Racism in the Early-20th-Century U.S. and Sun Yat-sen's Outlook on Chinese Culture

Chao LIU
School of Foreign Languages
Southeast University
2 Sipailou, Nanjing, Jiangsu Province, China
zapiens@163.com

Abstract: Confronted with the decline of Western hegemony, the post-Great-War American society witnessed a prevailing trend of racism represented by Lothrop Stoddard, who proposed to suppress the nationalist movements in Asia and completely prohibit the immigration of Asians into the United States to maintain white supremacy across the world. His racist discourse also constituted the historical context of Sun Yat-sen's speech to The Kobe Chamber of Commerce. Unlike previous studies of the speech that focused on Sun's expression of "Greater Asianism," this paper examines his critical remarks on Stoddard, intending to explore the intellectual origin of the renewed outlook held by Sun on Chinese culture in his later years, as he intentionally misinterpreted Stoddard's main idea as cultural revolt, neutralied such notions as biological determination and human inequality, and replaced white supremacy with the ascendancy of Chinese culture by emphasizing its originality, historical unity and moral superiority. On the very basis, Sun presented an alternative mode of modern civilization that diverged from the Euro-centric capitalist modernity. Echoing various anti-capitalist and counter-enlightenment thoughts of this period, Sun's proposal could be taken as an integral part of the "new cultural conservatism" promoted by Chinese intellectuals in the 1920s.
Keywords: Sun Yat-sen, Chinese culture, racism, T. Lothrop Stoddard, new cultural conservatism

In November, 1924, Dr. Sun Yat-sen delivered a speech in Japan to the Kobe Chamber of Commerce and other organizations, pointing out that "there was an American scholar who published a book and discussed the rise of the colored people...Later on, he wrote another book, denouncing all national liberation movements as rebellions against the culture...The Europeans tend to regard themselves as the orthodox and the master of culture, whereas any forms of culture and independent thoughts emerging outside Europe are claimed by them to be rebellious" ("Kobe": 404-405). On this basis, Sun Yat-sen questioned the ascendancy and universality of Western culture and went further to emphasize the supremacy of Asian

civilization as represented by Chinese culture. According to Diao Xiande's research, the aforementioned books are *The Rising Tide of Color: The Threat against White World-Supremacy* and *The Revolt Against Civilization: The Menace of the Under Man* written by Lothrop Stoddard (Diao, 2008: 256), an American scholar whose racist theory prevailed all over the world in the 1920s.

These two books were exceedingly popular in the post-war US society as they were "just off the press of Chas. Scribner Sons and had created a sensation among the colored and white reading public" (*The Bystander*, 1920: 1). *The New York Herald* also deemed highly of them, since they posed "a striking and incisive criticism of our present-day society and a remarkably succinct analysis of some of the ills that it is generating within itself" (1922: 7). Even the world-famous novelist F. Scott Fitzgerald mentioned Stoddard under the alias of Goddard and intentionally added in the plot that the male villain Tom read *The Rising Tide of Color* and sighed, "if we don't look out the white race will be—will be utterly submerged" at the beginning of his masterpiece *The Great Gatsby*. In these two books, Stoddard focused on Japan's military expansion and the awakening of Chinese people, proposing to prevent the degeneration of "higher races" by means of apartheid and to forbid Asian immigrants to enter into white countries as well as their colonies in Africa and Latin America in order to ensure the living space and world domination of the Caucasians. His view echoed the escalating xenophobic violence of American society that was triggered in the 1880s and stimulated by the surge of immigrants during WWI, eliciting a fierce response from the social public. Against this background, the *Johnson-Reed Act* was passed in March, 1924, according to which, all Asians, including the Japanese, were strictly barred from the United States (Gordon, 1964: 96-102). As a matter of fact, the "Gentleman's Agreement" signed by the Japanese and the U.S. governments in 1907 had already reduced the quota of Japanese immigrants to 32, and the 1917 Act that entirely denied Japan's qualification proved to be a sort of "unreasonable humiliation" (Blake, 1972: 505). With the public opinion still seething with indignation in Japan, Sun Yat-sen's diatribes against Stoddard at this point were undoubtedly intended to touch a raw nerve and arouse a common hatred among the Japanese audience.

In actuality, Sun Yat-sen repeatedly quoted from Lothrop Stoddard on many occasions other than this speech. For example, he used to give a

