

The Sanctity of Balkan Borders: The Map-Making and Map-Using Process Following World War I*

CHRISTINE DRENNON

Trinity University, San Antonio, Texas

ABSTRACT: *In this paper, I explore the map-making and map-using processes of the social scientists and diplomatic communities immediately following World War I in order to expose the mystical foundation of the authority to which they lay claim. To do this, I draw on the thoughts and methods of Jacques Derrida. In particular, I use Derrida's notion of deconstruction to reveal the binary relation that political maps reinforce or create between a perceived situation on the ground and its re-presentation on the map. Deconstruction allows me to explain how the borders of the state, rather than the people they are meant to re-present and house, are considered sacrosanct and worth fighting for.*

Part 1: Mapping Macedonia

Following the devastation of World War I, the responsibility of bringing some order out of the chaos fell to the international peacemakers. Wishing to placate skeptical audiences at the Paris Peace Conference and at home, United States President Woodrow Wilson sought to reconcile very real concerns about the threat of renewed warfare in Europe with his more idealistic philosophy of global peace based on justice and truth. The return of the Eastern Question to international politics reflected the sense that renewed warfare was still possible. Who and what were to replace the political vacuum in Southeastern Europe and the Middle East created by the defeat of the Ottoman Empire? Wilson believed that only the "consent of the governed" (Seymour, 1951: 7)¹ would guarantee future peace, for "the wishes and needs of these peoples transcended everything

1 Charles Seymour was a history professor and specialist on the Austro-Hungarian Empire during the period of World War I. He was a key player in the data collection project, which was commissioned by the peace conference for the map-making process. I rely heavily on his recollections, which were written in the years following the war.

else” (Seymour, 1951: 9). Although he wrote independently (i.e., *not* under the auspices of the various delegations to the peace conferences), Halford Mackinder (then a professor of geography at Oxford and director of the London School of Economics) envisioned the solution to this shared sense of disorder and insecurity when he noted that “Germany and Russia have grown into great empires out of opposition to one another; but the peoples of the Middle Tier – Poles, Bohemians, Hungarians, Rumanians, Serbs, Bulgarians, and Greeks – are much too unlike to federate for any purpose except defense, and yet they are all so different both from Germans and Russians that they may be trusted to resist any new organization of either great neighbor making towards the empire of East Europe” (1942: 171).

Wilson’s idealism plus Mackinder’s pragmatism helped to materialize a tier of self-determined nation-states that were supposed to hinder the expansion of a vengeful Germany and a revolutionary Russia. Political vacuums and expansionary states were not new problems; however, the proposed solutions to these problems were new. In 1815, in order to erect a barrier against a revolutionary France, the Austrian Netherlands were transferred to Holland, Prussia was installed in Westphalia and the Rhineland, and the ancient republic of Genoa was handed over to Sardina-Piedmont. As compensation for the loss of the Netherlands, Austria received the Venetian Republic and the Duchy of Milan, as well as indirect control over Parma, Modena, and Tuscany. Sweden, which surrendered Finland to Russia, received Norway in compensation. In contrast with these reassignments of sovereignty, one hundred and four years later, in response to German aggression in Central and Eastern Europe, President Wilson and his colleagues sought democracy in Germany, an independent foreign policy in Austria-Hungary, prevention of the military union of Austria-Hungary and Germany, the “contentment and friendship of Bulgaria” (United States Department of State, 1942: 43, hereafter USDS) through a satisfactory solution of Balkan frontiers, and guaranteed autonomy for the Armenians (*Ibid*: 43). Indeed, this was to be the war to end all wars. A geographical solution founded on the will of the people instead of on the will of diplomats would secure peace.

So what happened? On the Balkan Peninsula, over 2,000,000 people were displaced immediately after World War I. Almost immediately following this came World War II, the Cold War, separatism, ethnic cleansing, more ethnic cleansing, and finally international tribunals. Similarly, Poland, where minorities once comprised a third of the population, today is a homogenous state; this dream of Poland’s old nationalist right was realized with the help of Hitler and Stalin. Similarly, the Czech Republic today is without Jews, Germans, and now even Slovaks. Alone at last! Slovenia, the only Yugoslav successor state where the democratic transition fits the Central European

pattern, also does not have a significant minority population. In short, in Central Europe, "ethnic cleansing" was completed half a century ago, whereas in the Balkans the process of homogeneous nation-state building is still underway (Rupnik, 1999: 60).

Among the numerous questions raised by the apparent failure of early twentieth-century attempts to bring peace, the following two are considered here: 1) Were those original boundaries imperfect, i.e., were they based on erroneous data or on a lack of data? Did less-than-competent scholars make them? Or did the compromises made by the peacemakers between the model of self-determination for the new states and their own concerns over national security undermine the greater ideal? Or 2) Did the geographical solution of a tier of self-determined nation-states, mystically founded on the will of the people, obscure the supposed origin of the newly formed countries, rules, or conventions?

