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Mapping Alterity: Maps, Borders, and Social Relations in the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*

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Ⅰ. Introduction

This essay examines the role of maps and geographic knowledge in the perception of spatiality and social relations as represented in Luo Guanzhong's *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, a fourteenth-century novel that purports to offer an account of events of the second and third centuries CE.[1] The employment of maps in the narrative is significantly implicated in the Han's project of mapping

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1) Throughout this essay I cite C. H. Brewitt-Taylor's translation of Luo Guanzhong's *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, 2 vols. (Rutland, VT: C. E. Tuttle Company, 1959) by volume and page number. When necessary I cite the Chinese text and correct Brewitt-Taylor's translation. The Chinese edition cited is *Sanguo yanyi* (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1973).

borders and constructing alterity, a reconfiguration of geospace and culture whereby the Han establishes itself as a geographical and cultural center in order to achieve and maintain political supremacy. The novel introduces maps as a form of visualized sign, critically channeling verbal communication with characters and their perceptions of the world and worldviews in the narrative. Equated with verbal language or sometimes going far beyond it, maps enable characters in the novel to recognize the object of their political desires and to visualize their fulfillment. Thus, social relations among characters are represented and mediated by maps; maps are also interwoven with the novel's core narrative of configuring space and people because of their use in conducting wars to fulfill political desire. By examining this canonical text, acclaimed as one of the Four Great Classical Novels of Chinese literature, the essay aims to show how cartographic thinking and practice are already presented as a part of verbal communication in ways that resemble how modern cartography is structured, thereby problematizing the idea that the production and use of maps in the terrain of social life and polity is exclusive to modernity.[2)]

The essay is structured in three parts. The first part examines the problematic nature of modern cartography in conjunction with modernity, introducing major scholarship on maps and cartography and then critically reviewing its limits, thereby contesting the dichotomy between traditional and modern mapping. The second part, which focuses on the role played by maps and geography in the development of the narrative, addresses how geographic knowledge and cartographic power contributed to social and political life, military operations, and political aspirations for geospatial management and territorial expansion in the context of the Han's attempt to claim geographical and cultural centrality for the Central Plain (the

2) The *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* has a long and complicated textual history. Rather than trying to link its depictions of cartography to particular historical contexts, I treat the *Romance* simply as a premodern text.

Zhongyuan), an act that constitutes the origin of China. By discussing the intricate relationship between verbal language and visual language, as well as the use of similes and the color-coded mapping of non-Han people to construct alterity, the essay argues that the premodern logic and mechanisms of boundary making, based on the center-periphery dichotomy and used to demarcate territorial or cultural boundaries, were not dissimilar to those of modern times. In grappling with the question of the significance of rhetoric and representations of alterity, which typically serve as an essential source for mapping out the hierarchical order of space and people, as is the case in this narrative, the third part of the essay explores how representations of cultural differences can be used to deconstruct such hierarchies. Although the author may not have intended his account of cultural differences to function in this way, this approach opens up a new perspective on the significance of Chinese historical narrative. Predicated on the spurious postulation of the centrality of the Han and their territory with respect to those of other peoples, the cartographic interactions in the text show how maps and mapping were utilized to forge the idea of civilization and its concomitant binary sets of primitiveness and otherness. The text also demonstrates how geographic knowledge and cartography affect the inner dynamics of social relations, thereby revealing the arbitrary and alterable nature of the criteria of demarcation in value judgment in imperial China.

Ⅱ. Modernity in Mapmaking : Geography, Cartography, and Mapping

To begin with, Kant observed the significance of geography in knowledge production and its role in history as it pertains to the expansion of human knowledge and serves as the theoretical basis for mapmaking. Kant's discussion of geography sheds light on the theoretical development of space and its arrangement

in the West. Kant defines geography as the study of space, which is a basis for history: history is a narrative of time, and geography is a description of space and is the foundation of history. Kant's notion of geography reveals how geography is produced as a form of human knowledge through classification and ordering, laying the theoretical groundwork for the further elaboration of knowledge, geography, and maps.[3)]

Paying attention to the panoptic yet noncomprehensive nature of cartographic representation in mapmaking, Jeremy Black defines a map as a selective representation of reality. Far from being all-encompassing, a map is "a show, a representation," that embodies a producer's intention of "what to show and how to show it, and, by extension, what not to show."[4)] Space, in Black's view, is about power because "spaces were created through the exercise of power."[5)] Thus, a map pertains to the discourse of power, knowledge, and space, reflecting power relationships among humans. The advent of modernity led to scientific, accurate representations of space that homogenize discursive, human dimensions of life and environments by ignoring or minimizing heterogeneous aspects of social relations.[6)] Therefore, the selective representation of space and reality, in turn, highlights the impossibility of comprehensive coverage.

