

A Groundbreaking Chinese Voice: Introducing *Literary Cartography*¹ by Guo Fangyun

Li Liu

College of International Studies, Southwest University, Chongqing, China
Email: liliuliterary@gmail.com

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Abstract

In his work *Literary Cartography*, Professor Guo Fangyun, a prominent Chinese scholar, develops a pioneering academic framework for Literary Cartography. Through a historical examination of the traditional intersection between literature and maps, he clarifies the distinct disciplinary features of literary cartography and addresses its theoretical foundations from the perspectives of philosophical origins, ontology, and methodology. Guo's theory expands Western spatial criticism within the postmodern context and offers fresh insights into Chinese literary studies, particularly in the field of Chinese Literary Geography. The cartographic mechanisms and cognitive strategies proposed in *Literary Cartography* uncover the hidden spatial structures within literary texts, emphasizing their spatial dimensions and providing a novel critical approach to literary analysis. Overall, *Literary Cartography* presents significant potential for future research.

Keywords

Literary Cartography, Guo Fangyun, Cartographic Mechanism, Cognitive Strategies, Chinese Literary Geography

1. Introduction

Literary Cartography by Professor Guo Fangyun of Southwest University is the first academic monograph on the subject of literary cartography in China. It rep-

¹In this article, the term *Literary Cartography*, with initial capital letters, is a theoretical perspective of literary criticism; while with initial lowercase letters, it is phenomenon of combination of literature and maps, and in a inclined form, refers to professor Guo's academic work; "literary maps" is the geographic or allegorical or cognitive maps in literary works; "Cartography" and "mapping" refers to dynamic and subjective mapping behaviors by authors and readers. Literary Cartography is an effective approach to literary spatial studies.

resents a significant contribution to cutting-edge research by Chinese scholars in the contemporary era. The book was included in the Chinese Academic Translation Project, supported by the National Social Science Fund of China (2022). Furthermore, in the same year, Chapter Six of the book, titled “Exploration of Attributes in British and American Literary Cartography,” was featured in *Spatial Literary Studies in China*, edited by Robert T. Tally Jr., a leading scholar in American spatial studies, and is set to be published by Macmillan. In 2024, Professor Guo received the 9th Higher Education Scientific Research Award from the Ministry of Education of the People’s Republic of China for this work. As such, *Literary Cartography* marks a pivotal moment in the global emergence of Chinese literary cartography.

The exploration of modernism and modernity through geography and space in Western literary geography has played a crucial role in the Spatial Turn since the 1960s. Fredric Jameson, a central figure in integrating literature and spatial studies, argued that postmodernism is fundamentally centered on spatiality, in contrast to the temporality emphasized in modernism. In this context, space has become a critical framework in postmodern humanities and social sciences research. Various spatial theories have emerged, including Joseph Frank’s Narrative Space, Michel Foucault’s concept of Heterotopia, Henri Lefebvre’s Triadic Dialectic of Space, and Edward William Soja’s Epistemology of the Third Space. These foundational spatial theories focus on the ways in which modernism reshapes and explores the pluralism of social space. While traditional literary spatial research primarily focuses on textual description and interpretation without providing an intuitive and graphic representation, for example, Mikhail Bakhtin’s Chronotope underscores the interpretation of temporal and spatial relations in literary works, ultimately anchoring its theoretical core in the unity of literary form and content without any special pictures. In contrast, Gaston Bachelard’s Spatial Poetics culturally prioritizes spatial connotations embedded in specific scenes and material objects within texts, which inclined to overlook the holistic spatial interpretations. Professor Guo, however, leans more heavily on the iconological tradition advocated by the renowned Western art historian Erwin Panofsky (Panofsky, 1972: p. 17). For instance, in analyzing the colonial metaphor embedded in *Twelfth Night* from the perspective literary cartography, Guo not only focuses on the textual details: “He does smile his face into more // lines than is in the new map with the augmentation of the Indies.” (Greenblatt, 1997: p. 1798)—but also contextualizes it within a broader historical framework which incorporates Francis Drake’s and John White’s celebrated maritime expeditions, alongside Richard Hakluyt’s geographic work *Divers Voyages Touching the Discovery of America and the Islands Adjacent* (1582) and John Smith’s new map of England (1624)—a seminal English colonial map—thereby constructing a robust, historically grounded discourse on *Twelfth Night*’s colonial context and its discursive production of overseas space through Literary Cartography (Guo, 2020: pp. 210-214). Professor Guo also stresses that Literary Cartography is not a groundless construct but results from

