

Romance of the Three Kingdoms:

How a Historical Novel Turned Wartime Generals into Cultural Icons

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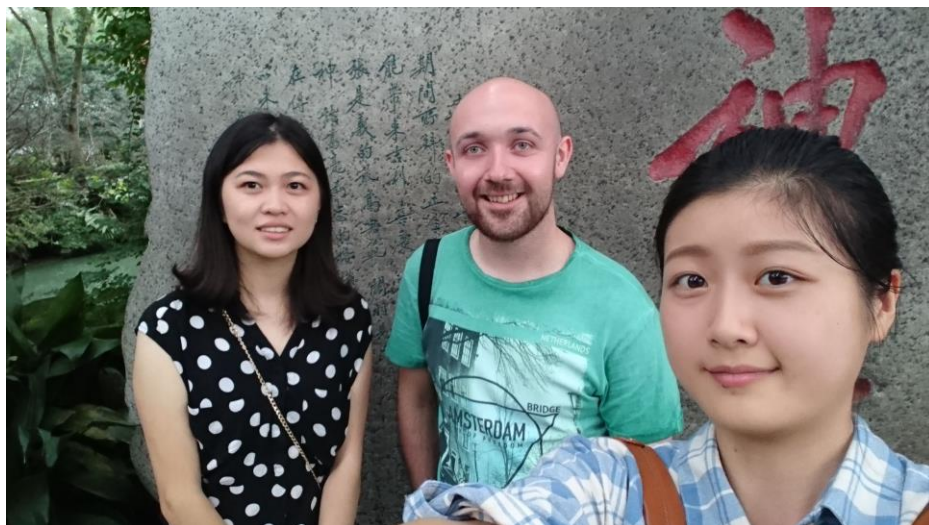
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Harry Pollard on the 26th of September 2015 at Wuhou Temple in Chengdu, China. Wuhou Temple is a memorial temple dedicated to Zhuge Liang of the Kingdom of Shu during the Three Kingdoms period. Harry visited the temple during his time at Sichuan Normal University, China.



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Abstract

The Romance of the Three Kingdoms was a text philosophically influenced by The Art of War that bears the ideas of Sunzi on the best form of leadership. More emphasis is placed on the moral character of leaders such as Cao Cao, Liu Bei and other historical leaders in the Han Dynasty. Luo Guanzhong fictionalizes these two major characters and scrutinizes their philosophical understanding of concepts like equality. A more in-depth analysis of the novel, The Romance of the Three Kingdoms, changed the manner that the wartime generals were perceived and presented in a fashionable style as cultural icons.

Keywords: Cao Cao, Dynasty, Dong Zhuo, Liu Bei, Mandate, Mao Zedong, Mahabharata, Romance of the Three Kingdoms

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.0 Background

Luo Guanzhong wrote The Romance of the Three Kingdoms (Sanguo Yanyi) that has the accounts, tales and short stories of legends that have been presented from a personal viewpoint. The Novel is based on a Chinese history commonly referred to as the Three Kingdoms. A profound analysis of Guanzhong narration reveals that some historical characters have been presented appealingly as cultural icons although they were different in their times. In the dissertation, the definition of “cultural icon” is limited to historical characters in the Three Romance Kingdoms who represent the Chinese culture, as well considered worthy of respect and admiration. Furthermore, the brutal nature of the historical characters in the novel seems to be overlooked with the positive side emphasized to pick valuable lessons from the Chinese historical context.

The “Romance of the Three Kingdoms” is a corrective hypnotizing harmony story that Chinese rulers mostly use to narrate when they are in control and are trying to uphold the position. Additionally, the novel (mythical and historical part) dramatizes and romanticizes feudal lords and their retainers, who were attempting to replace or restore the decaying Han Dynasty. While the story follows hundreds of characters, the focus of the present dissertation is the wartime leaders emerged as Chinese cultural icons. However, the novel deals with army battles, plots, struggles, personal conflicts, and intrigues as these dynasties try to achieve leadership for a period more than ten decades. The novel also provides readers knowledge of how Chinese perceive their history through a cyclical lens.

Dissertation: The research paper aims at presenting the manner in which The Romance of the Three Kingdoms presented the wartime generals into cultural icons.

1.2 Problem Statement

In the study of different cultures around the world, there is a difference between its historical and mythical nature. Guanzhong seemed to have concentrated more on the ancient life of the legends in their cultural context and failed to look at their negatives equally. The research paper will identify the various ways in which the Chinese culture is depicted from a historical perception that praises the cultural icons.

1.3 The Purpose of the Research

The research aims at finding out the various ways in which the historical novel presented the wartime generals into what evidently seems to be cultural icons. Armed with the historiographical information of the Han dynasty, a keen reader will quickly identify the principal intentions of the author that glorify the historical characters.

1.4 Importance of the Study.

Besides the positive presentation of the war generals in the Chinese context, the study further places researchers in a position to understand the difference between historical and mythical nature of culture. The study also proves the position that was taken by an author influence the thoughts of the readers who might not necessarily collect the historical facts about the issue under review.

1.5 Research's Aims and Objectives

The primary goal of conducting this study is to profoundly discuss the manner by which the wartime novel, Romance of the Three Kingdoms transformed historical wartime leaders into cultural icons. Despite the fact that the story deals with numerous characters, the primary focus of this study is how each notable leader in the novel became Chinese cultural icons. The research also investigates how the author influences the readers who are interested in the Chinese history.

1.7 Motivation

Besides answering the research questions, my motive was based on the need to understand the political affairs of societies in the historical context. I was also driven by the need to understand the various ways that authors present facts from their viewpoint through the analysis of scenarios and events that suit their themes.

1.8 Research Questions

1. How are the wartime generals depicted in the novel?
2. How does the author influence the thoughts of the readers?
3. What are the literal techniques employed to transform wartime generals into cultural icons?

1.9 Literature review

A significant body of literature has developed investigating the purpose of Luo Guanzhong in his narrative version of the Three Kingdoms, although one of the most credible is that during the rule of Mongol during Yuan, most works seemed to be Pro-Han, instead of favoring Jin. However, Cheung (2007, p.16) argues that analyzing heroes' disillusionment in the Three Romance Kingdoms reveals a historical regret pattern, conveying a tragic consequence from events or expectations non-fulfillment. The thesis of the author about the regretful events pattern is illustrated in the novel through the acts of the primary characters such as Zhuge Liang who ultimately recognizes his partial lifespan. The author further contrasts the traditional concepts of the Western epic hero to the features of the Eastern tragic hero, where he finds both similar in regards to the flaw of "wrath." Cheung reckons over hundred instances of the wrath flaw in the Three Romance Kingdoms, finding a wrath pattern in dealing with Cao Cao with others, and with Liu Bei's who is after revenge.

