- 1 Selective Prepared Carbon Nanomaterials for Advanced Photocatalytic Application in
- 2 Environmental Pollutant Treatment and Hydrogen Production
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28 Abstract:

Highly-efficient materials and technologies for environmental pollutant treatment and 29 hydrogen production are urgently needed in "green" 21<sup>st</sup> century. Notably, 30 photocatalytic process over carbon nanomaterials (CNMs)-modified photocatalysts is 31 an effective solution for these crises. CNMs (e.g., fullerenes, carbon nanotubes, 32 graphene, carbon nanofibers, and carbon quantum dots) reveal remarkable 33 morphological, mechanical, electrical and optical properties, which have been of 34 significantly scientific and technological interest in photocatalysi 35 Until now, many efforts have been made to take advantage of these unique s 36 nd surface-dependent properties of CNMs for photocatalytic process. In s review, we firstly summarize 37 selective preparation of CNMs that has a grat impact on their photocatalytic 38 performance. Then we provide an updated outline of advanced photocatalytic 39 vironmental pollution and hydrogen energy application of CNMs in addressi 40 of various CNMs play in the enhancement of crisis. The difference in e roje 41 s also discussed. Lastly, we discuss the limitations of ce) 42 photocatalytic per orm CNMs applied in photocatalysis or even wider fields. We hope this review will 43 project a fast developmental path with providing a wide view of recent preparation 44 methods, applications, prospects and challenges. 45

46

47 Key words: CNMs; selective preparation; photocatalysis; environmental pollutant
48 treatment; hydrogen production.

49 **1. Introduction** 

The importance of efficient pollutant treatment and hydrogen production is 50 evident from the aggravation of energy and environmental crisis [1-7]. 51 Photocatalysis is a low-energy technology for environmental treatment owing 52 53 to the high efficiency for reduction on highly toxic contaminants and oxidation degradation on organic pollutants serving H<sub>2</sub>O and CO<sub>2</sub> as the final products 54 [8-12]. Additionally, since the photo-generation of hydrogen from water over 55 dioxide titanium  $(TiO_2)$ photoanode under ligh diation 56 [13], photocatalytically splitting water has been consi 57 a potentially significant strategy for hydrogen production [1216]. Thus in recent decades, 58 photocatalytic process has attracted enormour, interest as an effevtive method 59 for both environmental pollutant treatment and hydrogen production. However, 60 most of the photocatalytic pr eed to be improved because of the low 61 quantum conversion efficiency of the absorbed light to charge carriers and high 62 21]. Therefore, developing efficient methods for 63 carrier recombine tion better photocatalytic process is in demand. 64

Photocatalysis over carbon nanomaterials (CNMs)-modified materials is an enabling process to address environmental pollution and hydrogen energy crisis [22-24]. CNMs are one of the most promising nanomaterials today, including fullerenes, carbon nanotubes (CNTs), graphene (GR), carbon quantum dots (CQDs) and so on (Fig. 1). CNMs are classified based on the 70 number of dimensions that not confined to the nanoscale range (<100 nm), zero-dimensional (0D) nanoparticles, one-dimensional 71 including (1D) nanotubes, and two-dimensional (2D) nanosheets. Since they were found, 72 CNMs have been applied in various fields, like supercapacitors [25], batteries 73 74 [26], hydrogen storage [27], solar cells [28], and biomedical applications [29]. Moreover, environmental pollutants, such as heavy metal ions [30-37], organic 75 dyes [38], colorless organics [39-45], inorganics [46] and co-pollution [47-49], 76 apt to be effectively treated by using CNMs [50-52]. ticular, CNMs 77 attracted enormous interest in photocatalysis field the remarkable 78  $\pi$ -system formed by sp<sup>2</sup> hybridization. And C As show wonderful stability, 79 robustness, biocompatibility, chemical ine the igh photoluminescence (PL) 80





Fig. 1 Illustration of common used CNMs: fullerenes, carbon nanotubes,graphene and carbon quantum dots.

Up to now, many efforts have been made to take advantage of the unique 85 size-, surface- and structure-dependent properties of CNMs applied in 86 photocatalysis [58-62]. Fantastic progress has been obtained in promoting the 87 photocatalytic performance of CNMs. CNMs are significant for their structural 88 89 variability, which has a positive effect on the photocatalytic performance [63]. Further application of CNMs is initially limited by the complicated and 90 uneconomical processes for their selective preparation with desired scale [64]. 91 Therefore, simple and cost-effective methods for selective 92 preparation of CNMs are rapidly in a great demand. On the other ha 93 lication of CNMs in pollutant treatment and hydrogen production a wn increasing interest owing 94 to the aggravation of energy and environmental crisis. Previously,  $\pi$ - $\pi$ 95 96 interactions and mechanochemistry of CNMs were discussed [63, 65], the application of carbon-based Rodrigues and Smith 97 [66] ed nanomaterials for remova of chemical and biological pollutants from water, De 98 marized many commercial applications of CNTs, and Volder et.al. [6 99 S11) Miao et.al. [68] elaborated on recent advances in catalytic application of CNTs 100 101 catalysts or functionalized CNTs. However, comprehensive summary on CNMs photocatalytic applications for environmental pollutant treatment and hydrogen 102 production and the role of  $\pi$ - $\pi$  interactions and mechanochemistry in the 103 photocatalytic process is still absent. 104

This review firstly pays attention to the reversible and sustainable selective 105 preparation process of CNMs. Then recent advanced progress in CNMs 106 photocatalytic applications are summarized and analyzed, along with further 107 exploration of the role of  $\pi$ - $\pi$  interactions and mechanochemistry in the 108 photocatalytic process. Finally, challenges and future directions of 109 CNMs-modified photocatalysts are discussed. 110

### 111 **2.** Selective preparation of CNMs

It was reported that structural variability positively influenced performance of 112 CNMs in photocatalytic process [63, 69, 70]. In detail, the ocatalytic properties 113 are affected by the size and structure, which make y depend on the preparation 114 process of CNMs [64]. The primary barrier of me selective preparation is the 115 complicated and uneconomical production process. Therefore, simple, cost-effective, 116 and eco-friendly methods for Cl tive preparation are urgently needed before 117 CNMs are widely used in protocatalytic process for environmental pollutant 118 treatment and hyprogen 119 rod action.

120 2.1 Zero-dimensional fullerenes

Fullerenes, zero-dimensional (0D) spherical carbon cages, are simply classified based on the number of carbon atoms [71]. Fullerene  $C_{60}$  is the smallest and almost abundant fullerene, followed by  $C_{70}$  and other higher fullerenes ( $C_n$ , n > 70). Fullerenes are chemically reactive owing to the  $\pi$ -system, like combining with semiconductors and influencing the electron donor-acceptor system [69]. The characteristic endowed fullerenes with the capacity to be applied in the formation of novel photocatalytic materials with expected physicochemical properties [70-73]. Notably, the size of fullerenes has a great impact on fullerene properties. To further explore their size-dependent properties, many different methods have been presented to prepare fullerene molecules with desired size [74-76].