Black's insight into how homogeneity is produced in mapmaking is illustrated by Thongchai Winichakul's study of mapping techniques for political purposes in Thailand. Drawing from the discourse of nationalism, space, and power, Winichakul demonstrates how maps play a pivotal role in the construction of a homogenous, national Thai identity, resulting from an underlying premise on which the diversity

3) J. A. May, *Kant's Concept of Geography and Its Relation to Recent Geographical Thought* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), 255-264.

4) Jeremy Black, *Maps and Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 11.

5) Black, *Maps and Politics*, 18.

6) Ibid., 57.

of Thai people and languages is reduced into a single, homogeneous Thai nationhood. The existence of negative otherness (the Western imperial Other) provides legitimate sources for the positive construction of the self (Thainess).[7] The identity of homogenous Thainess and the creation of Thai nationhood are possible through what Winichakul calls "geo-body"; it deals with "the operation of the technology of territory, which created nationhood spatiality"[8] as a critical element of the life of a nation-spatiality. "The geo-body of a nation is a man-made territorial definition that creates effects—by classifying, communicating, and enforcement—on people, things, and relationships."[9] New geographic knowledge and language become the essential basis for the recognition of a new conception of the nation and create a framework "for thinking, imaging, and projecting the desired realm."[10]

Together, Black and Winichakul's studies illuminate the power of geography and the widespread use of maps in the formation of national identity as a response to Western imperial power; Winichakul attributes the rise of Thai nationalism to the proliferation of maps that classify space and people in order to unify them as a national entity. Black and Winichakul draw their examples from the modern world, leaving open the question of whether the criteria for modern mapmaking and mechanisms of configuring the Other and mapping alterity have an analogue in premodern times. The production of scientific, accurate maps cannot be the sole criteria for distinguishing between modern and premodern mapping technology and mapmaking.[11] Already in premodern times, the Chinese produced precise maps

7) Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994), 6, 164.

8) Winichakul, *Siam Mapped*, 16-17.

9) Ibid., 17.

10) Ibid., 129.

11) Black himself notes that the modern notion of cartography as scientific and accurate is problematic, remarking that "the limitations of the map-medium are more than

using scientific methods before the adoption of Western technology, which calls into question the idea that the degree of geographic accuracy serves as the standard theoretical foundation of modernity in mapmaking.[12] Moreover, the production of maps and their representation in premodern times have important sociopolitical and cultural ramifications, reflecting people's desires and principal concerns of the time. In discussing the role of maps in building Thai nationhood, Winichakul has argued that "[t]he presence of the geo-body of Siam is an effect of the hegemony of modern geography and mapping."[13] The geo-body of the nation was formed by both foreign colonial powers and the Thai people themselves. This line of reasoning, however, is likely to gloss over the fact that premodern people elsewhere also classified other people before their contact with the West, a process that is clearly represented in the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. Inspired by the power of maps, the characters experienced a spatial and political awakening that led them to seek control over the Other by positing the Han as the center of the world. As a consequence, they drew a demarcation between the Han and non-Han peoples that allowed them to delineate alterity. Established and sustained by the diametrically opposed binary of civilization and barbarity, alterity legitimizes the civilized center's rule over frontiers, thereby fuelling a long-lasting cycle of dominance over the Other.

'technical' and non-controversial; the questions involved are more than merely a matter of which projection or scale to select, and with such choices seen as 'technical', rather than as involving wider issues." Black, *Maps and Politics*, 17.

12) For more detailed discussion, see Colin A. Ronan, *The Shorter Science and Civilization in China: An Abridgement of Joseph Needham's Original Text* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978-1995), 237-285.