Furthermore, Kim (2007, p.143) claims that Three Romance Kingdoms novel is essential in its focus on the reader, despite the cultural background. The claim of the author is not only based on the epic's knowledge of history or literature, but also on the reader's knowledge reception or response theory. The mind of the reader is designed to fill unintended gaps which it discovers in any provided text with his or her information cache. The primary argument of the author is that any reader, as the meaning producer, has the authority to recreate the Three Romance Kingdoms from his or her perceptions or worldview

1.9.1. The relationship between historiography and Fiction in traditional China

The three Kingdoms reveals the divide between fiction and history, where the main events and characters are built in the past. Besides, the Three Kingdoms' historical roots are apparent in the author's use of the third-person detached voice, and in its affinity to offer minute details that are not important to the work as a story (Chu 2002, p. 161). For instance, Luo introduces the names of the fighters shortly before their death in the battle. Conversely, the novel also freely provides information that a historian would not usually have access to as well as in some incidences formulates stories to offer a more interesting structure of the drama, for example, Peach Garden Oath (Chu 2002, p. 161).

There is a strong inter-relationship between the writing fiction and the historiography. Furthermore, the first writing history originated as a story, which illustrates the existence of natural attraction in the writing of both fiction and history (Liu 2008, p. 390). Besides, both are expressed with words and thus, naturally take resort to the framework of narration. Historiography deals with the actions that occurred in the past, whereas fiction is associated with imaginary events or what might is likely to happen, which is the reason Aristotle provided a valid difference between a historian and a poet. As per Aristotle (2001, 97), the distinction between a poet and a historian is based on the fact that former deals with things that are likely to happen, but the latter is associated with things that already took place.

Both fiction and historiography have similar representation nature since both are associated with narrating stories. The very nature of revealing reality is both based on the framework of narration. As per Hutcheon (1989, 10), both history and fiction tell stories in varying modes, where sometimes the modes used by them are copied from photography and cinema.

Both novelist and historian attempt to reveal truth through narrativizing the phenomena of the real world (Benjamin 2012, p. 234). The truth revealed by them is subjective, relative, and specific to their own situations in history. Both of the elements select some subject's aspect and begin to build up the pattern of narration which later results in a complete product in the form of a story. Hutcheon (1989, 6) mentions that both in fiction and history the very manner of expressing the past is performed in such a way that the politics of the representation act are made manifest.

1.9.1.1 Is Luo Guanzhong Novel real?

Luo Guanzhong's depiction of the significant events and time periods are historically accurate especially the succession of the three kingdoms. Thus, meaning the novel is real since most of the significant characters in the story represents the real historical leaders (Benjamin 2012, p. 234). But, in present China nobody expects the real generals to fight each other one-on-one when they have trained soldiers or military. However, biasness or favoritism towards Shun Han can also characterize the novel (Benjamin 2012, p. 234).

1.10 Methodology

1.10.1 Introduction

In order to collect information needed for the dissertation, the study utilizes aspects such as the research design, the area of study, the collection of data, and limitations of the research will be covered.

1.10.2 The Research Design

The research utilized a cross-sectional descriptive approach to gather the necessary information from the historical novel and other related documents. A descriptive method was the most preferred approach because it was easier to capture the opinions, perceptions and the interests of the novels others as well as other researchers who wanted to identify the real events in the Chinese period under study. Besides, the approach helped to understand the case and effect of the variables under the study to get precise information regarding the status of phenomena back in the historical period. Research consider the design as being efficient and inexpensive in the presentation of self-reported facts (Sandelowski 2000, p. 333-334).

1.10.3 Study Area

The research area for this research paper, based on the work of Guanzhong the Romance of the Three Kingdoms in China. However, it is worth noting that the wartime generals might have also influenced outside China.

1.10.4 The Study Population

The study population is the Chinese people upon which the influence of their leaders was encountered. However, the study might go beyond the modern day China although the focus is laid on the then population that were governed and controlled by the wartime generals.

1.10.5 Documentary review

The research relied on the secondary data and information from the novel, The Romance of the Three Kingdoms, reports, books, journals, periodicals, abstracts, reviews, statistics and public records. These sources helped to inform the study area, the characteristics of the population, the perception of the people and the wartime generals. All these aspects helped to come up with a detailed literature review that provided the prior knowledge necessary for the research.

1.10.6 Research's Assumptions and Limitations

Some research assumptions and limitations were met in the research process. General methodological assumptions were based on the idea that all the information that was collected from the secondary sources were based on the truth. Longitudinal effects acted as a limitation of the study. Unlike researchers and professors who devote much of their time gathering and analyzing data, the case was different from the study. Time was a significant constraint because of other academic activities that had to be factored.

1.11 Dissertation's Structure

Chapter one has focused on the introduction to the research problem. The chapter sheds light on what the dissertation will concentrate on to address the research statement.

Chapter two will look at how the wartime generals are presented in the novel, *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms* and the Chinese history regarding the legends and the historical period under study.

Chapter three will discuss the literal analysis whereas the last part of the dissertation will also discuss author's position as well as my position for scholars and historians who wish to get a better understanding of what the Chinese culture and tradition entailed in regards to political leadership and conquests.

Chapter 2: Presentation of the Wartime generals in the novel

2.1 An Introduction

The Han Dynasty came into existence in the 3rd century. The individuals who might give themselves a role as China's future leaders have conveyed the realm to the verge of battle (Usher 1989, p. 1033). Court eunuchs have conspired, leaders have failed, and extraordinary conquerors have conceived in a legendary battle. The general population of China, who by any means yearn for peace, ponder what will happen to their respective lives as war seethes over the land. The dynasty appears to have lost its "Mandate of Heaven." (Foo 2008, p. 171).

Rather than keeping up a solitary royal family descent from a thousand years as that of Japan, China had a succession of ruling dynasties, which expanded and declined in a recurrent trend (Benjamin 2012, pp.233). At whatever point a dynasty achieved decline, the field was opened for the time's most capable and prideful officers of fortune to form alliances and battle with opposite camps in fights that prompted the building of another dynasty (Dubs 1938, p. 23-26). Episodes of dynastic modifications once in a while extended to decades if none could beat each of its rivals, similar to a case in the period which the Romance of Three Kingdoms is established. Amusingly, the exceptionally gifted group of contenders observed an extended stalemate in the battle. Its individuals, in the long run, ceased to exist, while the significantly weaker second era failed in the rejoining of the domain, which serves as the setting for the classic novel Romance of the Three Kingdoms, that is regarded as a principal foundation of the Chinese texts (Norden 2013, p. 2). Its writer, Luo Guanzhong, takes hold of history as well as tradition to produce a vivid epic that features the period's politics and society. Besides, it was viewed as a manual to the military technique that was compared to Sun Tzu's The Art of War (Chu 2002, p. 161). In its pages, the reading audience encounters many famous icons in history, as well as perceives clashes in each scale. The three kingdoms are located at the center of Chinese social personality and the idea of yi—the rudimentary element that unifies a harmonious society (Foo 2008, p. 172).