the epistemological transformation of maps and the Spatial Turn in literature during the 1970s (Guo, 2020: pp. ii). This field represents an organic synthesis of spatial, image-based, and literary intertextual thinking, offering a graphical representation of the spatial ideologies within literary texts and the symbolic meanings of maps, distinguishing it from other approaches to literary spatial studies (Guo, 2020: p. 70).

One limitation of prior research is its focus on trivial empirical textual criticism, which has yet to establish an independent theoretical system. To address this gap, Professor Guo has broken down the disciplinary barriers between literature and cartography, creating an innovative integration of literature with space and graphics. Through the intertextual interplay of images and texts, he has developed a unique spatial grammar that visualizes literary spatial elements and highlights the intrinsic logic of art. In sum, the methodology of Literary Cartography transcends the limitations of traditional spatial research and systematically constructs a novel approach to literary scholarship.

2. What Is Literary Cartography?

Scholars have long recognized the intersection between literature and maps. Notable examples include J. G. Bartholomew's *Literary and Historical Atlas of Europe* (1910), Michael Hardwick's *Literary Atlas and Gazetteer of the British Isles* (1973), David Daiches' *Literary Landscapes of the British Isles: A Narrative Atlas* (1979), *The Atlas of Literature, edited by Malcolm Bradbury* (1996), Franco Moretti's *Atlas of the European Novel 1800-1900* (1998), *Literature and Cartography: Theories, Histories, Genres* (2017) by Anders Engberg-Pedersen, as well as works by Chinese scholars Yang Yi (2015) and Shi Chang (2019). However, these studies remain fragmented and have yet to form a cohesive, systematic framework.

Literary Cartography is the first book, both in China and internationally, to construct a comprehensive theory of Literary Cartography, addressing it from the perspectives of ontology, epistemology, and critical strategies. The work is divided into three main sections, consisting of a total of eleven chapters. The first section examines the historical context of literary cartography through a genealogical approach, focusing on the historical evolution, research context, and academic landscape of Western literary maps.

The second section addresses the ontological aspects of literary cartography. Chapter Four explores the relationship between literature and maps by analyzing their similarities, differences, and mutual influences. In Chapter Five, the concept of Literary Cartography is defined, which leads to the identification of four key attributes in Chapter Six: ideological properties, body-physical metaphorical properties, graphic and textual intertextual narrativity, and spatial ontology.

The final section focuses on close readings of texts, using Shakespeare's plays and Spenser's poems as case studies to construct specific critical strategies for Literary Cartography. These strategies are examined from five dimensions across five

chapters: political imagination, gender poetics, religious guidance, mapping mechanisms, and cognitive mapping strategies. These chapters demonstrate the feasibility of Literary Cartography as an emerging method of literary criticism, highlighting its theoretical value and interpretive potential.

