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**American Cultural Imperialism and Chinese Resistance through  
Performance: from a Postcolonial Perspective**

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# **DEDICATION**

To my family

## ABSTRACT

The wide spread of American culture has recently triggered a controversial debate among scholars in the field of Humanities. The hegemonic phenomenon has affected societies from different corners of the globe, and it appears that even most conservative societies are not safe from such global homogenization. Accordingly, this thesis attempts to describe and analyze American cultural imperialism in light of the twenty-first century global changes and cultural configurations. From a postcolonial view, it examines the complex relationship within the American-Chinese couple. The theoretical part is devoted to study and define the key concepts and their relation with Uncle Sam's expansionist culture. It provides an overall picture of the classic history of the United States to underline the fact that culture has always been the basis of American hegemonic practices around the world. From its creation to the globalization era, passing through continental Americanization, the US has chiefly relied on culture to build up its modern empire. On the way, the thesis examines Chinese society to give evidences about cultural expansion and its impacts on both social structure and consumption. It synthesizes that culture has a great role in controlling societies and more importantly in gaining the US ideological and consuming markets. At last, the thesis investigates the reaction of the Chinese administration, with at its head the Communist Party, against American cultural incursion that plainly impacted Chinese identity and sovereignty. It goes through three important performances which show how China converted a cultural struggle against American imperialism into a prosperous cultural move.

**Keywords:** The United States- China- Imperialism- Hegemony- Americanization- Culture- Ideology- Resistance- Performance.

## RESUMÉ

L'impérialisme américain, souvent décrié par plusieurs intellectuels d'horizon différents, aspire sans cesse à étendre sa domination dans le monde entier. Même les pays réputés être très conservateurs vacillent devant cette américanisation imposante. Cette recherche vise à étudier la relation complexe du couple américano-chinois dans le contexte postcolonial. D'un côté, on a une Amérique qui a tout fait pour imposer son hégémonie culturelle, et de l'autre, on a une Chine qui résiste de pied ferme et réagit, culturellement aussi, pour ne pas voir son identité diluée dans l'impérialisme américain. La première partie de cette thèse est consacrée à l'étude théorique de certains concepts clés de la culture expansionniste de l'Oncle Sam. Ainsi, elle brosse un tableau de l'histoire classique des Etats Unis pour souligner le fait que la culture a toujours été le socle des pratiques hégémoniques américaines dans le monde entier. La deuxième partie tente d'analyser comment le processus de l'impérialisme culturel américain a opéré dans un pays bien spécifique, à savoir la Chine. En effet, le cas de la Chine représente une illustration parfaite de la stratégie américaine qui instrumentalise la culture à des fins à la fois commerciales et idéologiques. Enfin, la dernière partie de notre thèse étudie la réaction de l'administration chinoise, dirigée par le Parti Communiste Chinois, à cette invasion américaine qui menace et son identité et sa souveraineté. Trois domaines d'action bien précis sont donnés comme exemples pour mettre en exergue la performance culturelle chinoise à renverser la situation et devenir par la suite une grande puissance.

**Mots-clés :** Etats-Unis – Chine – Impérialisme – Hégémonie – Américanisation – Culture – Idéologie – Résistance - Performance.

## الملخص

ارتأينا في بحثنا هذا الوقوف على دراسة العلاقة الموجودة بين الإمبريالية الثقافية الأمريكية و التقدم المتواصل نحو العولمة وذلك من وجهة نظر نظرية "ما بعد الاستعمار". يسعى الجزء الأول، بطريقة مفصلة نسبيا، إلى تحليل و تعريف المفاهيم الأولية و علاقة هذه الأخيرة بالوجود الثقافي الأمريكي في العالم حتى تكون هذه الأخيرة في متناول القراء والباحثين؛ هذا الجزء مهم جدا لأنه الركيزة التي تبنى عليها الرؤى و تستخلص منها النتائج. لهذا الغرض يحاول أيضا هذا البحث مراجعة تاريخ جد معروف عن تطور الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية و كذا عرض مدى دور الثقافة في هذا المسار، و بالتالي يستنتج أن هنالك فعالية كبيرة لا يمكن تجاهلها، تجعل التاريخ الأمريكي تاريخا ثقافيا قبل أن يكون تاريخا سياسيا أو اقتصاديا، فضلا عن ذلك تستنتج هذه الأطروحة أنه في ظل الهيمنة الأمريكية تعتبر الثقافة العامل الأول في أي توسع جغرافي. فمنذ تأسيسها لغاية عصر العولمة مرورا بـ "أمركة" القارة الجديدة، استعانت أمريكا بثقافتها لتأسيس إمبراطوريتها المعاصرة.

و سعيا لتقريب هذه الفكرة، يقوم هذا البحث بتحليل المجتمع الصيني كعينة لدراسة مظاهر الإمبريالية الثقافية و أثارها على كل من البنية الاجتماعية و طبيعة الاستهلاك في الصين. و يستنتج الفصل الثالث أن الثقافة لها دور هام في التحكم على المجتمعات بكونها تؤثر على الذهن الاجتماعي و المنظومة الاجتماعية كما أن لها دور في استحواد الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية على سوق فكرية-إيديولوجية و استهلاكية في المنطقة.

وأخيرا تتطرق هذه الأطروحة لدراسة ردة فعل النخب الصينية (على رأسها الحزب الشيوعي) على هذا التفاعل الثقافي الذي أثر سلبا في هوية المجتمع الصيني.

## **List of Abbreviations**

AAA	American Asiatic Association
AJST	American-Japan Society of Tokyo
ARENA	Asia Regional Exchange for New Alternatives
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CCD	Convention on Cultural Diversity
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
FOCAC	Forum on China-Africa Cooperation
GLF	Great Leap Forward
HRW	Human Rights Watch
KMT	Kuomintang (translated as the Nationalist Party of China)
ME	Middle East
PSC	Politburo Standing Committee
SU	Soviet Union
SEZ	Special Economic Zone
TNCs	Transnational Corporations
TPPT	Trans-Pacific Partnership Treaty
TPP	Trans-Pacific Partnership
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
U.S.	United States
WTO	World Trade Organization



**Acknowledgement**

**Dedication**

**Abstract**

**Résumé**

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## **General Introduction**

### **Background and Research Problem**

The eve of the 21<sup>st</sup> c has known an intensified debate over the phenomenon of cultural imperialism. The debate is led by many theoreticians, thinkers, political activists and historians under the name of postcolonialists. Although this debate seems to be as old as civilization itself, its importance and fame has reached the zenith in the contemporary period with the technological development and the modernization that occurred in the means of telecommunication. The latter has given imperialism another dimension after being, for a long period, practised chiefly by other means than soft power, such as military interventionism. In addition, despite the fact that all societies of the world play their role with different degrees in this cultural phenomenon, the American society has proved to be the dominant actor for it has developed a necessary mastery of technological means, and it has strategically devoted its political institutions to serve the aim of world dominance. In fact, a huge amount of literature reflects critically on the American move which warns of the control of fantasies by cultural products of the United States.

Knowing that China is a country which is more or less affected by American cultural imperialism, it can surely make a good and an explanatory case study. In other words, the thesis statement of this descriptive and analytical research consists of American cultural imperialism from a postcolonial perspective. Yet, the emphasis is on the linking points between American cultural hegemony and contemporary Chinese social performance. After a relatively detailed theoretical description and a simplified historical insight about Uncle Sam's expansionist tendency, this scientific investigation tries to provide a systematic study of the logical connection that exists between three main aspects of American cultural imperialism. The first aspect is related to political strategies and propaganda which make the

starting point of a new version of the Americanization process of the world. The second represents the echo of the first or its ulterior results on the Chinese society. The third aspect is the reaction from the part of the societies threatened by this phenomenon or what is commonly called “cultural resistance.” This cultural relationship between the external world and the United States gives birth to some international conflicts or, at least, got hand in the conflicts’ wide spread.

At this level, what is interesting is that in the light of globalization and modernization, China is committed to face at any price the American cultural incursion into the mainland. Yet, this time the Chinese struggle is noticeably scientific and intellectual. In fact through the findings provided in this thesis one may observe plainly how the Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese social activism converted resistance against a foreign cultural conspiracy to an internal multidimensional performance. This form of resistance does not inspire opposition and battlefield struggle; rather it inspires innovation and exchange in the process of modernization. Besides, this important element makes one irreplaceable foundation for the postcolonial thinkers who strongly believe that every modern resistance should fetch its practices from scientific promotion and economic production which in themselves rely on the transgression of authentic and local cultures. Obviously, studying the Chinese strategy of cultural resistance from a distant angle and in the way exposed in the last chapter would open new scientific perspectives for researchers on this ground.

### **Importance**

The importance of this dissertation lies in its attempt to synthesize both sides of American culture: positive and negative. Nowadays, most societies around the globe know a lot about American culture because of multiple factors in which mass media, modernity and propaganda take part, in addition to the historical experience of the United States which is in

practice considered the first country based on democratic institutions, freedom of speech and respect of human rights. Besides, the American administration sustains the wide spread of this view about the American society so that Americans win more admiration from world communities. In fact, American democracy and respect of human dignity has become the central project for many countries in different corners of the globe because of the advantageous impact they may have on societies.

However, behind the wide spread of American culture, one can depict an imperialistic attitude from the side of American political institutions and economic corporations. This attitude is growing bigger as long as the American values continue to visit other horizons and other frontiers. Some scholars look at the glorification of American culture (we unlikely feel in the mass mediated discourse) with a critical eye, because since the Second World War it has represented a danger to other vulnerable cultures. This fact raises many questions from which one can ask: what is the reason behind the reputation of American culture? Is its spreading process spontaneous or strategically intended? Knowing that the United States is a pragmatic country *par excellence*, are there economic ends which can be fulfilled by this phenomenon or to which extent cultural imperialism perpetuates economic interests? As well as, how powerful is American culture in shaping societies? Without doubt, all these questions surf around the thesis statement, and they have relatively well illustrated answers in the coming chapters.

### **Sources and Methodology**

To reach the underlined objectives, the text is at the same time descriptive and analytical relying on books, documents, and sometimes on documentaries and movies that help in answering appropriately and convincingly the leading questions and in deciphering successfully the problematic. The latter is obviously premised on the works of postcolonial

writers such as John Tomlinson, Edward Said, Antonio Gramsci, Michel Foucault and Frantz Fanon. This is in the theoretical part which needs the insertion of more descriptive texts to simplify concepts and reduce all kinds of ambiguities in the use of definitions of concepts. In addition, the research relies on historical documents and books such as speeches, letters, and literature, because the second chapter investigates the evolutionary stages of the American cultural expansion in the continental, the regional and the global eras, as it intends also to submit as much as possible historical evidences about the role of the American manufacturing culture in building and expanding the American empire.

Moreover, the two last chapters which need extensive analytical approach appeal to books in cultural studies such as *Cultural Intelligence*, *Post-colonial Studies*, *Linguistic Imperialism*, in addition to books and articles about modern history and international relations such as Barbara Bush's *Imperialism and Postcolonialism*, John Mearsheimer's *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* and Samuel Huntington's *The Clash of Civilization and Political Order in Changing Societies* because both of them study the impact of American culture on Chinese society. The thesis appeals also to many articles and scientific sources in the domain of media technology use, economy and management which have lot of things to do with the cultural phenomena in the modern world. One of these articles is the noble prize winner, Joseph Stiglitz's "Of the 1%, by the 1%, for the 1%" which shows clearly the use of culture by multinational corporations' owner to control the wealth of peoples around the globe and to control the political life in the US in a way to serve the needs of a handle of American business men.

Furthermore, in dealing with the Chinese counterpart, the research includes writings of Chinese authors in English, such as Zhang Weiwei's China recent bestseller *The China Wave: Rise of a Civilizational State*. Roughly, it makes sure to implement scholarly references of authors from both insides -the Chinese academic institutions and universities in particular-

and from the Chinese Diaspora. Besides, the thesis' observations rely on an array of Chinese sources from different historical phases of the 20<sup>th</sup> c and on scholars who participated in the intellectual debate about the cultural experiment in China and whose books reflect objectively the social truth and the changes on the mainland. Chen Xujing, Yu Keping, Kin Chi Lau and Eric Li's writings, for example, recall the crucial sociological facts which have manufactured Beijing's modern civilization in the context of globalization. All in all, the thesis unlikely makes use of many texts written by Chinese authors in order to keep balance between different views in both sides, American and Chinese.

### **Structure**

Accordingly, the thesis is made of four complementary chapters. The reader is advised to follow the order because every chapter initiates for a better understanding of the following. The opening chapter consists of an overview about postcolonial theory and the emerging debates over the concept of cultural imperialism in its comprehensive meaning. It aims at defining and clarifying different concepts of the thesis in order to simplify the understanding of the coming chapters. It tries also to reduce the existing ambiguities between some major and key concepts which the reader will meet all along the paragraphs, from the beginning to the end. One of the central principles of this discipline is that of the impossibility of carrying a research in a given field without referring to another. Besides, it cannot stand autonomous in its own right. For the postcolonialists, all sciences -particularly human sciences- are intermeshed and complementary, and it is only through a sensitive connection of different disciplines that a coherent, consistent and reliable knowledge would develop. Thus, a researcher on the ground of civilization or culture has to go through social, economic, political and literary data, otherwise; he may miss some crucial elements in describing sociologically a given phenomenon.



The second chapter aims at underlying that American cultural imperialism is not a new phenomenon. On the contrary, it is as old as the birth of the thirteen British colonies which established one united state after the War of Independence and the Treaty of Paris of 1783. Through a careful insight on history, it is clear that for more than three hundred years Americans have participated in the construction of an empire that sought today to extend its influence through a refined propagation of its emerging culture. Notwithstanding the carelessness that is felt among different scholars dealing with the early American history, this cultural aspect has been a major theme in many written and spoken texts produced in the successive historical stages of the United States. Hence, with a deliberate objectivity, this chapter surfs through these different periods to show the uncontroversial continuity in the American cultural policy.

The third chapter deals with the case of China as a sample country. Besides, choosing China as a case study to illustrate concretely and analytically the smooth move of American culture is indebted at least to three important reasons. First of all, this case would supposedly give this study more credibility and scientific authority because today China is the second biggest industrial country in the world, and according to some intellectuals it has the potentialities to be a balancing force in the near future. However, this country cannot stop the incursion of American culture regardless of all efforts to reduce its impacts on the Chinese society. The second reason is that the choice of a conservative and relatively powerful country would confirm the supremacy and the intelligence of American culture, i.e. if the American life style succeeded in paving an open way into such a conservative and reserved society, what would be the results in other weak open societies? Briefly, this fact shows to which extent American cultural strategy is sophisticated and intelligent. The third reason is that China is a country among others which recognized the threat of the wide spread of American

culture and tries to resist through a number of performances which have in turn promoted the process of Chinese modernization.

The last chapter examines Chinese cultural resistance in the light of globalization and modernization; it shows to which extent China is committed to face the American cultural imperialism in favor of its own ways and competences. Yet, this time the struggle is noticeably scientific and intellectual. In fact, at this stage, one may see clearly how the Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese social activism converted resistance against a foreign superpower to an internal performance. Of course, studying the Chinese strategy of resistance from a distant angle would certainly open new perspectives for historians and researchers in general because Chinese performance in several fields can be a centre of interest for many other countries where the will to convert cultural aggression to a positive creativity is already awake. All these chapters, in turn, are subdivided into other subtitles to make the ideas clear and explicit in the sight of the reader.

## **Chapter One: Postcolonial Theory and Critics**

This urge to break with the inherited epistemologies of rationalism is directly relevant to the political imperatives of a postcolonial culture, for the critique of rationalism can be mobilized to call into question the intellectual authority of all-knowing discourses of mastery, be it white over black, men over women, or capitalist over labourer (Bill Schwarz).

### **Introduction**

This opening chapter consists of an overview about postcolonial theory and the emerging debates over the concept of cultural imperialism in its comprehensive meaning. It aims at defining and clarifying different concepts of the thesis in order to simplify the understanding of the coming chapters. It tries also to reduce the existing ambiguities between some major and key concepts. At this level, too many things have been said, written, defended and rejected about postcolonial theory. Some point out that it is new; some others say it is as old as colonialism. While someone relates it to neocolonialism, another relates it to post-structuralism, deconstruction and postmodernism. In fact, there are many more complexities in this field among the second hand researchers like critics, teachers and students, rather than among its fathers and its architects. Thus, to go and read the founding texts of the theory makes it easier for a researcher to build his scholarship in the field and to assimilate the original ideas as transmitted and interpreted by the pioneers.

There are persisting questions for postcolonial critics and writers, and there should be return to the issues they rise to answer some of those questions. Nowadays, many written texts about postcolonialism bear a wide range of views. One can argue that what creates these hybrid views makes at the same time the force and the significance of this theory. To describe this estate of diversifying and sometimes inconsistent views, Robert Nichols puts “for better or for worse, postcolonial studies have not only become a major field of research in its own right,” and accurately he adds, “it has found its way into central debates in almost all disciplines of the humanities and social sciences” (111). Such thinking about postcolonialism is undoubtedly clear and eminent among all the contributors in the field.

In the same way, Bill Ashcroft and Hussein Kadhim write “There is possibly no other contemporary movement beset by such a range of definitions and interpretations, and, consequently such a multi-faceted collection of objections and controversies” (x). One of the central principles of this discipline is that of the impossibility of carrying a research in a given field without referring to another. Besides, it cannot stand autonomous in its own right. For the postcolonialists, all sciences -particularly human sciences- are intermeshed and complementary, and it is only through a sensitive connection of different disciplines that a coherent, consistent and reliable knowledge would develop. Arguably, this postcolonial vision of a competent scholar is a revival of the Greco-roman way of regarding a philosopher. The more the latter is multi-talented and masters a variety of domains, the more he is supposedly to be rhetorically convincing and scientifically reliable.

The outcome of the postcolonial studies has launched a huge debate among scholars who often use concepts in a confusing way. This makes it difficult for researchers to fix its meaning and its assumptions. For example, Professor Ali Rattansi, the author of several texts about cultural issues and identity questions, has argued that postcolonialism is both historical periodization and a particular form of theorization and analysis. He claims strongly that “the

concept of postcolonial should, in terms of historical periodization, be restricted to time-space inaugurated by the formal independence of former colonies of Western powers” (490). That is the appropriation of this theory to post-independence period and to freed societies’ intellectuals who belong to a long history of contestation and who are affected by the theories studying the nature of colonialism, imperialism and forms of resistance. Rattansi views the theory as an intellectual heritage provoked by the phenomenon of colonialism and the discourse which goes with it.

Professor of postcolonial and Diaspora literature, John Mcleod, for his part, distinguishes between these through the use of a hyphen to separate ‘post’ from the rest of the word. The hyphenised ‘Post-colonial’, he argues, seems more appropriate to denote a particular historical period, in other words, the period that follows empires; whereas, ‘postcolonialism’ without punctuation refers to ‘disparate forms of representations, practices and values [that] can circulate across the barrier between colonial rule and national independence’ (5). Postcolonialism then is not a mere historical period or a date showing the end of the colonial age, but a whole conceptualization of cultural life within a society that can be historically the colonized or the colonizer.

Over the same issue, Emeritus Professor of Postcolonial Literature, Lyn Innes synthesizes that the nonhyphenated term “refers to the consequences of colonialism from the time of its first impact –culturally, politically, economically” (239). It studies the knowledge resulted in the interaction that occurred between different cultures of the world with the discovery of the New World and mainly with the conquest of the subcontinents. Meanwhile, it is not only concerned with the accumulation of post-independence literature as the literal meaning of the word points out, but it is also concerned with the literature dealing with colonialism and other similar activities in the present and the past in general. In the same way as Mcleod, Innes attributes the hyphenated term (post-colonialism) “to the historical period

after a nation has been officially recognized as independent” (ibid). Post-colonialism is then used to underline a particular period in the history of an independent country.

Before going further with some details about postcolonial theory, it is primordial to shed light on ‘culture’ and ‘imperialism’ as the two concepts stand for the foundation of this theory. Actually, concepts are descriptive categories of analysis that help to classify, order and define complex phenomena such as culture. Besides, they are the bed-stone of theorization in a scientific research. Conceptualization of the same phenomena, for instance colonialism, may differ depending on the mainstream of thought adopted and depending on the period or the epoch. European colonizers and colonized North Africans may have- if not surely- different views on the notion of colonialism. Moreover, the Europeans of the 1940s and 1950s and the Europeans of the 21<sup>st</sup> c may face the similar circumstance and view the concept differently. In the same way, conceptualization may differ from each other on the basis of philosophy: a Marxist positioned thinker and a capitalist may define differently imperialism. Thus, the significance of a theoretical aspect of an academic and a scientific research lies in its ability to underline the way in which concepts and headlines will be implemented. In another way, through a sensitive description of the research’s recurrent and key concepts, theory paves the ground on which the ideas will be constructed step by step.

Arguably, the most plausible explanation of culture and imperialism needs to account for the interaction of the economic, political, social and mainly cultural factors. Postcolonial theory, hence, corresponds to these conditions and answers many questions on this cultural ground.

#### **A. Characteristics of Postcolonial Theory**

Being a new and emerging theory, nowadays postcolonialism is still a field of investigation of several critics. Because it is concerned with all aspects of life (history,

politics, economy), its description as a theory is not enclosed. Besides, day after day, new ideas completing the previous ones are poured to the repertory of the theory to make its total meaning. Therefore, writing about characteristics and major ideas of postcolonial studies today is relatively and likely impulsive. Most influential figures in contemporary critical theory such as Gayatri Spivak, Fredric Jameson, Homi Bhabha and Aijaz Ahmad continue flaunting its concepts and mainstreams.

However, what is clear is that the concept of postcolonialism emerged as a distinct and a major school of criticism in the 1990s. It is a literary movement with origins deeply rooted in the 1960s' political and chiefly cultural struggle for independence. Even so, it has not been included in the manuals and dictionaries of both linguistics and literary theory until the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> c. For instance, the word is not mentioned one time in the J. A. Cuddon's famous *Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* (fourth edition 1999). Till recently, postcolonial theory has no definition and no scholarly description in the most prominent dictionaries. This fact provides solid evidence about the freshness of the ideas brought about by this intellectual movement.

Actually, the overwhelming majority of texts written in this context do not demonstrate clearly the characteristics of postcolonial studies; instead, they are contented with discussing broadly its impact on the scientific research all over the world and its contribution to the development of a new reflection on ideas and truth in general. This way of tackling the theory is due to two major facts. The first one is that it is a newly born discipline and studies are still undergoing to cover its crystallized surface. The second fact is a consequence of the first. Because it is a new discipline, postcolonial theory is still in a permanent evolution. This volatility makes it difficult for the researchers to assert clearly the foundational components of postcolonial writings.

To study inductively the characteristics, it is primordial to highlight that postcolonial writings are of a given complexity. The latter is essentially provoked by several factors, but the most important one is the interference of other schools of thoughts in the making of its body-knowledge. Postcolonial Studies, as a theoretical approach to discourse analysis, is influenced by four foremost contemporary theories: deconstruction, poststructuralism, postmodernism and orientalism. Accordingly, the convergence between the latter has become by now a curious union that forms four important characteristics of postcolonialism. To some extent, the latter represents a crucible of several streams of thoughts which are continuously fusing, transgressing and reproducing knowledge. To defend this view, Peter Barry demonstrates that “The postcolonial writer explains the great attraction which post-structuralism and deconstruction have proved to the postcolonial Critic” (196). Briefly, the interaction existing between these four philosophical streams forms the matrix of postcolonial studies and its worldwide reputation. At the same time, it highlights at least three inextricable characteristics in the postcolonial writing.

### **1. Progressive Identity**

Without doubt, this element reflects the anthropological attraction and concerns in the postcolonial studies. Anthropology, which makes an important body-knowledge of sociology and which deals with the evolution of societies in the course of time, demonstrates that social groups are dynamic and in a permanent evolution. This sociological fact confirms that the culture of every social group is relatively cognitive. It shows that culture, which is also the bed stone of one’s identity, is by nature progressive and changes from a generation to another. This fact is widely felt and approached in the postcolonial writing.

Accordingly, one important characteristic of postcolonial writers is their strong interest in the notion of *progressive identity*. Similarly with poststructuralists, postcolonial



researchers are centrally concerned with the unstable and shifting nature of identity. That instability gives to the world throughout time a heterogeneous dimension that is considered as a natural and an obvious feature of mankind. Contrary to liberal humanists and universalists who argue that human experience is universal and that “pre-enlightenment superstition, cruelty and ignorance would be replaced by both individual liberty and universal peace” (Kellner, 2-3), postcolonial thinkers reject this uniformist tendency because it has led to elitist, colonialist and, from a feminist view, to patriarchal ideologies. The philosophy of the enlightenment, which promoted the idea that Europe is the centre of human civilization, had actually opened a big bracket in the genocidal history outside Europe. Jean Paul Sartre went even further, when writing about colonial France in Algeria in the preface of Fanon’s *The Wretched of the Earth*, to state that European humanism comprised “nothing but an ideology of lies” because it denies those worshiped ideals in the countries other than the European ones. Sartre’s words clarify how much the colonial discourse produced in ‘mother-country’ was ironical when it has come to practice.

In other words, the universalists who represent a long tradition of western ideology that goes back to the enlightenment constructed their own social categorization in which cultural relations are based on Europeans over ‘others,’ men over women, and later on whites over blacks, and capitalists over labourers (as we can include north over south). This relation was not only vis à vis the colonized people, but there was even within the European societies a classification which had given one class the right to civilize another one. From the postcolonial view, practical humanism as pictured by history is indicted for generating the will to dominate, to establish boundaries, to classify and calibrate. Hence, what distinguishes the two conceptions is that humanists are “class-rooted and universalizing in their motivation, whereas the postcolonial intellectual resembles more the declassed intellectual” (San Juan). Besides, the reason behind this difference between them is the way intellectuals from both

sides consider identity: the universalist want it standardized on the western model; the postcolonialists admit it divided and heterogeneous.

Besides, divided identity foregrounds also cultural hybridity, that is, the situation whereby individuals and groups belong to more than one culture. Thus, social groups in modern era may belong to several cultures because of major historical changes and circumstances. In addition, for a long period, human societies have been undergoing technical and contextual configurations which brought many cultures around the world closer to each other. As a result, there has been fusion in many areas where cultural hybridization is systematically observed. Professor Joseph Chan from the University of Hong Kong names this cultural phenomenon with the term ‘transculturation.’ Just like cultural hybridity, the term stands for the outcome of cultural interaction which usually happens as a consequence of territorial, regional or global changes. Accordingly, Cultural hybridity can by itself be a result of great events taking place in the course of time, whether at national scales or international and global scale, such as the Industrial Revolution, colonialism, regional economic boom as well as economic crisis, globalization. Either immediately or progressively, these events have significantly changed societies quantitatively and qualitatively.

The Industrial Revolution, for instance, “marks the most fundamental transformation of human life in the history of the world recorded in written documents” (Hobsbawm xvii). In the context of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, that transformation allowed some cultural blocs, usually foreign blocs, to interfere in social life of other cultural blocs within the European continent. It was this scientific revolution which ‘modernized and industrialized’ Western European countries and brought them together in the quest of raw materials. Simultaneously, a new society, which was growing identical, emerged in most part of the continent and the United States. Since then, a new hybrid culture has been vigorously manufactured. In the same way, colonialism as the most explicit form of imperialism compressed societies sharply and

juxtaposed a variety of cultures with the controlling metropolis dictating the norms of new and modern society. Over centuries of colonization, the interaction between colonized and colonizer has formed cultural layers in both societies. Yet more particularly, it has given the colonized communities another thick cultural layer which has in some cases enriched but in many other cases destroyed the authentic traditions. The same cultural layer has continued to shape peoples' conception of life in the ex-colonies. As a result of these modern phenomena, societies consciously or unconsciously belong to a complex culture that may have different origins. To illustrate the view of interdependency and cultural hybridity, Edward Said explains that:

[To] ignore or otherwise discount the overlapping experience of Westerners and Orientals, the interdependence of cultural terrains in which colonizer and colonized co-existed and battled each other through projections as well as rival geographies, narratives, and histories is to miss what is essential about the world in the last century (*Culture and Imperialism* xxii - xxiii).

Postcolonialism then tries to popularize the fact that even the European culture may well be that of 'the other' and vice versa. On this premises, it endorses co-existence between different cultural entities, and it systematically hinders all the ways of interfering in the latter's' development because they fuel clashes and wars between social groups. Postcolonial writers consider colonialism as the major historical event which prohibited some identities from existing and developing because of the interference of colonial administrations all along the 'civilizing mission' in Latin America, Asia and Africa.

## **2. Difference and diversity**

The other important characteristic is directly connected with the progressive identity. Postcolonial theory has a strong faith in cultural *difference*. But for postcolonial critics,

difference does not mean necessarily opposition as it is understood in some contemporary political studies. For them, world societies can be everything but uniform. Thus, diversity is unequivocally natural. Besides, dispersed people may have the same historical roots but may be culturally different. In the same way, major historical events contribute to the formation of cultural layers and to the process of transculturation as seen in Progressive Identity, and they may also push societies to develop in different ways. For example, the Industrial Revolution had provoked a big shift in the life style in Europe. This fact had changed the parameters of power between Western industrialized Europe and the late 18<sup>th</sup> c North Africa. Simultaneously because of the stimulated scientific and technical improvement, it had endorsed cultural disparity between both sides and put their cultures on two parallel lines. In the same way, everywhere in the world, cultures grow different depending on historical circumstances and on social patterns.

Postcolonialists argue that actually cultural difference should bring societies closer to each other instead of generating clashes between them. They claim that, like in trade, differences are a source of exchange and mutual promotion. However, because of excessive nationalism and radical pragmatism, colonial discourse widened the gap between colonized and colonizer on the basis of difference which is “a keyword of imperialist discourse” (Kaiwar). Among the numerous inappropriate and hegemonic ways of using intentionally the concept to divide mankind is the discursal distinction between the European white, civilized and Christian from the savage, pagan and Muslim. This use of difference ended in massive missionary and military maneuvers which in turn were transformed into a long period of exploitation and genocidal crimes in Africa and other corners of the world.

History recorded by both Western and non-Western intellectuals demonstrates that since the first contact with the indigenous people of the occupied territories, the colonizers used the notion of difference to divide, distinguish and then harass indigenous cultures to

create a feeling of backwardness among the colonized people. There were repeated psychological wars which functioned at various levels of peoples' life to make them feel different and inferior. As a result of psychological wars, peoples were forced to abandon their original culture and embrace "the mother country's cultural standards" to find themselves lost "in-between" (*Black Skin White Masks* 9). In the case of colonialism, difference represented an obstacle for the Europeans to control entirely the spirits and the wealth in the occupied countries, while cultural uniformity makes the whole project easier for them.

This case of colonial project is nowadays back to political, academic and intellectual scene, and it is discussed in the context of globalization. On the premise of this cultural homogenization and difference intellectual dispute, postcolonial critics later on asserted that one fundamental impact of globalization, promoted by telecommunication progress and 'the death of distance' in the 'global village' would be the eventual death of difference which in turn would lead, in Fukuyama's view, to "the end of history and the last man." Without equivocal, the death of difference will put the world in an unprecedented situation where only one culture (most intellectuals believe it is the American culture) will be celebrated.

The Indo-British critic, Homi Bhabha gives a great priority to the characteristic of cultural difference in his writings. He points out in his masterpiece *The Location of Culture*: "It is in the emergence of the interstices – the overlap and displacement of domains of difference – that... collective experience of *nationness*, community interest, or cultural value are negotiated" (2). To a simple extent, he distinguishes two types of *differences* which shape significantly the identity of social groups: the first is natural and based on race, class and gender; the second is cultural and is based on people's experiences and wisdom. Anthropologically, Bhabha highlights that there is a close relationship between them, and they affect each other. However, in contemporary world issues, the latter is more important

because it represents a breeding ground for the former. In other words, cultural difference which stands for Said's 'otherness' reinforces natural difference.

Western universalism, from this perspective, aims at consolidating this notion of difference in a way to uphold the European enlightened and superior citizens over the 'inferior subaltern' communities. Postcolonial critics notice that difference is sometimes fueled by politics, and if there are today several world conflicts designed as cultural clash based on religious difference, it is because of the interference of political and economic interests of great nations mainly through fueling religious rivalries. The best illustration to clarify this point is Samuel Huntington's "The Clash of Civilizations?" In this article, Huntington foreshadows that "the principal conflicts of global politics will occur between nations and groups of different civilizations" (22). Yet, Edward Said considers this essay as part of an ongoing orientalism because it contains a brief survey of "what the West must do to remain strong and keep [its] opponents weak and divided" (The Myth of 'The Clash of Civilizations' 3)<sup>1</sup>. That is Huntington's article encourages rivalries between the West and the East and regards difference as the source of conflict in the 21<sup>st</sup> c. In other words, Said regards this manner of exploiting difference within politics to divide and weaken societies as a hegemonic strategy which aims at strengthening western values and legitimizing its policy.

### **3. Quest for the Past**

The third characteristic of postcolonial theory is chiefly projected by literary and historical circles of post-independence era. It is the need to *reclaim the past*. This aspect is of great importance because it is well pictured in the New Cultural History in which the study of the past is not only synchronic, as in the traditional approaches to history, but it is also

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<sup>1</sup> "The Myth of 'The Clash of Civilizations'" is a written speech by Edward Said right after Samuel Huntington's publication of his book *The Clash of Civilizations and the Emerging World Order*. It is a speech designed to put into question much of the ideas included by S. Huntington and the reliability of his references.

diachronic. In the latter, the study of the past relies on other scientific discoveries and other fields in humanities such as anthropology, archeology, economics, politics and even religious texts. In effect, what is crucial in postcolonial studies is the deconstruction of history which is regarded as being manipulated, constructed and to some extent falsified during the colonial period in order to cherish the Western imperial will<sup>2</sup>.

Edward Said, in what he calls in his analysis of Yeats' masterpieces 'a third nature' of postcolonial writers, argues that "the search for authenticity, for a more congenial national origin than that provided by colonial history... are enabled by the land" (Yeats and Decolonization 79). This quotation, which reflects a key postcolonial belief, shows clearly that there are two types of history: the authentic one and the colonial one. Besides, decolonization should not be only an armed revolution, but it should be also armed of credible knowledge and historical reconsideration. In this way, decolonization is meanwhile an intellectual writing-back to question the history which in the colonial context legitimized the oppressive administrations' presence in the colonies. It also opens the way to historical nationalism that sprouts out of the quest for identity and the claim for historical documents from the colonial administration. For this reason, Algerian historians and researchers for instance are still asking the French officials and administration to release the hidden archives about colonial and pre-colonial history of Algeria.

Said's argumentation is by the way applicable on most countries which got independence whether in the early period such as India or belatedly such as Algeria. After independence, they started rewriting their histories on the premises of historical documents and scientific knowledge. Accordingly, national histories provided by colonial administration

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<sup>2</sup> Imperial will is the way in which an imperial power legitimizes or justifies its expansion in a given territory, either by propaganda or pretexts (Todd, 55). In its political and economic sense, this concept is also well explained in the books of Noam Chomsky, *Dominer le Monde ou Sauver la Planète* (2004) et *Le Bouclier Américain* (2002).

under exogenous theories are revisited and studied to synthesize appropriately the reliability and the authenticity of many historical events. In his anthropological studies on North African communities, Mouloud Mammeri, the Algerian anthropologist and novelist, states that colonial authorities had conceived a whole system of explication which would serve the ideological legitimization of their administration (48). These words clarify the significance of history in the sight of colonial administration, and so it is in the sight of postcolonial writers. They unveil another strategic tool of colonization which functions through academic institutions and discourse production.

Among the scholars who applied these measures to study colonial history, there is Ramila Thaper, an Indian outstanding contemporary historian who wrote *History of India* (1966), in addition to a dozen of scholarly works in the same field. Correspondingly, she rejected and proved the fallacy of some key Indian historical events that were taken, before her publications, as Indian history by grants. In an interview about British colonialism and the distortion of history, Thaper argues that the principle distortions of colonial history in India, and this is valid to other histories of the colonized world, occurred at the level of the reading of historical materials and texts, and that British officers tended to read those materials “very much from the point of view of the culture and civilization that they came from, which was Greco-roman and Christian Europe.” Just in the same direction as Mouloud Mammeri, she keeps on saying that “they wanted to use history as part of their colonial policy.”<sup>3</sup> Actually, the latter did not content itself only with the falsification of historical truth, but beyond that it glorified its civilization through a systematic and continuous representation of the South as uncivilized and unable to rule itself. This aspect is humbly detailed in the following title in the context of the colonial representation of the colonized.

