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A Dialogized Monologue: A Study of Gu Hongming's Letters to Richard Wilhelm

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Abstract: This paper examines the twenty-one letters from a Chinese scholar Gu Hongming to a German Sinologist Richard Wilhelm. It is essential to empower the right of speech on the side of Wilhelm by restoring a dialogic discourse from the epistolary space and revealing the innate nature of polemic in Gu's internally dialogized publications. Their interconnected cultural and social activities represented in these letters may all be regarded as concrete rejoinders that signify their meanings and are signified by their previous context. The interaction between Gu and Wilhelm has cast a far-reaching impact on their developments in either academic thoughts or cultural identities, so much so that only by perceiving their reciprocally infiltrated ideas and related activities in coexistence are we able to understand their richer and fuller personalities developing along a mutual reference line and in a context of an unfinalized dialogue.

Keywords: dialogues; Gu Hongming; letters; Richard Wilhelm; translation

Gu Hongming (辜鸿铭, 1856–1928) is probably the most controversial and misunderstood literary figure in the intellectual history of modern China. He is an anti-modern multilinguistic writer and translator; a fervent nationalist and cultural conservative; a government official and Confucian scholar educated in Europe; a spokesman and defender of Oriental civilization; and a passionate supporter of the Qing dynasty (1644–1911). Among his multifaceted cultural and social identities, Gu was more widely known as a Confucian preacher. Those who knew him had unexceptionally been impressed, inspired, amused, or infuriated by the ideas embodied in his speeches, letters, or articles that are typical soliloquies. Gu was no doubt an accomplished orator and writer in his use of monologic rhetoric, yet this does not necessarily conflict with its inherent appeal for dialogue. The twenty-one letters from Gu Hongming to Richard Wilhelm (1873–1930) offer us a chance to reexamine Gu's works and interaction with other scholars in a dialogic context (Walravens, 2008, pp. 286–315). These private letters, twenty in English and one in German, span the period of June 10, 1910 to July 6,

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1914, during when Wilhelm, as a Christian pastor sent to China, was beginning to shift the emphasis in his role from a German missionary to a Sinologist noted around the world. In contrast, Gu experienced an unpredictable phase of life in a troubled time. Through his life-long endeavor, Wilhelm has translated numerous Chinese classics into German, most of which have become universally acknowledged in the West and continued to be reprinted up to date. Expectedly, these letters mainly involve issues relevant to translation and publication. In particular, thirteen letters focus on Wilhelm's translation project and one of Gu's three German books (Ku, 1911, 1916, 1920), which later earned him worldwide fame. Unfortunately, we are unable to have access to Wilhelm's replying letters. Yet the tension created by Gu's harangue and the lack of Wilhelm's responses in turn urges us to reconstruct dialogical rhetoric that is responsive and accountable to Richard Wilhelm.

Serious studies of Gu Hongming in the English world in the past decade are not many (Du, 2011, pp. 715–746, 2019; Qian, 2010, pp. 38–47; Wang, 2021, pp. 217–240), and this paper aims to examine the letters with two major concerns. Firstly, it is essential to empower the right of speech on the side of Wilhelm by restoring a dialogic discourse from the epistolary space and, in so doing, reveal the innate nature of polemic in Gu's internally dialogized speeches, letters, and works. Mikhail Bakhtin's (1895–1975) "dialogism" lends a strong theoretical tool in the dialogical reconstruction of their correspondences because "a dialogic approach is possible toward any signifying part of an utterance." Gu's letters and works are not "impersonal word of the language," but "a sign of someone else's semantic position," and "the representative of another person's utterance (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 184). Notably, an analytical comparison between the most substantial letter (Feb. 22, 1912) and its published adaption is a case study of recovering the inter-subjective consciousnesses embodied in most Gu's works.

Moreover, their interconnected cultural and social activities represented in the letters may all be regarded as concrete contextualized rejoinders that signify their meanings and are signified by their previous context. Correspondence as the substitution of a lively conversation is bound to touch upon realistic details in our complicated, dynamic, and unpredictable lives. Were those just accounts of trifling everyday matters and venting of pent-up complaints? Or were the discursive actions actually interrelated and pertinent to Wilhelm's tremendous shift in his cultural identity and Gu's revised attitude toward Christianity and foreign missionaries after WWI? Exploring these letters through the Bakhtinian lens does a great deal to insulate part of an original dialogue or related activities from being interpreted solely as statements or deeds of monologic persuasion, defense, and harangue. Each letter witnesses the process in which one encounters the alterity accepts alternative ways of being and thinking, and is part of the identities Gu and Wilhelm already lived. Every act of their dialogues is an unfinalized signifier of an invitation to further dialogues and co-construction of the meanings they found in making the other part of oneself.

I argue that the interaction between Gu and Wilhelm as represented in these letters has cast a far-reaching impact on their developments in either academic thoughts or cultural identities, so much so that only by perceiving their reciprocally infiltrated ideas and related activities in coexistence are we able to understand their richer and fuller personalities developing along a mutual reference line and in a context of an unfinalized dialogue.

1 Monologue or dialogue

Dialogue in Gu's literary work and life played a more significant role than any other rhetoric did. From an "imitation western man" back to a "Chinaman," the shift of Gu's cultural identity started with a dialogue. Gu was born in a Chinese family in Penang, Malaysia, an English colony in 1856, and was brought to Scotland to receive Western education before working for the England Colonial Secretary's Office in Singapore. On a particular day in 1882, two Chinese, strangers to each other, drank wine and conversed in fluent French in the Strand Hotel in Singapore. Though a master of half a dozen Western languages, Gu was not excellent in classical Chinese. Facing him was Ma Jianzhong (马建忠, 1845–1900), a competent diplomat, and a learned scholar who later wrote *Mashi wentong*, the first book on Chinese grammar. To improve Gu's Chinese, Ma advised him to read the works of "Tang Song Ba Da Jia" (唐宋八大家), the eight great writers of the Tang and Song dynasties. He also recommended a work of the great masterpieces of Chinese literature—the collected memorials of Lu Zhi (陆贽, 754–805), a great statesman of the Tang dynasty (Wen, 1937, p. 386). This chance encounter with Ma has produced a life-long influence on Gu. Forty years later, he recalled, "My meeting with Ma Chien-chung at Singapore … was a great event in my life. For it was he–this Ma Chien-chung, who converted and made me become again a Chinaman" (Wen, 1937, p. 387).