What is Literary Cartography? In Chapter 5, Literary Cartography is defined in two senses. In its narrower interpretation, it refers to the pictorial representation of spatial information within a literary work (Guo, 2020: p. 128). Examples of this include the map of the island in *Utopia* (1516), the island map in Robinson Crusoe, and the orientation map in *Treasure Island*. These graphic maps are easily comprehended by general readers and are frequently the focus of traditional literary map research in British and American scholarship. In a broader sense, Literary Cartography encompasses both graphic representations and textual depictions of spatial information within the literary world (Guo, 2020: p. 128). Accordingly, cartography in this context can include not only geographical maps but also literary iconographic representations, such as graphic, verbal, cognitive, and allegorical maps, as well as imaginative depictions of the universe. For instance, the verbal description of the maid Luce by Dromio of Syracuse in *The Comedy of Errors* constitutes a typical body map (Guo, 2020: pp. 218-231), while the metaphysical journey of the female knight Britomart navigating the Sea of Desire in *The Faerie Queene* (Volume 3) can be understood as a religious navigation map (Guo, 2020: pp. 265-278). Thus, it can be argued that nearly all spatial information related to literature—whether involving authors, works, readers, or geographic contexts—falls within the purview of Literary Cartography.

It is important to note that Professor Robert T. Tally Jr., a leading scholar in American literary spatial studies, coined the term “literary cartography,” which shares the same expression as that used in Guo Fangyun’s *Literary Cartography*. Tally’s usage, however, is metaphorical, suggesting that, much like a cartographer, the author employs conventional techniques to map both real and imagined spaces within their world. In this sense, the author’s work functions as a literary map, and the reader of the map similarly engages with the text by envisioning space, plotting a trajectory, and orienting themselves within the depicted world (Tally, 2013: p. 79). From this perspective, Tally’s definition emphasizes the logical parallels between authors and cartographers, highlighting the dynamic process of literary mapping by writers and the reader’s active engagement in interpreting these maps. This approach differs from Professor Guo’s Literary Cartography, which places greater emphasis on the inclusion of both physical and literal maps in literary works. According to Guo, the maps within Literary Cartography extend beyond real geographical maps to encompass metaphorical and fictional artistic maps. As a critical methodology, Guo’s *Literary Cartography* adheres to a professional, structured paradigm that begins with the text, integrates historical and specific map analysis, and ultimately returns to the text itself.

It is also important to note the relationship between Literary Cartography and literary geography. Although cartography is considered subordinate to geography

within the modern disciplinary system, the French geographer Paul Pedech observed that la science géographique a commencé par la cartographie. La manière descriptive n'a été qu'une deuxième étape (Pédech, 1976: p. 33), meaning that geography originated from cartography. In this regard, Literary Cartography corrects the traditional misconception that geography is the source of cartography. Furthermore, Literary Cartography is committed to interdisciplinary exploration, integrating literature with cartography while also incorporating elements from geography, psychology, sociology, and philosophy to create a new form of literary spatial analysis. From this standpoint, *Literary Cartography* offers a more robust framework for interpreting literary texts than literary geography. For example, the 1506 map of Purgatory in *The Divine Comedy* by the Italian poet Girolamo Benivieni is based on the spatial descriptions found in the last six cantos of Dante's *Divine Comedy*. This map was drawn by the distinguished Florentine humanist Antonio Manetti, who utilized both Dante's artistic imagination and Ptolemy's spatial measurement methods. Professor Guo uses this example to demonstrate that Literary Cartography not only involves a mutually reinforcing relationship between maps and literary texts but also possesses a multidisciplinary scope. In this way, *Literary Cartography* provides a creative interpretive space for literary criticism that geography, as a discipline, struggles to achieve (Guo, 2020: p. 160).

3. Innovative Contributions of *Literary Cartography*

Literary Cartography introduces four major academic innovations. The first lies in its conceptual innovation, namely, the rejection of the dichotomy between objective-neutral empirical research in the natural sciences and subjective criticism in the humanities. This allows for the integration of scientific maps into literary studies, thereby contributing to the advancement of the New Liberal Arts.² Professor Guo argues that since the mid-16th century, advances in surveying and mapping technologies have enabled the simulation of maps. At the same time, the late 19th century saw the rise of disciplinary specialization, which promoted the in-depth development of various fields but also created divisions between them. This fragmentation contributed to the growing dominance of scientific rationality in the modern era, which ultimately evolved into a form of mechanical scientific rationalism. This shift led to the marginalization of the arts and literature within the scientific domain, reducing them to mere sensual fictions. Moreover, while maps continue to be associated with the objective and precise perspective of scientific

