
Romancing Westphalia: Westphalian IR and *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*

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Abstract

*We need to re-envision international relations (IR). By framing world politics as a world-of-worlds comprised of multiple, interactive and overlapping regional worlds, we can curb the hegemony of the West through Westphalian IR and stem, if not transform, the “cartographic anxieties” that still beset postcolonial states. Both of these provoke state violence externally and internally. This paper examines an East Asian regional world inflected by the 14th-century Chinese epic, *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. Noting its conflicts as well as compatibilities with Westphalian IR, I conclude with the implications of this thought experiment for IR and for world politics in general.*

Key Words

Regional worlds, hegemony, conflict and compatibility, Westphalian IR, *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*.

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Introduction

State violence in Asia invariably resurrects the West’s old saw about “Oriental despotism”.¹ Basically, it accuses “Oriental” peoples of not knowing how to govern themselves. They resort to acts of violence and suppression whenever dissent arises, Eurocentric claim, in contrast to the enlightened, democratic processes of the West. It’s the same old story of the future vs the past, modernity vs tradition, liberal-democracy vs authoritarianism. To Fukuyama, this realisation signals “the end of history”.² *They* (“the Orient”) must learn to be more like *us* (“the West”). Accordingly, more education, more supervision and, if necessary, more sanctions must follow. The West still rules.

Besides its inherent imperialism, this Eurocentric critique sees only half the picture. It fails to acknowledge a context to the problem: that is, the *international* sources of state violence. Gourevitch first raised this awareness in the late 1970s but from an elite-structural, not a subaltern-postcolonial, perspective.³ Palumbo-Liu

describes this analytical lack as “white absence”.⁴ It accounts for why the mainstream media in 1992, for example, focused only on the conflict between Koreans and blacks in the riots following the first Rodney King trial.⁵ That is, “white absence” excuses from scrutiny the white power structure in which both minority groups must fight for survival *and* justice. Similarly, as C. Chen points out in his paper, we must understand the current dispute between China and Japan over the Diaoyutai/Senkaku Islands within the context of Westphalia’s imposed inter-state system, defined and marked by territorial sovereignty. No such dispute had occurred in the region for millennia before this historical imposition. Indeed, Westphalia’s forced entry into world politics has left huge swathes of the globe dealing with “cartographic anxieties” that rationalise state violence both externally and internally, as Ahmed notes about Assam. Emasculated by Westphalia as the degenerate, “sick” Oriental Other,⁶ state elites feel compelled to proclaim to the Westphalian Self: “We are man enough to be just like you! We, too, can censor, jail, barricade and shoot”.⁷ (Eurocentrics fail to appreciate the comprehensiveness

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of postcolonial mimicry). Indeed, state elites and Eurocentrics alike benefit from internalised imperialism. They can seem actively taking charge and solving problems without doing anything to transform the situation. Meanwhile, ordinary citizens suffer. And Westphalia’s impact on world politics remains hidden, overlooked and untreated.⁸

Generations of leaders/thinkers in Asia have tried alternatives. Strategies have ranged from state rejection (Qing China) to assimilation (imperial Japan) to hybridity (Nehru’s India). Ultimately, each succumbed to larger, contextual forces.⁹ Strategies directed internationally have fared no better. The 1955 Bandung Conference sought to neutralise Cold War rivalries between the US and the Soviet Union with Afro-Asian-Caribbean solidarity. In the 1970s, third world states proposed a New International Economic Order (NIEO), reinforced by oil price hikes from the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), to create a more equitable world economy for all. Each effort has dissipated despite its early promise. Seven years after Bandung, India and China warred over borders drawn by former colonisers.¹⁰

Today, the World Social Forum (WSF) champions global change for the Global South. Founded in 2001 and committed to the proposition that “another world is possible”, the WSF seeks to counter the neoliberal, globalising interests of the World Economic Forum (WEF). The latter represents the globe’s corporate, cultural and political elites, gathering annually in the posh, Swiss resort of Davos; whereas, the WSF convenes at various locations in the Global South and welcomes the subaltern, the exploited and the oppressed.¹¹ But is this *enough*?¹²