The date of the first letter collected, marked June 10, 1910, is interesting, for it seems like a recurrence of Gu's conversation with Ma Jianzhong. But Wilhelm was the one to be converted. The bulk of the letter explained Gu's understanding of Chinese literature, tinted with persuasion and defense. In Chinese literature, he maintained "there is no grandeur, but only a persistent uniform excellence." He also thought the intellect of modern Europeans become "so abnormal that it wants stimulants," "grandeur no matter true or false," and "crotchets," "but it cannot appreciate plain and sound literary excellence without grandeur." He then likened Europeans to "sick men" who "now want piquant highly seasoned meat" but "have no appetite for plain healthy food." In Gu's opinion, nothing is more important than living on "a great mass of plain healthy nourishing food," therefore, "mankind can be made to accustom themselves to pleasures which depend neither upon the bodily

appetites nor upon money." To conclude the letter, Gu recommended two books to Wilhelm to make him "feel what a man of good solid sense there is in the Chinese literature." They are (1) T'ang Sung pa chia (Essays by eight literary men of the Tang and Sung dynasty) (2) Wen-hsien t'ung-k'ao by Ma Tuan-lin" (June 10, 1910).

Dialogic imagination is not rarely seen in Gu's works. In an essay "John Smith in China," he preserved part of a catechism of Anglo-Saxon ideals he compiled (Ku, 1915, pp. 113-114). And he explained to the Western readers in the preface of his English translation of *Daxue* that *Zhongyong* and *Daxue* can be called "the Catechism of Confucian Teaching." (Ku, 1915, p. 1) To introduce Chinese civilization to the world, there seems existent of a rationale as revealed in Gu's suggestion: "The first thing to be done is still to educate and fire a few men with enthusiasm. To kindle a fire, one must first light and fire a few sticks, and that will carry the flame into the mass". The strategy that underlay this ignition process is practical and straightforward: conducting a dialogue. While describing a recent talk with a young Englishman from Oxford, Gu wrote, "After I left him, he was already on fire of Chinese literature. If I could only get a few young men, who are serious fired up, then the work will go of itself" (Oct. 22, 1910). A letter, either long or short, temporarily creates a textual space for a monologue due to the lack of timely and reciprocal replies. Each opinion is "a living thing" that is "inseparable from an embodied human voice," but if we incorporated it "into an abstract, systemically monological context," it ceases to be what it seems to be (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 17).

The letters between Gu and Wilhelm began with a clear-cut intention. In 1910, Wilhelm published his German translation of *Lunyü*[1], which was an immediate success in the academic world and book market. The high appraisal from many influential critics galvanized a prominent publisher Eugen Diederichs (1867–1930) to make an ambitious proposal to Wilhelm. The Diederichs Publishing House at Jena and Wilhelm finally agreed they would initiate a translation project with a general theme of "Religion und Philosophie Chinas." Wilhelm would choose ten Chinese classical works to translate into German. The primary concern throughout the letters from June 1910 to April 1912 was about the ideas on book selection and translation techniques.

Gu expressed his supportive attitude toward the project once he got to know the news: "It seems that such a work is now more needed than the work of transferring the achievements of modern European civilization to China" (June 10, 1910). Regardless of how different the positions Gu has assumed, be it a private tutor, a Manchu official diplomat, a literature professor, or an independent scholar, his top priority never changed: to facilitate smooth dialogues between the East and West on

1 Kung-Futse: Gespärch, Jena: Diederichs.

equal footing. And this motivated him to exert unremitting efforts in publishing translations, delivering speeches, and writing articles.

There are two main reasons why they corresponded with each other regularly during this period. Issues involving translation matters come first. Encouraged by his missionary friends, Gu completed his English translation of *Lunyü*[2] as a response to a popular version rendered by James Legge (1815–1897). Evidence shows that Wilhelm had consulted Gu's work for his German translation of *Lunyü*. For example, Wilhelm quoted Gu's interpretation of "*keji fuli*" (克己复礼 renounce yourself and conform to the ideal of decency and good sense) in his annotation and advocated Gu's way of situating the explication of classical lines in the Western literary context (Wilhelm, 1910, p. 118). Additionally, *I Jing* was usually translated as "*Book of Change*," and Gu's version, "*I King*" was borrowed by Wilhelm, for "*I Ging*"[3] was the book title of his German translation of *Book of Change*. Gu occasionally translated "*li*" (propriety or ritual) as "tact" in different contexts, and Wilhelm also favored "Takt" in his translation (Fan, 2011, p. 140; Huang, 1995, p. 104).[4] From a certain angle, Wilhelm had already conducted intellectual dialogues with Gu before meeting each other. His German work, which he later sent to Gu, was somewhat a reply to Gu's English translation. After receiving the copy, Gu wrote that Wilhelm had "done the work thoroughly" but "ought not to expand too much." Gu commented, "[you] have therefore made a separate text of your own for expanding the thought of the text. I think it would have been better if you had expanded the thought in the translation of the text itself" (Sept. 24, 1910). Their exchanges of ideas in the letter, on the one hand, resumed the unfinished dialogues on *Lunyü* translation and evaluation of Confucian thoughts; on the other hand, Gu also provided Wilhelm with many insightful suggestions for the latter's translation project.