²The notion of "New Liberal Arts" was initially introduced by Hiram College in USA in 2017 which advocates for a reconfiguration of conventional humanities and social sciences through interdisciplinary integration, particularly by infusing cutting-edge technologies into those disciplines such as philosophy, literature, and linguistics, aiming to furnish students with a holistic and cross-disciplinary educational experience. Also, Chinese government has explicitly articulated the strategic imperative to further advance the development of "New Liberal Arts" in its policy blueprint Outline of the Plan for Building China into an Education Powerhouse (2024–2035) to establish a world-class educational ecosystem and construct an autonomous intellectual framework for China's humanities and social sciences.

cartography, they also carry ideological power and hidden prejudices, often disguised as scientific objectivity. These biases, in turn, become silent forces that shape and control the world, imposing standards and structuring spatial relations. As a result, individuals are rendered “prisoners” of the spatial power structures embedded in these maps. Postmodern theorists such as J. B. Harley and Michel Foucault have argued that maps exhibit the fictional qualities of art. Regardless of whether the cartographic techniques are scientific or artistic, maps are cultural rhetorical tools that shape the reader’s spatial behavior (Guo, 2020: pp. 46-49). In this context, maps occupy a unique position in art, serving both as cultural texts constructed by power and as elements within a broader artistic system. In today’s map-dominated world, where scientism prevails, the integration of Literary Cartography into literary criticism is an essential step toward uncovering the true essence of space.

The second major innovation of *Literary Cartography* lies in its theoretical contributions. Any theory must evolve from metaphysical abstraction to empirical practice, undergoing critical examination in order to yield meaningful insights and advance scholarly inquiry. The strength of *Literary Cartography* is its methodological framework, which follows a logical progression from textual analysis to the integration of graphic and virtual maps. The book emphasizes close readings of Shakespeare’s plays and Spenser’s poetry, using these texts as case studies to demonstrate the unique discursive value and interpretive potential of this new approach to literary criticism. The final five chapters present five distinct strategies for analysis, each of which begins with detailed textual analysis and examines it in conjunction with relevant maps. The organic integration of maps and textual interpretation is essential for a deeper exploration of literary space. For example, in Chapter 8, the body map of the maid Luce in *The Comedy of Errors* is analyzed through the lens of gender poetics, drawing on the historical archaeology of literary cartography discussed in the earlier chapters, as well as the body-physical metaphorical properties examined in the middle section. Professor Guo argues that the body map functions as a literary critique of the Renaissance theory of the Queen’s two bodies. In this context, the political body of the queen, representing her divinity, is demonized and sexualized in the map, reducing it to a filthy, obese, and lewd female servant’s flesh. This interpretation transforms the female body into a sex-political cartography that reflects England’s political stance towards other European countries, while simultaneously constructing a body topography imbued with political and ethnographic significance (Guo, 2020: p. 230). In contrast to the interpretation offered by Western scholar Paige Newmark, who views Luce’s body map as a cross-temporal and spatial mapping of drama, maps, and the body (Newmark, 2004: p. 15), it is clear that *Literary Cartography* more effectively captures the play’s political and spatial dimensions. From this perspective, the publication of *Literary Cartography* is of considerable significance, as it not only challenges the cultural stereotypes that limit Western scholarship but also establishes a spatial research paradigm for English literature from a Chinese per-

spective.