13) Ibid., 131.

Ⅲ. Rendering Space Special : The Rise of Geographic and Cartographic Power and Desire

According to the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, prior to the adoption of Western technology and cartography, the Chinese produced maps containing detailed geographic information.[14] With a discussion of what information a map includes, this section will first show that as described in the text, Chinese maps in their coverage and contents were not antithetical to modern Western mapmaking, particularly in their contents, although their form and style developed over time. The idea of mapping is already embedded in the pictographic nature of the Chinese language, and the character for a map as drawn in its original bone and bronze forms, *tu* (圖), shows a map, but this word also came to refer to diagrams or drawings later on. Due to the loss of early written records, it is uncertain whether *tu* originally referred to a map, but the pictographic nature of Chinese implicates and promotes the idea of mapping.[15] Just as the character indicates, early maps in China had pictorial elements and diagrams and can thus be equated with and treated as analogues of modern maps, because in both maps and diagrams information is represented abstractly and visually. Luo's novel shows that Chinese maps did include detailed geographic information on the country and roads: "In the meantime the traitor, Ma Yao, had given Teng Ai very complete plans of the country showing the whole one hundred and sixty *li* of road he had to traverse" (2:586). What is more, according to the novel, a map not only offers information on roads, rivers, and terrain, it also includes detailed notes on the width and length of each geographical feature and on the level of precipitation in the mountains. Furthermore,

14) Regarding the overall technological development of Chinese maps, see Black, *Maps and Politics*, 27–28.

15) Ronan, *The Shorter Science and Civilization in China*, 237.

the map records information on strategic points for controlling space and resources and thus serves as a visual aid in planning wars: " 'I [Chang Sung] offer you this map of the country, whereby its roads and rivers may be known.' Yuan-te unrolled the map; it was covered with notes, on the lie of the land, lengths and widths, and such matters. Strategical points on rivers and hulls were shown, and store-houses and granaries and treasuries. Everything was plainly stated" (1:631).

Maps are thus an exhaustive treasure trove of geographic information, and their importance for the characters in the novel cannot be overemphasized. Used for strategic and military planning and its operations, they exemplify the rise of spatial awareness, geographic knowledge, and cartographic power as the pulse of social and political life. In the narrative, knowledge of geography and the production and use of maps become the crucial factors that determine the time and necessity of waging battles, as well as the deployment of generals. The possession of geographic knowledge and cartographic skills is presented as a cultural competence, a key element in expanding territory and a way to acquire power by being to a higher position. After K'ung-ming studies the map brought by Lu Kai, he says to his generals: "I had studied the map and knew the positions of the camps" (2:283). Owing to geographic knowledge gleaned from the map, adding more power to his unsurpassed ingeniousness, Kong-ming is able to plan operations and lead his army to victory. In spite of their high rank, Chao Yun and Wei Yan are not placed in the vanguard of the army because they do not have a deep knowledge of the geography of the country (2:282). Teng Ai asks his spies to make a map showing the deployment of the Shu army that is sent to the capital, and Chung Hui is given the title of "Conqueror of the West" by Ssuma due to the map he made (2:568–569). The above two examples demonstrate how critical geographic knowledge and maps were in the sociopolitical realm, to the extent that the power conferred by social rank is outstripped by the power acquired through mastery of geography and maps. Thus, cartographic knowledge and people's capacity for mapmaking exemplify how

cartographic power emerged as a new form of cultural competence, as well as a fundamental prerequisite of employment and promotion. The rise of geospatial literacy as a form of cultural competence and a criterion for evaluating job performance has the critical potential to blur the boundaries of the social and political order. Linguistic competence in Chinese classics was traditionally preferred over the mastery of other areas of knowledge in the cultivation and employment of governmental officials; however, geographic competence challenged the rigidity of a social status system based on and operated by the orders of cultural competence and particular types of knowledge and skill sets associated with the dominant literati culture.