National security advisors, international peacekeepers, and many national separatist and irredentist groups have asked the first question; here, I ask the second. I do so because violence has surrounded the Balkan borders since their inception. Some scholars even argue that "the Bosnia War is above all the War of Maps ... Nowhere were the new maps so ubiquitous as in former Yugoslavia, and nowhere were their frontiers so charged with historical emotion" (Vuilliamy, 1994: 5). While the study of the production of nationality and space through cartographic partitioning has a rich history in geography and especially in critical geopolitics, the ideas in this paper are inspired by the growing research in critical cartography. I seek to challenge the sanctity of inherited borders (a classic topic in political geography), but I intend to do so by exposing the originary moment of their creation under the purview of the cartographers. For it is in that founding moment of "fabulous retroactivity" that the signature reveals the signer (Derrida, 1986: 10). In particular, I examine the role of data collection and map-making in the process of border delineation, since "the appeal to maps in every discussion was constant" (Seymour, 1951: 10). In order to accomplish this, I employ the methods of Jacques Derrida, for I believe his search for authority (and ultimate deconstruction of it) serves as an appropriate model for this case study.

Derrida claims that we structure reality into concepts, codes, and categories, and then proceed to organize those codes and categories into binary opposites, privileging one over the other. I intend to show that the human and physical geography and the maps that came to re-present this geography existed in such a binary relationship. In the following pages, I outline how Derrida's insights can be used in geography in general and cartography more specifically. Then, I take up the example of the maps and collection techniques of the American researchers commissioned for the Paris Peace Conferences, whose

responsibility it was to find out who the people who were occupying the former Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian lands were. Their maps came to stand in for the situation on the ground, such that reasonably well-informed decisions could be made thousands of miles away.

In a surprising turn of events, the hierarchical relationship between the maps (the signifier) and the situation on the ground (the signified) was violently reversed. The play of difference between the maps and the landscape has been heavily militarized ever since.

Part 2: Reality and Maps; Maps and Reality

The eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month ended the war to end all wars. For Wilson, it was crucial to find out who the people were whose freedom would be determined by new international boundaries dictated by the peace agreements (Seymour, 1951: 9). However, where the borders between the new states would lie proved quite controversial (A.R.H., 1919; Dominion, 1917; Holdich, 1918). The geographical journals of the time closely followed the debates over what the nature of the new political boundaries would be; they included articles with titles such as "Where should they lie to ensure order?" and "What role should a boundary line play in the economy of nations?" (Johnson, 1917: 208). And central to the debates was the new phrase "scientific frontiers" – i.e., frontiers that were to be designed "objectively," by scientists equipped with the proper tools. It was firmly believed that given the proper data "new political boundaries [would be determined] on the basis of justice and practicality" (Seymour, 1921: 260). Maps were to represent not only the "manner of territorial boundaries but [the] distribution of peoples, populations and their local densities, religions, economic activities, distribution of material resources, trade routes, both historic and potential strategic points, etc." (Editor *GR*, 1919: 4).

The relationship between map and people in this scientific peace-making endeavor was one of mimesis, of "objective correspondence reflections" (O' Tuathail, 1994: 535). "Specialized draughtsmen" (USDS, 1942: 37) were secured who were capable of depicting all sorts of information in cartographic form. That information was to include:

[G]eneral relief; the barriers, gateways, and corridors ...; the proportion of flat and cultivable land as against steep and uncultivable land; the drainage lines; ... seasonal navigation; ... railways crossings ... regional drift of internal commerce in relation to navigable streams; the types of soil and their distribution; special features of the soil ...; climate, showing lands favorable to white settlement; ... the length of the growing season, fogs, destructive

storms, and droughts;... the forest types and commercial woods; ultimate forest land; ...fisheries; fishing streams and shore rights; ...As to the people, present general distribution by occupation, races, languages, and religions, together with comparisons with earlier and later distributions; materials showing the general level of civilization, significant customs, and general mode of life; ... the domestic commerce and routes of trade; ...Military geography ... (USDS 1942: 37-38).

Geographer Brian Harley would most likely have looked at an agenda like this skeptically, for Harley was one of the first to question the objective authority of maps (1988a, 1988b, 1989, 1992; Crampton, 2001; Laxton, 2001). In "Deconstructing the Map," Harley observes that since the seventeenth century, European mapmakers have promoted a scientific, positivistic model of map-making whose object is to "produce a 'correct' relational model of the terrain" (1989: 4) to which these wartime cartographers added "a correct relational model of the human geography." Maps such as these were intended to be devices of information transmission, which involved the basic rules of communication and assumed a one-to-one correspondence of the world with the message sent and received (Muehrecke, 1972). In this capacity, they worked as storage mechanisms for spatial data (Robinson *et. al.*, 1977: 6), or as "models" of that which they represented (Board, 1967). Yet, as Brian Harley has argued, maps are neither simply objective representations of the world nor are they solely devices of information transmission, but rather they work as "refracted images contributing to dialogue in a socially constructed world" (1988b: 57).