The second reason concerns the book selection. Gu's opinions might not be as predominantly decisive to Wilhelm as Gu had expected. Still, on the part of Wilhelm, it would be beneficial to hear from an academic consultant he admired and supported. "A dialogic reaction personifies every utterance to which it responds (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 184)," and the process involves an encounter, a conflict, and a negotiation of two different voices, ideas, and thoughts. Wilhelm wanted to translate *Jin Ping Mei*, a late-imperial fiction notorious for its vulgar language and lascivious plots. But Gu threw a question as a response: "I decidedly think it is not possible to do it. Besides, why should you give a picture of the rottenest state of society in China?" (Oct. 8, 1910) In the following letter, Gu reiterated that it was not "desirable" to translate the work, because "moral causes govern the rise and fall of nations," and

2 Ku Hung-Ming, *The Discourses and Sayings of Confucius*. Shanghai: Kelly and Walsh, 1898.

3 It was published at Düsseldorf and Jena by Diederichs in 1924.

4 First edition in 1911; second and third edition in 1917; fourth and fifth edition in 1921.

"the book is not for the public at large." Interestingly, the Daoist School and their works also appeared on Gu's blocklist. After finishing his translation of *Dao De Jing The Book of Meaning and Life*), Wilhelm sent a copy to Gu for further suggestions. Gu replied he only had time to read the introduction and thought Wilhelm failed to "make it clear why the book should be translated." He continued his lecture that Wilhelm had "given so much attention to Laotzu and the writers of his school," which are merely "side current in the stream of national thought," for "the main current of the stream of ideas which go to form the Chinese civilization is … in the Confucian books … " and one should "present the great fundamental constructive ideas in the Confucian books," to make Europeans know Chinese civilization (May 27, 1911).

As an answer to Wilhelm, Gu volunteered to make a book list for Wilhelm's translation project (Oct. 8, 1910), but his promise was only partially fulfilled because he presented a list of Chinese emperors, politicians, and scholars who found themselves into the categories of "Carlyle's heroes." According to Gu's explanation, an ideal book to be translated and can "awaken interest in Chinese civilization" should be a book "giving short sketches of the great men from Chinese history" (Oct. 22, 1910). In fact, Wilhelm had already prepared a tentative list and disclosed it in a letter he wrote to Diederichs on March 6, 1910 (Diederichs, 1967, pp. 176–177). We could indeed read something interesting out of the lists below (Table 1):

Most "heroes" on Gu's list meet the moral ideals set by Chinese traditional and cultural standards with Confucianism as its core. Gu's selection, though very limited

Table 1: Gu and Wilhelm's lists.

Gu Hongming's list	Richard Wilhelm's list
Chou kung—the law giver	Gespräche (lun Yü)
Ch'in Shih–huang-ti—the tyrant	Auswahl aus dem uralten Buch de Wandlungen
Han Kao-tsu—great commoner or democratic emperor	Auswahl lie Tse (pantheistische Philosophie)
Han Wen ti—the ideal emperor (Marcus Aurelius)	Auswahl Han Fei Tse und Huai Nan Tse
Han Kuang—the king maker	Auswahl aus den Dokumenten der geheimen Sekten
Chu-Ko liang—the statesman	Maß und Mitte und Große lehre eventuell mit einer religiösen Stoffs aus dem Buch der Riten
Han Wen-Kung, d.i. Han Yu—the scholar	Konfuzianische Naturphilosophie (Tschou Tse, die beiden Tscheng und Tschu Hi) in Auswahl
Ssu-ma Ch'ien—the Historian	Tschuang Tse und Lao Tse's Tao Te king
Su Tung-p'o—the poet	Auswahl aus Mencius

and somewhat vague, was made out of sheer consideration for setting up excellent moral exemplars, whereas Wilhelm's book choices, arranging widely from Confucian classics, including *Mengzi*, *Zhongyong*, *Daxue*, to other schools of thought, namely *Yi Jing*, *Liezi*, *Hanfeizi*, *Huainanzi*, etc., contain canonical works from Daoism and other secret sects, such as *Dao De Jing*, and *Zhuangzi*. The comparison shows Wilhelm's choices are more accredited by the thematic request of "Religion and Philosophy in China." The practical matters, such as the book length, publishing cycle, sales profit, paper cost, reprint rate, etc., that Diederichs as a publisher must consider mark one end of the spectrum. At the other end, the books chosen for the translation should stand the test: they should be universally acknowledged masterpieces. Wilhelm had to strike a balance. The difference among these two lists is symptomatic of Gu and Wilhelm's shared research preferences with disparity. It reveals the latent conflicts within the current dialogic discourse and foreshadows a future round of dialogue permeated with polemic.

Though Gu did not list specific book titles, he firmly advocated Wilhelm's efforts. How to help Europeans apprehend the true values of Chinese civilization? Gu's reply was terse: "Make the Chinese literature known to Europe." How to define excellent Chinese literature? Gu's explanation was concrete yet indirect: "The greatness of the Chinese literature does not lie in its philosophic system nor single great master pieces … [but] in the vast extent and persistent strength of the effort to humanize life" (June 10, 1910). As Bakhtin argues, "A single voice ends nothing and resolves nothing," because "All else is the means; dialogue is the end (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 252)," and Gu's letters were "not as a neutral word of language, not as a word free from the aspirations and evaluations of others, uninhabited by others' voices (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 202)." The final selection made by Wilhelm could be regarded as a product of his dialogues with Gu and others. And the translation manifests, explicitly or implicitly, the marks of their exchanges of ideas. Gu's first influential book in Germany, translated by Wilhelm, is not an exception. Will his work be a sort of effort featured by "vast extent and persistent strength" to "humanize life"? What is Gu's evaluation of Wilhelm's translation? What is Wilhelm's opinion on the book? Expectedly, the translation of the book started from a dialogue.

2 Gu and Wilhelm's discussion on translation

Alfons Paquet (1881–1944), a famous German journalist, visited Gu the day before he left Shanghai in 1910, on whom Gu left an ineffaceable impression after accepting a book Gu published as a gift during their long talk. The second day on a ship, Paquet was so appealed to the thoughts in the book that he decided to render it into German. He immediately brought this idea out to Wilhelm aboard (Ku, 1911, p. 14). It was Gu's

second English anthology entitled *The Story of a Chinese Oxford Movement* (Shanghai Mercury, 1910). The metaphorical title indicates that Gu, throughout his analysis, had drawn a historical analogy between the "Movement of Pure School" led by Zhang Zhidong (张之洞, 1837–1909) and the "Oxford Movement," a movement, from 1833 to 1845, centered at the University of Oxford that sought a renewal of Roman Catholic thought and practice within the Church of England in opposition to the Protestant tendencies. Similarly, Zhang's movement of cultural conservatism by the end of the 19th century aimed to reinstate the utmost Confucian authority against the prevalence of modern European liberalism, utilitarianism, and materialism in China. Gu's intention in writing this book was to help foreigners inside and outside China "understand the true state of things in China." (Ku, 1910, xi)

In 1910, Richard Wilhelm came to know Gu's name via Paquet, and he later "played an important material and spiritual role as a bridge" between Gu's works and European readers (Leutner, 2010, p. 60). Gu's first German book, *Chinas Verteidigung gegen Europäische Ideen*, translated by Wilhelm in 1911 and with a preface by Paquet,[3] invoked tremendous responses from the German intellectual circle, for reviews and comments flooded most mainstream press including *National Zeitung*, *Frankfurter Zeitung*, and *Rhein.-Westf. Zeitung*. His ideas had greatly influenced many German elites, especially those who strongly favored cultural nationalism. It had drawn a great deal of attention from the German intellectual world till 1913 (Fang, 2007, p. 77).