Coupled with the political desire to control the Central Plain, the characters view geographic knowledge and cartographic skills not only as means integral to communicating with generals and superiors for war purposes, but also as rulers' *modus operandi* for spelling out and even peddling their vaulting political ambition to recover the Central Plain and extend their domain to far-flung frontier territories. The power of geography and cartography are further affirmed and augmented: the characters project their desires to control space, people (particularly the Other), and things onto the map, turning the map into a tangible cluster of desires and dreams to be realized. The more they pursue the desire to recover the Central Plain, the more the object of desire becomes subjective, as if it was becoming manageable or coming closer to being achieved. Thus, the value of space is recognized and redefined from viewers' subjective perspectives, as the domain in which they project the visions and desires they wish to attain. In the novel, K'ung-ming is the person who introduces the map to Liu Pei. He explains to Liu Pei the importance of Chingchou and Yichou for military, economic, and historical reasons in the process of reifying Liu's desire to recover the Central Plain. K'ung-ming tells Liu Pei that "Heaven has virtually made it [Chingchou] yours," and that Yichou is a "country favoured by Heaven and that through which the Founder of Han obtained the

Empire" (1:399-400). Since he is "a scion of the [Han] Family," with good qualities, he is qualified to obtain these two places and will have harmonious relationships with other tribes such as the Jung, I, and Yueh (1:400). K'ung-ming shows Liu Pei the map with "the fifty-four divisions of SSuan." He further stresses that Liu will obtain the support of the people (human unity) and that these areas are the basis for seeking the Central Plain, the Zhongyuan.[16] After Liu Pei listens to K'ung's plan for him to become a celestial savior ruler, the apotheosis of virtuous kingly qualities—a plan that has been figuratively verbalized and cartographically visualized—Liu begins to have a clear picture of the future, a blueprint of his political career as the legitimate heir to the Han Family. Encouraged by K'ung-ming's ardent suggestion, Liu Pei is able to frame his dream vividly by viewing a representation of space.[17] This is the critical moment when Liu Pei's desire to recover the Central Plain, rendered into the visual language of the map, literally begins to look possible.

Just as K'ung-ming's map makes it possible for Liu Pei's desire to become more than just a pipe dream, this passage shows the intricate relationship between verbal language and visual language and their arrangement.[18] On the one hand, K'ung-

16) 此西川五十四州之图也。将军欲成霸业，北让曹操占天时，南让孙权占地利，将军可占人和。先取荆州为家，后即取西川建基业，以成鼎足之势，然后可图中原也 Luo, *Sanguo yanyi*, vol. 1, chapter 38, 328. Translation revised to indicate the original meaning of *renhe* and the Zhongyuan.

17) Liu Pei says that "[y]our words, O Master, render everything is so clear that meseems the clouds are swept aside and I see the clear sky" (1:400).

18) My ideas about this issue are inspired by Rey Chow's discussion of Lu Xun in *Primitive Passions*; however, she does not address the fact that he was also engaged in woodblock printing. Therefore, her contention that his return to literary culture was motivated by the threat of the new technology of cinema needs to be examined more carefully, since woodblock printing is obviously one dimension of visual culture, although it is produced and circulated in a different way. Rey Chow, *Primitive Passions: Visuality, Sexuality, Ethnography, and Contemporary Chinese Cinema* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 4-18.

ming supplements verbal language with visual language to highlight the concrete materiality of the object and to strongly support his verbal statements. On the other hand, verbal language is reconfigured and reinforced by visual language. Enhanced by the power of visuality, K'ung-ming's statements carry more persuasive power and authority than words alone, inducing in Liu a burgeoning desire for conquering the territories and presenting the ultimate goal of retrieving the power of the Han Family. Liu is affected and eventually persuaded by a cartographic visualization of space; he is able to see the tangibility of the object, which reduces the actual distance and simplifies its complexity. The map functions like a final touch on a painting, a vital process by which the literal meaning of Kong-ming's statements is polished and enhanced, rendering them as a lucid dream that the listener will believe. Since the visual language serves as the manifestation of the verbal statements, the existing verbal language consolidates its validity and power through the concrete images of visual language; at the same time, both the addresser and the addressee recognize and accept the power of visual language to render the space that is crucial to their common goal of realizing the desire for the center. The power of the visual embodiment of space immediately motivates Liu Pei to recover the old capital, leading him to wade into the unfathomable geopolitical waters in order to expand his sphere of influence. In this instance, the completion of verbal communication is contingent upon the employment of visual signs, thereby foregrounding the emergence of the power of visuality and representation as an integral part of sociopolitical communication in social relations and polity.