We need to re-envision IR.¹³ As history attests, neither domestic nor international reform *alone* can shift Westphalia’s hegemony. Instead, we need to align the “outside” with the “inside” by anchoring both in a “regional world”. Acharya defines a regional world as a “broader, inclusive, open, and interactive dynamic of regions and regionalisms. It is not just about how regions self-organize their economic, political and cultural space, but also about how they relate to each other and shape global order”.¹⁴ Put differently, a regional world represents a way of life and living through time-honoured traditions shared by neighbours. This would globalise IR for an already globalised world-of-worlds.¹⁵ Not only would we finally see and hear from the “multiple worlds”¹⁶ that make world politics but doing so would also “provincialise”¹⁷ Westphalian IR as, simply, another regional world. From

this basis, we may stem, if not transform, Westphalia’s “cartographic anxieties”.

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Let’s try a thought experiment. I draw a regional world for East Asia based on the 14th-century Chinese epic, *Sanguo yanyi* (*Romance of the Three Kingdoms*; hereafter, *Romance*).¹⁸ The epic remains popular today throughout the region, ranging from the vast Chinese mainland to Korea-Japan in the northeast and Hong Kong-Taiwan-Singapore-Vietnam in the southeast. The epic tells of the competition between three states—Shu, Wu and Wei— for supremacy “under heaven” (*tianxia*). The epic covers the chaos that followed the Han Dynasty’s decline (c. 169 AD) to the re-establishment of world-order under the Jin Dynasty (c. 280 AD). Besides books,¹⁹ films²⁰ and TV dramas,²¹ the novel stays current through new social media such as *manga*,²² *anime*,²³ computer games²⁴ and internet discussions.²⁵ As B. Chen notes in his paper, the President of Taiwan cast future relations with China in terms of the novel’s opening line: “Long divided, the world will unite; long united, it will fall apart” (“*tianxia da shi, fen jiou bi he, he jiou bi fen*”). These words, along with

the epic's other phrases, episodes and characters, echo throughout the region.²⁶

I begin with Wendt's "three cultures of anarchy" in Westphalian IR: Hobbesian enmity, Lockean rivalry and Kantian friendship.²⁷ I juxtapose these with comparable identities in *Romance*: self-aggrandising enmity, negotiated rivalries and eternal brotherhood. I include three other identities that also signify the epic: strategic genius, political trickster and ubiquitous narrator. (More could be added but these are the main ones.) Here, I draw on the latest (2010) televised version of *Romance*, titled *Three Kingdoms (Sanguo)*.²⁸ I do so rather than draw directly from the novel to underscore its currency in the popular imagination today within China and throughout the region. (The series also mirrors the novel closely).²⁹ I conclude with the implications of a *Romance*-inflected regional world for globalising IR.

Enemy, Rival, Friend

To Wendt, only three ideal-type cultures apply in (Westphalian) world politics. Hobbesian enmity, also noted as Machiavellian, evokes realist IR with the familiar characterisation of world politics as an unrelenting "warre of all against all". Lockean or Grotian rivalry accords with liberal IR with its recognition of the capacity of norms and institutions, such as sovereignty,

to curb Hobbesian tendencies. And Kantian friendship prefigures the rise of constructivist IR with its belief in the possibility of (collective) norms subsuming (individual) self-interest; accordingly, states could resolve disputes without resort to violence knowing that cooperation benefits all. "External norms", Wendt writes on Kantian friendship, "have become a voice in our heads telling us that we *want* to follow them".³⁰

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Wendt bases these cultures on individual (Western) psychology. Hobbesian/Machiavellian enmity, for instance, asserts a self-interested, competitive and murderous individual in the State of Nature now coded for world politics: "Self mirrors Other, becomes *its* enemy, in order to survive.... This gives enemy-images a homeostatic quality that sustains the logic of Hobbesian anarchies".³¹ Lockean/Grotian rivalry reflects the possessive individual who seeks, primarily, to protect property:³² "[The] neoliberal or rationalist explanation holds [that] states comply

with sovereignty norms because they think it will advance some exogenously given interest, like security or trade”.³³ And Kantian friendship internalises the “Lockean culture”: “Most states comply with its norms because they accept them as legitimate... identify with them and want to comply. States are status quo not just at the level of behavior, but of interests as well, and as such [are] now more fully self-regulating actors”.³⁴ Wendt implies a progression here: states advance from Hobbesian enmity to Lockean rivalry to (hopefully) Kantian friendship.