The foremost method for fullerene preparation in preparative quantities is 132 vaporizing graphite with resistive heating in the arc plasma. der low helium 133 pressure [77]. The obtained fullerenes can keep stable 134 for at least a few weeks and be used without special treatment, but with low efficient production. 135 Soon after, a 3-phase thermal plasma proc was presented for fullerene 136 production, which realized the independent control of the input carbon rate [78]. 137 ethod to control the preparation process And Churilov et.al. [79] pres 138 in the high-frequency ac plasma by changing the helium pressure, which 139 of arc temperature and electron concentration. Though illuminated the effect 140 fullerene production are mature, selective preparation of fullerene with desired 141 size is in the early stage. For this reason, properties and application of fullerene 142 in photocatalytic field still remain unclear. 143

Commonly, there are three methods used for fullerene selective preparation (Fig. 2): (i) fractional crystallization. The unit operation of fractional crystallization is divided into three steps - dissolution of crude fullerene soot extract, heating, and filtration. During the crystallization process,
deposits of similar compositions from every procedure can be obtained with
higher quality. To date, fractional crystallization has been a mature technology.
It is simple, cost-efficient, but time-consuming because of the multiple
crystallization procedures [80].

(ii) chromatographic process. Traditional chromatographic process for fullerene 152 selective preparation often use neutral alumina as the stationary phase, and use 153 hexane or toluene as the mobile phase [81]. The traditional 154 cess has some basic drawbacks, such as limited column loadings, tir 155 uming operation, and irreversible adsorption of fullerenes. Researchers in this field have been 156 always trying to solve these drawbacks. ent years, using metal-organic 157 framework as the stationary phase for in proving the chromatographic process 158 4]. Current improved chromatography has drawn increasing attent 159 possesses facile operations, reversible adsorption-desorption of fullerene, 160 narufacturing process. In addition, chromatographic low-cost and 161 aid technology shows the ability to achieve large-scale selective fullerene 162 preparation [76]. 163

(iii) selective complexation. Among these methods, selective complexation via
designing appropriate molecular receptor for fullerene shows a high efficiency
in selective preparation [85, 86]. Complementarity in size, shape, structure,
molecular symmetry, and electronic donor-accept relying on the host-guest

interaction between receptor and fullerene are crucial factors [87]. Specially, in 168 design of coordination metallosupramolecular receptors, 169 the different  $\pi$ -extended systems was utilized as molecular building blocks to improve the 170 selectivity [64]. There are many examples of designed receptors used for 171 fullerene selective preparation, such as the receptors synthesized by 172 cyclodextrins [88], cycloparaphenylenes or CNTs [89], and  $\pi$ -extended 173 derivatives of tetrathiafulvalene (TTF) [90]. Herein, a coordination 174 metallosupramolecular calixar[3] arenes cage containing  $\pi ex$ ded moieties is 175 discussed at length [91]. It can be used for  $C_{60}$  set 176 preparation in a reversible way. This calixar[3] arenes cage can clude  $C_{60}$  to form an adduct 177 with 1:1 stoichiometry. Though the cavity is ditable to encapsulate  $C_{70}$  due to 178 from the aspect of shape complementary, C<sub>70</sub> is scarcely reacted with 179 calixar[3]arenes cage. This se the unsuitable complementarity of 180 molecular symmetry between calixar[3]arenes cage and C<sub>70</sub> [92]. Lithium 181 r[3] arenes cage can enhance the inclusion of  $C_{60}$  within cations bound to 182 alix the cage, whereas the bigger sodium cations can impede  $C_{60}$  encapsulation via 183 adjusting an ellipsoidal shape when they are bound to the receptor as a 184 substitution of lithium cations. This adjustment in the shape and size of the cage 185 caused by cation binding contributes to fullerene  $C_{60}$  selective preparation. 186



Fig. 2 Reported strategies of fullerene selective preparation: (a) fractional
crystallization, (b) chromatographic method (c) selective complexation with
molecular receptor. Reprinted from Ref [14] with permission from Elsevier.
There are still some challenge an selective complexation method before

applying in industrial preparation. On the one hand, it is not easy to determine 192 sith ut visible phenomenon. On the other hand, the space the extent of real 193 ion of designed molecular receptors may be blocked by other materials with higher 194 affinity than fullerenes, which also happens in chromatographic process. In a 195 word, selective complexation, fractional crystallization, and chromatography 196 are available, meanwhile greener technologies with recyclable process need to 197 be further explored for selective preparation of fullerenes. 198

199 2.2 One-dimensional CNTs

CNTs, one-dimensional (1D) cylinder-shaped macromolecules, were 200 found during the synthesis of fullerenes by arc discharge [93]. The diameter of 201 CNT lies on the size of the semi-fullerene located at the end. Since they were 202 found, CNTs have been the foci of numerous versatile fields due to their 203 diameter- and helicity-dependent properties [94-96]. They are another one of 204 the most representative examples of CNMs due to their excellent properties 205 which are similar to fullerenes [97]. CNTs are classified into multi-walled 206 carbon nanotubes (MWCNTs) and single-walled carbon nano es (SWCNTs), 207 relying on the rolling layers of GR films. 208 Wide application of CNTs is reflected in the yield capacity which exceeds 209 several thousand tons a year [98, 99]. Repid innovations in the scalable 210 production of CNTs have extended CNT research, like arc-discharge, laser 211 ablation, and chemical vapor (CVD) (Fig. 3) [98-100]. Among these 212 methods, low-temperature plasma is a common used method owing to its 213 dely distributed active species, improved catalyst multiple benefit 214 lik high-efficiency and sustainability 215 activation. in energy [101]. The low-temperature plasma contains positively charged ions, non-ionized atoms 216 and free electrons which causes dissociation, ionization and excitation. 217 Furthermore, this method can occur on the surface of materials without 218 changing their main properties [101]. Laser ablation method is similar to 219 low-temperature plasma. The advantage of laser ablation is to form high-purity 220

221 CNTs with defined chirality structure. But it is expensive and difficult for laser 222 ablation to scale up in CNT selective preparation [100]. CVD method is mainly 223 used for large-scale production of CNTs. CNTs are formed by the 224 decomposition of CNTs precursor over transition metal catalyst and deposition. 225 However, the prepared CNTs by CVD method show poor qualities that contain 226 impurities, which is not suitable for CNT selective preparation [102].