In his work, Brian Harley seeks to understand how maps become a political force in society (1988a). Using the tools of Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault, Harley's project has been to provide a closer and deeper reading of the cartographic text (1989: 8) through map deconstruction. Harley uses the methods of Derrida to show how the literal level of the map – that which we read – is intensely metaphorical (1989: 10; see also Black, 1997); thus cartographic facts (such as those listed above) are actually cartographic symbols: "[M]aps have become part of a wider political sign system," (1988a: 300) and "both in the selectivity of their content and in the signs and styles of representation, maps are a way of conceiving, articulating, and structuring the human world which is biased toward, promoted by, and exerts influence upon particular sets of social relations" (1988a: 278). Those social relations are most obvious in the form of nationalism, as explored in the work of David Campbell (1998). Campbell builds on Harley's insights and elucidates the dependence of national movements on maps, noting that "when the Yugoslav federation is represented with its internal republican borders clearly marked, the lines of nationalist cleavage and fracture appear as predetermined, and the latent but ever present existence of new national sovereignties awaiting their fulfillment is

suggested" (1998: 78; see also Shapiro, 1997). This relationship between maps and nationalism is well developed in the geography literature, and much of it is indebted to Brian Harley (Crampton, 2001; Edney, 1996; Murdoch and Ward, 1997; Peckham, 2000; Wood, 1992).

Harley's use of Foucault and Derrida was revolutionary in historical cartography studies. Moreover, in his texts, he encourages geographers to pursue an "epistemological shift in the way we interpret the nature of cartography (1989: 1). Frustrated with the assumed objectivity and the entrenched positivism of his field, Harley sought to show "how cartography also belongs to the terrain of the social world in which it is produced," (1988a: 232) and, as I intend to show here, that it produces. Since his untimely death in 1991, others have continued the work of Brian Harley, and the emergent field of critical cartography has gained increased recognition. Jeremy Crampton, for example, has urged his colleagues to continue the "Harleian tradition," (2001) especially Harley's engagement with the work of Michel Foucault. Harley drew on Foucault in order to begin a critique of the "map communication model" (Crampton, 2001: 237) within which single, optimal maps are produced, and on which information is presented clearly. Crampton encourages us to continue this engagement with Foucault, and in particular to ask "under what circumstances is a map authored" (Crampton, 2001: 243).

While Harley's use of Foucault is more extensive than his use of Derrida, I concentrate here on his understanding of Derrida, because it is Derrida's methods and questions that guide the work presented here. Following Derrida, Harley argues in *Maps, Knowledge, and Power* that "[m]aps are slippery customers... [that] may contain unperceived contradictions or duplicitous tensions that undermine the surface layer of standard objectivity" (1988a: 239). He also proceeds to apply these methods (the search for inconsistencies) to maps; for instance, he applies these methods to the artwork of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century maps and on the road maps of the present day United States, and claims that each one is an "articulation of local values and rights" (1988a: 242; also 1988b). Rather than concentrate on the errors promulgated by improper location of lines on the map, Harley asks how maps have helped to create myths which have assisted in maintaining the territorial status quo (1988a: 282), noting that maps have become part of the wider political sign system (see Monmonier, 1991). This idea resounds in more current work in which maps are seen not as authorities of spatial information, but rather as human constructions of it (Edney, 1996).

While Brian Harley asks the important questions in his work, he never really succeeds in answering them. In other words, he begins the process of bringing the ideas of post-structuralism to cartography, but he is not altogether successful in applying them (Belyea, 1992, see also Andrews, 2001). For

instance, despite the power of the work of Jacques Derrida, Harley dismisses it in his "Deconstructing the Map" because he, like others, fails to see the political implications of Derrida's project (Harley 1989: 12). Harley understands Derrida's project as one of finding the contradictions within any (map or) text in an attempt to expose the absence of foundation on which it claims to lie. Yet Derrida's potential contribution to geography is far greater.

According to Derrida, our sense of order works on a hierarchical, value-laden ordering of signs in terms of binary oppositions. In this way, one term is privileged over its partner: presence over absence, in over out, soul over body, meaning over sign, landscape over map. The two exist in a hierarchy – often a violent hierarchy – as one of the two terms governs the other. Derrida's act of deconstruction aims to reveal the hierarchy. He does so in order to expose how the maintenance of the foundation (of the essence, of the true meaning, of the signified) suppresses and even oppresses its twin. For example, in *On Grammatology*, Derrida examines the work of philosopher Ferdinand de Saussure. As Derrida states: "I [Derrida] do not question the truth of what Saussure says, I would announce the limits and presuppositions ... [W]hy does a project of general linguistics, concerning the internal system in general or language in general, outline the limits of its field by excluding, as exteriority in general, a particular system of writing ..." (1976a: 39). Saussure sees spoken language as preceding writing, while written words are poor representations of the spoken, and of the even more real referent, writing simply immortalizes the spoken word. Derrida both accepts and rejects this. Writing does prove to be a substitute for speech, yet he shows how writing also has priority over speech, as the written word writes itself upon the spoken word. Language brings things into being rather than serving what is already there (for other uses of Derrida's deconstruction of Saussure, see O' Tuathail, 1994). Speech constitutes writing just as writing constitutes speech; they both constitute each other continuously and simultaneously – neither precedes the other.

