

# In Memory of Hu Shi: Friend or Foe?

## Biographical Writing on Hu Shi in the PR China

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### 1. Introduction

Hu Shi 胡適 (1891–1962) is one of the most controversial figures in Chinese discourse on the intellectual history of the Republican era.<sup>1</sup> Known as the “hero” of the May Fourth Movement, treated as the new Confucius, and even admired by Mao Zedong,<sup>2</sup> he became *persona non grata* during the great anti-Hu Shi campaign of 1954 and 1955. Immediately following the campaign, eight volumes of anti-Hu Shi critiques were published, including an official selection of texts that had been printed in newspapers and journals.<sup>3</sup> A further “best of” volume came out in 1959.<sup>4</sup> A different collection of texts was published in 2003,<sup>5</sup> which included articles published between 1949 and 1980. Taken together, they are proof of the crucial role anti-Hu Shi critiques played in the formation of the PRC’s academic identity. After the Cultural Revolution, however, Hu Shi was rediscovered and re-evaluated.

This paper will examine the impact of the anti-Hu Shi campaign in 1954 and 1955 on the production of later biographical writing on Hu Shi, and its role in the formation of a collective memory. First, the biographical data available in the eight volumes of anti-Hu Shi critiques will be used to paint a biographical portrait of him. The analysis will focus on recurring themes in the discussions of Hu’s academic achievements, and his political positions on crucial historical events. These will serve as points of reference for an examination of two sets of biographical writing published after the Cultural Revolution. First to be considered are memoirs written by Hu’s companions that were also involved in the campaign against him. Recent interviews with Hu’s contemporaries have shown that despite the political campaign, Hu’s eminent status was nevertheless

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1 I thank the participants of the Workshop “Writing Lives in China” at Sheffield University, and Kai Vogelsang, for their valuable comments.

2 According to Edgar Snow, Mao Zedong remembered that he had greatly admired articles written by Hu Shi and Chen Duxiu 陳獨秀, idealising them after discarding Kang Youwei 康有為 and Liang Qichao 梁啟超 (SNOW 1968, p.148).

3 HSSXPP 1955.

4 *Hu Shi sixiang pipan: lunwen xuanji*, 1959.

5 PHS 2003.

acknowledged.<sup>6</sup> The authors of the memoirs had not only first-hand information on Hu, but also on the campaign's themes. They were an important resource for the later re-evaluation of Hu Shi. The analysis will focus on the description of Hu's character during the anti-Hu Shi campaigns. Two collections of memoirs have been chosen – these appeared in 1998 and 2003, and reflected a variety of perspectives.<sup>7</sup>

Second, biographies of Hu Shi will be analysed in terms of their conception, their style and the occurrence of themes that were prominent in the 1950s, to highlight new developments in the re-evaluation of Hu. The biographies constitute second-hand source material on Hu, since their authors belonged to the subsequent generation of biographical writers. The texts reflect the process of sedimentation of 1950s biographical information on Hu in the collective memory, while allowing for new perspectives on his life after the Cultural Revolution to emerge. The biographies selected were all written in the 1980s and 1990s. Since they were all republished, they can be considered successful examples of anti-Hu Shi writing.<sup>8</sup> A more recent example will also be included, indicating the emergence of another group of writers in the mid-1990s.

The re-editing of the texts published during the anti-Hu Shi campaign demonstrates that even today, criticism of Hu is very much alive. In conclusion, the following questions will be examined: To what extent did the image of Hu Shi influence biographical writing produced after the Cultural Revolution? What differences and similarities are there between the memoirs and the second-hand biographies in terms of their engagement with the collective memory of Hu?

### Writing on Hu Shi's life during the 1950s

For various reasons, Hu Shi was an ideal figure to be made an example of. On the eve of the establishment of the PRC, he had turned down Mao's offer to remain in Beijing as the president of Peking University. In addition, while in the United States, he delivered political speeches that contained negative opinions of the new government. Before 1949, Hu Shi was considered a major fig-

6 These interviews were conducted as part of my project entitled "Institutionalizing the Humanities in the PR China: The 1950s" at the Universität Hamburg, funded by the German Research Foundation (project description available online: <http://yschulzzinda.googlepages.com/institutionalizingthehumanitiesinthep.r.ch>).

7 ZHU Wenhua 1998; ZI Tong 2003. A few of the memoirs from the 1998 collection are included in ZI Tong. Due to the limited space, memoirs in the form of monographs have not been included. These include SHI Yuangao 1985. Wang Yuanfang, another associate of Hu Shi, and the nephew of the publisher Wang Mengzou 王孟鄒, also published his memories of the days of the *Yadong tushuguan*. These also relate to Hu Shi. See WANG Yuanfang 1983.

8 See BAI Ji'an 1987, revised 1993; YI Zhuxian 1987, revised 1994; ZHU Wenhua 1988, republished 2007; SHEN Weiwei 1988, revised 1999; HU Ming 1996, revised 1997; and ZHU Hong 2001. The biography written by Zhu Wenhua was not available, so it is not clear if it has been revised.

ure of the May Fourth Movement, which in Marxist historiography was considered a vital turning point in the struggle against feudalism and imperialism. As early as 1949, on the occasion of the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the May Fourth Movement, two articles appeared in *Renmin ribao*<sup>9</sup> which displaced Hu Shi as the leader of that movement, and substituted him with Li Dazhao 李大釗. Li Dazhao thus became not only the official leader of the Movement, but also a forerunner of the following New Culture Movement. Criticisms of Hu Shi were instrumental in defining the new ideological positions and methods in the humanities, and contrasting them with the old scholars and their Western methods. In fact, texts of public criticism, self-criticism and repentance were a genre of academic literature that had already formed in Stalinist science.<sup>10</sup>

While the anti-Hu Shi criticisms in 1954 and 1955 began as more personal attacks, the articles soon took a more “academic” turn, and began discussing the humanities. There were three perspectives on Hu Shi’s life during the 1950s. These were: 1) autobiographical works containing recollections of past associations with Hu Shi; 2) anti-Hu Shi critiques; and 3) a subgroup of these perspectives, which consisted of positive assessments of Hu. Autobiographical writing during the 1950s, in general, was more or less reduced to self-criticism. Its aim was to present “summaries of thought” (*sixiang zongjie* 思想總結), detailing one’s attitudes to the communist revolution in the past and present, as well as what they will be in the future.<sup>11</sup> During the period of “thought reform” (*sixiang gaizao* 思想改造) beginning in 1951, self-criticisms were written to describe one’s past life in terms of one’s family background, political involvement before 1949 and associations with the “wrong” types of people. In light of the clash between Hu and the CCP, autobiographical writing on, and memoirs concerning him were reduced to mere confessions. For example, Gao Liang, a professor of history, admitted that before 1949, as a student he had admired Confucius and Hu Shi. Additionally, Hu Weibo stated that he was misled by Hu Shi’s lectures when studying at Yanjing University.<sup>12</sup>

The volumes of anti-Hu Shi critiques contained only one personal memory. A former student, Wu Jingchao, wrote an article entitled “Hu Shi and I – From Friend to Foe”.<sup>13</sup> After accusing Hu Shi in the manner that had become commonplace, Wu went on to recall his pre-1949 association with Hu. His memories were presented in accordance with the accepted approach of self-criticism. As a student at Qinghua University, along with others of the *Duli pinglun* 獨立

9 HE Ganzhi [1949] 2003; MAO Dun [1949] 2003.

10 KREMENTSOV 1997, p. 52.

11 Booklets even existed on how to write these summaries. See, for example, the one published by *Dagongbao chubanshe* as described in BAUER 1990, p. 693.

