to the radical sociopolitical changes within China and to the modernist and imperialist forces that were expanding around the world. Instead of adopting the common *ti-yong* dichotomy[10]—that is, Chinese learning should constitute the essence of study and Western learning should be pursued only for its practical utility—Gu developed his vision of universalism based on a hybrid system of "the East" and "the West." In particular, he advocated "humanity" to replace materialism as the new criterion of civilization, denouncing the latter as the cause of modern chaos and the foundation for a destructive Western global dominance. Despite Gu's challenge to Western hegemonic discourses on civilization, his idea of "a spiritual East" based on humanity-centered Confucianism, which became a powerful symbol in Western imaginations of the East as well as Easterners' self-perceptions until today, was essentially a mixture of Confucian teachings and Western Romanticist ideas. Gu's approach to civilization distinguishes him from cultural relativists who focused on the uniqueness of individual culture and Orientalists who considered the East-West differences essential and unbridgeable, making his ideas relevant even today as globalization once again forcefully highlights critical questions about how to modernize while maintaining cultural independence from Western dominance.

Some recent scholarship attributes Gu's generation of "Asian traditionalists'" "failure to make headway against liberal modernity"[11] to the lack of global intellectual networks among them in the early twentieth century. The author claimed that they "sat at the periphery of global intellectual life, disconnected from the European core *and from one another* in any relevant sense."[12] Such isolation was said to be caused by many factors including "technological constraints on travel and communication" and "the lack of mutual language competencies among Arabic, Hindi-Urdu, and Chinese."[13] What lacks in this narrative is a critical examination of the complexities and transformations of these scholars' ideas and identities in an age of intensive global interactions. In this article I contextualize Gu in a group of what I call "spokesmen

[10] Benjamin Isadore Schwartz, *In Search of Wealth and Power: Yen Fu and the West* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1964), pp. 25–53.

[11] Adam K. Webb. "The Countermodern Moment: A World-Historical Perspective on the Thought of Rabindranath Tagore, Muhammad Iqbal, and Liang Shuming," *Journal of World History* 19, no. 2 (2008): 190.

[12] Ibid., p. 210.

[13] Ibid., pp. 210–211.

of the East" of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, who appeared as staunch advocates of Eastern cultures and traditional values in the world. These eminent "non-Western" intellectuals, including Rabindranath Tagore and Okakura Kakuzō, were often immersed in multiple cultures. Like Gu, they drew inspirations from various intellectual sources in their responses to the era's critical issues such as the nature of civilization and the ways civilizations interact.[14] Seemingly rooted in a cultural and ideological confrontation between the West and the non-West, their discourses in fact are better seen as marked by a global intellectual syncretism. The cases of these intellectuals therefore destabilize traditional conceptual boundaries between the East and the West, and bring into question the underlying assumptions of rigidly defined Orientalist and Occidentalist frameworks. They became what I call "cultural amphibians"[15]—men able to forge authentic identities across national, ideological, and cultural boundaries due to their social "hybrid vigor" and transcultural competence. Unlike the usages of "cultural conservatives," which are often circumstantial, ideological, and ambiguous, "cultural amphibians" transcend the dichotomous characterizations of Eastern or Western, conservative or radical, traditionalist or modernist, and nationalist or cosmopolitan. It takes into account the changes of individuals' identities and thinking in varied environments during a time of rapid transformations, highlighting their ideas' hybrid natures and global implications. Joined by their Western admirers, these "cultural amphibians" formed a global community that addressed the era's most critical intellectual concerns in the turbulent era at the turn of the twentieth century.

Gu's Odyssey

Gu Hongming lived a distinctive transnational life as a diasporic Chinese elite figure of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. His life and ideas are full of fascinating contradictions and ironies. Gu was born in the British colony of Penang[16] on 19 June 1857 into a

[14] See Stephen N. Hay, *Asian Ideas of East and West; Tagore and His Critics in Japan, China, and India* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970), pp. 1–51.

[15] The concept of "cultural amphibians" came out of a discussion I had with Willard Peterson of Princeton University. I thank him for this and many other inspirations.

[16] Penang became Britain's first settlement in Malaya in 1786. In 1826, Penang, along with Malacca and Singapore, became part of the Straits Settlements. It remained under the control of the government of India until 1867, when it became a separate crown colony.

wealthy family who had originally emigrated from Fujian, a coastal province of the Qing empire from which the majority of Chinese immigrants to Southeast Asia emigrated. By the time Gu was born, Penang had already been under British rule for more than seventy years and developed into an extraordinarily vibrant contact zone among Chinese, Malays, Indians, and Europeans. Gu's clan belonged to an elite group of Straits-born Chinese and remained one of the oldest and most prominent Chinese families in Penang since British control.[17] Little is known about Gu's immediate family except that his father Gu Ziyun (Koh Chee Hoon) worked for a plantation owned by a Scottish entrepreneur named Forbes Scott Brown,[18] and that his elder brother Gu Hongde (Kaw Hong Take), claiming an Anglo-Chinese legal status, set up a company in the new treaty port of Fuzhou, China in 1864.[19]

After two years of formal education in the Penang Free School, the oldest English school in the Straits Settlements, Gu was taken to Scotland for further education by his guardian Forbes Brown between 1870 and 1871. His trip to Europe was earlier than those of the Straits Chinese sponsored by the Queen's Scholarship,[20] such as Lim Boon Keng,[21] and mainland Chinese students sent abroad by the reforming Qing government, such as Yan Fu. Brown most likely financed Gu's stay in Europe, even including Gu in his will together with his various

[17] Gu's great-grandfather Gu Lihuan (Koh Lay-huan) was the first Kapitan China of Penang, leader of the Chinese community appointed under the British colonial administration. Most of his descendants worked as political and commercial intermediaries between the British and the Chinese communities, amassing a considerable fortune from their positions. A branch of the Gu clan has become one of the most prominent families in Taiwan since the era of Japanese occupation, including Gu Xianrong, the prominent economic tycoon and aide to the Japanese colonial authorities, and his son Gu Zhenfu, a leading Taiwanese businessman and diplomat who served as Taiwan's negotiator in the first direct talks between Taiwan and the People's Republic of China.

[18] See the obituaries, "Death of Mr. Ku Hung ming," *The Straits Echo*, 4 May 1928, and "Ku Hung Ming, Eminent Philosopher, Poet and Linguist," *Sunday Gazette*, 4 October 1936.

[19] See Lo Hui-min, "Ku Hung-Ming: Homecoming," *East Asian History* 6 (December 1993): 179.

[20] The Queen's Scholarship was founded in 1885 by Sir Cecil Clementi Smith, governor of the Straits Settlements, and abolished in 1959 when Singapore became self-governing. It was awarded to the best students of the year from the Straits Settlements through special examinations. For more information, see Song Ong Siang, *One Hundred Years' History of the Chinese in Singapore* (Singapore: University of Malaya Press, 1967).

[21] Lim Boon Keng, the first Chinese recipient of the Queen's Scholarship, studied medicine at Edinburgh University. He later became one of the most prominent local Chinese leaders in the Straits Settlements and played an influential role in mainland China's reforms. For more information, see Li Yuanjin, *Lin Wenqing de sixiang: zhongxi wenhua de huiliu yu maodun* (Singapore: Xinjiapo Yazhou yanjiu xuehui, 1991).

racially mixed children.[22] There have been speculations on Brown's biological relationship with Gu, though no actual evidence has been found.[23] After studying in a local academy for about two years, Gu passed the entrance examination and entered the University of Edinburgh, majoring in English literature. Gu studied in the Faculty of Arts, where he took "two years each of Humanity (Latin), Greek, and mathematics, and one year each of logic and metaphysics, moral philosophy, natural philosophy (physics), and rhetoric and English literature."[24] He received the degree of master of arts[25] in 1877 under the name Kaw Hong Beng. Due to his study at Edinburgh and extensive travel study for another two years in Europe, Gu received a thorough training in classical Western learning and became familiar with contemporary European intellectual trends.

Gu Hongming returned to Penang by the summer of 1879 after nearly a decade of sojourn in Europe. He then served in various positions including secretary in the British legation in Beijing, contributor for newspapers in Hong Kong, staff member in the colonial office in Singapore, and interpreter for a British geographer in Indochina. In his late twenties, Gu experienced a self-claimed conversion from "an imitation Western man" to "a Chinaman again":[26] he started learning classical Chinese and Confucian Classics and worked in China for most of his life. Gu served as a private secretary of the powerful Viceroy Zhang Zhidong from 1885 until the latter's death in 1909, two years before the fall of the Qing dynasty. His work in Zhang's *mufu*[27] involved trans-

[22] See "1875 Brown, Forbes Scott" (Reference SC70/4/155 Edinburgh Sheriff Court Wills). It was common for early wealthy European settlers to send their children back to Europe for secondary and higher education, including the ones they had with local women. Forbes Brown's father, an early settler of Penang, came from Scotland and sent his sons, including Forbes Brown, to Scottish schools when they were young. Forbes Brown followed the same practice with his own sons.