Before the application of geographic information systems (ArcGIS) to literary mapping, modernist literary critics had already recognized the potential of mapping as a tool for interpreting literary works. Two key concepts of literary maps are particularly prominent in Western academic discourse. One is proposed by Franco Moretti, a pioneer in studying literature through mapping. Moretti argues that maps should not be seen as merely peripheral or decorative; rather, they serve as essential analytical tools in literary studies (Moretti, 1998: pp. 3-7). However, Moretti's approach emphasizes literature from the perspective of objective geography, where the existing space (or place) in a literary work corresponds to its topographical signposts. In this sense, the literary maps he creates stress objectivity and provide a broad, God-like macro perspective, outlining the rise and dispersion of European novels. The other key perspective comes from Eric Bulson, who also believes that literary maps offer a unique insight into the understanding of modern literary works. According to Bulson, the representational space of a novel is translated into the representational space of a map, offering readers something beyond what novels provide. Maps, he contends, serve as a quick and cost-effective means of guiding literary tourists to key locations in the text. Bulson argues that it is irrelevant whether the original literary landmarks still exist in the real world; the map alone is sufficient for creating the "reality effect" and allowing readers to engage with the literary work (Bulson, 2007: pp. 3-4). Bulson's approach to literary mapping may have been influenced by Frederic Jameson's concept of cognitive mapping.

Professor Guo integrates the two concepts of literary mapping mentioned above, emphasizing that the mapping of literary texts should combine both scientific and artistic approaches. The maps derived from literature exist between spatial reality and artistic fiction, aiming to provide an intuitive representation of the spatial structure of the text (Guo, 2020: p. 284). Furthermore, Guo addresses and overcomes the four major challenges of Digital Literary Mapping identified by David Cooper (Cooper, 2016: p. 9). Chapter 10 focuses on the Cartographic Mechanism, where Professor Guo uses *The Merchant of Venice* as a case study to explain in detail the process and specifications for creating literary maps using ArcGIS. First, the overall plan is developed, which includes four key elements of cartography: purpose, subject, form, and audience. This phase integrates fragmented spatial experiences within *The Merchant of Venice* to outline the play's spatial layout and narrative structure. Second, data analysis is conducted, which involves the collection, classification, localization, and vectorization of the prototype map. In this step, specific spatial information from the play is gathered and organized into actionable geographic data. Historical evidence is also incorporated to determine the actual locations of landmarks in the play, such as Belmont and Shylock's house. Third, the representation of items is addressed, which includes the vectorization of the original data, data input, layout decoration, and map output. Other cartographic elements, such as outlines, colors, and descriptive

texts of spatial units in *The Merchant of Venice*, are input into the ArcGIS editing area. After layout decoration and orientation corrections, the dramatic map of *The Merchant of Venice* is finalized (Guo, 2020: pp. 285-296).

Professor Guo not only represents the spatial relations described in literary texts but also reflects on how social space shapes those texts. To this end, Professor Guo created maps such as the Map of Shakespeare's Comedies, Map of Shakespeare's Historical Plays, Map of Shakespeare's Tragedies, Map of Shakespeare's Romances, and Map of Shakespeare's Plays, providing new visual depictions of both the partial and overall spatial structures in Shakespearean drama. The Map of *The Merchant of Venice* focuses on the internal space of the text, while the other maps incorporate the external space into literary studies. These micro and macro cartographic approaches distinguish themselves from Charles Travis's use of GIS and social media to map James Joyce's *Ulysses* (Cooper, 2016: pp. 102-120). Unlike Travis's approach, which focuses on mapping, Literary Cartography serves as an interpretive practice. These maps not only visualize the spatial elements of Shakespeare's plays but also collectively form a grand picture of his dramatic works (Guo, 2020: pp. 297-302).

