

CUHK

Comparative and Public History 2020-2021

## HIST 4306SM

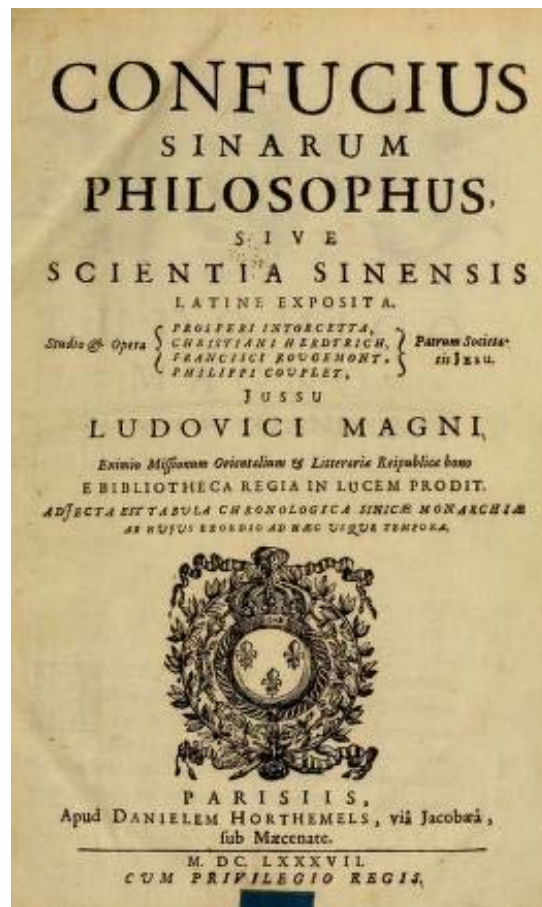
Topic Studies in world History – West and the world III: Early Modernity

### FINAL PAPER

Study of a rare book:

Philippe Couplet, S.J. and others:

*Confucius Sinarum Philosophus, Sive, Scientia Sinensis Latine Exposita. 1687.*



CHAN, Yu Christy

23/4/2021

## Introduction

*Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* is a fundamental book for the history of sinology in Europe; it enhanced the connections between the East and West. In this essay, I will describe about the background, author, the printing characteristics, major contents, and influences of the book as a bit investigation.

### Author and background of the book

Philippe Couplet was born on 31<sup>st</sup> May, 1623 in Mechlin, a small town in Belgium. He entered the Jesuit college in his early times and became a novitiate in 1640. Then he tried his first attempt to reach the Americas in 1647 but failed to obtain permission from the Spaniards. Then he pursued further studies and being inspired after attending a lecture in 1654 by the Jesuit father Martino Martini who was returned from China. Later that year he got the approval for the Chinese Mission and started the journey with his confrère François de Rougemont. After they passed through many hardships, they finally reached Macao in 1658<sup>1</sup>.

After that, they were dispatched to Jiangxi, Fuzhou and Sichuan respectively as for serving in provinces. However, there was a persecution for the missionaries in China since 1661. They could not preach further at that time. And the Jesuits sending procurators as a coordinator to find the more comfortable way to deliver Christianity to the Chinese. During this vacuum period, they turned to focus on the scholastic works, including Confucianism, hence *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* was written under such background. As the persecution ended 5 years later, they could resume for their servings for certain years.

The role of Couplet and his colleagues was as the “bridge” between China and Europe, delivering messages like a “transmitter” to the west from the east<sup>2</sup>. After they back to Europe in 1683, they had a tour of visiting various European countries, which introduced Chinese culture to the people in certain successes. Finally, they reached Rome in 1684. As the Pope promised to examine more to support the Jesuit mission in China.

When Couplet stayed in Europe, he put much effort to write a few more works to describe the oriental mission. After 8 years, he got the chance to return to China. Unfortunately, he

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<sup>1</sup> Jerome Heyndrickx, *Philippe Couplet, S.J. (1623-1693) – The man who brought China to Europe* (Nettetal: Steyler Verlag, 1990), 17.

<sup>2</sup> Not only in scholastic works, but also in different aspects, such as Chinese medicine. Noël Golvers, “Philippe Couplet, S.J. (1623–1693) and the authorship of Specimen “Medicinae Sinensis” and some other Western writings on Chinese medicine”, *Medizinhistorisches Journal* Bd. 35, H. 2 (2000): 177.

died during the trip in 1693. Generally, although sinology was still not being widely accepted among the European leaders and people, he placed a fundamental stone for facilitating the East-West connections in the early modern period.