For greener preparation of CNTs, cost-effective and eco-friendly 227 approaches were reported to produce high quality TS. A recent 228 preparation process used polymer waste like high-dens 229 Nethylene (HDPE) as the carbon source [103]. The conversion from polymer waste to MWCNTs 230 happens in a closed environment via thermal dissociation with autogenic 231 pressure and chemical catalysts. The first step is to add used HDPE which 232 alt acetate (CoAc) catalyst into a 5 cc contains 20 wt% C<sub>4</sub>H<sub>6</sub>CoO<sub>4</sub> 233 autoclave. In the autoclate, the state and structure of HDPE change with the 234 nperature in nitrogen atmosphere. Polymer waste begins 235 increase of reaction to to decompose at about 573 K and the outcomes containing water vapor, CO<sub>2</sub>, 236 and molecules with several carbon atoms can be recorded by Mass 237 measurement. When temperature reaches above 873 K, the products include 238 hydrogen, water vapor, and hydrocarbons. As the temperature up to 973 K, all 239 the bonds of C-H and C-C start to get break, and the products consist of 240 hydrocarbons and solid carbon coupled with hydrogen gas (Fig. 3d). This 241

controlled dissociation of polymer waste is a reproducible technology for
MWCNTs production, providing an opportunity for sustainable development
and achieving a significant addition in industrial value.



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Fig. 3 Selective preparation of CMTs: (a, b) arc discharge technique, (c) CVD,
(d) thermal dissociation of bigi-density polyethylene (HDPE). Reprinted from
Ref [100] with permitsion from The Royal Society of Chemistry.

249 2.3 Two-dimensional OR

GR, the thinnest known material, is a two-dimensional (2D) carbon-based nanomaterial consisting of sp<sup>2</sup> bonded carbon atoms [104]. Since Geim and Novoselov seminal report on monolayer GR electronic properties [105], studies on its special properties, synthesis and various application have escalated sharply. Owing to the unique extended honeycomb network, GR can be used as the basic building block for other members of CNMs like 0D fullerene and 1D CNT [106]. GR reveals zero effective mass, giant intrinsic mobility in charge carriers, record thermal conductivity and stiffness [107-109]. And the electrons in GR show a linear dispersion and behave like massless relativistic particles, showing optical transparency, ambipolar electric field effect, transport via relativistic Dirac fermions and the quantum Hall effect [110, 111]. Because of these unique properties, GR shows the potential to promote the transfer of charge carriers along its planar surface. Hence, GR has been regarded as a promising candidate to be applied in photocatalysis [112-114].

Usually, there are four main methods for mass manuf. 263 of pristine GR: (i) Extended GR. It contains CVD growth on epitaxia 264 nt to the surface of metal substrates. May et.al. [115] first explained about extended GR without 265 rationalizing the low-energy non modes of a graphite electron 266 dif. 267 monolayer.

(ii) Micromechanical exformation. Several studies elaborated on
micromechanical exfoliation and outlined the great value for GR, inspiring
continuous exploration in their potential science and applications [116-118].

(iii) Exfoliation of graphite. This typical method is making graphite powdersexposed in organic solvents with high intensity ultrasound [119].

(iv) Other methods, such as bottom-up synthesis [120], growth on substrates
[121], and arc discharge [122]. Issues of control in GR layers and minimization
in folds have been solved via these methods.

Now the effort is made to achieve large-scale preparation of GR sheets 276 with ideal thickness, because their unique properties are almost only bound up 277 with individual sheet [123]. However, GR sheets show the tendency to 278 agglomerate irreversibly and even restack to form graphite in the presence of 279 strong van der Waals forces and  $\pi$ - $\pi$  stacking. Compared with other methods, 280 chemical reduction process was more suitable for high-quality GR sheet 281 preparation. Chua et.al. [124] summarized the state-of-the-art in GR preparation 282 via reduction process, including more than fifty types of re-283 ming agent. For mass manufacture, it is encouraged to prepare GR fr 284 phite crystals via reduction of graphene oxide (GO) [125-127]. The reduction process is shown in 285 Fig. 4a. Graphite crystal possesses strong ve der Waals forces between GR 286 sheets (Fig. 4b). If using graphite crystal as the initial material, the powerful 287 van der Waals forces are req be broken at first. Graphite oxide is the 288 oxidized form of graphte with oxygen functionalities mainly containing 289 xide and hydroxyl. These oxygen functionalities enlarge carbonyl, carbo 290 ep the interlayer spacing which can weaken the forces between GR sheets for 291 easier exfoliation. GO (Fig. 4c) is an intermediate, which can be gained from 292 graphite oxide via ultrasonication or mechanical stirring. GO mainly exists in 293 the state of mono-, bi- or few-layer sheets. Lastly, GR (Fig. 4d) with defects 294 can be obtained from GO reduction through thermal treatment, electrochemical 295 technology or chemical reduction [126-128]. The reduction of oxygen 296

functionalities on GO follows the mechanism exhibited in Fig. 5. The reduction of epoxide begins from a ring opening by reducing agents (e.g. iodides and hydrazine) and then elimination from the benzene ring (Fig. 5a). The first step of carbonyl group reduction is to form hydroxyl groups, and next is dehydration which affords olefins (Fig. 5b). The reduction of carboxyl starts from the protonation at  $\alpha$ -position of C=C bond combined with C=O bond, and then decarboxylation to regenerate C=C bond (Fig. 5c) [129].



Fig. 4 (a) The process from graphite to GR; (b) Pristine mono-layer sheet of graphite; (c) Mono-layer sheet of graphite oxide or GO; (d) Synthesized mono

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307

GR from reduction of GO.



308

Fig. 5 (a) Reduction mechanism of epoxide on GR; (b) Reduction mechanism 309 of carbonyl on GO; (c) Reduction mechanism of carboxyl g 310 2.4 Three-dimensional CNMs-based networks 311 With the development of 0D fullerenes, 1D CNTs and 2D GR, macroscopic 312 three-dimensional (3D) superlattices networks based of CNMs has received a huge 313 amount of attention [130]. CNMs, constructed <sup>P</sup> hybridized carbon atoms, can be 314 used as building blocks for 3D networks ubrication (Fig. 6) [131]. Hexagonal carbon 315 rings were not employed i covalently interconnection with CNMs at multi 316 terminal nodes. The m chant properties of 3D networks for axial compression was 317 of the covalent interconnections. On the other hand, 3D unprecedented be 318 superlattices revealed porosity properties, minimized agglomeration and re-stacking, 319 remarkable surface and electrical properties. These significant properties endows the 320 3D networks with the potential to be used for the fabrication of novel promising 321 materials applied in catalytic process, environmental pollution treatment (e.g. 322 adsorption and filtration), and molecular storage. Previously, Nardecchia, Chabot, and 323 324 Dasgupta et.al. [130-132] elaborated on the synthesis of 3D networks, containing GR-, GO- CNT-based structures, and GR/CNT hybrid structures. Therefore, this section
just make a brief summarization and focus on the potential properties that can be
utilized in addressing environmental pollution and energy crisis.