[23] Some have hinted that Scott Brown was actually Gu's biological father. See Lo Hui-min, "Ku Hung Ming: Schooling," *Papers on Far Eastern History* 38 (September 1988). The question about Gu's race is never thoroughly explored due to a lack of primary sources and the ambiguities of racial identities during the colonial era. This article does not aim to solve the puzzle. But seen from the available materials, the relationships between Gu and Brown seem beyond a simple patronage. Gu is very likely a "bastard" son and half-caste in the colonial system.

[24] Edinburgh University, *First Matriculation Book, 1873–1874*. Also see Lo, "Ku Hung Ming: Schooling."

[25] Equivalent to a BA degree today.

[26] Wen Yuanning, "Ku Hung-Ming," *T'ien Hsia Monthly* 4, no. 4 (1937): 386–392.

[27] *Mufu* 幕府 was a popular practice among late Qing viceroys and high officials, who hired a number of talented people as their private secretaries without going through regular official bureaucratic systems. Many of the secretaries failed in the civil examination system and joined *mufu* as alternative career opportunities.

lating, consulting, and dealing with Western affairs. It was during this period that Gu published influential newspaper articles and books that created stirs among European readers inside and outside China, including his famous defense of the Boxer Movement and attack on foreign missionaries in China.

In the early twentieth century, Gu continued to endorse the Qing monarchial system even after the 1911 revolution successfully turned the country into a republic. Gu worked briefly as a supervisor at the South Sea Public School[28] and taught at the Department of English literature at Peking University, the center of the radical New Culture Movement. Gu became an object of increasing hostility from the May Fourth radicals and he finally left Peking University in the early 1920s as the revolutionary atmosphere grew stronger. Partly because of economic pressures and partly because of his enthusiasm for Japan as the heir to and bearer of the true Chinese civilization, Gu taught at the Pan-Eastern Cultural Association[29] in Tokyo and gave lecture tours in Japan and its colonies in Korea and Taiwan between 1924 and 1927. In 1928, Gu died in Peking, just before he was to have assumed the post of president of Shandong University.

As a fervent Confucian propagandist, Gu Hongming spent most of his adult life introducing Chinese culture to foreigners: English writings form the majority of his works and provide the most comprehensive explanation of his ideas. These writings include four monographs, translations of three Confucian classics, and numerous articles. Gu's translation of the Confucian canon, including *Lunyu (The Discourses and Sayings of Confucius)*,[30] *Zhongyong (The Universal Order; or Conduct of Life, a Confucian Catechism)*,[31] and *Daxue (Higher Education)*,[32] promoted his credibility and status as a Confucian scholar in the West. *Papers from a Viceroy's Yamen: A Chinese Plea for the Cause of Good Government and True Civilization in China* in 1901 defended Empress

[28] South Sea Public School (Nanyang Gongxue) is the predecessor of today's Shanghai Jiaotong University.

[29] Pan-Eastern Cultural Association (Daitō Bunka Kyōkai) was a government-founded association that sought to promulgate Confucian morality in Japan. It is the predecessor of today's Daitō Bunka University.

[30] All translations were Gu's. See Ku, trans., *The Discourses and Sayings of Confucius. A New Special Translation, Illustrated with Quotations from Goethe and Other Writers* (Shanghai: Kelly and Walsh Ltd., 1898).

[31] Ku, trans., *The Universal Order; or, Conduct of Life, a Confucian Catechism, Being a Translation of One of the Four Confucian Books, Hitherto Known as the Doctrine of the Mean* (Shanghai: Shanghai Mercury, 1906).

[32] Ku, trans., *Higher Education* (Shanghai: Shanghai Mercury, 1915).

Dowager Cixi, while blaming Western missionaries as being responsible for the anti-Western riots in China; and *The Story of a Chinese Oxford Movement: An Essay in Political and Social Criticism in China* in 1910 tried to help Westerners to "understand the true state of things in China."[33] During the ongoing Great War in 1915, Gu published *The Spirit of the Chinese People* in "an attempt to interpret the spirit and show the value of the Chinese civilization."[34] Two years later in *Vox Clamantis: Essays on the War and Other Subjects*,[35] Gu blamed the outbreak of World War I on the nature of Western civilization, especially its foundation in materialism and militarism. While the Great War boosted Gu's reputation as an "Eastern prophet" in the twentieth-century Western world, Gu's Chinese writings were largely neglected in China. They were compiled into two collections, *Zhang Wenxiang mufu ji wen*[36] and *Du Yi caotang wenji*.[37]

Gu was an early product of globalization. As a colonial subject, Gu lived and traveled in the British Straits Settlements and the metropole until his early adulthood. Joining the movement of the modern Chinese diaspora, Gu turned to China as a political and cultural alternative to his colonial past. Gu's life history was continuously shaped by various national and transnational forces of colonialism, Chinese nationalism, modernism, cosmopolitanism, and Pan-Asianism. These actual and ideological forces created both opportunities in and limitations on Gu's career and identity in ways that were unimaginable for earlier generations of non-Westerners in the pre-industrial age.

Civilization Is Humanity

Since the nineteenth century, intellectuals around the world engaged in discourses on the nature of civilization, as it became crucial both to the legitimacy of Western global domination and to non-Westerners'

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[33] Ku Hung-ming, *The Story of a Chinese Oxford Movement* (known in Chinese by the title *Qing liu zhuan* 清流傳), 2nd ed. (Shanghai: Shanghai Mercury, 1912), preface.

[34] Ku, *The Spirit of the Chinese People: With an Essay on "The War and the Way Out"* (Taipei: Committee for the publication of Dr. Ku Hung-ming's works, 1956), preface, p. 1. First edition in 1915 by the Peking Daily News.

[35] Ku, *Vox Clamantis; Essays on the War and Other Subjects* (Peking, 1917).

[36] Ku Hung-ming, *Zhang Wenxiang mufu ji wen* 張文襄幕府紀聞 (Shanghai: Saoye shanfang, 1910), included in Huang Xingtao, ed., *Gu Hongming wenji* (Haikou Shi: Hainan chubanshe, 1996).

[37] Ku Hung-ming, *Du Yi caotang wenji* 讀易草堂文集 1922, included in Huang, *Gu Hongming wenji*.

resistance that started to take place on a global scale. Highly debated issues included whether civilization is singular or multiple, material or spiritual, and exclusively Western-originated or not.[38] Gu Hongming advocated "humanity" as the new theoretical basis of civilization. As he wrote, "the question we must ask, in order to estimate the value of civilisation,—is, *what type of humanity*, what kind of men and women it has been able to produce."[39] Gu denounced Western civilization in the modern era, especially crucial characteristics ranging from an industrial system driven by machinery and technology to the Western mindset obsessed by commercialism and utilitarianism. For example, Gu blamed commercialism for creating "the Religion of Mob-worship,"[40] which, together with the "monstrous modern Machine," had brought about the Great War.[41] At the same time, Gu opposed the democratic and republican system, mocking it as "demo-plus crazy,"[42] while condemning socialism and the Russian Bolshevik revolution as an example of mob rule.[43] In contrast, he argued that the spirit of the Chinese people is "not a science, philosophy, theosophy, or any 'ism,'" but rather "a state of mind, a temper of the soul . . . in short, a mood, or in the words of the poet, a serene and blessed mood."[44]

Gu's Chinese colleagues found his claims xenophobic, reactionary, and eccentric, especially from a thoroughly Western educated figure. In fact, rather than being anything but "traditional" or "old," Gu's ideas were deeply rooted in nineteenth-century Western Romanticists' critiques of modernism that developed in reaction to the social turmoil and political revolutions caused by industrialization. They include Ralph Waldo Emerson, John Ruskin, Matthew Arnold, and most importantly, Thomas Carlyle.[45] As Gu himself acknowledged, it would not be an exaggeration to name Carlyle, renowned for both his literary contributions and social criticism of the Victorian age, as his

[38] Duara, "Discourse of Civilization."
[39] Ku, *Spirit of the Chinese People*, preface, p. 1.
[40] Ibid., p. 8.
[41] Ibid., p. 152.
[42] See Lin Yutang, "Gu Hongming" in *Youbuwei zhai suibi*, included in Huang, *Kuangshi guaijie*, p. 70.
[43] Ku Hung-ming, "Will the Chinese Become Bolshevik?" in *Yazhou xueshu zazhi (Journal of the Asiatic Learning Society)* 1, no. 1 (1921). The article was written in English.
[44] Ku, *Spirit of the Chinese People*, p. 72.
[45] See Frederick William Roe, *The Social Philosophy of Carlyle and Ruskin* (Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat Press, 1969); Joseph Persky, "Retrospectives: A Dismal Romantic," *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 4, no. 4 (1990): 165–172; and Patrick Brantlinger, "A Postindustrial Prelude to Postcolonialism: John Ruskin, William Morris, and Gandhism," *Critical Inquiry* 22, no. 3 (1996): 466–485.