serial talk on nationalism at Guangzhou Higher Normal School from January to March, 1924, in which Stoddard's discourse was utilized to highlight the crisis of national survival faced by China under the pressure of the rapid population growth of other races. Meanwhile, he attributed the decreased growth rate of French population to the overwhelming influence of Neo-Malthusianism, making reference to Stoddard's explanation in *The Rising Tide of Color* ("Nationalism": 194-196; Stoddard, 2016: 3). He also directly responded to Stoddard's prediction of Japan's future invasion of the US by sending warning messages to the American government that if China fell into the hands of Japan, the US national security would be definitely under a dire threat (Chen Xiqi, 1991: 1380, 1395, 1441). Although these two books got published in 1921 and 1922, merely two years before the speech, Sun Yat-sen, as an enthusiastic reader versed in English and "familiar with all updated Western political and sociological theories" (Wu, 1986: 701), must have read Stoddard's books and acquired a deep understanding of them. Nevertheless, when facing the Japanese audience, he deliberately diverted the focus of Stoddard from biology to culture and insisted that the resistance of the colored people should be a cultural one that was meant to challenge the hegemony of modern Western civilization. Sun's generalization of the books' main content obviously deviated from what Stoddard advocated and elaborated on in *The Rising Tide of Color* and *The Revolt against Civilization*. Although *The Revolt against Civilization* slightly touched upon the subversion of traditional Western culture by Soviet art, it just rendered a passing comment and did not associate this intellectual crisis with the rise of the colored (Stoddard, 2012: 110). On the contrary, Lothrop Stoddard, not unlike other well-known racist scholars, such as Haeckel, Galton, and Steiner, laid a particular emphasis on the biological superiority of the Nordics in heredity and strongly opposed racial intermarriage as well as human equality, demanding a mandatory fertility control over the inferior races, the lunatic, the feeble-minded, the criminals, and the lepers. He even argued that the most effective way to save and renew Western civilization is to replace religion with eugenics (2012: 150-156). On this account, what was the real intention hidden behind Sun Yat-sen's deliberate misinterpretation of Stoddard's visions, and what relationship did it bear with his perspectives on Chinese culture?

The word "race" was originally coined in Italian and referred to the noble family or aristocracy. It did not enter into other languages until the

18th century, standing for the distinction between different human groups. The formation of its modern definitions and its circulation across the world relied heavily on Linné's invention of biological taxonomy and the global expansion of European colonial powers (D'Appolionia, 2015: 16-17). On one hand, colonialism brought once isolated populations into a unified system, describing, defining, and classifying them separately, and organized the world with a fixed hierarchy, thus reconfirming the power order of the colonial rule, though in a symbolic way. On the other hand, it was modern sciences, particularly biology, that lent legitimacy to the classification and organization principles of this symbolic order. Modern biology, as represented by Carl von Linné, Charles Robert Darwin, and Gregor Johann Mendel, evolved from phrenology to evolutionism, and then to genetics, with its multifarious theories serving as the basis of racial discrimination and the purported supremacy of the white people. As it naturalized and absolutized the Western hegemony, biological determinism and racial inequality were claimed as two major characteristics of racism (Taguieff, 2005: 33). In other words, racism stipulated that the success or failure of a certain civilization hinged on the biological properties of different races that were by no means equal to each other.

Lothrop Stoddard, as the American representative of racist ideas in the first half of the 20th century, also constructed a hierarchy in terms of racial hereditary features, in which the Anglo-Saxons and the Nordics were placed at the top of the pyramid, followed by the Alps and the Mediterraneans, the yellows and the reds were in the middle, and the brown and the black people subsisted at the very bottom. Although Stoddard also recognized the Nordic superiority over other white races, unlike Madison Grant, he regarded WWI as a fratricidal war within the Caucasians, which, in his opinion, significantly undermined the white supremacy and prestige and made it difficult to deal with the challenges posed by the awakened colored, and therefore repeatedly emphasized the importance of a unified Caucasian identity that could unite the Nordics, the Alps, and the Mediterraneans together. Moreover, as he put it, the whites, among other races, were the best due to their outstanding creativity, whereas their yellow rivals possessed extraordinary patience and adaptability, who, under the principle of "survival for the fittest" rather than "survival for the most excellent," posed the greatest threat to the livelihood of white people with their ever-growing population. In this

connection, Stoddard defined the main theme of human history over the past one thousand years as the white resistance against the continuous invasions by the yellows and called for a united front among the Caucasians to thwart the expansion of Japanese people and the integration of the colored world under Japan's control (Stoddard, 2016: 13-30).

Against this backdrop, Sun Yat-sen intentionally misconstrued the genetic and reproductive competition in Stoddard's sense as cultural rebellion. Although when he defined what was nation in the aforementioned serial talk, he assumed "bloodline" as the "biggest force" for the formation of a nation and declared that "the reason why the Chinese are yellow is that they inherit the yellow lineage from their ancestors and they are accordingly destined to be a nation" ("Nationalism": 187),[1] he always denied the influence exerted by the hereditary characters of different races on their civilization's achievements and vehemently criticized "those students who used to study abroad and ascribe the advancement of Western civilization to biological advantages" for "abandoning themselves to vice" ("Lingnan University": 539). In Sun's eyes, the political, economic and cultural factors were more crucial than the genetic one in determining the emergence and development of a nation, and it was the political oppression, economic extortion and cultural subjugation by the imperialists that caused the decline of Chinese civilization in modern times, as was also the primary reason why Sun Yat-sen shifted his attention to intellectual and cultural issues when critiquing Stoddard's ideas. In fact, unlike Zhang Taiyan (see 1977: 424), even at the height of the anti-Manchu movement Sun Yat-sen had never distinguished the Manchus from the Han Chinese from a biological perspective or denounced them as brutal barbarians who were by nature incompatible with the civilized society. Instead, Sun condemned the Manchu government's slaughter, exploitation and enslavement of the Han people according to the notion of man's natural rights as represented by life, liberty, and proprietorship ("Yamazaki": 172). Therefore, as the Republic of China was established and the Manchu dominion was ended in 1912, Sun could quickly adjusted to the new environment and transformed his political agenda from "expelling the barbarians" to "uniting the five ethnic groups as one family." It was just because of Sun's prioritization of politics and culture over the lineage that he was able to propose that "the Han Chinese should sacrifice their blood purity, history and self-esteemed title, treat such minority groups as the Manchus, the Mongolians, the Uyghurs,

and the Tibetans sincerely, and integrate with them in a melting pot to form a new Chinese nation" ("Three Principles": 187).