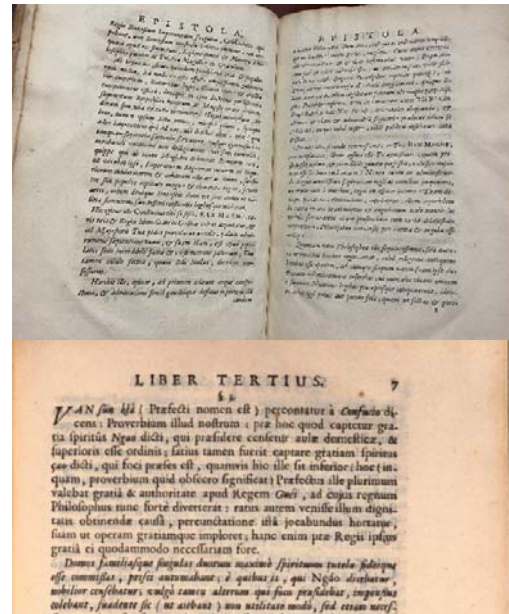
## Printing and typographical techniques

*Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* is a monochrome printed book, which is only consisted of black color of illustration and texts on each page, as the black color was being the most favorable color for printing with technical and perceptual reasons<sup>3</sup>. Also, the configurations of typical printing style in 17<sup>th</sup> century could be found in the design and alignment of texts of illustrations in this book.

Firstly, typographical skills are replaced hand-printed colors for indicating the different chapters, sections, and sub-sections of the texts, which helped the readers to find out what they need from the complicated contents. One Paris scholar, Robert Estienne (1503-59), he practiced this very well. He used printed initial letter, different fonts, and size of texts to classify the level of importance of contents in a book<sup>4</sup>. Hence creating a hierarchical classification and order to the contents.

In this book, Italic types can be seen on the Epistola (Dedication) and other explanation sections when the original texts or other main texts are printed in ordinary Roman types<sup>5</sup> (showing in figures 1 and 2 at the right). And different scales of Initial Letters can be seen as well, they are larger and highly decorated for major sections, and they are smaller and less decorations for minor sections (showing in figures 3-6 below).

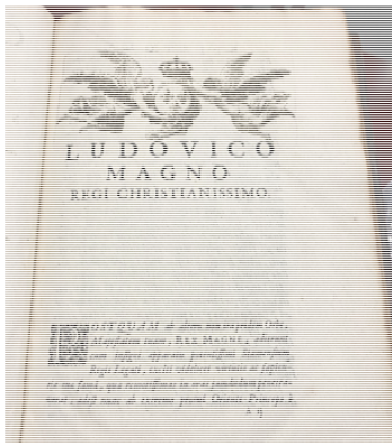
Secondly, the section head, page number can be found easily too (also in figures 1 and 2 at the right). This is not only for the readers to figure out the parts of the



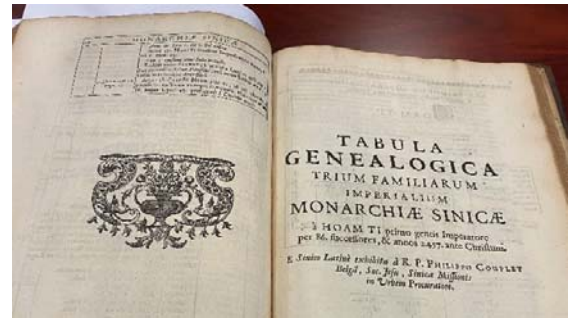
Figures 1 (Upper) and 2 (Lower): which shows the Italic and Roman typefaces, section head and page no. and smaller scale of initial letters of different section.

<sup>3</sup> Michael Twyman, *The British Library Guide to Printing – History and techniques* (London: British Library, 1998), 31.  
<sup>4</sup> Twyman, P.30.  
<sup>5</sup> Italic and Roman typefaces are being commonly introduced since early 16<sup>th</sup> century.  
 David J. Shaw, “Book trade practices in early sixteenth century Paris: Pierre Vidoue (1516–1543),” *The book triumphant – Print in transition in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries*, Malcolm Walsby and Graeme Kemp (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 343.

book, but also being one of the ways that make the correctors (as the ones called editors and proofreaders today) in the press could follow and blind it up, making sure the book is made in corresponding order of contents and pages<sup>6</sup>.



Figures 3,4,5 (Upper, from left to right): various type of decoration and initial letters for section and sub-sections.  
Figure 6 (Lower) There is also decorations marked the end of a session.