During the mid-14th century, Luo Guanzhong initiated the style of combining stories. Since that particular period, such stories are personally conveyed. His attempts' brought about this legendary novel, which crossed 120 chapters. The novel contains accounts, short stories, as well as tales, which regularly become dramatizations and this is the high significance of the interpretations which stream from the warring, disordered time of Chinese history referred to as Three Kingdoms (Roberts 2013, p. 2-3).

The majority of Romance of the Three Kingdoms manages the unprecedented achievements and unfortunate inadequacies of the first era of warriors as well as workers. Legendary greatness saturates Luo Guanzhong's novelistic union of chronicled records and society story periods. For causes regarding which researchers can hypothesize, China did not have the kind of great epic observed in the vast majority of the large old developments (Bodde 1997, pp.45-47). Romance of the Three Kingdoms, nevertheless, rose to a high rank as the country's persisting written text. The legendary warrior, Kuan Yü, eventually accomplished the position of divinity in the prevalent personality (Hartman 2014, p.23-24). Regarding the previous magnificent era, China was able to hold more sanctuaries dedicated for praising Lord Kuan Yü, the divine force of battle, as compared to other gods (Norden 2013, p. 2-3).

Luo Guanzhong believed that the destiny of each country is carved in the stars and that people are extremely constrained in their capacity to influence the significant stream of history. Nonetheless, he likewise trusted that if individuals are upright and idealistic, one can be able to do significant attempts', conveying radiance to themselves and their respective families, leaving a sparkling heritage that rises above the ages (Norden 2013, p. 3).

Each power intermediary considered this to be a new chance to introduce their decision of selecting a young ruler. The tough central authority battles in the Imperial Palace are set apart regarding strategies, interests, and plans. Besides, the eunuchs also are after their riches. They killed General He Jin without a second thought through deception, which resulted in the arrival of General Dong

Zhuo with the idea of crushing the disobedience (Yeh 1989, pp.550). In this manner, the stage started wherein control was under the authority of a Han ancestor, the genuine power depends upon another person, starting with Dong Zhuo. Therefore, the initial stages of the narration are characterized by a period of tumult (Teck 2005, p. 1).

Since Dong Zhou initiated the usurpation of majestic powers on the outskirts of the city, an organization took shape. In this regard, powers accumulated with the purpose of providing freedom from the Han royal house from Dong Zhuo's handling (Guanzhong 2005, p. 3-5). Dong Zhuo was eliminated, yet it was not because of pitched fights but rather, through an exciting procedure. From the scenes which include Dong Zhuo, there are a few interests. For instance, there is the delineation of the part on backhanded methods. Diaochan, a singer, was used in driving a wedge for Dong Zhuo together with Lu Bu who was his general (Liu and Roberts 2009, p. 172-175). In the front line, it was often difficult to overcome Dong Zhuo. He, however, exited the stage in a unique manner that is portrayed through parts of his flesh getting consumed as a result of lightning. (Roberts 2013, p. 3-5).

It must be comprehended that an extraordinary multifaceted nature has been an accomplishment of the novel, *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. It is filled with various smaller sub-stories, wherein a substantial number can be produced into full-length books in their particular right. In that capacity, the accompanying exertion fills in as an abnormal state for the story's synopsis.

The *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* is a fictionalized historical record of the struggles of the Han dynasty to the establishment of the Jin dynasty. Just like Thucydides' text on *The History of the Peloponnesian War*, Guanzong seemed to take the same approach in the presentation of history. Luo Guanzhong helped us to understand the early civilizations. The nature of conflicts and the values that guided the traditional society. The manner in which the history is presented is straightforward with the Northern Warlord wanting to monopolize power and make the court a puppet that dances the emperor's tunes. Besides the illustration of the Chinese civilization, the hierarchy of values is

also scrutinized. The novel further lays more emphasis on the core values that Sun Tzu emphasized in the Art of War that underscored the importance of surprises and deception. A profound analysis of the facts further reveals that stability was the highest good in as far as the balance of the dynasty was concerned. Chinese during this era believed that being devoted to peace is the most significant virtue of all people from subordinate to superiors.

The struggle presented in the novel is unavoidable, hence natural and a fundamental concept in any dynamic society. However, these struggles ought to be guided by the laws of heaven (Guo-min 2007, pp.44-46). All the able leaders in the Chinese context seem to underscore the roles played by a counselor who acts as wise men. The wise men as an integral part of the struggle to gain power or succeed from the Han dynasty. The counselors borrowed their lessons from a traditional setting to dictate the leadership affairs through influencing decisions made by the political class.

2.2 Yellow Turban Battle

The novel started during the Han Dynasty when inept eunuchs swindled the ruler along with the exile of higher authorities. The legislature had turned out to be to a great degree degenerate on each phase, prompting boundless crumbling of the domain. When Emperor Ling, leader of the Han Dynasty ruled, the Yellow Turban Rebellion was disrupted, and it was led by Zhang Jiao, who supposedly rehearsed Taoist wizardry and contained interminable forces. Zhang disguised as a voyaging healer who treated individuals experiencing numerous ailments while furtively urging them to lead a revolution. In such a season of chaos, a significant group of real characters is presented as that of Cao, Liu Bei, Sun Jian and Zhang Fei. Royal troops scarcely stifled the defiance of He Jin being the ruler (Teck 2005, p. 1). He Jin happens to be Emperor Ling's brother by marriage, and he is also the Supreme Commander of the armed forces of the Central Government (Hansen 2000, pp.34-38). In order to dread the developing force, the eunuchs under the rule of Zhang Rang tricked He Jin in the castle preceding Emperor Ling's demise that was coordinated by his adversaries. His paralyzed gatekeepers, driven by Yuan Shao, reacted by dashing into the royal

residence, which transformed into an aimless murderer. In the resulting disarray, the young Emperor Shao as well as the Prince of Chenliu and also, Emperor Xian vanished from the royal residence (Roberts 2013, p. 1-2).

2.3 Dong Zhuo's Tough Leadership

Before long, the Emperor, as well as the Prince, were found by officers having a place with the war leader, Dong Zhuo who originate in Western Liang. He continued to take hold of the whole region along with the guise of securing the ruler (Yu 2007, pp. 24-28). It wasn't long enough when the soldiers who were under the leadership of Dong Zhou found the Emperor as well as the Prince. They took hold of the whole region with the assumption of instilling protection upon the emperor. Dong was able to remove Emperor Shao as well as supplant him with the Prince of Chenliu, who moved toward becoming an emperor as well. With Dong Zhuo's brutal control, the general population endured incredibly. The court doctor Wu Fu an Cao sent grave death threats to him, yet the two endeavors fizzled (Winter 2006, pp.155-559). Cao Cao figured out the manner of evasion and released an order under the ruler's name for all government leaders, influencing them to expel Dong Zhuo due to his leadership style. Under the rule of General Yuan Shao, a total of 18 leaders and noblemen united in a battle opposing Dong Zhuo, yet possessing mediocre administration and irreconcilable situation; they figured out the manner on taking him away from Luoyang (Yingsheng 2005, pp. 338-339). In any case, Lu Bu double-crossed and killed Dong Zhuo became double-crossed, from an argument about the lovely Diaochan, for a Wang Yun's plan (Foo 2008, p. 172-173).