The deliberate misinterpretation by Sun Yat-sen not only neutralized Stoddard's biological determinism, but also undermined his argument of human inequality. This "inequality," as Sun revealed in the later part of his address to the Kobe Chamber of Commerce, featured the oppression and enslavement of "a majority of their own compatriots" as well as "most of the 900 million Asians" by "some privileged Westerners" ironically in the name of "justice and humanitarianism." Sun not only regarded this cruelty and mendacity as the innate character of Western culture in the past one hundred years, but also compared it unfavorably to the Chinese political tradition of civility, singling out its "rule by force" due to its violent nature embodied in "planes, bombs, guns, and cannons," which he claimed to be "extremely inhuman and disgusting" ("Kobe": 404-405). On this basis, he demanded to break the boundaries between nations and unite all "suffering people" in both Asia and Europe to fight against Western imperialists. In this way, "the war of the whites and the yellows" was turned by him into that "between right and might," whose ultimate goal consisted in "seeking freedom and independence among all human beings" ("Inukai": 403). As Sun stated, the realization of this goal by no means depended on armed conflicts over the "color line" in Stoddard's sense, but entailed "an enhanced cooperation that could guarantee world peace" and "a considerable improvement of the state power" among Asian countries in order to thwart the impending aggression of Western imperialists ("The Osaka YMCA": 128).

Subverting these two presumptions of racism with the cultural turn of Stoddard's racist discourse, Sun Yat-sen also elucidated some unique values of Chinese culture and the advantages it possessed over the Western civilization as opposed to the white creativity and supremacy Stoddard made every effort to substantiate. As early as 1919, confronted with the proposal of holistic Westernization promoted by the leaders of the "New Culture Movement," Sun, in his monograph entitled "Teachings of Dr. Sun Yat-sen," consciously separated the spiritual dimension of Chinese civilization from its material one and alleged that even if modern China lagged behind the West in the material world, her "spirituality" could rival or even overshadow that of the West ("Doctrine": 180). This idea was further developed through a series of discussions and eventually unfolded in a systematic way in the 1924 speech usually associated with

"Greater Asianism" (Sang, 2006: 1-13). According to Sun's arguments on various occasions, the reason why Chinese culture was able to stand and thrive for thousands of years could be summarized from three aspects.

First of all, compared to other races, Chinese people were most creative across the world. As Sun argued, from the perspective of individuals, the Chinese gained a high reputation for their extraordinary intelligence; even in modern times, "throughout the United States, Chinese students always perform better than the US students no matter which school or class they are in, as is also commonly acknowledged by the Americans themselves" ("Lingnan University": 539). Historically speaking, China had not only achieved spectacular material achievements as represented by the four great inventions, but also led the world in intellectual and institutional development. China remained "the champion all over the civilized world" until a couple of centuries ago ("Clark": 151), and when she had already evolved into "a dignified nation" and "a state replete with cultural relics," "people of other countries still lived a barbaric life." The decline of Chinese civilization, on the other hand, resulted from the conquest and dominance by the Mongols and Manchus, not due to its own degeneration. By contrast, the progress of science and technology of the Western world overtook that of China in the most recent two hundred years. In Sun's eyes, the cultural inventions exemplified by Stoddard to highlight the superiority of the Caucasians, no matter pertaining to "philosophical, religious, ethical, or industrial culture," all originated from Asian countries, particularly China; even "the latest cultural products of the modern world," including anarchism and communism, were nothing but "the old teachings formulated by Chinese people thousands of years ago" ("Nationalism": 230). In other words, it was the Chinese culture that truly embodied originality and creativity, and on the contrary, the Western civilization was just a derivative one that imitated the example of China. Owing to this counterattack, the discourse of white creativity Stoddard employed to legitimize Western imperialism was dramatically inverted to demonstrate that China was "far more civilized than Western countries" ("Clark": 149-150). In a similar vein, Sun Yat-sen even told Henk Sneevliet, the envoy of the Communist International, that "Marxism possesses nothing new, as it has been iterated by Chinese classics two thousand years ago" (CASS, 1980: 25) on the crisis-ridden eve of Chen Jiongming's revolt. At the same time, he regarded the Soviet Union's social welfare policies as a duplicate of the traditional Chinese ideal of "Great Harmony" and believed "they

would exert a better effect if implemented in China" ("Armies": 36, 39). He also warned the young intellectuals baptized in the New Culture Movement not to blindly worship Western political theories, but to draw inspiration from their own cultural traditions since ancient Chinese philosophers had already elucidated most of them.