Self-aggrandising Enmity, Negotiated Rivalries, Eternal Brotherhood

Romance offers a distinctive contrast. Not only does the epic interpret enmity, rivalry and friendship differently but it also extends the roster of cultures to genius, trickster and narrator. Let’s see how:

Self-aggrandising enmity

Cao Cao (155-220 AD) represents the key antagonist in *Romance*. A low-level official from a family associated with eunuchs,³⁵ Cao rises to become chancellor of the Han Dynasty in its dying years. To deflect charges of unseemly ambition, Cao never proclaims

himself emperor- despite acting like one and holding the actual Emperor hostage. *Romance* depicts Cao as ruthless, conniving and self-serving. For instance, Cao kills his kindly godfather, who had given him safe haven, for fear the old man would inadvertently reveal the secret. But the epic also notes Cao’s utmost competence, savvy and- contrary to the times- emotional honesty. “I’d rather owe the world”, Cao famously declares, “than have the world owe me” (“*ning yuan wo fu tianxiaren, bu yuan tianxiaren fu wo*”). Cao embodies a kind of self-aggrandising power: his approach to his enemies reflects agency, not Hobbes’ situational inevitability, Machiavelli’s amoral calculations, or Wendt’s existential mirroring. Cao decides on friend or foe depending on person and circumstance. At times, Cao allies with his main rival, Liu Bei (161-223 AD). Cao also honours talent. He imprisons and then releases Guan Yu precisely due to the warrior’s famed ability with a halberd and his unswerving dedication to Liu, his “elder brother” (*da ge*). When Guan Yu dies, Cao mourns grievously.

Negotiated rivalries

The novel itself testifies to rivalry in world politics. All the characters and plots revolve around this central premise. For this reason, social scientists in the West take the “three kingdoms” as a metaphor for a multi-polar world

politics.³⁶ But the plots and schemes in *Romance* do not simply reflect rule-bound self-interest or possessiveness, as Wendt suggests for Lockean/Grotian rivalry. Rather, decisions to ally or fight often reflect contending psychologies such as greed, ambition, fear, lust, jealousy, vanity and brotherly love—often in the same individual. Still other times, alliances reflect norms of honour, duty and righteousness. One episode shows Zhuge Liang, master strategist for Liu Bei, on a mission to persuade Sun Quan, Prince of Wu, to ally with Liu against Cao. A long hallway of Sun’s ministers, generals and advisors greet the master strategist when he arrives at the palace. Each poses a question to Zhuge, as he walks down the hallway, as to why an alliance should ensue. Zhuge defeats each questioner by exposing a defect in his logic. Zhuge’s final and winning argument, however, hinges on righteousness: “Are we not honourable men?”³⁷ The longstanding appeal of *Romance* rests not only on calculations of self-interest—certainly, these matter—but the epic also underscores a larger sense of what it means to go to war, sacrifice one’s life, persevere despite repeated failures and make the most of triumph which is, ultimately, momentary. The novel asks: What is it all *for*?