Kong-ming's remarks also reveal how vision and power are interrelated with respect to the issue of gaze and desire. As Black points out, mapping and maps are linked to the matter of the gazing subject and reveal "political and ethical programmes for change."[19] The presentation of the map signifies the appearance of

19) Black, *Maps and Politics*, 20-21, 36.

a gazing subject with power who can rearrange space and classify people and things according to self-imposed standards and order. In order to realize Liu's desire, K'ung-ming, the gazing subject with the capacity of foresight, rearranges space hierarchically in terms of the center-periphery dichotomy. Perceived as the legitimate origin of the Han, the Zhongyuan is identified as the center, and all other spaces are considered peripheral, to be reorganized as part of the process of recovering the old capital. In this military campaign, a space has meaning only in so far as it serves as a place of great strategic importance and as an outpost for regaining the center. Every space must be redefined from a strategic point of view —as the location of a military expedition, as territory to be acquired, or as a site supplying resources necessary for war—regardless of the reality of the space itself and its immanent values. Through such redefinition, heterogeneous features of space are compressed through a political and economic lens and the gazing subject's desire. A space becomes the site for projecting desire, and it is the place to be redefined according to the configuration of the desire to be fulfilled.

Ⅳ. The "Origin" Matters : Simile and the Rhetoric of Alterity

The affirmation of the Zhongyuan as the origin of China, though presumed, is not limited to Liu Pei but extended to followers of Liu Pei and Ts'ao Ts' in order for them to justify and legitimize their desire; they also hope to benefit from the unification of China. The Zhongyuan is the sole and ultimate place to be retained by Wei and to be recovered by Shu and Wu.[20] After K'ung-ming conquers three cities,

20) There is one indication that the Central Plain is not important strategically for the time being. After Ts'ao Pei hears the news that Shu and Wu will become allies, he becomes angry and confers with the great council. Hsin P'i opines that "the country is extensive, but the population is so spare that no successful army could be raised just now. My advice is to wait ten years, spending that period in forming an army and in cultivating

Wang Lang visits him and says that Ts'ao Ts'ao and his son were

> wise and warlike, adequate to the great heritage and fitted to wield supreme power. Wherefore, in accordance with the will of Heaven and the desires of men, and following the example of the earliest emperors, he [i.e., Ts'ao Ts'ao] took his place as arbiter of the Central Government, whereby the myriad countries are ordered and governed. Can any maintain that it was not the desire of Heaven and the wish of men? (2:349–350)[21]

Relying on the accumulated spatial significance of the historical, cultural site and on the iconic power of the previous emperors, including the Han Family, the desire of Ts'ao Ts'ao and his sons (including Liu Pei) for the Zhongyuan is also a desire to acquire recognition and legitimacy for control over the whole of China as a unified entity. Their concerted efforts to reoccupy the center can be seen as a forlorn

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the land till stores and weapons shall have been accumulated. Then both our rivals may be destroyed" (2:271). But Ts'ao Pei refuses this advice. This scene shows how political figures are heavily concerned with the symbolic meaning of a space regardless of its actual importance. But this does not mean Ts'ao Pei completely negates the significance of the *zhongyuan* as the center; Hsin P'i also states that it will be eventually used.

21) 世祖文帝, 神文圣武, 以膺大统, 应天合人, 法尧禅舜, 处中国以临万邦, 岂非天心人意乎? Luo, *Sanguo yanyi*, vol. 2, chapter 93, 795. Brett-Taylor translates *zhongguo* as "Central Government," but this is not accurate. During the Western Zhou, *zhongguo* referred to *guozhong* (inside the kingdom) and *guo* referred to a city and its surrounding areas. After the Eastern Zhou dynasty, *zhongguo* refers to the capital, Luoyang, or to its surrounding areas. It also includes other feudal states that are regarded as *Zhongguo*. Endymion Wilkinson explains that in the Wei and Jin periods, *Zhongguo* and *Haxia* were abbreviated to *Zhongghua*, which refers to "either the area inhabited by the *Zhonghua* as opposed to the surrounding areas barbarian lands, or simply to the *Zhongyuan* (Central Plain). It is sometimes implied that the Chinese were unique in regarding their country as central." Endymion Wilkinson, *Chinese History: A Manual*, rev. ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 132. Given this historical background of the terms as noted in *Chinese History*, *zhongguo* also refers to the Central Plain, but *huaxia* cannot refer to the whole country, since it does not include places where barbarians live.