Secondly, as far as Sun Yat-sen was concerned, Chinese culture based itself on a distinctive consciousness of political unity along its historical trajectory. At the initial stage of the Xinhai Revolution, Sun Yat-sen used to propose that "since China is as large as Europe and thus not suitable for a centralized government, she should follow the example of the US and adopt federalism" ("French Journalist": 154). Nevertheless, shortly after the establishment of the Republic of China, witnessing the threat of imperialist powers, the disorders in frontier areas, and the rise of local separatism, Sun soon switched to the proposal of "building a unified nation and implementing the centralization policy." As he stated, "China is a unified country and will be so forever…It is just because of China's unification that she can survive today; when China becomes unified and prosperous once again, she will definitely turn into a major world power and no longer suffer from the oppression and exploitation imposed by other states" ("Railway": 491). Furthermore, the cannibalistic fights among European countries during WW Ⅰ and the tremendous damages they caused to the Western civilization also made Sun firmly believe that only political unification could guarantee the survival and success of a highly civilized nation and on this account celebrate national unity as the prerequisite for economic and cultural prosperity. Taking the US history as an example, he ascribed the weakness of America at her early stage to the division of 13 states, which "engaged in rivalry with one another with no unified government" and "were thus vulnerable to the European colonization." According to Sun, it was after the 13 states formed a union, established the United States, and enacted the federal constitution that the country began to grow stronger and wealthier and eventually "became the No. 1 world power in the wake of the Great War" ("Democracy": 302-303). Likewise, Sun Yat-sen also claimed political unity as the overarching theme of Chinese history and deliberately removed the episodes of national division from his historical accounts. As he put it, the eighteen provinces of China proper, along with the three northeastern provinces, Xinjiang, Rehe, Suiyuan, Qinghai, Mongolia, and Tibet, were all governed by the Qing government for more than 260 years; in the Ming Dynasty,

"these provinces also got united"; the Yuan dynasty, among others, not only unified China, but also pacified the Eurasian continent; even the southern Song dynasty was able to maintain "the unification of south China," not to mention such great empires as the Tang and the Han. In Sun's own words, "historically speaking, China is always unified, not split or loosely tied; unity brings order, and disunity leads to chaos." Sun went further to associate this political tradition with China's reality and concluded that the division of China under the rule of warlords was an anomalous historical phenomenon and a form of "temporary dysfunction" ("Democracy": 304). "Deeply rooted in the historical consciousness of the Chinese nation," political unity not only affected social realities in a profound manner, but also became an integral part of Chinese culture. For this reason, as Sun pointed out, China was able to "survive as a nation after all these catastrophes" ("Manifesto": 528-529) and would one day surpass Europe and the United States, which were respectively beset by "mutual animosity" and "local separatism," through her ever-lasting vitality and potential for rejuvenation.

Last but not least, the lofty moral ideals embodied by Chinese culture enabled it to be a representative of peace and justice, which, according to Sun Yat-sen, was more qualified than the ferocious Western civilization to lead human society into a bright future. As a matter of fact, for a long time before the founding of the ROC, Sun applauded the moral sentiments of Chinese people mainly for the sake of self-defense. For instance, in "Debate over the Preservation or Dissolution of China," an article published in 1903, he assumed the tone of "an East Asian preservationist" and accredited the maintenance of Chinese civilization to "its moral advantage over others," referring to Chinese people as "the most peaceful race on the earth," who "seldom adopted military power to conquer other nations," but tended to "invoke moral teachings" to influence them. Hence the necessity of "preserving China" as a way to "promote humanism" (219). Likewise, as Sun defended against the idea of "yellow peril" in his well-known thesis "The True Solution of the Chinese Question," he argued that "the people of the Chinese nation are diligent, peaceful, and submissive, who join in wars just to guard themselves…If they achieved independence, they would become the most friendly people…and turn yellow peril into yellow happiness" ("True Solution": 253-254). Obviously, during this period, Sun's real intention of defining the nature of Chinese culture as "moral" and "peaceful" was to dispel the

misgivings of Western powers and to seek their "sympathy and support" by showing the white feather. He did not mean to advertise China's cultural superiority, not to mention posing challenges against the white hegemony. That was why in the following part of the same article, he highly praised America as "the pioneer of Western civilization" and "the defender of freedom and democracy" and demanded to "model Chinese government on its US counterpart" ("True Solution": 255). In 1913, when delivering a speech to the members of the YMCA in Tokyo, Sun mentioned the "conflict and hatred" caused by racism, but at the same time stressed Confucius' teachings of "world peace" and "universal brotherhood," comparing "the building of the Great Wall by the First Emperor against Mongolians" to what China did in modern times to deal with foreign invasions (Chen Pengren, 1995: 8). That is to say, he still held on to a defensive position as Chinese culture, in his accounts, was "peaceful" by nature and could only envelope itself with something like the Great Wall to avoid external threat, with no intention to compete with its Western counterpart. He even consciously admitted that Chinese civilization, "from a metaphysical perspective," was "not as good as European culture in many aspects" ("Doctrine": 180) in his *Dr. Sun Yat-sen's Doctrine*, a book published in 1919.