American scholar Peta Mitchell observed that postmodern maps have become less concrete and more abstract, less prescriptive and more cognitive. She notes that "all maps are mental maps," acknowledging the inherently cognitive nature of cartography (Mitchell, 2012: p. 21). This raises a fundamental question: how can literary works be mapped when they lack explicit physical locations and landmarks? Chapter 11 addresses this issue through cognitive strategies, employing the concepts of route schema and survey schema to schematically represent the implicit spatial trajectories of a text. Drawing on principles from cognitive psychology, these strategies use diagrammatic reasoning to visualize spatial structure. Professor Guo applies the Landmark-Route-Overview model to conduct a detailed cognitive analysis of Shakespearean drama, developing a four-step method for constructing route schemas. The first step involves tracing scene transitions within the play, recording the coordinates and durations of spatial units, and identifying their orientation and focal points. The second step uses the continuity of self-awareness to guide spatial positioning, progressing linearly with the narrative rhythm until the next spatial node appears. The third step connects these spatial nodes cognitively, using the primary space as a reference point and mapping the direction and trajectory of narrative space according to the logical structure of the play. The fourth and final step is to extract the conceptual schemas embedded within the text. These schemas serve as interpretive blueprints, enhanced by appropriate moral rhetoric, for conducting in-depth analyses and identifying conceptual metaphors (Guo, 2020: pp. 313-314). Using this methodology, Professor Guo has produced a Cognitive Route Map of Shakespeare's Comedies, Cognitive Route Map of Shakespeare's Tragedies, Cognitive Route Map of Shakespeare's Histories, and a U-shaped Cognitive Route Map of Shakespeare's Entire Dramatic Corpus. Each map is closely integrated with textual analysis, offering a new di-

mension for interpreting Shakespeare's spatial imagination.

With regard to the survey schema strategy, Professor Guo outlines a concrete operational procedure for analyzing the main spatial fields across Shakespeare's 38 plays, based on the spatial homogeneity of recurring landmarks. The procedure involves the following steps: first, identifying and recording the principal spatial locations within each play; second, classifying these locations by kingdoms or countries to serve as categorical catalogs; third, integrating the spatial settings of related plotlines to construct a literary survey schema; fourth, through the reorganization of landmarks, cultural interpretation, and thematic elevation, extracting conceptual frameworks and symbolic patterns that are often neglected or difficult to uncover through micro-textual analysis. This methodological approach culminates in the creation of four regional overview maps corresponding to spatial configurations within Shakespeare's plays: London, Northeast England, Southwest England, and Southeast England. These maps reveal a spatial structure in Shakespeare's dramatic world, with Northumberland and York in the north, Shropshire in the west, and Kent in the east, forming a triangular microcosm of England's geography. The three corners of this triangle represent three pivotal foreign relations in English history—Scotland, Wales, and France—while London emerges as the geopolitical and narrative core. Taken together, these survey schema maps offer a multidimensional representation of England that synthesizes spatial relations, historical developments, political dynamics, military conflicts, and personal vendettas. This intricate configuration becomes a vivid spatial landscape on the stage of European Renaissance literature and art (Guo, 2020: pp. 331-345).

4. Academic Influences of *Literary Cartography* in China

Since the publication of *Literary Cartography* in November 2020, the field of literary mapping has generated sustained interest in China, fostering both the growth and innovation of Literary Cartography. Numerous influential studies on literary maps have emerged within Chinese academia. According to a search conducted on China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI), since the concept of Literary Cartography was introduced, there have been 43 academic journal articles in Chinese that reference Literary Cartography as a research theme and cite *Literary Cartography* in their reference lists, excluding those written by Chinese scholars in English or other foreign languages. Additionally, there are 29 Master's and PhD dissertations on the subject, although some doctoral dissertations are not accessible due to copyright protection. Professor Guo's target texts predominantly engage with those writings of Shakespeare and Spencer. However, contemporary scholars in China have significantly expanded the scope of *Literary Cartography*, incorporating not only the works of other Renaissance authors but also those of American and Chinese literature, which render *Literary Cartography* to encompass a variety of literary genres, historical periods, and cultural traditions, thereby underscoring its versatility and multifaceted potential as a critical methodology.