2.4 Struggle among the Different Warlords and Nobles

Consequently, the realm was at that point deteriorating into a general battle. Sun Jian, legislative head in Changsha, discovered the Imperial Seal in the well that was located where Luoyang remains were despite being covertly hidden for its respective motivations, additionally illustrious

debilitating specialist. In the absence of stable focal government, warlords grew in number and battled each other due to land and authority issues (Min 2014, pp. 2-4). For the north, Yuan Shao, as well as Gongsun Zan, was in full battle gear, while in the south, those who served as leaders were Sun Jian and Liu Biao. Numerous others, even in the absence of a property or lands like Cao and Liu Bei, were additionally beginning to develop control (Roberts 2013, p. 2).

Cao Cao was able to take Emperor Xian away from Dong Zhuo's former subsidiaries Li Jue as well as Guo Si to build a novel court located in Xuchang (Wei et al. 2008, pp.8). Much more useful recently with the ruler under his administration, Cao Cao immediately stifled his adversaries as that of Yuan Shu, Lu Bu, and Zhang Xiu, coming full circle in his most prominent military triumph, which was against Yuan Shao for the well-renowned Battle of Guandu in spite of being dwarfed (De-Crespigny 2004, pp. 3). Cao Cao sought after the vanquished Yuan faction lastly joined Northern China, which then filled in as the establishment of the Kingdom of Wei (Norden 2013, p. 3).

2.5 Liu Bei's Unrealized Ambition

Liu Bei, alongside his siblings Guan Yu and Zhang Fei promised faithfulness for the Han Dynasty and vowed to strive in serving the sovereign as well as ordinary citizens. In any case, their objectives and aspirations were not acknowledged until the novel's ending. Liu Bei, who effectively suppressed the Yellow Turban Rebellion, did not perceive this in his endeavors and was assigned as the judge of a little province (Wei 2011, pp.22-23). Afterward, Liu Bei was with Gongsun Zan and took part in the battle in opposition to Dong Zhuo. Cao attacked Xuzhou as a reprisal in opposition to Tao Qian, a legislative head of Xuzhou who unwittingly enabled his assistant to murder the father of Cao. Liu Bei drove his army at the region known as Pingyuan to aid Tao Qian as well as Tao transfer his role as Governor of Xuzhou to Liu Bei before his death (Roberts 2013, p. 2-4). At that particular period, Lu Bu was in full battle gear with Cao as he additionally desired to rule China back when he murdered Dong Zhuo. Cao crushed Lu Bu and looked for asylum under the

leadership of Liu Bei. Afterward, Lu Bu reimbursed the latter's graciousness with the malicious domination of Xuzhou.

Meanwhile, Liu Bei was compelled to unite with Cao to fight in opposition with Lu Bu. He was murdered. Liu Bei turned out to be authoritatively perceived by Emperor Xian. Because of this, Liu Bei schemed together with a few authorities to slaughter Cao as he employed a great deal of control and had the goal of getting the position of power. Liu Bei neglected to murder Cao when the scheme was uncovered. He was able to steal the place of Xuzhou from Cao when he drove his army to conquer Xuzhou. Liu Bei gained the power of Runan through the assistance of a few previous Yellow Turban revolts but was repeatedly crushed by Cao. Liu Bei did not have any real option except to transfer at Jingzhou and look for Liu Biao's insurance. Liu Biao approached Liu Bei possessing deference and placed him accountable for Xinye. He then selected the gifted Zhuge Liang and gradually developed his powers at Xinye (Foo 2008, p. 173).

2.6 Important Novel Aspects

The novel starts as China reaches the brink of anarchy, a period when the focused organization became disorganized; agencies, foundations, and workplaces systematized by the victorious Han rulers from the past for the safeguarding of social request as well as prosperity. Without a doubt, in Chapter 1 there were perceived indications from heaven regarding the looming empirical destruction. With the end goal of representing the symbolism of pandemonium, only two cases were featured (Teck 2005, p. 1).

In this particular novel, there appears to be a line which portrays tsunamis intensely as to attract beach front villagers to the ocean. Other than earthquakes and tsunamis, which are regarded as clear symbols of parallelism, there appears to be those that needed creative ability concerning the potential readers. These techniques incorporate the presence of the green serpent winding around the majestic seat. Along with its vanishing, a storm occurs. At that point, hailstones were brought

down from the open sky on its abodes (Morowitz 2002, p. 5). Moreover what is plainly artificial or extraordinary is what continually occurs. Such signs were portrayed in the first chapter 1 to check the start of a time characterized by pandemonium in the antiquated regions of the Middle Kingdom and China (Roberts 2013, p. 2-3).

About these events in Chapter 1, the Yellow Scarves rebellion emerged, which is perceived as an unmistakable sign of shortcoming at the focal point of energy, which is the Imperial House. The source of this issue can be traced back to the management of the young rulers. Since they are much younger for leadership, they moved toward becoming the focus of political control (Guanzhong 2005, p. 7). Cao Cao's son, Cao Pi, was so much concerned about the consolidating power to keep his father's legacy. He, therefore, sought ways to justify the Emperor Xian's abdication which is an action that shows his selfishness in silencing dissenting voices.

Historically, the three kingdoms were used to refer to the historical period that succeeded the six dynasties. The era is lasting long enough till the establishment of the Sui dynasty in the late 580s (Kai 2013, pp.4-5). During this period, people were divided into the three kingdoms. The three factions were the Eastern Wu under Sun Quan, Wei under Cao Cao and the Shu that was ruled by the chosen Liu Bei. Sima (Goodman 2016, pp. 45) Yan latter on usurped the Kingdom of Wei and founded what came to be known as Western Jin. Although there are attempts to keep the history of the three kingdoms inclined to the truth and facts, there are sufficient proves that historians have tried to embellish the accounts. However, The Romance of The Three Kingdoms is more objective and inclined to the truth, hence worth being considered as among the few classic novels that retell the Chinese history.

The three famous leaders attained remarkable popularity in their kingdoms and beyond. The ever-increasing fame is associated with the manner that they are depicted in the novel as brave, intelligent and upholding virtue. Besides the big three, it is worth recognizing another able general that served various purposes called Guan Yu (Huang and Lei 2010, pp.26-27). He was also referred

to as Yunchang and had the reputation of one of the able generals in the Shu Kingdom. Guan Yu was Liu Bei's confidant and advisor, a position that was also shared with Zhang Fei. As a confidant, Guan had excellent moral standards that were anchored on righteousness, making him one of the most respected generals in Shu (Pengli 2002, pp.45). The significant influence caused the development of a religious cult although *The Romance of Three Kingdoms* changed such negative aspects to portray him as an epitome of virtue coupled with righteousness.