There are many methods for the synthesis of 3D CNMs-based networks, such as 328 hydro-/solvo-thermal process, template directed approaches, reduction, self-assembly, 329 CVD, free standing direct dry and so on [133-136]. 3D networks fabricated via 330 template directed approaches showed superhydrophobicity, high organic solvent and 331 oil capacity. 3D networks constructed through free standing di 332 dry possessed scalable size, high strength and rigidity. Self-assembled 3D 333 ks revealed benign elongation, high adsorption with reversible characteristic, and rapid compression 334 recovery. All the synthesized 3D CNMs-based poty orks were found to behave high 335 conductivity and chemical stability, which showed the potential application in the 336 fabrication of novel CNMs-base s for advanced photocatalytic application in 337 environmental pollutant treatment and hydrogen production. 338



Fig. 6 0D, 1D, and 2D CNMs used as building blocks for 3D networks
fabrication. Reprinted from ref [131] with permission from Elsevier.

## 342 **3.** Advanced photocatalytic application of CNMs

CNMs, revealing remarkable conductivity, thermostability, adsorptivity 343 344 and controllability with delocalized conjugated structures, have a great impact on electron transfer process [40, 126, 137]. And specially, the surface 345 properties of CNMs can be adjusted through chemical modification, which 346 provides many opportunities for functionalized composites [121, 138]. To date, 347 CNMs have gained extensive attention in photocatalysis field. Generally, the 348 enhanced photocatalytic performance caused by the introduct of CNMs was 349 ascribed to two aspects: (i) higher absorption capability 350 light due to their black body properties, (ii) longer life span of elec on-hole pairs because CNMs 351 play as an electron reservoir to trap photog ne ateu electrons [70, 73, 139, 140]. 352 Since CNMs have similar structure and dectronic properties in common, there 353 play similar roles in the improvement is a question that whether all 354 of photocatalytic activity 355

# 356 3.1 Environmental polytart treatment

In photocatal vic process, CB electrons (e<sup>-</sup>) and valence band holes (VB h<sup>+</sup>) are produced when CNMs-modified photocatalysts are irradiated with light [141]. Electrons can directly reduce environmental pollutants like bromate, or be transferred to electron acceptors (i.e. CNMs) to react with molecular oxygen to produce superoxide radical species for oxidation of organic pollutants [142, 143]. Holes with strong oxidizing property plays a direct role in photocatalytic 363 oxidation process, or react with adsorbed hydroxyl ions to produce hydroxyl 364 radicals [144]. The photocatalytic application of CNMs in degradation of 365 organic dyes was shown in Table 1, and the application in treatment of 366 colorless organic and inorganic pollutants was shown in Table 2.

367 3.1.1 Degradation of organic dyes

A large scale of organic dyes from dye manufacturing and textile industries have 368 been released into water environment over the past decades. Many of these dyes, such 369 as Rhodamine B (RhB), methylene blue (MB) and methyl orange. 370  $(\mathbf{Q})$ , are toxic and carcinogenic. RhB and MB are dissolved in cationic, w 371 are dissolved in anionic. Different from other organics and inevanics, colorful dyes can be 372 photodegraded via three possible reaction notosensitization, photolysis, and 373 photocatalysis [145]. In photosensitization posess, light irradiation can stimulate the 374 dye to produce photo-electrons to conduction band of photocatalyst, then 375  $Q_2^-$  h photolysis process, electrons induced from the dye react with oxygen to form 376 react with oxygen glet oxygen atom for the oxidative degradation of dye. 377 CNMs-modified photocatalysts revealed high photocatalytic activity on the 378 degradation of organic dyes owing to the introduction of  $\pi$ -system or the formation of 379 heterojunctions [146]. For example, 0D C<sub>60</sub> modified Bi<sub>2</sub>TiO<sub>4</sub>F<sub>2</sub> hierarchical 380

microspheres showed strong photocatalytic performance for RhB degradation [70], and 1D TiO<sub>2</sub>@MWCNTs composite show high degradation performance on MB and

RhB [147]. Compared with 0D and 1D CNMs, 2D CNMs (e.g. GR, GO, and reduced

GO) reveal better interaction with photocatalysts. Reduced GO (rGO)/bismuth 384 tungstate (BWO) composite, prepared in the presence of GO, showed high 385 photocatalytic performance on the degradation of RhB (Fig. 7) [148]. The presence of 386 GO promoted the interaction with the cations and provided reactive sites for the 387 growth of nanoparticles. Introduction of rGO led to the negative shift of the Fermi 388 level and the decrease in CB potential of BWO, promoting the migration of 389 photoinduced electrons [149]. And owing to the excellent charge-carrier mobility of 390 GR, separation of photogenerated electron-hole pairs on BWO improved. GO 391 reduction level has a positive impact on the photocatalytic nce of rGO/BWO. 392



Fig. 7 (a) TEM im ge of GR/BWO composite; (b) Photocatalytic mechanism of organics degradation over GR/BWO composite. Reprinted from ref [148] with permission from The Royal Society of Chemistry.

Composites	Preparation process	Dye	Efficiency	Ref
C <sub>60</sub> /g-C <sub>3</sub> N <sub>4</sub>	(i) ball-mill C <sub>60</sub> and dicyandiamide;	MB	99.9%	[69]
	(ii) heat at 550 °C for 4 h.			
$C_{60}/Bi_2TiO_4F_2$	(i) dissolve TiF4 into tert-butyl alchol;	RhB	93.0%	[70]
	(ii) add Bi(NO <sub>3</sub> )-ethylene glycol solution;			
	(iii) add C60-toluenen solution, and heat at 160 °C for 24 h.	_		
GR-CQDs/g-C <sub>3</sub> N <sub>4</sub>	(i) CQDs was loaded on $g-C_3N_4$ through hydrothermal process;		91.1%	[146]
	(ii) GO was reduced and combined with CQDs/g-C $_3N_4$ thorough			
	second hydrothermal process.	•		
TiO <sub>2</sub> @MWCNTs	(i) add MWCNTs into ethanol to make suspendion	MB	99.9%	[147]
	(ii) add TiCl <sub>4</sub> ethanol solution with sonication	RhB	99.9%	
	(iii) heat at 150 °C for 3 h, and C ich cut $600$ °C for 5 h.			
GR/BWO	(i) add GO to $Bi(NO_{13}:5H_2 v)$ solution;	RhB	99.9%	[148]
	(ii) add $WO$ , $2H_2C$ , and adjust pH to about 7;			
	(iii) heat at 180 °C for 16 h to obtain GO-BWO;			
	(iv) mix GO-BWO with ethylene glycol, heat at 140 $^{\circ}$ C for 2 h.			

398Table 1 Photocatalytic application of CNMs in dye degradation.

