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Final Research Paper Outline

**Main text: “The Spirit of the Chinese people. With an essay on Civilization and anarchy” by Gu, Hung-ming, 1857-1928.**

**Thesis Statement**

In comparison to its European and American counterparts, Chinese civilization changed very little from its inception up until the 19th century. This continuity is typically traced back to the Confucian system of values that Chinese people faithfully followed for thousands of years. In this research paper I will attempt to decide whether the prevalence of Confucian values was, when everything is considered, a positive or negative phenomenon. To do this successfully, I will divide the paper into four parts. In the first section, I will summarize the context in which Confucian values arose and briefly summarize what they consist of. In the second section, I will use “The Spirit of the Chinese people” by Gu Hung-ming to illustrate the benefits that arise from an entire population following the values of Confucius. In the third section, I will make use of Lu Xun’s writings and fiction to illustrate the criticisms that can be directed towards Confucian philosophy. In the fourth and final section, I will put Confucian teachings into a familiar context to aid in deciding whether one should vehemently reject or happily embrace Confucius and everything he stands for.

**Section 1**

**Paragraph 1**

As he observed the social fabric of his society tearing apart, Confucius desperately attempted to record the way things had been.

**Paragraph 2**

Confucius believed in a few values above all else, which are the following… (*Understanding the Analects of Confucius: A new Translation of Lunyu with Annotations).*

**Section 2**

**Paragraph 1**

Gu lists the benefits that come from following a Confucian set of values as laid out in his short book.

**Paragraph 2**

In contrast to almost every other civilization this allowed China to stay relatively peaceful for an incredibly long amount of time.

**Paragraph 3**

Society was harmonious for an incredibly long amount of time, allowing the Chinese population to outgrow every other nation on earth.

**Section 3**

**Paragraph 1**

Lu Xun writes “The Diary of a Madman” a fierce criticism of the Chinese system of values.

**Paragraph 2**

Lu Xun uses Ah-Q to demonstrate how China cannot thrive, or even survive, if it becomes complacent. (*Failure, Nationalism, and Literature: The Making of Modern Chinese Identity, 1895-1937)*

**Paragraph 3**

China then stops being a passenger in world history and embraces the idea of destroying the old to make place for the new, reaching an ironic climax in the Cultural Revolution.

**Section 4 (in Foucauldian style)**

**Paragraph 1**

Today we are in a similar position to that of Lu Xun in the early 1900s, we have an entire world system that guarantees that liberal capitalism is the inevitable result of history.

**Paragraph 2**

Complacency today will lead to the destruction of the human race.

**Paragraph 3**

With the values that are now becoming predominant throughout the entire world, should we call for a return to a Confucian style veneration of tradition or rebel in any way that we can?

Works Cited

Gu, Hung-ming. “The Spirit of the Chinese people. With an essay on Civilization and anarchy” 1857-1928.

Ni, Peimin. *Understanding the Analects of Confucius: A new Translation of Lunyu with Annotations.* SUNY Press, 7 Feb 2017.

Tsu, Jing. *Failure, Nationalism, and Literature: The Making of Modern Chinese Identity, 1895-1937.* Stanford University Press, 2005.

Xun, Lu. *The Real Story of Ah-Q and Other Tales of China.* Translated by Julia Lovell. Penguin, 2009.