most important intellectual mentor.[46] Gu constantly quoted from these Romantic thinkers in his own writings. Following Matthew Arnold's classification of the members of the English nation into three groups that Arnold dubbed "the barbarians," "the Philistines," and "the populace,"[47] Gu Hongming divided Chinese people into three classes: "the Manchu Aristocracy, the Middle Class Literati, and the Populace." Echoing Carlyle's concept of "heroes," the most competent members of the society drawn from aristocracy who should serve as the leaders of society,[48] Gu Hongming found in the Chinese society *junzi*, the "gentleman" or scholar-official class, whom Carlyle had also praised as an ideal conception of heroes and rulership.[49] As the German author Erich Franz perceived in 1920, "He [Gu], like Spengler, feels the appeal of the romantic: 'The cultivation of the soul instead of physical civilization; personal worth instead of material refinement; authority instead of Socialism and democracy.'"[50]

Although many scholars have noticed Gu's Romanticist influence,[51] what has been neglected is his distinctive challenge to the ideologies of Western domination that went beyond his Romanticist mentors' critiques of the industrial era. While many Victorian Romantic critics supported British colonial expansion, celebrated Western superiority, and agreed upon the moral justification of the civilizing mission,[52] Gu remained highly critical of imperialism. The non-Western intellectual world of his time was under the spell of a Western-invented

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[46] According to Zhao Wenjun, a professor at Beijing University, Gu told him that he had maintained a close personal relationship with Carlyle and his family, had often visited Carlyle's home in Edinburgh, and had received direct guidance from Carlyle and his daughter. See Zhao Wenjun, "Gu Hongming xiansheng dui wo jiangshu de wangshi," in Huang, *Kuangshi guaijie*, pp. 136–148. However, there is no direct evidence showing Gu had such a close personal relationship with Carlyle.

[47] Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

[48] See Thomas Carlyle, *Carlyle on Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History*, ed. Archibald MacMechan (Boston: Ginn, 1901).

[49] Ibid., p. 194.

[50] Erich Franz, "The Death of Western Civilization," *The Living Age*, no. 3969 (31 July 1920): 254–260. Originally published in *German Evangelical Literary and Political Weekly*, 10 June 1920.

[51] See Huang Xingtao, *Wenhua guaijie Gu Hongming* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1995); and Kong Qingmao, *Zhonghua diguo de zuihou yige yilao Gu Hongming* (Nanjing: Jiangsu wenyi chubanshe, 1996).

[52] For example, some scholars argued that Carlyle displayed anti-Semitic and "Negro-hating" attitudes and belief in the "Teutonic superiority" of the Nordic white race. Similarly, John Ruskin, known as a vehement critic of industrial capitalism and a precursor of socialism, was called a "Tory imperialist." See Gillian Workman, "Thomas Carlyle and the Governor Eyre Controversy: An Account with Some New Material," *Victorian Studies* 18, no. 1 (1974): 77–102; and Brantlinger, "Postindustrial Prelude to Postcolonialism."

civilizing ideology, which internalized "Western Orientalists' essentialist conception of Asian thinking and learning as a single 'Oriental' whole that had stagnated and fallen behind the West in science and mathematics."[53] Most of Gu's contemporary Chinese intellectuals, from conservative late Qing reformers to radical May Fourth activists, regarded scientific and technological aspects in Western learning as crucial in the survival and success of China. Even the communists, who had ascended to national politics in the last years of Gu's life, believed in the importance of Western-developed material power in their blueprint for a new China, despite their anti-Western political rhetoric. An intellectual maverick who had experienced colonialism in a British colony as a child and lived in the metropole for a decade in his formative years, Gu's view of Western materialism was fundamentally negative even during the years before World War I. During the war, Gu seized the opportunity and expanded his attack to a full-scale critique of what he considered "modern Western civilization," particularly its excessive attachment to material progress and civilizing mission ideology.

For Gu, what lent the West its global hegemony was the same demonic power that depleted the Western spiritual world and ultimately destroyed its material world as well. As he wrote, "the real cause of the present war in Europe is traceable to the awful state of the spiritual condition of the peoples of Europe."[54] The very Western notion of civilization, he believed, which was globally predominant as he was developing his critique of it, was self-serving and incompatible with the Romanticist tradition that exalted human spiritual, moral, and aesthetic values. Using a materialist criterion, Westerners denigrated non-Western civilizations, especially that of China, by ignoring their cultural worth, therefore ideologically facilitating Western conquest of those societies. The West to Gu was not only a modern West, the symbol of "wealth and power,"[55] but also a West that was dominating the world by relying on its material progress, a result of its "bastard Imperialism."[56] "I wonder whether Lord Salisbury [then British prime

[53] Michael Adas, "Contested Hegemony: The Great War and the Afro-Asian Assault on the Civilizing Mission Ideology," *Journal of World History* 15, no. 1 (2004): 36–42.

[54] Ku, *Vox Clamantis*, p. 5.

[55] "Wealth and power" highlight the major goals of Chinese reformers and revolutionaries of several generations in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. See Benjamin Schwartz, *In Search of Wealth and Power*.

[56] Gu denounced what he called "bastard Imperialism" in contrast to "true Imperialism," which he defined as "disinterested government." See Ku Hungming, *Papers from a Viceroy's Yamen: A Chinese Plea for the Cause of Good Government and True Civilization in China* (Shanghai: Shanghai Mercury, 1901), p. 72.

minister] and the real British nation know how many British subjects of the mean and greedy Cockney class have come out under the flag of the bastard Imperialism through the 'open door' into China with the purpose of 'fishing free of charge.'"[57] Gu demonstrated a clear understanding of the nature of Western global expansions of the time and remained critical of the dominant belief of white supremacy.

In an article titled "John Smith in China,"[58] featuring a caricatured generic figure whom Gu dubbed "John Smith," Gu attacked the ideas expressed in Rev. Arthur Smith's best-selling book *Chinese Characteristics*,[59] criticizing him for helping create and spread Anglo-Saxon ideals of racial superiority over the Chinese. In Gu's opinion, Western missionaries, journalists, or even Sinologists were ignorant and arrogant purveyors of "information" regarding China to the rest of the world, and were to be held responsible for the Western misunderstanding of China and the consequent misjudgments in policy making. In addition, Gu mocked the missionary claim of performing charitable works by arguing that the whole missionary enterprise in China was nothing but a "huge scheme of charity for the benefit of unemployed professional persons from Europe and America."[60] After pointing out that the money spent paying indemnities far outweighed what was spent on charities, and a larger percentage of the donations from the West was spent on the missionaries than on charities for the Chinese, Gu argued that the missionary enterprise in China was causing injury to both the Chinese and Western countries.[61]

Gu's own writings and translations of the Confucian Classics therefore were not simply an effort to "spread Chinese culture," but must also be seen as an ideological statement of a Chinese "self-representation" countering what he considered Westerners' biased portraits. Built on his definition of civilization as humanity, Gu developed his own set of comparisons between Chinese and Western civilizations. He asserted that while Western civilization was based on monetary relations, the former was based on moral relations; while the European civilization is "in fact a terrible battlefield where the head and the heart—the soul and the intellect—come into constant conflict," in Chinese civiliza-

[57] Ku, *Papers from a Viceroy's Yamen*, p. 101.
[58] Ku, "John Smith in China," in *Spirit of the Chinese People*, pp. 111–116.
[59] *Chinese Characteristics* was one of the most widely read English books on China during this period. It is now considered by scholars to be a particularly influential example of Orientalist scholarship. Arthur Henderson Smith, *Chinese Characteristics*, 13th ed. (New York: Revell, 1894).
[60] Ku, *Papers from a Viceroy's Yamen*, p. 42.
[61] Ibid., pp. 42–44.

tion there was no such conflict.[62] While Western society of the time was run by force and represented by law, Christian priests, and militarism, Gu depicted a Chinese society that was based on morality and the principles of honor and duty *(ming fen da yi)*.[63] He formulated a system within which Chinese civilization is the mature one while the Western is immature, like the difference between "a finished house and the incomplete, bare frame of a house."[64] By this token, Chinese civilization was the "more superior one,"[65] and Gu's portraits of China reversed the colonial rhetoric on the civilized West versus barbarian non-West.

In sum, Gu opposed this predominant criterion of civilization, not only because of his Romanticist beliefs, but also because he understood it as providing the very basis for Western domination over China. Gu's new conceptualization of civilization contributed to a changing global discourse on civilization that recognized the coexistence of multiple civilizations and highlighted their ultimate spiritual and moral concerns,[66] representing a major theoretical challenge to the imperialist ideologies of Western hegemony.

Uniting "the East" and "the West"

> East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet.[67]
>
> —Rudyard Kipling, 1889

> We sat and talked of modern creed
> And ancient lore:
> Of modern Gospel, gush and greed
> Now to the fore.
> Thy fervent hope it was to join
> The best with best,
> To break down the dividing line
> Of East and West.

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[62] Ku, *Spirit of the Chinese People*, p. 14.