401 3.1.2 Oxidation of organic pollutants

Disposal and management of organic pollutants existing in air, water, and 402 soil mediums is of great environmental concern [150]. CNMs are a nice choice 403 to be applied in photocatalytic degradation of organic pollutants [126, 127]. For 404 example, C<sub>60</sub>-modified ZnAlTi-LDO showed high photocatalytic performance 405 406 on the degradation of Bisphenol A (BPA) [151]. Besides, MWCNT-doped TiO<sub>2</sub> films were presented as efficient materials for photocatalytic degradation of 407 PNP (Fig. 8) [152]. The electrical connection between NTs and  $TiO_2$ 408 allows an easy transfer of photoinduced electrons f 409  $\tilde{D}_2$  to conductive MWCNTs, leading to higher photocatalytic activ 410 y. The amount of MWCNTs introdcued to TiO<sub>2</sub> was limited under 4 oo high MWCNTs content 411 W would change the transparency of the film and isolate  $TiO_2$  from touching light, 412 then reduce the photocatalytic 521. 413



415 Fig. 8 Preparation of MWCNT-doped TiO<sub>2</sub> films and photocatalytic
416 performance of as-prepared samples. Reprinted from ref [152] with permission
417 from Springer.

Recently, we synthesized a 0D CODs modified 2D BWO nanosheets hybrid 418 material (CBW) for MO and BPA degradation [139]. CQDs are a new 0D member 419 with size below 10 nm in the family of CNMs. Since the original report of CQDs in 420 2006 [153], they have attracted enormous attention because of their remarkable 421 physical and chemical properties, like biocompatibility, robust 422 stability, and chemical inertness [154, 155]. CQDs show unique both 423 d down-PL, and that make CQDs-modified photocatalysts become near-infrared light driven materials 424 [156-158]. And ultrathin 2D BWO are excellent photocatalysts owing to their large 425 specific surface area and special surface tructure [159]. CBW composites with 426 0D/2D unique nanostructure po benefits: (i) well-structured accessible area 427 between CQDs and m-BWe and the channels of bulk-to-surface for electrons transfer; 428 fill spectrum of solar energy; (iii) improved adsorption (ii) the ability t 429 utili. capacity for pollutants (especially the hydrophobic pollutants) because of the CQDs 430 sp<sup>2</sup> carbon clusters; (iv) enhanced interfacial charge transfer process owing to the 431 efficient contact with pollutants caused by the ultra-small nanostructure (Fig. 9) [139]. 432



Fig. 9 (a) Schematic diagram for up converted PL of 0D CQDs modified 2D ultrathin 434 BWO nanosheets heterojunctions; (b) proposed photocatalytic mechanism of CBW 435 under full spectrum light irradiation. Reprinted from ref [139] with permission from 436 Elsevier. 437 Many other CNMs have also been used in photocatalytic process for organic 438 pollutant treatment. For example, kim et.al. [160] explored an improved method for 439 the preparation of 1D carbon nanofiber (CNF) titanate nanotube (TiNT) composite 440 with a core-shell structure, and CN TiNT showed wonderful photocatalytic 441 performance for the oxidation gaseous acetaldehy. In addition, Zhao et.al. [161] 442 recently reported a ng/bridging melamine-GR-TiO<sub>2</sub> capsule after H<sub>2</sub> 443 -wra treatment (H-TiC (ND) for efficient photocatalytic degradation of gaseous 444 formaldehyde (HCHO). The introduction of GR improved the electrical conductivity 445 of photocatalyst and the separation of charge carriers [161]. 446

447 3.1.3 Treatment of inorganic pollutants

Inorganic pollutants caused a worldwide environmental concern due to their non-biodegradability, which will accumulate in biological bodies and lead to high-toxicity [131, 162]. Photocatalytic reduction over CNMs-modified 451 materials has been proven to be an efficient method for inorganic pollutant 452 treatment [112, 142]. For example, BWO/GR composites showed high 453 photocatalytic performance on the oxidation of NO owing to the positive shift 454 of the Fermi level cuased by GR [163], which is contrary to the negative shift 455 caused by rGO [148].

GO and F co-doped TiO<sub>2</sub> (FGT) was presented to show high 456 photocatalytic activity in the reduction of bromate (Fig. 10) [112]. Bromate, a 457 common inorganic pollutant from the by-products of oxid 458 on process for water purification, has been found to be strongly carc c [164, 165]. The 459 co-doping of GO and F enhanced the transportation of photogenerated e<sup>-</sup> and 460 the separation of charge carriers. In the photo atalytic process, a lower pH was 461 beneficial for bromate reduction owing to the positive effect on bromate 462 adsorption on FGT [112]. 463



465 Fig. 10 Photocatalytic reduction of bromate by FGT: (a) cuboid morphologies
466 with (001) and (101) facets; (b) spherical particles. Reprinted from ref [112]
467 with permission from Elsevier.

Like NO and bromate, the existence of heavy metal ions in water and soil 468 has been known to cause pollution problems. Photoreduction process is an 469 efficient method to eliminate the toxicity of heavy metal ions by generating low 470 toxic analogue ions [166]. For example, chromium (Cr), one of the most 471 dangerous heavy metals, mainly consists of high-toxic Cr(VI) and low-toxic 472 Cr(III) [167]. CNMs-modified composites show high photocatalytic 473 performance on the removal of Cr(VI) [168-170]. 474

Recently, a synthesized carbon dots (CDs)-TiO<sub>2</sub> nanoshe exhibited high 475 photoactivity in the reduction of Cr(VI) (Fig. The result of 476 11 photocatalytic experiment over CDs-TiO<sub>2</sub> show at 99.2% Cr(VI) was reduced 477 after 2 h irradiation [171]. CDs work as elect eservoir and donor, and they 478 can play a favorable role in improving the photocatalytic performance by 479 harvesting light and separating arriers. 480



482 Fig. 11 Photoreduction process of Cr(VI) over CDs-TiO<sub>2</sub> nanosheets. Reprinted
483 from ref [171] with permission from Elsevier.
484