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<sup>3</sup> These quotations are taken from an interview in which Ramila Thaper received Honorary Doctorate from the University of Alberta, Canada. The title of the interview is “India’s Past and Present: How History Informs Contemporary Narratives.”



In addition to the deliberate interpretative distortion of history, there is another worthy element to mention in the same context, that is, material and physical erosion of civilization. One concern of postcolonialism in the study of history is to investigate the impacts of colonialism not only on the colonized but also on the universal cultural heritage because colonization got broader consequences on human civilization. Without doubt, decolonization with its wide stretching frontiers has affected international relations, and Bandung Conference (1955) demonstrated the will of the newly independent countries to participate in shaping strategically these relations and in writing modern history of the world. In addition to its national and local criteria, decolonization was also a global move to save universal cultural and historical heritage. Because it paved the way to cultural revival in different corners of the world, many intellectuals consider it as the monumental event of the 20<sup>th</sup> c. Aimé Césaire's *Discourse on Colonialism*<sup>4</sup> is one early and most revealing text in this context. As an influential figure among the postcolonialist thinkers, the Martiniquan essayist shows how colonization "dehumanize[d] even the most civilized man," and how it destroyed "the wonderful Indian civilizations." He furthers that "neither Deterding nor Royal Dutch nor Standard Oil will never console me for the Aztecs and Incas" (5, 6). This statement brings back the whole historical background of the 15<sup>th</sup> and the 16<sup>th</sup> centuries which saw a big wave of explorations in search for gold and silver and which became through time entitled the 'civilizing mission'.

At this level, it is essential to explain that though postcolonial theory is a new cultural practice and a new scholarly investigation, yet it shows a great interest in the old histories and all kinds of narratives. Its core is revising the past (either in literary or historical books) to show the foregrounded truth from the backgrounded one and rethinking history as a

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<sup>4</sup> The used version of Aimé Césaire's *Discourse on Colonialism* is translated into English by Joan Pinkham and published by Monthly Review Press: New York, 1972. Originally, it is published as *Discours sur le colonialisme* by Editions Presence Africaine, 1955.

whole: not as one over the other or one to exclude the other as it was the case with colonial historical literature. This shows that those who argue that postcolonialism is limited to post-colonial issues are relatively wrong for it has to reconstruct a great deal of past primordial knowledge on which it may locate itself. In this respect, Vasant Kaiwar explains that:

Postcolonial theory constructs itself around the... axes: a grand narrative of the pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial in which the global South is positioned, its historical specificities seemingly preserved in microhistories but effectively cancelled in collusion with the imperialists.

Kaiwar's statement enhances the importance of pre-independence period in the writings of postcolonial thinkers because it is mainly during that period that historical misconceptions took place and colonial discourse of 'grand narrative' was constructed around the concept of modernity.

When commenting on Frantz Fanon's work from this historical angle, Said wrote "the whole point of Fanon's work is to force the European metropolis to think its history *together with* the history of colonies awakening from the cruel stupor and absurd immobility of imperial dominion" ('Representing the colonized' 223). Both histories should be symmetrically as well as objectively studied as one universal archival heritage but different from each other; they should not, then, be implemented as tools of domination or triggering hatred. Here lies the postmodernist view that decolonization has restrained Western universalizing, authoritarian and modernity-based narrative, and it has stimulated postmodernity which localized representation and has no claim of universal truth.

Furthermore, this quest for the past is highlighted not only in academic research and books of history but also in literary works. Postcolonial writings put into relief national historical figures with local names that were overlooked by colonial texts. This is the case of

African literature written in English and French languages. Despite the fact of ‘adapting’ the European form of writing prose and poetry, pioneering African literary texts tend to deal with African subject matter. According to the critics, this act is another important maneuver of decolonization which occurs in literature to show to the Westerners that every human being has a sense of history and of innovation. Bill Schwarz, Reader in Communication and Cultural Studies at Goldsmith College, observes that:

For those engaged in the postcolonial critique are, it seems, attempting to write their way out of the hegemony exerted by the interlocking master-categories of race, nation, culture and sexuality which lie deep within the foundations of European thought (10).

From the part of some postcolonial critics such as Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak and Homi Bhabha, notwithstanding the overuse of identity in their texts, yet this concept is removed from its circumstantial ground and historical contexts in order to be treated as autonomous phenomena and far from political legitimization. It is not used to draw borders between states as most of people may take it, but as an alternative to colonialism and as a form of resistance to all kinds of authoritarian regimes. Some political organisms, particularly tyrannical and despotic governments, used the concept of identity to keep their societies isolated from the external world and then have a complete authority over them. All these elements spotlight how much the aspect of history is significant not only to the postcolonial studies but even in the constructed colonial discourse.

So far, postcolonialism pivots around three important characteristics which are also shared with other schools of thoughts. All of them make the theory’s centre of interest and its body-knowledge. Divided identity underlines that human experience is not universal and that culture reflects that experience. Yet, because of some social and historical circumstances,

divided cultures meet in certain areas to form cultural layers in the same society. This is the case with Europe since enlightenment and mainly the Industrial Revolution. Difference instead is the human spatial experience which grows different over time. From postcolonial perspective, it should encourage exchange and tolerance, not hegemony and wars. This was the case with Europe and 19<sup>th</sup> c Africa. At last, the quest for the past stands for historical deconstruction which heralds a number of intentional falsifications in the colonial discourse. Thus, a scholar on this ground has to provide historical evidences, and one of his ultimate task is to denounce objectively the constructed past. All in all, these characteristics give postcolonial studies great esteem and credibility in the pursuit of truth and reliable knowledge. Meanwhile, they explicitly foreground the significance of cultural representation in the verification of past and present assumptions.

## **B. Representation of Culture in Postcolonial Theory**

Culture is the most recurrent concept in postcolonial studies. Even in the titles of the pioneering texts, *culture* receives a large space as it is the case with: Gramsci's *Cultural Hegemony*, Said's *Culture and Imperialism*, Jameson's *Postmodernism or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, Bhabha's *Location of Culture* and Tomlinson's *Cultural Imperialism*. All these texts in addition to lot of others study different aspects of life, literary discourse, philosophy and societies in general around this ground of culture. Edward Said wrote, "My own theory, which I put forth in the book from which these comments are an extract, is that culture played a very important, indeed indispensable role" ("Yeats and Decolonization" 72). This means that this concept is of great importance in understanding the foundations of orientalism and in apprehending the postcolonial theory in general. It is not included in the characteristics because it has a particular signification, and it should be clarified carefully in order to get into its real meaning from the scope of cultural studies. More accurately, this part aims at locating the concept of culture in postcolonialism in the context of

the 20<sup>th</sup> c socio-historical circumstances and at unveiling its hegemonic use in the geostrategic discourse.

### **1. Location of Culture in Postcolonialism**

In postcolonial theory, the word *culture* is most of the time, if not all the time, related to imperialism. For this reason, postcolonialism is referred to in some founding texts as ‘cultural imperialism theory’. In fact, although there is a slight difference between them, these two appellations can- in term of field of study- stand together as one domain. However, it is noticeable that the former is broader because, in addition to cultural imperialism, it deals also with other aspects of knowledge such as history, teaching and translation. Whereas, the latter’s ultimate purpose is to analyze “the discourse of cultural imperialism” produced in multiple ways mainly in literary texts and media (Tomlinson 22). It is possible then to argue that cultural imperialism thesis is included in postcolonial theory.

A good assimilation of American cultural imperialism requires a good understanding of the concept of culture. The latter has all the time been an attractive field of knowledge; it has fascinated scholars from different domains. Among them, we find sociologists, anthropologists, linguists, historians and theoreticians such as Ibn Khaldun, Margaret Mead, Claude Levi Strauss and Edward Said. These scholars, and many others from different periods and disciplines, diverge in what concerns some characteristics of the concept; however, they share some important similarities. It is through those built common points as well as other postcolonial analytical studies that a complete definition may sprout out.

Ibn Khaldun, whom influential book *The Muqqadima* represents an introduction to sociology and a new History, gives at the same time a broad and a meticulous definition of culture; he claims that it is the goal of every society because it is the source of civilization and improvement. In fact, he divides the concept into two aspects: the first is the inherited

knowledge which accumulates and grows throughout time to form the second aspect which is the infrastructure. But what is more important here is that when he came up to this concept, he introduced the notion of hegemony in a genius way and asserted that the weak societies have to follow, in a way or another, the culture of powerful societies. That kind of hegemony corresponds widely to that of postcolonial theory.

Predominant discussions about contemporary issues move towards this khaldunian perspective of putting culture at the center of societies instead of military strength, economy or politics. Postmodernist texts describe human being as singular and determined figure, historically situated inside his culture. Such thinking inspires ‘death of man within culture,’ and improvement is not that of human beings but that of culture which affects “individuals’ behavior that they acquire from other members of their species through teaching, imitation, and other forms of social transmission” (Richerson, 5). According to Bill Asherroft, it is “a range of separate and distinct systems of behavior, attitudes and values” (*Post-Colonial Studies* 60). This definition shows that if there is something that distinguishes a social group from another, it is culture. This is why people speak of cultural diversity instead of cultural uniformity; they speak of cultures instead of ‘global culture’. Tomlinson, for him, estimates that “culture is entirely- even definitively- the work of human being” (23). This interest in culture, as it is argued, is not recent. What is recent is the way it is approached in the age of post-colonialism and globalization.

With the birth of new theories in the field of cultural studies, many descriptive questions are asked about culture such as: how cultural practice is established through time? Is the process of cultural establishment ever finished and that peoples are living ‘the end of history and the last man’? Is it possible to speak of authentic culture in ‘global village’? How can we distinguish what is local from what is foreign in culture? Can we speak of ‘culture’ in singular; that is ‘global culture’? In fact, all these questions need rational answers. Besides, a

number of eminent scholars have worked on them with both scientific skills and objectivity. Yet in this part of the chapter, culture is limited chiefly to its role in the hegemonic practice. Postcolonial scholars put it at the front place in the practice of imperialism.

## 2. Hegemonic Use of Culture

When describing the world of the future in his theoretical text *Une brève histoire de l'avenir*, Jacques Attali, a French political figure and analyst, foregrounds that the world will live three important generations. The first will give birth to '*hyperempires*'. The latter, for Attali, will result in confederations of nations belonging to the same culture. The second will be that of '*Hyperconflicts*', because conflicts are no more between countries but between cultural entities. This will lead to two opposing hypothetical results. The fatalistic one is the end of the world because of the use of today's stored sophisticated weapons of mass destruction. The optimistic one is that the hyperconflict will change dramatically the traditional order into a globalized '*hyperdemocracy*', an advanced form of human organization (10, 11).

In a less excessive way, Samuel Huntington elaborated the same theory of world conflicts in the future, and he puts it forward, "the clash of civilizations will dominate global politics," in which ideological differences will be disputed among mankind. Huntington made his views explicit when he says that "the great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be Cultural" (22). In addition, he takes into account the currently issue between the United States representing the western world and terrorism representing the eastern world. Contrary to Attali's theory of cultural clash of superpowers, Huntington hypothesis is cultural clash between 'tribalism and globalism.'

Obviously, both of the defended hypotheses give a great deal of importance to culture as the ultimate machine of history. What is also clear in these analyses is that politics

and economy are understood equally with culture. In other words, both views regard economy and politics as important as culture, something which is most of time refused and rejected by postcolonial scholars. The latter argue that culture is the origin of economic and political thinking of a given society and that it is the source of knowledge in general. Because cultures are relatively different from each other and methodically premised on various ways of cumulating ideas, knowledge -which is by itself the product of culture- is then systematically relative and needs verification. Economically, this fact makes it clear for instance why some societies prefer socialism, others capitalism and many others prefer something in between. It is due to the cultural foundations which produce knowledge in human societies. This view of relativity in knowledge is widely defended by the French thinker, Michel Foucault. That is, every culture has its own truth, and it is on that truth that economic and political principles are constructed.

To illustrate, the relation between culture and economy in a given society is like the relation between individualism and capitalism. The first is a cultural notion; the second is an economic one. But thanks to some other cultural factors, the first has developed to become an economic theory that is known as capitalism. The same relationship is between tolerance and heterogeneity, and democracy. Though from the outside they look the same, from inside they are two different things, and unlikely one is the origin of the other. Politics in sequence manages the gap between them. Tolerance is a cultural value, and democracy is a political system. However, an anthropological study of the two concepts in the United States shows that democracy is presumed a political notion rooted in the culture of tolerance and respect of the other in the context of immigration of the 17<sup>th</sup> c. This is why when postcolonial thinkers use culture; they mean the deepest side of social truth and of knowledge in a limited setting. To clarify, politics and economy are the embodiment of cultural heritage which is made of small units of knowledge, in the same way as the molecules in chemistry.



In his favorable position towards the significance of culture in the making of empires, Said claims that:

These accumulated experiences, territories, peoples, histories; [Eurocentrism] studied them, classified them, verified them; but above all, it subordinated them to the culture and indeed the very idea of white Christian Europe. This cultural process has to be seen if not as the origin and cause, then at least as the vital, informing, and invigorating counterpoint to the economic and political machinery that we all concur stands at the center of imperialism” (“Yeats and Decolonization” 72).

Said highlights the primordial role of culture in the Western imperial mission, as he distinguishes also what is cultural from what is political and economic machine in the process of domination. Moreover, he subordinates the latter to the former, as he goes further to argue that cultural imperialism is an over-lasting form of hegemony, for it controls minds instead of political and military faculties of a society. Defending this opinion in a book devoted to Said’s works, Ashcroft notices; “the role of culture in keeping imperialism intact cannot be overestimated” (*Edward Said* 83). All in all, these diverse views on culture provide the reader in the postcolonial studies with how culture is conceptualized and implemented in the context of imperialism.

### **C. Imperialism as Associated with Colonialism**

This title cannot try to encompass the many views and arguments that are primordial to the understanding of imperialism. Imperialism has generated a continuing debate which has ended in plenty of conclusions. Even to attempt to acknowledge some of those conclusions or views would result in superficial lists of opinion-poll specific to different colonial territories

and cultural contexts. As it is argued previously, the definitions given about imperialism depend on differing philosophical positions and political values of the definers.

From his angle, the Russian philosopher and eminent political and economic reformer in the post-Bolshevik revolution, Vladimir Lenin defines imperialism as “the highest stage of capitalism,” from the point that the onward march of global capitalism reduces the lives of many people to “unspeakable misery”. He related it to free trade doctrine which, for him, facilitates the process of colonization and exploitation of both the oppressed and the working class. In addition, he considered the First World War (WWI) an imperialistic war “for the division of the world, for the partition and repartition of colonies, ‘spheres of influence’ of finance capital” (1). Simultaneously, when analyzing the existing connections between capitalism and imperialism, Jean Paul Sartre claimed that “this time it was capitalism itself that became colonist” (10). In the same way, many scholars in Humanities, regarded most of the time as pro-Marxists theoreticians, defend this view of economic hegemony.

The British historian Ronald Robinson instead defines imperialism as “...a political function of a process of incorporating some countries at some times into the international economy” (cited in Bush 45). He gives more weight to the political side, that is the administrative side of the practice of control over other territories in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Therefore, while Lenin discusses the economic side of imperialism; Robinson for his part includes the political dimension. What is certain is that both of them look at hegemonic practice from different angles depending on their social, historical and cultural tendencies.

Despite the existing differences in the previous definitions, scholars agree on the fact that imperialism transcends the notion of domination and imposition, and enhances the gap between powerful and weak societies. Practically, the whole mankind does agree that its

practice in international relations is unsustainable, because it dehumanizes both sides (the controller and the controlled) and reduces them psychologically as well as physically to savagery and cruelty, as it was the case with colonization. Thus, it is impossible to reduce the meaning of imperialism just to the material side, that is: economic exploitation through the use of military strength. In this respect, it appears that Edward Said, one of the founders of postcolonial theory and the father of Orientalism, has reached a moderate and an appropriate definition which sums up the postcolonial use of imperialism. He puts it as “practice, theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan centre ruling a distant territory” (*Culture and Imperialism*, 8). Comparing to the traditional ways of studying the concept, the statement explains how much imperialism is meticulous. Moreover, this definition is neither from economic nor political view, but it mirrors both theory and practice in the show of power. It goes deeper to cover the exteriorized attitudes as well as the implemented knowledge in the states’ hegemonic behavior.

The difference occurs also when it comes to the meaning of the notion of imperialism in contemporary era. In the past, it was clear because it was a question of military presence of a foreign authority in a given country where political administration is in the hands of the mother country. What leads to the question: How can we speak of imperialism in the absence of colonialism, or more precisely in a world said to be ruled by human rights organizations?

Barbara Bush, Professor of imperial history, answered this question by introducing and explaining the notions of “*formal* and *informal* imperialism” (45). These two concepts clarify the relationship between societies: one controls, the other controlled. A formal imperial relationship exists when the ‘imperialized’ country is deprived of its sovereignty and is incorporated into the metropolis or empire. This was the case of British India and French Algeria. The word most used in this context is colonialism: “*apparatus* [and] heavy machine”

of oppression (Sartre, 21). Informal imperial relationship can have several dimensions: cultural, political, economic and historical. This relationship involves the interaction of economic, political, social and more precisely cultural dependence on a hegemonic metropolis. Vasant Kaiwar, an eminent postcolonial scholar and a historian, argued that:

One of the central characteristics of postcolonial theory is the contention that colonialism- defined not so much as the history of the physical occupation and rule by European states of vast regions of the world beyond Europe- is the defining experience of humanity in our epoch....In the postcolonial age, we are all somehow still under the epistemic sway of colonialism even as we resist under the sign of something “post”.

In the same way as Bush, Kaiwar distinguishes ‘the physical occupation’, which stands for colonialism, from ‘the epistemic sway of colonialism,’ which stands for cultural hegemony. In his texts, he defends the view of continuity in Western imperial policy but taking other shapes and disguise rather than traditional colonialism. This means that the latter conditioned the history of humanity, and though it had seen the end by the 1960s (except for some countries), the world continues to live its collateral and unavoidable consequences. Among those consequences is the emergence of a new form of imperialism under the name of neo-colonialism. As the name suggests, it is colonialism by another name.

One contentious nature of the concept of informal imperialism, mentioned previously, is reflected in the polarized debate in the post-colonial period over the existence of neo-imperialism. During the post-independence era, this vision of imperialism was the predominant in the intellectual scene of the former colonies. It is characterized by the banishment of the use of weapons and direct military control, but the ex-colonial administration instead worked on the elaboration of another sophisticated strategy to rule the newly born countries. In geopolitics, analysts tend to call this form of control ‘soft power’.

Since the 1950s and in the fag of decolonization wars, speeches, texts and pictures fuel the political debate about this new form of imperialism, and the United States gets the lion's share of criticism on this ground.

Besides, there are two main views on the question of neo-colonialism. The first view is that of the Westerners mainly orthodox historians who tend to have Eurocentric conservative vision. They argued that Western imperialism started with colonialism; it ended with decolonization, and that neo-colonialism is invented by some nationalistic views in the former colonies to escape some responsibilities and failures. This is in the way that political leaders in the independent countries attribute economic underdevelopment and political corruption to foreign interference and political pressure to avoid all kinds of criticism and popular reactions. The second view is that of the 'tricontinentalists,' or Third World nationalists and Western leftist intellectuals. Contrary to the first view, they claim that decolonization did not abolish completely imperialism because colonialism was culturally deeply rooted in different institutions of the dependencies.

Neo-colonial view in North vs South relations is the basic claim of the opening statement of Spivak's postcolonial seminal text: "Can the Subaltern Speak?". She asserts that western academic thinking is produced in order to support western economic interests. Postcolonialism as a form of knowledge came to counter another body of knowledge of Eurocentric and orthodox scholars who defend the motto of the "White Men's Burden." Moreover, the role played by postcolonialists is not only denouncing or buffering any evolution from any side but to reduce that evolution to a historical truth, so that to make everybody aware of the strategic impact of colonial and universalizing discourse.

In addition, according to many intellectuals and political activists from the North as well as the South, international and global organizations which have emerged since WWII are

the spearheads of neo-colonialism because they privilege great powers in world affairs. For example, under international monetary system, former colonies -in spite of great efforts from some countries such as India and Cuba- keep on suffering economic crisis and deficit, because they do not share equal opportunities and privileges as other superpowers. For postcolonial thinkers, since the end of the Second World War imperialism has been perpetuated by economic exploitation and political domination in the subaltern world. The British postcolonial theorist and historian, Robert Young wrote that “It can be said that, paradoxically, the liberation struggles helped the new imperial system to break up the old one” (44). This shows that continuity is the heart of every imperial system and that in the same way many countries fight to bury and damn this hegemonic system, other countries struggle to keep it alive under other pseudonyms.

Therefore, post-colonialism as a period does not mean post-imperialism. The latter is present at a large scale of sophistication and abstraction. Furthermore, it is even arguable that Young’s new imperialism is the most dangerous form of hegemony which continues to control softly the institutions of states and the minds of people. Kwame Nkrumah, the Ghanaian influential political figure and one of the fathers of Pan-Africanism, claimed that:

Neo-colonialism is also the worst form of imperialism. For those who practise it, it means power without responsibility and for those who suffer from it, it means exploitation without redress. In the days of old-fashioned colonialism, the imperial power had at least to explain and justify at home the actions it was taking abroad. In the colony those who served the ruling imperial power could at least look to its protection against any violent move by their opponents. With neo-colonialism neither is the case.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> This quotation is taken from a text in which Kwame Nkrumah in 1965 coined for the first time the word ‘neo-colonialism’. The text is available in the following web site:  
<https://www.marxists.org/subject/africa/nkrumah/neo-colonialism/introduction.htm>.

What is significant in this quotation is the idea of ‘responsibility’ and ‘exploitation’ in the neo-colonized world. That is people and resources in tricontinental countries are exploited and exhausted in as thoughtful way as possible to keep Western superpowers away from suspicious views of the outside world (precisely countries directly concerned with Western exploitation) and away from apprehensive reactions of their own public opinion.

When the notion of colonialism had interfered the debates about when and where the postcolonial began, the latter has been pushed back to the American Revolution and to the decolonization of Latin America. It has been also argued that postcolonialism has begun with colonialism itself. Perhaps as far back as 1492 with the European exploration of new lands in the Atlantic Ocean and with the earliest practice of resistance (Ahmad, 14). Klor de Alva argued that “its aim is to challenge and revise forms of domination, past and present” (245). Thus, according to this trend of views, the postcolonial which to a large extent represents a form of resistance through methodological philosophy is as old as imperialism and resistance. However, the mainstream of postcolonialist scholars such as John Tomlinson and Edward Said... argued that it officially appeared as sparks of thoughts in the 1960s and as a reaction against colonial discourse. However, the view of the mainstream scholars does not deny the fact that the theory has all the time fetched data and materials of the studies it carries on from present, past and far past facts to contain and denounce colonial discourse.

In a nut shell, the latter aimed at highlighting the superiority of the colonizing Western civilization over the colonized subcontinent countries, whereas postcolonialism denounces and challenges such hegemonic and irrational discourse through a chirurgical study of the entire intellectual heritage produced in the context of censorship and domination. Colonial discourse is part of this intellectual heritage which contributed immensely in the colonial enterprise. Hence, the coming paragraphs analyze the existing intertextuality and interdependency between postcolonialism and colonial discourse analysis.

#### **D. Postcolonial and Colonial Discourses**

There are three main figures who pioneered the study of representation in colonial discourse: Edward Said, Frantz Fanon and Michel Foucault. Actually, no one can deny or underestimate the contribution of other postcolonial thinkers such as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Aimé Césaire, Homi Bhabha as well as Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o in the analysis of colonial discourse and in underlining its failures in picturing the big South. Yet, choosing these three figures would make the text consistent and relatively less ambiguous. Thus, this part consists of their major ideas and works in this context. Colonial discourse analysis, pioneered by professor Said from Columbia University, is influential in the postcolonial theory.

In his masterpieces, *Orientalism* and *Culture and Imperialism*, Said tends to explain a profound and complex web of ideas developed in Western texts. *Orientalism* has remarkably revolutionized the study of the Middle East and the Third World in general because it helped to create and shape entire new fields such as postcolonialism as well as to influence disciplines such as English history, anthropology, social sciences and cultural studies. Like postcolonial theory, it is one of the most controversial scholarly books of the last decades sparking intense debates and disagreements between, on the one hand, Western Orthodox and conservative intellectuals who serve to legitimize imperial administration and, on the other hand, revisionist and deconstructivist intellectuals who prefer to stick to historical objectivity. Said's text tries to answer the question of why when the Westerners think of the Middle East (ME), they have a preconceived notion of: what kinds of people live there, what do they believe in and how do they act? This may be the case even though they may have never been in the ME, or indeed never met anyone from there. More generally, *Orientalism* asks how do Westerners come to understand people and strangers who look different from them by virtue of the colour of their skin and of their culture? Briefly, Said tried to answer the question: how the Eastern world is represented in the Western discourse? This was Said's



main field of investigation. What is quite worthy clarifying is that the use of Middle East in these examples does not mean that other parts of the world are not included because Said provides many illustrations from Africa, Asia and Latin America where misrepresentation has played an important role in people's mind.

The answer to these questions clarifies how much cultural representation represents a capital element in hegemonic practice, and how much consistent are the representations though numerous and different are the authors to whom they belong. Said describes Orientalism as “a Western Style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient” (*Orientalism* 3). His position is that Orientalist scholarship was and remains inextricably tied to the imperialist societies that produced it, which makes much of the work inherently political, servile to power, and therefore intellectually suspect. As a result, all knowledge inherited in such conditions of control should be revisited, verified and deconstructed. It is only in this way that a reliable and a credible knowledge would be constructed in the postcolonial age.

In his writings, Said is influenced by the work of the Martiniquan psychiatrist and anti-colonial intellectual and activist, Frantz Fanon, whose *Black Skin, White Masks*, a study of the psychological complexities of the colonial relationship, became a seminal text in postcolonial theory. A slight difference is that while Said depicts principally how discursive stereotypic representation becomes a general truth over time, Fanon depicts the impacts of that discourse on the psychology of the colonized people. He synthesizes the impacts in the “inferiority complex” that prevails in the African societies of the colonial period and which continues to harass African cultures of the postcolonial period in the form mimics.

Fanon explained evocatively this idea when analyzing the French policies of assimilation in Algeria with a particular emphasis on the language, which for him symbolizes

culture as a whole. He argues that the use of French language, apart from local languages, creates dependency complex which would push people to abandon their culture “for it is implicit that to speak is to exist absolutely for the other” (8). Hence, colonial France uses cultural techniques to enhance dependency complex to make imperial practice easier and continuous. This is done, of course, through a production of discourse which distinguishes the Western from ‘the other’ and in which ‘the other’ is seen as inferior and ‘backward’. This is why Fanon refused to affiliate to any ‘nativist’ nationalism which reproduces the cultural and intellectual segregation of the colonized. In short, he lucidly depicted a Manichean historical world where “the feeling of inferiority of the colonized is correlative to the European’s feeling of superiority” (69). That feeling is of course promoted through a fluid production of discourse which fuels incisively segregation and oppression.

Said analyzed several texts written by Western intellectuals from different periods and places, with a particular emphasis on Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* and William Butler Yeats’ poems. when developing his arguments about Orientalism as a system of Western knowledge that facilitated domination and put the West and the East in two separate and distanced angles, he shows how much the representation is incessantly falsified. He claims that “the Orient has helped to define the West as its contrasting image, idea, personality and experience” (1). Eventually, colonial discourse has created two virtual worlds in which one opposes the other, and by contrast one describes the other. Besides that division is not new at all because it was practiced by other previous civilizations. Roman civilization for instance considered all other communities which did not share the same culture as its own as being barbarian and savages. This was the case of societies which refused to submit to the European cultural imperialist will such as North Africans, Northern Germanic Tribes and Native Americans. Though these societies had a sense of socio-political organization and economic independence, they were represented in the way to create an image of them outside

of history and to expose them as the ultimate enemies of the Western culture. Therefore, something like '*missions civilisatrices*' has to take place to bring those communities to reason.

What is fundamental for Said is that production of a certain kind of discourse is all the time followed by an imperialist project. In his analysis of the discourse produced by American media during the 1970s on the Arabs, Said discovered a huge arsenal of images, all of them giving impression that Islam is frightening, mysterious and threatening, in addition to "series of crude, essentialized caricatures of the Islamic world presented in such a way as to make that world vulnerable to military aggression" ("Islam Through Western Eyes").

The central argument of Said is that Westerners' acquisition of this knowledge is not innocent or objective but a result of a process that reflects a range of interests. Particularly, the way the US looks at the countries and peoples of the Middle East is through a scrutiny that distorts the actual reality of those places and those peoples. He calls the knowledge that comes out of this thinking "the very fabric of European and Western Christian society" ("Yeats and Decolonization" 77). In the same context of representation, the journalist and writer Robert Fisk presented a lengthy speech<sup>6</sup> in which he argues that media has failed to fulfill its duty as watchdog because majority of Western journalists misreport events, with exaggeration in the use of the word "terror," to create a hostile environment . Such hostility is going to intensify and shape the American public opinion in what concerns Middle Eastern issues.

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<sup>6</sup> Robert Fisk is one of a few Western journalists to have interviewed Osama bin Laden. This speech is presented at the First Congregational Church of Berkeley in September 22, 2010, about "Lies, Misreporting, and Catastrophe in the Middle East." Fisk studied the words used by journalists when covering an event in the Middle East. It is a good example to see briefly how media functions as a means to create wrong images in the mind of naïve viewers. The speech is available on: <<http://www.radioproject.org/2010/10/robert-fisk-the-terror-of-power-and-the-power-of-terror/>>

Said drew on the apparently constant theories of Antonio Gramsci and Michel Foucault. Gramsci was one of the most important Marxist thinkers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He is an eminent figure in modern European philosophy. His masterpiece *Cultural Hegemony*, for which he is well known, analyzes culture and political leadership and describes how states use cultural institutions to maintain power in capitalist societies. He provides a dynamic model through an analysis of hegemonic power (Europe and USA) and ‘subaltern’ resistance (Third World and lower classes). He wrote in one of his letters, in which he invites the oppressed classes in Europe and elsewhere to participate in cultural struggle, that “Some whimper miserably, others curse obscenely, but... only a few ask themselves: ... if I had tried to impose my will.” He manifestly added “I live, I am a partisan. This is why I hate those who do not take sides; I hate those who are indifferent” (Adamson 15). Throughout his intellectual investigations of the post-World War I period, Gramsci concluded that every successful fight against all forms of imperialism should rely on the intellectual faculties of the oppressed.

The difference that one can seize is that Gramsci, contrary to some scholars dealing with cultural imperialism, did not victimize the oppressed, but he liked to see them active as it was the case with decolonization. At the same time, he defended teaching and instruction of indigenous people in the subcontinents because he thought that any claim for rights starts with teaching and instruction. Once again, he reported in one of his letters a resolution adopted by the Algerian Socialist workers in Constantine in 1912 and addressed to the French capitalists to generalize teaching among the indigenous populations:

If you declare yourselves to be incapable of carrying out this work (educating the indigenous population, giving it a consciousness and moral awareness), thus revealing your impotence, we have the right to ask you what your intentions in this country are, and whether you have come simply to substitute French for Turkish tax-collectors (112).

This quotation makes explicit Gramsci's cultural theory which becomes overwhelmingly present in the postcolonial writings. If imperialist Western world controls political and economic life of people, it is due to the control of cultural life of these people: either through elaboration of educational programs destined to keep them subservient and dependent on the Western culture or through generalization of ignorance through a systematic destruction of the existing teaching infrastructure. This hegemonic strategy is appropriated mainly to colonial school and administration.

The French sociologist, Michel Foucault studied the mechanisms of using cultural tools in the practice of power in Western societies. In his poststructuralist analysis, power is directed to suppressing resistance. He considers culture as a means of repression and violence that operates through powerful discourses and the construction of a given knowledge to represent the truth. He recognized that when people think of power, they correspondingly have in mind the government because it has the means to exercise control through a number of institutions which are administration, police and army. In fact, the latter are made to transmit laws, make sure that they are implemented and obeyed, and then punish those who do not obey.

For Foucault, power is by contrast practiced much more through other institutions other than those conceived by ordinary people and which may seem to be from the outside neutral and independent. He argued that schools with their elaborated cultural programs play a great role in keeping disparities between social classes, and between the oppressor and the oppressed. Accordingly, he explored how man came to be an object of knowledge, and he argued that all periods in human history have possessed some underlying conditions of truth that constituted what is acceptable as a scientific discourse and what is not. Foucault argues that these conditions of discourse have changed over time. He claims in his book *Power/knowledge*, that:

Each society has its regime of truth, its ‘general politics’ of truth, that is the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true... Truth is to be understood as a system of ordered procedures for the regulation, distribution, circulation [of discourse]... Truth...is not merely ideological but a condition of the development of [economy]. Systems of power produce and sustain discourses... the problem is not simply changing people’s consciousness- what’s in their head- but the political, institutional regime of the production of truth (131).

The production of discourse is then the production of power since it describes and represents and, at the same time, ‘includes and excludes’ as it was the case with colonial discourse. Hence, Modern states with their imperialist administrations had the necessary tools to regulate and control every area of people’s life. This notion is clear in contemporary political changes; that is, whenever there is a change of the ruling class, there should be a change in the programs taught at teaching institutions to implement new programs that would serve the new ruling class through technical brain-washing and other means such as glorification, inclusion and exclusion. Postcolonial thinkers have implemented Foucault’s theory of discourse in analyzing the nature of colonial power and the ways in which the representation of the colonized ‘others’ also defines the superiority of the colonizers. In the same way, Homi Bhabha argues that “to understand the productivity of colonial power it is crucial to construct its regime of truth, not to subject its representations to a normalizing judgment” (67). It is deducible that understanding how knowledge is constructed helps incredibly in understanding how power is maintained and regenerated.

In fact, there is an infinite number of examples to illustrate the idea of discursive legitimization in the colonial administration. They may be used as focal points to assess legitimacy by studying the relationship between domination and discourse production. The French educational programs and school manuals, for instance, taught the Algerians of the

early 20<sup>th</sup> c that the French army came to chase the despotic Turkish rulers who illegally impose taxes and threaten the indigenous people. As a result, they got a solid bed-stone to legitimize their presence in Algeria. In addition, because the colonial administration symbolized the liberator and the only authority, it set up a hierarchy which included colonizer and excluded the indigenous or 'the other' from the circle of citizenship. This notion of 'otherness,' that has been always present in the writings of Edward Said, provided a powerful critique of Western structures of knowledge in both sides: the way in which colonial discourse and colonial subject are constructed.

Implicitly, *Orientalism* studies in detail history of a particular discourse construction and teaching in Europe and North America in the context of Westernization and Globalization. In Short, Said defines the concept as Western teaching, writing and research focused on the Orient. Yet, the knowledge produced as a result of teaching, writing and research intends chiefly to transform mankind from one standard to a double standard society where one side is rational, the other is irrational. In other words, it is a background of thoughts based on a Manichean reasoning and to a large extent on racial distinction made between the Orient and the Occident. At this level and in one of his interviews, Said expressed his astonishment in "the consistency and the coherence of pictures of representation of the East or the Orient [created by Western intellectuals]". All these intellectual and theoretical materials, according to him, contributed in creating a kind of unified image of the orient which in most instances does not reflect the actual oriental society.

To conclude, postcolonial studies answer an important number of questions about different forms of power. Besides, all the questions presented since the beginning of the chapter provide an overview about the theory. They simplify the theoretical constituents of postcolonialism which make the latter's feasibility in the study of American imperialism. In the characteristics, three important elements are highlighted: divided (hybrid) identity,

cultural difference and quest for the past. These chosen characteristics (there may be others) are in complete opposition with the mainstream of American thinking which aims at universalizing the American values and culture in general as the standards of human civilization. Another characteristic which is implicitly included is that of deconstruction. One gesture of the latter is not to naturalize what is not natural, and not to assume that what is conditioned by institutions or society is natural (scientific truth). In other words, Knowledge which comes to existence with the prejudice that the other should not participate in making and enriching his world (as it is the case with Eurocentric ideological tendencies) is not reliable because it is not objective and it contains hegemonic intentions. Thus, it should be revisited and deconstructed.