attempt to search for an "origin" that does not really exist, when viewed in terms of multiplicity of origin or differed origin or the absence of origin in a poststructural sense. Commonly perceived and defined as the center and the origin of China, the Zhongyuan functions as a geographical and cultural device that constantly evokes lost or nonexistent images of the origin. On the one hand, this device could imply people's desire to return to the presumed origin fabricated in their imagination after the disintegration of historical totality (which is what Lukács would say), resulting in the loss of their eternal home. On the other hand, as a source of culture the Zhongyuan is represented and manipulated regardless of the actual significance of the space for the user's purpose and interest. The characters' desire for the origin reveals the mechanisms of defining one's identity, which is possible only by referring to origin, centrality, and cultural icons as indispensable sources to be identified with and used to legitimize power that is developed in order to dominate others.

The production of the origin and centrality ineluctably brings forth a social, spatial stratification. By mapping the frontier as the periphery at the expense of the heterogeneity of the Other, the production of the origin renders the existence of people and culture other than the "Han" exceptional, thereby excluding the possibility of any "origin" other than the Han culture.[22] When K'ung-ming goes on

22) My use of the terms "exclusion" and "exception" borrows from Agamben's discussion of the logic of sovereignty, defined as the inclusive exception, exclusion, and the bond resulting from its suspension, but I also use them in a general sense. Drawing from Carl Schmitt's conceptualization of sovereignty as the structure of exception, Agamben explains the paradox of sovereignty and the logics of exclusion and inclusion. The paradox of sovereignty lies in that it itself is "at the same time outside and inside the juridical order" through the structure of exception. The exception is a kind of exclusion as the structure of sovereignty, and its state results from its suspension. Suspension itself causes the exception and constitutes itself as a whole. Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), 1-29.

the expedition to the Southern Man and occupies Ichou and three divisions, the prefect of Juch'ang recommends Lu K'ai and says: "The safety of this city is due entirely to Lu K'ai," who produces a map of the Southern Man, titled "An Easy Scheme to Conquer the *Mans*," that shows the country with strategic points marked (2:281). The map is presented to K'ung-ming and is the foremost source of information for the conquest of non-Han people. For the Man, "the south is a desert country reeking with malaria"[23] and is located in remote, distant areas from the center and is mostly uncivilized (2:277). Using their own civilization as the standard, the Han represent the Southern people's culture as different, subordinate, and inferior. For example, Man soldiers "wore their hair loose and went barefoot" (2:233); the Man people in general are described as having "blue eyes and swarthy faces, auburn hair and brown beards. They wore earrings. Their hair was fuzzy, and they went barefoot" (2:293).[24] The Man's physical attributes and physiognomy, including complexion, skin color, and hair, serve as conspicuous visual signifiers of racial difference and indigenousness. The Han, by contrast, are described in attractive terms: Liu Pei's face was "clear as jade and he had rich red lips" (1:6), while Kuan Yu has a "dark brown face" and "deep red lips" (1:7).[25] Footwear

23) There is another passage showing that the South is not a complete desert: "in good seasons the country produces grain"(2:309). Juxtaposing the two statements reveals how space is defined as a place with a homogenized characteristic by eliminating discursive traits of space.

24) "孔明尽教入帐看时, 皆是青眼黑面, 黄发紫须, 耳带金环, 蓬头跣足." Luo, *Sanguo yanyi*, vol. 2, chapter 88, 726.