12 GAO Liang [1951] 2003, p. 33; HU Weibo [1951] 2003. Another example is You Guo’en. While at Peking University, You Guo’en, a student of Wen Yiduo, later confessed that he believed in Hu Shi’s method of reorganising the national heritage (YOU Guo’en [1951] 2003, p. 57).

13 WU Jingchao [1955] 1955.

評論 journal group, he went out twice a week for a meal with Hu Shi, who was the editor of the journal. Wu wrote that, along with the majority of students, he could only listen to the “great words” exchanged between Hu and important figures such as Ding Wenjiang 丁文將. These meetings led Wu and his colleagues to develop reactionary points of view. He also elaborated on how Hu had begged him to become an official in Jiang Jieshi’s government, and even how in 1948, Hu had pushed him and others to remain in contact with Jiang.<sup>14</sup>

These critiques offer few personal memories or concrete biographical details. Still, they may be considered biographical writing – albeit in a highly politicised form. Similar accusations were continually repeated throughout the campaign. These criticisms often included descriptions of Hu’s deeds and attitudes, quotations from his works, and inferences regarding his character. Such politicised biographical accounts would become more or less standard, and the sole source of information on Hu’s life. They were augmented with numerous quotations drawn from Hu’s autobiographical works.<sup>15</sup>

The third perspective on Hu Shi, the more positive subgroup of biographical material, represents the opinion commonly held on Hu Shi’s work in the academic community after 1949. While Hu Shi’s “incorrect” political views seem to have been undisputed, many academics in the mid-1950s nevertheless openly acknowledged his achievements in the fields of literary criticism, philosophy and historiography. They depicted him as a “wise man” (*shengren* 聖人) or a “(modern) Confucius” (*dangjin kongzi* 當今孔子). One example may be found in the first article to appear in the anti-Hu Shi campaign – an interview with Guo Moruo, then president of the Chinese Academy of Sciences:

Hu Shi’s bourgeois idealist academic perspective is still deeply rooted in the Chinese academic world. It has a great hidden power, not rare among high level intellectuals. In politics we have already proclaimed Hu Shi to be a war criminal, but in the eyes of some, Hu Shi is still a “Confucius” in the academic world.<sup>16</sup>

These positive opinions were used in anti-Hu Shi critiques as a rhetorical device, and were contrasted with his “real” character.<sup>17</sup>

According to one internal paper, in December of 1954, Mao instructed that while critiques should be written in simple language and propagate Marxist-Leninist thought, the political aim behind Hu Shi’s articles had to be exposed. The articles often cited crucial events in pre-1949 history, and then subsequently directed the reader’s attention to Hu’s behaviour during specific episodes as

14 Wu Jingchao [1955] 1955, pp. 110–111.

15 Such as *Wode qilu* 我的歧路, *Liuxue riji* 留學日記 or *Jieshao wo zijide sixiang* 介紹我自己的思想.

16 “Zhongguo kexueyuan Guo Moruo yuanzhang guanyu wenhua xueshuji ying kaizhan fandui zichanjieji cuowu sixiangde douzheng dui Guangming ribao jizhede tanhua” [1954] 1955, p.4.

17 See also the first article in this campaign: GUO Moruo [1954] 1955.

a way of exposing his flawed character. A series of anecdotes were generally employed for this purpose.

Hu Shi's personal life was rarely discussed, however the Marxist historian Hou Wailu did trace Hu Shi's family tree back to the Tang dynasty. His grandfather had deserted the Taiping army. His father instructed him to work hard, and his mother urged him, in fulfilling his ambitions, to rely solely on himself. Hu Shi therefore had a traditional upbringing. In his early years, he learned business skills from his uncles, who owned a teashop.<sup>18</sup> Most depictions of Hu Shi's life, however, started with his overseas studies, which lasted between 1910 and 1917, and particularly emphasised the financial support he received indirectly from the United States. The United States had returned the indemnity for the boxer rebellion to China so that programmes could be established for overseas students, but it was alleged that in truth this was intended to raise a new generation of Chinese leaders who would help bring China under the United States' control. According to these accounts, Hu came to worship the United States and studied under the guidance of the "most reactionary philosopher", John Dewey.<sup>19</sup>

Almost every article in the first two volumes of critiques, which represent the early phases of the anti-Hu Shi campaign, discussed his association with the May Fourth Movement. It was stated that on the eve of the Movement, Dewey came to visit China. Instead of staying in Beijing, at a crucial moment in the Movement, Hu went to receive Dewey in Shanghai.<sup>20</sup> Back in Beijing, the students did not attend Dewey's lectures, or any other lectures. Hu was quoted as having said that he "cannot stand it anymore" and that he was "so angry that he wants to talk about politics".<sup>21</sup> In addition, regarding the May Fourth and March Sixth Movements, which are known as "the great patriotic movements", Hu is supposed to have said that he "cannot bear it [the situation]." In some cases the following quotation from July 1917 was used: "I shall refuse to talk about politics for the next twenty years."<sup>22</sup> This quote, which contradicts his earlier statement, was cited as evidence that Hu Shi had indeed broken his promise shortly afterwards in 1919. Hu Shi urged the students to return to their studies, and even proposed to transfer Peking University to Shanghai.<sup>23</sup>

In the aftermath of the May Fourth Movement, Hu Shi warned intellectuals against communism, and to "research problems more, [and] talk about *isms* less" (*duo yanjiu xie wenti shao tan xie zhuyi* 多研究些問題少談些主義).<sup>24</sup> He

18 HOU Wailu [1955] 1955, pp.21–24.

19 WANG Zisong *et al.* [1954] 1955, p.20; ZENG Wenjing [1954] 1955, p.36.

20 For example WANG Zisong *et al.* [1954] 1955; LI Da [1954] 1955; XIA Kangnong [1955] 1955.

21 WANG Ruoshui [1954] 1955, pp.48–49.

22 WANG Zisong [1954] 1955, p.21. The quotation was drawn from Hu Shi's *Wode qilu* 我的歧路.

23 ZENG Wenjing [1954] 1955, p.38.

24 These words, or rather the title of Hu Shi's article, are quoted in most of the articles in volume one, two and three.

was accused of hindering and misleading the Movement.<sup>25</sup> At least some of the authors stated that Hu belonged to the right wing of the May Fourth Movement, which had taken a reactionary path.<sup>26</sup> In his harsh criticism of Hu, Li Da even denied that Hu had participated in the May Fourth Movement at all, reducing his influence to a virtually non-existent level. Li Da stated that before the Movement, Hu attended the funeral of his mother, and afterwards went on to Shanghai to receive Dewey.<sup>27</sup> Hu's role in the literary revolution was also discredited, among other means, by showing that he promoted the vernacular language as a mere counterrevolutionary instrument, enabling the spread of the US reactionary culture that he had brought back from his studies at Columbia University.<sup>28</sup>