Guan Yu sworn brotherhood with Zhang Fei and the leader Liu Bei to strengthen his influence in the region (Yu 2010, pp. 124-126). However, a profound analysis of the Luo Guanzhong's account reveals that there was an element of embellishing his achievements to align the ideas to the central theme. Luo presented Guan in an extraordinary manner that overstated his character and accomplishments. He, therefore, turned out as a valiant and a brave fighter who fought for the instilment of justice in the traditional legal system. Tendencies of overconfidence, as well as pride, are also evident in the narration. A similar emphasis and attempt to present the wartime general as cultural icons are also visible in the description of other strategists like Zhuge Liang, Cao Cao, and Liu Bei. Zhang Fei was extraordinarily powerful making him hungry for battles (Duara 1988, pp. 780-782). Zhuge Liang was a cool character with a high intelligence level that made him take well-planned and calculative moves. Cao Cao was not left out either in this glorification, was portrayed as ambitious, and command a great deal of honor from the subjects. Towards the end of the Qing dynasty, Guan Yu became an influential person that informed the Confucianism ideologies (Xiaohong 2010, pp. 2-4).

Guan Yu continued to gain respect even in the Western Jin where he was regarded as a historical warrior (Mingao 2010, pp. 10). He was dedicated to improving the norms of the society by making them more realistic, objective and guaranteeing equality for all. The influential leader in both the community and traditional cults, however, faced considerable resistance from the Literati and the people who managed to maintain their status during the era were very few (Louie 2002, pp. 34).

These challenges did not stop Guan's fame and reputation crossing cultures to the extent of influencing the neighboring societies in the Buddhist temples (Wen-ning 2013, pp.10-11). The inclusion of his ideas in the faith can be attributed to the influence that he had on Confucianism. Buddhism was suffering from the opposition by the neo-Confucians and Daoism beliefs. In *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, the image of Guan Yu is dominant and receiving a high reception across the population. He is portrayed as having risen from the position of a historical fighter to a respectable deity, a god of war and an epitome of righteousness and justice (Farmer 2001, pp.73-77). Besides, Luo Guanzhong wanted to paint Guan's picture to potential readers as a protector of the political subjects and a god that was in charge of wealth.

The novel *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms* had some influences that were evident after the fall of the Han dynasty. A similarity of in running the affairs during the Mongol rule reflected an almost similar pattern. The various institutions that appeared to be pro-Han sought multiple ways to ensure the strengthening of their legitimacy through appropriating (Xiaolin 2011, pp. 5-6). The Mongols sought legitimacy from the people through deriving lessons from Shu, Wu, and Wei. Besides, it is worth noting that the wartime generals depicted in the novel also served a central role in the promotion of propaganda in questioning the legitimacy of the governing bodies that were in place. Just like the generals, Mongol leaders were fierce especially when a need arose to suppress the various uprisings that came up.

Chapter 3: Literal Analysis

The novel, *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* refreshes the knowledge of the traditional Chinese society. In the beginning, the story was emphasizing the importance of accountability and new leadership hence the assertion that “The Empire long divided, must unite.” Cao Cao has been presented as a self-made leader who is aggressive and a calculative opportunist. Liu Bei is also portrayed in a positive manner that underscores good qualities of an ethical leader that abides and acts within the precepts of the traditional Confucianism. Guanzhong presents the wartime generals as being benevolent and righteous in their conduct because they are sons of heaven. The concept implies that they have received the mandate to establish dynasties or inherit leadership positions.

On comparing Cao Cao and Liu Bei, the latter is presented as being exemplary benevolent and an able Confucian leader who has received the mandate to rule over the people. Although Cao Cao is present in a similar manner at a lower degree, it is evident that he goes through a fierce struggle to prove that he has obtained the mandate from heaven. A more in-depth analysis of the character reveals that he was driven by political goals that make him an unfit leader who fits in the context of Sunzi’s *The Art of War* (Wang 2012, pp. 110-113). Liu Bei was not interested in leadership, and his conduct reveals that he was looking for ways to protect the status quo. A keen reader of the novel will realize that he did not believe in turning out to be an able leader. However, the mandate to protect the Han rule made him, to be close to other people who held the same goal like Liu Bei, Zhang Fei and Guan Yu with whom he takes a brotherhood vow.

Cao Cao evil, malevolent acts seem to be overlooked by the author who lays more emphasis on the vow to save the people and protect the state. The application of a technique referred to as the two tigers trick to have Lu Bu killed by Liu Bei through the emperor’s instruction proves the point (Luo page 9). Cao Cao must have reasoned that his friend Lu Bu would be automatically considered as an adversary by Liu Bei. Liu Bei was however in a position to read Cao Cao’s motivation, and because he was presented as protective and respectful, he chose to spare Lu Bu. The further disobedience to

Zhang Fei's warning proved that he was guided by benevolent and virtue values (Clark 2012, pp. 34-38). Liu Bei argued that people, particularly the leaders should not turn away from what is righteous otherwise, heaven was going to act against the malevolent in the society. Liu Bei further appreciated that respect should be given to all men. From this point of view, Guanzhong presented Cao Cao as not being well-intentioned. Because of the mercy, Lu Bu considers Liu Bei as a great ally to the extent of protecting his family in the Xuzhou's siege.

Guanzhong further presents Liu Bei as a benevolent man who risks his life to defend Han's mandate. Cao Cao's real character is revealed when they engage in a heated with Li Bei who is accused of dishonoring their friendship. The pulling of an imperial decree did not help to keep him safe after his courage made him declare Cao Cao to be the people's traitor. Lie Bei, therefore, turns out as the one who has the legitimate claim to Han's mandate. Cao Cao interpreted the words from the influential character as a threat to his position in power, and that is why he had to seek ways to silence him. The confrontation presented is obviously behind the motive to have Lei Bei abducted severally.

The pressure to take up the leadership position and become an icon in the Han history came from Lord Guan Yu. Guan is behind the pressure for Lie Bei to take over the mandate. Guanzhong further seeks to promote the heroic deeds of the benevolent leader by comparing him to the first emperor whose influence was felt for hundreds of years. Teaming up Liu Biao was Sun Quan's plan to form an alliance that would oust Cao Cao. The coalition that was formed afterward can be linked to the need to accept the mandate. Guangzhong presents Liu Bei as the cultural icon he comes out in various situations as not being in a position to accept the fact that he was an emperor (Jian-rong 2011, pp. 5-10).

From the storyline, Liu Bei does not deserve to be regarded as a cultural icon because he lacked the confidence in leading his people. He is continuously against the idea of accepting the mandate and the protection of the imperial house. Being a leader entails taking a firm stance in protecting the

people especially when there is an emergency. Zhuge Liang, one of his trusted advisors, puts so much pressure on Liu Bei in conquering Cao Pi and the might Liu Xian who possessed as a threat to the regime (Haiyan 2006, pp.13-14). The decline of Zhuge's request is as a result of his majesty underscoring and appreciating the value of being merciful to his opponents and holding the belief that shedding blood is not always the solution. In the presentation of these facts, Luo succeeds in proving that Liu Bei had all the positive attributes of a true cultural icon.