In a scientific research, concepts are descriptive elements because they limit the field of investigation and classify the ideas within the text. Culture then is defined as an important concept in postcolonialism for it is widely used by scholars to determine the life style of a society and it is commonly seen as a means of indirect (informal) control of a society over another as it is the case with the US over other cultures around the world. In addition, imperialism is studied through time with different appellations: colonialism, neocolonialism and cultural imperialism. This explains continuity in the hegemonic practice in contemporary world yet taking a soft and abstract form. At the end, the analysis of discourse from a postcolonial perspective shows how much a meticulous representation of ‘the other’ makes the process of control smooth and legitimate.

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## **Chapter Two: Historical Insight into American Cultural Imperialism**

If, then, the American people shall remain an undivided nation, the ripening civilization of the West, after a separation growing wider and wider for four thousand years, will in its circuit of the world, meet again, and mingle with the declining civilization of the East on our own free soil, and a new and more perfect civilization will arise to bless the earth, under the sway of our own cherished and beneficent democratic institutions (Senator William H. Seward 1850).

### **Introduction**

This chapter aims at showing that American cultural imperialism is not a new phenomenon. On the contrary, it is as old as the birth of the thirteen British colonies which established one united state after the War of Independence and the Treaty of Paris of 1783. Through a careful insight into history, it is clear that for more than three hundred years Americans have participated in the construction of an empire that is seeking today to extend its influence through a refined propagation of its emerging culture. Notwithstanding the carelessness that is felt among different scholars dealing with early American history, this cultural aspect has been a major theme in many written and spoken texts produced in the successive historical stages of the United States.

Already, in the early years of the American independence, the hegemony of English, with all its ideological implications, over other languages was evoked either by the white settlers or their rivals mainly the Native Americans. Later, in the reconstruction and progressive era, there was a rise of unease in a number of southern countries of the new continent towards the spread of American culture. This latter is regarded as a source of inspiration for many reasons, at the same time; it triggered a kind of heresy among some people who consider it as filling the gap of the old Spanish and Portuguese colonialism. Since the end of the Second World War, there has been a continuing debate over this question of the wide spread of the American culture, either as ardent opponents for some debaters or as fervent supporters for others. With a deliberate objectivity, this chapter surfs through these different periods to show continuity in the American cultural policy.

#### **A. The Birth of a Nation (Continental Era)**

When dealing with American history, scholars usually tend to distinguish two important periods. The first is the stage when the United States was considered as part of the British Empire, and it staggers over the years between the settlement of Jamestown in 1607 and The Declaration of Independence in 1776. The second is that of the post-independence era. In addition, every aspect of the first period is studied for a better understanding of the chronological order of the events such as the settlement of the colonies, the reasons of the settlement, the arrival of the first Africans, the development of slavery, the threat of Native Americans. Obviously, through a political study of this period, no one can deny the British belonging of the thirteen colonies. Yet, when a close attention is given to this stage of the American history, we discover that it was during the early colonial period that the settlers had started developing a distinct culture which was growing through time different from that of the motherland Europe. Hence, it is necessary to point out some elements that contributed to the configuration of a new culture in the New World.

## 1. A Search for a National Character

As early as the establishment of the borderless villages in Virginia, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Maryland and Connecticut, a progressive social order was put on to answer and serve the needs of people. Besides, as the number of the first settlers was growing in the new continent, another culture was symmetrically sprouting, and another identity was escalating. For circumstantial reasons, there had been a considerable shift in the way people see life in the growing villages, not far from the unprecedented wilderness. People were leaving Europe bearing in mind fresh expectations which unlikely pushed them to behave differently and to adopt day by day attitudes. The great mass of Americans was developing a new character and growing quite different from the European type because of three fundamental factors: the nature of emigration, the nature of the lands and the literary atmosphere. Since the beginning of the settlement, these elements -which are studied one by one in the coming steps - provided the foundation of "The American Mind," as they represent also the matrix and the origin of the American life style.

Without doubt, the United States is a country of immigration *par excellence*. Today, all Americans -with the exception of Indians- are of European, African or Asian origins. However, the most influential group is that of the European origins because this group is the discoverer of the lands, and it is the first group to pour its boats full of cargoes and emigrants on the Western coasts of the Pacific Ocean leaving behind a whole world of kingdoms and civilization. Spanish people were ahead in occupying the Southern part of the new world, but their control was rather economic. The Spaniards, as they are called, were made exclusively of explorers, merchants and opportunist sailors who went to America to make their fortune around mines of gold and with Indian craftsmen. At the beginning, their journeys were based on comings and goings, but through time they turned out to be farmers, merchants, craftsmen or officials of local institutions.

Slowly but surely, Frenchmen had in their turn founded some colonies in the New World and had practiced multiple of businesses with the natives, particularly fur trade with the northern tribes of the great plains. Their first permanent settlement was Quebec which was inaugurated by Samuel Champlain, “the father of New France.” As traders, missionaries and explorers pushed further into Northern America, New France grew larger and prosperous. In the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, two other large regions came to be French mission stations for priests and missionaries: Montreal and Louisiana. Representing almost half the size of the US on the eve of the 19<sup>th</sup> c, Louisiana stands for a catapult of the French life-style in the US. Besides, there had been a significant mass of the French emigrants moving to different corners of the colonies bearing with them the French way and culture.

After a great sea battle that took place between the Spanish Great Armada and the British navy in 1588 and which ended with the defeat of Spain, England joined the endless adventure of building an empire in the same way its neighboring countries did a century earlier. Thus, under the encouragement of Queen Elizabeth I who succeeded in solving almost all internal problems (particularly religious conflicts between the Protestants and the Catholics) that kept the United Kingdom weak for a long period, Englishmen turned their sight towards the New World. As a result, the British age of exploration began, and British explorers, such as Walter Raleigh, John Cabot and John Smith, sailed around the North-East of the new continent. In 1606, as a step towards planting a colony, England formed the Virginia Company of London whose members were for the most part wealthy and wellborn commercials and adventurers who were eager to find a way for investment. A year later, the company founded Jamestown, the first British permanent settlement that grew to make the colony of Virginia. In fact, the latter was just the spark which would lead to a whole fire, since in less than a century twelve other colonies were founded in different circumstances and for various reasons.

Consequently, flocks of British people immigrated to New England colonies. 100 men set sail in the first journey to Jamestown. 13 years later, 102 men, women and children along with William Bradford and Captain Christopher Jones set their pilgrimage to found Plymouth plantation in Massachusetts. Since then, the census of 1790 shows that in New England alone, there were around 900000 people. One main reason of this increase in population is immigration from Europe.

In addition to the Spanish, French and British settlers, other European communities of great importance went to find their way on the other side of the ocean. Hence, people of German, Dutch, Irish and later of Italian origins filled the boats reserved for backing settlement. Some of them went under the program of indentured servitude in which people could cross the Pacific in exchange of some unpaid years of work. What is significant in this story of immigration is not the movement of different social groups of different nationalities or the means they used to reach the New World but the way in which this immigration took place and expanded once inside the colonies, and how these different social groups coexisted knowing that they came from diverse cultural backgrounds. In describing this meeting of the various social groups in the British colonies, William Carlos Williams stated: "Strangers are welcome, because there is room enough for them all" regardless of their cultural belongings (155). In fact, despite then multiple divergences and conflicts they had in Europe, these communities had established good relations and mutual considerations once in the colonies. They deliberately abandoned all inherited clashes in order to welcome each other in the unknown world.

At this level, it is worthy clarifying that even though the colonies affirmed their belonging to the authority of a given country- most of them to British authority-, they did not forbid other European strangers to integrate their communities. This pushed American historians such as Allan Nevins and Henry S. Cammager to argue that "Neither the Germans



nor the French Huguenots set up a separate colony, as they might have done; they mingled with the first British comers;” they went further to affirm that “the infusion of Dutch, German, French, and other continental stocks was significant” (24). Over time, this kind of infusion of several European cultures gave birth to a *new culture* which is neither British nor Spanish, neither French nor German, neither Irish nor Dutch, but an amalgam of all these cultures. Although the foundation of the American life style is made of the British one, the influence of other European styles is so significant to the extent that today it is impossible to distinguish one from the other. It is then arguable that even during the colonial period, the United States was a heterogeneous society or something of a melting pot. This aspect of diversity which has resulted from emigration is one main factor which shapes the American culture.

Moreover and in the same context, it is important to point out the quality of emigrants who usually went to set a new life in the New World. At the beginning, most of them were nonconformists who opposed the prevailing European culture of the 18<sup>th</sup> c and who broke with the established feudal and mercantilist order. Meanwhile, they were eager to find another atmosphere in which they could practice their ideas and pursuit their liberty. Puritanism is a good example to illustrate religious non-conformism. Nowadays, historians commonly disagree over the essence of the Puritans’ belief, since there were crystallized political implications in it against the Anglican Church and “since there was never any organized Puritan party as such” (Bunyan IX)<sup>7</sup>. This group of “separatist” Protestants wanted to purify the Anglican Church -which they considered as being corrupted- from some archaic and Catholic practices. After being persecuted, the separatists decided to leave England, so they fled to Holland where they received a patent from the London Virginia Company to charter two boats of which only the Mayflower succeeded in coasting in Cap God. This

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<sup>7</sup> Professor Stuart Sim from university of Northumbria at Newcastle wrote an interesting introduction to John Bunyan’s *The Pilgrim’s Progress*. In the introduction, he gives a rich historical background about Puritanism in the British literature of the 17<sup>th</sup> c and a vigorous description of the Puritan movement.

pilgrimage from Europe to America, as it is all the time referred to the journey of Puritans, is well pictured in William Bradford's book *Of Plymouth Plantation* which represents the chief historical document telling about the beginning of the settlement of Massachusetts.

Till today, Puritans are of considerable impact on the American way of living. They established a new structure of ruling their territory in the absence of the King. Hence, they signed an agreement known as the Mayflower Compact (1620) in which they determined the relationship between the governor and the governed. In this context, Jean Pierre Martin and Daniel Royst wrote "We can see in the 'compact' of 1620 the roots of constitutional tradition based on government of the people by the people" (9). Without doubt, this idea of government with the consent of the people is taken over again 156 years later in the Declaration of Independence which represents the foundation of the American culture of democracy. To put it briefly, it was the Puritan nonconformist attitude which created troubles for the Separatists in Europe, and it was the same attitude which encouraged them to behave independently and sign decisive political documents in the New World. In fact, non-conformism has got in a way or another everlasting impact on the American philosophy.

In the same way, the émigrés who fled France in the years following the French Revolution of 1789, found in the ex-colonies an ideal exile. Most of them were prisoners; they refused to obey the newly established order in their country. Thousands of emigrants who went to the U.S. in the late 18<sup>th</sup> c were in this category of the nonconformists. Without doubt, they had sought for an adequate environment for their ideological partisanship, and they were most of the time lawyers, editors, preachers...etc. Once in the USA, they spontaneously develop an individualistic culture. Intellectually, it was high class immigration because people were escaping the old continent to defend some newly born ideas, political principles and ideals. In the colonies, the flocks of émigrés became a number of individuals bearing with them internal convictions and personal perspectives which imposed on individuals to act and

respond individually. Yet, through time, this personal experience would be shared with the other settlers. As a consequence, the pace of non-conformism paved the way to the culture of individualism in the first independent states.

In fact, the nature of immigration, that over the time became a mingled blood in the towns and the countryside, imposed two major characteristics on the American society: that of individualism and democracy. Briefly, individualism, or as in the words of Ralf Waldo Emerson “Self-Reliance,” was because immigrants came from different parts of the world and they did not know each other since the beginning. As a result, they had to deal with their own affairs independently and individually. This aspect has a long-lasting impact on the American culture and particularly economy, because it encourages hard working and it transcends both individual liberties and the necessity of each person to follow his own instinct instead of social consistency. In Emerson’s words, “A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds, adored by little statesmen and philosophers and divines” (Self-Reliance 23). Thus, non-conformism was the first factor behind individualism. Democracy instead was because as early as the first immigrants, there was a need for a political structure able to listen to different voices of the society and to keep them unite in order to face the difficulties in the New World. In a nutshell, non-conformism among different waves of emigrants has a say in the birth of a new culture in the U.S.

Land and expansion is another factor that shaped the American culture. The New World is an immense continent of unknown lands inhabited by unknown people. There were plenty of fertile prairies, enough to receive as much as possible of settlers and emigrants. Contrary to the European lands which were exhausted and properties of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance period nobility, in the US everybody of European origins had the right to possess lands. No matter how poor he was, the average settler had a sense of opportunity that

he had not in Europe. In a sensitive poem entitled “For You O Democracy,” Walt Whitman transcends the importance of land in the mind of Americans. He wrote:

Come, I will make the continent indissoluble,  
I will make the most splendid race the sun ever shone upon,  
I will make divine magnetic lands,  
With the love of comrades,  
With the life-long love of comrades.  
I will plant companionship thick as trees along all  
the rivers of America, and along the shores  
of the great lakes, and all over the prairies,  
I will make inseparable cities with their arms about each other’s necks,  
By the love of comrades,  
By the manly love of comrades.<sup>8</sup>

Though this poem was devoted to celebrate democracy as the ideal form of government, Whitman evokes inside the close relationship between land and democracy and their role in making the American citizenship. In fact, there were wide areas of fertile lands and abundant wealth, so that there was no need for struggle or conflicts in and between the states. Unequivocally, this fact created among the “comrades” a feeling of belonging to the same land and the share of one national pride which grew to forge remarkably the American identity and to cement gradually the internal social ties. In this context, the French settler and farmer St. John Crevecoeur put it, “the rich stay in Europe, it is only the middling and poor that emigrate.” He carried on; “Everything tends to regenerate them; new laws, a new mode of living, a new social system; here they are become men.”<sup>9</sup> In this way and continuously, the American character was growing nationalistic and different from the motherland Europe.

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<sup>8</sup> Walt Whitman’s poem was written in the 1860’s, and it is available in:

<http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/182086>. It is taken from *Leaves of Grass* (1892)

<sup>9</sup> Hector St. John de Crevecoeur is a French gentlemen who went to the American colonies about 1759 and settled there as an “American Farmer.” He wrote series of letters collected in *Letters from an American Farmer* (1782) in which he describes life in North America of his period. This passage is taken from Letter III “What Is an American?”

From the beginning till the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> c, the founding fathers contented with Eastern costs. But since then, because of the overcrowded cities resulted in emigration and birth rate increase, they moved westward looking for more opportunities and for sure lands. As a consequence, the newly born nation entered an important phase in its history which affected to a large extent the American mind. The Westward expansion and the moving frontier created among peoples a feeling of confidence and encouragement reflected in the motto of the “American Dream”. People now could see the greatness and the wealth of their country. Some historians consider the Westward Expansion as the mould of the American culture because it was the highest stage in the making of the American country and its social development. In his thesis *The Significance of the Frontier in American History*, Professor Frederick Jackson Turner provided evidences on the impact of land on the American social development. He argued:

American social development has been continually beginning over again on the frontier. This perennial rebirth, this fluidity of American life, this expansion westward with its new opportunities, its continuous touch with the simplicity of primitive society, furnish the forces dominating American character (2).

Turner went even further to endorse that in every step behind the line of a frontier, there was a process of evolution and “a manufacturing civilization.” In fact, the frontier became a kind of a crucible where immigrants were Americanized through a permanent exchange of individual and collective experiences, the encounter of friendly or hostile Indian tribes and the discovery of new territories. As a result of that change, sometimes radical, in the environment caused by the eternal movement, the settlers had changed and replaced their architecture as well as agriculture with other ones they found adequate to the new lands. Indeed, the way west and the land acquisition has been all the time a decisive element in the

American psyche and its connections with the external world in front of a frontier which has not fixed limits.

Scholars such as Robert Mckeever in his book *Politics: USA* and Lloyd C. Gardner in *Imperial America* remarked that Westward Expansion conditioned the process of policy making till late 19<sup>th</sup> c, as it provoked a hegemonic tradition in the American administration. To illustrate, Northwest Ordinance of 1787 was to organize the American expansion and authority over lands and peoples behind the Mississippi River. Gardner synthesizes that excessively the American policy makers were blind in their expansionist attitude and they were day by day committed to move forwards. All in all, American thinking is tightly related to the history of “The way west;” or in the words of the frontiersman and explorer, Daniel Boone: “the history of the western country has been my history” (Gulliver, 244). It was during the great West that more than half of the Americans were brought up in an environment in which Old World traditions and principles were absent, and men had to stand on their own feet as individuals.

Another element interfered in the process of this change and affected the American culture: the adoption of Natives’ techniques in building, planting trees and sowing seeds. Early European settlers learned from various native tribes how to effectively farm the land, especially when cultivating crops unfamiliar to the Europeans, and they learned “how to plant and fertilize corn, grow tobacco, cook succotash, make canoes and snowshoes, stalk game, tan deerskins, grow expert in wood craft”(Nevins, 26). Corn was one of the staple crops for many Native American tribes. Today, it is one of the most important crops cultivated in and exported by the United States. Obviously, the change in the diet would have impacts on people’s customs. From Native Americans, the settlers learned also how to use wood and some plants to make their dwellings, for the climate is completely different from that of Europe, and the tools used in the European building techniques were often unavailable in the

colonies. For this reason, many scholars argue that the interference of Indian ways in the American character is not to underestimate because it is present in many aspects of life in the U.S., and it eventually shapes the American character.

The search for national identity can be seen also in literature which was symmetrically growing independent from the European one. Until the American Revolution, American literary movements were indebted to the British literature, and there was an imitation in both the styles and the themes. It began with works of adventurers, explorers and colonists, yet the works were for the benefit of readers in the “Mother Country.” Besides, a great deal of such literature intended to advertize the greatness of the New World to encourage immigration from Europe. The well-known journals of John Winthrop *The History of New England* and William Bradford’s *Of Plymouth Plantation* are two outstanding examples of colonial literature. Though most of the latter’s texts were written as historical documents telling about daily life in the colonies, some of them reached the level of literary works.

However, because of the elements mentioned previously other than the growth of disillusionment in the American society after the war of 1812, the American literature began to achieve a native culture and saw a number of eminent literary figures who influenced even European writers. “It is now full time,” noticed Noah Webster, “that we should assume a national character, and opinions of our own” (Kohn, 307). To illustrate this quotation, contrary to European romanticists of early 19<sup>th</sup> c, James Fenimore Cooper cultivated American themes in American scenes. Instead of arts for the sake of arts, he preferred to deal with the issues of his time with more objectivity and realism. His *The Last of the Mohicans* is a realistic novel which deals with a national issue. Symmetrically, Ralph Waldo Emerson’s transcendentalism and Henry David Thoreau’s “Civil Disobedience” influenced other famous thinkers such as Leo Tolstoy and Mahatma Gandhi, and they were considered as “a literary

and philosophical declaration of independence” (Nevins, 148). Throughout time, these American thinkers and others became the teachers and the popularizers of the emerging American culture and its ambassadors in the foreign countries.

To conclude, by the years of American Revolution, a distinct American society with its own social, political, economic and mainly cultural qualities was tremendously emerging. Till that moment, few of the settlers had a real awareness of the fact because this happened spontaneously for most of the time and along a period stretching over two centuries. It was that new culture that has been step by step propagated throughout the world starting from the Westward Expansion. Without doubt, the latter pushed further the American borders to the Pacific Ocean, meanwhile; cultural expansion imposed on the included borders a unified social, economic and political organization which disrupted the old order.

## **2. A Way West and Cultural Contact with the Natives**

If it is argued in the preceding paragraphs that the period of westward expansion was of great importance in the making of American culture, it was also the period in which that emerging culture was imposed in different ways and for different reasons on the indigenous people in the New World. Actually, Cultural imperialism within the boundaries of what is called today the United States started with the Westward Expansion, when the whites of the thirteen states wanted to acquire more lands to enlarge fields of agriculture and prairies for hunting. Yet, the whites faced a strong opposition and resistance from the indigenous people who had been living there -according to some theories- for more than 15000 years. The main reason of the clash between the white settlers and the natives was the land. Besides, cultural influence was generously implemented by the whites as a means to reach that aim. From the side of Indians, land did not essentially stand for their own geographical periphery or property, but it mainly stands for the cultural and the ethical significance embodied in that



periphery. This view of land was completely different from the settlers' one. While for instance the white Americans were moving towards capitalism and exhausting natural resources, Native Americans were attempting to maintain a traditional way of life much more in harmony with the nature and the environment. In fact, they did not share the same attitudes towards the utility of land. This opposition in cultural views fueled regularly the hostilities between both sides and triggered several deadly wars all along the settlers' journey from the East to the West.

In this context, it is important to notice that the undisciplined temperament of the Americans had tragic consequences when dealing with the Indian tribes. With the non-respect of the mutual treaties, the adventurers westward had constantly invaded the Indian territories and destroyed the vital resources on which the tribes depended in feeding, housing and clothing their families. The unfinished release of archival documents about the natives demonstrate that, during the course of the nineteenth century, the whites had deprived and seized lot of Indian land by expropriation and massive forced removal westwards. Accordingly, many Americans were ready to slaughter all the redskins in their sight till the last one. When the Indians tried to defend themselves wars were ensued. One of the bloodiest wars was with the Creeks in the South in which entire powerless families were killed under the leadership of Andrew Jackson, the seventh president of the US.

Despite the fact of how much closer they were, Indian tribe and American village were two different worlds, sometimes to an unconceivable extent. They did not speak the same language and worship the same God; they did not wear the same clothes and eat the same food; they did not tell the same stories and play the same games; they did not share the same past, and they did not even see the future in the same way. The frontiersmen called the natives "savages and barbarians;" while the natives called the frontiersmen land-hungry and bloodthirsty. The practical meaning of cultural contact is so well known that it needs no

explanation. Culturally, these two worlds were like “day and night [that] cannot dwell together.” In his speech to Isaac Stevens<sup>10</sup>, Chief Seattle, the Dwamish leader, said after a lengthy argumentation: “How then can we be brothers? We are two distinct races with separate origins and separate destinies. There is little in common between us” (Seattle 252). Nowadays, many historians and activists from both natives and non-natives regard the historical gap of expansion as genocidal either from a humanitarian or from a cultural angle. Besides, Indian resistance was strong but most of the time unsuccessful. To this degree, after more than two centuries of cultural contact, Indians look at the settlers with suspicion and distrust.

For the Indians, The sorrow was for welcoming the first Europeans. It was the source of cultural uprooting, land-losing and all the nightmares of genocides that came after. One of plains Chieftains expressed this feeling as such:

We were happy when he first came. We first thought he came from the light; but he comes like the dusk of the evening now, not like the dawn of the morning. He comes like a day that has passed, and night enters our future with him (Brogan, 51)

Unequivocally, it was not the case of all the Indian tribes, but some of them developed friendly attitudes towards the settlers and expected mutual cultural esteem, something that was not obvious in the circumstances of the 19<sup>th</sup> c United States. Such dissimilar entities, as it may be taken, could well have afforded to co-exist under the same sky. Yet, they were unfortunately different enough, and the American administration refused to admit the presence of the Reds in the same lands side by side with the settlers.

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<sup>10</sup> Isaac Stevens (1818- 1862) was the first governor of Washington Territory, a Brigadier General in the Union Army and a United States Congressman. He fought several wars against Indians, and by force he expropriated several tribes of their lands and sent them to state reservations.

Cultural hegemony during the Westward Expansion is unswervingly related to land control which was the foundation of the American economy of the 19<sup>th</sup> c. For the whites, the strategy was clear so as to control the lands. To avoid any confrontation with the natives who were supposed to own the country, the settlers proceeded to spread and teach their culture among different Indian communities. Knowing that the Indians got their own cultural perception of land and that they would not accept any foreigner to treat it differently, Presidents of the confederation and governors of the states required to alter and modify that perception so that they would have access to the resources of those lands. This hypothetical strategy was the priority of the epoch, and it was the beginning of a practice that over time proved to be effective in controlling people's wealth through the control of their culture. It aimed first of all at creating 'an open society' to get rid of all kinds of direct clashes and rival resistances, and then make profits. This cultural practice is deeply ingrained in the American political thinking, and it is overwhelmingly rooted in past and contemporary American foreign policy.

In 1831 the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, John Marshall had attempted to define the status of the Native Americans among other minorities. He declared that the Indian tribes were "domestic dependent nations [whose] relation to the United States resembles that of a ward to his guardian."<sup>11</sup> In fact, Marshall was recognizing that the Indians of North America were unique in status, unlike all other minorities who were symmetrically looking for some civil rights; they are both separate nations within reservations and part of the United States. This helps to explain why relations between the federal government and the Native Americans have been so troubled. A guardian prepares his ward for adult independence, and so Marshall's judgment, contrary to President Andrew Jackson's hostile attitude, implies that

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<sup>11</sup> The quotation is taken from the Court opinion about the bill of Cherokee Nation v. Georgia (1831) that is brought by the Cherokee Nation and delivered by Chief Justice John Marshall. The Court opinion is entirely available on: <https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/chokeee.htm>

the U.S. policy should work to assimilate Native Americans to the mainstream of the American culture. In fact, a global reading of the American history of the period and a distant contemplation of its historical documents demonstrate that cultural assassination and assimilation was the dominant strategy to contain the tribes and to avoid any direct confrontation with them.

In some cases, assimilation was not evoked at all because the Indian tribes refused even to negotiate such a deadly fate. This consideration was empirically a result of long years of separation between the two cultures. To highlight this view, Professor of Communication Studies, Archana J. Bhatt wrote: “In the tradition of political and cultural hegemony, Indian Americans... are rewarded for their sense of separateness” (Kramer, 210). Besides, social organization of the Indian tribes indicates that most of the Native Americans feel that the preservation of their culture is the utmost importance and should be transmitted tirelessly to their children from generation to generation. This cultural preservation can be best achieved by marrying only within the Indian community. In this context, the Reds were too much reserved in term of interracial marriages, for they recognized how much this kind of marriages with the Whites might bridge ‘modernity’ to their society and how much that modernity might be harmful to their social organization.

In some other cases, the strategy of cultural assimilation succeeded in bringing some tribes to adopt the new American culture. The assimilated tribes were frequently called ‘civilized tribes’ as it was the case with Cherokees, Seminoles and Choctaws in the Southeast of the US. Yet, even these tribes expressed a great deal of mistrust and reservation against the so called ‘civilized culture.’ For the whites, the contact was obviously oriented to annihilate gradually the traditional conception of life and to implant what was regarded as ‘modern civilization.’ Unlikely, there was a remarkable misbalance in term of the allotted grounding between the two cultures. One was more experienced and sophisticated, and the other was

traditional. In such meeting of two opposing cultures, of which one was determined to assimilate the other, the nascent one would certainly and basically be victorious. Frederick Turner explains this estate and wrote:

In recent years, however, it has become even clearer to us that in the coming together of a literate, nontraditional, technologically oriented culture with a nonliterate, traditional culture, the former will achieve cultural dominance and whether by design or attrition impose its system on the latter (*North American Indian Reader*, 259)

As it went along with the political trickiness, American cultural imperialism in the Indian world occurred at multiple levels of the society. At the religious level, Americans saw the Natives as pagans, regardless to their inconsistent and flexible ways of worshipping the Great Spirit. Hence, their Christian faith obliged them to Christianize the continent and damn those who refuse to accept it. It is also important to notice that religion was the first aspect attained during and before the Westward Expansion. Since the beginning, missionaries were trying incessantly to convince the Natives to leave their ‘old stereotypic and superstitious’ faith. This religious beginning raises two humble hypotheses: it may be because of the nature of the first settlement and the will of Puritans to establish a ‘city upon a hill’ where the communion should respect the covenant with God, as it may be also because of the role of religion in regenerating submissive subjects easy to control instead of responsible citizens.

According to the historical events of the colonial period, one can argue that the first hypothesis was right and credible during the settlement of the Northern states and the New France. Wishing for more religious integrity and for “a strict performance of the articles contained in [the godly covenant]” (Winthrop), the founding fathers looked after converting the native pagans to the Puritan Christian faith. Yet, the more the Americans went in commercial affairs over time, the more they developed a pragmatic attitude to control lands

and resources. Thus, divinity might be used pragmatically to enhance Indian submission. In a nut shell, religion played a double-faceted role in bringing the tribes to Christianity and in creating rivalries between the Christianized and the non-Christianized Indians, on the one hand, and in stimulating obedient believers who would not slow down the process of land acquisition on the other.

“Some of your good chiefs,” said Sharitarish to President James Monroe, “as they are called [missionaries], have proposed to send some people to make us... live like the white people” (Seelye, 206). In the context of the way West, to propose was the first step to take, and then came other steps that would complete the white men’s religious mission in the heart of the wilderness. The coming steps were commonly colored with the blood of the endless wars, sometimes against defenseless and peaceful tribes. In few words Leonard I. Sweet sums up the historical contact between the whites and the reds: “a clash of cultures that is illuminated by the history of Christian missions to American Indians” (52). In fact, the religious aspect represented the bed-stone of American imperialism during the Westward Expansion because it was the catalyst of imperial will and soft power in the early American administration.

The first wave of missionaries took place with the early explorations as watch posts and outposts to know more about the native ways and technical life in the villages. The second wave established churches and schools to teach the baptized Indians the English language and the American ways. The real interaction between the two communities occurred at this point because the inquisition of the English language by the means of Churches and schools permitted the natives to understand and communicate with the settlers and vice versa. In return, communication promoted commercial exchange which, in many cases, eradicated the traditional practices and the new ones. For instance, the promotion of alcoholic drinks which were unknown among the native communities made of the Indians grew more and

more dependent on the settlers' goods. When recognizing the impact of these goods on his society, Chief Red Cloud of the Sioux said: "the white man... brought with him some shining things..., weapons more effective than our own, above all, the spirit-water that makes one forget old ages, weaknesses and sorrow" (*New York Times* 2). For the natives, this cultural impact brought out by cultural products was the first thing to fear because it came to change the inherited wisdom which was supposedly ready to be transmitted to the growing Indian generations.

In short, the cultural contact between the Natives and the settlers show the hegemonic intentions of the states in their relations with the foreigners. Besides, there was an intentional reliance on the culture as a powerful American tool in the practice of imperialism and in the expansionist policy of the 19<sup>th</sup> c. To a large extent, the Indian culture symbolized the greatest obstacle in front of the American western destination. Thus, its conversion would allow many things to happen easily and quickly. Accordingly, the socio-political scene of the period implicates a great deal of cultural confrontation which resulted in the erosion of millions of Indians in the final years of the westward movement. It highlights a symmetrical advance of territorial expansion side by side with cultural assimilation which ended in another broader phase of continental Americanization.

### **B. Cultural Americanization (Regional Era)**

This phase of American history had known all good and adequate conditions to go on in cultural expansion. Interior security, provided by the westward movement that opened the way to the Pacific Ocean, the inquisition of Alaska in 1867 that pushed away Russia from the continent and the end of the Civil War (1865) that cost too many lives and materials, united the American people and mainly the American administration around one goal: political stability. Few years later, the latter provoked great ambitions in the US to control the

surrounding hemisphere of the American subcontinent. As a result, the growing country emerged “by all tests of pragmatism... [and] more than ever an imperial state” (Rosati, 24). In a quest for economic growth, American sight turned now abroad to Latin America following, as it was the case with the Native Americans of the North, the cultural strategy.

In this context and to avoid any interference from the European countries and Russia that would challenge the American authority in the hemisphere, ‘Monroe Doctrine’ became an ambiguous parameter for the United States to put forward the idea of Pan-Americanism which would assert, instead of a European, an American authority in the region. In this way, Uncle Sam engaged in a trial of strength with the other powers, and accordingly James Monroe’s administration considered that “any attempt [from non American countries] to extend their system to any portion of the hemisphere as dangerous to [internal] peace and safety.”<sup>12</sup> This authoritative warning alarmed chiefly England, France, Russia and Spain about the American intention to overthrow all foreign competitors in the hemisphere and to keep its boundaries secured.

In fact, the intention of the US to push its frontiers culturally up to Canada and down to Latin America was not new at all. It goes back to the period of the Westward Expansion and the early years of independence. For instance, in a letter to James Monroe, at that time Governor of Virginia, President Thomas Jefferson demonstrated the American wishes to expand and spread the nascent culture beyond its frontiers. He stated:

When our rapid multiplication will expand itself beyond those limits, [and] cover the whole northern continent, if not the southern continent, with a people speaking the same language, governed in similar forms, [and] by similar laws; nor can we contemplate with satisfaction either blot or mixture on that surface.

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<sup>12</sup> These words are taken directly from the address of The Monroe Doctrine (1823) which aims at keeping the great powers of the period far from the continent and permitting the USA to establish a new cultural balance in the hemisphere. The copy used is taken from: <http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=23>



What is important in Jefferson's letter is the fact of emphasizing first of all culture as the premise of the American 'empire of liberty.' The President described an empire speaking one language with all the ideological implications that the word 'language' may carry. His statement comes to be very closely understood that a strong republican country requires territorial enlargement and establishment of variable and dynamic ideological boundaries. Such ideas, though frequently not openly manifested, were overwhelmingly present in the mind of many American officials of the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> c. Besides, Jefferson's conception of empire shaped the coming stages of the American foreign policy which gave birth to the 'Manifest Destiny' which in turn became extensively the helm of the American cultural expansion in Latin America.

### **1. Cultural 'Manifest Destiny'**

By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> c, there was among Americans an immense consensus around the ideological intentions of the 'manifest destiny' to spread American culture throughout the world. The Concept, coined by John L. O'Sullivan in his *United States Magazine and Democratic Review* of 1845, did not represent, as it is taken by some scholars, just some prevailing economic and political intentions to control regional markets, but it relied mainly on the 'superiority' of the American culture as expressed in the official literature of the period. In other words, at the heart of manifest destiny subsisted a pervasive belief in American cultural and racial superiority. As in the words of Barbara Bush, every step in building the city upon a hill was "premised on the superiority of protestant Anglo-Saxon culture" (200), in the same way the European empires that based their superiority on the Greco-Roman and Christian culture. In fact, in addition to the cultural abuses that prevailed during the contact with the Native Americans, history of African-Americans enslavement proved how much the American thinking was also shaped by racial abuses and social inequalities.

Civilization and order was pitted against barbarism and disorder that threatened the civilized world. Under this scrutiny, the Americas were divided into two parts: the civilized and powerful North; the uncivilized and weak South. From a postcolonial angle, this notion of a superior civilization over another inferior civilization provided a common justification and pretext upon which to build empires. In the case of the United States, this was clearly stated by the Senator William H. Seward:

The American people shall remain an undivided nation, the ripening civilization of the West, after a separation growing wider and wider for four thousand years, will in its circuit of the world, meet again, and mingle with the declining civilization of the East on our own free soil, and a new and more perfect civilization will rise to bless the earth (Krebs, 36).

The expressions of “wider and wider” and “for four thousand years” translate that American empire, according to the founding fathers, is unlimited either in space or in time, and starting from the ‘backyard’ it goes in a search for a perfect civilization. This is a convincing and a plausible account demonstrating that economy was not a prime source of the American imperialism but its end. The source was mainly encompassed in culture. The well known British poet Rudyard Kipling describes the philosophy of manifest destiny in “The White Men’s Burden.” Though the interpretation of this poem differs from one critic to another, yet it makes a good example about the endorsement of the American cultural imperialism. According to the circumstances in which they were written, the stanzas were an allusion to the American duty to rule over peoples from other cultures in a way to enlighten them. Actually, it appears that Uncle Sam’s civilizing duty was highly mingled with profits and interests.

Through a close observation of the examples of the Indians and African Americans, a researcher can understand the equation of culture and interest in the manifest destiny, as he

may come with the conclusion that cultural imperialism is wealth regenerating. The two examples explain clearly that the civilizing mission is only workable when Washington makes profits. On the one hand, Red skin people for instance had long been perceived as inferior, and efforts to 'civilize' them had been intensified since the days of William Bradford and Miles Standish. Expanding the boundaries of the United States was in many ways a cultural war as well. That is in many ways the Whites' culture serves as a strategy to acquire more Indian lands. The desire of the southerners to find more lands suitable for cotton cultivation would eventually spread slavery in those regions. Simultaneously, Spreading the American culture of individualism among the Indians to distance them from the tribal and communal culture would make the task of land seizure faster and easier. Moreover, knowing that many American citizens in the South were deeply concerned with adding more and more slave states, they needed to expand their culture to the other frontiers.