Regarding Hu's political views, Li Da went as far as to state that he was against the 1911 revolution, and in favour of Yuan Shikai's decision to accept Japan's 21 demands.<sup>29</sup> Hu was said to have mourned Yuan's death.<sup>30</sup> Jiang Jieshi and Hu Shi were often referred to as the alliance of "a scholar and a soldier" (*yiwén yiwǔ* 一文一武).<sup>31</sup> He was alleged to have "shamelessly" (*wúchǐ* 無恥) said to Jiang that his constitution was the most democratic in the world. While others were infuriated when an American soldier allegedly raped a Peking University student, Hu was said to have commented that this was "a purely legal matter". Though Jiang Jieshi had already fled after liberation, Hu continued to try and to spread his anti-Soviet and anti-communist liberalism, stating that "in the Soviet Union there is bread but no freedom. In the US there is bread and also freedom. If the CCP comes to China, there will be neither."<sup>32</sup> Different examples were cited in support of the accusation that he promoted the "(ism of the) good people's government" (*hǎorén zhèngfǔ [zhuyì]* 好人政府[主義]). Beginning in 1922, and during the warlord era,<sup>33</sup> Hu continued to speak about the "good people's government", as well as "the foreign investors' hope for peace

25 For example: ZENG Wenjing [1954] 1955, p.37. This complies with Yu Yingshi's observation of the Marxist interpretation of the May Fourth Movement as an "enlightenment", rather than with Hu Shi's "renaissance". It tries to follow the European pattern of the French revolution, in which a small group had also followed purely intellectual aims (Yü, Yingshi 2001, pp.299–323).

26 For example: YANG Zhengdian [1954] 1955, p.121.

27 Li Da [1954] 1955, p.58.

28 ZENG Wenjiang [1954] 1955, p.39.

29 Li Da [1955] 1955, pp.14–16. Unlike other sources, Li Da did not give sources for these quotations.

30 ZENG Wenjing [1954] 1955, p.37.

31 See, for example, GUO Moruo [1954] 1955, p.10; WANG Zisong *et al.* [1954] 1955, p.35; HE Lin [1955] 1955, p.100.

32 Li Da [1955] 1955, p.15.

33 WANG Zisong *et al.* [1954] 1955, p.26.

and unity in China”,<sup>34</sup> especially immediately following the second assembly of the CCP, which ran under the slogan “against international imperialism”.

Hu Shi was most often branded “reformist” and “liberalist” (*ziyouzhuyizhe* 自由主義者), as anti-patriotic, and as a “slave” or “hatchet man” (*zougou* 走狗) to US imperialism.<sup>35</sup> His opting for “gradual reform” (*yidian yidi gailiang* 一點一滴改良), which was criticised in most of the articles in volumes one to three, was considered a direct threat to the communist revolutionary project. Even his publications were seen in a political light. He was considered an example of the proverbial “servant that crossed the river” (*guojiang zuzi* 過江卒子), hinting at Hu’s time as ambassador to the USA:

The servant that has crossed the river wanted to carry out his duties with complete devotion, so as to unite the triad of imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucratism into one government. For this reason, Hu Shi rounded up Jiang Yan, Ding Wenjiang and others and established *Duli pinglun* [...] in May of 1932.<sup>36</sup>

Hu Shi’s student, Yu Pingbo 俞平伯, was also criticised, and often seen as an example of how Hu poisoned (*du* 毒) China’s youth and the academic world.<sup>37</sup> Hu’s scientific methods were discredited at great length. His textual research was said to have twisted Chinese historical facts, and to have reduced history to the activities of a mere few. Hu’s intention was seen as being “to lure the young away from Marx, Lenin and Stalin” so that they would “bury their heads in heaps of old paper”.<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, Hu was accused of reorganising Chinese heritage by means of pragmatism, staining it with his “idealist poison”.<sup>39</sup> In later articles, Hu was even reproached for placing little value on China’s great heritage, and opting for “total westernisation”. Thus dehumanised, Hu was laid aside until the end of the Cultural Revolution, and was not given any further attention.

### 3. Memoirs of Hu’s contemporaries after the Cultural Revolution

The publication of memoirs by politicians and academics increased in the 1980s. After decades of self-criticism, prominent figures recovered their pride. In 1987, the *Renmin chubanshe* drew up a manual – aimed mainly at elites – describing how one should write memoirs. In its foreword, it classified memoirs as primary historical sources.<sup>40</sup>

34 ZENG Wenjiang [1954] 1955, p.39.

35 For example: XIA Kangnong [1955] 1955.

36 LI Da [1954] 1955, p.63.

37 For example: WANG Ruoshui [1954a] 1955, p.76; CHEN Yuanhui [1954] 1955, p.93.

38 For example: CHEN Yuanhui [1954] 1955, pp.101–102.

39 XIA Kangnong [1955] 1955, p.21.

40 For example: TIAN Liu / HONG Weilei 1987. In 1986, the journal *Zhuanji wenxue* 傳記文學 was published (BAUER 1990, pp.739–741).

In 1998, Zhu Wenhua, who in the past had written other works on Hu Shi, published a volume consisting of Hu's contemporaries' memories of him, and Hu's memories of them.<sup>41</sup> Some of these were purely personal experiences, and described their associations and working relationship with Hu. Many referred – directly or indirectly – to the accusations levelled at Hu during the campaign in the 1950s, and proceeded to reconsider these accusations. This indicates a different attitude to Hu Shi, and the possible beginning of a new period of interpretations. In contrast to the forced memories of the 1950s and the Cultural Revolution, this new period was characterised by greater freedom for recollection. Colleagues and students were free to openly contemplate their traumatic experiences during the time when they were attacked for having associated with Hu.

In his foreword, Zhu Wenhua reiterated the view, common during this new period, that Hu Shi was a “reformer” – now the word was intended to have positive connotations. He explained that Hu Shi took the stance of a liberal intellectual and criticised the government of the GMD. This also reflected the shift from the completely negative implications liberalism had previously, to the more neutral and even positive attitude of public intellectuals in the 1990s.<sup>42</sup> In addition, Zhu acknowledged, without going into detail, that Hu had made special contributions to China. He thus had to be seen as an important person who had strong points as well as shortcomings.<sup>43</sup> In the second foreword, the eminent scholar Ji Xianlin – a contemporary of Hu Shi – described memory as a “*cartharsis*”. Since memoirs of and by prominent persons were more complex, they resulted in a higher grade of *cartharsis*, becoming a *cartharsis* for everyone.<sup>44</sup>

Luo Ergang, Hu's private secretary, had written a confession in 1955 that conformed to the general pattern of anti-Hu Shi criticism outlined above, describing how Hu Shi had “poisoned” him in two ways.<sup>45</sup> However, he later produced a completely different article, in which he expressed deep admiration for his teacher, who had patiently guided him through his studies.<sup>46</sup> The story of how Hu Shi had criticised his work *Tai ping tianguo* is told in two different ways:

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41 The texts of the volume consist of selections from other works. Other works by Zhu Wenhua are: ZHU Wenhua 朱文華 1988. *Hu shi pingzhuan* 胡適評傳. Chongqing: Chongqing chubanshe; ZHU Wenhua 朱文華 1991. *Lu Xun, Hu Shi, Guo Moruo lianhuan bijiao pingzhuan* 魯迅, 胡適, 郭沫若連環比較評傳. Shanghai: Shanghai wenyi chubanshe.