Eternal brotherhood

The epic celebrates, above all else, brotherly love. It finds iconic expression in the relationship between Liu Bei (“first brother”), Guan Yu (“second brother”) and Zhang Fei (“third brother”), ordered according to age. Each supports, comforts and protects the other, always. Even when Cao captures Guan Yu, hoping to recruit him, the latter returns to Liu’s side at his first opportunity despite countless hazards along the way. The three men’s oath of loyalty

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is legendary: “We ask not to be born in the same year, same month, same day (*bu qiou tong nian, tong yue, tong ri sheng*) but hope to die in the same year, same month, and same day” (“*dan yuan tong nian, tong yue, tong ri si*”). Cao commands in lonely isolation, in contrast, perhaps accounting for his frequent migraines. Advisors and ministers abound but they perform primarily as lackeys. Cao does not inspire the kind of brotherly love that Liu enjoys. For example, Liu values the brilliance of Pang Tong, a subsidiary character, despite the latter’s ugly face and body. Here, the epic makes a subtle point: all the plotting and scheming, warring and fighting may thrill but it pales next to the succour and devotion

of one's brothers-in-arms. Even conjugal love cannot compare. "Wives are like clothes" ("*qizi ru yishang*"), Liu jokes, "whereas brothers are like the palm of one's hand" ("*xiongdi ru shouzhang*"). This norm of brotherly love and loyalty in *Romance* contrasts starkly with Wendt's notion of Kantian friendship. It may induce "a single 'cognitive region' [such as]... 'we-feeling,' 'solidarity,' 'plural subject,' 'common in-group identity,' 'thinking like a team,' 'loyalty,' and so on",³⁸ but the state-as-person remains "pre-social".³⁹ Like Hobbes' individual in the State of Nature, Wendt's state-as-person sprouts mushroom-like after a rain.⁴⁰ There is little sense of identity *through* social relations, as demonstrated by the oath of eternal brotherhood between Liu, Guan and Zhang.

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Genius

Along with Cao Cao and Liu Bei, the third key figure of *Romance* is

Zhuge Liang. Always elegantly attired in silk robes and waving a fan made of crane feathers (even in battle), Zhuge is Liu's master strategist and, later, his prime minister. In addition to military strategy, Zhuge is renowned for his overall genius as a scholar, thinker and inventor. Two examples suffice. In the critical Battle of Red Cliff (*chi bi*), along the southern bank of the Yangzi River, Liu finds himself outnumbered by Cao's forces in men and ammunition. Defeat seems imminent but Zhuge finds an extraordinary solution. He has several small, straw boats made to send out in the thick fog of night towards the enemy's fleet. Thinking Liu is attempting a sneak attack, Cao's admirals order thousands of arrows shot at the boats. Zhuge's men later retrieve the boats- and the arrows- to use against the enemy next day. A second example comes from an episode titled "Empty City Scheme" ("*kong cheng ji*"). Sima Yi, now Great Commander under Cao's son, advances towards Zhuge who is camped within a small city. Zhuge is caught by surprise, without adequate forces, yet he cannot run. He knows Sima's army can easily capture him and his people. Instead, Zhuge leaves the city gate slightly ajar. He orders some men to casually sweep leaves outside. Zhuge stations himself atop the city gate, plucking the *guqin*, a zither-like instrument. The master strategist plays calmly, melodiously. *He must have lots of men armed to the teeth to play so well,*

Sima guesses with his forces just beyond the city gate. He retreats and Zhuge is saved for another day. Westphalian IR has no narrative of genius in world politics. At most, it forwards the notion of (Western) hegemonic stability to justify the Eurocentric claim of “West knows best”.

Trickster

Sima Yi exemplifies the trickster: he who can wait a lifetime before making his move. Initially appointed to tutor Cao’s son, Sima lays low until his 70s, even feigning a coma, before seizing power. When he does, Sima takes off his cloth boot and sticks his bare foot on the neck of his now kneeling captive, regent to the boy emperor. The late Cao Cao, Sima explains to the hapless regent, had once joked that the shiniest part of a man’s body is his foot because it is always covered. Now, Sima thrusts his foot further upon the regent’s neck, I show you *mine*. Sima’s grandson eventually rises to become the founding Emperor of the Jin Dynasty, thereby reuniting China and ending the warring states period. Again, Westphalian IR has no explicit counterpart to the trickster. What comes closest are stereotypes of the Other as “duplicitous” or “deviant” but with only negative outcomes such as “rogue” or “failed states”.