On the other hand, the Black skin people were enslaved since 1619 in the same culture that wanted to civilize the Reds. The question to ask then, if the Americans were really looking for civilizing 'subhuman' races through teaching them the American culture, why did they not practice that since the beginning with the African-Americans? Isn't it the duty of the American administration to keep a close eye on their 'captives' to improve their social conditions? Is there any motive other than the ideal city upon a hill that pushed the Americans to prevent these people from the civilizing mission? Obviously, the motive was the reason for which they were brought to the New World. In those conditions of 'negroes,' American plantation-owners could make big profits, and thus the Manifest Destiny was not practicable on this category of people. Accordingly, the Manifest Destiny touched on issues of religion, economy, race and morality which were all in all intermingled with the American culture of pragmatism. It is a generalizing and a broad concept in which the American imperialism nestles, or as in the words of William Carlos Williams, "Make it big enough and it becomes a

wood where thieves protect each other” (202). Indeed, Monroe Doctrine and Manifest Destiny are the core of American imperialism which keeps growing to take the form of the globalization in the modern age.

Notwithstanding the claims of isolationism, the US since the early years of the 19<sup>th</sup> c has made it clear that it was destined to go beyond its frontiers to protect its interest. In his book *the Twentieth-Century World and Beyond*(2011), Professor of history and international relations, William R. Keylor, challenges the theory of isolationism and argues that the United States was imperialistic from the time of the Monroe Doctrine and the Manifest Destiny which openly claimed hegemony over Latin America. Commonly, the American hegemony occurred indirectly in the form of informal imperialism, yet it occasionally extended to military interventions as it was the case with Haiti and Dominican Republic. At this level, it is worthy to clarify that the United States relies most of the time, if not all the time, on cultural hegemony to avoid direct confrontation with other countries, but it appeals to military intervention whenever the former is not successful.

This American hegemonic attitude which makes one major theme of the postcolonial theory may have roots in the practices of the mother land Europe. Noam Chomsky, like Robert Mackeever, defends this view and claims consistently that Washington’s imperialism is a continuity of the European expansion that started with Christopher Columbus’ expeditions in 1492. Historically, no one can deny the outcome of this analysis, for it brings evidences of how much the two imperialisms spoiled peoples’ self determination. However, American civilizing attitude was mainly a result of new cultural foundations that sprouted at the eve of the Progressive Era. Once again, Uncle Sam was the leader in the scientific and intellectual progress, and since that period he has succeeded in preserving the status of leadership in modern know-how. In fact, the expansion of scientific knowledge in the nineteenth century drew the attention of the peoples around the world and particularly the

Latinos. It was the age in which interest was focalized on dictionaries and philology. The latter in turn predicted and promoted the progress of human sciences and anthropology in particular.

The researcher and Professor at the University of Virginia, M. Schele de Vere, wrote *Americanisms; the English of the New World* (1871) in which he studied different American dialects, and in which he argued that the dialect of the New England states was “by far the most fully developed” (Warfel, 893). It was growing different from British English for it includes hundreds of Indian words and alludes to a new ideological belonging. Besides, dictionaries were of significant role in scientific development in the US, for they provided conventional definitions and standardized use of the language. For the first time in 1841, Noah Webster published a dictionary of American English which was typically involved in the process of Americanization from the sense that it was growing the Lingua Franca as opposed to Spanish in the hemisphere. In the other words, English now entered in a competition with Spanish which was the dominant language in the New World. Later on, it appeared that in scientific knowledge English won the battle with a wide margin.

This historical event in the field of humanities coincided with the birth of American cultural anthropology. The latter was founded in the mid-nineteenth century by Lewis Henry Morgan after recognizing the rich anthropological resources of his native land. Morgan was influenced by Darwinism and Positivism both of which were endorsing scientific imperialism. For him, the advance of American culture is a natural evolution in the ‘backward’ subcontinent, and every “opposition to such a project is a struggle against fate.” He wrote that “It can now be asserted upon convincing evidence that savagery preceded barbarism in all the tribes of mankind, as barbarism is known to have preceded civilization” (17). Furthermore, Morgan’s cultural studies were at higher level influential, and they contributed largely in understanding the Native American culture and social organization. Subsequently, they

provided a chief element in the advance and the concretization of the American Manifest Destiny.

Furthermore, the American civilizing attitude was also a result of a political development deeply rooted in the cultural atmosphere of the 19<sup>th</sup> c. Constitutional and democratic systems represented nearly the most sophisticated cultural achievement of the United States; it summarizes literally modern life style inexistent elsewhere at that time. The founding fathers were convinced that the American political system, when purified and improved, was the ultimate goal towards an ideal social organization. And thus, any presence of another inferior and non-democratic systems nearby may represent a threat to Uncle Sam's political stability. The best way for them to avoid such regenerating problems was "to spread the superior American way of life, rooted in democratic republicanism" (Bush, 24). Cultural Manifest Destiny was then a number of deals which for economic and political reasons aimed at democratizing the continental hemisphere.

## **2. Beyond the Pacific Ocean**

Over the course of time, the American culture has strategically crossed the whole continent from the East to the West. It stretched to the far South in a cultural coalition with Canada to which ideals hereupon are not different from that of the US. The Americanization has made it sure that every single neighboring country should conform to the American style, for it would ensure stability and peace in the hemisphere. In fact, when it came to Latin America, the cultural agenda of the White House was sustained with the military supports, and in many cases the involvement of the US in the Latino subcontinent resulted in what is considered by many historians as American colonialism. Since the turn of the century, Latin America experienced new historical parameters. The most important ones are the decolonization and the rise of nationalism. Yet, this time nationalism was conceived as

encompassing all the regions of South America. For this reason, in many known revolutionary cases, any revolution in the continent was regarded as that of all the Latinos. The Cuban Revolution for instance was at the center of interests of other rebellion groups in the subcontinent, and many Latino nationalities participated side by side with their Cuban neighbours in their anti-colonial struggle.

This fact created many troubles for the process of Americanization because it put most of the Latin American peoples in a block against Washington which was increasingly seen as filling the gap of the traditional European empires. Culturally, because of the growing consciousness about the American use of soft power to get rid of all forms of resistance, the subcontinent countries (particularly Central America and the Caribbean Islands) opposed any intervention from the U.S. under the Monroe Doctrine proclamation, and they instead call for the right of countries for self-determination as opposed to oppressive and hegemonic regimes. To accomplish its imperialist task, Uncle Sam was then forced to go through a number of policies since the end of the Civil War. Apart from the ‘Monroe Doctrine’ and the ‘Open Door’ policies passing through the ‘Big Stick’ and the ‘Dollar Diplomacy,’ Washington was appealing to a cultural agenda which permits the American administration to change and control the minds of people before acceding softly to control their wealth.

As it was the case with the colonial period and the Westward Expansion, this American expansionist attitude was lucidly expressed in both words and deeds of the American leaders. The leader to victory in the Spanish-American War and the President of the US at the eve of the 20<sup>th</sup> c, William McKinley confided to Senator Robert LaFollette that his “greatest ambition was to round out his career by gaining American supremacy in world markets” (Gardener 25). His policy underlines the general assumption of the American hegemonic perspective of the Progressive Era in Latin America. In the last speech he uttered the day before his assassination in 1901, he proclaimed “isolation is no longer possible or

desirable. The period of exclusiveness is past. The expansion of our trade and commerce is the pressing problem...” (Kingseed). Opposing his predecessors for their relatively isolationist administration in what regards the Cuban revolution and other Latino uprisings, Mckinley urged the Congress to settle “that which disturbed so long the peace and tranquility of the American government...” (Mckinley 115). Like many other Republican presidents and members of the Congress, he was backing all kinds of interventions to protect or restore American interests in the region. Without doubt, the Reconstruction period triggered the ambition of carrying on the project of the Westward Expansion to new destinations other than the West. Besides, on the map scale, the remaining move was chiefly upward and downward. As portrayed by Van Alstyne:

By all tests of pragmatism the United States emerged from that war [Civil War] more than ever an imperial state. It entered its period of consolidation and centralization, it began developing its internal economy intensively, and abroad it soon joined in the international scramble for material wealth and power (Rosati, 24).

Uncle Sam’s ambitions were economic, but he relied on his customary political and cultural strategies to fulfill his agenda. Briefly, the political strategy consisted of promoting friendly regimes which can be regarded before the 1920s as an anticipatory ‘Good Neighborhood’ policy. The cultural strategy is summarized in the American prescriptions which imposed on the friendly regimes to pass the American values and life style first as the model in their countries. One of the first measures that the friendly regimes enacted was educational reforms which would introduce English–language symbolizing the bank of American culture, and which would end in school manuals glorifying the American history and civilization on the whole. In many cases, this favorable estate given to the American culture was frequently at the expense of the local languages and cultures.



As a matter of fact, while the American educational system was growing prosperous and lucrative, the friendly regimes' reforms in their own countries have, over the course of time, proved to be a failure from all the angles. They have instead created a new generation of corrupted leaders who continue to serve multinational corporations under the atmosphere of permanent popular uprisings which celebrate local cultures and denounce puppet administrations. Sharing this view, the journalist and political activist, John Pilger demonstrates that the American culture in foreign countries operates through military coups which put national decision-making in the hands of one neoliberal social class. Of course, this socio-economic circumstance was enhanced with Washington's cultural programs which had degenerated failures in the educational systems instead of promoting citizenry of right and duties.

Actually, Washington's programs make sure to develop and finance one local elitist class to rule, and the latter would in turn devote its efforts to ensure the American economic presence in distant countries. This scenario was repeated in countries such as Haiti, Nicaragua, Chili and Panama where today Coca Cola is the preferable drink, McDonald is the preferable food and the American life style is the civilization on its own. So far, it is clear that the relation between economy and culture is that of the light and the power. In the same way, the power produces light without making noise; culture softly regenerates wealth without creating troubles or direct confrontations. In the course of American development, Washington's economy has been inextricably tied and linked to its cultural strategy and its soft move outside the American borders.

Notwithstanding its vastness, the Pacific Ocean has never been an obstacle for the United States. On the contrary, American leaders of the 19<sup>th</sup> c saw in the waters beyond the Western coasts the ultimate source of the internal security. Hence, there was no way to tolerate any other state with different ideology, which may confront the White House in the

future, to surf around. For this sake, Senator William H. Seward from New York articulated the importance of seas in the American expansionist policy of the time, and he proudly argued:

The World contains no seat of empire so magnificent as this, which... is traversed by wide-expanding lakes and longranching [sic] rivers, offers supplies on the Atlantic shores to the over-crowded nations of Europe, while on the Pacific coasts it intercepts the commerce of the Indies. The nation thus situated... must command the empire of the seas, which alone is real empire (Sicker 37).

From this perspective, it is clear that as Uncle Sam grows taller, he sees further. As early as the 1850s, there were already real intentions to go beyond the Pacific Ocean in the search of new frontiers. For those knowing the perspective, it would not be surprising to observe some decades later the American soldiers in the Hawaiian Islands and the Philippines. Once again, in addition to the military intervention to kick out the Spanish control from the Philippines, the American missionaries roamed in the country and the civilizing schools served Washington's informal empire. In fact, right after the annexation, more churches were built to Christianize the society on a large scale. In addition, a commission was created and hundreds of teachers -under the name of Thomasites- were sent to do the cultural job. This form of interventionism was a result of many anthropological studies which were the premises of social Darwinism and Positivism (such as L. H. Morgan's studies) and which saw in non-Western Culture a direct threat to the modern civilization.

The Monroe Commission on Philippine Education investigated the cultural background of the Filipinos and came out with many conclusions. Yet, the report of the commission emphasized the importance of the English-language teaching in bringing the islands to the American ideology. Culturally, efforts were made to teach the society new concepts and new habits which would initiate the people of this part of the world to the

American life style. Professor George Count, who taught in several American universities, supported the progressive education movement of John Dewey and worked sporadically as an advisor in the American educational administration, participated in the Monroe commission's exploration in the Philippines. He explicitly unveiled that the intentions were not targeting the elderly people but the young generations in order to grow up a society of different mentalities and uprooted from the old traditions which had tendency to fight foreign invaders and to oppose imperialism.

In one of his texts, Count advocated that the Filipino children of the American presence period were handicapped because they were not only relying "on a civilization alien to them" and "trying to learn new concepts in a foreign language," but incitingly he added, "they were also being forced to do so from the point of view of a different culture" (26). The statement explains clearly how the imposition of American 'alien culture' on that society occurs all the way through educational programs. Likewise, the head of the commission, Paul Monroe illustrated in his survey the weight of American culture in school's curriculum and the importance of English as a medium of instruction (Magno 140). Side by side with other cultural programs of broader aims, such strategy, though significantly beneficent for the Filipinos, intended to expand Uncle Sam's virtual frontiers further beyond the seas. Once this aim is achieved, the American administration had already achieved one step further in building the 'city upon a hill'. Without equivocal, the Philippines' case represent a good example about the American imperialism in general and the American soft power in particular. Even the political literature of the day demonstrates how much the impacts of that policy are visible today in the Filipinos' daily life as well as their perception of the world.

In fact, from the settlement of the issue of the Civil War to the eve of the Second World War, though there is a large consensus among the researchers over the isolationist policy, the panoramic outlook of the American policy, however, reveals continuity in the

expansionist tendency that has started since the colonial settlement. In addition, the United States was militarily involved in many conflicts in Latin America and the Pacific Ocean. Simultaneously with direct intervention in the region, there was an increasing American soft power which functioned through cultural propagation. Intentionally, the American administration worked as a large assimilative centre to homogenize the surrounding societies and other peoples on its path with the “America-as-model” paradigm. As a result, the American cultural empire widened and pushed forward its borders, and Uncle Sam expanded his presence into the other corners of the globe.

### **C. Cultural Globalization (Global Era)**

Some eight decades ago, “the most influential private citizen in the America of his day” (Herzstein 8), Henry Luce wrote “The American Century” to urge Washington and his fellow Americans to abandon isolationism and enter the Second World War. In the text, he underlined the potentialities of the United States to take the global leadership in its hands and her mission of spreading “democratic principles throughout the world.” From his view, what was going on in Europe was an unprecedented opportunity for the US to interfere not as a simple participant in the war but as a regulator of the global destiny. In fact, Luce’s view translates the dominant perspective in the ongoing debate of whether Uncle Sam should go one step further to Asia and acquire a bigger empire or stay in his actual borders and deal with national businesses. Nine months after its publication, it appeared to all the peoples, in the U.S. and the other corners of the globe, that this view committed the ruling class and the public opinion to the old tradition of interventionism, and Washington decided to go to war with its allies. As a consequence, a new and a broader story of the American cultural proliferation started.

In his article, Luce articulated that so far the US had gone through two important steps which in turn would underline two great cultural projects. The first intended to develop a bigger industry and a free market to improve economic conditions of the nation and the ways American people regenerate capitals. Hence, the Americans worked to develop a new economic and managerial culture more compatible with the requirements of a big consuming society. According to Luce, this great achievement was accomplished around the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and, technically, it has constantly continued to flourish with the technological innovations. This historical step rested on an array of economic principles which pour into the same bath of strengthening internal industrial revolution and material production. Implicitly demonstrated, the phase was the first ‘American century’ which was, as explained earlier, located in the continental and the regional move of the American interests and investment. The second instead was supposed to be ‘the American century’ from the side of the endowment for democracy and the American cultural model in general. Besides, this century would be marked by the American mass and soft intervention all over the world starting immediately from the South-east Asia.

In fact, the theory of the 20<sup>th</sup> c is the American century is revealingly the utmost policy which aimed at homogenizing the world. The WWII was the starting point of global Americanization. The U.S. went to export the American democratic principles (as opposed to fascism and totalitarianism) and more importantly the American daily life experience through media advertisement and propaganda. Knowing that at the end of the Great War the US owned the most sophisticated apparatus of media technology, it unlikely succeed in dominating world cultural framework, and the people -who had never seen or heard about the American life style before- could now consciously or unconsciously afford to live with it and admire it, for some.

## 1. Asia and the Cold War

On the eve of WWII, American cultural expansion westward reached the Philippines. Though there were few international relations, which manifested in a mixture of economic and cultural exchanges, with South-east Asia, nevertheless; they were not solid enough to give the U.S. a noticeable authority in the region. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> c, the first wave of missionaries went to China in a pilgrimage of Christianization of the Far East and China in particular. Thus, it would be not surprising to know that the author of “The American Century,” Henry R. Luce was born in China to missionary parents around the same period. In the study of Luce’s biography, Robert E. Herzstein wrote “To the reverend and Mrs. Henry W. Luce, it seemed like a happy coincidence that the little boy came into the world during the very time when America was acquiring an empire in the Pacific” (8). Actually, according to the advance of events during the Progressive Era, all those islands in the ocean were the stepping stones across the ocean to reach the great market of China and the surrounding overcrowded countries. Besides, over the course of time, there was an increasing interest in the South-eastern countries in Asia.

At that epoch, the approval of this statement may be positioned in the Alabama Senator John T. Morgan’s call for expansion in a speech in front of his fellow congressmen. He claimed “Our home market is not equal to the demands of our producing and manufacturing classes and to the capital which is seeking employment.” He inductively concluded; “We must enlarge the field of our traffic or stop the business of manufacturing just where it is” (Williams 338). The speech voiced an expansionist strategy to save the internal economic deficit which put the American overproducing factories in a cross road of where to find marketplace to sell the surplus of the industrial and agricultural output. Like much of the literature of the period, it advocated the nascent American hegemony to compete with the European powers in order to preserve or win markets, and it looked to the Far East for this

purpose. Without doubt, the missionaries with which Luce's parents travel to China were intended to enhance the economic presence of the US in the country. The aim was to convert Asians to modern Anglo-Christian cultural frame in order to make the flow of the cultural products, which represent the American major economic income, easier and accessible.

However, the post-WWII realities were an opportunity for Washington to increase culturally and ideologically its presence in many countries of the region. In the context of the Cold War, the cultural discourse to show difference between the Americans and the other peoples to whom philosophy of life is different reached the climax. Moreover, the notion of 'the American century' has been since then rested on this cultural distinction which put the US in the far front of the world leading states. Proudly, Luce deciphers the motives which gave his country this estate and reminds the world about the incomparable position that the Americans enjoy, and he points out: "We know how lucky we are compared to all the rest of mankind. At least two-thirds of us are just plain rich compared to all the rest of the human family – rich in food, rich in clothes, rich in entertainment and amusement, rich in leisure, rich" (Beckett). In short, these words are sufficient, for the Americans, to prove the efficiency of the American culture in modernizing societies and in bringing prosperity and wealth to the world.

To enhance the agenda of the Progressive Era and to endorse the help of the first missionary wave which brought lucrative economic effects, since the 1945, the US has investigated the possibility of a mass cultural interventionism in Asia. Yet, if in the past the White House did it in a competition with other Western countries to win its share of the markets and the investment on the ground, this time it did it merely to stop and contain the expansion of communism which threatened seriously the estate of the American institutional and ideological presence in the Confucian world. At this level, it is worthy to clarify that many scholars on the ground of political studies regard the Cold War as a political conflict

between Washington and Moscow and that many of the countries around the globe (mainly Asian countries) became the battlefield of this conflict because of their political allegiance to one of the sides.

Yet and actually, the issue was bigger than to say that only politics was implicated, and, from a broader sense, it would be more appropriate to regard it as a cultural clash where every side of both rivals wanted his culture to dominate the world and where “intangible factors such as a nation’s ideas, opinions, moods, and tastes [as well as] symbols, words, and gestures” (Iriye) that reflect people’s life as a whole were strategically significant. On the one hand, the Soviet Union attempted to spread the communist ideology with all the cultural implications that goes with; i.e. either politico-economic tradition or proletariat daily life tradition. On the other hand, the US struggled to buffer any development of such. Instead, it pushed forward its cultural expansion to countries and regions such as Japan, Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Vietnam in order to contain the communist culture.

This explains very well what urged Washington, just after the war, to the South-east Asia. The latter is the closest region to the Soviet culture which, contrary to the American culture, rested on the array of collectivism, socialism and non-religious social relations. Besides, the pace of proliferation of communism to the other Asian countries was fast. The situation urged the American administration to put many Asian countries at the opening of her expansionist agenda. Japan was the first mature country that was exposed to the American authority for it went out of the Great War defeated and destroyed by receiving two atomic bombs in 1945. Notwithstanding its loss of the traditional hegemony in the region, Japan became an important partner of the US and took profit of the American financial projects to reconstruct its demolished infrastructure. As early as the 1970s, Tokyo restored its place among the superpowers of the time. Yet, this happened under the supervision of Uncle Sam who planned to make of Japan the chief ally to contain communism in Asia. Meanwhile, huge



budgets were devoted to encourage cultural programs in order to promote the American presence in the region. One of the most important cultural bodies which helped Washington in this task was the America-Japan Society of Tokyo (AJST). It was created around three decades earlier, but it became more active after the war in serving the American character and in propagating against communism. It was mainly during that period that the American culture started to reshape the Japanese society which was growing more and more Americanized. In both levels (the culture and the infrastructure), the Japanese big cities became more and more resembling New York and the American suburban.

The basic assumption here is that Truman Doctrine of containment officially declared in 1947 was theoretically the political body which functioned to avoid any 'domino effect' from the communist culture in the continent. However, on the ground, it functioned also as a framework of American cultural propaganda all along the years of the Cold War. Accordingly, there had been all kinds of cultural manifestations to encourage countries of the region to adopt the American way. From Hollywood movies to the huge posters on the sidings of the roads, the Americans highlighted the superiority of Washington's democracy and profound modernity to serve as a magnet in foreign communities. In the Cold War context, Professor of American diplomatic history and specialist in United States-East Asian relations, Akira Iriye wrote in one of his contributions to the encyclopedia of *The New American Nation*:

Even in the United States, where traditionally cultural pursuits had been considered to belong exclusively to the private sphere, the government did not hesitate to sponsor art exhibits, publications of journals, or meetings of labor leaders abroad in order to try to influence other countries' opinions. A cultural Cold War did exist, as did official cultural policies.

The statement demonstrates plainly how much important was the role of the culture in the American conflict with the Soviet Union over the South-east countries in Asia. Furthermore, it was the American cultural move in the continent that provoked social splits before provoking geographical divisions. The wide spread of American culture in Korea, for instance, has eventually formed two cultural poles in the country: that which was sticking to the communist culture siding with the SU and that which was influenced by the democratic culture siding with the US. The same story was repeated with the Vietnam (North and South), China and Taiwan, and surely with many other countries of the region and around the world. Today and as long as the American cultural influence, that pours in the direction of Orwellian, Jacobin and homogenized world, continues intentionally to manufacture world societies, cultural diversity will carry on vanishing over and over to end in a mega-society where culture of ‘the last man’ is that of Americans.

## **2. American Global Village**

On the eve of the last century, a great technological progress occurred in the field of telecommunication or media technology. The latter has transformed the globe into a small village<sup>13</sup> where distance and time are no more perceived in the same way as in a couple of decades ago. The fact has changed radically the configurations of power and hegemony, as it has transformed the traditional imperialist strategies by breaking many kinds of obstacles and erasing virtual frontiers. Deliberately, Professor Armand Mattelart, from the university of Paris VIII, calls this factual estate of contemporary world the empire of wire (“l’empire du cable”) (188). Despite the fact that many countries around the world participate in the race of building such empire, yet the monopoly falls in the hands of the US which not only owns the

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<sup>13</sup> The irony of fate is that there are around seven billion people from diverse cultures around the world, but this huge number lives in a small village as predicted by the intellectual Marshall McLuhan in the 1960s. Actually, the continents are today nothing but a ‘global village’ where both distance and time are killed at once.

most sophisticated media science but also mobilizes her cultural and political eminence for this purpose.

Actually, after a close attention upon the world's leading media companies, one can deduce that eventually the same American transnational corporations (TNCs), which control local transmission, dominate today the global media production. In the same direction, the scholar in media matters, Robert W. McChesney argues that if Washington struggles to maintain its media technologies vibrating, it is because of their role in endorsing cultural domination through cultural products industry and discourse production and in capitalizing on "the potential for growth abroad-and not get outflanked by competitors" (260). In fact, American media companies such as Disney and Time Warner activate in different corners of the world with a total support from the mother country. This has given Uncle Sam the advantage to penetrate into peoples' everyday life without caring about distance, time and physical confrontation with the external world. Accordingly, the American culture smoothly integrated societies of all kinds and become the global model imposed by the means of fabricated pictures and invented discourse.

A more crucial aspect in this context is that the global memory is increasingly Americanized, McDonald-oriented and Coca-colonized because it is fundamentally based on "mass-mediated forms of communication" (Beck 9) which overwhelmingly insist on the American values and the mental disposition. According to the behaviorist school, media consumption has all the power to shape and lead distant social bodies -conservative they are or progressive- to one particular interpretation of life. Over the course of time, one particular way of organizing cultural programs insists on adopting unconsciously one particular model which stands nowadays for the American life style. In this way, the societies of the globe are growing homogenous by universalizing the culture of mass media or what is frequently called 'popular culture.' In studying the relation between the American culture and the contemporary

changes in the world order, Fredric Jameson articulates that there exist “developing forces that are North American in origin and result from the unchallenged primacy of the USA today and thus the ‘American way of life’ and American mass media culture” (64). The American model and media culture are regarded here as forces recycling again and again Washington’s imperialist behavior. This consequence is chiefly a result of media consumption which, due to the American monopoly, overwhelms foreign independent social groups with a set of pictures and conceptions which transcend the American culture and present it as the end of human civilization.

The worldly dimension of the American culture unveils a huge virtual project which intends to sum up world diversity in the American life style and to globalize the latter on the virtues of liberal democracy. In turn, every single progress in the project has given the US new perspectives to control systematically both international commerce and politics because of the produced efforts to hijack the minds of independent societies and make them feel inferior in front of ‘the American mind.’ One important insight on this American perspective is made by the French philosopher Jean Baudrillard in his book *America*. At the twilight of the cold war, he pointed out that the US, after her performance in facing and containing the Soviet culture, has become the centre of the globe and the mold for the rest of the continents including Europe. While Baudrillard admired the complexity of the American society and its multifaceted organization, he warned of the impact that Hollywood films, inspirational experience of the American landscape and in general the cultural social characteristics of the city life may have on this heterogeneous world.

It is highly contemplated that “the American century” is no more a myth as many scientists in humanities may conceive or pretend, but it is the assumption that even the traditional adversaries often admit and acknowledge. Despite his rejection of the word ‘empire’ in describing the American contemporary world hegemony, Harvard Professor in

international affairs, Joseph S. Nye discusses the phenomenon by describing the new world order as one civilization copying from American modernizing culture instead of diverse backward cultures, and thus he writes:

In many ways the metaphor of empire is seductive. The American military has a global reach with bases around the world and its regional commanders sometimes act like proconsuls. English is a *lingua franca* like Latin was. The American economy is the largest in the world, and American culture serves as a magnet (*Understanding International Conflicts* 275).

In another article, Nye argues “The United States has played a central role in the current phase of globalization for a variety of reasons including its syncretic culture,” and he applauds that the fact has “benefited American hard and soft power” (112). In his writings and speeches, Nye denounces the random use of the words ‘imposition’ and ‘force’ in describing the wide spread of his culture; he claims instead spontaneity and seduction for the process. On the contrary, Professor Olivier Zunz sees in the way nothing but a new hegemonic approach, though imposition for him does not mean necessarily military intervention but something like media propaganda. In the context, Zunz explains:

By separating the often conflated concepts of the ‘American century’ and the ‘Pax Americana,’ I show how one could eventually support the other. For Americans had in effect constructed the necessary ideology of an ‘American century’ before imposing it on a world recovering from the Second World War

By the statement, Zunz confirms the intentional strategy of Washington to impose its cultural model as the updated life style for other societies. Without doubt, internal views among intellectuals over the centrality of the US in the universalizing mission are relatively different and in many cases oppositional, depending on the ideological or philosophical

mainstream. However, it is clear from the American political scene that all in all the neoconservative partisans back all kinds of initiatives to have big hands for dominating the world culturally. Liberals and most of the left wing intellectuals, instead, prefer to harmonize American cultural relations with the external world to avoid possible clashes with conservative societies which would do everything to defend their local cultures.

So far, the time line of the American expansionist policy and the multi-dimensional field implications in building the American empire denote concretely that, since the roots of the American state, culture has played a significant role in pressing the process and in concealing the deployed means for this purpose. All along the three historical phases, culture has been permanently an active tool of propaganda and control. First, it served as a means of distinction between the Natives and the settlers and, in another way, between the ‘civilized’ and the ‘uncivilized’. On this premise, the assault against Indians to seize their lands and communitarian properties were legitimized during the Westward Expansion. Then, by the end of the Civil War, the American rulers showed an immense consensus around the ideological intentions of the ‘manifest destiny’ to spread the American culture in the hemisphere in order to ensure security around the borders and maintain social stability inside the borders. In the last phase, the American culture reached Asia and served the containment of communism during the Cold War, and the flowering of cultural relations after WWII was in many ways a culmination of the globalizing trend that had began on the eve of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Being sustained with media technology, the American culture is today the basic iron-head of globalization. In fact, even most conservative societies are getting stuffed with the American cultural products and haunted by the American values.

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## **Chapter Three: The Case of China**

The US instills its laws, human rights and technology into its international label and imposes these on developing countries. Thus, the ‘Americanization’ of the Internet has begun to threaten some countries’ social, political and cultural values (Bian Qi 1999).

### **Introduction**

Choosing China as a case study to illustrate concretely and analytically the smooth move of the American culture is indebted at least to three important reasons. First of all, this case would give this study more credibility and scientific authority because today China is the second biggest industrial country in the world, and according to many economists it has the potentialities to be a balancing force in the near future. However, this country cannot stop the incursion of American culture despite all efforts to reduce the latter’s impacts on the Chinese society. The second reason is that the choice of a conservative and relatively a powerful country would confirm the supremacy and the intelligence of the American cultural strategy, i.e., if the American life style has succeeded in paving an open way to such a conservative and reserved society, what would be the results in other weak and open societies? Unequivocally, this fact shows to which extent the American cultural strategy is sophisticated and intelligent.

The third reason is that China is a country among others which recognized the threat of the wide spread of American culture and tries to resist its effects. Thus, since a decade ago it has proceeded to implement national and international cultural programs to reduce negative effects of globalization on the Chinese identity and to contain the American culture in limited areas of life in China.

#### **A. The First Contact and Evolution of Sino-American Ties**

After a long process of cultural hegemony domino-effect in the mainland and in the Pacific Ocean, as it is seen in the preceding chapter, China has become comprehensively the ultimate American target. Until the Spanish-American War over the Philippine islands or even after, the United States got no direct or worthy contact of any kind with China. This happened only in the early 20<sup>th</sup> c. Initially, American administration demonstrated interest in the Chinese affairs in the late 19<sup>th</sup> c to minimize the European, Russian and Japanese attitude of “spheres of influence” in order to allow Washington to have a share of equal trading rights in the region. Actually, around the period of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, though China constituted a complete independent country, it was essentially divided into spheres of influence in the hands of other great powers. For this reason, if the prospering United States wants to go on into the Chinese society, it had to negotiate not only with the Qing Government<sup>14</sup> but mainly with the great powers on the head: Japan, Russia and Great Britain. Knowing that the clash had been already triggered between the British and the Japanese concession-seekers over Chinese independence and demanding territorial concessions, the American claim to share in the commerce of the Celestial Empire would be in jeopardy.

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<sup>14</sup> Qing Dynasty is the last imperial dynasty which reigned over China from 1644 till 1912. It was established by the Manchus from Northern China and Southern Mongolia after having overthrown the predecessor Ming Dynasty. The Qings moved from north to south crossing the Chinese Great Wall to conquer Beijing in 1644. As a result, China became the “Great Qing Empire.”

To avoid this from happening and to keep China out of the clutches of the imperialist conspiracy, the White House needed more sovereignty for the Chinese administration. Thus, in 1989, it participated in the creation of the American Asiatic Association (AAA). The latter constitutes the first American political initiation which aimed at maintaining a free Asian market and in which the United States had not to go in direct confrontation with other Western and non-Western rivalries. It organized businessmen, economist and intellectuals in support of an aggressive China-policy and to foster commercial interests of the United States in the hemisphere.

In this context, the American political strategy was embodied in the famous “open door policy” which constituted the Bible of American foreign affairs of the period. Though there were several attempts from the opponent powers to prevent Washington from negotiating businesses and tasting the Chinese cake, it was late because it had already paved the way for this purpose. Some analysts argued that the entire journey in the Pacific Ocean was in the direction of the “Great China Market,” and that even the adversaries knew how much the United States was committed to get in that market. “We want those islands;” said Senator Henry Teller having no doubts about annexing Hawaii, “We want them because they are the stepping way across the sea.... Necessary to our safety, they are necessary to our commerce.” (Miner, 306). Besides, for Americans, Hawaii without China is a breakdown, as it would be of little value to anyone except pineapple growers.

Even in the case of the Philippines, there were several arguments showing that the intentions of the United States were Chinese-oriented rather than Spanish superseding in the islands. Apart from security reasons, the lands of the Philippines were not of great importance in the sight of the Americans. Yet, it offered them an opportunity to maintain an Open Door Policy throughout the Orient. Besides, knowing that the Qing Empire was at that time largely disputed by superpowers, it allowed them to be militarily present in the area to sustain every

political decision that may provoke foreign aggression. After the first victories over the Spanish navy, the American war council decided openly to send an army of twenty thousand men to substitute the Spanish authority.

In fact, in all what occurred during the Spanish-American conflict, the stake for Uncle Sam was mainly the Great China. This was the reason why, after a period of dithering whether to declare a war or no against Spain, William McKinley's administration suggested that the Philippines could remain Spanish; in exchange, the United States would retain "a port and necessary appurtenances" in the region. In this case, if the Spanish had accepted Washington's suggestion, they would have avoided a new defeat and a loss of a strategic loaf from its Empire. Actually, what the Americans were looking for were harbors to provide steppingstones across the Pacific. In the words of President McKinley: "Acquisition of these islands was not one more step on a jingoist journey to the far end of the earth---only a means to another end" (Gardner 37). In another way, the American inquisition of the islands in the Pacific Ocean was not the ultimate goal but just a means to reach another greater end which was in fact the Chinese Market.

Meanwhile, the AAA carried on insistently its campaign for a "stronger China policy." By no means, it succeeded in encouraging and in anticipating the White House's direct interference along with other allied powers in the Chinese troubles. In 1900, some American troops still engaged in the Philippines found their way to China to settle the uprising of the Boxers. The rebellion- motivated by a proto-nationalist sentiment against the imperialist exhaustion of the Chinese material and spiritual resources- was dedicated to the destruction of foreign imperialism in China and the eradication of Western missionary activities which were considered as the greatest enemy of the Chinese cultural tradition. Hence, the latter constituted the source of excitement and the moral force for the uprising crowds, and the Boxers' primary practice involved "the whirling of swords, violent

prostrations, and chanting incantations to Taoist and Buddhist spirits" (Thompson 7). The Boxer Rebellion was the first clash between the Chinese entities and the Western culture, in which the United States was largely involved. Indeed, the discussed events reveal that Washington at this point was looking for much more than investment opportunities in the region, and demonstrated a great interest in the Chinese affairs for which it had laid the groundwork for future actions.

So far, regardless to the Boxers uprising from 1899 to 1901, most of the elements mentioned about the Sino-American contact of the late 19<sup>th</sup> c. are geostrategic and political rather than cultural. Besides, the first cultural contact of the United States with China occurred simultaneously around the same period in an ongoing process of Americanization in the Oceania passing through the Westward Expansion and interventionism in Latin America. However, it is worthy highlighting that before the American incursion in the Chinese world, Great Britain had already paved the way to the Anglo-Saxon Culture.

### **1. Chinese Vulnerability in Front of Western Culture**

Contemporary historical studies show explicitly that until 1940s, China had often been controlled by foreign countries either under formal or informal empires. Knowing that in the 19<sup>th</sup> c it was divided into spheres of influence under the gaze of Qing government, the Anglo-Saxons owned the lion share of privileges comparing to other powers; chiefly because they were not only acting economically and politically but also culturally. In fact, in the course of time they had had a great impact on the Chinese culture, and in many ways they influenced local communities mainly in the field of religion and beliefs which is a very important aspect in the people's life in Eastern Asia. In addition, the same historical studies provide evidences that China, despite the human and the natural potential it has, had been for a long period passive in its relations with the external world. This kind of international

relation pushes to the front scene one important question: what makes of China a vulnerable state and susceptible to the hypothesis of Western incursion? Answering this crucial question, which requires shedding a light on the Chinese '*colonisabilité*'<sup>15</sup> and her attitude towards expansionism, would help to a large extent in unveiling the entry of American culture to China.