The letters around this period exposed the entire process of how the German translation was compiled, edited, and translated by both of them. Gu frequently made meticulous suggestions and requests after he knew Wilhelm would serve as his translator. He sent two volumes of his Chinese books, *Chinese Recollections from the Viceroy Zhang Wenxiang Secretariat*, to familiarize Wilhelm with his thoughts which were "the same as I (Gu) have expressed in the story of the Oxford Movement." Gu also insisted that a letter written to "North China Daily News" on the death of the late Empress dowager should be attached as an appendix (Sept. 24, 1910). One month later, Gu sent the copy of his first English anthology: *Papers from a Viceroy's Yamen* (Shanghai Mercury, 1901), suggesting that Wilhelm translate the last essay entitled "Civilization and Anarchy" to make it the introduction (Oct. 22, 1910). Gu reiterated this request in another letter (Dec. 27, 1910). We are not sure to what degree Gu's Chinese works were referentially helpful, but Wilhelm responded with interest in Gu's original notes for the English book. Thus Gu wrote, "I hasten now to send you the notes you wanted for your translation of my book." (Jan. 10, 1911) These requests, adding a letter in the appendix and translating an essay as the introduction, all found their way into the published translation.

Wilhelm completed his translation as timely as was expected. Gu examined the draft and then wrote a one-paragraph letter to Wilhelm, pointing out some

typographical errors. This short-note reply with careful corrections manifested Gu's attitude of high seriousness toward any version of his work (Ku, 1928). These seemingly impersonal suggestions ended up with no words of gratitude but hypercritical judgment. This academic overkill would presumably fill the next round of dialogue with harsh polemic: "I must congratulate you on the faithfulness of your translation. You have not, of course, been able to reproduce the tone and Stimmung of the book" (Sept. 22, 1911).

Gu assumed Wilhelm would consider that he was too "hypercritical." Nonetheless, he maintained Wilhelm should "reproduce exactly the tone of the book in the translation." Gu's fastidious attitude was due to his stringent criteria in writing and translation. As a mentor and expert in Chinese scholarship, this 16-year-elder man of letters instructed his German student like this: "I write with all my heart or to speak properly with my heart's blood. In that reason, when I do not feel strongly, I cannot write. In fact, when I feel strongly, I would get sick or even die if I do not get the feeling out of me in some form." He then employed a metaphor to explain, also in a way to comfort himself, why he should not expect a translation of his book to "feel exactly" as to how he felt when he wrote it: "When I finish a book, you do not know what a relief it is to me as a woman feels relieved when the child is born." Gu eventually confessed, "I know that I ask for an impossibility." Yet from Gu's point of view, it is not merely about introducing a Chinese scholar to German readers, but of high relevance to part of the cause of spreading Chinese thoughts to the Western world. Gu compromised himself by accepting Wilhelm's excuse, a gesture of self-praise that highlights the profundity of his book: "Besides as you say, you had not the time to cogitate the ideas in the book to allow them to melt and reproduce them in German." (October 15, 1911) Gu built a reputation in Germany shortly, which partly proves Wilhelm's translation was a success.

As for Paquet's introduction, Gu's feedback was highly negative. It turned out that Paquet's unconsidered remarks on the "fight between Manchu and the Chinese" ignited the fuse of Gu's explosive temper. Gu wrote, as a somewhat response to Paquet's comments, that "I must say that it seems to me he has not read deeply into my book, into the inner meaning of my ideas. The logic and cleverness of certain parts of the book alone have impressed him." He further blamed Paquet's French origin for the latter's imprudent attitude in the preface because "all Germans … can feel deeply." Gu continued to seek out another reason to debunk this poor preface writer: "perhaps his profession of a journalist has hindered him from being able to think deeply … because it not only demoralizes the people who read newspapers, but it demoralizes, even more, those who write newspapers. For there is nothing more demoralizing for true culture than to have to write quickly without having thoroughly mastered the subject on which you write" (April 27, 1912). Gu once again

demonstrated he was endued with mastery of writing pungent satires, for he killed three birds with one stone, to say the least: he rebuked Paquet for writing a superficial preface which in turn implied the depth of his book; Wilhelm may feel flattered when Gu, with a self-claimed endowment that enables him to think as deep as German does, blamed Paquet's fault for not being a German origin; he attacked newspapers and journalists not because he regretted working as a journalist before, but because he was able to avoid demoralizing newspaper readers by providing them with insights in a thorough study on one subject, a barbed allusion of his dissatisfaction for Wilhelm's translation. Naturally, this complaint within Gu-Wilhelm's dialogic discourse asked for a follow-up.

Meanwhile, considering Wilhelm and Paquet's connections to the publishing houses and their appreciation for his works, Gu expressed the idea urgently and repeatedly that he wished to republish *The Story of a Chinese Oxford Movement* (Sept. 24, 1910; Oct. 15, 1911). There was an interesting line at the end of a letter written on April 27, 1912: "My new book or the new edition of my book should be ready by now, yet they have not sent me the copies I want." This note is not relevant to its previous or following paragraphs, nor are there any common grateful words for Wilhelm or Paquet's possible recommendation. Luckily, the second edition of *The Story of a Chinese Oxford Movement* is accessible, and its issuing date met our expectation: April 1912. It is thus the "new edition" Gu referred to in the letter. Though no significant changes have been made throughout the texts, new materials were noticeably added if we compare the book content with that in its first edition. Specifically, there is a letter written to the "North China Daily News" and a review of Princess Der Ling's book, *Two Years in the Forbidden City*, both attached as appendices. The new edition also incorporated, in the words of the editor, "a letter to a German Pastor from a well-known Chinese scholar, entitled 'Jacobin China,'" "hoped to be found of additional interest (Ku, 1910, v)."