Narrator

We cannot discount the role of the ubiquitous narrator in *Romance*. Not only does it relate all the events and characters that transpire over a century, but the narrator also provides a philosophy to understand them. Its opening line, for instance, conveys the dialectics of time and power: “Long divided, the world will unite; long united, it will fall apart”. The narrator draws on this outlook throughout the epic to account for the various alliances and their unravelling epitomised by the three kingdoms. Westphalian IR’s closest version of an omniscient presence comes from Waltz’s identification of world politics as a “self-help system” that structures world politics so that there can be “order without an orderer”.⁴¹

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“cartographic anxieties” induced by Westphalian hegemony. Still, it is the interaction between *Romance* and Westphalia that makes the difference. Either on its own merely reproduces a mono-cultural hegemony. Indeed, both the conflicts and the compatibilities between Westphalia and *Romance* contribute positively to a globalising IR.

Conflicts and Compatibilities

Romancing Westphalia surfaces some counter-normative surprises (see Table 1). Let’s see how:

Compatibilities

Westphalia and *Romance* match best in their treatments of friendship. Despite divergences in social ontology, whereby Kantian friendship is “pre-social” and eternal brotherhood in *Romance* emerges from sociality, both value and propagate norms of cooperation, if not love. This bond may solidify and stabilise relations between East Asia and the West but it also causes a problem: it skews power and politics in favour of hypermasculinity/patriarchy. To truly globalise IR and give the feminised its due in world politics,⁴² we need feminist interventions to realise *human*, not just gender, priorities. Here, a second, albeit modest, compatibility between Westphalia and *Romance* helps. Lockean/Grotian rivalry proceeds from rules about possessing and protecting

property; nonetheless, it does not deny or reject multiple and mobile negotiations, as suggested in *Romance*. An integrated understanding of rivalry could enhance cooperation by, for example, dynamising sovereignty. It need not fixate on the physical, the immovable and the contemporary only. Instead, sovereignty could take on, when needed, an older understanding of borders as relational, mobile and longstanding.⁴³ China has proposed to Japan, for instance, the idea of “dually managing” the Diaoyutai/Senkaku Islands to resolve the dispute.⁴⁴

Conflict

Westphalia and *Romance* conflict most, not surprisingly, in the category of “enemy”. Westphalia defines “enemy” as situationally compelled (Hobbes/Machiavelli) and stagnantly Self-mirroring (Wendt); whereas, in *Romance*, enemy-making depends on self-aggrandisement. This apparent conflict would seem to repel Westphalia from *Romance* were not for the two compatibilities identified above, friendship and rivalry. These introduce some elasticity in the relationship; accordingly, Westphalia’s difference from *Romance* on “enemy” could *sophisticate* understandings of inter-state competition as agential, rather than induced, and variable, not homeostatic. With this range, murderous competition need not dominate.

New Agendas

The categories of genius, trickster and narrator in *Romance* bring new identities and agendas to world politics. Zhuge's "genius" shows the value of challenging conventions and jumping paradigms: it contests hegemony. Sima's "trickster" reminds us to never presume and always consider the possibility of transformation. The *sanguo* "narrator" underscores the dialectics of time and power: politics is a process best evaluated over the long duration. The final outcomes rarely conform to initial expectations.

Conclusion

Nodes of compatibility and conflict weave through Westphalia and *Romance*. These show how two regional worlds, represented by their respective epics of world politics, could converge despite their differences. *Romance* also introduces new identities and agendas that inveigh upon us to seek emancipation, discard complacency and watch out for developments in the long-run. Equally significant, *Romancing* Westphalia highlights multiplicity in world politics. Not only do regional worlds vary

tremendously and colourfully- *Romance* and Westphalian IR are but two, limited examples- but regional worlds also overlap and interact, as shown above, thereby producing ever more variations. IR and world politics both need to take these developments into greater account.

Recent developments in IR suggest such conceptual bridgings are taking place. Even without the benefit of *Romance*, Lacassagne finds the promise of relationality, *habitus* and social interdependencies enriching IR. It can recognise that "[t]he civilizing process is not unilinear, there can be de-civilising processes... major outbursts of violence, or a return to a state in which the external constraints take precedence over self-restraint".⁴⁵ As Duffy notes in his paper, the seeds of self-transformation already exist within Western social science.