Maps, too, function as a form of writing or inscription (Pickles, 1992). Scientific cartography, like Saussure's writing, is believed to re-present a pre-existing reality. The landscape is inscribed upon the map; the landscape comes before, while the map signifies that pre-existent landscape. The landscape is the foundation on which the map is built. According to Saussure, the pre-existing reality is language, itself a sign of a deeper thought or image. For the cartographer that pre-existent reality is the physical and human landscape.

Looking closely at the words and methods of the cartographers employed by the Peace Conference to produce maps of problematic areas, it is easy to see that they privileged the landscape in their production process. Cartographers set out to experience, describe, and quantify the reality they looked upon. They understood the landscape as coming before. Thus the landscape – the human

and physical geography – held (author)ity over the map that was its representation. (Author)ity is therefore vested in the landscape as author, as foundation. Derrida's bipolar, hierarchical tension is at work here – not between the accuracy of the contents (or lack thereof) of the map but between the map itself and the landscape it seeks to signify. The imbalance of power between the two may give rise to violence; as Ann Norton explains: “[V]iolence is taken as a species of inscription and an act of authority. Acts of violence, like acts of speech and writing, invest the material with meaning by giving it structure In its inscription of will on the world, violence is a signifying act, giving expression and authority to identity and will” (1988: 145).

In looking for inconsistencies within maps, Harley misses the larger point, that is, the role of the map in general and not just the interplay between symbols on the map and the landscape. This is where Derrida proves helpful, for I think Derrida's contribution to geography is in his recognition that all inscription processes contain potential violence. As the written word is inscribed upon the spoken, so too is the map inscribed upon the landscape. Thus, the possibility for violence enters with inscription. David Campbell seeks to understand Bosnia in this way, noting that “the conflict is constituted *in the present*” (1998: 84). This relationship between violence and the political can be understood by looking more closely at the inscription process – much in the same way as Derrida does when he examines the relationship between speaking and writing. But when we begin to investigate the inscription process and search for the grounds that bestow legitimacy, that is, for the sources of authority, they elude us. By whose authority do the founders act? In the name of the people? But who are the people before they are named? How can something be founded without a foundation? According to Derrida, something can be founded without a foundation only by an act of violence – a *coup de force* (Derrida, 1992; Campbell, 1998). Historical trajectories are created and enacted in a self-perpetuating, self-preserving cycle. Derrida's project is to demonstrate the mystical foundations of authority. The role of geography in creating such foundations of authority often lies with the map.

The aim of the American and European powers still standing at the end of WWI was to create, through objectivity (rather than favoritism), science (rather than secret treaties), and logic (rather than balance of power), a map that would endure and lie like a balm over a tortured landscape. This map would ensure not only peace, but would also provide for the necessary and unimpeded progression of democracy and capitalism around the world. Vesting “peoples” with authority and sovereignty seemed to the peacemakers a viable alternative to the instability that the defunct empires left in their wake. Therefore, they created a series of independent states patterned on the complex distribution of nations in Eastern Europe and on the Balkan Peninsula. Yet, as Derrida has

shown, at the origin of every institution, “the operation that amounts to founding, inaugurating, justifying law, making law, would consist of a *coup de force*, of a preformative and therefore interpretive violence that in itself is neither just nor unjust” (1992: 13). While authority was supposed to lie with the people, with the new self-determined nations, in fact it (authority) was much more mystical, for it was “walled up in the violent structure of the founding act” (1992: 14). In the following pages, I intend to show that authority in this sense – that which comes before, one bipole that is privileged over its mate – is not necessarily where those who rally in its name (nationalists, separatists, peace-keeping forces) assume it to lie. I intend to do this by exploring the map-making and then the map-using process in the years before the close of WWI, because these years ushered in a particularly problematic world order. My focus is on Eastern Europe in general and on the Balkan Peninsula more specifically. Throughout the next section of this article I rely on the original writings and works of the mapmakers and of the diplomats who commissioned their work. Their search for the truth took them to the landscape. My search does not take me to the landscape in order to expose the inaccuracies of their measurements; rather it takes me to the maps themselves and to the texts meant to explain the maps² so as to better understand the ideas that drove the mapping process and the search for a foundation in the landscape.