42 Cheek describes the selective adaptation to this formerly vilified and suppressed term: CHEEK 2006.

43 ZHU Wenhua 1998a, pp. 1–4.

44 Ji Xianlin 1998, pp. 1–3.

45 Second, Hu Shi “poisoned” him because he taught him to do “textual research for the sake of textual research”. LUO Ergang [1955] 2003.

46 LUO Ergang 羅爾綱 [1958?] 1998, pp. 93–106. 1958 is probably a misprint of 1985. At a time when the political campaigns were in full swing, it does not seem possible to have published such a memoir.



How I was poisoned by Hu Shi's reactionary academic thought is a long story. He taught me that the writing of history must transcend politics and class, be from an "objective" point of view, and be independent in order [for one] to be a historian. He betrayed me. *Taiping tianguo*, which was published in 1937, was written according to his perspective. When Hu Shi read the little booklet he was very angry. He scolded me very much and said that I only showed the good side of the *Taiping tianguo*, and that I did not speak about the dark side.<sup>47</sup>

Later on, Luo described his teacher in a different light, this time addressing him by his first name:

The target [readership] of the book [*Taiping tianguo*] I had written was middle school students. For this reason, a lot of material did not come into it, nor did some of the academic textual criticism. When it was in print, I sent a copy to teacher Shizhi [Hu Shi]. He read it and reproached me: "You have written this book praising the *Taiping tianguo*. You have not written about the disorder in modern Chinese history that issued forth from the *Taiping tianguo*, [which resulted in] it not recovering its vitality for several decades. As a historian, you should not be subjective. You should show the truth in its entirety. If you leave out one side, then it will become a one-sided record."<sup>48</sup>

We then read of Hu's character:

In teaching me, Teacher Shizhi was often strict like this. His strictness was not as frightening as the summer sun. It can be better compared to the mild sun in spring. It was something that inspired people to renew their vitality, and taught people to be affected, to exert oneself.<sup>49</sup>

Luo later wrote with great devotion about his teacher, who was willing to read and critique all of his work before publication. Luo later became a famous expert on the Taiping rebellion, which a contemporary attributed to Hu Shi's earlier encouragement.<sup>50</sup>

Deng Guangming, a student of Hu Shi, and his assistant, explicitly referred to the accusations made against him in the 1950s. During the anti-Hu Shi campaign, Deng contributed to discussions on the history of Peking University, which were later published. His criticisms were directed toward the reactionary influence of Hu's academic thought. However, Deng refrained from making personal attacks against Hu, arguing solely from an ideological perspective.<sup>51</sup>

47 LUO Ergang [1955] 2003, p.335.

48 LUO Ergang [1958?] 1998, p. 101.

49 LUO Ergang [1958?] 1998, p. 103.

50 SHI Yuangao 1985, p.86. Contrary to Luo Ergang's confession, Shi stated that Luo was the private teacher of Hu's children (*ibid*, p.85). Shi further described Luo as someone who for "the whole day buried his head in books". (SHI Yuangao 1985, p.85). Incidentally, Luo employed a similar expression in his confession regarding Hu Shi, stating that "he [Hu Shi] wanted the young to flee from politics and to bury themselves in a heap of old books." (LUO Ergang [1958?] 1998, p.336). This was an expression commonly used during the campaign to discredit Hu's intentions.

51 DENG Guangming ([1955] 2003) "Pipan Hu Shi zhuguan weixinlunde lishiguan yu fangfalun: Beijing daxue lishixi jiaoshi zuotanhui fayan tiyao 批胡適主觀唯心論的歷史觀與方法主觀唯

In his memoir, he characterised Hu as a “pure scholar”, and as someone who “has absolutely nothing to do with politics”. Deng drew an example from the diary of Wang Shijie 王世傑, which also described his association with the GMD. When Jiang Jieshi asked Hu to become president, Hu allegedly said that even if he took up the position, Jiang would stay in control. Hu saw this as advantageous because the seclusion of his new residence would provide better conditions while conducting his research.<sup>52</sup> He also indirectly referred to the accusation that Hu wanted to dissuade the youth from participating in the revolution, and poison them with his thought. Deng reasserted that

throughout his life, Hu Shi was loyal to scholarship. It is said that he fought with the young people of the CCP, but there was no such thing. He only hoped that the young would succeed in learning. He had no intention of drawing the young away from the revolution.<sup>53</sup>

Deng used the example of Qian Jiaju 千家駒 to show that Hu was impartial when it came to academic work. Hu introduced Qian, a member of the CCP, to the Institute for Social Studies, and even refuted his colleague’s objections on the basis of Qian’s political background.<sup>54</sup>

In his 1955 critique, Deng added a commonly used “battle cry”:

For this reason, we have to make even greater efforts to armour our minds with the ideology of the proletarian class, to keep a watchful eye, and to completely erase the academic poison of the Hu Shi faction.<sup>55</sup>

In his later memoir, Deng stressed that Hu Shi’s influence was not as great among the younger generation at that time, since he did not teach in many schools.<sup>56</sup> This seems contradictory to the perception of Hu Shi as a new Confucius in the 1950s.

Regarding Hu’s academic achievements, Deng stated that Hu tried to (re-)organise the Chinese national heritage. He provided academics and researchers with a useful instrument when he introduced vernacular language. This again is different in emphasis to his accusations made in 1955 when he claimed that Hu Shi denied Chinese tradition by selectively choosing small parts of Chinese culture, such as foot binding, opium or *baguwen* to represent Chinese culture in its entirety, and to support the commonly criticised “total westernisation”.<sup>57</sup>

Deng further stressed that Hu paid special attention to both the humanities and to science, not only at Peking University but throughout the nation. Even

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心論的歷史觀與方法” [Criticism on Hu Shi’s subjective idealistic historical conception and methodology: abstracts of papers given at a symposium by professors of the department of history at Beijing University], in: *Gushi kao* 古史考 [Investigations into ancient history]. Haikou: Hainan Chubanshe, vol. 1:339-350. First published in *GMRB* 1955/6/1.

52 DENG Guangming [1995] 1998.

53 DENG Guangming [1995] 1998, p. 116.

54 DENG Guangming [1995] 1998, pp. 116–117.

55 DENG Guangming [1995] 1998, p. 342.

56 DENG Guangming [1995] 1998, p. 118.

57 DENG Guangming [1995] 1998, p. 341; DENG Guangming [1995] 1998, p. 117.

on the day of his death, he had attended a meeting at the Academia Sinica of former students who had spent time in the United States.<sup>58</sup> In his story, Deng characterised Hu Shi as an academic of high ethical standards: Deng had written an article on Xin Jiakuan 辛稼軒, which had already been worked on by a certain Zheng, who was a student of Liang Qixiong 梁啟雄, the younger brother of Liang Qichao 梁啟超. Zheng wrote a letter to Hu, asking him for assistance in publishing his manuscript, which he had worked on for seven years. Hu told Deng to discontinue what he had been working on and gave him the draft. After reading the manuscript, Deng pointed out that he had accumulated a great deal more material than Zheng. When meeting Zheng, Hu discovered that although Deng was just at the beginning of his research, he had greater potential, and he thus supported him in continuing his work instead of Zheng.<sup>59</sup>