Pretending to be ill did not make Liu Bei sympathize with Zhuge who wanted his voice to be heard in assisting his master to rise to the throne (Killigrew 1999, pp.82). Fearing the adverse judgment of the world, Liu Bei claims he cannot control Cao Cao's son. Eventually, he ascends to the throne getting massive support from the ordinary people and the loyal chieftains. Being an empire entails engaging in battles and at the time, being ruthless and merciless in dealing with the people, insurgencies, and rebels. As an emperor, Liu Bei turns out as a real wartime general who has been portrayed by the author as having positive attributes of a cultural icon. Liu Bei began launching attacks immediately after taking power, although he suffered first defeats for lacking the faith of having the mandate. Other attacks were directed towards Sun Quan, the Wu leader, and Cao Pi, the leader in the south.

The Liu Bei performed some of his functions as an emperor like murdering the Xian. Such activities reveal that he had inner intentions of causing harm to the subjects. However, the author creates a positive image through pointing out that the act affected him to the point of being incapable of performing his administrative duties. Guanzhong, therefore, succeeded in proving that Liu Bei had a natural connection between nature and the heaven. However, the emperor's attitude and perceptions of the subjects is far much when compared to Cao Cao whose ambition to take power and establish his dynasty was characterized by extreme brutality.

The author presents Cao Cao as having an extraordinary value of patience when working in the Han Dynasty. However, Cao Cao is an expert in ensuring that other people suffer and take it as an

advantage to attain more power. The attempt to use Lu Bu to eliminate Liu Bei is a perfect example to illustrate the kind of tyrannical leader he was. The motivation behind the mission was jealous that Cao Cao had towards the Liu Bei who was considered as an ideal son of heaven. He pronounced his mandate in the royal hunt when he claimed that Emperor Xian's golden arrow was his. The fact that Cao Cao did not rise from the aristocratic family reveals that there were minimal chances of being the Son of Heaven. However, in *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, Cao Cao is presented as a leader who has a sense of self-worth and capable using the knowledge to evaluate the worthiness of other subjects. As a leader, it turns out that he borrowed from Sunzi's teachings that one should be aware of the flaws possessed to learn those of others (Ames 1993, p.34-35).

Cao Cao is a calculative leader who uses his skill in taking advantage of matters and situations at hand to accumulate more power. Although such a move is beneficial at times, even for the contemporary leaders, Cao Cao's seemed to have gone overboard. The battle between Dong Zhuo and Sun Jian left the nation in a vulnerable state that called for reinforcement. The emperor depended on Cao Cao for protection, who made the decision hence the relocation of the court to Xuchang for maximum security. Through the revelation by the astrologer that the mandate of heaven does not favor or empower any dynasty, Cao Cao was in a position to petition the emperor. He further used his somewhat selfish traits to manipulate the emperor who relied on his support through pushing his agenda to gain the mandate.

The association of Cao Cao with the element earth further proves that he was not a cultural icon worth emulating. The element is often associated with being egocentric and having an unusual form of stubbornness. Therefore, there was no way he could control the element fire which characterized Han dynasty that upheld virtue and justice (McIsaac 2000, pp.1650-1654). He relied on his advisors' words on the strength he had in conquering the southwest although the move brought misunderstandings and conflicts with Wei. The wartime general relied on the analysis he got from the adviser on the powers of the earth and fire to gain advantage and proceed in maximizing his

control in the kingdom. A keen reader will realize that *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms* portrayed Cao Cao as having the mandate and the ability to control Han because Heaven was meant for him and therefore, he has to claim it. In reality, Cao Cao plays a cruel game to take over the emperor's power through relying on the advice he gets from his advisors. Taking emperor Xian as hostage was another cruel act that made Liu Bei protest the decision and questioned his legitimacy.

The author further proves that the end justifies the means because Cao Cao eventually took over the throne as Liu Bei concentrate on Sun Quan, Cao Cao's also resorted to teaming up with Wei and Wu to undermine Liu Bei and thwart his missions and chances of ever rising to power. Although he succeeded in sparking an enmity between Sun Quan and Liu Bei, his mandate did not materialize, something that can be attributed to lacking worthiness. Cao Cao was further haunted by ghosts a reason that is behind the establishment of foundation hall, a means of appeasing the supernatural beings to end the shocking apparitions. Cutting down the tree that would facilitate the construction of the building was met with mysterious and paranormal phenomena (Scogin 1989, pp. 1324-1325). Cao Cao had been considering his belief in the supernatural as being anchored on fear and hence unrealistic. However, upon cutting the leafy canopy that is said to be reaching the Milky Way, the tress oozed blood, and he was convinced that he did not have the mandate and the support from heaven.

All the influence that Cao Cao had had seems to be canceled out and cannot be relied upon as an icon to inspire future leaders. He lacks the natural connection to the supernatural and therefore becomes unfit to rule over the people. The tree to build the foundation was vital because it was guarding the Dragon Pool. Having an interconnection with the supernatural was paramount for a leader, but the case for Cao Cao was different as he witnessed unusual and frightening phenomena that sickened him to the point of death. An analysis of Liu Bei history, however, raises the question why he had to undergo an almost similar situation when he assumed the mandate of heaven. Cao Cao's legacy was carried on by his son who ensured there is no threat to overthrowing his father's

authority through the use of the Grand Cops commander who was ruthless with rebels (Yates 1998, pp.240-245). The refusal to obey such commanders was because the elite considered them as being illegitimate hence undermining the mandate.

A profound analysis of some of the wartime generals that are portrayed as cultural icons has revealed that their history and conduct revealed otherwise. The emperors and the generals were ruled in the manner that they dealt with enemies or any person who challenged their mandate. However, because history is supposed to inform the modern world, the wartime generals had to be portrayed positively so that modern leaders can draw valuable lessons to guide their actions and decisions.

From the novel, Guan Yu's status is elevated to meet the theme of influential cultural icons in the Chinese context. However, the emphasis on the positive attributes cannot be considered as distorting the real character of the mighty leader. To conclude on the actual traits of the advisor, readers need to revisit the history of the Huang and the Yan dynasties that also offer a proper chronology of events, at the same time borrowing knowledge and information from different reliable sources. Guan Yu's important religious image was developing as the storyline in the novel developed. From a humble beginning in the Yuquan region, he then relocated to the Southern Song where his reputation and image grows significantly (Wood and Li 2015, 618-620). Guan was further favored by negative factors such as the forced move to the south where he spread Daoism to the Shu Kingdom. Guan's views, ideas, and ideals were critical in influencing the religious positions of the time. He even played a significant role in the Yuan state for changing their religion.