Part 3: Reality Becomes the Map

In the same month that the United States entered World War I, President Woodrow Wilson stated America’s war aims and peace terms. The U.S.’s peace terms differed significantly from those of its Allies, for they neglected (or may not even have been cognizant of) the secret treaties among the states that would have divided the territorial spoils amongst themselves. The United States envisioned a “scientific peace,” a peace settlement not predicated on the national interests of any single government (or combination of governments), but rather “a settlement based on the findings of disinterested specialists in accordance with the accepted peace terms” (Gelfand, 1963: 16). Data, and an abundance of it, was needed to help ensure the scientific peace. In turn, data would guarantee that Allied diplomats working in Paris would make accurate representations and assessments of the current situation on the ground.

American diplomat Henry White’s suggestion that information be gathered in order to ensure a scientific peace encouraged others to begin organizing a group of men from the leading universities to commence such data collection

2 The *Geographical Review* published these accounts in the years immediately following World War I.

(Nevins, 1930). Organized under Colonel House and working independently of the State Department, "the Inquiry" was formed in late 1917, nearly one year before the armistice. The purpose of the Inquiry was "to furnish [negotiators] beforehand information and data in a condensed form upon which they could rely in the discussion of questions" (USDS, 1942: 10). A preliminary list of the subjects the Inquiry was to study appeared in December 1917:

1. Declaration and proposals; studies of political parties and a Who's Who of the principles.
2. Physical, racial [sic] and economic maps for territory from the Baltic Sea to the Persian Gulf. Economic and political maps of Africa. Boundary maps to be superimposed indicating tentative solutions for Poland, Balkans, Asia Minor, and Africa. Economic maps of Alsace-Lorraine and occupied area of France.
3. A small and authoritative library on all moot questions.
4. Tables and charts of (a) immediate civil and economic needs in Europe; (b) available tonnage; (c) credit position of belligerent nations.
5. Analysis of "freedom of the Seas."
6. Social data for (a) Baltic Provinces; (b) Poland; (c) Serbia; (d) Macedonia; (e) Palestine; (f) Italia-Irredenta.
7. Analysis of German, French, and English commercial relations to (a) Antwerp, and (b) Belgian railroads and canals.
8. Method of estimating reparations.
9. Tentative proposals for internationalizing Baghdad Railroad and the Straits.
10. Tentative proposals for preventing undue economic stress penetration especially in Russia.
11. The relation of the Monroe Doctrine to the Settlement (Gelfand, 1963: 88).

Charles Seymour, Yale history professor and specialist on Austria-Hungary for the Inquiry, explained the commission in the following way:

The Inquiry had been studying the conditions that would determine new political boundaries on the basis of justice and practicality. The principal delegates [to the Paris Peace Conference] could not be expected to know the

details that would decide the disposition on Danzig, the fate of Fiume, the division of the Banat of Temesvar. They would need someone to tell them the amount of coal produced in the Saar Basin, the location of the mines in Teschen, the ethnic character of Eastern Galicia, the difference between Slovaks and Ruthenians. It was all very well to come to the Conference with demands for justice, but our commissioners must have cold facts to support those demands. The fact that exact information was available, and played a role in the decisions of the Conference, marks a step forward in the history of diplomatic relations (1921: 260).

It was generally believed that a peace, based on scientific data, held the promise of permanency (Gelfand, 1963; Seymour, 1951). Wilson agreed and felt that the data could be “gotten from a few specialists in this country such as historians, professors, etc,” that is, men trained in the handling and manipulation of facts, “distinguished thinkers who considered the questions for peacemaking in terms of both facts and solutions” (Gelfand, 1963: 12). The Executive Committee of the Inquiry was of the opinion that accumulating factual information would help avoid the pitfalls of subjective impressions, interpretations, and judgments.

Given this agenda, everyone was well aware that “geography would play a large role at the Conference” (Wrigley, 1951: 7). Therefore, Professors James Shotwell and Archibald Coolidge, both from Harvard University, sought out Dr. Isaiah Bowman, Director of the American Geographical Society, “the one scientific body for geographical research in America” (Shotwell 1937: 6), to serve as Division Chief of Geography and ultimately to assume the title of “Chief Territorial Specialist and Executive Officer, Division of Territorial, Economic, and Political Intelligence, Commission to Negotiate Peace.” The Inquiry itself was housed on the top floors of the American Geographical Society. In 1919, the editor of the *Geographical Review* wrote about the role of the American Geographical Society in the war effort: “[T]here could be no greater justification of the society’s existence than the use to which its collections and the results of its long labors in the domain of scientific geography had been put” (Editor *GR*, 1919: 2). The Inquiry was a “fact study, conducted in a scientific spirit by specialists and scholars, both American and from various European countries affected by the war” (*Ibid*: 2-3). Their purpose was to “give high value to any statement of fact” (*Ibid*: 3), and they did so in part with the use of maps:

Maps were made to visualize not only all manner of territorial boundaries but distributions of peoples, populations and their local densities, religions, economic activities, distribution of material resources, trade routes, both historic and potential strategic point, etc. (*Ibid*: 4).