My thought experiment now ends. It suggests the gap between "the West" and "the Rest" can close in theory as well as in practise. No longer can Eurocentrics claim supremacy in civilisation disguised as enlightened governance. Nor can postcolonials bemoan a "cartographic anxiety" that renders them victimised yet reactionary, oppressed but violent. We, as Zhuge Liang shows, are capable of far greater creativity.

Table 1: Westphalia and *Romance* Compared

	Westphalian IR	<i>Romance</i>	Implications for globalising IR & world politics
Enemy	Hobbesian/Machiavellian Homeostatic, self-mirroring murderous competition	Cao-ist Variable, agential self-aggrandisement	<i>Sophisticate</i> competition
Rival	Lockean/Grotian Rule-bound possessiveness	Sanguo-ist Multiple, mobile negotiations	<i>Dynamise</i> sovereignty
Friend	Kantian Internalised cooperation	Liu-ist Eternal brotherhood	<i>Feminise</i> interventions
Genius	(Hegemonic state)	Zhuge-ist Paradigm-jumping strategising	<i>Contest</i> hegemony
Trickster	(Deviant duplicity, failed states)	Sima-ist Unknown factor	<i>Consider</i> transformative possibilities
Narrator	(Order without an Orderer: Self-help anarchy)	Sanguo-ist Dialectics of power	<i>Evaluate</i> power as a process over the long term

Endnotes

- 1 For a brief review of the history of “Oriental Despotism” in European thought, see, Rolando Minuti, “Oriental Despotism”, *EGO* (European History Online), at <http://www.ieg-ego.eu/en/threads/models-and-stereotypes/the-wild-and-the-civilised/rolando-minuti-oriental-despotism> [last visited 1 December 2013].
- 2 Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, New York, Avon Books, 1992.
- 3 Peter Gourevitch, “The Second Image Reversed: The International Sources of Domestic Politics”, *International Organization*, Vol. 32, No. 4 (Autumn 1978), pp. 881-912.
- 4 David Palumbo-Liu, “Los Angeles, Asians, and Perverse Ventriloquisms: On the Functions of Asia America in the Recent American Imaginary”, *Public Culture*, No. 6 (1994), pp. 365-381.
- 5 These riots occurred in South-Central Los Angeles where African-Americans dominated as residents but Korean-Americans owned and operated many local stores. The first Rodney King trial exempted four white police officers of police brutality and racial animus despite a videotape showing them beating an unarmed black man, Rodney King, while prostrate on the ground. A second trial later reversed this sentence. For a full recounting of the incident, the trials, and the riots, see, New York Times, *The Los Angeles Riots and Rodney King*, New York, New York Times Company, 2013.
- 6 Eurocentrics labelled both Ottoman Turkey and Qing China as “sick men” in the 19th century. A cartoon from 1898 shows Turkey, as the “sick man of Europe”, consoling China, the “sick man of Asia”, at <http://www.granger.com/results.asp?image=0014135&screenwidth=1274> [last visited 15 December 2013].
- 7 Nandy demonstrates how Indian elites internalised the British coloniser’s hypermasculinised, “undeveloped heart” to show their worth in British eyes and rule over domestic Others. Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: The Psychology of Colonialism*, Delhi, Oxford, 1988.
- 8 For a recent example, see, Manjari Chatterjee Miller, *Wronged by Empire: Post-Imperial Ideology and Foreign Policy in India and China*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2013.
- 9 Qing China suffered defeat and unequal treaties; imperial Japan, atomic devastation; and Nehru’s India, Cold War power politics.
- 10 For a new take on the 1962 India-China border war, see, L.H.M. Ling, *Rethinking Borders and Security, India and China: New Connections for Ancient Geographies*, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, forthcoming.
- 11 Frances Hasso, “Alternative Worlds at the World Social Forum 2013 in Tunis”, *Jadaliyya*, 1 May 2013, at <http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/11396/alternative-worlds-at-the-2013-world-social-forum-> [last visited 3 December 2013].