[63] This is Gu Hongming's own translation.

[64] Ku Hung-ming, "Tōzai no idō o ronzu" in *Ko Kōmei Kōen Shū* (Tokyo: Daito bunka kyōkai, 1925), pp. 102–125.

[65] Ibid.

[66] Duara, "Discourse of Civilization."

[67] Rudyard Kipling, "The Ballad of East and West," *Collected Verse of Rudyard Kipling* (New York: Doubleday, Page and Co., 1907), p. 136.

O Friend, albeit of alien race,
For ever more
With me shall be thy noble face
Too sicklied o'er[68]

—Gu Hongming, 1893

Epitomized by Rudyard Kipling's popular slogan, dominant discourses of civilization in Gu's time were rooted in race, setting the West apart from the rest of the world with no common ground in between. This idea of mutual exclusion reflected Western arrogance and bias: the non-West was seen as inferior in religious, cultural, technological, and moral terms. Even critics of imperialism, both from the West and the non-West, were often under the spell of this essentialized binarism and perceived separate historical paths to explain the divergence of Western and non-Western societies in the modern era.

By the 1920s Gu was by no means the only person claiming Chinese civilization was still relevant or even superior. Younger generations of Chinese intellectuals absorbed Western ideas and reinterpreted Confucianism in new terms. For example, Zhang Junmai drew from the "European *kulturkampf* between science and Christianity" to "defend the autonomy of value and by implication Confucianism."[69] Suffused with Bergsonian images and terms, Liang Shuming celebrated the values of Confucianism against pure rationalism.[70] Even pioneering modernizers of the older generations such as Liang Qichao and Yan Fu reevaluated Chinese learning after the awakening WWI.

Like them, Gu also advocated distinctions between the East and the West at the civilizational level. In Gu's humanity-centered system, it was "the East" and only "the East" that had preserved the true remedy for the bankruptcy of modern Western civilization: the set of values that should be adopted by the world as the new universal basis of civilization. However, in contrast to these Chinese scholars who treated the differences between spiritual East and materialist West as essential and unbridgeable, Gu focused on differences created by individuals under specific circumstances instead of based on generalized concepts such as "civilization" or the "West vs. East."[71] For example, he believed that if

[68] Ku Hung-ming, "In Memoriam," in *Papers from a Viceroy's Yamen*. It was written in memoriam of a German consul after his death in 1893.

[69] Furth, *Limits of Change*, p. 37.

[70] Guy S. Alitto. *The Last Confucian: Liang Shu-ming and the Chinese Dilemma of Modernity* (University of California Press, 1986), p. 90.

[71] Ku, *Spirit of the Chinese People*, pp. 115–117.

foreigners really understood the Chinese spirit, they would find that "there is very little difference between the East of Confucius and the West of Shakespeare and Goethe, but you will find a great deal of difference between even the West of Dr. James Legge the scholar and the West of the Rev. Arthur Smith."[72] Here he contrasted the efforts by Sinologist Legge in introducing Chinese tradition to the outside world with the aforementioned biased portraits by missionary author Arthur Smith, calling for distinctions among different Westerners as well as among Chinese. In fact, Gu Hongming himself provided a good example of how blurred the boundary between the East and the West could be. Gu demonstrated how a "Chinese" like him could be closer to "the West" of Carlyle than to "the East" of Hu Shi, John Dewey's Columbia disciple who became a leading figure in China's New Culture Movement, and Sun Yat-sen, a diasporic figure who spent much of his early years in the United States and Hong Kong and who became seen as the founding father of Republican China. Gu rejected the view that Western civilization exclusively processed or developed unique and true values of civilization. In Gu's works, Confucius and Mencius were presented as expressing the same ideals as Carlyle and Emerson, and Empress Dowager Cixi was depicted as the head of the state precisely equivalent to Queen Victoria.[73] These internationally recognized names all spoke similar languages, celebrating the ideals that had been lost in the West but still existed in China. It was their ideas' shared universality and relevance to the contemporary world that transcended these authors' differences in race, nationality, and language, and that projected them as equal.

Opposing the unbridgeable West-East civilizational division discourse, Gu believed that human civilizations were essentially similar to each other, a discourse that we may call universalist. By projecting parallels based on social structure, he believed that different societies were actually more comparable than alien to each other. As mentioned earlier, Gu Hongming divided Chinese people into three classes following Matthew Arnold's classification of the members of the English nation, "the Manchu Aristocracy, the Middle Class Literati, and the Populace." As Gu explained, "The barbarians in China are the Manchus, the Aristocracy by birth. The Philistines in China are the Chi-

[72] Ibid., p. 117.

[73] For a detailed discussion on Gu Hongming's conceptualization on sovereignty, see Lydia Liu, "The Desire for the Sovereign and the Logic of Reciprocity in the Family of Nations," *Diacritics* 29, no. 4 (1999): 150–177.

nese educated class, from whom are recruited the literati. The populace in China are the lower middle class living in cities and the working class from whom are recruited the rich merchants and compradors,—the Aristocracy, it may be called, by the power of industry."[74] In Gu's conception, these three classes each performed a distinct function in society: the populace produced material prosperity for the nation as a whole, the literati provided education, and the Manchu aristocracy guided the populace. Unsurprisingly, as a believer in Carlyle's "hero," Gu in his blueprint for social and political leadership supported the Manchu monarchical rule while subordinating the peasants.

The interactions between civilizations as Gu perceived them honored no demarcation between foreign and native cultural values but were based on universal criteria of harmony and accordance. In this sense, Gu was unlike those cultural relativists who, after becoming disillusioned with the Western-centered global order, went to another extreme and rejected any idea of universally applicable principles and claimed the uniqueness of each culture. Instead, Gu developed a new type of universalism based on a hybrid system of both worlds, rejecting dichotomous portraits of the East as an essentialized inferior Other. Building on this universalist discourse, Gu insisted that both Western and Chinese civilizations be evaluated by the same set of criteria, one that was justified on the basis of morality and ethics rather than force and power. Quoting what he interpreted as the sayings of Confucius, Gu claimed, "Among really educated men, there is no race distinction."[75] Comparing with the more literal translation by James Legge as "In teaching there should be no distinction in classes,"[76] Gu's version showed his conscious adaption of the classic texts at a peculiar historical moment, so controversial that he was criticized for his "over-interpretation"[77] by some but celebrated as original by others.

Gu's ultimate goal was to formulate a higher level of civilization

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[74] Ku, *Story of a Chinese Oxford Movement*, pp. 5–6.

[75] Ku, *Papers from a Viceroy's Yamen*, p. 155. There is no direct racial implication in the original Chinese phrase, "You jiao wu lei 有教無類." This translation was unconventional. It might be related to Gu's own ambiguous racial identities as well as his hostilities toward the racial hierarchies in the colonial system.

[76] Confucius, "Wei Ling Gong," *Analects*, in James Legge, trans., *The Chinese Classics*, vol. 1 (repr., Taipei: SMC Publishing Inc, 2001), chap. 15, no. 38, p. 305.

[77] Wang Guowei, a renowned classical scholar, criticized Gu's lack of fidelity to ancient scholars of the classics. He identified two major mistakes in Gu's translation of the *Zhong yong (Doctrine of the Mean)*, one of which was his over-interpretation by applying Western metaphysics. See Wang Guowei, "Shu Gushi Tangsheng ying shi *Zhongyong* hou," *The Critical Review (xue heng)* 43 (July 1925).

based on a united East and West. As stated in his aforementioned poem, "Thy fervent hope it was to join / the best with best, / To break down the dividing line / Of East and West."[78] In lectures he gave in Japan on the differences and similarities between Eastern and Western cultures, Gu argued that "those who well know both, know that the best in China and in the West are in perfect harmony. Let the best of the two civilizations unite and nothing but good will follow."[79] In a way, it was such universalist claims that provided more potential for their adaptations by other cultures and in other times. Rejecting the paradoxical colonial ideologies that on the one hand claim Western civilization as universal and on the other hand exclude "civilized" non-Westerners from a full citizenship, Gu presented a truly universalist approach to civilization, providing an alternative that is inherently hybrid and easily transmittable. He reversed the colonial hierarchy and created a new type of reciprocity in East-West encounters. As Erich Franz pointed out in "Asia as a Teacher" in 1921, Gu "predicts the eventual victory of Eastern 'universalism' in Europe, and believes that a synthesis of the two philosophies will enable humanity to attain its highest possibilities."[80]

Gu's Global Success

On 6 June 1946, the American journal *Christian Science Monitor* published a story about Bodil Begtrup (1903–1987), president of the National Council of Women in Denmark and chief censor of films, who decided to enter public life largely because of the writings of a Chinese philosopher whom she read in 1917. "It was strange," she said in the interview, "how the philosophy and ideas of that man affected me."[81] The work she referred to was by Gu Hongming, whose books had become popular in the Western world ranging from "a small provincial town of Denmark"[82] to European metropolitan cities, especially