These maps were described by the War Department as “not cheap and hasty productions, but carefully drawn compilations from the latest and best sources” (*Ibid*: 6). Never before had maps played such a central role in peace making. Maps were central in this information gathering process; sheets containing population statistics, the location of economic resources, and the distribution of other kinds of data were prepared according to a uniform scale and designed so that the diversified information could be superimposed upon base maps (Gelfand, 1963: 91). In this way, an enormous amount of information could be made serviceable when territorial questions arose during the peace negotiations. All possible information concerning a particular place went into drafting the maps. It was the job of the Inquiry to furnish the American negotiators with graphic representations of sets of facts about the human and physical geography of all “problematic areas” upon very short notice (Gelfand, 1963: 91). The Department of State defined these places as the “war breeding areas [such as] Alsace-Lorraine, Poland, Lithuanian region, Czecho-Slovak, Roumanian irredentist areas, and Yugo-Slavia” (USDS, 1942: 17). While most information gathered by the Inquiry was from secondary sources, in the case of highly controversial areas such as these, missions were sent out. As Archibald Cary Coolidge explained, the American Commission in Paris had plenty of information drawn from books, maps, and statistics to help it carve out new boundaries in Southeastern Europe, but it also needed “reliable reports from agents on the spot, as to the aspirations and sentiments of the populations in question” (Coolidge and Lord, 1932: 196). Only by going to the source could accurate representations be made.

Agents on the spot included B.C. Wallis and Robert Kerner. Wallis published eight articles in *Geographical Review* between 1918 and 1922.³ His series concerning Hungary was reprinted in the *Geographical Review* in 1918 and included “The Slavs of Northern Hungary” (1918b), “The Slavs of Southern Hungary” (1918c), “Central Hungary: Magyars and Germans” (1919a), and “The Rumanians in Hungary” (1919b). Each follows a similar outline, and provides descriptions and accounts of the physical geography, the population, the people, the minorities (Germans and Jews), the movement of people, the natural increase of population, the relative changes of population due to emigration, internal migration, the natural increase of population, religious elementary education, public health, the economic conditions, the railway transportation, and a summary in which all of the aforementioned information is given a geographic orientation and the general impression of the

3 In addition to the reports by Kerner and Wallis, the following contributions were made to the geographical journals of the time: Brunhes and Vallaux, 1918; Day, 1920; Keltie, 1918; Marinelli, 1919; Pallis, 1925; Woods, 1918, 1919.

expert is provided (as was requested by the Inquiry). Wallis was able to conclude, for example that “the general impression left from the consideration of the facts is that the Rumanian is neglected, although he is not seriously oppressed” (1919b: 171). In this way, an “accurate” depiction of the geography of Hungary was charted and mapped.

Wallis’ stated purpose was “to present certain facts which must be taken into consideration in determining the general problem of the future of the subject races of the Hungarian monarchy” (1919b: 156). To do this, he “rearranged and reclassified the published materials [census volumes and their supplements] in order to arrive at the phenomena concerning the separate nationalities” (*Ibid.*). Great care was taken to “make the information typical and to ensure the accuracy of the results” (*Ibid.*). Wallis’ goal was to re-present the people of the region to the Conference. He proceeded to explain Hungary to the Inquiry in the following terms:

Hungary contained 21,000,000 people in 127,000 square miles ... New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania contained 19,000,000 people in 100,000 square miles, while Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois contained 13,000,000 people in 133,000 square miles. Hungary thus occupied an immediate position between these two groups of states. ... There are five municipalities in Hungary [of which] Kolozsvar, Nagy-Varad, and Arad are each the size of Terre Haute, Indiana (1919b: 156).

Wallis then calculated population changes in Hungary proper, first in absolute terms and then with respect to each group. The geographical distribution of people was then determined and plotted. “The Rumanians of Central Europe form a continuous band of people roughly in the shape of a D, the vertical stroke representing the Rumanian Forelands and western Transylvania, and the curve running through northern Transylvania through Bukovina, northern Rumania, and Bessarabia round southern Rumania” (1919b: 160). The constant referral to the landscape was meant to underscore the map’s credibility and accuracy. “[T]he linguistic boundary ... runs northward, bends slightly to the northeast, Plate IX, but fails to coincide with the physical features of Plate III, while it is essential that masses of land in Plate IX be examined carefully in relation to distribution of population in Plate X” (1919b: 161). Concerning the internal migrations of the people of Hungary, Wallis found that each village tended to house one people, and when a village received a considerable inflow of any kind of foreigners, the original people tended to migrate. In this way, Wallis provided “reliable” reports regarding the aspirations and sentiments of the populations in question. His maps were little replicas of those places.

Robert J. Kerner was another prolific researcher for the Inquiry. Working primarily on Austria-Hungary, he fought for free and independent states

throughout Central and Eastern Europe, and believed that scientists could safely conclude that any solution which did not treat the Yugoslavs as one nation was based on unscientific foundations, and hence could not be considered a permanent solution. Data were collected and sent back to New York and Paris where it was deposited, filed, digested, edited, sorted, and filed once again (USDS, 1942: 34).