Rather than initial letters, there are detailed decoration in the beginning and the end of each section. Also, a page of illustration of the portrait of Confucius in the “Guo Xue” (National Academy) and his major publications written in Chinese (with pronunciation as well) at the back and written introduction of Confucius is written below<sup>7</sup>. These shows the examples of use in engraved illustrations (it would be printed in bronze graves with ink since the lines and shapes of it is very detail). Not only it makes the book more attractive, but also provide deeper impression to the readers which descriptions are being visualized as figure 7 shown at the right.



Figure 7: the portrait of Confucius with descriptions below (Page at the left).

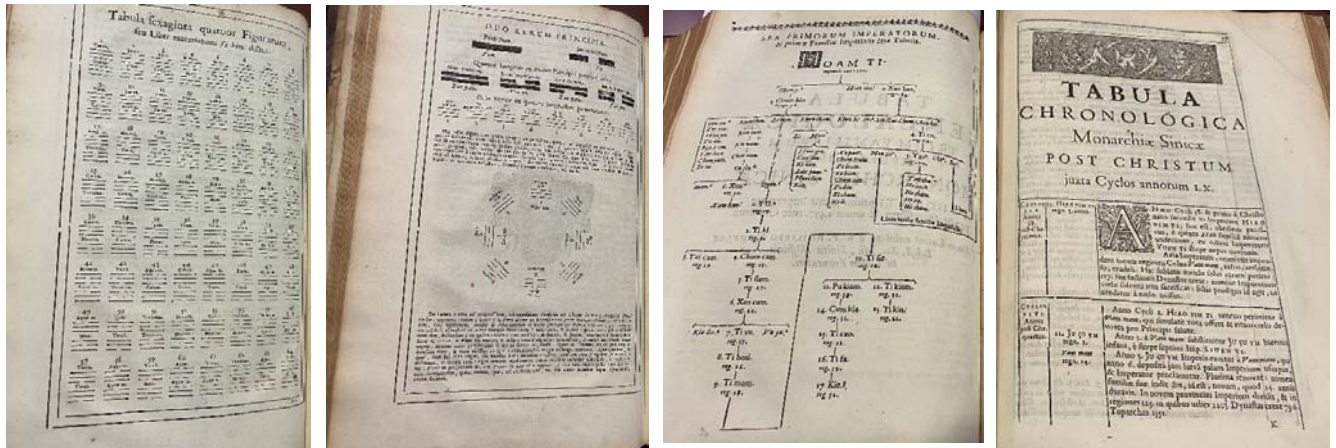
<sup>6</sup> Twyman, P.34.

<sup>7</sup> Manuscripts normally being a natural textual supplement to the print since 15<sup>th</sup> century. And in late 16<sup>th</sup> century, larger prints of illustrations available since the advanced use of roller prints made engraved printing easier and more feasible, when portraits become more popular.

David McKitterick, *Print, manuscript and the search for order, 1450-1830* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 53, 93.

## Contents and Influence of the book

*Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* is divided to different sections, including a brief explanation of general Chinese philosophy and its problems, with mentioning of Daoxue and the graph of Baihua (the eight trigrams, 八卦 in Chinese, representing various statuses of natural phenomenon according to eight directions, derived from Zhouyi, 周易 in Chinese, one of the main books written according to Daoism) and translation of major publications (Including the *Lun Yu*, *Dai Xue* and *Zhong Yung* (論語、大學、中庸 in Chinese, all mentioning about personal, social motifs and behavior)<sup>8</sup> of Confucianism. Also, a tree graph describing the historical sequences of Chinese emperors and chronological tables stating the major historical events in China are attached at the last part (with indication of corresponding Christian years), all shown in figures 8-11 below.



Figures 8-11 (Left to right): Showing different part of contents of the book.

It was published in Paris in 1687. This is the first book that introducing the high-levelled civilization of China, including history, geography, and religion beliefs of it with true bases in Europe. The European elites could gain their first impression or know more about this mysterious eastern country (as the legend of “Cathay” was very appealing at that time)<sup>9</sup> through a glimpse of the book.

In later years, this book was translated to French and English and being published in Europe<sup>10</sup>. It was highly valued by the French King of Louis XIV, he was fascinated with the

<sup>8</sup> Through translation of the original text.

<sup>9</sup> J.J. Clarke, *The Tao of the west: western transformations of Taoist thought* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 37.