The letter to a "German Pastor" is of more significant relevance to our inquiry. Examining its physical information, this 11-page letter (Ku, 1910, xviii–xxix) is set before "Author's Preface" and after "Introduction," both appear as what they have originally written. For the German translation, Gu had required Wilhelm to translate the last essay of his first English book and made it the new introduction, which may indicate that enriching the introductory note was necessary for any revised version in any language. Since "Civilization and Anarchy" does not appear in the 1912 edition, is this letter the Gu's purposeful expansion to the introduction? Why it, in an epistolary format, has to be placed before but not after the main text? The juxtaposition of two flyleaves from the German edition and the second English edition may suggest some possible intention of Gu's letter attachment (Table 2):

On the English flyleaf, the way how the letter title is emphasized arouses much of readers' curiosity: "With ***letter from Chinese official to German pastor*** and

Table 2: Flyleaves of the German and English editions.

Ku Hung Ming	The story of a chinese oxford movement
CHINAS VERTEIDIGUNG GEGEN EUROPÄISCHE IDEEN: KRITISCHE AUFSÄTZE	BY KU HUNG MING
HERAUSGEGEBEN MIT EINEM VORWORT VON ALFONS PAQUET	Second edition with ***letter from Chinese official to German pastor*** and appendices
VERLEGT BEI EUGEN DIEDERICHS IN JENA 1911	Shanghai: Shanghai mercury limited, print. 1912

appendices." The full letter title is placed right beneath the book title and the author's name. It thus stands out as something more indispensable than other newly attached materials being over-generalized by the "appendices" caption. Moreover, the letter occupies a page position parallel with Paquet's preface located on the German flyleaf. The readers may reasonably assume that the substitution was a calculated plan drawn up by the author. It is not until we delve into its content that we discover it is an adaptation of one letter found in the twenty-one-letter corpus.

Written on Feb. 22, 1912, the most substantial letter concerns mainly Gu's then-current analysis and commentaries on public affairs, combined with the ideas from the book Wilhelm translated. Gu showed he bitterly opposed the reformers, especially Li Hongzhang (李鸿章, 1823–1901), whom he credited with the loss of Chinese culture and everything beautiful in China. Another Gu's target was President Yuan Shikai (袁世凯, 1859–1916), who betrayed the last emperor, and under whose guidance, Gu felt, the morality of the masses degenerated (Leeuw, 2010, p. 179). In the end, Gu told Wilhelm he hoped Wilhelm and his foreign friends would not yield to Yuan's despotic power, and he requested the letter to be translated and published "in the most influential newspaper or journal in Germany" (Feb. 22, 1912) to spread his opinions further. Wilhelm probably asked Paquet's help (April 27, 1912) once he finished the translation, but we could not have access to its revised version in German, nor could we confirm whether it had been published. Fortunately, Gu's existent letters allow us to examine the difference between the original letter and Gu's new and preface-like paratext in the form of official publication.

Firstly, Gu seemed to relish the creation of heterogeneous personas. For example, judging the title "*Letter from Chinese official to German Pastor*," Gu deliberately concealed the true identities of both correspondents by merely alluding to their job titles. The opening sentence confused those who would presume Gu as the letter writer: "Some five years ago writing to the 'N.C. Daily News' under the signature of a long-gowned Chinaman I said …" (Ku, 1910, xix). Furthermore, whenever Gu's words or works were quoted or commented in the letter, a specific "Mr. Ku Hungming" would appear to highlight the "fact" that Gu did not equal to this

Chinese official. Likewise, the signature of "T.S." was not sufficiently an intentional signifier for a short form of Gu's courtesy name, "Tang Sheng," a very less known fact to his foreign readers. It was by no means the first time Gu applied such masquerade (André, 2018, p. 161) to his work, nor would it be the last time. For instance, with "Gu Bulang" as the protagonist, he anonymously published his first Chinese anthology *Zhang Wenxiang mufu,* in 1910. In his *The Spirit of Chinese People,* published in 1915, he obscured himself in a mantle of "modern man" or "modern poet" wherever quoting his own poetic lines. Gu even created a figure of "My Master Mr. Xiaoyao You" to assume his autobiographic experience in his second Chinese anthology in 1922.

This rhetorical device seems to make a backfire in a way that Gu firstly neutralized the private nature of a personal letter with his adaptation aiming at a wider readership, but then the audience would possibly call its epistolary authenticity into question because of the pretentious tone and artificial structure Gu deliberately designed throughout the text. Ambiguously, it is this blurred demarcation between a private letter and a public statement that expands the Gu-Wilhelm dialogic space into a much broader communication field. Gu's adaptation was a creative style defined by a high expectation of more opinions. A voice bears thoughts, and by putting a voice onto paper, ideas are materialized and textualized. His anthologies were unexceptionally collections of his speeches, letters, or newspapers articles. Each one was a monologic discourse of the whole, inherently diffused by "a continuous hidden polemic or hidden dialogue with some other person on the theme of himself." They were not soliloquies insulated from their original dialogic contexts, but rather, internally dialogized self-utterances unfolding against a communication platform that might be socially, culturally and intellectually alien to him, yet "permeated with an intense sensitivity toward the anticipated words of others about them, and with others' reactions to their own words, about themselves." (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 206) Similarly, Gu built up within this letter a reading space that facilitates many imaginative rounds of dialogues between a Chinese official and a pastor, between the author and Mr. Ku Hungming, and between the letter writer and its readers.

There are other textual changes worth mentioning. New accounts and comments are added after the opening summary of the whole book and a concise survey of the past 250-year history of China. These are about a Sichuan revolt against the Beijing government for its allowing the foreigners to deal with the questions of building railways in China. And these lines follow Gu's typical writing style found in most of his para-text letters: immediate, documental, and circumstantial. And this section equally responds to his dialogues with a newspaper on the same issue to be discussed in the following. Moreover, a paragraph on "Reign of Terror" in the middle had been

moved understandably to the end, as a metaphorical conclusion corresponding to the political situation.