Zhou Ruchang's story differs greatly from the others. He began by describing his ambivalent position. On the one hand, he was a "disciple" of Hu Shi, yet on the other he was also a harsh critic. This reflects the two parts into which his memoir can be divided. The first part concerns his personal relationship with Hu Shi. Zhou took a mild attitude towards Hu, presenting him as an attentive, dignified and lenient teacher. According to the memoir, Zhou discussed his work with Hu, and received Hu's support. Hu continued to praise Zhou as a good student even after an attempt to discredit him, when someone showed Hu Zhou's work on *Hongloumeng*, which he published in 1953.<sup>60</sup> In the second part, Zhou discussed the differences between Hu's approach to research and his own. At the same time, the tenor of his account is completely different. This part contains some of the rhetoric and expressions found in the anti-Hu Shi critiques, such as apocalyptic prophecies:

I decided to make a Xueqin 雪芹 *zhenben*, substituting this *chengyiben* edition that harms people and deceives the world (*hairesn qishi* 害人欺世).<sup>61</sup>

His extensive use of quotation marks, either for emphasis, or to show the absurd meaning of Hu Shi's words, is another feature common to the texts from 1954–1955. He displayed his enlightenment regarding Hu in a fashion so typical for the style of self-criticism in the 1950s:

I [...] thought that the knowledge of those famous great people like Hu Shi was limited, and should not be blindly followed and believed.<sup>62</sup>

In addition, Zhou stated that

His [Hu Shi's] point of view (*guandian* 觀點) and attitude (*taidu* 態度) towards *Hongloumeng* "disappointed" me.<sup>63</sup>

58 DENG Guangming [1995] 1998, p. 117.

59 DENG Guangming [1995] 1998, pp. 111–112.

60 ZHOU Ruchang [1995] 1998, pp. 119–124.

61 ZHOU Ruchang [1995], p. 126.

62 ZHOU Ruchang [1995], p. 126.

63 ZHOU Ruchang [1995], p. 126.

Zhou also resorted to the polemical, rhetorical questioning that was common during the campaign. After explaining the “right position”, the author’s question would be used to denounce Hu’s point of view, and show its absurdity:

May I ask, is this not an anti-thesis? Does it have to be spoken, written and employed [as Hu has stated]?<sup>64</sup>

During the campaign, Zhou Ruchang, along with Yu Pingbo, were considered prime examples of how Hu Shi had “poisoned” the younger generation. Zhou’s memoir might also be considered a late attempt to emancipate himself from Hu Shi by asserting his different point of view.

Another critic, Wang Junong, had met Hu Shi several times. He mostly referred, however, to the second-hand memories of his contemporaries, which portrayed Hu as an academic while also emphasising his shortcomings. For example, his colleague Li Xinbai said that Hu was unable to write short, accessible articles.<sup>65</sup> Wang portrayed him as a lovable and humorous person. He told of how the director of the *Dongya tushuguan* in Shanghai, where Wang was working, had invited Hu to a New Year’s party. Hu was so touched that he brought individual presents for his host and the staff, each of which Wang meticulously listed.<sup>66</sup> Wang also spoke of Hu Shi’s political stance. Since he had missed Hu’s lecture at Sun Zhongshan University, his fellow students told him later. Hu had allegedly said that the US policy towards China was good. The United States had returned the indemnity for the boxer rebellion to assist with China’s national development. Upon being questioned on the supposed unfavourable policies of the United States towards China in the past, Hu had said this belonged to history. This caused a great stir, both among the students, and the director of the university.<sup>67</sup>

Bing Xin’s memoir of Hu Shi is rather vague, as she only came into contact with him on two occasions: Once, when introducing him at a conference in the 1920s, and again when Hu Shi was a witness for her fiancé at their engagement ceremony. Despite these meetings, she emphasised that she did not know Hu Shi personally, and so after 29 years of acquaintance, could not feel aggrieved upon his death.<sup>68</sup> Her repeated statement that she did not know him seems somewhat overemphasised, and almost echoes back to the earlier period of accusations against Hu.

The memoirs of two eminent republican era scholars, Liang Shuming and Ji Xianlin, are more outspoken in reference to the 1950s accusations. It seems that scholars of this generation were beginning to recover their former roles as spiritual leaders in general, and in the reinterpretation of Hu Shi in particular. Writ-

<sup>64</sup> ZHOU Ruchang [1995], p.128.

<sup>65</sup> WANG Junong [1989] 1998, pp.45–46. Wang Junong’s dates are not known, but in his article he stated that Hu Shi was older than him (WANG Junong [1989] 1998, p.45).

<sup>66</sup> WANG Junong [1989] 1998, p.47.

<sup>67</sup> WANG Junong [1989] 1998, pp.46–47.

<sup>68</sup> BING Xin [1991] 1998, pp.38–40.

ten at the age of 94, Liang Shuming's memoir of Hu might be considered a stubborn reassertion of Hu's importance in recent Chinese history. Liang, who had also been harshly criticised during the 1950s, stated that Hu had been the first to employ the vernacular language on a wide scale, and that it was because of him that literary Chinese had been abolished. Liang even went a step further, stating that "Hu Shi's achievements were great. Bringing forward vernacular literature, he promoted the New Cultural Movement [!]."69 On a personal level, he described Hu as someone who was adept at writing articles and giving speeches. Liang commented that Hu's textual research was more superficial, however, and cited his Buddhist studies as an example. Like Luo, he saw Hu as an inspiration to others. His fear of the communist party was his weakest point.<sup>70</sup>

Ji Xianlin's memoir is the most outspoken. He not only tried to restore Hu's reputation, but also took the opportunity to comment on, and criticise intellectuals and politics after 1949. He likened dialectics to a sleight of hand, which he also claimed to have played, although he commented that it made him sweat to think about it now.<sup>71</sup> He stated that he had been greatly irritated by a newspaper article which asserted that Hu Shi "throughout his life has followed the GMD and Jiang Jieshi". Ji added that around that time, intellectuals had invented new terms such as "a slight scolding [can be of] great help" (*xiaoma dabangzhu* 小罵大幫助), referring to Hu's relationship with Jiang Jieshi.<sup>72</sup> Ji denied the accusation, and related an incident that occurred during the student uprisings. He recalled that when some students had been imprisoned, Hu personally went to the person responsible, Li Zongwen, and secured their release.<sup>73</sup>

Ji confirmed that although Hu Shi did not welcome the CCP's rise to power, he was also not a member of the GMD, and only admired the US for its democracy and experimentalism. Ji recalled that Hu had even dared to criticise the eminent Sun Yat-sen, angering Jiang Jieshi and resulting in him harshly criticising Hu. In fact, Ji felt that Hu propagated the "government of the good people" precisely because he thought that the GMD was not such a government. Ji continued to add that these examples "clearly show that Hu Shi was not a loyal slave of the GMD and Jiang Jieshi."<sup>74</sup> According to Ji, Hu was not even interested in politics, instead preferring an academic life. In contrast to Deng, he saw in Hu Shi a slightly "confused scholar" who Jiang Jieshi had tried to exploit for his own benefit by asking him to become president.<sup>75</sup> Ji saw him as