<sup>10</sup> The book in French:

Jean de La Brune, trad. , “La Morale de Confucius › philosophe de la Chine.” Published in Amsterdam by Pierre Savouret, 1688.

The book in English:

contents and his interest of China was further inspired<sup>11</sup>. With such “official recognition” of the work, many people became interested to Confucianism and its major concepts began to spread through Europe<sup>12</sup>, and it was being considered as the Eastern counterpart of the European Renaissance later.

But on the other hand, *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* also shaped a negative image of Daoism, which producing an influence of changing the ways of later Jesuits for evangelizing China. Confirming that Confucianism is a better way to make Christianity more acceptable for the Chinese officials and ordinary citizens.

Most westerners (including Ricci and Couplet) mainly agreed that Confucianism as the heart and soul of China, hence Daoism was classified as “Wrong religion beliefs”, which is superstitious, ridiculous, just like something inspired by the devils, even being as a course of delirium<sup>13</sup>. He elaborated this view with the story of Qin Shi Wang (founding emperor of Qin Dynasty, who searched for eternal life) and Zhang Daoling (who established Tianshi Dao, Master of Heaven)<sup>14</sup>, to mention that their notion was unacceptable by the missionaries.

Furthermore, Couplet also mentioned that although Laozi was another talented philosopher in ancient China, with explanation of its pursuits for “Dao as a creator, he produced everything. Later he produces by multiplies” seems like the divinity that Jesuits were interested about, but he did not intend to explain about the difference between the two points, and thought it was quite obscure or vague for clarifying the concepts<sup>15</sup>.

Couplet misunderstood the true beliefs of Daoism in religious and philosophy aspects, that is why he denied it. However, as there are still several Jesuits formed admiration to the

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“The Morals of Confucius. A Chinese Philosopher, Who Flourished Above Five Hundred Years Before the Coming of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Being One of the Most Choicest Pieces of Learning Remaining of That Nation.” Published in London by Randal Taylor near Stationers Hall, 1691.

姜哲。 “學而時習之，不亦說乎 – 晚清新教傳教士的《論語》英譯”。《中國文化研究》1, (2013):頁 43-52。\* (\* Explanation in references section)

<sup>11</sup> Mei Tin Huang, “The Encounter of Christianity and Daoism in Philippe Couplet’s “Confucius Sinarum Philosophas””, *Frontiers of Philosophy in China* Vol.9, No.4 (2014): 617.

<sup>12</sup> Latin was being considered as a most effective (language for delivering knowledge at that time, which had the greatest mobility in Europe. Hence books written in Latin became a key for communication to the outside world.

Shanti Graheli, “Italian books and French medical libraries in the Renaissance”, *Books in motion in early modern Europe: Beyond production, circulation and consumption*. Daniel Bellingradt, Paul Nelles, Jeroen Salman (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2017), 248,266.

However, popular reading among the people was still not exist at that time, even specific reading, was depend on different groups. Therefore, sinology was being more common in the specified elite class only.

Roger Cartier, *The Cultural Uses of Print in Early Modern France* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 151,152.

<sup>13</sup> Clarke, P.37, 38.

<sup>14</sup> Huang, P. 618-620.

<sup>15</sup> Huang, P. 621,622.

Daodejing (book of morals) and translated it to Europe around 1700s<sup>16</sup>. With the small extent of inspiration through this book, more interactions, and interchanges between both are performed in the daily life and through writings during the duties of missionaries by later Jesuits in China.

## Conclusion

To conclude, *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* marked a breakthrough of Sinology in Europe as it provides more practical information related to an exotic country. Philippe Couplet and his colleagues, the authors who linked up Europe and China as Jesuits, opened a window to westerners who aimed to know more about the East, and inspired related research afterwards<sup>17</sup> for enhancing the east-west communication.

However, many westerners still misunderstanding Chinese culture (including Daoism) in recent times<sup>18</sup>. This is ignorant since the importance of inter-cultural philosophy is growing under the trend of globalization which knowledges are exchanged more wisely and frequently. Adaptation of foreign wisdoms would be a possible solution for non-desirable consequences such as conflicts and pollution. Or I can say, open the mind and being sympathetic to different beliefs, like the later Jesuits did, is the best way to pursue a harmonious living for the new age ahead.

1,586 Words in total

Included:

1,502 words in main text.

84 words of explanation of figures.

Excluded:

The title and other words in cover page.

18 words in subtitles.

400 words for notes.

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<sup>16</sup> Clarke, P.38.