485 Table 2 Photocatalytic application of CNMs in treatment of colorless organic486 pollutants and inorganics.

Composites	Preparation process	Pollutant Treatment	Efficiency	Ref
rGO/BWO	(i) electrostatic self-assembly of positively charged BWO and	Oxidation of benzyl	93.0%	[149]
	negatively charged GO sheets;	alcohol		
	(ii) hydrothermal treatment.			
C <sub>60</sub> -modified	(i) combine ZnAlTi layered double hydroxide (ZnAlTi-LDH)	Degradation of BPA	87.1%	[151]
ZnAlTi-LDO	with $C_{60}$ via the urea method;			
	(ii) calcine under vacuum atmosphere to obtain $C_{60}$ -modified			
	ZnAlTi layered double oxide (ZnAlTi-LDO).	•		
MWCNT-doped	(i) synthesize from two-step sol-gel routes: alcohoic and	Degradation of PNP	57%	[152]
TiO <sub>2</sub>	aqueous;			
	(ii) deposited by dip-coating ongras			
CBW	(i) add $Na_2WO_4$ ·2H <sub>2</sub> O, $B(NO_3)$ /5H <sub>2</sub> O, and	Degradation of BPA	99.5%	[139]
	cetyltrimet viewmonium romide into deionized water;			
	(ii) add CQDs and stirring for 1 h;			
	(iii) heat at 120 °C for 24 h.			
CNF-TiNT	(i) mix nanosized $TiO_2$ and PAN to obtain $TiO_2$ /PAN;	Oxidation of gaseous	95.4%	[160]
	(ii) carbonization to obtain TiO <sub>x</sub> /CNFs;	acetaldehy		
	(iii) add TiO <sub>x</sub> /CNFs to NaOH solution, heat at 150 $^{\circ}$ C for 24 h.			
H-TiO <sub>2</sub> /MG-D	(i) sonication: melamine and GO aqueous solution;	Degradation of	92.0%	[161]

	(ii) $TiO_2/MG$ synthesis: add the mixture of tetrabutyl titanate	gaseous HCHO		
	and absolute ethanol to above solution, heat at 180°C for 10 h;			
	(iii) $TiO_2/MG$ -D synthesis: mixed $TiO_2/MG$ , hexamethyl			
	tetramine, and dopamine hydrochloride solution, heat at $90^{\circ}$ C			
	for 3 h, followed by $H_2$ treatment.			
BWO/GR	(i) synthesize BWO through a hydrothermal method;	Oxidation of NO	59.0%	[163]
	(ii) mix GR and BWO, stir for 24 h.	-		
FGT	(i) introduce GO, TiO2 and hydrofluoric acid to ethyl alcohol;	Reduction discomate	99.9%	[112]
	(ii) heat at 180 °C for 24 h.			
Ag@BiVO <sub>4</sub> @rGO	(i) $BiVO_4$ were synthesized by maintaining the mixture of	Reduction of bromate	99.1%	[165]
	Bi(NO <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>3</sub> H <sub>2</sub> O, NH <sub>4</sub> VO <sub>3</sub> and CO(NH <sub>2</sub> ) <sub>2</sub> at 80 °C to $2^{-1}$			
	(ii) BiVO <sub>4</sub> @rGO was synthesized by rGO chemical deposition;			
	(iii) Ag@BiVO <sub>4</sub> @rGO was gaicer a Applo <sub>3</sub> photoreduction.			
CuS/rGO	(i) mix GO and $CuSO_4 5 I_2O$ into deionized water with stir;	Reduction of Cr(VI)	95.0%	[168]
	(ii) treat at $12^{\circ}$ C with moreovave irradiation.			
CDs-TiO <sub>2</sub>	(i) citric acid manohydrate were used as carbon source,	Reduction of Cr(VI)	99.2%	[171]
	$NH_3$ · $H_2O$ were used as base, then mixed with TiO <sub>2</sub> ;			
	(ii) heat at 160 °C for 4 h.			

488 3.1.4 Photocatalytic disinfection

Bacteria exist almost everywhere. Several kinds of bacteria are harmful for 489 490 human, such as Escherichia coli (E. coli), staphylococcus aureus (S. aureus), Fusarium oxysporum (F. oxysporum), and pneumococcus aeruginosa (P. aeruginosa). 491 492 These harmful bacteria can enter human body via eating and breathing, and then cause diseases. Photocatalysis has been proven to be an efficient method for disinfection 493 owing to the great oxidation ability [172-174]. Generally, photocatalytic disinfection 494 contains two main sequential processes: (i) generation of react 495 oxygen species (ROS) after light irradiation and (ii) the attack of ROS 496 rial cells. To fully understand the mechanism of photocatalytic disjunction, it is necessary to first 497 identify the detailed effect of ROS (e.g. singlet g  $\bullet O_2^-$ ,  $\bullet OH$ , and  $H_2O_2$ ) on the 498 disinfection performance of photocatalvsts. 499

photocatalysts have been synthesized and Until today, many CNMs 500 CNMs in composite photocatalysts can boost the applied in disinfection [17 -177 501 to generate more ROS. For example, rGO in TiO<sub>2</sub>/rGO 502 electron reduction composite photocata yst can boost the production of  $H_2O_2$  [178]. Moreover, CNMs 503 can react with photocatalysts to form chemical bonds to enhance the activity, such as 504 the formed Ti-O-C and Ti-OH in MnO<sub>x</sub> quantum dots decorated rGO/TiO<sub>2</sub> [179]. 505 Recently, Zhang et.al. [175] presented a CDs and TiO<sub>2</sub> co-decorated rGO (CTR) 506 ternary composite photocatalyst for E. coli inactivation (Fig. 12). The result showed 507 that CTR slurry system reached 1.03 log inactivation of E. coli after 60 min of light 508

509 irradiation. CDs play as both electron acceptor and donor and GR work as a scaffold, also enhancing the single electron transfer for  $O_2$  reduction to form  $\bullet O_2^-$ . Besides, 510 Cruz-Ortiz et.al. [176] explored the mechanism of photocatalytic disinfection using 511 TiO<sub>2</sub>-GR composite photocatalysts under UV and visible irradiation. In this study, the 512 generated ROS under light irradiation were investigated. It was found that H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> 513 514 worked as a dominant ROS in the inactivation of E. coli under UV light, but singlet oxygen played a dominant role under visible light [176]. And chloride was presented 515 to have an effect on the disinfection performance of photocatal sta 516 bloride can react with ROS in photocatalytic process to form chlorine, whi 517 consume  $H_2O_2$  to form singlet oxygen [176]. In addition, our previous study found that humic acid 518 might limit the physical contact between bacte (a) is and photocatalysts [177]. 519



521 Fig. 12 Synthesis of CTR nanocomposite and application in photocatalytic
522 disinfection. Reprinted from ref [175] with permission from Elsevier.

In conclusion, CNMs played three important roles in the enhanced photocatalytic disinfection. Firstly, CNMs worked as a scaffold to avoid the aggregation of photocatalysts in the CNMs-based composite photocatalysts. Secondly, conductive CNMs worked as an electron acceptor or donor to improve the separation of charge carriers and promote electron reduction of oxygen to form  $H_2O_2$ . Thirdly, chemical bonds formed between CNMs and photocatalysts can improve the performance in photocatalytic disinfection.