69 LIANG Shuming [1987] 1998, p. 4.

70 LIANG Shuming [1987] 1998, pp. 3–5.

71 Ji Xianlin [1996] 1998, p. 136. This was written in 1987.

72 Ji Xianlin [1996] 1998, p. 135.

73 Ji Xianlin [1996] 1998, p. 138.

74 Ji Xianlin [1996] 1998, p. 135.

75 Ji Xianlin [1996] 1998, p. 137.

having a complex and contradictory character. Although he followed Jiang Jieshi to Taiwan, he did not completely agree with the GMD. As Ji stated:

For this reason, it is not in accordance with the facts to say that Hu Shi was a servile dependent of US imperialism, or to say that “throughout his life he followed the GMD and Jiang Jieshi”.<sup>76</sup>

In comparison to the memoirs published in 1998, those contained in the 2003 collection are less tainted by the anti-Hu Shi campaign.<sup>77</sup> On the whole, they consist of milder, more personal recollections. Ji Xianlin’s later judgements of Hu’s political views were less severe, and of a more personal nature.<sup>78</sup> Ji portrayed Hu Shi as inspiring and enthusiastic. One evening, he had given Hu Shi one of his articles to read. Hu read it through that night, then complimented Ji on his “absolutely convincing” conclusion.<sup>79</sup> He restated his position that Hu was against communism, but also against Sun Yat-sen’s “Three Principles of the People”. He asserted that Hu was helpful to his students. Once, as soon as he had heard that a student had been imprisoned, he took his car and drove straight to the police station, demanding – and securing – the student’s release. In terms of politics, Ji did describe Hu as a “servant that crossed the river”, yet at the same time, he distanced himself from the expression by adding quotation marks. Academically, Ji characterized Hu as a bookworm, who would rather neglect appointments than leave an interesting discussion.<sup>80</sup>

In the 1990s, Luo Ergang remembered Hu Shi in greater detail. He provided many anecdotes of a personal nature, and gave his personal assessment of Hu.<sup>81</sup> He described him as a disciplined person who worked during set hours, not giving in to pleasures other than his academic work and intellectual discussions, especially with Fu Sinian 傅斯年, who would visit him even on Sundays when Hu Shi usually did not receive guests. He told many anecdotes on topics such as his travels with Hu Shi and his family,<sup>82</sup> and how Mei Lanfang 梅蘭芳 had asked Hu to advise him on American tastes before going on a tour of the United States.<sup>83</sup> He even joked that Hu might have become a communist if only he had had time to meet the Soviet delegation instead of Chen Duxiu 陳獨秀.<sup>84</sup>

Qian Jiaju confirmed this latter anecdote.<sup>85</sup> In his letter, he admitted that it was the first time he had spoken about his relationship with Hu Shi – a subject which during the anti-Hu Shi campaign, he would not have dared to mention.

76 Ji Xianlin [1996] 1998, pp.138–139.

77 Zi Tong 2003.

78 Ji Xianlin [1999] 2003, pp.52–63.

79 Ji Xianlin [1999] 2003, p.57.

80 Ji Xianlin [1999] 2003, p.58.

81 LUO Ergang 2003, pp.37–51.

82 LUO Ergang 2003, pp.47–48.

83 LUO Ergang 2003, pp.44–45.

84 LUO Ergang 2003, p.37.

85 QIAN Jiaju [1987] 2003, pp.69–72. The letter was written to Tang Degang 唐德剛 in 1985.

This would have resulted either in him being criticised, or being forced to criticise Hu Shi, even if half-heartedly. Again, Hu Shi was described as an enthusiastic teacher; after reading Qian's article, Hu had immediately wanted to know him. After his graduation, he recommended Qian for research work, in spite of his reputation at the university as a political "trouble-maker". Later, Hu wrote a letter of recommendation to the dean of the economics faculty, who had expressed reservations about Qian. In the end, Qian received the position.<sup>86</sup> In Qian's assessment, "Hu Shi has a definite place in Chinese cultural history, a fact that could not be erased by any political force."<sup>87</sup> Yet when comparing Hu to the literary icon, Lu Xun, Qian found him to be comparatively superficial, due to the influence of experimentalism. This, however, was not stated with the same level of vitriol that had characterised the anti-Hu Shi campaign.

In accordance with the changing political perceptions of Hu, recent memoirs are more relaxed, and make less reference to the earlier period of critique, or at least maintain greater distance from it. This new atmosphere can accommodate more personal remembrances, allowing Hu to be rehumanised after decades of public condemnation. In 1999, Geng Yunzhi edited Hu Shi's autobiographical material, again allowing Hu to speak with his own voice.<sup>88</sup>

#### 4. Biographies of Hu Shi

In addition to the above collections of memoirs, other works on Hu Shi were gradually published, which grew to become a wave of works by 1985.<sup>89</sup> None of the authors of the biographies introduced below knew Hu Shi personally. However, two of them, Bai Ji'an, who had graduated in 1956, and Yi Zhuxian, who was five years his junior in 1961, were close to the anti-Hu Shi campaign. Zhu Wenhua graduated in the 1970s. Shen Weiwei, Hu Ming and Zhu Hong were younger, having left university in the 1980s. These authors broke new ground after decades of vilifying Hu Shi, and of heavily politicised discourse. While expressing loyalty to the CCP, they revised past judgements, and re-evaluated Hu Shi's academic accomplishments.

The short abstract to Zhu Wenhua's biography legitimised the re-evaluation of Hu Shi by arguing, with the new political credo of the post-Cultural Revolution reforms, the author overthrows these past simplified views of complete denial. Upholding the "search for truth in facts" (*shishi qiushi* 实事求是), he acknowledges as well as criticises Hu Shi.

86 QIAN Jiaju [1987] 2003, pp. 70–71.

87 QIAN Jiaju [1987] 2003, p. 72.

88 GENG Yunzhi *et al.* 1999.

89 For a list of works on Hu Shi through to the mid-1980s, see: ZHU Wenhua 1988, pp. 371–374. In 1984, the publishing house *Shanghai renmin chubanshe*, in cooperation with the *Huadong shifan daxue chubanshe*, compiled an index of Hu Shi's works (*Hu Shi zhuyi xinian mulu yu fenlei suoyin* 1984).

Zhu considered Hu Shi's "bold assumptions and careful search for proof" (*dadande jiashe xiaoxinde qiuzheng* 大膽的假設小心的求證) – which had become taboo in the academic world of the PRC – to be a valuable method, which should be combined with the "search for truth in facts".<sup>90</sup> Zhu went so far as to conclude, on the basis of historical materialism, that Hu Shi belonged to the class of new man that Mao had defined. He, as did Yi,<sup>91</sup> quoted Snow's work, which seems to be his only source for this information, to restate that Mao held Hu Shi in high esteem.<sup>92</sup>

In a similar vein, Ren Fangqiu 任訪秋, a former student at Peking University in the 1930s, acknowledged Hu Shi's positive contribution to academic research, but also stressed the importance of the anti-Hu Shi critiques in the 1950s for the establishment of a Marxist academic system. However, Shen stated that in his efforts to describe Hu's accomplishments in modern literature, and Hu's attempts at "reorganising the heritage" (*zhengli guogu* 整理國故), he was now "searching for the truth in the facts". He even went so far as to employ Hu's method of obtaining proof when verifying objective facts.<sup>93</sup> In his afterword to the first edition, Bai also praised the political stance of the CCP, which had allowed for the "search for truth in facts" in academic culture, and hence his study of Hu Shi.<sup>94</sup>

In the mid-1990s, well-known Hu Shi scholar Geng Yunzhi offered three perspectives for discussing research on Hu Shi, which are also apparent in the biographies discussed here: 1) an approach that is capable of offering both criticism and praise; 2) offering different perspectives instead of ideological critiques; and 3) accepting the knowledge and experience of historical persons based on historical material.<sup>95</sup>

The biographies from this time can be divided into two groups. The authors of the first group dealt with his life and work in the context of Chinese intellectual history.<sup>96</sup> They took up the themes from the critiques of the 1950s, which lent structure to their research, and guided their re-evaluations. These included pragmatism, liberalism, the "good peoples' government", Dewey's visit to China, his participation in the May Fourth Movement, "reorganising heritage", his refusal to discuss politics, and his classification as a "servant that crossed the river". In spite of their different judgements, they all acknowledged Hu Shi's accomplishments and his importance for Chinese history.