Nevertheless, just a couple of years later, Sun's attitude underwent a fundamental change, as he consistently anticipated an ultimate war between the West and the East that would erupt within ten years to determine the future of mankind, in which Chinese culture, with its "high moral standards," served as the foremost intellectual resource for the "oppressed" to overthrow tyranny and enforce social justice (Wilbur, 1986: 201; "Letter to Inukai": 403). Of course, not a few factors might have contributed to this significant change, including the lessons of the First World War, Sun's disappointment with American politics, and most importantly, the influence of international proletarian revolution and the national liberation movement both motivated by the Soviet Union. However, considering that Sun's idea of the ultimate war coincided with that of Stoddard (Stoddard, 2016: 7-8; Stoddard, 2012: 133), his emphasis on the moral values of Chinese culture as well as its superiority over the "might-dominated" Western civilization undoubtedly constituted a direct response to Stoddard's racist discourse.

As a consequence, in the aforementioned address to the Kobe Chamber of Commerce, Sun Yat-sen raised the question about which side was more

qualified to represent humanity, the East or the West, immediately after he introduced Stoddard's theory and rendered a detailed explanation on the guiding significance of Chinese culture for the future world. In his opinion, European culture was characterized by "utilitarianism," "militarism," and "hegemonism," whereas on the contrary, the essence of the East Asian civilization, particularly Chinese culture, featured "benevolence and justice" with "edifying the people by means of morals" instead of "fears" as its starting point, which, in its ultimate stage, developed into the so-called "kingly way" ("Kobe": 405), the highest ideal of Chinese politics throughout history. By introducing the opposition between "profit" and "justice," and between "hegemony" and the "kingly way," Sun employed the political tradition of China to despise the former and respect the latter and further justified his judgment that Chinese culture was superior to its Western counterpart. In addition, the theory of social Darwinian imported from Europe was also recruited by Sun to demonstrate his viewpoint: the excessive development of European material civilization had brought about the moral decline of the Western world, and some Asian countries also suffered from this "degeneration of morality"; even in terms of social Darwinism, China, due to her higher moral level, had better prospects than that of the West. This understanding echoed what he stated several months before about the regression of the US society in a meeting with the students sent by Tsinghua University to America ("Tsinghua University": 308), and on the very basis, Sun embraced "justice and morality" as the underpinnings of his "Greater Asianism," celebrating the "kingly way" as the political standard for human society to "head for a brighter future." As opposed to the "money and power worship" of Western countries, he went further to specify the ultimate goal of modern Chinese culture as "assisting the oppressed nations" and "struggling for human equality." As for the specific implications of the concept of "justice and morality," Sun generalized them in four points, namely loyalty, benevolence, faithfulness, and pacifism in March, 1924, calling on the 400 million Chinese to restore their "inherent moral sense," to break off the shackles of Western racism, and to "unify the world in the form of Great Harmony" ("Nationalism": 243, 253).

In *Dr. Sun Yat-Sen and Traditional Culture*, Sang Bing evaluates the influence of cultural traditions on Sun Yat-sen's political thought as follows: "in his later years, he even traced the origin of the Three Principles of the People to classical Confucianism, considering his

thought as the development of Confucian ideas in modern times, which evolved from his early belief in the relatedness of civilizations and the partial ascendancy of Chinese culture to the notion that China's political philosophy far exceeded that of modern Western culture" (2015: 244). Sang's analysis insightfully outlined the major transformation of Sun's intellectual world, and as revealed above, it was Stoddard's racist theory that significantly informed this transformation. However, in order to form a better understanding of the cause and effect of Sun's outlook on Chinese culture in his later years, we must place it in the larger social context of the 1920s.

In the wake of WWI, an ethos of disillusionment swept over the Western society, which evoked various racist ideas and in the meanwhile generated a great many counter-enlightenment and anti-capitalist intellectual trends, such as neo-humanism, aesthetic modernism, the philosophy of life, and so on. These intellectual trends not only held a militant attitude towards materialism, pragmatism, and historical evolutionism that ruled modern Western society, but also proposed a new "agenda" to "revive the declining Western civilization by integrating it with the Oriental cultural traditions" (Shih, 2007: 176). Chinese culture, in this sense, was no longer considered backward and inferior, but on the contrary, obtained the same legitimacy and universality as its Western counterpart based on a unique spiritual and moral value. Under this influence, Chinese intellectuals, including Liang Qichao, Liang Shuming, Zhang Junmai, and Mei Guangdi, competed to shift their focus to the traditional culture in an effort to endow it with a modern spirit, to revitalize it by reconciling the East with the West, and to spread it all over the world. Their reevaluation of Chinese culture within the purview of modern knowledge system remarkably differed from the discourse of national essence articulated by old-styled scholars like Lin Shu as well as the proposal of holistic Westernization presented by the May 4th intellectual elites, which not only indicated China's internalization of modern Western civilization, but also revealed an inevitable path for Chinese culture to take as it marched towards the world arena. In this sense, Sun Yat-sen turned to be one of these so-called "new cultural conservatives."