Luo Guanzhong's narration and the manner that he depicted Guan Yu as having heroic traits seems to differ from the account of Idema (Timmerman 2015, pp. 23-25). In his works, he did not portray the hero as having such as great inspiration and influencing the leaders of the Three Kingdoms. However, lacking a direct inspiration does not mean that Guan Yu did not influence the general population at the local and the dynasty level (Meulenbeld 2012, pp. 126-128). The different position

taken by various historical scholars do not, however, rule out the fact that the Chinese culture had religion and drama being intricately intertwined. Besides, it is worth noting that Song-Yuan was of utmost importance in as far as Guan Yu's religious status is concerned (Liu 2008, pp.390). The lesser centralized societies perceived Guan Yu as a hero who was praised in shrines and temples (Li and Zhao 2011, pp. 15-19). These societies served a significant role in ensuring that Guan beliefs in society's stable foundation were reinforced, preserved and passed down to future generations that now hold Guan in great awe.

The relevance of the novel, the Three Kingdoms goes beyond the depiction of the wartime generals as cultural icons to the spread of ideologies that continue to shape the religious thoughts of the modern society. The text's characters play a significant role in influencing the Confucianism philosophical thought. Besides, valuable lessons can be drawn regarding the then cultural influence on Daoism and the legalist approach that continue to influence people until today.

Confucianism philosophy in the novel seems to have multiple variants when considering the actions of those who considered themselves as followers. The differences were observed from the manner that the various characters perceived and interprets the five universal principles of Yen, Yi, Li, Xhi and Zhi (Yong-xing 2010, pp. 14-15). The fall of the Eastern Han kingdom was as a result of the loose belief in these concepts because corruption was at all levels of administration, hence the loss of the Heavenly Mandate. Confucianism's and the notion of suitability in the novel are intertwined. However, Yu's goals in the novel seem to make the value of appropriateness to be a little bit complicated although still in line with the concept Confucianism. Confucian valuable lessons on dishonor can be derived from various scenarios in the novel. An apt example was the capture of Cao Cao and his liberation when Zhuge realized that he had a limited lifespan. He started looking for ways to reverse the Mandate of Heaven although he did not succeed. Other flaws on the Confucianism are evident in the manner that Cao Cao dealt with his subjects and the Liu Bei's tendencies of seeking revenge (Liu et al. 2013, pp.4-6).

Chapter 4: Critical Analysis of the Novel

Rather than keeping up a solitary royal family descent from a thousand years, like Japan, China had a progression of domains or administrations that became successful and collapsed in a repetitive trend. At whatever point a dynasty achieved the purpose of its fall, the field was opened for the period's most capable and yearning warriors to frame unions and battle with opposition camps which resulted to the establishment of another dynasty (Teck 2005, p. 1-2). Episodes of dynastic modifications seldom extended into long years when no field could beat every one of its rivals, similar to the case by which this story was set. Consequently, the skilled original contenders saw an extended stalemate during the battle. Its individuals, in the end, vanished, while the substantially weaker next generation screwed up into the rejoining of the entire realm.

The entirety of Romance of the Three Kingdoms manages the exceptional achievements and numerous weaknesses of the first line of warriors and leaders. Epic glory saturates Luo Guanzhong's novelistic combination of authentic records and society narrative cycles. For causes on which researchers can mainly hypothesize, China did not have the kind of verse epic situated in a significant portion of the colossal old human advancements. Romance of the Three Kingdoms, in any case, rose to a high status as the country's persevering epic in composition. The heroic warrior legend, Kuan Yü, accomplished the condition of a god in the mainstream mind. During the late royal ages, China contained several sanctuaries dedicated to Lord Kuan Yü, the divine deity of battles, as compared to other gods besides the known earth deity. Before his progression to the position of authority as the leader of Shu Han, Liu Pei rose as the most thoughtful competitor (Norden 2013, p. 5).

One conceivable motivation behind why the Chinese keep on generating supported colossal jumps is the fact that they are not new in adjusting to these conditions. Because of the Romance of Three Kingdoms, several Chinese children grew up finding out as well as hearing the numerous tales, interests, stories, plans, and strategies which are all founded in a time of battle, mayhem, and

disruption. Consequently, as adults, the Chinese continually perceive the environment regarding the view of the Romance of Three Kingdoms. In this regard, one refers to Mao Tsu Tung's life story as an apt case. The description of Mao Tsu in the biography is the best example of the Romance of Three Kingdoms can mold a Chinese individual as part of his reasoning; this is regarded as enough cause to read and critique this authentic story (Teck 2005, p. 1-2).

The book, Romance of Three Kingdoms obtained has another function that it serves within the Chinese culture. It can be analyzed and taken from a different perspective, for instance, the case of Taiwan. Grand vistas implied as well as conveyed the Romance of the Three Kingdoms through visual images; these images are based on complex writing. The method of symbolism is utilized to pass on profoundly established Chinese ideas as that of a kingdom. In contrast to English, Chinese has also been a way of correspondence through pictographs. English dialect, Chinese as a method for correspondence has its underlying foundations in pictographs. Aside from this, Chinese as a language is depicted as a progression of images that are strongly connected. As such, the Chinese belief is installed through the Chinese characters which developed from pictographs. Chinese ideas, as well as the language, itself, are indivisible.

Because the Romance of Three Kingdoms is not merely a novel written by Luo Guanzhong, it is more of a growing collection, and so it should not be treated as that of an ordinary Western story. However, they are fascinating stories since they were read repetitively through proficient narrators to engage agriculturists. It occurred instantly over several rice fields in rural China. Envisioning such occasions conducted in ideal situations: bright moonlight involving a night sky filled with stars. Some people ponder on the reason why these stories held on for a long time regarding numerous versions (Teck 2005, p. 2).

4.1 Author's position

The Romance of Three Kingdoms is an adventure which continually facilitates the Chinese to understand their respective environment. Furthermore, it is an environment modified to be progressively eccentric as well as complex. In the case of Non-Chinese people, there is considerably a more prominent incentive in reading the legendary novel. Thus, the foreigner exhibits signs of improvement in handling the awareness of the Chinese, as that of bits of knowledge as to the manner in which customary Chinese personalities regularly sees, shapes and considers global issues (Roberts 2013, p. 3).

As a whole, there appears to be an absence of a fundamental similarity of this novel in both the Indian or Western form of writing. For instance, the Indian Mahabharata that began in Sanskrit was through an examination of a profoundly spiritual and supernaturally motivated content, which is not new because the Three Kingdoms talks about occasions which occurred in the individual realm. Mahabharata talks about life as managed by the deities. The traditional work includes Gods and supports Hindu convictions. The brief Indian encounter reveals this to the Indians that the Mahabharata has not highlighted their outer, authoritative perspective emphatically, where it is not astonishing since the Three Kingdoms talks about occasions that occurred in the individual realm, Mahabharata dwells on existence as influenced by divine principles. This is not to prevent the enormous incentive from claiming one to read Mahabharata to welcome the Indian mentality (Teck 2005, p. 2-3).

Moss Roberts gave considerable intriguing parallelism with the Three Kingdoms and Shakespeare's masterpieces. The Three Kingdoms exhibit a 'mythic' realm with that recorded time. All things being equal, the legendary novel cannot be classified in folklore. In the mindset of the majority, the Chinese culture has been profoundly affected by this legendary novel (Teck 2005, p. 3).