Last but not least, Gu purposefully switched two reasons over. He sustained the average morality among the masses as the essential prerequisite for the survival of a government, a nation, and a civilization. In the original letter, two reasons were brought up to expound why under Yuan's rule "even the average morality of the masses in China will be destroyed." The first reason was that to maintain an average morality among the masses in every country, the political leader must possess and show at least an average standard of honor to inspire some respect on the part of the people for him. But Yuan, in Gu's opinion, was not a qualified leader. As to the second reason, he thought it "is not so easy to explain," and then drew an analogy between the Western state-church relation and the Chinese emperor-state relation, followed by an analysis of their differences (Feb. 22, 1912). In the reprinted book, this essential yet "hard-to-explain" reason appears first, followed by the attack on Yuan as the second reason. It is conceivable that Wilhelm must have his perspectives on the religion topic, and they must also have conducted the in-depth discussion, for Gu wrote to Wilhelm in another letter: "I have read your letter on the state religion question. Yesterday I wrote also on the subject, which, I have no doubt, you will approve." (Dec. 24, 1913) The order swap of the two reasons bears the marks of a Gu-Wilhelm dialogue. That Gu prioritized the second reason is indicative of his fundamental concern on the East and West communication in fields of religion, national conditions, and cultural tradition. One paragraph permeated with "profound dialogic and polemical nature of self-awareness and self-affirmation" (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 206–207) from the original letter may best summarize the gist of the book and the purpose of writing in his life:

> Many of my foreign friends here in Shanghai are amused at what they call my foolish and fanatic loyalty to the Manchu dynasty. They do not know that my loyalty is not merely loyalty to the Imperial House under whose beneficent rule my fathers and forefathers have lived, but is also a loyalty to the cause of the religion of China, loyalty to the Chinese civilization. It was the story of our desperate battle for this cause—the religion of honor and duty against the modern European religion of interests and ambition that I have tried to tell in *The Story of a Chinese Oxford Movement* (Feb. 22, 1912).

This confessional self-utterance, "not only the tone and style but also the internal semantic structure," is established by anticipating other responses. It is a statement with the overlapping and merging of diverse sides of dialogue into a single voice (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 210). By highlighting confrontation and conversation, this open-end text expects all past, current, and future interlocutors.

Gu's book is a record of his dialogue with the historical "Chinese Oxford Movement" during the late period of the 19th century. It gives factual accounts of

history and reflects his understanding of those facts. His opinions, judgments, interpretations, and analyses of history are textualized, appearing as a rejoinder to his previous conversation, and a dialogue trigger for those who read, study, or translate the book. Many years later, Wilhelm remarked on the movement and Gu's work: "He exaggerated its importance. A handful of literary idealists attempted to bring about a reaction without being equal to the situation. The whole movement failed hopelessly and barely represents an episode in the history of Chinese reform." (Wilhelm, 1926, p. 39) It is the otherness in both Gu and Wilhelm that presupposes a dialogue. The fusion of different opinions occurs in an interchange of ideas and collision of voices from both conversational subjects. The clashes of Gu and Wilhelm's consciousness gave birth to new dialogic texts that were differentiated from neither of the voices in agreement, battle, or compromise. By the same token, the new letter-preface in the reprinted English book is Gu's official response to Paquet and Wilhelm. It is a fruit that could only be produced from the textual dialogue between Paquet's preface and Gu's original letter.

3 The Choice between "bowl" and "duty"

These letters disclose other details in Gu's distressful life, except for academic issues. By the end of 1910, Gu quit his job in Shanghai Huangpu Conservancy and worked in Nanyang College as Director of Studies (Dec. 27, 1910). He then supported the "Movement of Railway Protection" in Sichuan by writing a letter to the "Shanghai North China Daily News" on the railway questions. He attacked Sheng Xuanhuai (盛宣怀, 1844–1916) and condemned his oligarchic leadership to sell the right of constructing Chinese railways to foreign forces. As Gu claimed, he had a good reason for this: "The foreign public is so often misguided by the English press that I felt it my duty to write to the newspapers" (Oct. 15, 1911). Yet his school was affiliated to the Ministry of Transportation and Communication, with Sheng as the minister. His letter caused, between him and opponents, newspaper editor and common readers alike, many rounds of tit-for-tat wrestles on the newspaper. The students in his school immediately rose against Gu, and he had thus to quit the position when his life had been threatened (Nov. 21, 1911).

Losing the primary source of income, Gu Hongming, whose life subject had been to "educate himself" instead of "making money" (Dec. 27, 1910), had to regularly seek financial support from Wilhelm. And this seemed to bring an unpleasant memory to Wilhelm, for after years, he still depicted Gu as a man "gifted with the capacity of spending a great deal of money" and "belonged more or less to the Bohemia of the scholars." (Wilhelm, 1926, p. 58) Being fond of lecturing others, Gu had consciously

assumed to be Wilhelm's teacher and mentor, but this sense of superiority was "destroyed by the financial difficulties and the resulting requests he made of Wilhelm." (Leutner, 2010, p. 62) Would a domineering Gu change to adopt a more condescending manner and ingratiate such a dependable patron? To both Wilhelm and another English friend, he described in letters the same experience of being driven from school and home by the students in a riot. The descriptions were slightly different but highly intriguing:

> Providentially, I made the re-acquaintance of an Austrian gentleman who offered me the houses for workmen in this soap factory where I have been and now living (Dec. 20, 1911) (Wu, 2018, p. 64).

> I and my family have however found a very safe refuge here through the kindness of an Austrian gentleman Mr. Soyka whose acquaintance I made by accident—gefuhrt dazu durch Gottes vorsehung! (Nov. 21, 1911)

Gu explained away his encounter with this Austrian to his English friend by using a situational yet vague expression: "Providentially;" whereas, in the letter to Wilhelm, a simple adverb had been developed into a specific and concluding German phrase to emphasize that the encounter was "guided by the providence of God." At the end of the same letter, Gu anticipated the future of a New China and decided to leave his mission and life work to "the all-wise guidance of God," because he "feel thankful that he (God) has kept and preserved me and mine in security, —in a manner too in which I (Gu) seem to see this directing hand." There were other similar cases concerning Gu's stances in the letters. He quoted from the Bible to explain why a lack of sufficient idealism in foreign teachers would impede them from vitalizing the knowledge they impart in China (Feb. 22, 1912). He even recited one line from *Psalm* to forecast the prospect on the battlefield (July 6, 1914). Were these obligatory flatteries merely designed to facilitate the loan? To answer this question, we need to briefly trace what Gu's earlier attitude toward Christianity and missionaries had been.