On one hand, the conceptual framework Sun Yat-sen adopted to examine the cultural tradition of China, as epitomized by racial competition, social evolution, national liberation, and cosmopolitanism, actually originated from modern Western thought. The fact that he

referred to the challenge posed by Chinese culture against Euro-centrism as "cultural rebellion" also manifested his conceptual overlap with the post-war "anti-modern" ideas Stoddard fiercely attacked in *The Revolt against Civilization* (85-86). What's more, Sun even managed to make direct contact with some representatives of modern Western philosophy, including Bertrand Russell and John Dewey. During Russell's visit to China, though unable arrange a personal meeting, Sun kept in close touch with him by letters, in which Russell's warnings that Western capitalism "could only lead us to wars and destruction" and "never indiscriminately imitate the example of the West" (2004: 300-301) as well as such statements as "Chinese civilization is on a par with ours and contains something urgently needed by the world," "their culture might bring more happiness to human beings than ours," and "the young reformers among them will soon revive China and frustrate our all-crushing machine culture" (1996: 132-133), must have profoundly inspired Sun and enabled Sun to applaud him as "the only English man who knows China" (Zhang, 1994: 492). In return, Russell also claimed Sun to be "a true Chinese patriot" (1996: 201). Little wonder that as Sun rebuked Stoddard for being racially prejudiced, he intentionally mentioned that "recent European scholars begin to notice East Asian culture and gradually realize the marked superiority of its moral values over those of the West" ("Kobe": 405) and borrowed the suggestion of "absorbing East Asian civilization to cure our own disease" from Western scholars to support his argument. Besides, his employment of the Confucian idea of "justice and morality" to represent traditional Chinese culture could also be taken as a response to the agenda of self-discipline and moral cultivation put forward by the American New Humanism (Hoeveler, 1977: 3-27).

On the other hand, Sun Yat-sen approached modern Western knowledge always from a Chinese point of view and "regarded the independence and emancipation of the Chinese nation as his primary task." As Edward W. Said put it in his masterpiece *Culture and Imperialism*, the maintenance of an empire entirely relied on cultural productions as represented by literature, art, the ethic code, and religious beliefs (Said, 1993: 12-13). On this account, it was for the purpose of undermining the ideological foundation of imperialism, breaking away from its intellectual control and reconstructing China's historical subjectivity, namely the so-called "capacity of national self-determination" ("Zhao Nangong," 1923: 6), in a modern context that Sun strategically chose to invoke the concept

of "cultural rebellion" rather than a political or economic one. Therefore, he not only preached China's cultural supremacy to the public, but also posed himself as a Chinese philosopher (Dewey, 2016: 161-162), debating with foreign scholars over social theories and persuading the world-famous pragmatist Dewey to admit that "too much emphasis on practice ironically denies its own practicality and in the West, no one believes it is an easy task to gain knowledge" (Jiang, 1997: 105). Even Henk Sneevliet was enchanted by "the mysterious character of Sun Yat-sen's thought" (CASS, 1980: 25) as Sun proclaimed himself "the successor of great Chinese reformers from the time of Confucius to the present" (Sneevliet, 1985: 25) and endorsed his tireless effort to "reconcile ancient Chinese philosophy with socialist ideas" to make room for Chinese culture in a Western-theory-dominated world. Domestically, not unlike the *Xueheng* intellectuals of the same period, Sun Yat-sen regarded the restoration of self-confidence in traditional Chinese culture as the first step to revitalize China. For this reason, in the face of Stoddard's belittlement of Chinese culture, Sun deliberately shied away from the inadequacies of the cultural tradition, and promoted it to an unprecedented height through his re-interpretation of history. He even disparaged those who proposed holistic Westernization as "slaves of foreigners" ("Tsinghua University": 308) and gave warnings from time to time to the "May 4th" "new youths" who were addicted to Western culture by reiterating the brilliance of Chinese civilization and criticizing the abandonment of traditional culture under the negative influence of the West as "a wrongheaded act of self-colonization that merely served imperialist purposes" ("Nationalism": 243). It is also worth noting that Sun's critical attitude towards the "New Culture Movement" incurred fierce oppositions from Hu Shih and other cultural revolutionaries, who not only implied that Sun's notion of "hard to know and easy to do" constituted a totalitarian discourse that forced people "to worship the pilot and obey the leader" (1998: 1892), but overtly accused Sun of "hindering the spread of new culture, propagating obsolete thoughts and fostering a megalomaniacal psychology" (1998: 1938).