[78] Ku, "In Memoriam."
[79] Ku, "Tōzai no idō o ronzu."
[80] Erich Franz, "Asia as a Teacher," *The Living Age (1897–1941)*, no. 4010 (14 May 1921).
[81] Ann Foster Written, "Service to People Long-Range Goal of Chairman of U.N. Sub-Commission: Early Reading of Chinese Book on Citizenship Led Bodil Begtrup toward International Career," *Christian Science Monitor* (6 June 1946).
[82] Ibid.

in Germany.[83] Gu's English works were translated into half a dozen languages and published by major publishing houses in Shanghai, Tokyo, London, Paris, and New York. For example, *The Spirit of the Chinese People* was translated into German, Swedish, French, and Polish by the 1920s.[84] His translation of the Confucian canon *The Universal Order*, included in the "Wisdom of the East Series," was published in several editions by John Murray, a leading British publishing enterprise, and by E. P. Dutton, an expanding American publisher.[85]

Gu's phenomenal success was a product of his time. The Great War shook the heretofore still widespread optimism about modernity. Returning soldiers who had witnessed human tragedies caused by the war now doubted existing narratives on barbarism and civilization, and anxious intellectuals sought solutions to what some saw as the decline of modern Western civilization.[86] The popularity of *The Decline of the West* by Oswald Spengler was a prominent example that reflected the despairing atmosphere of a period of "great cultural uncertainty."[87] Earlier caution of progress gained new vitality in the Western world by the early twentieth century, when prominent critics of industrialism formed active circles that also included thinkers from the East. Eminent Germany scholar Adolf Reichwein began his book on China and Europe with a calling: "'We Europeans are beginning to be educated by ancient China': thus did Alphonse Paquet some ten years ago summarize the feeling of a small group of cosmopolitan thinkers and students of the East."[88] He then continued: "Rudolf Eucken spoke recently of the 'immeasurable importance of a closer connexion between East and West,' and already during the War Nathorp made the following fore-

[83] According to Shen Laiqiu, a Chinese student in Germany, Gu's name was popular all around Germany in 1920, and his books appeared in many German bookstores. See Shen Laiqiu, "Lüe tan Gu Hongming," in Huang, *Kuangshi guaijie*, pp. 151–160. Also see Adolf Reichwein, introduction to *China and Europe, Intellectual and Artistic Contacts in the Eighteenth Century*, trans. J. C. Powell (London: K. Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., Ltd.; New York: A.A. Knopf, 1925). Gu's popularity in Germany was related to the development of German idealism, especially in the aftermath of World War I.

[84] Oscar A. H. Schmitz, trans., *Der Geist des chinesischen Volkes* (Jena: Diederichs, 1916, 1917, 1924). Harald Svanberg, trans., *Det goda medborgarskapets religion och andra essayer* (Stockholm: Geber, 1916). P. Rival, trans., *L'esprit du peuple chinois* (Paris: Stock, 1927). Józef Targowski, trans., *Duch narodu chińskiego* (Krakow: Nakł. Krakowskiej Spółki Wydawniczej, 1928).

[85] See Ku, *Universal Order*, back cover.

[86] See Adas, *Machines as the Measure of Men*, chap. 6.

[87] Oswald Spengler, *The Decline of the West* (London: G. Allen and Unwin, 1922). Also see Adas, "Contested Hegemony" and Duara, "Discourse of Civilization."

[88] Reichwein, *China and Europe*, p. 3.

cast: 'To-day,' he said, 'the expiring occidental turns his face back to the rising place of the spiritual sun, the true birthplace of Man and of all his profound dreams of God and Soul—to the East.'"[89]

While Westerners sought inspirations from the East, Gu emerged as a Confucian prophet prescribing Chinese civilization as the antidote to cure the modern disease. He declared: "In short what I want to call the attention of the people of Europe and America to, just at this moment when civilisation seems to be threatened with bankruptcy, is that there is an invaluable and hitherto unsuspected asset of civilisation here in China," "the Chinaman,—the *unspoilt real Chinaman* with his Religion of good citizen-ship."[90] Gu's portraits of the two cultures echo popular sentiments among Western intellectual elites of the time, and provided accessible, "authentic," and useful ingredients for their self-critique. As Erich Franz perceived in 1920, "A prominent Chinese philosopher, Ku Hung Ming . . . prescribed the ethical ideals of Confucius to heal the illness of the Occident, betrayed by its material civilization and by its reduction of all human existence to mechanical standards."[91]

One key to Gu's success was his capability of communicating and popularizing Chinese culture in a manner that was both accessible and appealing to Western audiences. As someone fluent in English, German, and French who also knew Latin, Greek, and Italian, Gu often filled his English writings with Latin titles as well as various classical and modern European references. Such manner of writing established a common ground that smoothed the way for his reception in the Western scholarly world. Despite being seen as a show-off by some, Gu's tactic did help him in gaining credibility as an Eastern guru. To make the Chinese tradition familiar to "an ordinary Englishman's eyes," Gu frequently drew comparisons between these two cultural traditions. For example, Gu called Yan Hui, a favorite student of Confucius, "the St. John of the Confucian disciple."[92] He compared "the Hebrew Bible, the plan of civilisation according to which the people of Europe have built their present modern civilisation," with "the Chinese Bible—the Five Canons and Four Books in China, the plan of civilisation which Confucius saved for us the Chinese nation."[93] He interpreted Confucianism as "a social religion, or what may be called a State religion," while considering "religion in the European sense of the word, such

[89] Ibid.
[90] Ku, introduction to *Spirit of the Chinese People*, p. viii.
[91] Franz, "Death of Western Civilization."
[92] Ku, *Discourses and Sayings of Confucius*, p. 9.
[93] Ku, preface to *Spirit of the Chinese People*, pp. 16–24.

as Christianity or Buddhism" as "a personal religion, or what may be called a Church religion."[94]

Interestingly, while Western Sinologists' translations of Chinese classics were often more textually based, obscure, and "foreign," Gu's writing appeared "philosophical"[95] and "Western,"[96] cultivating a more general audience. As Gu stated in his introduction to *The Discourses and Sayings of Confucius*, a new translation was needed because "the intellectual and moral outfit of the Chinese as presented by Dr. Legge in his translation of the Chinese books, must appear as strange and grotesque as to an ordinary Englishman's eyes."[97] Gu therefore consciously adopted idioms and a less formal writing style, and wrote such popular newspaper articles as "Half Hours with Confucius."[98] Even more ironically, while James Legge, the famous missionary Sinologist, translated the Chinese Classics using more neutral and secular words, Gu employed terms loaded with religious or moral implications despite no clear evidence of a personal religious belief. As David Arkush pointed out, Gu translated *tian* 天, *sheng* 聖, and *jiao* 教 in *The Universal Order* as God, saint, and religion, while Legge translated them as heaven, sage, and instruction, respectively.[99]

In addition to making his writings "more English" than England, Gu appeared "more Chinese than China."[100] He skillfully fostered a public image of his "authentic Chineseness": not only did he propagate and popularize what he considered the Chinese cultural essence, he also practiced "the Chinese way of life," displaying various symbols of old China, such as traditional dress and customs, on a daily basis. Such a seeming paradox reflects Gu's ambivalent identities: as an insider and outsider in both Chinese and Western worlds, Gu tried to forge a new and authentic self in his adopted homeland China while remaining intellectually and emotionally attached to the West. Meanwhile, Gu's simultaneous display of Englishness and Chineseness resulted from his conscious efforts in promoting a selected self-image to foreign audiences. Like Gandhi's sandals and Tagore's robe, Gu Hongming also kept and promoted a widely publicized feature, his long queue, an icon

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[94] Ibid., p. 27.

[95] See Wang, "Shu Gushi Tangsheng ying shi *Zhongyong* hou."

[96] Some Western residents in China even mistakenly took the writings of Gu as being by a Westerner. See Ku, *Papers from a Viceroy's Yamen*, pp. 31–32.

[97] See Ku, *Discourses and Sayings of Confucius*, p. vii.

[98] Ku, *Vox Clamantis*, pp. 39–61.

[99] David Arkush pointed out Gu's usage of religious language in his translation. See David Arkush, "Ku Hung-Ming (1857–1928)," *Papers on China* 19 (1965): 209.

[100] See Ku Hung-Ming, "Uncivilized United States," *New York Times*, 12 June 1921.

of Manchu conquest in the eyes of Chinese revolutionaries yet a symbol of Chinese men to foreigners of the time. As Gu told W. Somerset Maugham during their meeting in Beijing, "It is a symbol. I am the last representative of the old China."[101] The powerful image was later spread to the English world through Maugham's popular travel book. On another occasion, Gu called the queue "the badge and insignia—almost a religious symbol, the flag of Chinese nationality."[102] Not only did the queue attract a large crowd on the streets of Republican Beijing, its mention also became obligatory in various kinds of writings on him, whether journalists' interviews or literary biographies. Though critical of the impacts of technology, Gu undoubtedly benefited from the faster circulation of information and wider consumption of news in the industrial age, which were made possible by new technologies like the telegraph and photograph. Through these powerful portraits, Gu became a cultural icon in the Western imagination of the East, something like a Confucian sage, appearing simultaneously exotic, authentic, and spiritual.