Comparing to other Western and Asian countries, China had been for a long period an isolated country. Notwithstanding its human and material resources in addition to its strategic location, China did not go beyond its boundaries to ensure the security and the integrity of its society, in the way Washington did for a long period. The geographical map of the Chinese frontiers, apart from the territories taken by Japan or seized on the premises of international agreements, has been steady and more importantly exposed to foreign infiltration. On the contrary, the American frontiers- as it is also the case with other empires of the nineteenth century- were progressively expanding. In addition, even though China possessed a big navy at a given period, it did not exploit it in building a larger Empire as the Westerners did. This isolationism was the key reason of the Chinese vulnerability.

Moreover, China is the most overpopulated country in the modern age, and it is constituted of several ethnic groups which speak hundred of different languages and living separately as independent kingdoms. This cultural environment had several times provoked internal clashes either over the cultural belonging of these groups or over the Chinese throne. Unlikely, this kind of circumstances harms Chinese social integrity and political stability, and it offers natural resources and market seekers opportunities to invest Chinese society without

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<sup>15</sup>The conceptualization of the French word '*Colonisabilité*' is studied by the Algerian thinker, Malek Bennabi, in which he connected the phenomenon of colonialism not only to the European industrial and military development but also to the indifference and the stagnation that made of the former colonized societies vulnerable in the sight of the colonizers. Thus, some negative attitudes in the societies of the South may be indirectly the cause of their colonization.



worrying about the reaction of the ruling class. Accordingly, this internal unease has likely prevented the latter from expanding Chinese frontiers formally and informally.

Furthermore, during the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, China had missed an important transformation in world development which altered completely the relations between the North and the South. It is the Industrial Revolution. Though most of Eurocentric intellectuals consider it as Western invention, postcolonial thinkers on the contrary consider it as a universal heritage in which human scientific experience is implemented. Obviously, China, like all other countries of 'the South,' had missed the event that would have changed radically its destiny and its relations with 'the North.' In the words of Yu Keping, Professor and director at the China Center for Comparative Politics and Economics in Beijing:

China has made social progress very slowly and has scarcely contributed to the world.... Meanwhile, Western countries experienced the Industrial Revolution and its resulting progress. Consequently, China has lagged behind Western countries since the start of modern times. Some Chinese intellectuals identified the gulf between China and Western countries as early as the middle of the [19<sup>th</sup> c] when the Western powers forced open ancient China's door through superior weapons and commodities. (143)

To put an end to this weakness, China must undergo a thorough industrial revolution to increase its productivity so that to achieve market auto-satisfaction. No matter the price China has to pay, this is the only way to avoid all kinds of market neocolonialism of the 20<sup>th</sup> c. In fact, today China has gone ahead in the process of industrialization, and it succeeded considerably in competing along with other world super industrialized countries.

These are some factors that has caused Chinese fragility in front of Western hegemony and consequently facilitated the infiltration of Western culture in general. Great Britain for its part played a significant role in shaking China to open its market to the Anglo-

Saxon countries during the Opium Wars. The conflict between Britain and China lasted from 1839 to 1860 over trading rights; it aimed at gaining British monopoly on the growth of Opium in India for the sake of controlling unilaterally its trade. At that time, Chinese were the first consumers of opium in the world. Knowing that opium consumption is not like any other food consumption, this would make the Chinese opium demand dependent on the British merchants. As a result, Britain would have indirectly forced Qing rulers to wide open the Chinese market not only to the opium but also to the other cultural products.

In the same context, the Opium Wars were also shown and more importantly justified as a fight against “backwardness” in Asia. Besides, they contributed to the decline of the Celestial Empire, as they systematically prevented industrial proliferation in the Far East. In *Industry and Empire*, Eric Hobsbawm reveals that the wars were a clash of two cultures with differing world views, as he demonstrates the failure of the Chinese to resist British cultural expansion (126-7). In addition, Yujun Wu, Associate Professor at Beijing University, identified some instances of the Chinese sense of inferiority during and after the wars. He argued that during that period “the Chinese people lost their sense of self-superiority but maintained an attitude of accepting western culture with pleasure” (no page). Since then, this Western attitude of approaching the Chinese inferiority has fed texts and speeches dealing with the Chinese affairs.

Simultaneously, the backwardness of the Chinese culture (seen by Westerners) was also used by the Americans to enhance their presence in China. Thus, the eve of the twentieth century is known for American missionism in the region to spread democracy and Christianity which had come to represent one side of western modernity. Professors Rosati and Scott, from South Carolina and Oklahoma universities, wrote that during the ‘Regional Era’<sup>16</sup> “there was

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<sup>16</sup> Jerel A. Rosati and James M. Scott are authors of several texts on American foreign policy. For a better understanding of the history of the latter, in their book *The Politics of United States Foreign Policy*, they

a large American ‘missionary’ presence in Asia particularly in Japan and China” (26). In this way and at this stage, it is apparent that by the early 19<sup>th</sup> c, the newly and worldly emerging United States had claimed Britain’s Position as the enlightening empire in the region, with an extensively idealized mission to spread new American ideas throughout the World.

When writing about the weight of the United States and Great Britain in challenging world’s affairs, Barbara Bush, Professor of imperial history at Sheffield Hallam University, noticed that these two countries “shared a mission to spread their superior Anglo-Saxon culture globally” (86). However, this mission through time shifted from an Anglo-Saxon to an American one. Highlighted by American principles, it had taken new forms, yet it has the same objectives: political control and economic growth. What makes Uncle Sam’s interventionism in China different from the Western traditional one is that it is not limited to the use of military and political control; it has also overwhelmingly implemented a cultural strategy in which “strategically, the US is likely to use the by-pass policy with carrot and stick tactics” (Jiaxi 18). Thus, the culture of democracy that is- according to historians- first applied in the United States has a considerable place in the American ‘mission.’

At the same time, there was a strong will to teach English for the role it could play in the American mission. Notwithstanding its ideological implication, spreading English by teaching and other local programs would help in communication and in making the Chinese, who were converting wave after wave, understand the Bible and different Christian preaches. Moreover, the American ‘open door’ policies facilitated the infiltration of American values. They aimed mainly at protecting economic interests of the United States, yet they got a broader cultural impact on Eastern Asia. Open Door remained the essence of the US in China until the establishment of the communist regime in 1949.

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divided it into three major periods: 1. The Continental Era (1776-1860s), 2. The Regional Era (1860s-1940s), 3. The Global Era (1940s-present).

These evidences, in addition to many others au fait with other coming titles, suggest that it would be hard to disprove the claim that China is being Americanized. But the process was interrupted by the growth of the Soviet Union after the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, and then by the advance of communism in Asia. The adoption of the communist ideology since 1949- after the Chinese Civil War- brought China to a lasting divorce from the Western world. It spent over 40 years without having economic, political and mainly cultural contact with the Western bloc under the leadership of the United States. Hence, during the Cold War, Chinese affairs were Russian-oriented rather than American, with the exception of Taiwan and Hong Kong which have opted for a democratic government.

Since then, the turning point in the Chinese policy towards national and international issues occurred in the 1960s when Mao Zedong, then Chairman of the Communist Party, launched series of critiques against the ruling class. Believing that current Communist leaders were taking China in the wrong direction, Mao called on the nation's youth to purge the "impure" elements of the Chinese society and to revive the revolutionary spirit that had led to victory two decades earlier. He succeeded in mobilizing the students of Beijing in the spring of 1966, and the goal was: eradication of the so called emerging bourgeois ideas and customs. As a result, schools and universities remained empty to reopen 3years later. At that time, Mao called the masses to "'smash the Four Olds:' old ideas, old culture, old customs and old habits" (Rogaski). Later on, the Chinese popular movement came to be called 'Cultural Revolution.'

After more than 20 years of totalitarian domination and social close-minded society, it was difficult for China to ensure the liberties claimed by the people. On the contrary, the chaos resulted in the movement of the 1960s caused some bad effects on the Chinese society, as it caused also a partial collapse in the Chinese economy. However, the Cultural Revolution has pushed the communist leaders to reduce their institutional domination on the political

scene. The Chinese Communist Party has lost much of its prestige, and China entered in the phase of the great release -“Le Grand Relachement” (Domenach 159)- abandoning the traditional conservatism, which in a part stimulated cultural changes.

At this level, it is important to highlight that Westernization in China is shifting and becoming more and more Americanization, and that after the Cold War, the United States became culturally omnipresent not only in China but all over the world. Furthermore, due to the American control of the global greatest network of information, some go to argue that from a cultural context Americanization is another connotation of globalization. Besides, the latter is hence seen as an American trap and as a fashionable tool to establish an American hegemony. Zhao Chu, a Chinese researcher in Sino-American relations, argues that “globalization in the information age stands for Americanization.” and that “the US economic and military power derives from its social system and cultural values” (43-44). In the same way, Professor Wang Nin indicates in an analysis devoted to point out the intrinsic connections between Americanization and globalization: “In a nutshell, globalization is essentially global homogenization in terms of American values and standards” (32). Other American revisionist scholars in geopolitics and economics, such as Noam Chomsky and Joseph Stiglitz go in the same perspective to show how much globalization is answering Washington’s needs on the detriment of other- technologically- less developed countries.

Since the 1980s, the Chinese have started to turn their sight to democracy and free market and ask questions about new ways that will help in making the Chinese “great leap forward” at different social levels. They started demanding a more moderate and open economy. Besides, the sprouting new ideas among one category of the Chinese elite denote that going ahead in the reforms will not systematically harm the Chinese culture. For them, “le traditionalisme social n’est pas forcément contradictoire avec la modernisation” (Domenach 167). That is China can enter the international competition with the great powers

including the US without losing its national identity and sovereignty. Right away, the great release that began with Deng Xiaoping and continued with Jiang Zemin was oriented to the modernization of the Chinese economy. It opened the Chinese society on an international scale. Consequently, the decades of the 1980s and the 1990s were of economic, political and chiefly cultural reformations that put China in a social dilemma over the real notion of modernization. Actually, the dilemma was whether Westernization is necessarily a threat to Chinese national cultural heritage, and thus to national identity, or not.

## **2. Chinese Debate over Westernization and Sinicization**

Nowadays, there is a persisting hot debate among Chinese intellectuals over different conceptualizations of ‘modernization’ in China. Yet, the debate was inaugurated around two centuries ago when Eastern Asia had observed western culture with admiration and distrust pouring into China new industrial products. The arrival of Great Britain with heavy weapons and mechanic had struck the Qing dynasty and developed a sense of inferiority and insecurity in the Chinese society. For the first time, Chinese officials witnessed the strength of Western civilization, as they found out the wide gap separating their society from the Western Society. Since then, they have gone in the quest of modern China. Currently, Chinese Communist Party is all along the same task.

However, when it comes to the question of how to modernize China the split among intellectuals, politicians and ruling class is repeatedly felt. Accordingly, three mainstreams of thoughts clearly appeared in the Chinese cultural studies and therefore the same thoughts are reflected in the political scene. If we review those debates today, we will notice, on the one side, there are intellectuals who eager to modernize through a total imitation of Western-American material and spiritual culture. This is the theory of ‘Americanization’ or ‘Westernization.’ On the other side, there are scholars who reject this theory and opt to

another one which gives priority to the Chinese civilization under the name of ‘Sinicization.’ It is worthy to clarify that sinicization here is limited to the Chinese society, contrary to Americanization which is functioning outside of the American geographical boundaries. In other words, what worries the Chinese administration is the fact that China (not the US) is the battlefield and the Chinese society is the subject to experiment.

In between, there are intellectuals insisting on taking the stick from the middle and synthesizing the first two theories. In nowadays’ Chinese intellectual scene, every social, political and economic move should foreground its position and locate itself with regard to this eternal debate. Each time, these theories provide their arguments on the premise of how much one may be more efficient than the other in regenerating modernity, and on the premise of how much one is time-consuming or timesaving than the other.

For Westernization Movement, it is imperative for Chinese officials to go ahead in the ‘wholesale’ process to save Chinese society and its vulnerable economy from collapsing. American-based Globalization is then an obligation where China has no choice but to be an active participant rather than a watchful resistant. Chen Xujing, a key Chinese researcher and ardent supporter of the tendency of ‘totalistic Westernization’, puts it:

Western culture is the trend of world culture. In fact, today Western culture is world culture. If we do not wish to live in this world, then that is a different matter, but as long as we want to live in this world, then we must adapt ourselves to this trend, for otherwise we resign ourselves to death (160).

In this way, modernization is the process of inquiry from the West and approaching its know-how. In the age of chips, optical fiber and cell phones, every shift from this process is backward and time wasting. Scholars defending this view, such as Hu Shi, Che Xujing, Lin Yutang and Wu Shichang consider American civilization as the ideal human product, and if

Chinese society wants to prosper, it has to take from all social aspects of American society: in both material and spiritual sides. Hence, Americanized China is Modern China.

Moreover, Chen Xujing for his part highlights the backwardness of Chinese culture. He claims that it is a superstitious culture, far from being a scientific one and that Chinese society plays the role of defenders of principles and virtues in their transcendental spiritual life but that in reality it has incessantly degenerated. At the same time, American society is pragmatically exploiting its civilized culture in scientific discoveries. Besides, a society which is not scientific in its daily life cannot improve and change its destiny for the best. All in all, Western culture is the opportunity and the ultimate solution, for it is “better than Chinese culture, no matter whether in thought, art, science, politics, morality, education, religion, philosophy, and literature” (Yu 159). Though it carries a percentage of truth, this view is too excessive in demonizing the Chinese underdevelopment comparing to the West, because China has always, in a way or another, contributed to human scientific heritage. At the same time, the view has cherished the agony of this belief’s opponent.

As opposed to Westernization, some Chinese scholars regard previous views of Western culture defenders as a threat to Chinese national identity and not different from colonial missionism which molested humanitarian traditional cultures. They accused the firsts of missing Chinese nationalism and of lacking knowledge about the Chinese civilization because most of them were taught in western schools and universities. In addition, They consider Xujing’s and Shi’s assault against Chinese culture as result of a long American Propaganda that created in them a dependency complex and a sense of inferiority which consequently made them see the American moon rounder than the Chinese one. China has its own culture which should make ‘the essence’ of every modernization in its society. The proponent of Chinese-based modernity, such as Zhang Sumin, Feng Youlan, Zhang Dongsun and many others, refused the Western way towards modernization. Their fear is that China



would lose its sovereignty once opened up to the West. The question then is how Beijing can go on in the competition alongside with the United States and Western countries and learn from them without losing its national independence.

The same scholars argue that though selective Americanization is accepted, it must be adapted to Chinese character, because any inattentiveness in the process would lead to a national crisis. They highlight that the specificity of Chinese cultural estate implicates that every tangible transformation in the country should come from inside and that the model that had led the West to modernization cannot be applied in China. They claim that what is right and good in U.S. is likely wrong and bad in China. Or as in the words of another proponent of this view, Xiong Mengfei:

National characteristics are what we generally call “national conditions.” In the last sixty years in China, the reform movement failed because of ignorance of the national conditions. Proponents of Europeanization “cut their feet to fit the shoes,” engendering a different result because of different local conditions. Western Parliamentary politics becomes piglet politics once moved to China.... Western science and education become foreign eight-legged essays once moved to China. American cotton produces less once transplanted to China. Italian bees make little honey once moved to China (Keping, 166).

China has to keep its eyes wide open as long as its doors are open because American culture contains both good and bad knowledge and indiscriminate in Chinese importation may be a factor of self-destruction. Besides, to tolerate this mind-set would induce other unknown dangers to the Chinese society, such as violence, criminality, chaos and insecurity, which are part of the American daily life but the ultimate Chinese enemy. The Chinese philosopher Zhang Shenfu, like Mengfei, agreed on the fact that foreign products should go through Sinicization process to avoid all kinds of cultural uprooting, yet he insisted also on

the fact that cultural consciousness and information plays a significant role in cultivating Americanization in China. He advocates that unclear understanding of events would result in unclear decisions and hence in wrong positions. Consequently, he deduces that Sinicization is “based on the need of consciousness and self-confidence,” and “those who objected to it or ridicule on it did not understand the situation” (Zonggui 388).

For them, Chinese culture and political structure are sufficiently advanced comparing to the American ones, yet China needs mainly to learn technological and industrial techniques. Accordingly, pro-Sinicization scholars distinguish between material and spiritual civilization of Western world; they argue that notwithstanding the West’s sophisticated material and technological civilization, its spiritual aspect cannot measure up to the Chinese one. To put it differently, China has a great spiritual traditional culture of Confucianism that feeds up the soul of the Chinese society and assures its unity and integrity; whereas, the united States possesses a great industrial culture which assures productivity and material transformation. Hence, here appears the fitting deal for Beijing. The ideal way of approaching modernity is to bring both cultures together to make the foundation of China’s future civilization. In this case, the so called “modernization is nothing but industrialization and mechanization.” (Keping 162) Actually, this view is inspired from Zhang Zhidong’s proposal to Qing government in 1898 to keep Chinese culture as the essence of Qing’s modernization and to use Western industrialization as a means, or what is known today as the theory of “Chinese essence, Western means.”

Rejecting completely this tendency, Lin Yutang, another outstanding representative of Westernization Movement, dedicated a whole essay entitled “Machine and Spirit” to criticize those who consider the Western spiritual civilization inferior to the Confucian one. He argues in his text that material and spiritual life do not exclude each other. On the contrary, they are complementary. If Americans, for instance, have an advanced material

civilization, it was thanks to its spiritual scientific-oriented civilization. In one of his attacks against scholars of ‘Chinese essence,’ he questioned their analyses and insisted that:

They must consider their mistakes behind closed doors, sincerely mend their ways, and make a determined effort at self-strengthening in order to learn some Western spirit that can produce material civilization. Otherwise, I fear the future will be in the hands of foreign devils and their machine civilization (Luo, 178)

In other words, if Chinese administration’s officials want to change China for the best, they have to learn from Western style as a whole. In short, American material is the product of American principles and virtues, and thus excluding spiritual aspect is going to make American material not compatible with Chinese spirit.

Some intellectuals have gone further to denounce an American plotting to divide China and its intention to disturb national stability through cultural maneuverings. According to them, the U.S. is seizing the opportunity of Chinese quest for modernity to create two categories of Chinese citizens. The first is that of masses with Chinese culture and anti-Americanization ideology; the second is that of Americanized citizens. Actually, the latter is mainly made of Chinese elite who under pressure of different means became Americanized. In some circumstances, this kind of division in the same country is likely to rouse internal clashes that may even lead to a civil war. The Chinese lived the same scenario in 1949, and history may repeat itself if ever people do not pay attention to their past. Until today, the issue of Taiwan, in which the White House has got big hands, is unsolved. Nowadays, if there is a place in the world that looks American-like, it is Taiwan. Since the communist revolution that ended in the Chinese Civil War, the latter has incessantly represented the aching thorn in Sino-American affairs. For Westernization opponents, the problem is primarily cultural, and what they fear of is to come, in the near future, upon the same problems in Tibet, Sinkiang and elsewhere in China.

Briefly, these different views over the conceptualization of modernization constitute the core of modern Chinese cultural studies, as they reflect the evolution and the changes in the perception of contemporary social realities. In fact, the debate has paved the way to new intellectual frontiers not only in China, but also in other countries that may face the same circumstances. It proves also to which extent the Chinese are committed to modernize their social conditions, though this, for Americanization admirers, will cost their own cultural identity. In addition, though the debate goes through two main options in the process of modernization, either partial or complete Westernization, one thing is clear: China currently cannot avoid Americanization. Moreover, this debate translates in the margins the modernization phases in the twentieth century China; each under the spot of one political framework.

### **3. Towards Modernization: from Westernization to Americanization**

On the premise of the preceding views, Chinese intellectuals have divided modernization evolution in China into three major stages. The origins of Chinese quest for modernization can be traced back to its encounter with the Westerners in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> c when the Qing Government had observed foreign industrialized countries surging within Chinese territories bringing with them sophisticated weapons and superior commodities. Before that period the Chinese believed that their civilization was superior to the others' civilization and that China is at the center of world culture. In fact, this Chinese perception did not survive the Qing rule, because soon the Chinese recognized that "feudal China had been left far behind" the western industrialization (Xinsheng). Since then two other phases have come across, and China has looked after the Western superior civilization.

Political and administrative structure of a country is obviously determined by multiple factors. The most important one is its way of approaching

modernization. Simultaneously, in the three phases, the political structure of China is dependent on and at the same time translates one attitude towards modernization. In another way, there are three different historical stages in modern China. In every stage, the way modernization is supposedly achieved is determined by the policy makers' tendency and the degree of influence of the intellectual class on the ruling one.

The first stage is located in late Qing dynasty's reign over China: around the period between 1860 and 1911. It was a historical gap in which modernization was an obligation because of some geostrategic weaknesses and other bad economic, political and cultural realities. The awful impacts of the Opium Wars, the unfair and inequitable treaties that resulted in Taiwan expropriation by Japan, Hong Kong by Great Britain and the occasional mass uprisings pushed Qing aristocrats and officials to recognize the need to fortify China. Because China was not scientifically and technically ready to compete with the West, it was forced to imitate the Western Model to catch up at different social levels.

Schools were built in big Cities just as westerners did; the teaching of English alongside with other European languages became increasingly important in scientific inquiry; students were sent to study abroad to learn about American and European knowledge; plans were announced to establish a constitution to increase social justice and political standard; new western inspiring warfare arsenals, strategies and knowhow were purchased. Therefore, all these modernizing measures, in addition to others, were historically entitled 'Westernization movement.' the latter sums up the philosophy of "a system of Chinese learning and use of western learning," which urgently aimed at "self-rescue" (Zhang 154) from foreigners' total hegemony and internal social unease.

Besides, it is worthy to clarify that at the beginning of this phase, modernization was chiefly oriented to military strategic studies and manufacturing equipments, yet in fact this had a considerable impact on the Chinese tradition for it had slightly extended later on to political and educational reforms. In addition, while some intellectuals called for copying from the West in order to preserve Chinese independence and superiority, some others symmetrically developed hostile and anti-Westernization opinions which later on led to the Boxers Rebellion. Such opinion contaminated the society mainly after the defeat of China in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894 that offended severely Qing administration's attempts of modernization. Thus, the Sino-Japanese War conformed the fact that the Westernization movement was nothing but a failure.

At this level, there is a question which put Chinese intellectuals and policy makers in a dilemma. Knowing that Western countries were behind most of Chinese problems and Chinese dependency, how then is it possible to expect great deal of things if Chinese modernization depends on the same Western world? This question had created among Chinese a kind of discomfort, uncertainty and suspicion in a total Western modernization, and hence they contented mainly with industrialization to avoid all kinds of cultural colonization and political dependency.

The second stage of Chinese modernization stretches from 1911 to 1949. It was the stage in which the debate over what type of modernization China should implement reached the climax. Thus, Westernization and Sinicization became an intellectual battlefield for both Chinese officials and thinkers. This phase manifested during the Republican Era and the establishment of the Kuomintang Republic of China by Song Jaoren and Sun Yet-sen after the Xinhai

Revolution (Chinese Revolution). The republic condemned its predecessor Qing Government of political irresponsibility and cultural conservatism which in turn caused economic and cultural stagnation. Contrary to its predecessor, its aim was to bring new socio-political and cultural configurations that would modernize China.

Instead of Qing's Western industrialization and Chinese cultural conservation, the republicans went further in political and economic reforms. Consequently, the period is also called the 'Reforms Movement.' Besides, the May Fourth Movement, which first grew against alienation of China in front of Japan in Versailles Treaty, had anticipated several changes. The authors of the movement were claiming a 'new culture' that would protect them from such alienation and offences in international ceremonies. At the same time, they grew nihilistic against traditional Confucian culture, and "liberalism, pragmatism, nationalism... socialism instead provided a basis from which to criticize traditional Chinese ethics, philosophy, religion, and social and political institutions" (Britannica).

At this stage, Great part of the Chinese society had remarkably, if not radically, changed their attitude towards traditional China, and their desire to go on the American model of society grew bigger. The fascinating pictures of American landscape of the Roaring Twenties would have contributed in changing the Chinese mind. Li Hongzhang qualified the atmosphere as unprecedented in the history of modern China. Shih Yuan-Kang, Professor of Philosophy from National Chung Cheng University, has in turn explicitly described this fundamental Change:

China had extensive experience in military, economic, and cultural exchanges with other countries throughout history. However, no one had ever imagined that such exchanges with other cultures would fundamentally impact the basic concepts and values of Chinese culture, and no one had ever realized that such exchanges with other cultures would fundamentally influence the structure of traditional Chinese society (97).

The reform movement was to modernize China by imitating American political and economical systems. It represented the first sparks of the Chinese Democratic Party that is today ruling Taiwan province under the sustainment of the United States. In fact, it was during the Republican Era that democratic institutions, multi-party system, national citizenship and liberal enterprises became debatable in China. Despite its space gaining in its early years, the Reform Movement proved to be a minority elitist movement rather than a national scale movement. Its political and economic measures lived almost three decades to come upon new historical changes that modified the Chinese perception of modernization.

The third and the last stage began after the Chinese Civil War and the rise of the Chinese Communist Party to contemporary period. However, the emphasis is on the post Mao Tse-tung period because during his leadership Mao rejected completely the American philosophy of wealth based on capitalism. Hence, he considered every cultural contact with the 'hegemonic' U.S. as a submission. This of course does not mean that he did not seek for modernization, but his ultimate goals were to preserve the independence of People's Republic of China and economically to concretize 'The Great Leap Forward.' In addition, his



modernization can be summarized in Marxist socialism of the Eastern bloc. In this way, Mao and his comrades closed the American Open Door in China until the 1980s and the coming of Deng Xiaoping's reforms.

With the Communist Party since 1980s, China has experienced the age in which it may learn from and at the same time stand against American modernization. Though from the outside, this statement may appear contradictory. Yet, when we check the echo of Sino-American relations in Eastern hemisphere, it is clear that China apprehends step by step the American life application; at the same time, it- as a form of resistance- rejects some American dictated cultural developments related chiefly to individual liberties and democratic principles. Deludingly, it seems that after two phases of modernization programs that lasted for more than a century and that undoubtedly failed, the Chinese recognized that their will to modernize depends on their readiness to accept certain conditions and mostly cultural changes. In addition, it seems that the changes that were taking place in the world affairs and in the neighboring countries after the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union forced Xiaping's administration to reopen the Chinese doors for Western cultural products. This provided also a good reason for Xiaoping's reforms of Communist party's traditional socialism in the manner to keep Chinese sovereignty and import American modernization model. This philosophy makes nowadays the essence of Chinese international affairs.

Contemporary China lives factual modernization with an average economic growth of 10 percent each year. At once, Chinese entry into international market sprouts quickly. Gradually, China saw a volatile combination of political circumstances which in sequence gave birth to various

and complex relations with the West, mainly the United States. Moreover, through time the prosperous China created relatively a balanced geostrategic and political role with the United States and great powers. The question then is what and how would be the Sino-American relations. Professor John Mearsheimer from University of Chicago assumed that “China will continue to rise up the next 30 years much the way it reasons over the past 30 years.” He carried on assuming that “eventually China will turn into a giant Hang Kong;” then he wondered “what will be US-Chinese relations when it gets that big?”<sup>17</sup> Through a structural analysis of this question, we can understand why China cannot rise eternally on its own way, but on the American way, and why it is becoming more and more Americanized.

Symmetrically, the best way to understand the price to pay for American modernity is to measure its impact on the Chinese society. Modernization, which is- as explained previously and unequivocally- an indirect Americanization, has a lasting impact over the Chinese culture and extensively over the Chinese nationalism which “has a powerful and ideological force” on the Chinese policy making process.

## **B. American Culture in China**

For various reasons, cultural groups do not possess the same access to people’s public life. Therefore, certain groups tend indirectly to dominate others through imposing on them their own vision of the world. Indeed, there is a mutual relationship between economic strength of a nation and its ability to

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<sup>17</sup> John Mearsheimer’s quotation is taken from a scientific study presented in Ottawa University’s Center for International Policy Studies. The presentation is a structural theory on the functioning of hegemony in today’s world, and it deals with, as its title indicates, “Why China Cannot Rise Peacefully.”

shape foreign cultures. Notwithstanding its remarkable basic successes, China is still far from the United States. Economically viewed, “Even if China continues to grow at a rapid rate of about 10 percent and the United States at 3 percent, China will still be less than half the economic size of the United States in 2025” (Nye, 275). Accordingly, unbalanced relationship will certainly exist between the two countries along this period, and the clash between the two cultures would obviously be in favor of the stronger US.

Since Xiaoping’s reforms, that were endorsed and maintained during Jiang Zemin’s (1993- 2003) and Hu Jintao’s (2003- 2013) presidential terms, and the entry to the international market, China has known a new age. Economically, official recent statistics published by the Chinese administration show that Beijing is experiencing an epoch full of hope. For instance, in the 1950s when the whole national economy was under the management of the Communist Party, the annual average of economic growth had never exceeded 8 percent or even less. But after the reforms of the 1980s, China’s economy has regularly grown at an average annual rate of 10.2 percent, a rate which even the United States has never exceeded in its prosperous times. And for the year 2006, Chinese economy knew an average rate of 10.7 percent (Clunas).

These Statistics show how the reforms are lucrative for China, regardless of some regions’ claim -mainly rural regions- of an unequal share of this economic prosperity. In this case, globalization has brought into China the first sparks of social development. In addition, it has given birth to another and new mass consuming society, according to Kin Chi Lau, never known in China’s modern history (31).

However, Chinese economic positive change has brought other unexpected and sometimes unwelcomed social changes that are seen as harmful to and denying Chinese civilization and identity “by which China is China” (Xinsheng) over centuries. Trade and importation of cultural products created a gap that is becoming wider between communities and their culture, and thus with people consuming foreign American products while they pour their own products onto the international market, Chinese society started to be affected by an American intended cultural imperialism. Writing about this cultural phenomenon, Domenach argues that China has been weakened by the invasion of foreign goods and models (173). In addition, with a population of more than 1,376,736,500 (Census of 2015), China represents a huge market for American cultural products. To highlight how American culture operates in China, social order and consumption in Chinese society need to be carefully analyzed.

### **1. New Social Order on American Style**

Social order of a given society is a significant factor that contributes to a large extent in differentiating cultures from each other. Social structural cohesion, family system, woman activity and nature of work socialization create multiple life styles on the planet. Meanwhile, these life styles do not enjoy the same prospective to express themselves. The French scholar in international affairs, Hugues Jallon, wrote that due to some historical, geographical, demographic circumstances, cultural groups are not equal in expressing their differences in human societies (189). Certainly, some do it better than others. Besides, some progressive Chinese scholars argue that if china is wrestling underdevelopment, it is due to its old-fashioned social order, and that every modernization in China implies a change at these different levels.

Roughly, the fact of knowing the position of American culture and its worldwide authority makes people feel the superiority of the United States as an entity. In the same way, it gives the feeling that the best social order that permits social development is the American one. For the progressive thinkers who advocate more social reforms, the American society makes the ideal example to modernize China, and every attempt beyond this example is a social breakdown. According to He Qing, the author of *Modern and Post-Modern*, these assumptions have no scientific foundations. He goes further to point out that one reason behind this “inferiority complex” that in turn leads to “dependency complex” is those progressive, Westernizing and Americanizing thoughts which actually and from a postcolonial view have nothing to do with the original meaning of the word ‘progress.’ When pointing out the damages caused by Americanization theory on contemporary Chinese society, he sums up:

The deep feelings of inferiority brought to the Chinese people by progress theory ‘is the greatest disaster of contemporary China. It is more severe than China’s population problem or economic problem. It in fact touches upon the question of whether five thousand years of Chinese culture can continue to exist, and also relates to the survival of the Chinese nation’ (285).

Nowadays, though there is relatively an intense disagreement over this issue, much of Chinese intellectuals share Qing’s view: Chinese society is becoming more and more American-like, and blindly it is shifting from a selective imitation to a ‘wholesale’ acceptance of American culture that infects basically common and urban people who make the majority of Chinese society. This fact makes it clear for some that “not only globalization but also almost all

American cultural products contain an ‘evil intent’ to Americanize China and the world” (Keping 140).

The study of how Americanization alters Chinese social structure denotes also to which extent the two societies- American and Chinese- are different and sometime antagonistic. In this context, it is worthy to clarify that cultures differ from each other not only in the details but also in the pervasiveness, rigor and popularity. In some societies, there is virtually a strict agreement on the kind of proper and righteous behavior; whereas in others, there may be much greater diversity and tolerance of difference in judging the same thing. In this case, Chinese culture is based on uniformity and agreement. In addition, it is basically made of homogenous populations and the dominance of particular beliefs summed up in Confucianism, whereas the United States with its heterogeneous social groups insists rather on cultural liberty and freedom. These instances show how much both social orders are far from being identical, as they clearly appear contradicting each other.

However, the rise of ‘global culture’- or what is called “Transculturating”<sup>18</sup> by Joseph Chan and Eric Ma and ‘complex connectivity’ by John Tomlinson- under the monopoly of Uncle Sam’s style has distorted the traditional order of Chinese society which is being gradually submerged. As a result, a new society is trialing and corresponding to the American one. Although the pace is slow, many aspects of the Chinese values and ethics have been converted, and here are some evidences that demonstrate the convergence.

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<sup>18</sup> The use of ‘transculturating’ in Joseph Chan and Eric Ma’s meaning aims at defining culture in the globalization process in which culture becomes ‘transnational and translocal.’ Culture thus is a product of an interaction that takes place virtually and in which all societies participate. Yet, the concept can be used in the context of Americanization, as the U.S controls most of the means that produce interaction (media technology).

For a better understanding of the new Chinese social order resulting in cultural imperialism, the coming parts deal with four central levels that determine the functioning and describe the essential features of every society: 1. Social structural cohesion. 2. Family system. 3. Women activity. 4. Nature of work socialization.

In their daily life, the Chinese have a much more group oriented community rather than individual centered. When an activity is planned, it is more common to invite a large group instead of one or two individuals, and the importance of the activity resides in the common interest of the group. This kind of relation in a society is called by sociologists ‘*collectivism*’ as opposed to ‘*individualism*.’ The former explains why China in its history has all the time adopted socialism, because collectivism is one important principle of socialism, and this makes it compatible to maintain social cohesion in China. In the collectivistic Chinese culture, people primarily view themselves as members of the group rather than autonomous individuals. Anthropologists argue that this social relation is very important for the survival of the group for it creates harmony and solidarity. They explain that in many cases it is a result of some natural and geographical conditions.

In addition, the economic nature of traditional China which is rural and agricultural imposes such collectivism. Before the catch up industrial revolution of the post Civil War, more than 80 percent of Chinese population lives in rural areas, and their lives depend on agrarian activities. As a result, in the absence of engines and machinery, they developed a communitarian organization in which ownership and success relies on the contribution of the whole community. For this reason, activities as well as ownership of property in China are likely to

happen within a group, and decisions are based on consultation of the group. In short, the Chinese are guided by the primacy of common interest instead of personal interest.

Moreover, in the Chinese philosophy and Confucian tradition, it is inhuman and out of ethics to stand alone against the group, because the latter is more important and epitomizes all kinds of socializations. Individual experiences and ideas are not underestimated or ignored, yet they should receive the consent of the group to go into practice. Furthermore, in Confucianism individual experiences cannot survive and endure if they do not prioritize the other or others, for more a person is selfless more he is admired by and integrated in the group. Liang Shuming, one outstanding supporter of 'New Confucianism,' advocated that in Confucianism "the teaching of filial and fraternal piety, ritual, and courtesy in all respects embrace emotion and are selfless" (Lai 25). In other words, selflessness is the key characteristic for an ideal human being, as it makes him "consider the other more important than the self" (21). In this way and as far as Chinese social order is concerned, collectivism represents the matrix of Chinese economic activity and social coherence.

Since the last decade of the twentieth century, cultural imperialism has dramatically transformed the social structure of China. Collectivism has been replaced by individualism which makes in the other side an important characteristic of American society. Kin Chi Lau, a Chinese Cultural Studies Professor and a member of Asian Regional Exchange for New Alternatives (AREN), writes that in its blind search for modernity, traditional Chinese culture which cements the communities- based on exchange, reciprocity, tolerance...and collectivism...- is thrown into forgetfulness (31). Symmetrically, individualism



which is associated with American liberty and free market replaces the old order. This change at the level of a fundamental principle stimulates the assumption that in the near future Chinese socialist tendency may vanish with the vanishing of collectivism to leave free access to liberalism.