25) This is the original Chinese sentence: "面如冠玉, 唇若涂脂," "面如重枣, 唇若涂脂." Luo, *Sanguo yanyi*, vol. 1, chapter 1, 4. Kuan Yu states that he has "been a fugitive on the waters for some five years" (5), and so the reference to his skin tone suggests that he had a weathered face. *Zhongzao* in the novel refers to a ripe jujube (Chinese date). Because "[t]he unripe fruit of the jujube is supposed to be an abortifacient," the ripe jujube has a positive connotation of production and reproduction in general. The *-zao* component of *Zhongzao* has a homonym meaning "early" (as in "to have a lovely son early, as soon as a couple is united"), and thus *-zao* here has a symbolic meaning,

stands for civilization, so the Man's shoeless status is considered primitive; it embodies their lack of sophistication and backwardness. The Man wear earrings (2:293), which can be interpreted as artifacts signaling a high level of civilization that radiates around their bodies, but ironically these accessories only lead to differentiation and further devaluation, calling attention to the culturally deprived status of their bodies.

In the novel's construction of cultural differences between the Han and the Man, a legal code and the practice of medicine were perceived as signs of civilization and an advanced culture. In line with the civilization-primitivity dichotomy, the local Man practice of praying to a sorcerer, called Drug Demon (2:309), instead of using medicine to treat illness embodies their undeveloped culture and technology and their superstitious mindset. Costume can also signify the barbaric and thus be used to classify the Other according to the cultural order of the Han. In the past, the lapels on the front of the jackets worn by Chinese who lived in the Central Plain were folded inwardly, so that the right side of the lapels was out. Other people's lapels were folded in the opposite direction, a visible sartorial marker of distinctio n.[26] However, strikingly, the Man's gender relationships in conjugal rights and power in gender relations were, as people have posited in light of modern practice of free marriage, far more advanced than the Han's: women "marry whom they will, the parents having no control in that particular" (2:309). This practice is an emblem

indicating that a person depicted along with a jujube tree and lichee fruit may have sons soon. Wolfram Eberhard, *A Dictionary of Chinese Symbols: Hidden Symbols in Chinese Life and Thought*, trans. G. L. Campbell (Routlege and Kegan Paul: London, 1983), 78-79. In this context, the portrayal of Kuan Yu's complexion and face conveys the Chinese's gender-coded cultural values, since the jujube embodies the Chinese preference of male over female for reproduction in the construction of lineage.

26) After K'ung-ming dies, Liao Li says, "Then, after all, I am but a barbarian" (2:465; "吾终为左衽矣!," Luo, *Sanguo yanyi*, vol. 2, chapter 104, 894). This interpretation is based on an annotation in Luo, *Sanguo yanyi*, 895.

of women's emancipation from patriarchal oppression, though men and women were kept separate according to Man custom. Here, the criteria for the preeminence of the civilization and culture of the Han are called into question, a trenchant revelation of the arbitrary nature of boundary marking by the Han, who make value judgments according to phenotype, culture, and taste.

The logic of civilization and barbarity is equally embedded in rhetoric, particularly in the similes used to describe the appearance of the Han. When the narrator portrays the Man people, he uses colors to vividly represent their difference: Man people "had blue eyes and swarthy faces, auburn hair and brown beards" (2:293). When describing the Han people, however, instead of using color words he employs similes that compare their appearance to things that reflect the Han's cultural values. Liu Pei's "complexion is clear as jade" and he has lips as red as lipstick (1:6). In this context, jade is a standard of beauty but it can also signify authority and the desire to earn sovereign power. Kwan Yu has a deep red (or crimson) face like a well-ripened jujube and his lips look like they are colored by lipstick (1:7). As noted previously (n. 25), here the jujube symbolizes the Chinese preference for males over females for the construction of lineage. In both cases the similes reinforce the idea that the Han are a civilized people. When a simile is used to describe a Man prince, however, it implies his barbarous nature: a Man prince's face "was spotted with red as if splashed with blood, and his eyes were grey" (2:233).[27] By linking the color red with the image of blood the narrator represents the primitiveness and indecency of the Man. Overall, the bodies of the Man are portrayed as unattractive and even repulsive, in need of the cultivation and refining that the advanced technologies used by the Han to enhance bodily appearance can achieve.