- 12 We explore this question in L.H.M. Ling and Carolina M. Pinheiro, “Worldist Dialogics: Creatively Listening to and Speaking with Others”, in L.H.M. Ling, Nizar Messari, and Arlene B. Tickner (eds.), *International Relations Theory: Views Beyond the West*, London, Routledge, forthcoming.
- 13 Here, I echo Ching-Chang Chen, “The Absence of Non-Western IR Theory in Asia Reconsidered”, *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (2011), pp. 1-23.
- 14 See the Call for Papers, under incoming President Amitav Acharya, for the 2015 annual meeting of the International Studies Association (ISA) in New Orleans, at <http://www.isanet.org/Default.aspx> [last visited 13 December 2013].
- 15 For more on “world-of-worlds”, see L.H.M. Ling, *The Dao of World Politics: Towards a Post-Westphalian, Worldist International Relations*, London, Routledge, 2014.
- 16 On “multiple worlds”, see, L.H.M. Ling, *Postcolonial International Relations: Conquest and Desire between Asia and the West*, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2002; Anna M. Agathangelou and L.H.M. Ling, *Transforming World Politics: From Empire to Multiple Worlds*, London, Routledge, 2009; Ling, *The Dao of World Politics*.
- 17 Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2000.
- 18 For a competent yet brief synopsis of the epic, see, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romance_of_the_Three_Kingdoms [last visited 15 December 2013]. Other Chinese epics like *Shuihu zhuan* (*Water Margins*), *Xiyou ji* (*Journey to the West*) and *Honglou Meng* (*Dream of the Red Chamber*) have had a similar cultural impact on the region but only *Romance* deals explicitly with world politics.
- 19 Lai Sing Lam, *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms and Mao's Global Order of Tripolarity*, Oxford, Peter Lang AG, 2011.
- 20 The film, *Chi bi* (*Red Cliff*, 2008), for example, was based on an episode of *Romance*. Directed by John Woo, the film had an international cast but was performed in Mandarin. The 2010 TV series, *Three Kingdoms*, enjoyed high ratings in Taiwan. See, <http://news.sina.com.tw/article/20120712/7312574.html>; <http://dailynews.sina.com/bg/ent/tv/sinacn/file/20120802/02003629939.html>; <http://big5.chinanews.com:89/yl/2012/07-25/4058001.shtml> [last visited 8 December 2013].
- 21 Chinese Central Television (CCTV) has aired two productions: one, “*Sanguo Yanyi*”, in 1994; a second, “*Sanguo*”, in 2010.
- 22 See, in Japanese: <http://mangafox.me/manga/sangokushi/> [last visited 8 December 2013]; in Vietnamese: [http://www.sachbaovn.vn/doc-truc-tuyen/sach/tam-quoc-dien-nghia-tap-1-\(truyen-tranh\)-MUQwQTQ2MkI](http://www.sachbaovn.vn/doc-truc-tuyen/sach/tam-quoc-dien-nghia-tap-1-(truyen-tranh)-MUQwQTQ2MkI) [last visited 9 December 2013].
- 23 See, in Japanese: *Kōtetsu Sangokushi* (2007).