This is not all. According to the American activist and distinguished fellow of The International Forum on Globalization, Jerry Mander, the cultural change in China has deep impacts on the Chinese psychology. The virtual American world has made of them dreamers as opposed to hard workers they were. He argues that even in the remote villages where roads are not yet built, people dream of cars and big houses. Such psychological phenomenon indirectly contributes in intensifying corruption and gang dealers. Mander writes when reporting a speech of a Chinese protesting against this scourge:

Nos traditions sont en grande partie inspirées par la nécessité de survivre. Seuls la coopération et le partage au sein de la communauté, l'absence du matérialisme, nous permettent de vivre ici. Mais la télévision véhicule toujours des valeurs opposées à celles-là (108).

Without doubt, this cultural influence can be seen positively by some of the Chinese, but most of them feel nostalgia to the authentic Confucian values. However, one thing that is made clear by scholars in humanities is that whenever a social group gives up an aspect of its culture, it is not easy to go back and restore it, and so it is the case with the integrity and coherence in the Chinese society.

American cultural imperialism has also affected Chinese *family*. If infiltration of American culture distorts traditional social collectivism, it is

chiefly because of its success in bringing the notion of individualism to the Chinese family. Hypothetically, if collectivism is very important in Confucian society, it becomes more important and fundamental within the smallest unit of that society. Chinese quest for modernity has brought several social changes which annihilates indirectly but severely the relationships between members of the same family. In fact, the impact varies from big towns where foreign cultural products are abundant to remote villages where globalization is relatively inaccessible. The change in turn imposed many reforms at the level of the family law which was in the past inspired by traditional China.

Nowadays, Chinese family law is becoming more and more flexible and inspired by Western judicial culture. Professor Michael Palmer makes it clear “the legal framework for family life has been reformed in order... to deal with problems encountered with the regulatory system built up in the 1980s and early 1990s,” coinciding with the third reform wave, “and to respond to changes taking place in Chinese society” (121). In addition to constitutional and official changes, the effect on Chinese family resulted also in a split in kinship: mainly between Young and old generations. The split in its part resulted in the increase of eagerness for wealth and materialism. The youth try to mimic the American ‘self-made man.’ As a consequence, men and women at their early age want to become autonomous. Simultaneously, the role of the elders in teaching the young generation Chinese values and principles is increasingly reduced because of the growth of personal interest and ‘self-relying’ philosophy. In the same context, Helena Norberg-Hodge<sup>19</sup> said “I saw divisions operating in different ways. A

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<sup>19</sup> Helena Norberg-Hodge is a Swedish philosopher and a knowledgeable researcher specialized in Asian societies. Her studies cover all South-eastern countries of Asia including China. Her quotation which I literally translated into English is originally written in French.

ditch is hollowed out between the young and the old people, the men and the women, the rich and the poor” (79). Literally, Norberg-Hodge’s words evoke generation as well as gender issues and the gap stimulated by the growth of materialism in China. In short and from a commonsense, all aspects of Chinese family around big cities are growing Americanized.

Moreover, nature of *work socialization* shifts from self-satisfying rural and agricultural activity to industrialized handwork. During the 1960s and 1970s, almost all Chinese economy was based on agriculture, yet since the reform period there has been a fast industrialization. The paradox is that Instead of encouraging agriculture which is the source of raw material for food industry. The latter has provoked a misbalance between the two sectors because, according to some economist, the state in its search for modernity favored industry on the extent of agriculture. As a result, a new proletariat emerged with new expectations and in which psychologically agriculture represents stagnation and poverty. In search for jobs, Young people prefer to leave the countryside to settle in overcrowded cities, for in such atmosphere they are more destined to work in factories rather than in plantations of tea and cotton.

Besides, new work socialization has appeared stealing the workforce of the other. This socialization, which is seen more secured in term of wages and conditions of work, occurs in factories; whereas, it was some years ago taking place in agricultural areas. In fact, this economic metamorphosis has proved to be efficient, for it promoted industrial revolution in China. Yet, it ended in many serious economic and social anomalies such as rural exodus and unemployment. Disparity of work opportunities and wages between urban and rural regions also raises many questions about social equality in communist China. Considerably

rural populations do not see a significant improvement in their social standard, and as Anson Chan puts it “in recent years the income disparity between those in the urban areas and those in the countryside are widening.” This shift from rural to urban in work socialization is one significant result of globalization and of course Americanization. Today, new economic intentions to deal with this issue sprout in the communist administration, and one of their greatest economic stakes is to keep balance between the two sectors to avoid all kinds of economic hysteria and at the same time to restore the Chinese tradition of agricultural wealth.

Furthermore, the status of the *American woman*, which had changed radically during the 1920s and which is continuing at present to take new shapes in different feminist movements, has given the Chinese woman a new dimension to their social role in their country. In the process of Americanization, seen by Barbara Bush, the role of women has changed considerably these last years because of copying the West and because of the free-market necessities. Bush states that the United States “has advocated Westernization [in China] through the emancipation of women” (104). In fact, the American instigation in women sphere appears to function very well. Notwithstanding the absence of outstanding leading feminist movements in both political and literary life in China, Chinese woman is becoming continuously American-like either in her family duties or in socio-economic participation.

In the Confucian traditional philosophy, women occupy a relatively subordinate position to men. Besides, Confucian human relations are exclusively cultivated and developed within a male-centered society but in which woman is regarded as a source of stability and productivity. This is the dominant way of

approaching the Asian women and the Chinese ones in particular. Correlatively, this shows clearly why they are chosen to be in productive areas and they make one overwhelming workforce in the world. This female workforce was mainly oriented to agriculture. But by becoming conscious of altering chances on today's job market, Chinese women are similarly encountering new perceptions on their role in the society. "Globalization and economic development of China present," notices Kira O'Sullivan, "increased opportunities [for women] along with increased competition." In this way, females' status changes and in the quest for modernity their social function is being polarized with men's function. Without doubt, the change that occurs in the status of women due to American cultural influence has affected the Chinese social order which is shifting from a long tradition of male-centered to a polarized order.

Actually, the four social levels mentioned previously are in direct connection and affect each other. Thus, every change at one level will cause other changes on the other levels, and any alteration brought about by American cultural imperialism is to affect the whole Chinese social order. The change of course is not spontaneous as many people think, yet under the influence of the mobilized media technology and modernization, American life style has infiltrated China. Nowadays according to Armand Mattelart, if American style is the most preferred style for societies (China in its modernization process) it is chiefly because it comes from the United States. He argues that this preference is the result of a new cultural order imposition (331). People tend to believe that they have chosen their fashionable culture, but in modern age their choice may likely be a result of a well planned strategy which aims at imposing American

ideas on non-American societies. As a consequence of a foreign American culture infiltration, a new social order is weaving in China.

## **2. Consumerism and Coca-colonization of China**

Postcolonial scholars and realist critics define Americanization as well as globalization as a homogenization of world culture on the Western and American model. This school of thought views in world contemporary changes, which started in the second half of the 20th century, a move towards a more standardized and unique universal culture because of one side flows of goods, technological revolution, and international exchanges of cultural products. Intellectuals use several concepts to underline this perspective in which ‘global culture,’ ‘McDonalozation,’ ‘mass culture,’ ‘Globalization’ and ‘Coca-colonization’ are some of them.

According to Berger, Beck and Jaja, globalization which is a “replication of the American... cultural tradition is considered a destructive force, a recipe for cultural disaster and an assault on local cultures” (Hassi 9). In China, it is not yet time to speak of cultural disaster, but Chinese intellectuals and officials continue to fear what will be the future impacts of the weaving culture. What is obvious to them is that two completely different cultures- one of the West the other of the East- can never coexist in the same society. In other words, any incursion of American culture into China means and requires an exclusion of local cultural traditions and practices. Of course, this scenario may certainly sustain Chinese national economy; however, it clearly threatens Chinese national identity.

This part is thus related to the role played by American cultural products’ exports in the process of cultural homogenization and in the birth of a new social consumption in China. Cultural products include all items, material or virtual, that utter a given society’s culture and that function through several means and carriers. Accessible television programs, wide spread

movies, famous public places and managerial corporations, for instance, are seen to disseminate cultural products of American industrial superpower which has become the icon of Western hegemony. Knowing that China is a big country of almost 1.5 billion censuses, it makes the ideal international market which has attracted the Americans since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Besides, the flow of American cultural products and their consumption in China is of a strategic interest for the United States in order to keep a big hand on Eastern Asia and to push the Taiwanese liberal democracy westward to the mainland.

Because television, internet and other means of communication represent important areas of entertainment in people's daily life, Americans were the first and are today ahead in associating these means with industry and marketing. Noam Chomsky, political theorist, calls this modern virtual market: industry of advertisement (16) which developed first of all in the United States in the 1950s. Americans feed their TV programs with advertisements presenting their cultural products of food, clothes, architecture, cinema, and mainly ideas and ways. Since the 1990s, all these products have found a free way to China, and they have become "objects' sought after and imitated by many Chinese" (Keping 136). Haiqing Yu depicts the relation between Media and China consumption as follows:

Cultural transformation in contemporary China is endowed with innovation and creativity by various social and cultural agents. These agents navigate the endless points of cultural multiplexes through representation, production, consumption and circulation. As such, interplay rather than simplified dichotomies is brought to the centre of media and cultural transformation in China (16).

In fact, advertisements play a significant role in business strategy and market research which aim is to convince and persuade audiences who are also consumers. In this context, expertise of psychologists and behaviorists is vital to make of mass media an imperial tool, as they know when and how pictures, words and slogans would have impacts on the

viewers as well as listeners. CNN broadcasting and Fox Cinema are famous advertisers of half a century of experience in broadcasting in all domains. In Chinese cultural context, media technology stands for the Trojan horse; it permits American cultural products, designed for consumption abroad, to enter the world market not only from airports and seaports but also from TV screens. For instance, thanks to it, many trademarks such as Coca Cola can be viewed by a huge number of people all over the world several times a day.

Nowadays, many regions in the world, including the rising China, are shaken by the American cultural invasion because of people's preferential of Western products consumption. Because of American advanced seen modernity, mass communication and other historical advantages, as predicted by Frantz Fanon and Aimé Césaire, a feeling of inferiority and dependence is incessantly growing. Many scholars regard this attitude as a result of psychological effects of cultural propaganda. The Chinese young generation, for example, idealize American world and the United States is "perceived as a paradise, making the American Dream [its] greatest inspiration" in its pursuit of wealth and happiness. Accordingly, the Chinese society which has one of world economical consumption around the 1980s is today growing overwhelmingly a consuming society on the American style in its way of clothing, the clothes fashion, TV programs and series, and food culture. As a consequence, words such as hamburger, McDonald and hip hop which translate deeply American consumerism are widely used in contemporary China.

James L. Watson, editor of and contributor to *Golden Arches East: McDonald's in East Asia* (1998), studied fast food consumption in Beijing and many other Asian big cities. Watson's book is devoted to a comparative study of food system in China and the functioning of transnational global culture, but it shows also an increasing consumption of "McDonald culture" in Eastern Asia. Nowadays, American McDonald which is well known for selling fast food of beef-burgers, ham-burgers and other take out sandwiches has opened many



spaces in China under the famous global campaign: 'I'm Loving It.' In the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> c alone, more than 70 McDonald's outlets opened in Beijing. One Chinese portrays sorrowfully food McDonalization in China and writes:

McDonald's is perceived as a symbol of American culinary culture, which the Chinese used to sneer at. Today American food has been launched in China and represents a challenge to classic Chinese food because it has captured Chinese children's taste buds before their parents have been able to inculcate the enjoyment of delicious traditional foods. (Keping 135)

In fact regardless of China, McDonald fast food serves more than 69 millions of customers every day according to 2013's estimations. Outside the Western world, consumption of this cultural product is chiefly concentrated in the youth, while the elders continue to popularize traditional dishes.

In the same way, Coca Cola which was first marketed in China in the 1920s has won celebrity in China where the sale rate reaches the first ranks in the last decade. Some intellectuals and social activists tend to call it 'Coca-Colonization' for the ideological consequences it may have and for its special hegemonic implications in multinational corporations. Bush advocates that "'Coca Cola' imperialism and the 'McDonaldisation' of the world have changed tastes and economic organization of labour" (194), and then she identifies their role in reshaping economic and trade relationships at international level as well as the relations between workers and working place at local level. In the same way, George Ritzer defines McDonalization as "efficiency, rationalization..., no time society. It promotes predictability and uniformity, emphasizes quantity, not quality, and uses no-human

technology to control people.”<sup>20</sup> John Tomlinson calls this emerging American culture “international food culture” (273).

These statements highlight the extent to which American food culture is related to a whole social system, as it is related to a chain in which family daily life, working conditions and urbanization are intermeshed to impose McDonald culture and the latter in turn suites them. In short, the change that occurs in the Chinese social order, as it is argued previously, is supposed to lead directly and simultaneously to change in the social consumption. Thus it is arguable that McDonaldization and Coca-Colonization is converging Chinese consumption to a common American food culture, assisted by mass communication and standardization.

Cinema and music are to other areas of consumption in modern world, and American influence in this area is noticeable and worthy to attract Chinese officials’ attention. Despite the thriving Chinese film industry, people in China prefer movies from Hollywood. Today, China is the first consumer of American cinema in Asia. In the late 1990s, Robert W. McChesney point out that even the Chinese president Jiang Zemin in a speech in front of China’s National Peoples’ Congress praised the U.S blockbuster film *Titanic* (115). If American cinema is already at the summit of Chinese society, its way to common people is certain. Even American series become famous among Chinese who later imitated American small families of four or three members.

Hong Kong is the Chinese capital of arts. It displays yearly an international music festival and organizes a variety of cultural and artistic manifestations. It owns several outstanding music corporations such as Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra and Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra which even the Chinese themselves consider as lucrative and developing companies. However, wave after wave of different American music genres represent a

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<sup>20</sup> George Ritzer’s definition is reformulated and cited in Bush’s *Imperialism and Postcolonialism* (2006).

cultural steamroller running over local authentic music. As a result, blues, rock-and-roll, rap and country have become entertaining styles and a source of inspiration for Chinese singers.

Many surveys conducted in mainland China (regardless of Taiwan and Hong Kong) reveal that Chinese society is very well connected to the American audiovisual industry, and stars in this field are also famous and imitated by the Chinese youth. Besides American public figures reach ordinary people in China and names such as Michael Jackson, George W. Bush, Oprah Gail Winfrey, Arnold Schwarzenegger and Hillary Clinton take part in people's daily speeches and dialogues. In his description of the evolution of Chinese consumerism, Brian Qi says:

Since the 1980s, more and more commodities, movies, videos, country music, rock-and-roll, Donald Duck, Mickey Mouse and American brand toys, values and culture have hit the Chinese market. Even purely entertainment products with little ideological bent demonstrate and advocate something of the Western life style that exerts enormous impact on people, especially young people in developing countries.

The impact of cultural imperialism has always been greater on the younger generation, because it is primarily the intended and the targeted social category. Moreover, it is psychologically fragile and for the most cases innocent to be suspicious of the American intentions. As it functions at the level of the Children, it is then clear that cultural imperialism impacts are not immediate, but long-term and lasting ones.

In the context of Children targeting, the Walt Disney Company which has so far produced many famous cartoons among children is an entertainment and Media Corporation set up in Burbank, California. Since its creation in then the 1980s, this company has affiliated multiple branches and built parks visited by huge numbers of people from all over the world, every day. Today, even the Chinese can spend their week-end as Americans do at Disney

Park. Indeed, the opening of Disneyland in China in 2005 is a great success for the American transnational industry. Children's cable channels, the Cartoon Network, and the Disney Channel now exist in China and "claim close to 80 percent of the countries young viewing audience" (Rauschenberger 22). Furthermore, it is imperative to point at children and youth in general as the Chief actors in cultural products' consumption what makes another reason of their vulnerability in front of cultural imperialism. In the same way as the Chinese Brian Qi, the American food scholar and researcher in impact-study of consumption system on societies Eric Schlosser hints at children impassion in consuming American:

McDonald's soon loomed large in the imagination of toddlers, the intended audience for the ads. The restaurant chain evoked a series of pleasing images in a youngster's mind: bright colors, a playground, a toy, a clown, a drink with straw, little pieces of food wrapped up like a present. Kroc had succeeded, like his old Red Cross comrade [Walt Disney], at selling something intangible to children, along with their fries. (42)

As the time passes and the 21<sup>st</sup> century progresses, the debate on cultural imperialism becomes more and more sophisticated as it functions indirectly and smoothly through multinational corporations like McDonald, Coca Cola, Hollywood, Disneyland corporations and many other companies which shape and shift the Chinese consumption tradition from local to global. Intellectuals agreed on the fact that as far as China continues to make profit of globalization which wide-opened the Chinese market to such companies, it remains difficult for the society to stop the American influence and reduce its impact on both social order and consumption.

### 3. Linguistic Americanization of China: English vs. Mandarin

Observed by many just as a means of communication, language has- not only in its communicative effect- a much bigger role in the making of great civilizations. Many anthropologists sum up the history of human beings in the evolution of its language system for it is one and the unique testifier on ancient historical events. Language represents eventually the platform on which scientific and historical verification is possible. The advance of pre-historical Babylonia and Egyptian Pharaonic civilization for instance is related mainly to the elaboration of Cuneiform and Papyrus which make two of the greatest inventions of human civilization at that time. In the same way, Greek and Latin played a significant role in the rise of Rome and Greece to form undefeatable empires in the last centuries before Christ and early centuries Anno Domini. Symmetrically, they endorsed the spread of the Christian religion in its early age in Europe and North Africa. Unequivocally, Arabic in which the wholly Koran is transmitted and standardized contributed to the wide spread of the Muslim culture to a large portion of the globe as well as in the establishment of '*Al Umma.*' Around the Industrial Revolution, English, Spanish and French became the ultimate references to distinguish the 'civilized' from the 'uncivilized' that make a key postcolonial field of investigation in the analysis of the colonial discourse.

Accordingly, language functions as the parameter and the pivot around which human cultural experience is weaved and stored, and it represents the bank in which cultural heritage is safely preserved. In the words of linguistics Professor Haidi Harley, "the history of the meaning of nearly every word is a little cultural story" (102). Besides, cultural imperialism does not function only at the level of social order and consumption, but it has a lion share at linguistic level where it implies the wide spread of English in almost all the human societies. More importantly, linguistic imperialism surges in universities and schools which symbolize the intellectual elite of the society and in which English is taught as the first foreign language

in many countries. In fact, it becomes the *Lingua Franca* in business and technological interactions and each time people find difficulties to communicate.

The linguist Robert Phillipson devoted an entire book, entitled *Linguistic Imperialism* providing some examples of linguistic hegemonies, to illustrate the role of the language in promoting cultural homogenization regionally -as it was the case with French- or globally -as it is the case with today's English. He explains that the overuse of one language may plausibly be a form of cultural domination. Besides, he reveals different educational programs elaborated by the United States and Great Britain to establish a new world intellectualism based on English-knowing and English-teaching. In one of his recent contributions to *The Guardian*, he notices that the "US and UK policy to promote English language teaching expertise around the world is undermining multilingualism and education opportunities."<sup>21</sup>

A number of studies in social sciences unveil that language and culture, though standing for two different things, form one entity because they make the premise on which national identities of social groups rest. Claude Levis Strauss for instance identified how far it is crucial to learn about the language to know about the culture, and at the same time how far it is fundamental to know the culture of a given society to understand appropriately its language. In all his studies that he defended along his life and that manifest scientific reliability, he foregrounds that it is impossible to succeed in studying a society without knowing about its language, as it is impossible to decipher the structure of sentences and the meaning of words when lacking knowledge about the culture in which the sentences and the words are produced. "Who says language says culture," as he puts it, and the relation between them is complementary so that it is impossible to mention one without the other. Similarly,

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<sup>21</sup> Phillipson, Robert. "Linguistic Imperialism Alive and Kicking." *The Guardian*. March 14, 2012. <http://www.theguardian.com/education/2012/mar/13/linguistic-imperialism-english-language-teaching>

the famous linguist Edward Sapir identifies that “vocabulary is a very sensitive index of the culture of a people” (27); what makes language in anthropological studies a way and an access to culture. Consequently, the study of American cultural imperialism in China requires a study of linguistic imperialism.

Most recent statistics by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) release that Chinese is the most spoken language and the first in this classification. However, it is mainly due to China’s overpopulation. Demographic explosion put China at the top of the pyramid of national languages in the world. Despite that, Chinese is only spoken in China, and it is not used as a medium outside Chinese frontiers. On the contrary, English, though not as important as Chinese at national languages’ level, is a worldwide used language which even the Chinese master in their current daily affairs. For different reasons, “English language... is becoming the lingua franca of business, is increasingly spoken in business circles all over Europe and large parts of Asia [including China]” ( Thomas 12). Currently, this kind of American imperialism is not yet eminent in China, but its initial impacts testify about its social move. Yu Keping stresses:

Learning English is a major task for students at universities, colleges, high schools, middle schools and even some primary schools. An English test is required not only for the equivalent of SSATs<sup>22</sup>, for job promotions and even to be hired for some jobs. English terms and names used to be transcribed with Chinese characters; today the trend has been reversed (135).

‘English language hegemony’ is regarded as a logical consequence of cultural imperialism in China which is moving forward in the program of modernization. Here are two strategic reasons that paved the way to English incursion and its wide spread on the detriment

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<sup>22</sup> SSAT stands for Secondary School Admission Test administered in the Anglo-Saxon countries to provide standardized measures to evaluate students’ admission.

of the Chinese language. The first is related to Chinese uselessness in foreign affairs. In effect, the nature of international political and economic relations necessitates or even forces people to use English. After the entry of China to the global market, globalization has spontaneously imposed a shift to a global language which is specifically American English, and hence Mandarin has become useless outside China. Besides, as far as Mandarin is not well received in communication purposes, the most appropriate language to use when dealing with neighboring as well as other countries is English.

The second reason is related to internal open door market. Since 2001, China has become a member in the World Trade Organization. This measure imposes on China to reduce government control over economy, as it imposes also a decrease in the subsidies and the restrictions on the foreign investors. These steps are important at national level because the Chinese administration has to deal and encourage foreign investors for the sake of economic development and technological exchange. In fact, nowadays in this kind of relations English is indispensable to save time in communication.

Today, however, Mandarin comparing to other languages over the world is not excessively threatened thanks to the power it has at national scale and because of the freshness of Sino-American relations. The threat is chiefly on the Chinese minor languages. At this level, it is essential to mention that though approximately 95 percent of the people in China speak Mandarin which is the language of the Hans (the dominant ethnic group), Chinese communities speak multiple of other languages such as Tibetan, Mongolian, Lolo, Miao and Tai. These minor languages which obviously play a significant role in the Chinese cultural heritage and diversity are those much more threatened by American cultural imperialism. This makes it understandable why the UNESCO warns against the extinction of a great number of languages namely ‘the threatened heritage.’



The Spanish scientist, diplomat and former Director-General of UNESCO, Frederico Mayor claims that the death of languages is accelerated by several factors related to globalization (338). The generalized impacts of global telecommunication, the intensified American propaganda and the emergence of new styles of consumption have incessantly contributed to the disappearance of many languages. Statistics reveals that the proportion of languages in danger is very high in Eastern Asia (ibid). In this context, intellectuals emphasize chiefly the reason of cultural propaganda, for they do not underestimate its concessions in shaping peoples' mind and in endorsing one-way flow of information. The latter have consequently caused a mass consumption of U.S made or approved products which in turn have led to a globalized American culture where English becomes the medium between consumers embodied in Chinese market and the advertisers embodied in the American ways. In short, Chinese social reality and the nature of Chinese relations with the external world confirm the need for American language as a tool to integrate the world of mass communication and mass culture where China is involved since three decades.

Side by side with Great Britain, American policies over the world aim at strengthening English language rather than sustaining multilingualism. Sustained by universities, private schools and organized trainings in the U.S, American administration and embassies in particular set multiple programs to wide spread American English and to make it the first global linguistic hegemony. For instance, the program of American Corners, such as that of Macau University in China, and educational aids which are destined only to the teaching of English without doubt encourage countries to abandon their own linguistic heritage. "The research evidence on mother tongue-based multilingual education is unambiguous." Phillipson makes it clear, "English-medium education in postcolonial contexts that neglect mother tongues and local cultural values is clearly inappropriate and ineffective." According to Phillipson, English Language Teaching (ELT) that he analyzes deeply in his

*Linguistic Imperialism* is committed to establish English monolingual world through teaching policies and plans which are sometimes exposed as scientific knowledge.

As they deal directly with schools and universities, these kinds of policies are destined more importantly to influence the intellectual class of the society. In this context, Bush points out that “U.S. universities and textbook publishers, backed up by U.S. aid programmes, have penetrated educational systems and played a crucial role in shaping elites” (195). In fact, the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of these programs in the Chinese society depends on the consciousness and the role played by the intellectual class. In China, few intellectuals acting on the mainland, fortunately for Confucian culture, adhere to these cultural programs, yet the latter receive basically the intention of common people who continue to see every aspect of American society as a step towards modernization. Consequently, under informal cultural imperialism, learning and teaching English language remains a key way to maintain American hegemony in China.

In modern China, it is hesitantly noticed that the last generation prefers to study English rather than Chinese which is more and more spoken just as mother tongue and not privileged in crucial domains. Symbolizing modernity and science, English in contrast is favored by people, and though it is taught as a foreign language, it takes more space in some fields in China. The U.S business executive, Michael Armstrong said once; “today there are more Chinese studying English than there are Americans.” Likewise, Jerry Mander discerns in a general context that young people lose interest in their mother tongue and want to learn only English (108). Sooner or later, this phenomenon will condemn national languages and cultural values to disappear or at least will diminish their role in social life.

As highlighted earlier, postcolonial scholars synthesize that every language represents a cultural storing bank and a mirror of national identity, as it expresses an ideology

and one conceptualized life style of the society speaking the same language. Hence, taking on another language is taking on another ideology. This view is shared among many anthropologists, linguists and thinkers of different historical stages and of different social backgrounds. American English in turn carries and symbolizes the values and the principles of American society which makes up a liberal democracy. “Every language carries the weight of a civilization.” Defends Alastair Pennycook; “the decision to use a certain language means to support the existence of a given cultural matrix” (22). It is then explicable why the colonial administrations of the 1950s and the 1960s struggled to keep their languages used in the former colonies. In the same way, France for instance maintained financial aids through CCFs (Centres Culturels Français) and other exchange programmes to keep French in schools, universities and administration of the newly independent Algeria because it is a direct testimony of imposing French civilization on other non-French societies.

Accordingly, if the Chinese enjoy openly English language, it means that they enjoy American culture as a whole including values of democracy and liberalism which at present fuel Chinese intellectual debate at the middle of modernization atmosphere. This linguistic situation of course can stimulate another larger issue which is no more linguistic but cultural, and reasonably if Chinese enjoy English language, over time they are likely to abandon their mother tongue, something that is going to provoke in the near future cultural uprooting in China.

To synthesize, after a brief historical insight on Sino-American relations in general, which eventually reveals how much vulnerable China was in front of Western Empires, the Chinese case demonstrates that culture is the matrix and the catalyst of American modern strategy in dominating the globe and in reducing non-American (sometimes Western) societies to American-culture consuming societies. Without doubt, this fact has a far lasting impact on China because it touches crucial social aspects of this country and puts in danger its

national identity. Spontaneously and unconsciously for most of the time, 'the open door' policy of the 1980s and the adoption of the American style have to a large scale distorted Chinese traditional social structure which ensures simultaneously popular integrity and national stability. In a country of almost a billion and half of inhabitants, integrity and stability are surely more important than other institutional privileges. In addition, the incursion of American culture into the Confucian world has given birth to a new social consumption growing analogous with Macdonald model. Actually, in recent years observations demonstrate how Chinese people experience a metamorphosis from an economical and non-wasting people to the opposite. The origin of this shift is in a shift from the Confucian tradition, which sanctifies natural resources and encourages reasonable use of them, to the American consuming tradition. In fact, such change in the attitudes has made of China a beneficent market for American multinational corporations and cultural products.

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## Chapter Four: Chinese Cultural Resistance and Performance

To the states or any one of them, or any city of the States, *Resist much, Obey Little*,  
Once unquestioning obedience, once fully enslaved,  
Once fully enslaved, no nation, state, city, of this earth, ever afterward resumes its  
liberty. (Walt Whitman 'To the States')

By three methods we may learn wisdom: first by reflection, which is noblest;  
second, by imitation, which easiest; and third by experience, which bitterest (sic).  
(Confucius)

### Introduction

The steamroller of the American cultural imperialism in the world does not pass without stimulating reactions of different kinds, and the eve of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, which makes the nutshell of globalization, has already shown the socio-economic limits of American culture in the other corners of the world. When studying the aftermaths of American imperialism in the scrutiny of culture, one may guess how much genius and smart is Uncle Sam's soft power, as it functions both economic and political interests of the United States as far as it avoids direct or military interventions which harasses continuously and deeply the White House's 'force of example' on the detriment of the White House's 'example of force'.

Besides, it is conceivable that scholars on the ground of cultural hegemony disagree over the latter's consequences on the societies and on the world geostrategic relations. Meanwhile, we may guess through the previous analysis and discussions available in the previous chapters that overall the phenomenon has provoked a confusing situation which in turn divided the views into agreement and disagreement, acceptance and rejection, and sympathy and mistrust. As defended early, the outcome of the hullabaloo in the diverse views denotes that cultural hegemony brought forth negative results and endorses economic and social misbalance which, at the end, subordinates other countries' lifestyles to work the interests of the United States. In other words, the views defending the wide infiltration of the American life style into other countries aim at obnubilating Washington's real and hegemonic intentions.

In the same context, China is so far the only country which went forth in the debate of cultural hegemony, and since the 1990s, it has experienced tremendous changes at multiple structural levels. Its process of modernization has opened the door to the American culture which in turn annihilated partially the Chinese social identity. For Beijing, the Challenge is currently crystallized, because cultural imperialism has got domino effect on all aspects of life of the Chinese. In addition, because China -in its Great Lead Forward- cannot go back, the only thing to do is to resist and protect its independence through a sufficient protection of its cultural heritage.

Therefore, this chapter studies Chinese cultural resistance in the light of globalization and modernization; it shows to which extent China is committed to face the American cultural imperialism in favor of its own ways and competences. Yet, this time the struggle is noticeably scientific and intellectual rather than a hand to hand fight. In fact, at this stage, one may see clearly how the Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese social activism converted resistance against a foreign superpower to an internal performance. Of course, studying the

Chinese strategy of resistance from a distant angle would certainly open new perspectives for historians and researchers in general. An American historian has aptly summarized:

In the domain of history a shift in the angle of observation will often bring into view new and important vistas and will create such new impression of old scenes as to alter our ideas of the whole landscape (Andrews 43)

Chinese strategy does not consider resistance which inspires opposition and battlefield struggle; rather it inspires innovation in the process of modernization. Actually, this important element makes one irreplaceable foundation and the bedrock for postcolonial thinkers who believe strongly that every modern resistance should fetch its practices from scientific promotion and economic flourishing which in themselves rely on the transgression of the authentic and local cultures. It transcends one characteristic of the postcolonial society in its rejection of the traditional defensive armed wars to the detriment of the offensive non-violent philosophy.

To a large scale, the Chinese administration is ahead in this fighting-back strategy, and its major feat in cultural, economic and political competences demonstrates Chinese devotion to turn the enemy's weapon against him. To state it differently, Beijing as a cultural entity, contrary to many other cultural entities all over the world, knows very well that the best way to buffer the American hegemony is not only by imitation but also by intellectual and scientific performance. Hence, this chapter goes through three types of these performances which illustrate how Chinese 'March winds and April showers bring forth May flowers' and why China today, regardless of the number of obstacles it may encounter in its path and the historical weaknesses which continue to fragment the Chinese house, is vibrating and making profits from globalization.

Implicitly, the three types of performances developed in this chapter permit us to know why china is today the only country -among the so called developing countries- which makes economic profits of the globalization, and why it surprises the world by its economic growth rate which, according to some scientific figures and numbers, has never been achieved by any other superpower in recorded history.

### **A. Cultural Performance**

Though it stands for the abstract components of a society, culture is irreversibly the factor which makes human groups different from each other. It is by referring to the underlying values, social structures and languages that people commonly categorize and classify human communities. On this basis, cultural disparity does not certainly stand for civilizational clash as defended by the American State Adviser Samuel Huntington. It does not denote in any way imposition; on the contrary, it denotes - either from a philosophical or a religious reasoning- coexistence and exchange of experiences among human beings of different cultural entities. In a strict sense, culture sums up the existing local, independent and distinct experience of a given society which shares the same geographical boundaries. In short, it is the common heritage on which the identity of a society is premised and fixed throughout ages. As suggested by John Tomlinson, the latter is “a sort of collective treasure of local communities” (269). Eventually, culture and identity last together to end in one concept: cultural identity.

The two concepts are at the centre of Chinese interests in the modernization process. The tight link between them leads everybody to a single rational thinking: every assault against the Chinese way is an assault against the Chinese identity which makes the ultimate source of social integrity and ensures continuity of socialization on the mainland. Without doubt, cultural hegemony side by side with the nonattendance of resistance and performance

has always been the first factor behind the disappearance of some cultural entities in the Southeast Asia and elsewhere in the world. The reports of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) warn against this cultural genocidal threat which roams with the globalization and the so called modernization on the American style.

As a consequence and as explained in the third chapter, the modernization move in the region has brought new social configurations and put the orthodox intellectual class as well as the Communist Party in a the dilemma of how to go ahead in the social changes without losing the Chineseness of China, i.e. the independence of the people's republic. In a scientific work on cultural intelligence, David C. Thomas and Kerr Inkson observe that- as it is the case with China, Cultural imperialism does not all the times weaken its subjects; rather, it mobilizes them since "most societies nowadays go out of their way to ensure that cultures under threat are protected from submergence by majority cultures" (28). In fact, the fear of Beijing is that one day China will look just like any other American department and the Chinese, from Fukuyama's Last Man theory, will think, speak and behave in the same way Americans do. Obviously, this has nothing spontaneous, but according to the international political scene there is a great imperial strategy which aims at neutralizing the world culturally. Accordingly, the entry of China in the competition with the great powers will seriously continue, and its cultural relations with the United States will surely determine the fate of the international relations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Chinese administration recognizes the intentions of Washington's war, yet this time, the war is not similar to the other wars fought in Vietnam, Afghanistan and Iraq. This one is an "undeclared war" (Dufour) relying on cultural means. On the way, China has proceeded in its own way to the valorization of the old Chinese Confucian heritage which shapes deeply the Chinese society, as it has engaged in the revitalization of its cultural identity via media technology and world cultural exhibitions. Hence, Confucian revival and cultural exhibitions

are the two significant measures to maintain balance between social modernization and total independence of China.

## 1. Confucian Revival

Confucianism represents the ultimate source of values and the mirror of conformism in China. No doubt, the concept is not as simple as we utter it, but it summaries one unity of conception of life in many Asian countries. John Berthrong wrote in his contribution to the study of the Chinese philosophy: “I am aware how complicated and conflicted the history of Confucian discourse and practice has been in China” (132). There has been a continuing debate over whether Confucianism is a religion or not. Even the Chinese scholars, to whom Confucianism is part of their daily life and part of their educational experience, do not share the same views hereupon<sup>23</sup>; they disagree about the degree of religiosity of the concept in the Chinese popular belief. Lee Rainey puts it:

The debate about whether or not Confucianism is a religion continued on through the twentieth century and, in some circles, continues today. There have been, and are still, those scholars who have understood Confucianism as a religion; others have argued that Confucianism is not a religion but something else, often, a philosophy (232).

However, this complication does not prohibit ordinary learners to know through different texts of the past and of the present that for ages the philosophy of Confucius (551 BC- 479 BC) has been manufacturing the Asian societies, as it continues today to haunt the Chinese mind. And actually, every cultural change in China is in a broader sense a change in the Confucian wisdom.

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<sup>23</sup> Xinzhong Yao’s *Introduction to Confucianism* is an impressive and informative book written about Confucianism. It includes different views and it synthesizes the cumulative knowledge about Confucian philosophy. Besides, it foregrounds “a clearer view of how Confucianism functioned in the past and of what it means in the present.”

Since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the context of the American missionism and the Western imperialism, Confucianism has engaged in a long struggle for survival. It supposedly appears that only its adaptability guarantees its long life in the Chinese populace. Notwithstanding internal and external attempts to erode the old tradition which forges the Chinese identity, Confucianism keeps on taking new forms of resistance and changes itself to sustain its moral and spiritual premises. In fact, it was not only on the target of the American cultural hegemony, but it was also widely exposed to the danger of the communist trend of the post-World War period. This trend brought some radical economic and political reforms which sooner affected the existing social veracity.