In this use of colors to map alterity, therefore, jade and jujubes do not represent

27) This is the original Chinese sentence: "为首乃是番王沙摩柯，生得面如噀血，碧眼突出." Luo, *Sanguo yanyi*, vol. 2, chapter 83, 699.

specific hues so much as they transmit cultural values, functioning as a maker of cultural distinctions. Through the creation of difference and the Other by means of color-coded visibility and visuality, the Han people maintain and reinforce the status quo social order of center and periphery. Alterity is the cardinal yet critical cultural rationale that allows Han people to affirm their privileged status as the origin and civilized center, providing material for the construction of the Han self and their self-determined centrality, rendering it axiomatic and primordial. The novel, in this respect, does not so much describe the martial heroes of the Han period and their struggles for hegemony, but rather depicts the mechanisms whereby Han centrality was constructed and sustained by reducing the physical and cultural traits of the Man to the visible and despicable marks of the Other.

Ⅴ. Conclusion

The preceding analysis suggests that the employment of maps combined with the visible representation of Otherness as cultural difference to construct the center-periphery dichotomy ineluctably brings about configurations of space and people in hierarchal order. People living outside of the Central Plain were perceived as marginal and manageable Others, who could acquire significance only after submitting themselves to the Center and being assimilated into Han civilization. In other words, to establish the legitimacy of the Han's rule and their superiority, the inferior, visible Other is discovered and defined in accordance with the Han logic of boundary making, which is always asymmetrical and judgmental; if it were not, these configurations of space and people would be impossible. Through the establishment of a distinctive periphery, historical writing and narrative per se further contribute to the production and dissemination of a central, unifying Han culture. In this sense, the use of maps in premodern times already contains the

moment of a particular way of seeing that includes the gaps between the gazing subject and the object to be seen and represented, and between indication and significance. The formation of the center and the production of images of the Other inevitably entail the possibility of recurrence. As a result, it is imperative to note that the problem of the creation of centrality through boundaries, difference, and images in turn implies the importance of the project of their deconstruction.[28] The *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* shows how geography and cartography emerged as a new form of cultural competence in social relations, an alternative to the dominant linguistic competence of the literati. On the other hand, the Man's cultural achievement in their perception and practice of marriage and conjugal rights and gender relations shows how the narrative of constructing Han centrality is mitigated and vitiated by the process of storytelling itself, consciously yet contingently. Therefore, rather than creating and maintaining narrative coherence, the composition of the historical narrative itself becomes a contentious process whereby a repository of Chinese history is constructed for boundary making—a repository that can also be demolished, as it is built upon a precarious dichotomy that is nebulously defined. The text in this respect invites readers to ruminate on the significance of mapping, whose meaning does not necessarily reside in its utilization for ordering and hegemony, but for inquiring into the cultural potential for unmarking and decentering.

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28) Naoki Sakai particularly addresses the issue of dislocating the notions of East and West; see *Translation and Subjectivity: On Japan and Cultural Nationalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).

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< Abstract >

This essay examines the role of maps and geographic knowledge in the perception of spatiality and social relations as represented in the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. The essay is structured in three parts. The first part probes the problematic nature of modern cartography in conjunction with modernity, introducing major scholarship on maps and cartography and then critically reviewing its limits, thereby contesting the dichotomy between modern and premodern mapping. In the second part, which focuses on the role of maps and geography in the development of the narrative, the essay addresses how geographic knowledge and cartographic power emerged as a new form of cultural competence, contributing to social and political life, military operations, and political aspirations for geospatial management and territorial expansion. The political leaders' concerted efforts to recover the Central Plain (the Zhongyuan) embody their desire to control the center and to legitimize the Han's claim of centrality for that region, the presumed origin of China. By discussing the intricate relationship between verbal language and visual language and the rhetoric of alterity used to portray the Man people with similes, the essay argues that the premodern logic and mechanisms

of boundary making, based on the center-periphery dichotomy and used to demarcate territorial or and cultural boundaries, were not dissimilar to those of modern times. Lastly, in grappling with the question of the significance of the novel's representations of alterity, the essay explores how representations of cultural differences can be used to deconstruct the hierarchies that they are meant to establish. Thus, the significance of mapping does not necessarily reside in its utilization for ordering and hegemony, but for inquiring into the cultural potential for unmarking and decentering.

Key Words : *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*(삼국연의), alterity(타자성), borders(경계), maps(지도), similes(직유)