On the Balkan Peninsula

Macedonia may have been one of the most perplexing areas for the Inquiry. Inquiry researcher H. Charles Woods called it “the danger zone of Europe” (1919: 19). From an international perspective it was difficult because it served as “the natural means of communication between the West and the East on the one hand and the North and the South on the other” (*Ibid*; Lederer, 1963). Once again, here was a place in which Wilson’s social justice agenda might be made to work in synergy with the European Allies’ security agenda: “[W]ere good relations to be established between the Balkan states and were an anti-German barrier therefore to be established, what would amount to an Allied wedge would prevent the expansion of the Central Powers toward the East and at the same time assure to Russia her legitimate access to warm water” (Woods, 1919: 19). Democratically organized and self- governed peoples-governed might do this.

Figure 1. From *Punch* November 27, 1912.



A wealth of materials already existed for the Balkan Peninsula and for Macedonia in particular. In fact, in 1951 H.R. Wilkinson, a lecturer in geography at the University of Liverpool, produced a volume entitled *Maps and Politics: A Review of the Ethnographic Cartography of Macedonia*, in which he enumerates and describes over 175 ethnographic maps of Macedonia, drawn by Turks, Greeks, Illyrians, Bulgarians, Serbs, Russians, British, French, Italians, Germans, Americans, Austrians, and Macedonians between 1821 and 1950. By 1919, the year of the Peace Conference, there were well over 150 published maps of Macedonia in circulation. Wilkinson's purpose was to compare the various interpretations that scholars, politicians, schoolteachers, mapmakers, explorers, and travelers had of the ethnic geography of Macedonia, and to tie those interpretations to various contemporary political agendas. From the World War I period, Wilkinson includes in his volume Bulgarian school master Vacil Kunccev's map of a Bulgarian-dominated Macedonia (Kunccev, 1900, figure 2, page 228; also Rizoff, 1917), Serbian geographer Jovan Cvijic's map of a Serb-dominated Macedonia (1918, figure 3, page 228), and Greek C. Nicolaides' map in which "the whole of southern Macedonia [is] Greek linguistic territory" (Wilkinson, 1951: 122). The Bulgarians often dug out older maps to prove their rights to ownership (Rizov, 1917). Although Bulgarians, Serbians, and most West Europeans used language to classify people in order to make their case for ownership of Macedonia, the Greeks were forced to use religion. No one could dispute the Christianity of the Slavs, while few would attest to their ability to speak Greek.

The maps Wilkinson reviews were made for a variety of reasons, but one stands out: they manipulate ethno-geography to rationalize geopolitical goals. By counting and categorizing people into ethnic groups, the various states interested in controlling the Balkan Peninsula could justify particular international boundaries that followed ethnographic boundaries. Given the rhetoric on national self-determination and rights of nations in vogue at the time, this type of argument for independence from alien powers made sense.

The sheer number of available ethnographic maps of Macedonia, the political agendas they represented, and the various methods of sorting and organizing the data used to construct the maps precluded their comparison. Some cartographers invoked language while others utilized religion to determine ethnicity and nationality, not to mention the more outwardly political agendas at work in which entire cultural frontiers shifted north and south as a function of the nationality of the mapmaker. Bowman's team of cartographers working for the Inquiry solved this problem. To ensure that data was stable from place to place and from researcher to researcher (no matter on what side of the political arena he was situated) the Inquiry constructed charts and graphs on which data was posted:

In each area the smallest administrative units for which figures exist are listed on a chart and in parallel columns the latest and most reliable data are assembled. If the data are of a kind about which there is no dispute of authorities they will be designed in one fashion; if there is a dispute, as for example in Macedonia, the best figures (in this case the best Serbian, Bulgarian, and Greek, Austrian, German, French, and Russian statistics) will be given, together with the judgments of the specialists in the employ of the Inquiry (USDS, 1942: 59).

In this way, figures could be compared across a variety of sources and could be returned and referred to in the decision-making process (the maps of the Balkan Peninsula in figures 4 and 5 (page 229) were originally published in the *Geographical Review*, and are compilations of the Inquiry mapmakers). The “best figures” and the “judgments of the specialists” determined which representation was the real, true one. Others could then be dismissed as political propaganda, as were the Bulgarian and Greek maps of Macedonia. Yet the final product of the Inquiry was not to be maps, but the international political boundaries that the maps “revealed.” Isaiah Bowman explains the manner in which international boundaries were determined:

When a line is to be drawn it must be run upon the ground; that is, it must be definite and continuous. It cannot alter its position with every minor circumstance. It must have the advantages, even while recognizing the defects, of the broad and general. A well-defined topographic feature that is followed in demarcating a boundary may separate a small ethnic group from a larger one with which it desires to be related politically. But the topographic features may be too important to be neglected and may have to be followed in violation of the ethnic principle (1923: 32).