Notwithstanding Sun's critique of racism and imperialism, he did not blindly reject Western culture as a whole. On the contrary, even if he adopted the strategy of "overcorrection" to nullify Stoddard's argument, he never denied China's backward state and demanded to "take the good and avoid the bad of Western civilization" ("*The People Journal*": 327), that

is to say, he advocated "learning from the good side of the West" on "our innate cultural basis" and enabling Chinese culture to "catch up from behind." According to Sun Yat-sen, in the material aspect, Chinese people should "introduce European sciences to develop industry and improve weaponry" ("Kobe": 407); they could even directly attract foreign investment and "cooperate with the Westerners to exploit China's wealth, reform China's administration, and build up China's military force" ("Deng Jiayan": 137). In the social aspect, they should transplant the Western welfare system, including compulsory education, unemployment insurance, retirement pensions, and so on, into China to ensure that "the young and the elderly are looked after properly" and "everyone enjoys equal economic benefits" ("Canton" : 5). In the aspect of private morality, they should focus on personal cultivation like Westerners and give up such bad customs as spitting, making loud noises, having long nails, and not brushing teeth in an attempt to form a healthy living habit that complied with the norms of modern civilization ("Nationalism": 248-249). In the aspect of cultural spirit, it was necessary for them to combine "the disinterested attitude of justice of Great Britain, the broad vision of the US, and the patriotic ethos of France" ("Assistants": 253) to recast the backbone of Chinese civilization. Most importantly, they were required to possess a "global perspective" and assume the responsibility of "supporting the weak and resisting the hegemonic." In Sun Yat-sen's view, it was only through the fulfillment of this huge task that Chinese culture could renew itself; otherwise, it would repeat the same errors as Western imperialism ("Nationalism": 253).

On this account, it is no exaggeration to claim that although Sun used to mention the harmfulness of cosmopolitanism for many times, his own political philosophy proved to be nothing if not a cosmopolitan one.[2] The "Great Harmony" in a new global sense not only represented his highest social ideal, but also offered him a macroscopic framework as well as an internal driving force for his national narratives. In the process of revolting against Western racism and imperialism, he started from the cultural tradition of China and brought forward a distinctive mode of civilization based on the so-called "Asian kingly culture" ("Kobe": 409). Though inevitably limited within the boundary of cultural essentialism, social Darwinism and conceptual binarism, this mode of civilization opened new possibilities in world history and profoundly inspired future generations.

Notes

[1] According to this statement, Frank Dikotter, in The Discourse of Race in Modern China, did not conduct a thorough-going research on Sun's nationalist ideas and merely based on this passage, made a hasty judgment that "Sun Yat-sen defined the Han Chinese as a purely biological community like most reformists and radical students," whose worldview "was subject to the confrontation between the whites and the yellows" and "embodied no distinctive creativity" (Dikotter, 1999: 113-114). His conclusion proved to be hasty and biased without a full consideration of Sun's narrative strategy and the specific historical context.

[2] In his early texts, such as "Dialogue with Yamazaki Tōten and Hirayama Shū," Sun had already stated that "as a world citizen, I support humanism" and "for the sake of world humanism, I formed the revolutionary army" ("Yamazaki": 173-174).

References

Blake, Nelson. *A History of American Life and Thought*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1972.

Chen, Pengren. "Synopsis of the National Father's Address to the YMCA of Japan: Realizing World Peace, an International Enterprise". *Central Daily News*, 9 December 1995.

Chen, Xiqi (ed.). *The Chronicle of Sun Yat-sen's Life*. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1991.

D'Appolionia, Ariane. *The Frontiers of Racism: Identities, Ethnicity, Citizenship*, translated by Zhong Zhenyu. Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 2015.

Dewey, John. *Letters from China and Japan*, translated by Liu Xing. Beijing: Beijing University Press, 2016.

Diao, Xiande. *Sun Yat-sen and the United States*. Shanghai: Shanghai People's Publishing House, 2008.

Dikotter, Frank. *The Discourse of Race in Modern China*, translated by Yang Lihua. Nanjing: Jiangsu People's Publishing House, 1999.

Gordon, M. M. *Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion, and National Origins*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964.

Hoeveler, J. David. *The New Humanism: A Critique of Modern America, 1900-1940*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1977.

Hu, Shih. "Hard to Know and Not Easy to Do: Comments on Dr. Sun Yat-sen's Notion of 'Hard to know and Easy to Do'". *A Collection of Hu Shih's Argument* (2). Ed. Geng Yunzhi. Beijing: China Social Sciences Press, 1998.

Hu, Shih. "The New Culture Movement and the KMT". *A Collection of Hu Shih's Arguments* (2): 1934-1944.

Jiang, Menglin. *The Western Tide*. Shenyang: Liaoning Education Press, 1997.

Russell, Bertrand. *The Problem of China*, translated by Qin Yue. Shanghai: Xuelin Publishing House, 1996.

Russell, Bertrand. "The Road of China to Freedom". In *The Road of China to Freedom:*

Russell's Lectures in China. Ed. by Yuan Gang, et al. Beijing: Beijing University Press, 2004.

Said, Edward W. *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Vintage, 1993.

Sang, Bing. "Japanese Exclusion Act and Sun Yat-sen's Speech on Greater Asianism". *Journal of Sun Yat-sen University* 46(6), 2006: 1-13.

Sang, Bing. "Sun Yat-sen and the Traditional Culture". In *The Activities and Thoughts of Sun Yat-sen*. Beijing: Beijing Normal University Press, 2015: 227-246.

Shih, Shu-mei. *The Lure of Modern: Writing Modernism in Semi-Colonial China, 1917-1937*, translated by He Tian. Nanjing: Jiangsu People's Publishing House, 2007.