In contrast to his growing international frame, Gu received different treatments inside China. In the first two decades of the twentieth century, Gu's works met with indifference at best or outright hostility. Few of his English works were translated into Chinese or introduced to Chinese readers in his lifetime. His works were largely inaccessible to general Chinese readers because of language barriers and neglected by elite intellectuals of the time who were busy learning from the West. Meanwhile, during a time when Westernization became increasingly hegemonic in intellectual circles, Gu provided a convenient target for radicals to attack. Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao, both prominent intellectual leaders and founders of the Chinese Communist Party, denounced the "reactionary" Gu Hongming and warned of the dangers of his ideas in society.[103] Hu Shi regarded Gu as absurd and challenged his personal integrity.[104] Ironically such attacks might also have helped

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[101] W. Somerset Maugham, *On a Chinese Screen* (New York: Arno Press, 1977), p. 154.

[102] Wen, "Ku Hung-Ming," p. 387.

[103] Li Dazhao, "Dongxi wenming genben zhi yidian," *Yan zhi* 3 (July 1918); Chen Duxiu, "Zai zhi 'Dongfang zazhi' jizhe—'Dong fang zazhi' yu fupi wenti," *Xin qingnian* 5, no. 3 (September 1918); and "Zai zhiwen 'Dongfang zazhi' jizhe," *Xin qingnian* 6, no. 2 (February 1919).

[104] See Hu Shi, "Ji Gu Hongming," in Huang, *Kuangshi guaijie*, pp. 19–24. Hu Shi also debated with Gu Hongming in *Millard's Review*, an English weekly periodical published in Shanghai, on the "Literary Revolution" and China's Westernization. See Ku Hung Ming, "Against the Chinese Literary Revolution," *Millard's Review*, 12 July 1919, and "Returned Student and Literary Revolution—Literacy and Education," *Millard's Review*, 16 August 1919.

boost Gu's fame: major intellectual leaders of the day all felt the need to denounce Gu in public. As Gu's international reputation made him difficult to ignore completely, intellectuals in China labeled him "a reactionary eccentric," an image that has been popularized and stigmatized in historical memory ever since through numerous scholarly and popular writings.

Gu provides an interesting case of the creation of an Eastern sage by Westerners at large. He was conscious of his perceived role as a Confucian prophet during a time when older generations of Confucian scholars were linguistically crippled and unable to directly participate in cross-cultural discussions, and when younger generations of Western-educated ones were still undergoing their intellectual training in China or abroad. Thanks to the Western education and modern media that he persistently denounced, Gu Hongming successfully extended his influence to the world. His ideas were widely circulated through major publishers and international periodicals. As a German scholar stated in 1925, "Ku Hung-ming, not a lyric poet like Tagore, but a commonsense Confucian, gives Europe the practical advice to learn at last from China, 'the religion of the good citizen,' and so recover from its malady of division between 'Power-worship' and 'Mob-worship.'"[105]

Spokesman of the East

Gu Hongming's remarkable success in the late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century Western world was a truly global story. As a former colonial subject, he had become capable linguistically and culturally of communicating in a fully international setting. Gu formed visible ties with eminent cultural mediators of the time when interactions between the East and the West were accelerated by imperialist expansions and facilitated by modern transportation and communications. He met Tagore during the latter's first visit to China in 1924. In the 1920s, both were invited to give lecture tours on Eastern civilization in Japan. Despite their similar roles as perceived by contemporary commentators, Gu openly mocked Tagore's ideas. He described Chinese civilization as "the product of rationalism and science," in opposition to the "mythic" Indian civilization, claiming that the "mythic model" would endanger China the most, as it was Buddhism that had caused the stagnation of Chinese civilization.[106] Such portraits of Chi-

[105] Reichwein, introduction to *China and Europe*.
[106] Ku, "Rabindranath Tagore et les Chinois," in Borrey, *Un Sage Chinois*, p. 72.

nese and Indian civilizations show Gu's selective adoption and reworking of Enlightenment and Romantic ideas.[107] Gu urged the Chinese that, "We have to refute Tagore's messages. Let him be a poet! Let him sing! But don't let him lecture to us on civilization!"[108] He also warned that "I will send him to the lunatic asylum; I also suggest that he not lecture on Eastern culture again, but rather to leave the task to me."[109]

Gu also corresponded with Tolstoy, exchanging ideas on how China and the East could face the challenges of modern Western civilization.[110] In 1906 Gu Hongming sent two of his newly published works to Tolstoy through the Russian consul-general in China; both books were violent denunciations of Western imperialism. Tolstoy seemed impressed by this Chinese author. In a public letter to Gu that was translated into German, French, and Chinese, Tolstoy urged the Chinese nation not to follow the path of the materialistic civilization of modern Europe.[111] Both Gu and Tolstoy seemed supportive of the idea that China was a vital peasant society and naturalistic civilization where liberty existed in political, economic, religious, and intellectual forms, an ideal image of China advocated by G. Eugène Simon's *La Cité chinoise*.[112] While Gu considered it one of the top two works on China,[113] the book was also one of the first two books on Leo Tolstoy's China reading list.[114] Despite the mutual hospitality, Gu opposed Tolstoy's suggestion of "boycotting everything European" as a way to "fight the destructive forces of the intensely materialistic civilisation of Modern Europe." He stated, "a social evil in the world can therefore never be reformed by boycott, because boycotting is a selfishness and an immoral tyranny," and the result is "the world being bad becomes worse."[115]

Although Gu limited his travel within Asia after he left Europe behind around 1879, he frequently hosted enthusiastic celebrity visi-

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[107] Many Enlightenment thinkers considered Confucianism as focusing on human morality and providing the rational basis for political systems in China, thereby serving as a model for Europe, while German Romanticist thinkers highlighted an image of a mythical India. See A. Leslie Willson, *A Mythical Image: The Ideal of India in German Romanticism* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1964).

[108] Ku, "Rabindranath Tagore et les Chinois."

[109] Zhao, "Gu Hongming xiansheng dui wo jiangshu de wangshi," pp. 136–148.

[110] Wei Li, trans., "Tuo'er'si'tai de liang feng xin," see Lin Yutang, ed., *Renjian shi* 12, (September 1934), 22–24. Originally published in *Dongfang zazhi* 25, no. 19 (1928).

[111] Derk Bodde, *Tolstoy and China* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1950), p. 50.

[112] G. Eugène Simon, *La Cité Chinoise*, 6th ed. (Paris: Nouvelle revue, 1890).

[113] Ku, *Spirit of the Chinese People*, p. 3, footnote.

[114] See Bodde, *Tolstoy and China*, pp. 17–19.

[115] For Gu's criticism of Tolstoy, see Ku, *Story of a Chinese Oxford Movement*, pp. 99–101, and *Spirit of the Chinese People*, p. 22. For Tolstoy's interests and discussions on China, see Bodde, *Tolstoy and China*.

tors in China, including English novelist W. Somerset Maugham, Japanese writers Oka Senjin, Shimizu Yasuzō, and Akutagawa Ryūnosuke, German writer Alfons Paquet,[116] and missionary and Sinologist Richard Wilhelm. It is said that Gu was one of the three must-sees when foreigners visited Beijing. Before Akutagawa went to China in 1921, he was told that "If you go to Peking, you may skip a visit to the old Imperial Palace, but you must not miss a chance to see Gu Hongming."[117] Maugham explained in his 1922 travel book on China that "The desire to see whom [Gu] had been to me one of the incentives of a somewhat arduous journey," calling Gu "the greatest authority in China on Confucian learning."[118] Intellectual communications were also carried out through publications circulating in dialogue with a global community of authors writing on China in European languages and those interested in critiques of the West in general. Eminent European writers, critics, and philosophers such as George Brandes, Hermann Hesse, Leonard Nelson, Rudolf Pannwitz, and Walter Benjamin were all impressed and inspired by Gu's ideas, translating or commenting on Gu's works.[119] Gandhi, who also regarded Ruskin and Carlyle as among his biggest influences, complemented Gu's criticism of machine-made cloth as it created unemployment and identified Gu as "one of the most prominent Chinese."[120]

These eminent scholars with whom Gu formed direct or indirect ties overlap with the networks of many contemporary non-Western critics who were active on the international stage. These critics conveyed their ideas in the capacity of philosophers, artists, writers, and religious and political leaders hailing from places including China, Japan, India, and Russia.[121] They formed a group of "spokesmen of

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[116] Ku, *Chinas Verteidigung gegen europäische Ideen: Kritische Aufsätze*, 1st ed. (Jena: E. Diederichs, 1911).

[117] Akutagawa Ryūnosuke, "Ko Kōmeisensei," in Ku, *Shinajin no seishin* (Tokyo: Meguro Shoten, 1940), pp. 1–3.