# 530 **3.2 Hydrogen production**

Photocatalytic water-splitting technology over CNM 531 ed materials has shown great potential for hydrogen production king to the low cost and high 532 sustainability [180-182]. Water-splitting includes two half reactions: (i) 533 hydrogen evolution reaction and (ii) oxygen evolution reaction. Photogenerated 534 e<sup>-</sup> are the main substances in l evolution reaction via reduction process, 535 and CB level of CNMs-rodified photocatalysts should be more negative than 536 le el. The efficiency of photocatalytic hydrogen 537 hydrogen proc tion production depends on the quantum conversion of the absorbed light to 538 photogenerated  $e^{-}$  -  $h^{+}$  pairs and the separation efficiency of charge carriers. The 539 photocatalytic application of CNMs in hydrogen production was shown in 540 Table 3. 541

542 For example, 3D CoSe<sub>2</sub>-CNT microspheres was presented for hydrogen 543 production, and it was prepared via combined spray pyrolysis and selenization process (Fig. 13) [56]. This  $CoSe_2$ -CNT composites showed remarkable catalytic activity with an overpotential of ~174 mV at 10 mA cm<sup>-2</sup> and excellent durability in an acidic medium. The backbone of CNTs provided a porous way for the acidic liquid medium to go through the microspheres. Hence, the contact area of  $CoSe_2$  active sites with the reaction medium was improved, which leading to the enhancement of the electrocatalytic activity for more efficient hydrogen evolution.



Fig. 13 Proposed prechanism of CoSe<sub>2</sub>-CNT composite microspheres through
spray pyrolysis process and one-step post treatment. Reprinted from ref [56]
with permission from Wiley.

551

Additionally, 2D rGO with a suitable reduction degree was utilized to prepare rGO-BWO photocatalyst for hydrogen production [57]. CB of rGO, composed of antibonding  $\pi^*$  orbitals, is more negative than the standard redox potential of H<sub>2</sub>O/H<sub>2</sub>. Therefore, efficient H<sub>2</sub> production over rGO-BWO was contributed to the more 559 negative reduction potential caused by the introduction of rGO. And in the process of H<sub>2</sub> generation, lactic acid was added as a sacrificial reagent into aqueous methanol 560 solution to promote the photocatalytic performance. Moreover, photocatalytic process 561 over rGO-BWO can also be used for  $O_2$  generation with adding  $Fe^{3+}$  ions as electron 562 acceptor. E<sub>VB</sub> of rGO-BWO is more positive than the standard redox potential of 563  $O^{2-}/O_2$ , which ensures the conversion of H<sub>2</sub>O to O<sub>2</sub>. The higher O<sub>2</sub> production was 564 ascribed to the strong chemical bonding between rGO and BWO, which promoted the 565 electron collection, transportation and the separation of photology charge carriers 566 (Fig. 14). Very recently, Marcelo et.al. [183] explored the -proton effect of GR, 567 and did an experiment of shining a light on GR deprated with Pt, which revealed 568 t.al. [184] reported that an high performance on hydrogen production 569 synthesized MoS<sub>2</sub>QDs@ZnIn<sub>2</sub>S<sub>4</sub>@RGO showed high photocatalytic performance on 570 ter purification. hydrogen production with simul 571



572

573 Fig. 14 Proposed mechanism of the photocatalytic activity of GR-BWO composite.

574 Reprinted from ref [57] with permission from The Royal Society of Chemistry.

Emerging 0D CQDs has also been used to enhance the photocatalytic 575 performance in hydrogen production [185-188]. For example, CQDs/MoS<sub>2</sub> (Fig. 15) 576 prepared through hydrothermal process showed high reduction activity for hydrogen 577 evolution under visible light irradiation [189]. CQDs modified on the surface of 578 MoS<sub>2</sub> makes the electrocatalytic activity more efficient with an overpotential of 579 ~0.125 V at 10 mA cm<sup>-2</sup> and show good stability in sulphuric acid. The enhanced 580 performance is ascribed to the high charge transfer efficiency caused by the 581 introduction of CQDs, and the decrease of S<sup>4+</sup> and the increase of  $\mathbf{H}$  sulfides  $\mathbf{S}_2^{2^-}$  and 582 apical  $S^{2-}$  [185]. Disulfides  $S_2^{2-}$  and apical  $S^{2-}$  are the sites for hydrogen 583 evolution reduction after visible light irradiation [185]. The preparation of this 584 CQDs/MoS<sub>2</sub> composite provides a potential alternative approach for the design of 585 cost-efficient electrocatalysts with enhanced catalytic performance, instead of 586 ÇCE Ç introducing other heteroatom d 587



588

Fig. 15 Characterization of the CADs MoS<sub>2</sub> composite: (a) Low magnification TEM
image; (b) High magnification TEM image; (c) High resolution of TEM image; (d)
SEM image. Reprint a from ref [189] with permission from Elsevier.

Besides, CNMs-modified photocatalysts prepared with designed structure were reported to be efficient for hydrogen production, like hierarchical core-shell CNF@ZnIn<sub>2</sub>S<sub>4</sub> (Fig. 16) [190]. ZnIn<sub>2</sub>S<sub>4</sub>, a metal sulfide, has been widely studied owing to the suitable band gap and visible-light driven photocatalytic functions. In CNF@ZnIn<sub>2</sub>S<sub>4</sub>, CNF acted as the electron acceptor that transported the photogenerated electrons in CB of ZnIn<sub>2</sub>S<sub>4</sub> along the cylindrical nanostructure. The

hierarchical core-shell configuration structure was beneficial for the formation of an 598 intimate contact between CNF core and ZnIn<sub>2</sub>S<sub>4</sub> sheets, which accelerated the 599 interfacial charge transfer of ZnIn<sub>2</sub>S<sub>4</sub>. And to ensure the efficiency of charge transfer 600 and the separation of photoexcited electron-hole pairs, sacrificial reagent was added to 601 602 complement the electrons to combine with the holes in VB of ZnIn<sub>2</sub>S<sub>4</sub>. CNF content has an impact on the photocatalytic performance, and the optimum content is located 603 at 15 wt % [190]. Low CNF content will lead to the formation of  $ZnIn_2S_4$ 604 microspheres separated from CNF, while high content will h e generation of 605 photoinduced electrons and holes on ZnIn<sub>2</sub>S<sub>4</sub>. 606



Fig. 16 (a) Formation process of the hierarchical core–shell  $CNFs@ZnIn_2S_4$ composites; (b) proposed photocatalytic mechanism of hydrogen evolution over the hierarchical core shell CNFs@ZnIn2S4 composites. Reprinted from ref [190] with permission from American Chemical Society.