After some failures in the measures to sustain the proletariat revolution, the first generation of the Chinese communist leaders – Mao Tse-tung at the helm – saw defects in the Confucian school which was regarded as idealistic and excessively rationalistic. This tendency was one of the reasons which triggered the Cultural Revolution in Beijing. It aimed chiefly at cleaning the society from all the old practices which, according to Mao, buffered the expected modern society and egalitarian China. In this way, the revolution was “to touch the people’s souls” (Dittmer 105) by challenging, to use the exact words, the Four Olds: old ideas, old culture, old customs and old habits. Knowing that the Four Olds were built upon the living Confucian tradition, the revolution was fundamentally to contain the latter and replace it with the communist ideology.

Right after the revolution, the communist administration proceeded to the implementation of new educational reforms in which the Confucian share was slim. Instead, it brought education in line with the communist ideology. Accordingly and in this way, Confucian scholars were singled out and distanced from instructing schools, and Confucianism was undoubtedly marginalized. As a result, a gap stretched between the new generation of the youth and their national identity. In fact, the gap that caused the youth

uprooting worsened the situation and made of the Chinese culture more and more vulnerable in front of the American cultural infiltration.

The failure of the Maoist economic modernization and the other attempts of modernization based on the Western way have pushed the Chinese administration to revise its policy which tends each time to leave its proper wisdom aside. The British thinker and political activist, Tariq Ali, in his analysis of the Chinese evolution since 1945, deduces that the smartness of the leaders of China lies in their ability to learn from their mistakes. He explicitly says: “the leaders of the Communist Party made numerous mistakes; they recognized that there were mistakes; they decided that the system wasn’t working. So if the system wasn’t working: what to do?”

Since the 1980s, the Communist Party comes to deduce that every positive social change necessitates the implication of local knowledge. It comes also to deduce that Confucianism was not the obstacle as it was pretended during the Revolution; on the contrary, it may sustain both the economic progress and the political structure with ethics and wisdom to avoid the biggest enemy of China: Chaos. Therefore, side by side with the Four Modernizations, it has become the catalyst of change and at the centre of intellectual interest. At this level, it is worthy to notice nowadays how seriously modernization is adapted to the Chinese culture, and how carefully Confucianism is adapted to the modernization. Noticing this adaptation, Yao wrote “As an array of social, cultural and spiritual traditions, Confucianism had been under constant changes, which were both the source of its energy and the basis of its vitality” (246).

The restoration and promotion of this ‘New Confucianism’ has become more than ever the inspiration of the time. Indeed, when it comes to how to recover from the economic disaster of the early communist strategy, a great intellectual debate in the Chinese universities



has brought to the scene the Chinese know-how with new adjustments. Some scholars went Even further to say that nowadays' economic vibration is indebted to the restored Confucian school which prohibited the vanishing of national identity, preserved national integrity and structured the society around the modernization process. In a way, the Neo-Confucian option has conciliated between material life which goes with the economic commitment to regenerate wealth in China and the spiritual self-cultivation which teaches cohesion, self-reliance and social duties.

In this cultural resistance prospect, Beijing mobilizes media technology to promote Confucian popular culture which is not yet widely affected by the “complex connectivity”<sup>24</sup> resulted in the globalization. Chinese interest in popular culture is not behind the times but new, and it revolutionizes the Chinese cultural products industry. Haiqing Yu points out that “In the post-New Era, however, a newly commercialised popular culture has taken centre stage in Chinese cultural and economic productions.” He carries on that it “displays an elastic and eclectic nature” (22). In effect, though it embodies a long philosophical, and in some circumstances religions, tradition and carries the wisdom of the Chinese elite, Confucianism is at present the pivot of the popular daily life and the soul of people’s interaction and socialization. In addition, the updated new Confucian way in the modernized media technology “allows one to have a more balanced view towards the relationships of the local, national and global” (ibid). It is worthy to understand here that the Confucian revival has not at all the intention to reject completely what is culturally external to China, yet it makes it sure that the Chinese identity which enhances the national pride is safe from the standardization of world cultures. The mass infiltration of the American culture in the big

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<sup>24</sup> The concept is coined by John Tomlinson in his study of globalization and cosmopolitanism. It denotes the cultural make up resulted in the interaction of two or more cultures. He argues that in the globalization era ‘complex connectivity’ is all the times dominated by the American culture.

cities pushes Beijing to admit transculturation, yet at the same time it pushes it to assess the local over the outsider.

## **2. Cultural Exhibition and Mobilization**

In historical studies, as in many other studies, a global and accurate perception of a given event can never be achieved without a meticulous perception of the details. Besides, every misrepresentation or misinterpretation in the details, that a scholar may underestimate or give less importance, minimizes the scientific accuracy in the study. In accordance, one may underestimate the role of cultural exhibition and sensitization in the agenda of cultural resistance. All over the world, cultural exhibitions are the best opportunities to know and discover one's and other's ways. In such ceremonies, peoples' cultures are displayed and celebrated, in a way to build a bridge between the individual and his culture, and the individual and the others' cultures.

To resist cultural hegemony, the Chinese cultural institutions have adopted this preventive option either inside China or outside in international occasions. One instance to illustrate this option is the Shanghai World Expo of 2010. From May to October of the same year, the banks of Huangpu River which held the ceremony became the visited land of peoples from different corners of the world. The central government spent huge sums of money to clear and equip a site of more than 5 km<sup>2</sup> with an innovative architecture and technology which transcends a Chinese culture. The slogan of the universal exhibition – 'Better City – Better Life' – translates the Confucian mode of a harmonious life where modernity is nourished with ethics and where industrial development is conciliated with ecology protection.

Attended the exhibition, Urso Chappell, the founder and the director of ExpoMuseum.com, commented "It's a great opportunity for countries to dispel old myths or

create new ones,” he excitingly added by the way; “The Chinese have a really playful pavilion, and that’s going to certainly leave a lasting impression on those who see it.” With the participation of the world big corporations whose cultural products are famous globally, such as Coca Cola and Disney Land, China opened widely the doors of exchange and more importantly competition with the United States. This reflects clearly the policy of the Communist Party towards international affairs and modernization strategy. Implicitly and pragmatically, Dong Xiaoping puts it in very colorful sentence when he says “I don’t care what the colour of the cat is, as long as it catches mice.”

Obviously, the world expo was a lively opportunity for Shanghai to exhibit its wisdom and its cultural contribution to the human civilization, more importantly, because it was a record-breaking from various angles: with 192 countries and 50 corporations on show, and not less than 72 million visitors. BBC News announced that Ban Ki-moon, the United Nations Secretary General, applauded the services endowed and admitted that its vision will be “alive in our discussions and our lifestyles.” The same source released that Chinese officials affirmed the World Expo was “an opportunity to promote the country's "soft power” - to show off its growing influence in the world.” The event was closely covered by the media, and it aims surely at foregrounding the history of modern China and at dazzling the hosts.

Accordingly, no one can deny what the effects such great manifestations may have on the spirit of both local populations and visitors. On the one hand, it creates confidence between the political structure of the country and the citizens who in their side contributed largely to its success. In addition, it consolidates the Chinese around the same national principles, as it enhances the feeling of national pride, satisfaction and self-respect. On the other hand, the manifestation pushes the western visitors to change their views about China which is reported, most of time and due to some prejudicial media effects, as the lands of corruption, violence and underdevelopment. Moreover, it invites the neighboring countries -

which share almost the same culture- to look for the Chinese friendship which would make of Beijing a friendly regional power instead of the United States.

Though many culturally and artistically famous figures participated in this unprecedented Chinese feast, the fact remains that the Chinese thinker and historiographer, Liang Qichao, was the most celebrated, for he is one of the rare scholars who wrote about hosting a large-scale public exhibition in China. The hazard wants it that he was the Chinese thinking modernizer of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. He promoted social reforms on the eve of the republican era and incarnated new cultural values or what stands today for Neo-Confucianism. On behalf of his objectives, he strongly believed that China should primarily preserve the ancient wisdom of Confucianism, yet simultaneously it needs to learn from the successes of Western culture. Qichao took the human factor as the foundation on which change is built and he affirmed that “to make new the people first as a means to renovate the country” (Tang 46). At the cultural level, there are actually lot of common points between today’s policy of the central government and Liang Qichao’s objectives. For instance, both of them do agree on the fact that china needs to learn from the United States in a way to harden its independence but not to lose it.

In the same process of cultural sensitization, China has decided to go further and do the job beyond its borders. It comes to the mind that it has recognized how much cultural isolationism is harmful to the Chinese economic investment in other countries. Hence, money spending in Cultural programs fortifies considerably Beijing’s economic relations. Because they symbolize unofficial embassies which manifest a considerable freedom in other countries, in general, cultural programs tighten softly the bilateral ties and enhance mutual considerations between nations. The American Corners, the French *Centres culturels* and *Alliances*, the German Goethe Institute and the British Council are some examples of many cultural nonprofit organizations which act day by day in different parts of the world,

particularly developing countries and ex-colonies. Their ultimate purpose is to popularize their local cultures and make them accessible to other people through language teaching and other anthropological studies.

Regardless of its limited abilities and the lack of experience compared to the Western countries, China on its side spends huge sums of money on such institutional subsidies every year. The Chinese central government through its embassies launched one cultural program called Confucius Institutes. Inaugurated since 2004, the latter are mainly active in the Chinese backyard and Africa where investment is growing beneficial. They represent the bedrock for the revival of Confucius' philosophy and its contribution to the human civilizational heritage. The last numbers provided by the Communist administration show that, only in Africa, there are more than forty establishments of this kind. They are the spearheads of Africa-China cultural and artistic relations. Apart from the scientific agenda, they teach the Chinese language and the traditional martial sports. Liu Yunsheng, a director of one Confucius Institute and a young diplomat, argues that for the most skeptics the efforts of these institutes are just propaganda maneuvers, but they never say the same thing about the French *Centres culturels*. He added that it is the culture which creates brotherhood between the peoples (Le Balzic). In short, this Chinese line-out to promote its heritage by teaching it in distant countries breaks the old Eurocentric stereotypes and clichés about China. It provides the Chinese administration with new perspectives of cultural performance abroad.

Moreover, on January 2007, along with Germany, Canada, France and other countries, China agreed and notified the Convention on Cultural Diversity (CCD). The role of the convention is “to fill an existing lacuna for cultural objectives in public international law,” as media-law Professor Christoph Beat Graber point out; “and to serve cultural counter balance to the world Trade Organization (WTO) in future conflicts between trade and Culture” (553). In other words, the UNESCO which passed the CCD admitted that the WTO

under the leadership of Uncle Sam is the first organization which threatens global heterogeneity because of the impacts the great corporations may have on the wide spread of American cultural products. The move towards an Orwellian world, where Uncle Sam is the Big Brother, and towards a globalized system, in which liberal democracy is the Ministry of Truth, has systematically prohibited the cultural participation of the nonwestern societies and has standardized the American social, political and economic structure.

Notwithstanding its economic backwardness comparing to the United States, China is still the second world industrial superpower. Besides, its active participation in such international and universal associations, in addition to the visible local performance, is certainly a delaying impediment in front of the advance of cultural hegemony, as it is also an opportunity to the other cultures to manage immediate and long-lasting internal cultural strategies in order to catch up with the advanced cultures.

## **B. Political Performance**

Actually, every question about the meaning of politics produces a wide range of answers which willy-nilly pour in different directions. For non-skeptic people, this variety of answers is comprehensible, simply because the definition of politics comes from different cultural perspectives and because in politics every conception has all the times at least two meanings: the first one is the literal meaning which is the idealized one; the second is its usage in political discourse<sup>25</sup>. Theoretically, politics is an ancient human invention which is at the same time the product of cultural realities of a given society and the mirror of its tactical actions in response to all kinds of issues. It represents all sorts of institutions put in place by an independent or a federal administration to deal with peoples' problems and to ensure individuals' welfare. In democratic countries, the political structure should reflect

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<sup>25</sup> Professor Noam Chomsky provided *Serious Science* website with details about political discourse and meanings of political terms, and he illustrates with multiple examples showing the role of inconsistency in media propaganda.

appropriately the expectations of the society, whereas in totalitarian administrations, the political structure is imposed by the ruling class and it does not evidently (but it may) reflect people's wishes.

According to Hannah Arendt, politics comes after a long philosophical process; it comes at the end in order to activate the human's eagerness for liberty. Thus, politics is the sphere where people, in groups or individually, become active. In all her works, Arendt argues that "the life of the mind" which is reflected in the political commitment of the society is the pillar of *Vita Activa* (active life) and citizenship. She makes it clear; if the underdeveloped countries cannot move forward to change their people's conditions, it is because they dare not move from philosophy and ideology further to a real political activity. Noticing political passiveness in the third world, she synthesizes that "the third world is not a reality but an ideology"; as to say, in such countries there is no concretization of one's expectations in the absence of real participative consciousness. In other words, the rise of political will is an important stage in one's life or in a country's history, for it is a fundamental factor to put into practice the elaborated cumulative knowledge.

In fact, political activity, as highlighted by many intellectuals and political activists, has never been an easy task, because it requires both an accurate knowledge and a commitment for performance for common interests. In this context, Mao Tse-tung compared the politician, in its literal meaning, to a peaceful soldier in his fulfillment of his noble duties, when he points out "politics is a war without bloodshed while war is politics with bloodshed" (153).

### **1. New Political Structure**

Nowadays, there is no doubt that the Chinese political structure is based on one-party system, and one may even be sure that this will possibly persist for long years in the future.

Since decades, democratization of the People's Republic of China has been one of the most attracting and striking question inside and outside China, and many empirical factors urge careful scholars to announce a political transition in the near future. Indeed, undeniable factors, such as “economic development, social stratification, political decentralization, the rise of social movements, world market integration, the influence of the Internet” (Shubert) foreshadow steadily a democratic alternative in China. However, the last Congress of the Communist Party held in 2012 identifies that, for several reasons, Beijing has no intention to move towards a democracy on the western model. Instead, it suggests something else as “socialism with Chinese characteristics.”

Political appreciation of the congress denotes that China is more and more leaning on its cultural background to frame a practical political strategy. In fact, during the congress many reforms were brought to adjust the constitution of the Communist Party and make it more compatible with the new economic configurations. For instance, the ratification of the Scientific Outlook on Development, as another guiding ideology side by side with Marxism, Maoist communism and Den Xiaoping modernization, reinforces the implication of science and universities in the country building and manages the gaps left by the pure communism of the Cold War.

As far as China is endowed with the will to learn from its mistakes, there is no doubt that every step it will do in the future is conditioned by an open-minded reconstruction of its past policies because the repair project has come after a long experience of almost a century of struggle with all kinds of crisis that a country of a billion and half of population may have. Therefore, one of the reasons which push China to avoid the western democracy in its own administration is this experience of political instability. This fact has urged the western countries and the United States in particular to consider the Chinese reforms in the absence of ‘liberal democracy’ just as an unjustified further delay. While Uncle Sam sees it as high time



for China to go forth and democratize political life through universal suffrage, Confucius in his side regards any conceivable democratization of the political scene will certainly take China back to the republican period, as it will sow division among the local cultural entities instead of melding their ranks.

From the common sense of the Communist Party, China has no tradition of liberal democracy and has a great fear of chaos. This makes it clear that China has to find its own way to establish an efficient political structure. The Chinese pace towards this underlined objective may be slow, yet it does not matter how slowly it goes as long as it does not stop. So far, with the recognition of international organizations and Human Right Watch, the Chinese political strategy has demonstrated through performance its faculties in dealing with national and international critical problems. According to the United Nations Organization, more than 70 percent of poverty in the world is achieved by Beijing in the last 20 years. As a result, China received all congratulations of the non-governmental organizations fighting poverty and working on this sense. In addition, thanks to the political performance, China has succeeded in the period between 1978 and 2004 to reduce the number of the impoverished people from 250 to 26.1 million (Qureshi)<sup>26</sup>. In this way, China has defeated hunger in the first battle of a war which does not advocate every politics but political science.

Simultaneously, the communist strategy has daringly exhibited why China rejects the alternative of liberal democracy. To explain this view, the professor in international relations at Fudan University of Shanghai and the author of China's best-seller *The China Wave*, Zhang Weiwei points out:

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<sup>26</sup> Mr Ajmal Qureshi is a former representative and ambassador of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization in China; he is a recipient of Boston University's distinguished Alumni Award in 2007 and Senior Advisor and honorary professor at the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences in Beijing. The statistics implemented here are taken from his worthy contribution to *Harvard International Review*.

China's population is larger than those of North America, Europe, Russia and Japan combined, and has no tradition whatsoever of liberal democracy and memories are still fresh of the devastating breakup of the Soviet Union. Going further back, China's more recent history saw chaos and wars, and on average from 1840 to 1978 a major upheaval every seven or eight years. So the Chinese fear of chaos is based on common sense and its collective memory, with very real fears that the country might well become ungovernable if it were to adopt the adversarial Western political system.

In fact, the first attempt to implement American-style democracy was during the era of Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT or Kuomintang) established by Sun Yet-sen, Yuan Shikai and Song Jiaoren after the Civil War which ended the monarchy system of the King Dynasty. The period is known for its massive political reforms. However, soon after the death of the charismatic leaders, the country was divided by warlords and fell in an eternal political unease. Since then, the fear of chaos is after all a national sport practiced by almost every Chinese citizen. Day after day, The Chinese consider public order as the most important value of the Confucian society, whereas surveys in the United States show that freedom of speech is the most important. This cultural disparity mirrors clearly the political distance between Beijing and Washington, as it also legitimizes the Chinese refusal of democratic way.

From the lowest view, the Chinese challenge of liberal democracy means surely the adoption of an authoritarian autocracy. Yet, for the Chinese, the implementation of democracy does not surely mean the respect of individual liberties, and its absence does not surely mean the abuse of citizens' civil rights, because China throughout its experience over decades has elaborated a new political structure based on the merit and performance in political life. Thus, it is more appropriate to say: democracy versus meritocracy instead of democracy versus autocracy. Professor Daniel Bell, in a co-authored article on *Foreign Policy* website, names

the Chinese political scene with a “vertical democratic meritocracy,” or what he describes as democracy “at the higher level.”

The latter is a concept deeply rooted in the Confucian tradition; it directly challenges the notion of “government of the people, by the people, for the people” in the western sense. In the past, a high rank officer in china is subjected to a continuous examination in different fields, namely politics. Besides, a leader of a party or an administration has to be defined by his substance, competency and his contribution to the wellbeing of the citizenry. For this reason, the communist party in its last congress and in its move towards a meritocratic structure discussed at length the age limitation of the Politburo Standing Comity (PSC). Meritocracy in the Confucian tradition is premised on knowledge, hard working and sacrifice in order to maintain a consistent growth and then fulfill the expectations of the people. This tendency in the Communist Party’s Politburo Standing Comity is reflected in the words of the general secretary of the Central Committee, Xi Jinping, in front of world media. Just after the congress, he made a speech in which he “lets the world hear China’s voice” and shows the suffering of the Chinese people during the long course of history. He claims:

Throughout five thousand years and more of evolution as a civilization, the Chinese nation has made indelible contribution to the progress of human civilization.... Countless Chinese patriots rose up one after another and fought for the renewal of the Chinese nation.... [T]he Chinese people have, working with diligence, bravery and wisdom, created a beautiful homeland where all ethnic groups live in harmony, and developed a great and dynamic culture (BBC).

In fact, the façade of the speech may appear idealistic, but the Chinese reality proves its righteousness. The spectacular rise of China and the visible improvement in the respect of human rights and individual dignity is alluding to a prosperous society. This structural performance, in addition to some reforms in election rules in both cities and villages (in

villages direct democracy is permitted and people allowed to chose their village chiefs), will obviously generate new legitimacy for the Communist Party which continues to sustain its policy with three important characteristics- cultural identity, flexibility and adaptiveness- and it will maintain close ties with the people.

Moreover, another positive aspect of meritocracy in designing a leader is the fact it relies on ‘selection plus election’ procedure; it is not based on showmanship and two months campaign which may give birth to an unknown president with an unknown past and future. Although the westerners consider this Confucian political tradition as nothing but ‘divine right of king’, yet it may be a lucrative political strategy in big countries like China, for it fetches leadership from the competent social class “on the basis of performance and popular support through a vigorous process of screening, opinion surveys, internal evaluations and various small-scale elections” (Weiwei). In fact, the claim here does not mean that meritocracy is better than democracy as some may demonstrate, it means that to some analytical view meritocracy is unlikely more efficient in China. Moreover, it is also important to mention that the symbolic meritocracy is not yet achieved and some “massive factionalism, factional struggle, clientelism, patronage and corruption” (Ash)<sup>27</sup> still exist in China. The latter is the bed-rock of all the criticisms of today’s Chinese policy. Most Chinese and Western intellectuals who oppose the Chinese internal policy rely on the old criticisms against Asian traditional communism and rely on the said rotten authoritarian political structure of the early ‘Great Leap Forward.’ This view is backed by major western media, yet the Chinese truth is not as worse as propagated.

Symmetrically, many influential figures in political and geostrategic studies, such as Noam Chomsky, Norman Finkelstein, Joseph Stiglitz, John Mearsheimer, Tariq Ali...etc

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<sup>27</sup> Professor Timothy Garton Ash’s quotation is taken from: Volodzko, David. “China’s Meritocracy Vs. Western Democracy.” *The Diplomat*. October 31, 2015. <<http://thediplomat.com/2015/10/chinas-meritocracy-vs-western-democracy/>>

argue that the American liberal democracy, which is the pillar of western democracy, is all about imperialism, lobbyism, money making, moral and political corruption. Openly, they do not criticize the theoretical democracy as defined in the political literature; however, they criticize its functioning within the American political scene in both houses of the Congress. Today, liberal democracy -in the neoliberal America- is regarded as the least bad option due to the many anomalies it has in the process of policy-making. For this reason, China prefers its own culturally rooted meritocratic system which “strive[s] for ... the best of the best options” where, in the view of Zhang Weiwei, “anyone as incompetent as America’s George W. Bush or Japan’s Yoshihiko Noda could never get to the top.”

Furthermore, in the same process of cultural resistance through political performance, it is noticeable that since its creation to this day, the Communist Party has seen three different phases showing the evolution of the party and its lean to cultural issues. The first phase is that of the Cold War when the ‘Red China’ opted for the industrialization and the economic isolationism. Everybody knows how expensive the price was for Beijing which discovered that the Great Leap Forward and the unplanned industrialization were unforgettable mistakes. At this level, a slight change occurred in the philosophy of the party. Instead of relying only on urban industrial faculties and close communism, the party decided along with the Cultural Revolution to involve the rural agricultural areas in the business of the country building. As a result, the second phase sets up, and the party engaged in the quasi-privatization of farmland. This adjustment in the Chinese policy making confirms that communist radicalism cannot survive the Chinese leaders’ political will to improve social conditions.

The third and the last phase is directly related to Deng Xiaoping’s political reforms and the remarkable media facilities. These two strategic elements have rapidly provoked the scourge of cultural imperialism which affects negatively the political integrity in China. Here

again, the party has shown readiness to transgress the rules of communism to protect the Chinese identity. In short, this flexible tendency in the Chinese political structure, from the Cold War to the World Trade Organization era, shows a shift from party politics –which means a total commitment to the communist norms or what we may call Maoism – to identity politics –which means the party’s performance in response to the globalization. The political shift makes a good example of Chinese resistance because it has occurred in response to the American cultural hegemony. Accurately, the American historian Arif Dirlik points out:

Even as China is drawn into a global capitalist economy, and makes claims to impending supremacy within it, there is evidence of continued resistance to being identified as one more emerging capitalist society with its own markets repertoires – resistance in which cultural memories, nationalist longings and socialist habits are intertwined inextricably (3).

Albeit its heavy weight in the international relations, China has to maintain a constant cultural resistance through a smart political flexibility to make sure that China is making money without losing its cultural sovereignty. To state it differently, China throughout its political experimentation knows very well that economic interests go with cultural performance. Therefore, it adopted its political activism to this rule.

## **2. Intellectual Implication**

Political performance in China is to a large extent indebted to the role played by intellectuals. Without equivocal, intellectuals got an important role to play a social role in which no one can replace them in the society. Not only in China but all over the world, they make the smith, and the normal functioning society makes the steel. Postcolonial writers back the fact the societies should be between the lines and the words of intellectuals because historical studies reveal that every social movement, technological innovation or cultural

revolution is preceded by an intellectual struggle where rational arguments are organized in a way to distinguish the right from the wrong, the fruitful from the sterile and the good from the bad. In the same line, some antique thinkers defended this view. Plato for instance glorified the role of the philosopher as long as he teaches people wisdom. He argues that for its good and for its prosperity, the society must be lead and directly influenced by the philosopher. At this level, two questions need answers on the behalf of the literary review to see the connections with the Chinese case. The first is: how can an intellectual get the way to power to lead a human society, knowing that the same society is over and over lead by politicians who most of the times and for several reasons do not share the views of intellectuals. The second question is on the real meaning of an intellectual in our age. To state it briefly, to whom belongs the word 'intellectual?'

The answer of the second question relies on two important figures in the world of ideas: Mahatma Gandhi and Jean Paul Sartre. Both of them were interested in locating the concept 'intellectual' in its appropriate understanding or scholarly area, and both of them provided readers and researchers with an interesting description of the concept. Remarkably, these two noble price winner thinkers and political activists of two different cultural environments gave two definitions hereupon which pour in the same perception of the meaning. From his side, Jean Paul Sartre based his description of the concept on the exercising of one's profession. He said briefly that it is only through his profession that an individual meets contradictions between what he does and what he should do. Some of these contradictions then appear to hurt his consciousness in a way to push him to reject some consequences of his profession on the other people or the external world in general. Hence, the intellectual career of an individual starts with his active and rational denunciation of the contradictions he meets in the exercise of his job.

From Gandhi's side, intellectualism has something to do at once with activism, courage and non-violence. In most of his works, Gandhi regards an intellectual as someone whose first role is to make people recognize their problems they live in their daily life. His role does not stop here or with the recognition of the problems, for more importantly he has to make people act against and solve these problems in an as peaceful and reasonable way as possible. Gandhi associates intellectual life with the political implication of individuals. He points out that political activism is not about 'enlightening people,' but it is a war of ideas 'to quicken the conscious of the public' to get them to act on what they already know is wrong. Obviously, such practice from intellectuals necessitates personal sacrifices and courage as it was the case with Gandhi's struggle for the Indian independence.

Both Gandhi's and Sartre's perception puts the intellectual in the front line to lead society on the right path. Sartre describes the intellectual in his profession as a journalist in his camera missions, a politician in his office, a scientist in his laboratory, a teacher in his classroom, a researcher in his library...etc, whereas Gandhi views the intellectual within his society as a galvanizer of non-violent activity against all forms of injustice. However, both of them do agree on the fact that the intellectual is the source of denunciation of the unrighteous and the promoter of human values embodied in political activism. They recognize his leadership because he is loaded of knowledge and acts side by side with the people to whom the recognition of the problems is achieved.

In the first case, it is hard to think about leadership without an instantaneous remembrance of politics which in itself relies on management. Spontaneously, when asked about the leaders of a given community, people start counting the heads of the official institutions of that community. That is obviously natural because the heads of those institutions are elected, for some, or designed, for some others, to manage, enact laws, ratify and instruct individuals and groups. They are supposed to ensure the welfare of the



community and lead its members to the right decisions. Accordingly, if one for example asks about the leader of the United States of 2016, the answer will surely be Barak Obama or another member of his cabinet. The same thing is with the other countries and the other political bodies. Thus, leadership is widely attributed to political representatives of an administration and high officials of a political entity.

Without doubt, this way of conceiving leadership in the society is set upon a realistic understanding of the human authoritative and systemic relations. However, another way of conceiving leadership is undoubtedly possible. This one recognizes another counterbalance force which acts reasonably and scientifically through official and unofficial institutional bodies, such as universities and independent associations, either to encourage or dissuade something on the way or to foresee and prevent the future. At this level, leadership is that of the intellectual whose engagement is truth learning and truth revealing to the society. This is why, when Plato discusses ‘the ideal city,’ he puts forward the philosopher as the ultimate source of the political truth and thus a source of leadership.

In fact, the functioning of an intellectual leadership in a given political entity in many cases disturbs the established order of the official leadership because it premises its actions on a knowledgeable participation and a commitment to learn the truth with the citizens of the same political entity. In addition, it recognizes the legitimacy of political leadership as long as it has no hidden intentions to mislead common people to the wrong path. In the words of the worldly famous activist, Noam Chomsky argues that “intellectuals are in a position to expose the lies of governments, to analyze actions according to their causes and motives and often hidden intentions” (The Responsibility of Intellectuals). This is the most realistic interpretation of the gap between politicians and intellectuals which in itself reveals how much the intellectual’s task is at the same time noble minded and difficult. Yet, in many other cases, the functioning of intellectual leadership guides the official leadership in the fulfillment

of its agenda. This may happen only when the officials have no hidden and unexplained intentions, because the former cannot function but in transparency and in an informed society. Intellectuals' participation in policy making is a factor of success because it gives credit to the output of that policy. For this reason in many countries where there is a political will to reach peoples' expectations and international peace, states' administration rely on advisors whom intellectual career is great and not to underestimate. Recent sociological studies demonstrate that all uprising social groups depend on the contribution of intellectuals through their studies and their permanent struggle to keep the eye wide open on both social awareness of the people and political veracity of the official leadership. When observing China growing prosperous, one may ask the question of what is the share of Chinese intellectuals' participation in such enterprise.

Most of western media and political literature do not report about today's implication of political activists and university researchers in the Chinese modernization and in the political reforms. Instead, they continue to denounce the Communist Party's atrocities of some decades ago against this category of Chinese subjects. For sure, many of these atrocities were committed during the period of political and economic austerities of the Cold War. In addition, for some reasons of political unpreparedness and cultural commitment of China, many Chinese scholars today continue to live in exile. Yet in recent years and amazingly, there is according to the UNO and the HRW a visible decrease in such practices. On the contrary, the intellectual participation in the cultural awakening of China is significant to the point that the debate over modernization was failure after failure till it reached the Chinese universities. There, it changed the dimension from an economic debate to become a multifaceted debate where culture owns the lion's share of concerns. Tariq Ali, the British political activist who studied the Chinese political system and the evolution of the Chinese

society, argues in one of his speeches when debating the impact of the Chinese reforms on the intellectual life of the country:

Interestingly enough...a huge debate started in the Chinese universities. Even though China is not a democratic state in the western style...; nevertheless, these debates were not censored. They were kept under control, but you could for the whole period [Deng Xiaoping period] write serious scholarly texts challenging this or promoting that (The Rise of China).

This fact endorses that the reason behind the Chinese successes in backing political reforms is the restoration of the consent of intellectuals. The Central Government does not take part in the intellectual debates which take place in different forms, however it has big ears to know about the details of the debates' outcome and their instructions. In his speech, Tariq Ali provides us with examples which reveal that many instructions by intellectuals were taken seriously by the central government and immediately put into practice.

Furthermore, intellectuals -among whom there were scientists, media scholars, researchers in the humanities and journalists- were the first actors behind the cultural imperialism thesis in China. They symbolize “‘a say-no club’ [that] emerged in response to the increasing presence of foreign cultural and media products in China” (Yu 23). For the major part, intellectual consciousness in China is a mixture of a communist culture and techno-economic ideas which dominate early leadership of the party and of traditional popular culture which resides in the heart of the society. Since the 1990s, it has been this consciousness which reconciles the ruling class or the party with the populations of different ethnic groups. Besides, it was the intellectuals of the left who at the eve of the 21<sup>st</sup> century warned the ruling class against one form of political globalization on the American style, because the latter represents “‘a threat to China’s sovereignty, culture, and social values” (Barrett). It was not the only factor, but this surge of the intellectuals has played a significant

role in urging the government to pass some political reforms without eroding the cultural premises of the meritocratic system. In this way, identity preservation has become part of the party politics thanks to the interference of intellectuals. To put it in a nutshell, Chinese intellectuals have succeeded in putting into practice the wide range of cultural ideas inherited from a conjuncture of school, tradition, philosophy and religion. Through Chinese entry to the WTO, they have even succeeded in pushing forward to other parts of the world their cultural and scientific fabric which because of a long period of isolationism remains unknown to the external world.

### **C. Economic Performance**

While the Chinese political reforms are going ahead shaking the West and the United States in particular, their impacts on the Chinese economy have become more and more imminent. As noticed previously, political reforms aim chiefly at bringing the Chinese social conditions up to get in the line with some growing neighboring countries and to get out of the suffering that the Chinese lived day after day for a long period. Without doubt all over the countries of the world, the failure in an economic experimentation reveals indirectly the political incapability of its authors. In the same way, the economic prosperity of a country is a factor of a good political strategy. Albeit from a backward and inferior starting point, contemporary China has become a superpower. That is not only in the traditional industrial and agricultural sectors but also in the other sensitive sectors, such as technology, education, scientific research and military capabilities. Economic performance has seen light with the advance of the political will to find new alternative strategies to fight poverty and underdevelopment far from the western ideological spectrum. The logic of alternatives based on reflection and action is inseparable from the actual Chinese economic realities which shifted, from the 1980s to this moment, from a vulnerable liberal and a backward communist state to a super-industrialized nation embracing ‘socialism with Chinese characteristics.’

Historically, the old dream of modernizing China consists of a blind imitation of its rival western countries. Modern history of economics unveils that the theory of wealth regeneration is a two edged sword. One edge is sharpened by the capitalist ideas of property owners' supremacy over the means of production and their priority in conceiving appropriate political trends to reach economic ends, whereas the other edge is sharpened by the socialist ideas of common properties and exchange of services within the economic frame of the state. During the first half of the last century, China was located in the first edge, and the economic reforms, as clearly publicized by the slogans 'science and democracy' and 'catch up with Great Britain and the United States' that prevailed the period, convey a number of processes of urbanization, industrialization, militarization and decentralization. The same processes were regarded as essential and primordial for the Chinese provinces to modernize their infrastructure and get in the rank of the other superpowers. Actually, the epoch of capitalism was an economic bankrupt which ruined China to the roots. Instead of regenerating wealth, the republican China experienced an unprecedented economic crisis which had become sooner a political one. In fact, because of the blind imitation of the western economic structure, China came back from an eventual disaster which could have provoked a division among the mainland provinces.

During the Cold War era, China was instead located in the second edge, and socialism has become the halter of the Chinese economic reforms. The period is also another blind mimicry for Beijing. Yet, this time instead of the United States, the Soviet Union is the example to follow. On the Russian style, 'the great leap forward' symbolized the economic strategy of the Communist Party to modernize China and to improve the society's daily conditions. Once again, the strong nationalist dream of Mao Zedong to make the old empire powerful and economically self-sufficient was nothing but a mirage. Again, because of the economic isolationism that was imposed by the frames of 'the great leap forward,' China

experienced another devastating disaster which caused the death of around ten million people. Notwithstanding the government's claims that the crisis was officially a result of natural circumstances triggered by the drought, there is today a common consensus among scholars (including a majority of the Chinese scholars) over the implication of many strategic slips in the economic reforms in worsening and extending the disaster. Accordingly, the latter is judged by many economists and scholars in humanities as unnecessary, but because of the communist administration's commitment of going on ahead with a close-minded socialism, the Chinese society as a result suffered from the long lasting famine of the 1950s and the 1960s.

Since then China, with the large scale participation of intellectuals who recognized the significance of economic strength in preserving one's culture, has decided on taking its own economic way which is premised neither on the Western pragmatic capitalism nor on the Soviet wasting socialism. Instead, it opted for a selective and innovative economy based on the Chinese managerial and cultural heritage. Officially named 'socialism with Chinese characteristics,' this late option of the central government performed and impacted impressively the society in China, for it has drastically changed the economic landscape of the last three decades. This option relies chiefly on two fundamental elements:

**1. Chinese Socialism:** performance inside China and local market

Over the past decades, China has manifestly performed better than most other liberal states. Thanks to the massive social efforts and the zealous will of the state, there has been recognition of the mutual relationship between economic performance and cultural progress. The fact is that every thriving economy is a push for political structure and a protection for cultural identity of a nation. Professor Zhao Yuezhi makes it simple that "the states [with its cultural make up] and the market are mutually constitutive of each other and simultaneously

reinforcing and undermining each other” (21). In other words, if China looks after the cultural identity preservation, it is because this will endorse political stability and economic revival. Meanwhile, if it looks after the economic flourishing, it is because this sustains the local values and manufactures the authentic culture through cultural products. This kind of economic resistance and ‘unfinished struggle for socialism’ rely on the state control of the market and the regulation of cultural products’ entry to the Chinese half world market. In addition, it counts on the media technology to relatively increase its citizens’ freedom through rational information and to promote national production.