[118] Maugham, *On a Chinese Screen*, p. 147.

[119] Wu Xiaoqiao, "Ku Hung-Ming und der Kulturdialog zwischen China und Europa im 20. Jahrhundert" (paper presented at the International Cultural Studies conference in Pairs, September 1999). Also see Alfons Pacquet, "Vorwort," in Ku, *Chinas Verteidigung gegen europäische Ideen*, pp. xi–xiv; and Richard Wilhelm, *The Soul of China*, trans. J. Holroyd Reece (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1928), p. 94.

[120] M. K. Gandhi, "A Parallel from China," *Young India*, 9 February 1928, reprinted in *Young India, 1927–1928* (Madras: S. Ganesan, 1935), p. 604.

[121] In this article, I do not focus on Islamic or African scholars' role as spokesmen of the East in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Russia's affiliation was ambiguous. Many European intellectuals regarded Russia as part of the mysterious Orient. Tolstoy, for example, was often associated with the East because of his role in introducing Asian religious thought to the West. Tolstoy himself also grouped Russians with "Oriental" people in his letter to Gu Hongming. See Bodde, *Tolstoy and China*, p. 52.

the East" who were deeply immersed in multiple cultures, engaged in transnational intellectual activities, and maintained hybrid existences as cultural amphibians. Most were Western-educated elites born in the nineteenth century. They had traveled or lived in the West, where they entered into personal and intellectual contacts with their Western mentors and Orientophile allies, as well as establishing connections among themselves. They later returned to their native places and traveled extensively in Asia and the world to propagate their ideas on the East-West relations. Well-known examples include Swami Vivekananda, Rabindranath Tagore, and Okakura Kakuzō.[122] Swami Vivekananda was often identified as India's most successful Hindu missionary to the West in the nineteenth century, whose famous speech at the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago earned him wide support among an enthusiastic American audience.[123] This famous Bengali religious leader also visited Japan in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. Tagore was another active Indian thinker who lectured extensively abroad, propagating his ideas about civilization. He visited Japan in 1916 and China first in 1924 and again in 1929, advocating the idea of a nascent Eastern civilization. Japanese scholar Okakura Kakuzō traveled in Europe, China, India, and the United States, including a year's stay in India from 1901 to 1902. He met Vivekananda and Tagore there, both of whom were excited by his ideas on Asian unity. These were later expressed in his 1903 book titled *The Ideals of the East*, with the famous opening quote: "Asia is one."[124]

As critics of modernity, these spokesmen shared some common ground in how they conceptualized Eastern and Western civilizations. Like Gu, they were often suspicious of or even hostile to the results of industrialization and opposed utilitarianism. Instead, they valued the interests of society as a whole over the individual, and moral and spiritual power over legal and military force.[125] Deeply concerned with the position that their respective cultures would hold in the modern world, these cultural mediators were eager to defend indigenous cultural institutions from the onslaught of Western civilization. Moreover,

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[122] Hay, *Asian Ideas of East and West*, pp. 1–51.

[123] Stephen N. Hay, "Rabindranath Tagore in America," *American Quarterly* 14, no. 3 (1962): 439–463.

[124] Okakura Kakuzō, *The Ideals of the East, with Special Reference to the Art of Japan* (London: J. Murray, 1905). Also see Hay, *Asian Ideas of East and West*, pp. 35–44.

[125] Interestingly, although these Eastern thinkers were well known for their anti-modern or sometimes anti-Western stances, they were often enthusiastic of Western learning at early stages of their lives. Nevertheless, like Gu, many underwent a kind of self-described conversion in their middle ages, transforming from Westernizers to critics of the West. Gu Hongming and Gandhi are two examples.

they promoted "Eastern spirituality" as a way to heal modern Western civilization by offering their indigenous cultural traditions to jaded audiences overseas.[126]

To a great extent, Gu Hongming and many spokesmen of the East were a creation of the West. Their books and speeches were written extensively or even primarily in English, their target audience was composed of Westerners, and their success was overwhelmingly due to Western recognition. More importantly, their ideas were greatly influenced by Western preconceptions about the Orient, and their thinking was largely confined to the paradigms that were set by their Western counterparts. When Gu drew on key concepts from the Chinese classics, his ideas and rhetoric were still largely defined by the Western traditions and narratives with which he was so familiar. While Gu appeared to be authentic and pure Chinese in words and in action, he in fact synthesized different cultural materials in a way that is impossible to simply label Chinese or Western. The case of Gu contradicts scholarship that emphasizes the distinctive "Eastern" character of these thinkers' ideas and their fundamental conflicts with such Western ideas as modernism and liberalism. Conventional dichotomous paradigms such as traditional versus modern or East versus West cannot fully conceptualize these figures' hybrid cultural identities, and miss the real world-historical implication of their ideas. In my view, these cultural amphibians forged authentic identities across national, ideological, and cultural boundaries due to their multivalent values and spontaneous adaptability. The reconstruction of Eastern and Western civilizations in their discussions was neither a mere projection of Western imagination onto "the East" nor a pure Oriental creation of "the West"; rather, it resulted from a complex process of global intellectual collaboration and co-imagination.

Despite their shared beliefs and similar roles as cultural mediators, these spokesmen of the East could by no means be called a coherent group. They disagreed among themselves over what stood for "the East" and what should be the standard for civilization. To Tagore it was Indian-centered, to Gu Hongming it was rooted in a core of universal

[126] In his intriguing Chinese book, Guy Alitto identified a global conservative response to modernization including scholars from Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. He pointed out that Asian critiques of the West were essentially part of Western self-critique. See Ai Kai (G. S. Alitto), *Wenhua shoucheng zhuyi lun: Fan xiandaihua sichao de pouxi* (Taibei Shi: Shibao chuban gongsi, 1986). I agree with Alitto that modernization and its impacts were major targets for cultural conservatives of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Nevertheless, I think the ideas of Gu and many Eastern spokesmen of the time cannot be limited to critiques of modernization. Another critical dimension is their psychological and political resistance to colonialism and imperialism.

morality based on Confucianism, and to many Japanese intellectuals it was Asia under Japan's political, economic, and spiritual leadership.[127] When Japan intensified its movements toward militarism in the early twentieth century, their internal divisions intensified and the ideal of Asian unity was seriously shaken. While Tagore became increasingly critical of Japan's growing ultra-nationalism and militarism in the 1920s,[128] Gu continued to hail Japan as the carrier of the real Chinese culture and thus the natural leader of Pan-Asian solidarity. Gu continuously held fantasies about Japan's preservation of true Chinese moral values and extolled its monarchical system. While such stances were attacked by his Chinese colleagues and students in Republican Beijing, Gu received continuous financial and moral support from the group of Japanese scholars promulgating Confucian morality in Japan.[129] Such divisions reflect tensions among these intellectual rivals about who and what represented "the true East." These differences also resulted from the diverse cultural traditions with which these exponents of "the East" were familiar and their varied political relations with Western imperialist powers. Within the particular sociocultural environment, each individual intellectual did his own selective reading and borrowing, and formulated different ideas and attitudes toward civilization, modernization, and progress.

Gu's Afterlife

Today, the attention that was lavished on the work of representatives of "Eastern culture" in the early twentieth century has largely faded. Many of these once celebrated social critics and original thinkers are now remembered mostly as literary writers, fervent nationalists, or cultural conservatives. However, the discourse of "Eastern spirituality" remains a powerful cliché in Western imaginations of "the East," while old spokesmen and symbols are reinvented and new ones are being created.[130] Gu Hongming, after several decades of neglect, has been

[127] For contemporary Chinese and Japanese views of Tagore's message, see Hay, *Asian Ideas of East and West*.

[128] Hay, *Asian Ideas of East and West*, pp. 312–333.

[129] The Pan-Asian Association that invited and hosted Gu in Japan was sanctioned and funded by the Japanese government. See *Daitō Bunka Kyōkai, Daitō Bunka Gakuin sōritsu enkaku: sōritsu jusshūnen kinen* 大東文化協會/大東文化學院創立沿革：創立十周年紀念 (Daitō Bunka Kyōkai/Daitō Bunka Gakuin, 1932), pp. 1–2.