Sneevliet, Henk. "Among the Revolutionaries in South China". *Selected Reference Materials on the Chinese Revolution Published by Pravda from 1919 to 1927* (1). Chengdu: Sichuan Academy of Social Sciences, 1985: 25-28.

Stoddard, T. Lothrop. *The Rising Tide of Color against White World Supremacy*. Middletown, DE: Ostara Publications, 2016.

Stoddard, T. Lothrop. *The Revolt against Civilization: The Menace of the Under-Man*. Middletown, DE: Ostara Publications, 2012.

Sun, Yat-sen. "Address to the Armies of Yunnan, Jiangxi and Guangdong in Guilin". *The Complete Works of Sun Yat-sen* (6). Ed. The Institute of Historical Research, Guangdong Academy of Social Sciences, et al. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2001: 9-39.

Sun, Yat-sen. "Address to the Canton General Chamber of Commerce and Other Organizations". *Shun Pao*, 31 October 1923.

Sun, Yat-sen. "Address to the Kobe Chamber of Commerce and Other Organizations". *The Complete Works of Sun Yat-sen* (11): 401-409.

Sun, Yat-sen. "China's Railway Construction Plan and the Principles of People's Livelihood". *The Complete Works of Sun Yat-sen* (2): 487-493.

Sun, Yat-sen. "Dialogue with a French Journalist". *An Additional Collection of Sun Yat-sen's Works*, edited by Hao Shengchao. Shanghai: Shanghai People's Publishing House, 1990.

Sun, Yat-sen. "Dialogue with Clark". *The Complete Works of Sun Yat-sen* (9): 149-151.

Sun, Yat-sen. "Dialogue with the Students of Tsinghua University". *An Additional Collection of Sun Yat-sen's Works*: 304-308.

Sun, Yat-sen. "Dialogue with Yamazaki Tōten and Hirayama Shū". *The Complete Works of Sun Yat-sen* (1): 172-173.

Sun, Yat-sen. "Debate over the Preservation or Dissolution of China". *The Complete Works of Sun Yat-sen* (1): 218-223.

Sun, Yat-sen. "Dr. Sun Yat-sen's Doctrine". *The Complete Works of Sun Yat-sen* (6): 157-246.

Sun, Yat-sen. "Lecture at the Welcome Meeting Organized by the Osaka YMCA". *Supplement to An Additional Collection of Sun Yat-sen's Works*. Ed. Hao Shengchao. Shanghai: Shanghai People's Publishing House, 1994: 127-128.

Sun, Yat-sen. "Lecture at the Welcome Meeting Organized by the Students of Lingnan University". *The Complete Works of Sun Yat-sen* (8): 533-542.

Sun, Yat-sen. "Letter to Deng Jiayan". *The Complete Works of Sun Yat-sen* (8): 137.

Sun, Yat-sen. "Letter to Inukai Tsuyoshi". *The Complete Works of Sun Yat-sen* (8): 401-405.
Sun, Yat-sen. "Dr. Sun Yat-sen's Manifesto". *The Complete Works of Sun Yat-sen* (6): 526-529.
Sun, Yat-sen. "Talks at the Celebration Ceremony for the First Anniversary of *The People Journal*". *The Complete Works of Sun Yat-sen* (1): 323-331.
Sun, Yat-sen. "Talks to Assistants on the Warship Moxuan". *The Complete Works of Sun Yat-sen* (6): 516-517.
Sun, Yat-sen. "The Three Principles of the People". *The Complete Works of Sun Yat-sen*, (5): 185-195.
Sun, Yat-sen. "The Three Principles of the People: Principles of Democracy". *The Complete Works of Sun Yat-sen* (9): 254-355.
Sun, Yat-sen. "The Three Principles of the People: Principles of Nationalism". *The Complete Works of Sun Yat-sen* (9): 183-254.
Sun, Yat-sen. "The True Solution of Chinese Question". *The Complete Works of Sun Yat-sen* (1): 248-255.
Taguieff, Pierre-Andre. *The Racism*, translated by Gao Linghan. Beijing: SDX Joint Publishing Company, 2005.
"Talks at the Meeting with Zhao Nangong and Other Sixty Representatives of Shanghai's Social Organizations". *The Republican Daily News*, 18 January 1923.
The Bystander, 11 June 1920.
The Institute of Modern Chinese History, CASS (ed.). *References about Henk Sneevliet's Stay in China*. Beijing: People's Publishing House, 1980.
The New York Herald, 21 May 1922.
Wilbur, C. Martin. *Sun Yat-sen, Frustrated Patriot*, translated by Yang Shenzhi. Guangzhou: Sun Yat-sen University Press, 1986.
Wu, Jinghuan. "Let Me Also Talk about Dr. Sun Yat-sen". *A Memoir of Sun Yat-sen's Life Experience*. Ed. Shang Mingxuan, et al. Beijing: People's Publishing House, 1986: 699-701.
Zhang, Lei (ed.). *The Dictionary of Sun Yat-sen*. Guangzhou: Guangdong People's Publishing House, 1994.
Zhang, Taiyan. "Indictment on Appropriation of Relief Funds by the Manchurian Governor". *A Collection of Zhang Taiyan's Political Commentaries* (1). Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1977: 423-424.