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90 ZHU Wenhua 1988, p.102.

91 YI Zhuxian 1994, p.142.

92 ZHU Wenhua 1988, p.156.

93 SHEN Weiwei 1988, pp.5–7.

94 BAI Ji'an 1987, p.103.

95 GENG Yunzhi 1996, p.311. This is a collection of his articles on Hu Shi, whom he described as the one of the most influential thinkers and academics in his introduction, entitled "Rediscovering Hu Shi".

96 ZHU Wenhua 1988; BAI Ji'an 1993; YI Zhuxian 1994; SHEN Weiwei 1999.



In his earlier foreword, Yi stated that although Hu may have been considered a “reactionary scholar” in the 1940s, in fact he was a very “complex personality” and “a rather influential historical figure”.<sup>97</sup> Shen went further, designating Hu a “great master of liberalism” who, like the Marxist Li Dazhao, searched for strategies to save China. He even employed Marxist terminology to rehabilitate Hu. He thus stated that Hu had used the “weapon” of experimentalism, and that after the May Fourth Movement, his reorganisation of Chinese heritage served as an “anti-feudalistic slogan” in the “revolutionary battle”.<sup>98</sup> In summarising what Yi called the ‘academic discussion’ – defying 1950s insinuations that Hu Shi discussed politics – Yi criticised Hu for taking the way of reform, and reiterated Li Dazhao’s critiques. However, he also came to his defence, explaining that Hu Shi did not know enough about Marxism.<sup>99</sup> Zhu considered Hu Shi’s experimentalism to be positive because it was Chinese. Zhu here availed himself of an argument in favour of parts of idealistic philosophy during the debate on Chinese philosophical heritage in 1957. For his experimentalism, he stated, Hu Shi had merely borrowed the “rational elements” of Dewey’s pragmatism.<sup>100</sup> Like Shen, Zhu stated that it had had a positive function in the criticism of feudalism, although he criticised Hu for relying solely on experimentalism.<sup>101</sup>

The works of Shen and Zhu were comparatively academic in style, and included many footnotes in support of their arguments. In addition, they employed a wealth of material from PRC, Taiwanese and international scholarship, as well as allowing Hu Shi to speak for himself. The work of the more senior Bai at times still had a polemical tone, and even occasionally resorted to the vocabulary of the anti-Hu Shi campaign, to which he had been a witness. He stated that Hu Shi had not taken part in the May Fourth Movement, but that he had propagated the literary revolution and the New Culture Movement, from which it had gained its inspiration. He strongly condemned Hu for opposing the students who gave up their studies to fight during the Sino-Japanese war, stating:

Who says that one can sacrifice a piece of the country, but not sacrifice a few days of life in the seminar room? At one time, to give up classes to go travelling, and in times of war, to sell the fate [of one’s country so one can] bury one’s head in the laboratory – there are no two such options.<sup>102</sup>

Bai’s biography shared with Yi’s work another feature prominent in the 1950s: The ample use of anecdotes, with few references, to strengthen his arguments. In fact, Bai’s work can be considered a link to the second group of novelised biographies. These biographies reflect developments that began in the 1990s.

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97 Yi 1987, p. 1.

98 SHEN Weiwei 1999, pp. 129–131.

99 Yi Zhuxian 1994, p. 242.

100 The papers of this conference were published by the *Zhexue yanjiu bianjibu* in 1957.

101 ZHU Wenhua 1988, pp. 60–62.

102 BAI Ji’an 1993, p. 372.

Following the economic reforms, publishing houses lost their state subsidiaries and had to look for other financial resources. Hence, novelised biographies of historical figures were published, which were successful in attracting wide readerships.

An example is Hu Ming's biography, in which he takes a different path, intending to "draw a picture of Hu Shi" in all his facets. He stated that during the anti-Hu Shi campaign, Hu went from being a "modern Confucius" and a "wise man" to a "traitor of his country" and a "public enemy". Rather than beatify or demonise Hu, Hu Ming portrayed him as a man of "flesh and blood". In contrast with former assessments of Hu Shi, Hu Ming described him as a man of contradictions, with human flaws. He seized the reader's attention using sensational tactics, making opposing statements that were hitherto unheard of. For example, Hu wrote an essay speaking out against the traditional Chinese game *majiang*, yet he allegedly liked to occasionally play it. Hu Ming almost turned Hu into a revolutionary:

He was against violent terror, but when he was angry he could also cry out "The bomb! The bomb! Get going! Get going!" He was against the political revolution, but also cried out "Overthrow the undisciplined government, begin a new revolution!"<sup>103</sup>

The author, however, did not prove these observations. In his table of contents, we find headings employing the usual expressions, such as "good peoples' government", "the servant that crossed the river" and "my son", rather than the language of the first group.

Zhu Hong's four volumes were similar. Apart from quoting Hu Shi's works, they contain a wealth of anecdotes and dialogues, although without providing further references. There is no information as to Zhu Hong's intentions, or his sources of information. The introduction is characteristic of the style of this kind of biography, opening with a story. Adding mystery and sensation, it tells of how on July 2 1972, "under the summer sun", a group of short-sleeved Red Guards entered a village in Shangzhuang, and opened the grave of Hu Zhuan 胡傳. The author explained that according to legend, the grave should have contained a golden head. Yet neither a golden head, nor a real one, was found. The story ends by stating that "this headless Hu Zhuan was Hu Shi's father, Hu Tiehua 胡鐵花 ..."<sup>104</sup>

Zhu Hong's biography is written from different perspectives, and switches from Hu Shi to those directing accusations against him, or to a third person. In the table of contents, we find even more references to criticisms from the 1950s, in a popularised style: "research problems more, [and] talk about *isms* less",<sup>105</sup> "you are just a counterrevolutionary",<sup>106</sup> "the servant that crossed the

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103 HU Ming 1997, p.7.

104 ZHU Hong 2001.

105 ZHU Hong 2001, *juan* 1, chap. 12.3, p.293.

106 ZHU Hong 2001, *juan* 2, chap. 10.2, p.613.

river”,<sup>107</sup> “Hu Shi talking rubbish” (*Hu Shide hushuo* 胡適的胡說),<sup>108</sup> and “Zhou Ruchang can be considered my disciple”.<sup>109</sup> This proves that the collective memory from the 1950s still remains, or is at least being revived for the purpose of sensationalism. The author mentioned the anti-Hu Shi campaigns, and employed expressions such as “counterrevolutionary”, which for many intellectuals are tainted with the traumatic memories of their experiences during this period. With the benefit of historical distance, especially in Hu Ming’s and Zhu Hong’s biographies, these terms were employed in a nostalgic sense, and carried with them the emotional tenor of bad times that are now over.