By this way, China does well in eradicating many economic scourges which haunt its market. From the external landscape of the Chinese economy, one may see clearly how much fascinating the progress is in all aspects of peoples’ life. Surely for the moment, the economic progress does not reach all the regencies with the same degree, as it does not affect all the social classes in the same positive way. However, one significant result of that progress is the eradication of more than 70% of world’s poverty in a period which does not exceed 30 years. Bert Hofman, World Bank’s Country Director, has applauded the achievement in a speech he performed in front of the Chinese leaders by using such words “it is well known that China has made a remarkable contribution to poverty reduction by lifting more than 700 million people out of poverty;” a number which makes two times the size of the American population. Many surveys conducted either by international scientific bodies, non-governmental associations, and international organizations or by local institutions foreshadow a better future for the Chinese if China continues on the path of economic reforms and in the search of its own intelligence.

The China Health and Nutrition Survey, which has started its activities since 2009, is designed to examine the effects of the health, nutrition, and family planning policies and programs implemented by the central government and the local governments and to see how

the social and the economic transformation in the Chinese society is affecting the health and the nutritional status of its population. It is based on extremely scientific experiments on the Chinese scale, and though the results of the conducted polls about health and nutrition improvement relatively vary from a province to another, yet it all the time shows an appreciation from the peoples.

On the one hand, the Westerners and the United States view the progress as a result of liberalism pursued in the reforms which allowed more economic decisions to be made by market forces instead of state interference. On the other hand, the Communist Party and many western leftist experts regard it as a natural outcome of Chinese socialism and market regulation which in themselves promote national production and job creation. In fact, since the beginning of the post World War period, China has gone on a preferential economy and market control. But the same policy which saw an excessive release during the 1980s and the 1990s is heightened over the last ten years in order to limit the noticeable impacts of the infiltration of the American culture. The interplay between the two views is that China does not reject everything culturally external to its economic faith; meanwhile, it does not adhere to the project of structural adjustment<sup>28</sup> because it actually aims at adjusting Chinese economic plans to the American ones. Alternatively, the Chinese administration has a strong faith in sovereign projects based on negotiations instead of credits and open door competition which put economic estate of most developing countries in troubles. In short, the Communist Party admits that in this world of monopoly capital every single successful change should come from inside, because the other way exposes the country to foreign interference.

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<sup>28</sup> First introduced in 1979 by the World Bank, Structural Adjustment finances domestic economic projects of chiefly developing countries to get out of economic crisis. It provides credit facilities, and it takes the form of agreement between the borrower and the bank. Yet, many leftist and revisionist scholars regard Structural Adjustment as a form of economic monopoly of the United States to interfere in domestic affairs of other countries and to make them adjust to the U.S. economic tendency.



This kind of selective economy articulates an open-minded socialism and insinuates a useful resource for cultural reproduction which in some cases transforms the American culture to take a new outlook on the Chinese socioeconomic context. “I want the culture of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible.” As Mahatma Gandhi once said, “But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any.” Economically, Gandhi’s statement mirrors the Chinese conception of its international affairs which should never erode the existing consent of socialism. The same conception summarizes how the Chinese policy is guided by both economic pragmatism and cultural protectionism, and it invites both sides of the dominant intellectual trends –the liberals and the leftists- to participate in enriching the Chinese ideological crucible.

In the comprehensive sense, the communist economic line and landscape tends to filter the Chinese market from cultural products which may alter the existing lucrative culture and to permit some other products for consumption. In a co-written book, David C. Thomas and Kerr Inkson show in a colorful way the Chinese selective tendency:

[They] adopted modern competitiveness but rejected modern attitudes toward sexual promiscuity.... Probably the only real convergence that is taking place is in surface matters such as basic business structures and consumer preference, rather than in fundamental ways of thinking and behavior (28).

The bed stone of theoretical socialism, as opposed to capitalism, is that market mechanisms should be controlled and oriented by the state in favor of peoples’ needs and welfare; otherwise, there will be all the time a ‘1%’ wealthy class which will control the political scene of a nation and the life style of its society in order to make more and more profits. Karl Marx went through these analyses in his studies on capitalism, and he predicted that “once the market mechanism became the sole determining factor for the fate of the nation-state, as well as the natural world, both would be demolished” (Hedge). Caring about

its safety from class hegemony in economy, China has conducted a preferential strategy in managing national business for better performance. Besides, in this kind of cultural resistance the subject matter is not to contain capitalism as many people may think, yet the subject matter is rather to make sure that People's Republic of China respects its revolutionary formula of equality and modernity. It is thus an economic managerial task and symmetrically a protection of the national heritage threatened by the American advertisement which, according to Chinese officials, works to manipulate the young generation's consciousness. In a broader sense, the rebirth of conservatism on the basis of national identity pushes in recent years the central government to behave differently and flexibly in what concerns economic matters. China becomes more conservative when it is question of a cultural threat and more flexible when it is question of money making.

According to economists, one big part of Chinese performance is on the ground of social policy on health and welfare provision. Indeed, this element has the entire honor to be the chief factor of poverty eradication and of reducing the inequality gap in china. Most recent statistics, provided by both local and international scientific bodies, show that all over the world there are around one billion people receiving social assistance from their national governments. The great deal of this number is located in the developing countries where tremendous experiments in social reforms manufacture a sort of revolution and a revival of state socialism. According to Beatriz Garcia Carrillo, a lecturer in China Studies and the author of *Small Town China*, "China's welfare programs are an important part of this revolution," especially, if we know that this occurs when the welfare state in the United States and many other Western countries is year after year vanishing and regarded as inefficient in dealing with social problems.

Historically, the Communist Party gets its legitimacy as the only leader of the Chinese administration through and mostly through maintaining the gap of inequality between

social classes (the working class and the ruling class, and the urban industrial class and the rural agricultural class) at the lower level. Equality was the slogan of the Chinese Revolution. One may deduce that so far the party is caring about restoring an equal and just society; it ensures also its legitimacy and the support of the Chinese society. In the same way, if inequality goes beyond the limits, it will expose the party to massive and uncontrollable popular uprisings. In other words, not taking seriously the issue of social equality is digging its own grave for the Communist Party.

For this reason, tax cutting and tax imposition on the imported products play an important role in controlling the gap between the classes through a balanced redistribution of wealth. Alongside with tax imposition, the New Socialist Countryside Program (2006), which was regarded by Western media as “a shift away from the previous focus on economic development” (Watts), abolished all agricultural taxes on peasants. Such inconsistent socialist measures of imposing taxes on some and reducing for some, aims at increasing social conditions of peasants of remote villages to get on the same line with their parallel industrial workers in big towns. Gini coefficient<sup>29</sup>, which measures inequality of income distribution in China, shows that the rate of inequality gap is tightening since 2008; whereas, before this year the gap was stable or in the worse cases widening. It is thanks to the effort of the government that is going further in the welfare strategy that such a result comes out of the earth. In addition, despite the global economic crisis of 2008, the Communist Party -as opposed to his rivals Western neoliberal parties- has continued to expand its welfare programs in the urban and the rural agricultural areas where assistance was already notable since the 1990s. In fact, within the political debate of the Chinese leadership, there has been a substantial agreement over the primacy of social harmony over economic growth because in a country of almost a

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<sup>29</sup> For more details about the statistics provided by Gini Coefficient see:  
<http://www.statista.com/statistics/250400/inequality-of-income-distribution-in-china-based-on-the-gini-index/>

billion and half inhabitants, every single trouble may transform the nation into a national nightmare.

In the reform process, a huge program of information control is underlined to make economic progress easier and uninterrupted by the wagged American propaganda. The fear here is mainly on the fragile young generations which did not live the harsh periods of civil wars and which due to the open door of the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century, many of them have been continuously exposed to media 'brain washing.' By the mediation of conservative intellectuals, Chinese leaders have understood the links between economic performance and media technology performance, so they have made efforts to compete with the West and develop the field in a way to make it beneficent for the commonwealth regeneration and political legitimization. In this respect and in an interview with the CBS News journalist, the Chinese President Jiang Zemin once said "We have to be selective. We hope to restrict as much as possible information not conducive to Chinese development." Indeed, China has proceeded to face the problem of excessive influence of internet and other means of communication on peoples' thinking by proceeding to regulate and organize the flow of information to the society.

This kind of policy has given birth today to a new form of modern society where citizens are given more freedom to choose their material life and where information should be controlled either by government or by independent social bodies to avoid disrupting peoples' rational choices. On the one hand, "Chinese people have been allowed an increasing freedom to choose, to consume, and to be self regulating;" On the other hand, "where the authoritarian specter of the disciplinary state remains as a fallback strategy of governance should civic freedom lead to anti-government uprisings" (Yu 21). Media policy in China is another form of a strong government which refuses virtual globalization and works to hamper its pace. For the Chinese, some American television and internet programs aim at engaging the society in a

war against the government by putting both of them in the traditional rivalry of liberty versus tyranny and development versus backwardness. Postcolonial studies demonstrate that discourse production and its organization in a particular way produce public opinions and build ideologies which work the producer's intentions. This is the reason why China does not want of media to control but to be controlled for the benefit of the Chinese economy and the Chinese culture.

The Communist Party, which is much anxious about the negative impact which media may have on social integrity than on the economic scale, regards internet and Google in particular as 'the Voice of America' and as powerful means to manipulate and disrupt the Chinese political, economic and chiefly identity consciousness. Subsidized by the central government, the Chinese technological research is shaken by this issue of scientific manipulation carried out by some American telecommunication corporations which blocks national economic structure which in turn triggers chaos. As a consequence of what the Chinese regard as a manipulation and propaganda, an extensive horrible picture is constructed about the Chinese society in the international public view. In that constructed picture, the Chinese culture is nothing but a form of violence. To prevent this possible effect from happening and thanks to the importance given to technological improvement, China is today a leading country in the domain of media technology and ahead of many developed countries. The central authorities, side by side with the scientific research carried out in the Chinese universities, have developed a web censorship program which "blocks any foreign site to come in without getting controlled" (Kessel). This means that on the Chinese internet vacuum, there is no Google, no Facebook and no Twitter on the mainland, yet there is a new generation of Chinese internet copycats that belong to huge companies which, from their side, help significantly in the economic leap forward. Chinese have for instance Baidu, Youku, Sina Weibo and some other search engines which are, according to computer

scientists, more advanced than those used in the United States and more flexible to serve market and marketing in China.

The Chinese web censorship program is called ‘the Great Fire Wall.’ Since a couple of decades ago, it has provoked intensified tensions with Washington which described the act as “a trade restriction..., and a significant burden to foreign suppliers” (Crowcroft). The Chinese authorities have another geopolitical view clearly exposed in the state controlled daily newspaper, Global Times:

[There is] a tiny number of foreign websites [so that] Western opinions cannot easily penetrate as ideological tools.... Western media have published major political reports that concern China in recent years, trying to direct the attention of Chinese society and set the discourse agenda for us. The Great Firewall has snuffed out such intentions (April 2016).

The Chinese administration hammers powerfully that American search engines will not surf without the Chinese strict regulation. As a response, the U.S. Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, has referred to this policy as an assault against the right for information and as an ‘Iron Curtain’ (The Guardian). On behalf of his authorities, the Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman, Ma Zhaoxu regards Clinton’s critiques as “unjustified and imperialistic” (Fisher). The conflicting debate between China and the United States transcends a deeply shared mistrust on both political and economic scales which affects directly the cultural ties, as it transcends also the strong will of China to go on in its economic performance to make of media technology a force in the service of social stability and cultural promotion.

## **2. Chinese Capitalism: Entrepreneurship and Global Market**

Economic performance in Beijing cannot be reduced to the reforms taking place on the national scale. Without doubt, socialism as explained previously is a significant factor

revealing one aspect of socio-economic performance on the mainland. However, there is another factor which came to be an important basis of the Chinese economic strategy since the 1980s: controlled capitalism. Recent practical studies in management approve that economic strength of a country is not sustainable except if it has a rational management of its human resources and natural potentialities, and if it has a good economic interaction with the external world. In fact, to study wealth regeneration in great powers economy is to study latter's relations with the surrounding world. It is the ability of these countries to make of their know-how and economic wisdom beneficent (or at least appear beneficent) to world markets, as it is the case with contemporary China. Then, it is easy to understand why countries which lack economic strength try to protect local markets, at the same time; great powers look after those markets through international economic agreements which provide a free way to competition. Knowing that countries are not equally equipped of technological development, competition then facilitates economic hegemony over the global market for the benefit of the great powers. It is worthy clarifying that many revisionist scholars regard competition as defined by the World Trade Organization as nothing but a means of exploitation, for competition does not obey the needs of small and underdeveloped economies.

China instead has officially gone onto that global market after having experimented almost 30 years of free local entrepreneurship which has note worthily contributed to the economic growth as well as in consolidating social harmony on the national scale. It was till the 1980s and the intellectual debate in China over which economic way to undergo that the Communist Party planned to appeal to the Chinese free entrepreneurship. This was of course due to many difficulties which the state economic structure encountered in the implementation of the new reforms. At that time, China wanted "to cross the river one stone at a time," but with the demographic and the geographical circumstances it could not realize

miracles by relying only on a pure socialist agenda. As a result, the first sparks of private enterprise in the Chinese investment saw light.

After a long debate in the Politburo Standing Committee, Deng Xiaoping and his administration decided to call for the Chinese Diaspora to come and invest on both agricultural and industrial fields. Because of the bad social conditions and the scarcity of job creation on the mainland during that period, China was ready to provide a cheap labour to encourage businessmen to establish their enterprises with complete confidence. The idea was to allow Chinese businessmen to try out with the market economy, importing advanced technology and managerial know-how, selling goods to the global markets, creating jobs and stimulating economic growth. This attempt from the party, though controlled to a large extent by the state, had seen a great success. As a consequence, investors from South-east Asia were pouring wave after wave to Beijing to ask for more economic opportunities in their mother country. Besides, since they represent the nearest refuge to the Chinese emigrants who own means of production, Hong Kong, South Korea, Japan, Taiwan and other regional states - which were already at the heart of capitalism- were the main furnishers of Diaspora businessmen in this experience.

To a given extent, this Chinese option was a consequence of many regional configurations. One of the reasons which pushed China to break with the old tradition of rejecting unquestionably all kinds of entrepreneurship is its observation of what was going on around the hemisphere and the neighboring countries in particular. In the observation, the Chinese leadership discovered many prosperous big cities with a complex infrastructure of production and super consuming societies. Though they are not located far from its boundaries and missing the potentialities that China had, these societies carried on growing steadily. Despite the disaster of the Second World War and the American launching of the two nuclear bombs on its lands, Japan for instance had become few years later a major



industrial power in the world. South Korea is another example which stands for the capitalist experimentation in the region and which saw a considerable development compared to many other Asian countries including China of the early communist period. Ironically, even Hong Kong and Taiwan which are taken as two Chinese autonomous departments were experiencing a significant improvement in the living standards of the people. To a large extent, this geostrategic fact urged the Chinese leadership to shift partially its conception and estimation of economic development.

From a geostrategic view, the other factor which has provoked this shift is the sudden dislocation of the centre of the world market. The centre has been for a long period pivoting around the European and the Atlantic regions which represented few decades ago more than 50 percent of world consumption. Today, the centre is on both costs of the Pacific Ocean where China and the United States have numerous common interests. Recently, the American President, Barack Obama has openly demonstrated the will of the White House to shift its military goals from the Middle East to the Far East. In the same way, the newly elected president Donald Trump has highlighted his intentions to take strict measures to contain China economically because of the threat it may represent to the American economic presence in the world. Besides, all along the election campaign, he shows China as the country which will mark the American foreign policy in the 21<sup>st</sup> c. These views have attracted the attention of the Communist Party and increased the tensions between the two sides. For the Chinese, the withdrawal of the American army from the Middle East to the Asia-Pacific aims at intimidating the Chinese growing economic relations in the region. Without doubt, Uncle Sam's intentions came as a result of the fundamental change which occurred in the international economic parameters and in order to fulfill the underlined goal of 'China containment policy'. Tariq Ali points out that:

The most significant feature of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is a big change in the structure of the capitalist world market that had till the beginning of this century been located firmly within the Atlantic zone. Without doubt, in the early years of this century, it shifted to the Far East... with China playing a huge role.

With this structural world shift, China has smoothly changed its vision and entered a new economic age where socialism is not surely the enemy of capitalism, but it is complimentary to it. Such daring reform from the Chinese leaders shows indeed the pragmatic side of the contemporary Communist Party. In the same context, the Chinese President and the initiator of private enterprise, Deng Xiaoping mentioned it clearly in a sarcastic way: “It does not matter if a cat is black or white so long as it catches mice” (Liao). At the end of his carrier, Deng becomes strongly convinced that socialism and market economy are not incompatible and that each of them can sustain the other when facing economic issues. Nowadays, it is clear that the organized private enterprises have significantly contributed to the rise of the Chinese economy. There is also no need to give more than a few arguments or statistics to show this economic rise. Yet, the one thing on which many intellectuals agree is that in China, contrary to the western world, it is the state which controls businessmen and not the opposite.

To illustrate, there are two important decisions from the central government which highlight an unprecedented economic policy and “marked the second round of Beijing-led reform” (Cease). Both of them foreground the capitalist tendency in the Chinese national and international affairs. The first one deals with the international relations, as it imposes on China to respect one particular order underlined by the Western allies after the fall of the Soviet Union. This one is the entry of Beijing to the WTO in 2001. After a long apparent hesitation, Beijing felt the necessity of going a little further in its reforms to keep its growth momentum in the new millennium. In fact, this decision marks a turning point in the

involvement of the communist China in the world economy, because it puts China at the same time in the obligation of opening its market to the United States and the obligation of controlling the impact that this can have on its society. Economically, these obligations in turn have seriously forced the Chinese to perform for the sake of having a great esteem in the decision making within the organization. Today, China is the only developing country in the world where the globalization (as conveyed in the WTO) is to a significant degree contained and managed to serve the economic interests of the Chinese society.

Thanks to its affiliation to the WTO, China has opened the world market in front of its private enterprises which have entered in a successful competition even with the western eminent corporations. Nowadays, the Chinese entrepreneurship -based almost entirely on the Chinese technology and know-how- is growing prosperous in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Multiple forums have been organized and subsidized by Beijing to create bridges based on the mutual interests between the Chinese and the other peoples of the South in the so called 'South-South Cooperation.' The most important one is the Sixth edition of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, held in 2015, and which, as declared in the platform of the forum, urges both sides "to jointly establish and develop comprehensive strategic and cooperative partnership..., economic cooperation for win-win results, exchanges and mutual learning between Chinese and African civilizations" (FOCAC).

In the summit of the forum, China with its autonomous provinces and 50 African countries underlined a rich economic and scientific agenda to enhance their bilateral relations. They established the special plan for commerce with Africa in which China is ready to provide the African countries with more than 20 billion Dollars of loans, to finance many infrastructural and agricultural projects, in addition to 18000 university grants for students and a number of professional trainings in China. To show the good intentions of the inaugurated program, the Chinese have already invested in many free projects as a sign of friendship. The

China-Niger Friendship Bridge which has become practical since 2001 is an illustration from hundreds of other Chinese unprofitable constructions in different corners of the big South. In addition, a big free project of building an Opera house in Algiers was signed in 2010, and inaugurated a year later to 1400 people at once. This project of about 3 billion dinars is entirely financed by the Chinese government as a gift from the Chinese to the Algerians. On the counterpart, Chinese entrepreneurship succeeded to get the lion's share of foreign investment in Africa. Observing this economic dynamism, the American media describe Africa as the El Dorado of Chinese enterprises. At the same time, there is an exteriorized feeling of discomfort because the Chinese economic progress, which takes and gives, threatens the presence of Western multinational corporations on the continent.

The other decision -which certainly preceded the one dealing with the international affairs- is the initiation to capitalism on the national scale. Chinese Administration proceeded to the privatization of business in the cities, farming, town and village enterprises, and to the creation of the Special Economic Zones. Actually, none of these measures was initiated by the state, but they were all a result of people's personal experiences in the towns or more importantly in the rural areas. Strategically, the state did not interrupt this kind of initiations, as long as they did not threaten the state sectors. On the contrary, after an experimental period, it formalizes them to become part of the constitution of the Communist Party, and it makes sure that the private sector is complementary to the state's one and each of them should serve the modernization of public services in China. In this context, professor Kin Chi Lau wrote an interesting article in which he examines the resistance and the innovations cultivated by the Chinese people to face the mediating effects of the globalization, and in which he attributes the Chinese development to the institutional and the popular daily struggle to find economic alternatives in order to sustain the inevitable socialism.

For example, private farming was introduced to some Chinese areas in 1980. However, it was not new for the Chinese, because it was actually issued all over China before the Chinese communist revolution. Then, since the early 1950s and the project of the GLF, the CP proceeded to the nationalization and the redistribution of agricultural lands. Hence, collective ownership of lands became the main source of the agricultural outcome and revenue for the Chinese all along the 1960s and 1970s. Yet, since the years of the Great Famine to which the Chinese communist reforms contributed significantly, people in some areas of China went back to private ownership of lands in the abandoned places. When noticing how lucrative it was for the agriculture and the economy in general, the Chinese leaders restored private farming in some areas. At the same time, they left collective farming in the areas where the production is growing prosperous.

Another example of capitalism on the national scale is the creation of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) “where special policies and measures support specific economic functions..., and facilitate experimentation and innovation over a wide range of industries.” Like private farming, SEZs started being practical with market-oriented reforms of the 1980s. China then was geographically divided into economic areas with a considerable autonomous activity. Some of these areas were devoted to free trade economy with the complete intention to take advantages of other experiences in the region. Shenzhen, which is located not far from Hong Kong, is an example of free trade SEZs. Cautiously, the state controls and promotes all the SEZs to balance socialism with capitalism and to avoid any possible economic disobedience. Through time, this policy has stimulated a fair competition between the zones with different activities, as well as interdependence which serves national integrity and unity.

Symmetrically in recent years, China from time to time dismisses free trade opportunities in order to maintain socialism as the main Chinese economic philosophy and to select what will not erode half a century of managerial experimentation. What shows the

Chinese selective tendency in the free market economy is the way it considers the Trans-Pacific Partnership Treaty (TPPT). The latter's final proposal was signed on February 2016 by 12 countries from the Pacific Rim including the United States, Canada, Japan and Singapore. It aims chiefly at lowering tariff barriers to trade among the participants. Though China has at numerous occasions shown its readiness to implement free market principles in the Chinese policy making so long it does not threaten socialism and so far it serves Chinese interests, yet this time it has not integrated this partnership. Apparently, Beijing 'cautiously welcomes' the deal. According to Xinhua state news headlines, China's Ministry of Commerce hopes the TPP may "contribute to the Asia-Pacific's trade, investment and economic growth." However, China till now does not show any official interest in riding this American horse. Notwithstanding the invitation of the American Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, the communist Party declined without giving clarifications.

Some analyses of the Chinese position argue that China cannot integrate the TPP because it is a "high standards agreement" which china is not able to fulfill. But this view appears to be unjustified, because in the last decades China had integrated other world organizations of higher standards such as the WTO. Some analyses instead regard the agreement by bringing the U.S. closer to the hemisphere as a direct threat to the Chinese regional growing power. In fact, many bilateral agreements were signed in the recent years between Beijing and the surrounding capitals to manage the trade rules in the hemisphere and to avoid sporadic economic crisis. By these bilateral agreements, China is contributing largely in building the body of the commercial law in Southeast Asia. Besides, knowing that the region represents an important market for the American products, Washington views the Chinese move in the region as an economic danger, just in the same way as many other Asian countries. This view is clearly expressed in Obama's words: "When more than 95 percent of our potential customers live outside our borders, we can't let countries like China write the

rules of the global economy,” he furthers in a statement. “We should write those rules” (The White House). Most realistic analyses move toward this interpretation of the strategic role of the TPP. The latter is intending to contain China and provide a way for the U.S. and the other 11 Member States to slow down Chinese economic and trading power.

Few years ago, Professor John Mearsheimer, one of the key edited experts on the Chinese issue, predicted this evolution in the Sino-American relations in his book *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. He argues that if China continues to grow economically in the same way it has done over the past 30 years, it will become a ‘regional hegemon’, and the U.S. “will once again face a potential peer competitor.” But what makes a sense is that, from the view of great power politics, Washington will not allow this to happen. Therefore:

It will go to enormous lengths to prevent China from achieving regional hegemony. Most of Beijing’s neighbors, including India, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, Russia, and Vietnam, will join with the United States to contain Chinese power. The result will be an intense security competition with considerable potential for war.<sup>30</sup>

This explains plainly the reason which pushes China to distance itself from the TPP agreement. What is also predictable from previous economic experiences is that if China proves the agreement is not plotting to prevent her from economic growth, it will unlikely integrate the coalition in the near future. Strategically, Beijing is pursuing an open-minded day by day policy, and before taking any decision, it makes sure it will not affect its economic progress. Basically, an economy premised on these rules will keep performing, just in the same way China is doing nowadays.

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<sup>30</sup> The last Chapter of Measheimer’s book from which the quotation is available on: <<http://nationalinterest.org/commentary/can-china-rise-peacefully-10204>>

If the Chinese integrated the market economy and the WTO, it is because they know it is essential to revitalize the state controlled sectors and indispensable to save socialism as a whole. Although, from the outside the economic aspects so far discussed in this chapter seem to have no relation with cultural hegemony and resistance, but actually they are the heart and the bed stone of cultural resistance in China. The Khaldunian theory of cultural imperialism and assimilation is built on the notion of economic development and power. In his works, Ibn Khaldun explains the way underdeveloped societies are forced to take refuge in the culture of developed and wealthy societies. One may deduce from this view that the first step to back one's culture is by economic performance. Accordingly, China by the economic revolution of the late 20<sup>th</sup> C is not only protecting its culture but it makes it also the standard for other underdeveloped and developing societies.

To conclude, Chinese resistance to cultural imperialism is a multi-dimensional project. It takes form of intellectual debates in the Chinese universities. The same debates are translated into cultural, political and economic performing activities. Culturally, resistance consists briefly in preserving national identity and social 'Chineseness' of the mainland through an enlightening revival of the Confucian tradition and through different cultural ceremonies with the purpose of restoring the Chinese national pride and organizing an affectionate meeting between people and their culture. Politically, it consists of restoring a new political structure, more reformist than radical and more compatible with the Chinese culture. Indeed, thanks to the involvement of the intellectual elite, the new political structure has proved its efficiency in dealing with national and international issues. Economically, it consists of a wide support for socialism as the first philosophy of the CP and a flexible shift to a controlled capitalism. As a result, this economic strategy has succeeded in maintaining social equality at the higher level and in regenerating an economic boom in the dynamic



provinces. All these performances represent the iron heads of the Chinese cultural resistance which will unlikely continue along the new millennium.

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## **General Conclusion**

All along this study, it is arguable that American culture, as defined and explained in the previous chapters, stands for one major aspect of American dominance in the world. Today, no one can deny that the United States is not only powerful politically and economically but also culturally. In fact, culture has often served the American hegemonic policy in order to gain access to material resources of other sovereign territories. It provides an efficient tool to control minds and genes through virtual conceptualizations of modern life and consistent media abstractions as well as discourse production. From a postcolonial perspective and a realistic observation of contemporary world, this thesis goes through some provocative questions, and comes out with scrutinized findings which humbly clear the forest of American imperialism from some ambiguities. It describes theoretically and historically concepts which often may have a variety of connotations and events which impartially point out the American expansion. Symmetrically, it analyzes the functioning of American cultural hegemony in distant cultural entities and its role in Washington's worldwide interests, as it shells Chinese cultural resistance and its significant role in consolidating Chinese independence and performance in different domains.

Theoretically, postcolonial studies answer an important number of questions about different forms of power. Besides, all the questions presented since the beginning of the chapter one provide an overview about the theory. They simplify the theoretical constituents of postcolonialism, the fact which makes the latter's feasibility in the study of American imperialism. In the characteristics of this philosophical and literary movement, three important elements are highlighted: progressive or hybrid identity, cultural difference and quest for the past. These chosen characteristics (there are surely others) are in complete opposition with the mainstream of American thinking which aims at universalizing the American values and culture in general as the standards for human civilization. Another

characteristic which is implicitly included is that of deconstruction. One gesture of the latter is not to naturalize what is not natural, and not to assume all the time that what is conditioned by institutions or society is a postulate or a scientific truth. In other words, knowledge which comes to existence with a prejudice that the other should not participate in the making of the world's human heritage is not reliable because it commonly misses objectivity, and at the same time it contains hegemonic intentions. Unlikely, such knowledge is constructed either to exclude one cultural bloc or to include another one on the basis of race, gender or class. Thus, it should be revisited and deconstructed in a way to guarantee that the findings approved in this knowledge are retrievable, rigorous and replicable.

In a scientific research, concepts are descriptive elements because they limit the field of investigation and classify the ideas within the text. In the postcolonial theory, culture is defined as an important concept, for it is widely used by scholars to determine the ideological location and the life style of a society. It is commonly seen as a means of indirect (informal) control of a society over another as it is the case with the US over other cultures around the globe. Accordingly, in modern cultural studies, post-colonial cultures are apprehended side by side with imperialism. Besides, the latter is studied through the course of time with different appellations: colonialism, neocolonialism and cultural imperialism.

All the appellations enhance the notion of hegemony. Undoubtedly, this fact explains continuity in the hegemonic practice in the contemporary world, yet this time taking the abstract form and transcending the progressive epistemology in the use of power. Moreover, analysis of discourse from a postcolonial perspective shows how much a particular representation of 'the other' legitimizes some practices and makes the process of control smooth and discreet. In fact, all these concepts and characteristics that are investigated in the chapter about the postcolonial theory constitute inextricable factors of American imperialism

and all of them represent an important feature of Washington's international interventionism in modern world.

Historically, the time line of the American expansionist policy and the multi-dimensional field implications in building the American empire denote concretely that, since the roots of the American state, culture has played a significant role in pressing the process and in concealing the deployed means for this purpose. All along the three important historical phases, culture has been permanently an active tool of propaganda and control. First, it served as a means of distinction between the Natives and the settlers or, in another way, between the civilized and the uncivilized. On this premises, the assault against Indians to seize their lands and other indigenous communitarian properties were legitimized during the Westward Expansion.

By the end of the Civil War which occurred in light of a fast territorial expansion in the Midwest, American rulers showed an immense consensus around the ideological intentions of the 'manifest destiny' to spread the American culture in the hemisphere in order to ensure security around the borders and maintain social stability inside the borders. In the last phase, American culture reached Asia and served the containment of communism during the Cold War, and the flowering of cultural relations after WWII was in many ways a culmination of the globalizing trend that had began on the eve of the twentieth century. Being sustained with media technology, the American culture is today the basic iron-head of globalization which is actually nothing but a mere Americanization. In fact, even most conservative societies, such as the Chinese society, are getting stuffed with American cultural products and haunted by American values.

Besides, the worldly dimension of American culture unveils a significant project which intends to sum up world diversity in the American life style and to globalize the latter



on the virtue of liberal democracy. In turn, every single progress in the project has given the United States new perspectives to control systematically both international commerce and politics because of the devoted efforts to hijack memory of societies and make them feel inferior in front of the American memory. Sceptically, if the United States has become a superpower, it is precisely thanks to its civilization which is, in itself, the product of cultural heritage of the Americans and which has kept manufacturing since the settlement period. On this ground, the study of the reasons behind the American global hegemony pushes many researchers to argue that it is thanks to Washington's economic productivity that American culture crosses borders to find place in other societies. Some others, instead, argue that it is due to Uncle Sam's political implication in worldwide affairs and his big hand over international and global organizations.

However, the findings of this investigation underline that culture has continuously been behind the American economic growth and its institutional control of the world. They also highlight that despite the deliberate mobilization of many factors, culture has most of the time been the first step of the American hegemonic process which implicates politics in the second step and economy in the third. In other words, the American administration, first of all, implements its cultural soft power represented in the American model and lifestyle to control individual and collective memories in foreign social groups. In this way, the US does not need direct oppressive policies to manage another territory as it was the case with the traditional imperialist practices which are today forbidden by the international law and the UN resolutions. In addition, because the American control is indirect and soft, the US can avoid some forms of direct confrontation with the targeted societies and her interests' rivals. Then in the second step, it mobilizes its political faculties with the assistance of the American embassies, Department of Foreign Affairs and more importantly very sophisticated mass media corporations to find out strategies which propagate 'the American mind' and 'modern'

civilization within distant countries. By doing this, Uncle Sam succeeds in crossing the river which stands between him and wealth. As a consequence of the cultural affection resulted in a long process of propaganda, the American cultural products invade world markets and the American ideology overwhelms human civilizational heritage in different corners of the globe.

After studying carefully some cultural concepts from a postcolonial perspective and briefly the history of the American expansion, it is inductively clear that the American culture is of a significant role in the imperialist practice of the United States. The Chinese case demonstrates that culture is the matrix and the catalyst of the American modern strategy in dominating the globe and in reducing non-American (sometimes even Western) societies to American-culture consuming societies. Without doubt, this fact has a far lasting impact on China because it touches crucial social aspects of the country and puts in danger its national identity. Spontaneously and unconsciously for most of the time, 'the open door' policy of the 1980s and the adoption of the American style have to a large scale distorted Chinese traditional social structure which ensures thoroughly popular integrity and national stability. In a country of almost a billion and half of inhabitants, integrity and stability are surely more important than other institutional privileges. In addition, the incursion of American culture to the Confucian world has given birth to a new social consumption growing analogous with MacDonal model. Actually, in recent years observations demonstrate how Chinese people experiences a metamorphosis from an economical and non-wasting people to the opposite. The origin of this shift is resulted in the shift from the Confucian tradition, which sanctifies natural resources and encourages reasonable use of them, to the American consuming tradition. In fact, such change in the attitudes has made of China a beneficent market for American multinational corporations and cultural products.

Chinese resistance to cultural imperialism is a multi-dimensional project. It takes form of intellectual debates in the Chinese universities. The same debates are transformed into cultural, political and economic performing activities. Culturally, resistance consists briefly of preserving national identity and social ‘Chineseness’ on mainland China through an enlightening revival in the Confucian tradition and through different cultural ceremonies with the purpose of restoring Chinese national pride and organizing an affectionate meeting between the people and their culture. Politically, it consists of restoring a new political structure, more reformist than radical and more compatible with the Chinese culture. Indeed, thanks to the involvement of the intellectual elite, the new political structure has proved its efficiency in dealing with national and international issues, as it has adopted a non-alignment policy in the United Nations Organization and noninterference in countries’ internal and international conflicts. Economically, it consists of a wide support for socialism as the first philosophy of the CP and a flexible shift to a controlled capitalism. As a result, this economic strategy has succeeded to maintain social equality at a higher level and to regenerate an economic boom in the dynamic semi-autonomous provinces. All these performances represent a challenge to the American interventionist, neoliberal and late-capitalist agenda. At the same time, they personify the iron heads of the Chinese cultural resistance which will unlikely continue along the new millennium.

The crucial aspect of the intellectual resistance on the mainland is that it is the catalyst of the Chinese rise in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. One cannot understand Chinese economic growth and political position in world affairs without having a close attention on the way resistance puts in work all social classes to face the Big Brother America. In fact, in the same way cultural imperialism gives Uncle Sam new perspectives in every single progress outside his borders; cultural resistance has opened the way to a national cultural fabric and unveiled new horizons of progress for the Communist Party. Today, the Chinese recognized that the

only way to survive economic crisis, as that of the Great Leap Forwards' years, is by national commitment for cultural production and intellectual participation, and that every attempt to progress relying only on imitation and 'whole-sale westernization', as it was the case with the republican China of the pre-communist revolution, is a failure with both human and material losses. In short, through the three different performances discussed in chapter four, one may see clearly how the Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese social and intellectual activism converted resistance against a foreign superpower to an internal performance. In short, every step forward in political reforms and economic innovation is indebted to the Chinese strong will to preserve national and cultural identity to face the incursion of American culture by using the available local potentialities. Besides, studying the Chinese strategy of resistance from a distant angle would certainly open new perspectives for historians and researchers in general when dealing with world issues. It would unequivocally encourage many countries around the globe and in particular the Third World countries to learn from the Chinese experience in order to revise their cultural agendas in their modernization perspectives. Hence, instead of approaching Chinese reaction to cultural hegemony just as an independent phenomenon, it is more appropriate to observe its remarkable contribution in the making of contemporary China.

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