Young Chinese scholars are actively exploring the theory of Literary Cartography, advancing its critical application to Western literature. Xu Qiuqun has argued that Marlowe subtly appropriates the long-standing Western concept of androgyny to construct a conceptual framework of identity, drawing connections between Tamburlaine and Elizabeth I. Through this, she projects England's growing colonial aspirations using cartographic metaphors in his renowned play *Tamburlaine the Great* (Xu, 2020: pp. 87-98). He Ping, in his analysis, reveals that Shakespeare employs anatomical and cartographic metaphors in *Macbeth* to explore the intersection of James I's early political strategies, the cognitive paradox of mind-body dualism, and the crisis of Britain's territorial fragmentation (Guo & He, 2022: pp. 41-50). He also demonstrates how *Henry VI* juxtaposes pirate narratives with cartographic imagery, reflecting England's imperial ambitions and the pervasive spatial anxiety that followed the Anglo-Spanish naval conflicts (Guo & He, 2025: pp. 92-110). Xu Ni, examining *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, interprets the mariner as a symbol of English imperial colonizers. He argues that Coleridge uses strategies such as blanking and striping in nautical charts to obscure the ethical dilemmas of British colonial violence and territorial conquest (Guo & Xu, 2024: pp. 104-112). From a Literary Cartography perspective, Zhang Zhe focuses on how *Dido, Queen of Carthage* portrays the marriages of two 16th-century English queens and their political ramifications. Zhang contends that Marlowe uses the dramatic representation of Dido and Aeneas's union and separation to explore two ways of controlling female rulers: the "common marriage" between Mary I and Philip II, and the "divine marriage" between Queen Elizabeth and England. These representations, Zhang argues, reflect contemporary issues such as spatial anxiety under female rule and colonial ambitions based on the imagined foundation of another "Troynovant" (Zhang, 2024: pp. 138-149). Collectively, these studies by young Chinese scholars, through the lens of *Literary Cartography*, not only deepen theoretical discussions but also enrich the research capabilities and perspectives of Chinese scholars on English literature.

The cartographic mechanisms discussed in Chapter 10 and the cognitive strategies outlined in Chapter 11 of *Literary Cartography* provide scholars with innovative approaches to literary criticism. For instance, Lü Xingyue and Yuan Xilin employed cartographic mechanisms and used ArcMap 10.2 to create maps based on Li Bai's Jinling poems. They developed a toponymic spatial-imagery analysis framework to perform a digital interpretation, focusing on location identification, positioning, and poetic image analysis. This approach allowed them to explore the spatial images within Li Bai's Jinling poetry (Lü & Yuan, 2021: pp. 68-77).³ In the realm of cognitive strategies, Xu Qiuqun examined the dual-route—explicit and implicit cognitive routes—in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, uncovering new in-

³A considerable part of the findings of *Literary Cartography* has been published in journals prior to its publication. The cartographic mechanism in chapter 10 has been published in the fourth issue of *Journal of Guangdong University of Foreign Studies* in 2019 as "New Literary Drawing Method: A Case Study of *The Merchant of Venice*".

terpretive possibilities for exploring the spatial politics in the drama. The explicit route, which traces a straight path from the home to the forest, vividly represents the political landscape of feminist expansion and patriarchal suppression. Conversely, the implicit (circular) cognitive route, which begins and ends at the home, symbolizes the unyielding political gender order of early modern England. Together with the broader spatial schema of Windsor and the New World, these routes perform a satirical play of submission and subversion, counterattack and conquest, alienation and assimilation in early modern England (Guo & Xu, 2023: pp. 87-98). Clearly, these scholars have reinterpreted classic literary works through the lens of Literary Cartography, offering fresh perspectives on both space and politics in literature.