<sup>17</sup> Such as Theophilus (Gottlieb) Siigfried Bayer, a German proto-sinologist who did deep researches in Chinese Language with connections of Couplet's work.

Knud Lundbaek, "Philippe Couplet in the writings of T.S. Bayer", Heyndrickx, 203-209.

<sup>18</sup> As under the "Eurocentric Approach", the westerners refused to know about foreign cultures. Clarke, PP.13-15.

## References:

### Books:

1. Heyndrickx, Jerome. *Philippe Couplet, S.J. (1623-1693) – The man who brought China to Europe*. Nettetal: Steyler Verlag, 1990.
2. Twyman, Michael. *The British Library Guide to Printing – History and techniques*. London: British Library, 1998.
3. McKitterick, David. *Print, manuscript and the search for order, 1450-1830*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
4. Clarke, J.J. (John James). *The Tao of the west: western transformations of Taoist thought*. London and New York: Routledge, 2002.
5. Cartier, Roger. *The Cultural Uses of Print in Early Modern France*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987.

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1. Graheli, Shanti. "Italian books and French medical libraries in the Renaissance", *Books in motion in early modern Europe: Beyond production, circulation and consumption*. Daniel Bellingradt, Paul Nelles, Jeroen Salman (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2017), 243-266.
2. Lundbaek, Knud. "Philippe Couplet in the writings of T.S. Bayer", *Philippe Couplet, S.J. (1623-1693) – The man who brought China to Europe*. Jerome Heyndrickx (Nettetal: Steyler Verlag, 1990), 201-209.
3. Shaw, David J. "Book trade practices in early sixteenth century Paris: Pierre Vidoue (1516–1543)," *The book triumphant – Print in transition in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries*. Malcolm Walsby and Graeme Kemp (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 334-346.

### Articles:

1. Golvers, Noël. "Philippe Couplet, S.J. (1623–1693) and the authorship of Specimen "Medicinae Sinensis" and some other Western writings on Chinese medicine." *Medizinhistorisches Journal* Bd. 35, H. 2 (2000): 175-182.
2. Huang, Mei Tin. "The Encounter of Christianity and Daoism in Philippe Couplet's "Confucius Sinarum Philosophas"." *Frontiers of Philosophy in China* Vol.9, No.4 (2014): 615-624.
3. 姜哲。 "學而時習之，不亦說乎 – 晚清新教傳教士的《論語》英譯"。《中國文化研究》1, (2013): 頁 43-52。  
(A Chinese reference: "Exploring the Translations of *Lun Yu* by late Qing Missionaries". *Cultural research in China*. No. 1 (2013): 43-52.)



CUHK MA in Comparative and Public History 2020-2021  
HIST 4306SM – Topic Studies in world History – West and the World III: Early Modernity  
Response Paper 4 – Readings for lecture 9: Europe and India

CHAN YU CHRISTY 12/3/2021

Readings included:

1. Vasco da Gama: *Round Africa to India*, 1497-1498 CE.
2. St. Francis Xavier: *Letter from India, to the Society of Jesus at Rome*, 1543.
3. Robert Clive: *Speech in Commons on India*, 1772.
4. Museum of Christian Art in Goa - Collections (webpage).

When India meets west – the two perspectives

In late 15<sup>th</sup> century Europe, many countries performed explorations to the east to seek for new opportunities. As the four readings of this week are about how the westerners (i.e. Portuguese and British) build East-West relationship through their discoveries in India. And this paper will be focused on the economic and religious aspects of the relationship.

The Economic perspective

Both Da Gama and Clive appraised India as an abundant and prosperous country. As Da Gama described about the temperate weather, which is ideal for food and supplies production. And Clive said, many “curious and valuable manufactures” can be found there. As the westerners realized there will be huge economic benefit once they can control the supply for such materials, they traded with India to gain control in this field. In this way, we can see how the East-West relationship had developed in economic perspective of trade and material productions.

The Religious perspective

The westerners also spread religious influence through explorations. Like St. Xavier wrote in the letter, he was upset about many Indians still worship their “idols”, which is non-civilized, hence converting their minds was his main duty. This shows the need that Portuguese to impose Christianity on the Indians for cultural regulation. And Christianity influenced the art too, both Christian and Indian cultural features can be found on the sculptures or jewelry those shown in MoCA<sup>1</sup>. As all these are strong evidence to show the East-West relationship was established through the religious context.

Conclusion

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<sup>1</sup> MoCA = Museum of Christian Art in Goa.