[130] The Dalai Lama is probably the most prominent spokesman for Tibetan Buddhism and the spiritual "East" today through his frequent lecture tours around the world and best-selling books in Western languages.

popularized because of the changing relations between the Eastern and Western worlds. Meanwhile, the theoretical significance of Gu's critiques of "the West" has been reexamined by scholars of world history and postcolonial and Asian studies.[131]

The receptions of Gu Hongming vary drastically according to time and location. In the Western world, Gu gained fame as a principal representative of traditional Chinese culture in his lifetime. Inside China, his ideas were almost completely discarded or simply ignored as "eccentric"[132] during a time when discourses of Westernization and modernization became increasingly hegemonic. In the following decades under the Communists' rule, Gu was largely excluded from historical discussion on the mainland because of his alleged political and cultural conservatism. In the 1980s, however, Gu has been revived in both scholarly and popular discourses inside and outside China. Since China's opening up, Gu has gained phenomenal popularity as an icon of Chinese nationalism and cultural conservatism. Study of Gu in mainland China has flourished and developed into a "Gu Hongming fad," attracting the enthusiasm of young and prestigious scholars as well as the general public. His works have been translated and republished in imposing volumes inside China while new editions and translations have also appeared outside.[133] In the words of an eminent Chinese historian, "it is no exaggeration to call the year 1996 the Year of Gu Hongming." It may be viewed with some astonishment that the Chinese translation of *The Spirit of the Chinese People*, a book celebrating Confucian moralities, sold more than 100,000 copies in the 1990s when the market economy and material interests gained increasing precedence on the scale of social values.[134] In the last two decades, more than fifteen monographs devoted to Gu have been published in China, including both scholarly and semi-scholarly works, as well as a dozen doctoral

[131] For example, see Prasenjit Duara, "Transnationalism and the Predicament of Sovereignty: China, 1900–1945," *American Historical Review* 102, no. 4 (1997): 1030–1051; Liu, "Desire for the Sovereign and the Logic of Reciprocity in the Family of Nations"; Dorothy Ko, *Cinderella's Sisters: A Revisionist History of Footbinding* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), chap. 1; and Wolfgang Kubin, *Die chinesische Literatur im 20. Jahrhundert* (München: K. G. Saur, 2005), pp. 33–41.

[132] "Qian Xun, No. 4," *Wang Kangnian shi you shuzha* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987), 3:2997.

[133] For example, a new French edition of *The Spirit of the Chinese People* was published in 2002 and a Korean edition first appeared in 2004. See *L'esprit du peuple Chinois*, Collection L'aube Poche (La Tour d'Aigues: Éditions de l'Aube, 2002), and *Chunggugin ŭi chŏngsin*, (Sŏul-si: Yedam Chăina, 2004).

[134] Yang Nianqun, "Women zhege shidai de wenhua yingxiong," in *Wutong san wei* (Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2006), pp. 39–49.

theses.[135] Gu also gained currency among the Chinese general public through such popular media as historical novels and television dramas, further boosted by internet articles and discussions.[136]

This sparkling new interest in Gu should be understood within the context of current historical reimagination of China. After several decades of isolation from the world during the Cultural Revolution, a fervent new wave of Westernization hit China, which in turn has triggered a counter-trend of renewed cultural conservatism, expressed in terms of a fear of losing "the Chinese essence."[137] Gu's attack on the West echoes such sentiments and anxieties when China is increasingly engulfed by industrialism, materialism, and capitalism. Gu's fervent defense and creative reinterpretation of Confucianism also fits nicely with the rising enthusiasm for this "social religion of China," now no longer viewed as a "feudalistic ideology" responsible for modern China's backwardness under Maoism. Instead, Confucianism is increasingly seen as China's national heritage that can play a crucial role in reconstructing a new Chinese identity as well as enhancing China's international soft power. The impressive 2008 Beijing Olympics opening ceremony extolled Confucian themes. In January 2010, the state put restrictions on the showing of *Avatar* to help the film *Confucius* dominate the New Year market. From 2004 to 2010, "282 Confucius Institutes and 272 Confucius Classrooms have been established in 88 countries and regions with about 230,000 registered students" to spread Chinese language and culture in the world.[138] While Mao is largely left out, Confucius now has become the new international symbol of China.

Many of the new works reevaluate Gu as a master of "the national learning" (*guo xue*).[139] Once ridiculed as "a pure foreigner with no use"[140] by the Chinese of his time, the racially and culturally hybrid Gu

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[135] From 1980 to 2008, over four hundred articles were written on Gu Hongming. Search results come from the China Academic Journals Full-Text Database.

[136] For example, Gu Hongming appeared in *Zouxiang Gonghe (Toward the Republic)*, a popular TV series first run in 2003.

[137] Cultural conservatism is translated into Chinese variably as *Baoshou zhuyi* 保守主義 or *Shoucheng zhuyi* 守成主義. See Huang, introduction to *Wenhua guaijie Gu Hongming*. Also influential in such discourse is Arif Dirlik's book in Chinese. See Ai Kai, *Wenhua shoucheng zhuyi lun*.

[138] See Tan Yingzi and Li Xiaokun, "Confucius Schools Bridge Cultural Divides," *China Daily*, 28 April 2010, and the Confucius Institute Online at http://college.chinese.cn/en/.

[139] For example, Kong Qingmao's *Gu Hongming ping zhuan (Biography of Gu Hongming)* is included in the series titled Series of Masters of National Learning *(Guoxue dashi congshu)*. See Kong Qingmao, *Gu Hongming ping zhuan* (Nanchang Shi: Baihua zhou wenyi chubanshe, 1993, 1996).

[140] "Qian Xun, No. 4," *Wang Kangnian shi you shuzha*.

Hongming/Thompson Ku ironically is perceived as a Confucian guru and spokesman of the "authentic" Chinese culture today. He is now granted a prominent place on the altar of masters of national tradition, heretofore dominated by "progressive and revolutionary" figures. In these new works, Gu's images as a conservative scholar and as a nationalist Chinese are conflated. The cosmopolitan Gu has reemerged as a national hero, who defended the ancient Chinese civilization against excessive Westernization and who won face for China during a time that has been long remembered for its unequal treaties and national humiliations. Gu's nationalism is legitimized by his "traditional" and "anti-Western" stances, just as China's new national identity needs to be reconstructed in relation to its cultural past and ideological Other.

Internationally, Gu's attacks on modern Western civilization have also gained him new respect. In Southeast Asian studies, Gu's works are increasingly included in the literature cannon of overseas Chinese from Southeast Asia, although his writings have no direct connections with the region and he never returned since his relocation to China in his late twenties. Gu has also won new respect among some Muslim intellectuals who see him as a key figure in forging an alliance between Confucian and Islamic civilizations. For example, Iranian sociologist Seyed Javad Miri[141] has singled out Gu Hongming in his various lectures on "intercivilizational dialogue" at the London Academy of Iranian Studies in the past few years.[142] In his 2009 book titled *Unknown Ku Hung-Ming: Rediscovering the Confucian Intellectual Tradition*, the Iranian scholar called for "a new breed of scholars" in China and the Muslim world who "can engage with one another directly and without any mediatory interference of Western rationality or rationalities."[143] He discussed the "contemporary significance of Ku Hung-ming and Muslim Intellectuals," arguing that Gu, "one of the most distinguished spokespersons of the Confucian tradition," is an ideal bridge between Chinese and Muslim intellectuals to forge "a grand alliance of sacred commonwealth" to resist secular materialism and combat Western imperialism.[144] In such portraits, Gu appeared as staunchly Eastern and religious against Western secular forces. Post–Cold War struggles

[141] His name also appeared as Seyed Javad Meynagh in other places.

[142] Seyed Javad Meynagh, "lectures in the London Academy of Iranian Studies," http://ianianstudies.org/lecture.htm, accessed 4 March 2010.

[143] Seyed Javad Miri, *Unknown Ku Hung-Ming: Rediscovering the Confucian Intellectual Tradition* (Saarbrücken: Lambert Academic Publishing, 2009), p. 92.

[144] Ibid., pp. 91–95.

between West and non-West have opened new possibilities for reinterpretations of Gu's ideas and roles.

Conclusion

Gu Hongming emerged as the most prominent exponent of Confucianism and Chinese tradition in Western countries in the first two decades of the twentieth century. His success was largely due to the rise of anti-modern sentiments among Westerners in the post–World War I era as well as his talents as a popularizer of Chinese culture for a general Western audience. The value of Gu's criticism of the West and his celebration of the Chinese tradition lies not in its immediate sociopolitical implications restricted by a national historical framework. Instead, he enables us to better understand an early effort of a globalized intellectual discourse concerning some fundamental questions of human civilization at an age of crisis. Gu Hongming and other spokesmen of the East, who are often neglected or identified as isolated cultural conservatives in traditional historiography, actively engaged in transforming and challenging Western hegemonic discourses on civilization. Thanks to their multivalent values, hybrid identities, and spontaneous adaptability, these cultural amphibians crossed multiple national, cultural, and ideological boundaries, and played a distinctive role at this critical moment in world history.

Gu's critiques of the West reflect crucial theoretical dilemmas that non-Western intellectuals would be facing in the coming generations, especially regarding how to maintain their cultural independence from Western material dominance and universalist claims of values. The recent renewed interest in Gu demonstrates his continuous appeal in global intellectual discussions regarding East-West relations. As the "West versus Non-West" thesis remains a key subject in our global era, Gu's criticism of modern Western civilization will be appreciated by new generations of non-Western intellectuals who find Gu's ideas useful in reconstructing their own traditions against powerful religious, intellectual, or ideological forces from the West. There is evidence that Gu Hongming and his universalist interpretation of Confucianism will continue to be relevant in the ongoing global dialogues on civilization.