The methodology of *Literary Cartography* has been applied to the study of Chinese literature, emphasizing the diverse geographical characteristics within these texts. Ge Yonghai and Shen Wenyi, building on the theoretical framework that Literary Cartography encompasses both physical maps and non-physical linguistic maps, conducted a comprehensive review of spatial and geographical descriptions in *Liaozhai Zhiqi*, a classic collection of short stories from the Qing Dynasty. They developed a “Liaozhai Novel Map”, which reflects the author’s geographical cognitions, and explored the narrative function of maps in relation to plot, scenes, and characters (Ge & Shen, 2023: pp. 213-235). Another example is Wu Kun’s creation of three maps for Ge Liang’s renowned novel *Yan Shi Ji*. These maps—“Rong Yisheng Map,” “Chen Wuju Map,” and “Dai De Map”—correspond to the subjectivity construction of Rong Yisheng, Hong Kong SAR attributes of Chen Wuju, and the identity dilemmas of Dai De, respectively. Through these mappings, Wu Kun illustrates the life trajectories and activity paths of these characters, demonstrating the potential of literary maps to explore local Hong Kong SAR culture (Wu, 2024: pp. 189-197). These studies clearly show that *Literary Cartography* not only enhances the study of Chinese literature but also contributes to the development of a localized literary spatial theory.

Prior to the publication of *Literary Cartography*, *Literary Geography Research* (2012) by Professor Zeng Daxing and *Principles of Literary Geography* (2017) by Professor Mei Xinlin had made significant contributions to the theoretical development of Chinese literary geography. The new generation of scholars has integrated the concept of literary maps into the field of Chinese literary geography. For instance, Zhang Yuanyue has incorporated aspects of *Literary Cartography* and expanded the scope of Chinese literary geography in her notable works, “From Literary Region, Literary Geography to Literary Map: Literary Geography from the Spatial Dimension” (2018) and “Research on Literary Maps from a Spatial Perspective” (2023). In her studies, she divides Chinese literary geography into three spatial perspectives: literary regions, literary geography, and literary maps. The first perspective focuses on regional culture, the second emphasizes geographical distribution, and the third reveals distinctive regional literary patterns and cultural connotations through visualized spatial information. Literary Cartography, as a visualized spatial approach, offers theoretical advantages over the

other two perspectives in the spatial study of literature (Zhang, 2018: pp. 149-158). There are two main reasons for this. First, literary maps more clearly present dynamic spaces and the multiple spatial elements involved in literary works, thereby facilitating the exploration of the structural components of works and the verification of geographic archetypes within texts. Second, literary maps play a crucial role in the reconstruction of literary history and in correcting the academic study of literary geography (Zhang, 2023: pp. 62-69). While *Literary Cartography* has predominantly focused on the critique of English literature, it offers a mutually beneficial strategy for Chinese scholars, expanding their critical frameworks to include the study of Chinese literature.

5. Conclusion

The theoretical framework of *Literary Cartography* is neither arbitrary nor unsubstantiated. It is grounded in the tracing of nearly three millennia of European literary cartography, from ancient Greece to the present, alongside the evolution of 20th-century positivist epistemology of maps, shifts in the paradigm of cartographic arts, and a comprehensive review of nearly thirty years of modern European and American literary map research. This theoretical construction represents the voice of Chinese scholars, innovatively articulated through the author's more than a decade of dedicated work, characterized by clear and rigorous thinking, extensive supporting materials, and a broad academic vision. While *Literary Cartography* stands as a landmark achievement in the interdisciplinary field of New Liberal Arts, the author openly acknowledges in the conclusion that significant gaps remain in the research. These include the exclusion of non-Shakespearean and non-Spencerian Western works, the omission of Chinese literary texts, and unresolved questions regarding the reception of maps—issues that warrant further scholarly exploration.

The innovative contributions of *Literary Cartography* offer fresh academic ideas and methods for geographic studies, making the hidden spatial structures of texts and cultural spatial information visible. These advancements have undoubtedly propelled the study of Chinese literary geography into a new phase, exemplified by the establishment of specialized literary geography platforms such as the Chinese Civilization in Time and Space (CCTS), the Chinese Historical Geographic Information System (CHGIS), and the Tang and Song Literature Chronological Map Database. To a considerable extent, *Literary Cartography* possesses unique value that cannot be easily replaced by other literary theories. However, it is important to note that literary maps differ from specialized maps, such as aerial or nautical maps. Readers should remain attentive to their inherent ambiguity, imaginative qualities, and fictional elements.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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