The explorations started the age of East-West relations, many eastern countries faced changes in different extent with economic and religious influences from the west. After that, many of them become colonies of the western powers. Or I can say, this shaped the dominance of the west in Asia in 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, and completely changed the way of the world being transformed.

(310 words in total)

(Excluding 14 words in title and subtitles)

CUHK MA in Comparative and Public History 2020-2021  
HIST 4306SM – Topic Studies in world History – West and the World III: Early Modernity  
Response Paper 5 – Readings for lecture 11: European Slavery in the Atlantic

CHAN YU CHRISTY 26/3/2021

Readings included:

1. Alonso de Sandoval, *Treatise on Slavery: Selections from De Instauranda Aethiopum Salute*, (selections), originated in 1627, edited by Nicole von Germeten in 2008.
2. Robert Edgar Conrad, *Children of God's Fire: A Documentary History of Black Slavery in Brazil*, 1983 (selections).

Transatlantic slavery – Lawful but Immoral

In 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the western powers were achieving the peak in expansion of their empires. As the two readings this week describe about the facts and views of slavery in this period. And this paper will discuss this phenomenon in law and moral aspects.

Lawful as being legalized

Sandoval supported the transatlantic slave trade as he mentioned that this is permitted by the Catholic church and Spanish law. The participants should not feel guilty about it. He thought it is right to “bring the blacks in good faith and for a good reason”. Since there was an urgent need for the west to recruit labor for colonies development, and they were obedient to the church and monarchies at that time, therefore they acted correctly that was beneficial to their loyal parties with no contradictions to their own beliefs. This is the side showing how slavery was being legalized.

Immoral in suffering of the slaves

Both readings mentioned about the poor living conditions of the slaves. Not only they lost their freedom as being controlled by the owners, but also faced much hunger, dehydration, and lack of proper rest. Although they miss their home, they are hard (or even impossible) to escape. As many westerners and African nobles considered them as “inferiors”, exploiting their strength for profit making, hence leads to the high mortality rate of the Africans. Through this we can know that the slaves are treated inhumanly. This reflected how immoral of the transatlantic slavery system was being at that time.

Conclusion

To conclude, although sufficient workforces for economic development can be well delivered through large-scale slavery, it was disastrous to the Africans as they are being enslaved. Furthermore, slavery was legalized in the west only, and it hurt globally. Therefore, the negative effects of this phenomenon are far more than the positive ones, and finally leads to its disappearance through the banning acts in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

(309 words in total)

(Excluding 16 words in title and subtitles)

CUHK MA in Comparative and Public History 2020-2021  
HIST 4306SM – Topic Studies in world History – West and the World III: Early Modernity  
Response Paper 5 – Readings for lecture 15: Political Revolutions

CHAN YU CHRISTY 23/4/2021

Readings included:

1. *United States Declaration of Independence*; 1776.
2. *Declaration of the Rights of Man*; 1789.
3. *Constitution of Cadiz*; 1812.
4. *Haitian Declaration of Independence*, 1804.

Political Movements – Towards a new era

Europe had been changed a lot since the Renaissance and Enlightenment movements. Apart from the various reforms, the people increasingly began to think rationally, and seek for their own “rights”. Then a series of political movements arose from late 18<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, which completely diverted the development of the countries. In this paper, I will elaborate on how the movements drive the countries into a new age.

For liberty and equality

“Human Rights” was the major concern in all the documents. Since the countries were mostly ruled by monarchs or colonial powers in the past, which was unfair and no chance for public engagement. As the revolution exists, they can get the freedom those never experienced before. Most importantly, monarchs will be replaced by a government, and everyone is considered as an individual and born to be equal. Hence their situation became totally different. Therefore, achievement in liberty and equality will be marked as a milestone towards the new world.

Against colonialism

For both declarations of independence of US and Haiti, they both stated out the reasons that why they should fight for their dignity. Hence, there is strong sense for anti-colonialism in certain countries. For most colonial powers, they aim to prey for economical resources and enslave the local inhabitants. And they will certainly pursue for a new rule without such pressure. Then they will be solely independent, freedom and rights can be executed for creating a better life to them. Therefore, being independent is a way bringing something different and new to a country.

Conclusion

All in all, revolutions, and constitutions completely converted the lives of people. Rather than being blindly obedient to the churches or monarchs, they began to reconsider the “true value” of life including rights and freedom, and fight for “a better state”. Later, concepts like nationalism are being inspired from this, which shaped the nations further and achieve for “a nearly perfect world”.

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(Excluding 13 words in title and subtitles)