- 24 See, in Korean: <http://samleague.no3games.com/nmain.php>; <http://cafe.naver.com/scsamguk>; <https://itunes.apple.com/kr/app/id431552463>; <http://cafe.naver.com/samtactic> [last visited 10 December 2013]; in Japanese: *Sangokushi Taisen* (2005, 2006); in Vietnamese: <http://3d.3qc.vn/teaser/xich-bich.htm>, <http://luyengame.com/games/tamquocchi.html> [last visited 9 December 2013].
- 25 See, “*Xin sanguo yanyi: zhong, e, mei*” (New Romance of the Three Kingdoms: China, Russia, US), *tianya shequ* (one of the biggest bulletin boards in China), 30 September 2010.
- 26 South Korea’s President, Park Geun Hye, notes her love of the epic in her autobiography, at <http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/18138421-the-exercise-of-my-despair> [last visited 10 December 2013]. In Vietnam, daily discourse includes these phrases from the epic: e.g., “*Vợ chồng như quần áo, anh em như tay chân*” (wives are like clothing; brothers are like the palm of one’s hand); “*Nhắc Tào Tháo, Tào Tháo đến*” (speak of the devil [Cao Cao] and he appears); “*Ba ông thợ may bằng một Gia Cát Lượng*” (three stinky leather tanners can triumph over one Zhuge Liang [genius]). Many temples in Vietnam also worship Guan Yu, a key character in *Romance*. He symbolises the principled warrior/nobleman.
- 27 Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999, p. 247.
- 28 To access the 2010 TV series with English subtitles, see, <http://the-scholars.com/viewtopic.php?f=5&t=21148> [last visited 27 July 2011]. A version dubbed in Turkish is available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rD3hZkPTLfl> [last visited 12 December 2013].
- 29 Slight differences appear. For example, the 2010 series does not include the novel’s chapter, “Seven Times Caught, Seven Times Released” (*qi qing qi zong*). On this, see Chapter 6 of Ling, *The Dao of World Politics*.
- 30 Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, p. 288, original emphasis.
- 31 *Ibid.*, p. 263, original emphasis.
- 32 For more on this Westphalian ontology of fear and property, see Agathangelou and Ling, *Transforming World Politics*.
- 33 *Ibid.*, p. 287.
- 34 *Ibid.*, p. 289.
- 35 Cao’s father was the foster son of a favoured eunuch in the Han Dynasty court.
- 36 Lai, *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms and Mao’s Global Order of Tripolarity*; “*Xin sanguo yanyi: zhong, e, mei*” (New Romance of the Three Kingdoms: China, Russia, US). See also, Emerson M.S. Niou and Peter C. Ordershook, “Preventive War and the Balance of Power: A Game-Theoretic Approach”, *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 31, No. 3 (September 1987), pp. 387-419.

- 37 This is a paraphrase of the dialogue in the drama series. Zhuge Liang charges his inquisitor with sentiments that brink on the seditious (literally, to have “no ruler, no father” or “*wujun wufu*”) and disloyal (literally, “without patriotism, without filial piety” or “*wu zhong wu xiao*”).
- 38 Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, p. 305.
- 39 *Ibid.*, p. 198.
- 40 Thomas Hobbes, *De Cive*, Chapter 8, at <http://www.constitution.org/th/decive08.htm> [last visited on 27 May 2013].
- 41 Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, Reading, Addison-Wesley, 1979.
- 42 These include any identity not deemed “masculine”: e.g., women, the underclass, the informal economy and the non-Western Other; Marianne Marchand and Anne Sisson Runyan, *Gender and Global Restructuring: Sightings, Sites, and Resistances*, London, Routledge, 2000 and 2011.
- 43 L.H.M. Ling, “Borders of Our Minds: Territories, Boundaries, and Power in the Confucian Tradition”, in Margaret Moore and Allen Buchanan (eds.), *States, Nations, and Borders: The Ethics of Making Boundaries*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. 86-100.
- 44 Luo Tian-bing, “*Dong Liwen: Zhong qitu yu ri gongguan diaoyudao haiyu*” (Dong Liwen: China Seeks with Japan Joint Management of the Diaoyu Islands Sea Area), *Ziyou shibao (Liberty Times)*, 24 April 2013, at <http://www.libertytimes.com.tw/2013/new/apr/24/today-fo1-2.htm> [last visited 14 December 2013].
- 45 Aurélie Lacassagne, “Cultures of Anarchy as Figurations: Reflections on Wendt, Elias and the English School”, *Human Figurations: Long-Term Perspectives on the Human Condition*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (July 2012), at <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/h/humfig/11217607.0001.207/--cultures-of-anarchy-as-figurations-reflections-on-wendt?rgn=main;view=fulltext> [last visited on 14 December 2013].