Materials	Preparation process	Clean-energy	Ref
CoSe <sub>2</sub> -CNT	(i) dry droplet formed by Co(NO <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>2</sub> •6H <sub>2</sub> O, CNTs and polystyrene nanobeads;	Hydrogen	[56]
	(ii) decomposition, partial reduction, then selenization.		
TiO <sub>2</sub> @MWCNTs	(i) mix MWCNTs ethanol solution and TiCl <sub>4</sub> ethanol solution;	Hydrogen	[147]
	(ii) heat at 150 °C for 3 h, and calcine at 600 °C for 5 h.		
MWCNT-doped	(i) synthesize from two-step sol-gel routes: alcoholic and aqueous;	Hydrogen	[152]
TiO <sub>2</sub>	(ii) deposited by dip-coating on glass.		
GR-BWO	(i) dissolve $Bi(NO_3)_3$ ·5H <sub>2</sub> O in 6.5% HNO <sub>3</sub> solution and then add GO	$H_2$ and $O_2$	[57]
	(ii) add $(NH_4)_{10}W_{12}O_{14}$ solution, adjust pH to 7 and st (at 50%C for 2 h;		
	(iii) 3 h of sonication with a high-intensity ultrast ac pube.		
MoS <sub>2</sub> QDs@ZnIn <sub>2</sub>	(i) disperse GO in mixed dimethylforma, ide and ethylene glycol;	Hydrogen	[184]
S <sub>4</sub> @RGO	(ii) add thioacetamide, $InCl_3$ (H $\sigma$ and $2v(Ac)_2 \cdot 2H_2O$ ;		
	(iii) heat at 180 °C → Nh		
CQDs/MoS <sub>2</sub>	(i) synthesize CODs via an electrochemical etching method;	$H_2$ and $O_2$	[189]
	(ii) add CQDs to $Na_2MoO_4$ and L-cysteine mixed water solution;		
	(iii) heat to 180 $^{\circ}$ C and maintain for 24 h.		
CNF@ZnIn <sub>2</sub> S <sub>4</sub>	(i) synthesize CNFs through an electrospinning apparatus;	Hydrogen	[190]
	(ii) add glycerol, $In(NO_3)_3 4.5H_2O$ , $Zn(AC)_2 6H_2O$ , and L-cysteine		
	hydrochloride monohydrate into CNFs ethanol solution;		
	(iv) heat to 180 °C and maintain for 24 h.		

Table 3 Photocatalytic application of CNMs in hydrogen production.

### 614 **4. Limitation on wider application of CNMs**

(i) The first limitation for wider industrial application of CNMs is the high cost of
CNMs. Though the market price of CNMs are coming down all the time, it is still too
expensive to be applied in industry (Table 4). To bring the price down, cheaper
selective preparation for high quality CNMs are needed.

Table 4 Cost of several CNMs searched in CheapTubes.com (USA).



620 (ii) For environmental poll ant teatment over CNMs-modified photocatalysts, many studies focused of lutant or confined to aqueous pollutants [131, 144, 147, 621 184]. However, there are numerous pollutants containing organics, heavy metal ions, 622 inorganic salt ions and so on not only in water but also in air and soil environment. 623 Therefore, to achieve efficient treatment on actual pollutions, further exploration on 624 more efficient treatments for more complex water matrix and even whole 625 626 environment matrix over CNMs-modified photocatalysts is required.

627 (iii) As for hydrogen production, there are also some challenges in practical 628 operations. One main barrier for practical application is the difficulty in H<sub>2</sub> separation 629 when H<sub>2</sub> and O<sub>2</sub> generated simultaneously from photocatalytic water splitting. 630 Though the separation can be achieved by adding h<sup>+</sup> scavenger or O<sub>2</sub> trapping agent, 631 the cost of the whole process would increase greatly [191]. Besides, today's reactors 632 for hydrogen evolution are small and the yield fall far short of the needed quantity 633 [192, 193]. Therefore, to develop a large-scale hydrogen production process is the

634 other challenge.

## 635 5. Summary and Outlook



The importance of efficient pollutant treatmen and hydrogen production is 636 evident from the aggravation of environmenta and energy crisis in "green" 21st 637 NMs-modified photocatalysts is a century. Photocatalytic process over 638 highly-effective solution for t owing to the remarkable morphological, 639 mechanical, electrical and optical properties. Notably, CNMs show size- and 640 operties in photocatalytic process. For example, C<sub>60</sub> has structure-dependent p 641 been used in photocatalytic process more frequently than other higher 642 fullerenes because of the smallest size, GR shows better performance in 643 photocatalytic system comparing with 0D fullerene and 1D CNT owing to the 644 2D structure, and GR or CNT can contribute to constructing firm network 645 structures with superior integrated performance due to the anisotropic structures. 646 To date, many efforts have been made to take advantage of these unique size-647

and structure-dependent properties of CNMs. But researches on the 648 optimization of structure-dependent properties are still in their infancy. A 649 further exploration on the accurate relationship between structure and property 650 need to be addressed. Besides, the selective preparation for desired structure 651 652 and morphology in a sustainable and reversible way is a significant challenge for CNMs. Reducing costs, emissions and improving security of supply are 653 supposed to be taken into account while locating the "sustainable energy 654 trilemma" during the preparation process.

Therefore, in this review, we firstly summarize 656 re preparation of CNMs that has a great impact on their photocolytic performance. Then we 657 provide an updated outline of advanced plot catarytic application of CNMs in 658

655

addressing both environmental pollution and hydrogen energy crisis. The 659 difference in the role of CNMs play in the enhancement of 660 photocatalytic performance is iso discussed. Lastly, we discuss the limitations 661 oto atalysis or even wider fields. 662 of CNMs applied

CNMs-modified photocatalysts with different nanostructures ranging from 663 1D to 3D structures can been prepared through various methods, such as 664 electrospinning, sol-gel process, deposition process, hydro- or solvo-thermal 665 process, and sonochemical process. The optimization of operational parameters 666 is significant for the preparation of CNMs-modified photocatalysts with 667 revealing desirable charge carrier transport in photocatalytic process. Moreover, 668

introduction of CNMs can enhance the photocatalytic performance owing to the 669 enhanced absorption capability in light and efficient transport 670 of photogenerated electrons. Commonly, CNMs act as absorbent, photostabilizer, 671 co-catalyst, and photosensitizer. Besides, CNMs can play as can play as a 672 powerful plasmonic 673 template [194], surfactant or material [195], structure-directing and morphology-controlling agent [196], and even 674 hole-extraction layers for the preparation of photocatalytic materials [197-199]. 675 To maximize the effect of CNMs in improving the photocital c performance. 676 all these functions are supposed to be studied at length. 677 ther possible roles of CNMs playing in the composite photocatal sts are needed to be further 678 explored. On the other hand, the exploration and optimization of synthesis 679 process for large-scale high-quality CMs-modified photocatalysts should 680 proceed simultaneously. An efforts ought to be made in the 681 combination of theoretica calculation and experimental evidence to investigate 682 enhanced photoactivity of CNMs-modified materials. unclear mechanic 683 These mentioned a pects are critical factors for improving the photoactivity of 684 CNMs-modified composites. We hope this review can promote the more 685 objective understanding on the analogy, and strengthen the efforts towards the 686 advanced photocatalytic application of these CNMs (including fullerenes, 687 CQDs, CNFs, CNTs, and GR) in energy and environmental field. 688

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