Gu had always firmly opposed the missionary work of Christianity in China. Upon the breakout of revolt against the foreign missionaries in Yangtse river regions in 1891, he wrote an article "Defensio Populi ad Populos" (Ku, 1901, pp. 35–50) to defend the Chinese government and people on the newspaper against any false accusation. His writings on missionary issues afterward had gone along the same line. It was surprisingly consistent that Gu still condemned severely the criminal enterprise committed by foreign missionaries despite the seemingly ingratiating remarks on God's grace in the same letter and quotations from the Bible in others. After visiting Wilhelm in Qingdao in 1912, he cautiously wrote to state his admonition: "you should be more moderate in your zeal and use a little more discrimination to choose the task which you would impose upon yourself" (Nov. 3, 1912). It is hard to deny that Gu's kind words were out of practical consideration; after all, he was in

monetary want and had a son in Qingdao to be entrusted to Wilhelm's care. Nonetheless, Gu's affirmation of the core values in Christianism does not necessarily split up his consistency in condemning those foreign missionaries with their evil deeds, nor will it counteract his strength in advocating Chinese civilization. As Bakhtin states, "I cannot manage without another, I cannot become myself without another; I must find myself in another by finding another in myself (in mutual reflection and mutual acceptance)." (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 287) We may safely contend that Gu was not so much condescending to Wilhelm as projecting Wilhelm's cultural identity on the part of himself. For Gu, to contextualize Christianism does not mean to Orientalize it. It was instead Gu's reflection on Christianism, a natural response on Gu's terms, an inherent desire for a conversation, and an unremitting attempt for an East-West dialogue on equal footing.

In the eyes of Gu's foreign friends, his image seemed unanimous: "a man who did not look after the bread and butter" (March 4, 1910). Was it because the books that won him worldwide fame guaranteed his aloofness from mundane human worries? An editor's note found in Gu's reprinted book supports our guess: "So great has been the demand for the first edition of Mr. Ku Hung-Ming's book, '*The Story of a Chinese Oxford Movement*,' that a second edition has been found necessary." (Ku, 1910, v) Furthermore, a former student recalled, "the number of Gu's translation of *Lunyü* sold in the West totaled more than one million" (Liu & Zhang, 1983, p. 269). It was, however, a different story from what we learned from Gu's letters. Gu expressed his strong wish to publish a collection of Zeng Guofan's letters and then explained why it was not fulfilled: "I cannot get a publisher to undertake the cost of publishing it. I have lost money in all my publications" (Oct. 22, 1910) (Pattinson, 2006, pp. 143–144). As for the translation of *Lunyü*, he only sold five hundred during a period as long as ten years. An unstable position as a newspaper columnist and a wretched lectureship in a conditional speech tour around Japan in the 1920s proved that Gu's early efforts in spreading his thoughts and publishing his books failed to trade for a decent life as a world-famous scholar deserved and should have enjoyed in his late years. However, during the early and late phases of his political career, Gu had many opportunities of bribe-taking and utilizing other immoral means to make himself rich (Huang, 1996, p. 430). Yet, all his earlier experience and current situation of poverty could only substantiate Wilhelm's judgment that Gu was a man "above accepting bribes in a dirty manner. It thus came about that he lived in a continual state of want" (Wilhelm, 1926, p. 58).

What did Gu mostly treasure for in his life then? He gave his answer to Wilhelm in the letter, while explaining why he was not afraid of offending Sheng Xuanhuai, under whose supervision the college was operated: "By writing that letter, I, of course, endanger my bowl of rice. But between duty and bowl of rice, I think the bowl of rice must go" (Oct. 15, 1911). The duty, to Gu, was the "true force" that "has gone into

the bones of Chinese people" would be "awakened and put down the religion of interests and ambition" (Nov. 21, 1911). The pen in Gu's hands undertook the mission to fulfill Gu's indispensable duty. The financial support guarantees a possibility for Gu's continual writing and embodies a visualization of Wilhelm's duty performance on the part of Gu. The money-borrowing dialogues indeed destroyed the teacher-student relationship, but they also nurtured a sense of camaraderie and constructed a duty-bound network in which Wilhelm would be identified as more qualified as an ally (Gilroy & Verhoeven, 2000, p. 183).[5]

Wilhelm's recognition of Chinese culture and civilization was similar to how traditional Chinese literati situated their self-awareness and self-expression into a Chinese context prevalent with Western commercialism and materialism during a transformational period in the first decade of the 20th century. The unilateral disclosure of life details from Gu's letters inspires us to think beyond the written framework and explore how their cultural and social activities were perceived in the form of dialogic connection. Translating the book, offering the money, helping with the publication, and taking care of Gu's son in Qingdao, were nothing but a Wilhelm rejoinder to Gu's struggle and choice between rice bowl and duty. Wilhelm found a house in Qingdao just in case of Gu's exile-like removal (Nov. 21, 1911). He even helped offer a job to Gu's son (June 29, 1912) and managed to prepare a lecturing tour in Germany for Gu, presumably because of the positive feedback of his German book (April 1, 1913; June 24, 1913). Wilhelm's contact with Gu occurred during the period of great political upheaval when Gu solidly advocated for the reinstallation of the monarchy. The "Lixian Academy" (礼贤书院) and "Zun Kong Society" (尊孔文社) (Lao, 1978, p. 47) Wilhelm founded were not merely the Garden of Eden for Qing loyalists to exchange ideas on knowledge and political situations, but an ideal hothouse for plots of monarchical restoration (Fan, 1993, pp. 68–73). The intimate relationship between Gu and Wilhelm was thus revealed in a bundle of intertwined academic, social and political activities.