Two streams of biography can be identified on the basis of the works by the younger authors discussed here. The first consists of critical biographies; these aim to present an intellectual history which assesses Hu Shi’s life and work in an objective manner, even including material from Taiwan and abroad.<sup>110</sup> The more recent, novelised works – which still aspire to be biographies given their references to the traditional Chinese “*zhuan* 傳” genre – are more emotional, subjective accounts of Hu’s life. The second consists of memoirs written from a more personal angle. Both types of biography, however, employ anecdotes to achieve their goals. This tendency has been reinforced by recent works which take particular aspects of Hu Shi’s private and emotional life and bring them into focus.<sup>111</sup> Like the earlier, critical texts, emotions are raised through the use of sensationalist styles, and by the inclusion of numerous anecdotes. In the novelised biographies, devices that had been used to make negative statements in the 1950s are used to present positive descriptions of Hu Shi, for the purpose of providing entertainment and meeting economic objectives.<sup>112</sup>

107 ZHU Hong 2001, *juan* 3, chap. 9, p. 895.

108 A play of words made during the anti-Hu Shi campaigns. See, for example: ZHANG Jinpan [1955] 1955, pp. 69–77. ZHU Hong 2001, *juan* 4, chap. 3.3, p. 1084.

109 ZHU Hong 2001, *juan* 4, chap. 10.11, p. 1275.

110 Even the first biography, by HU Bugui 胡不歸 (*Hu Shi zhi zhuan* 胡適之傳, 1941), as well as those by two well-known Taiwanese scholars, MAO Zishui 毛子水 (*Hu Shi zhuan* 胡適傳, rev. 1966) and WU Xiangxiang 吳想湘 (*Hu Shi dan kaifengqi bu wei shi* 胡適但開風氣不為師, 1971), were re-published. All three were students of Hu Shi. According to the foreword of the publisher, they have a more direct perspective on Hu Shi, in contrast to the biographies published in the PRC whose authors neither personally examined the historical material, nor had any personal experiences with Hu Shi (*Hu Shi zhuanji sanzong*, 2002).

111 Examples are: ZHU Wenchu 2007; HUANG Tuanyuan 2008; and ZHI Xiaomin 2010.

112 In general, the new trend in novelised biographies has also been for propagandistic reasons. In the 1990s, the CCP began to support biographical films of the lives of eminent persons in the CCP, such as Zhou Enlai (*Zhou Enlai* 周恩來; Director: DING Yinnan 丁蔭楠, 1991) and Mao Zedong (Mao Zedong and his son [*Mao Zedong he ta erzi*] 毛澤東和他的兒子, Director: ZHANG Jinbiao, 1991).

## 5. Conclusion

Autobiographical writing can be considered a hybrid literary genre that is linked to other forms of texts, such as memoirs and biographies.<sup>113</sup> In light of this, the memoirs of Hu Shi show that in the PRC, the nature of Lejeune's *pacte autobiographique* (1975) changed in accordance with the political environment. For some of Hu Shi's contemporaries in the 1950s, there was tacit understanding between the reader and the writer that in the restrictive political climate, Hu Shi could not be dealt with in a positive light. After the Cultural Revolution, in the new policy environment, this *pacte autobiographique* gradually changed with the help of eminent scholars such as Ji Xianlin and Liang Shuming.

The post-Cultural Revolution biographical writing on Hu Shi introduced here responded to two of the four layers Schwarcz identified in communist memory of the May Fourth Movement:

Third, the intellectuals' determination to recall forgotten, repressed figures of the cultural movement of 1919; and finally, the personal memories of revolution-wounded intellectuals who seek to retell individual stories that are still sequestered from the public domain.<sup>114</sup>

After decades of being taboo, Hu Shi, has been rehumanised and has regained his reputation. He even seems to have gradually become a new academic hero, who now fills the academic void of the 1950s and 1970s. The 1990s brought a new academic climate to China, in which internationalisation became increasingly important. Hence, Hu Shi can be considered an internationally competitive example of Chinese scholarship. Recently, academics have voiced their estimation that Hu Shi's work was not only equal, as Yi Zhuxian suggested in his foreword, to that of Lu Xun 鲁迅 – so highly esteemed in the CCP – but in terms of his academic approach, even better and more innovative.<sup>115</sup>

In Geng's view, the study of Hu Shi has thus regained its national importance. Among the reasons he offered as to why Hu's thought and principles are valuable to the Chinese intellectual of today, several are directly connected to the present political reforms: First, the view that gradual reform is most effective. To legitimise Hu's thought, Geng even stated that Li Dazhao never did completely disapprove of Hu Shi's advice to "research problems more, [and] talk about *isms* less".<sup>116</sup> Second, Hu Shi, confronted with the greatness of Chinese tradition, also saw its shortcomings. Geng suggested that today, Hu's scientific mind is needed, as well as his admonition to "search for truth in the facts", so as to avoid prejudiced thought.<sup>117</sup> Third, to be open-minded regarding

113 HOLDENRIED 2000, pp.28ff.

114 SCHWARCZ 1994, p.49.

115 See, for example: BAI Zhengui / JIANG Fan 2002; ZHANG Bing 2006. Zhu Wenhua argues that Hu Shi's reorganisation of the national heritage was clearer (ZHU Wenhua 1988, p. 140).

116 GENG Yunzhi 1996, p.4.

117 GENG Yunzhi 1996, pp.4–5.

Western culture.<sup>118</sup> Fourth, Geng reinterpreted the formerly vilified individualism advocated by Hu as meaning that every individual can contribute to the continual progress of society.<sup>119</sup>

The biographies of the first group, and the novelised biographies, might eventually mark a new period of set interpretation and part-time amnesia, as writers and scholars turn a blind eye to Hu Shi's political views and his relationship with the CCP in the 1950s. It is still to be decided as to whether intellectual history has been rewritten, or whether there has been a change of paradigm in the collective memory that will lead to a "single committed perspective", and which will speak in commemorative tones of "unquestionable heroic narratives" regarding Hu Shi's academic accomplishments.<sup>120</sup>

### Abbreviations

GMRB	<i>Guangming ribao</i> 光明日報
HSSXPP	<i>Hu Shi sixiang pipan</i> 胡適思想批判, 8 vols. Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 1955.
PHS	Pi Hu Shi 批胡適, in: <i>Gushikao</i> 古史考, vol. 1–5. Haikou: Hainan chubanshe, 2003.
RMRB	<i>Renmin ribao</i> 人民日報

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118 GENG Yunzhi 1996, pp.5–6.

119 GENG Yunzhi 1996, pp.7–8. The other reasons are that every challenge has to be met rationally, no matter if it is by an individual or the masses (GENG Yunzhi 1996, pp.1–2); to place man at the centre of all things refers to Hu Shi's "100 affairs are not one man" (*baishi buru ren* 白事不如人) (GENG Yunzhi 1996, p.6). He states, without explanation, that Hu Shi's words to young people have become important again.

120 For this definition of collective memory in opposition to history see: WERTSCH 2002, p.44.

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