Any individual who was in China will promptly concur that Mao Tsu Tung became respected as modern China's father. He is her premier vital scholar. Consequently, Mao's notoriety has achieved mythical status. Readers go to the extent of considering him as a deity, an elevated status that makes the novel to be a valuable masterpiece (Guanzhong 2005).

The cutting-edge practical pertinence of Romance of Three Kingdoms is high in its commitment to Chinese culture and sense-making. The text that it gives a cognitive blueprint for translating the focused, present-day realm. It can be taken, for instance, the manner in which the Romance of Three Kingdoms may highlight a Chinese form of reasoning and the present issue witnessed in Taiwan. Of highest priority among elderly Chinese individuals is the possible reincorporation of Taiwan, now isolated with territorial China. There is a hidden mainstream teaching frequently cited in the novel itself, and this is the fact that the human culture tends to shift from request to turmoil and back again to arrangement. Barely any Western researchers acknowledge how profoundly instilled in Chinese convictions such global request depends and this is installed in only two sentences of the Romance of Three Kingdoms. Chinese individuals frequently reference such phrases during discussions aimed at defending their perceptions. The first line is accurate from the start, presenting the areas of confusion or the start of turmoil. The other line remains comfortable in shutting out the story and sends a conclusion to the time of confusion, or the start of an arrangement. (Roberts 2013, p. 4-5)

4.1.1 Ideals that characterize an ideal leader according to Luo Guanzhong and in the present-day China

According to Luo Guanzhong characteristics of an ideal leader as such as loyalty, bravery, compassion, have morals, and righteous above others (Liu 2008, p. 390). Luo Guanzhong shows preference and sympathizes with Liu Bei due to his loyalty and benevolence, although it is precisely these ideals that will cause his defeat (Chu 2002, p. 161). Guan Yu is characterized by bravery and righteousness, although due to his intellect of honor he allows Cao Cao to go away when he has an

opportunity to destroy him (Chu 2002, p. 161). Luo Guanzhong brings out Zhuge Liang as a cunning strategist, although his intellect makes him identify the limitations of Guan Yu, Liu Bei, and Zhang Fei that eventually causes his downfall (Liu 2008, p. 390). Thus, he becomes a tragic general since he feels it is his moral obligation to offer help to cause of Liu Bei; hence he walks self-consciously toward his unavoidable fate. Cao Cao is the paradigm of ruthless character, although he is admirably calculating and cool. Cao Cao kills when necessary, but he does not participate in the imprudent and reckless violence that causes the death of Dong Zhuo (Scogin 1989, 1324). In the present day China, the novel illustrates that an ideal leader does not use force instead uses an example. In present China, the depicted generals show that leadership does not rely on having the most significant territory, but needs a leader to be brilliant and capable of outwitting his enemy (Killigrew 1999, p. 82).

4.1.2 Significance of the Ming context of the literati of the Ming period

The novel reveals Ming dynasty as the last cultural Chinese dynasty, in between Yuan dynasty and the Qing Dynasty (Liu 2008, p. 390). The dynasty started with fall of the Mongol Empire, and during the composure of the novel, the empire was uniting the Chinese cultural resistance. Despite the efforts, the emperor of the Ming dynasty made, it ended up with internal rebellion, natural disasters, and war (Min 2014, 25). To the literati of the Ming period, the Ming dynasty has a significance since it shows the origin of the rebellion in amid of the emperors. The Ming dynasty also demonstrates its relevance since it reveals the grounds of authoritarian political culture as well as an unstable empire (Liu 2008, p.390).

4.2 My position

Undertaking the research was a valuable learning experience. I had a chance to understand the nature and the process of carrying out research. Among the most important lessons were that things do not just fit into categories and that one has organized to come up with research whose pieces can be joined. Failure to be organized and not dedicating oneself to finding the necessary materials

required to get the relevant information can result in the research process being frustrating. However, with an organized mind and a clear outline of what is to be done on a particular day made the research process to be immensely rewarding. The research further made me have an insight on what the traditional Chinese society was organized and how influential political leaders rose to power through the belief of having a mandate and a heavenly appointment to lead the people. Furthermore, I learned that book authors whose stories revolve around historical narration could selectively choose the facts that favor their position in bringing out a particular theme. In this case, Guanzhong was more concerned about depicting the wartime generals as appealing and worth emulating although there were negative aspects that were downplayed.

According to my novel understanding, analysis, and the research process as well as its outcome, I call for two types of recommendations. There are suggestions to; improve the study, for further research, and to readers. To improve the current study and find out more ways in which the wartime generals were presented appealingly, more historiographical information needs to be gathered to establish the real characters of these leaders. Further research can be conducted to find out how the modern leaders are influenced by the Chinese history of the leaders in the Han dynasty. The Romance of the Three Kingdoms aimed at positively present the wartime generals to influence the modern world leaders. However, there is no research to identify leaders who borrow the leadership qualities from the traditional Chinese context. Therefore, there is a need for further research to be done to examine how the lessons learned from The Romance of the Three Kingdoms apply in the modern context.

5.4. Conclusion

The study has brought out some Chinese leaders such as Cao Cao and Liu Bei as the wartime generals that are worth being considered as cultural icons in the modern world as portrayed by Luo Guanzhong in his historical novel. All the various scenarios that prove these leaders had a significant potential to lead the people. However, the use of other research materials has revealed

the deep flaws that the wartime generals had such as lacking the confidence to lead the people despite having the mandate. Besides, other leaders were driven by their selfish interests in pushing for the acquisition of power and driven by the doctrine that the end always justifies the means. Luo Guanzhong narration of the historical events and the description of characters was a success in proving that the wartime generals were excellent examples of cultural icons.

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Appendices

1. A table illustrating the traditional Chinese literature.

The Name of the book	The Chinese Title	Book Author	Year of Publishing	Dramatic Setting
A Dream of the Red Chamber	Hong Lu Meng	Cao Xueqin	18th century	18th century
The Water Margin	Shuihu Zhuan	Shi Nain	14th century	12th Century
The Journey to the West	Xi You Ji	Wu Chengen	16th century	7th Century
The Romance of the Three Kingdoms	Sanguo Yanyi	Luo Guanzhong	14th Century	3rd Century

2. A brief look at the novels major characters.

Guan Yu- A legendary warrior that was also known as Yunchang. A sworn brother to Zhang Fei and Liu Bei. He was one of the Shu's tiger generals.

Liu Bei- Shu kingdom's lord during the era of the three kingdoms. Sworn brother to Zhang Fei and Guan Yu. He was also one of the five sworn tigers of the Shu kingdom.

Zhang Fei- A sworn brother to Zhang Fei and Liu Bei.

Cao Cao- He was the lord of the Wei kingdom during the era of the Three Kingdoms.

Zhuge Liang- A renowned strategist in Shu's Kingdom.

Huang Zhong- A renowned member of the five tiger generals in the kingdom of Shu.

Lu Bu- He was a general that served under Dong Zhuo, later turning out to be a warlord that