Gu's letters and Wilhelm's memoir helped restore a vivid period of their interaction around 1913. Wilhelm recalled: "Even the plan for the reconstruction of the monarchy which was forged in secret, at that time, broke down owing to petty quarrels" (Wilhelm, 1926, p. 174). With the constantly dwindling possibilities of restoring the dynasty, Gu's tone grew more pessimistic and his isolation greater (Leutner, 2010, p. 62). Gu thus wrote: "You should go to see our Men frequently, and they are in a low mood. But we must have patience" (June 24, 1913). Since their restoration plan had miscarried, Gu expressed in despair that "Thus humanly speaking, there seems to be no hope now for our cause. It is a great blow to all of us … The situation in China is such that I myself do not see any solution possible". Gu's life

5 Letters play an important role in building alliances and demanding loyalty.

and career were marred ironically by his pursuit of sacred honor and duty. It ended up with one last resort to seek refuge in Japan-occupied Taiwan upon an invitation of his merchant cousin, Gu Xianrong (辜显荣, 1866–1937), because "there was no place" for this lonely and isolated monologist in China (Sept. 22, 1913).

There was, however, a more pressing cause for Gu's abandonment of his motherland. Gu was one of Yuan Shikai's bitterest enemies and he bombarded Yuan publicly and privately whenever there was a chance in Chinese and English. To zip up Gu's mouth, Yuan nominated Gu English tutor to his son with a monthly salary of 500 dollars, but nothing showed Gu tempered his speech (Wilhelm, 1926, p. 58). Gu's political prophecies were frequently fulfilled in the past, but he was somewhat circumspect this time: "It is my firm belief that the incumbent administration is bound to fall. But as to when and how, the answer is unknown" (Jun. 24, 1913). With the tip of the pendulum swung to Yuan, the restoration proponents, or as Wilhelm put it, "the more thoughtful people," "turned more and more away from the conspiracy, some made their peace with Yuan and the republic, and eventually, the whole movement ended in adventure" (Wilhelm, 1926, p. 174). And it is under such circumstance, and only through the private letter, that we are vividly affected by Gu's courage, integrity, and his grace under pressure at that moment: "I shall probably leave Peking very shortly. I may however tell you that the President, through his eldest son, whom I have seen, has made advances to me to detain me in Peking. But I cannot very well at the last moment change my color." (Sept. 22, 1913).

What he truly cared for was nothing but his publication. He wondered whether there was a chance to reprint his first book and publish others. *Old and New Testaments*, together with other Christian books such as *Imitate Jesus Christ*, were often placed right beside Confucian classics on his table in Gu's late years (Borrey, 1930, p. 25). As an echoing rejoinder, regardless of temporal and spatial barriers, this late-year metonymic book juxtaposition pointed to its dialogic counterpart found in Gu's letter: "It is very sad to me to have to leave my country perhaps forever. But as Confucius said, the burden is heavy and the way is long. May God help me to bear my burden bravely to the end" (Sept. 22, 1913). Two months later, Wilhelm offered a large amount of money, but Gu and his family ended up not being able to move to the Japan-occupied Taiwan for some reasons.

4 Conclusion

The survival of Gu Hongming's twenty-one letters to Richard Wilhelm helps to reconstruct a monologic discourse whose situation may metaphorically be projected into that of Gu's works and life. As an interlocutor, Wilhelm has maintained the unfinalized dialogue with Gu through his words or deeds since they met. Among

them, fifteen were written between 1910 and 1912, five in 1913, and one in 1914. The year 1911 was crucial for Wilhelm's transition from a devoted Christian missionary to an influential translator and Sinologist (Sun & Jiang, 2004, p. 27). This was related to his association with a large number of late-Qing scholars, royalists, and other incidents, too, such as signing a contract of a translation project and the outbreak of Republican Revolution (Sun & Jiang, 2004, p. 103). Nonetheless, his interaction with Gu during this period ought not to be neglected as a positive factor for Wihelm's identity shift. Being a faithful disciple and advocate of Confucius, Wilhelm's final list of published translations in the following two decades includes *Lunyü*, *Mengzi*, *Li Ji*, *Jiayu*, *Yi Jing*, *Laozi*, *Liezi*, *Zhuangzi*, and *Lüshi Chunqiu*, etc. Wilhelm has attached great importance to Gu's thoughts and listed Gu's works as an essential reference (Wilhelm, 1928a, 1928b, 1928c, 1929), despite his late-year objections to Gu's royalist standpoints. After WWI, Gu became relatively tolerant of Christianity and acknowledged that the material and spiritual benefits brought by foreign missionaries substantially exceeded the crimes and misconducts some of them committed in China. He was inclined to quote lines from Bible to epitomize the core values of Confucianism. He was fascinated by *I Jing* in his late years and even urged Borrey to translate *Dao De Jing* into French since he thought its metaphysical value was of great significance (Borrey, 1930, p. 60).

It is not possible to substantiate with quantitative evidence that can show Gu and Wilhelm exerted mutual influence on each other, for the development of a unique view is a complex process that receives influences of diverse sources. But it is plausible that an examination of these letters and their interrelated activities will reveal concrete hints that imply a correlative of reactions encompassing them as a dialogic whole. Gu and Wilhelm's opinions, thoughts, books, and deeds were dialogically connected after this correspondence period and responded to their interaction recorded in epistolary form. Since 1911, Wilhelm has somewhat forsaken his preaching career and changed gradually to a Confucian Sinologist who devoted his whole rest of life to introducing Chinese culture and civilization to the West. In years after 1913, Gu has also modified his views on Christianism and foreign missionaries, especially his partial understandings of *Dao De Jing*. They both supported the idea that a Chinese "spirit" or "soul" is the "essence" and "greatness" of China and Chinese culture, and one distinctive feature of the narrative structure of their works is the arresting historical and cultural analogies (Leutner, 2010, p. 63).

Like a chain of individual events standing in an explanatory relation to one another, these letters restored a missing link for their overlapping trajectory of academic evolution. We can perceive, through the foreshadowing information in a dialogic context, how and why their thoughts developed in a parallel or divergent manner. And this is, among others, part of where the actual value of these letters lies.

As Bakhtin upholds, "to get one's bearings on the world meant to conceive all its contents as simultaneous and to guess at their interrelationships in the cross-section of a single moment" (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 28). Gu Hongming's letters to Richard Wilhelm, to this end, have offered an ideal "cross-section" of an interactive moment.

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