B. C. Wallis used the ‘contour’ method when making recommendations to the Inquiry (1917, 345). The method of representing nationalities and population densities was termed the contour method because of its use of lines similar in scope to the contour lines on relief maps, their chief attribute being gradational representation and the avoidance of adaptive change. Despite the objectivity and scientific nature of the cartographic process employed, Woodrow Wilson was not satisfied with the results of the Peace Conference. Even before it was complete, Wilson expressed his disillusionment with the process; he said that if it failed he would be ashamed to return to America and “would look around for an out-of-the-way spot, Guam perhaps, to retire to ...” (quoted in Seymour, 1951; 14). Despite the collections of facts, the maps, the charts, and the plebiscites, the new international borders were as much a product of

international politics as they were of self-determination. It was only in Eastern Europe that members of the Inquiry felt that their efforts had born fruit:

Where the geographers were given a relatively free hand, as in the European territorial commissions, the Wilsonian program accomplished a higher degree of success than has generally been realized. The frontiers of the new map of Europe conformed more closely with ethnographic divisions than any in previous history (Seymour, 1951: 20-21).

In Eastern Europe – if nowhere else – the Allied peacemakers believed that authority lay with the people, for their new states were understood to be a representations of them. All kinds of practical information had gone into the creation of the maps that then served as “accurate” representations of the real situation on the ground. Sovereignty appeared to be vested in the people whom the maps represented, for their distribution was the author of the map. Or was it? It should be remembered that prior to the map “polyethnicity and national heterogeneity [had] prevailed” (Campbell, 1998: 85). The landscape and its representation came to epitomize Derrida’s hierarchical, binary tandem. But which term was prioritized over and above the other?

Part 4: The Map becomes Reality

An examination of the mass deportations among Bulgaria, Greece, and Turkey at the beginning of this century begins to reveal the mystical nature of popular sovereignty. Although whole populations have been moved from one place to another throughout history (the Assyrians and Romans, in particular, resorted to this type of diplomacy), no other movement was coordinated under the guise of “the rights of man.” The protection of national minorities in states other than their own required sensitive legislation that was not deemed appropriate in the Balkan setting. Thus it was there that populations were shifted to conform to the new political geography.

Large minorities within the new political boundaries were seen as breaches of national security. Two mass movements were initiated on the Balkan Peninsula. Bulgaria and Greece signed the Treaty of Neuilly in 1919, which provided for the reciprocal and voluntary emigration of national minorities; and Greece and Turkey signed the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923, which was a compulsory exchange of Greek and Turkish peoples. According to treaty historian Stephen P. Ladas, “[T]he whole purpose of the Convention, [was] that of clearing up the inextricable intermingling of the two racial elements in these territories and establishing a racial homogeneity therein” (1932: 41). Between these two conventions over 2,000,000 people were uprooted.

The provisions of the Treaty of Lausanne, Article 1, stated that “[F]rom 1st May, 1923, there shall take place a compulsory exchange of Turkish nationals of the Greek Orthodox religion established in Turkish territory, and of Greek nationals of the Moslem [sic] religion established in Greek territory” (Ladas, 1932: 345). Lewis describes the mass movement in the following way:

The Greeks of Karaman who were repatriated to Greece were Greek Christians by religion – yet most of them knew no Greek. Their language was Turkish – which they wrote in the Greek script – and the inscriptions in their abandoned churches and cemeteries in Karaman still testify to their linguistic Turkishness. In the same way, many of the repatriated Turks from Greece knew little or no Turkish, but spoke Greek – and wrote it in the Turco-Arabic script. What took place was not an exchange of Greeks and Turks, but rather an exchange of Greek Orthodox Christians and Ottoman Muslims ... [T]his was no repatriation at all, but two deportations into exile – of Christian Turks to Greece, and of Muslim Greeks to Turkey (1961: 354).

Although Lewis raises more issues than simply the mass movements themselves, his observation that these were deportations into exile immediately raises some critical questions, such as: Which is reality, and which is its representation – the people or the maps drawn to represent them? Which is prioritized, reality or its re-presentation? Where does political authority lie – with the people or with the map? Was there a reality before the map, or did the map allow/produce a reality?

Article 56, Paragraph 2 of the Treaty of Paris between the Allied and Associated Powers and Bulgaria, signed in Neuilly-sur-Seine on November 27, 1919, provided that “Bulgaria undertake[s] to recognize such provisions as the Principal Allied and Associated Powers may consider opportune with respect to the reciprocal and voluntary emigration of persons belonging to racial minorities” (quoted in Ladas, 1932). The previous year, these people hadn’t been racial minorities; racial minorities were created only with the signing of the treaties. In the case of Greece and Turkey, the compulsory exchange occurred after the brief Greco-Turkish War in which part of the Greek population was driven out from Asia Minor and Eastern Thrace. The Treaty of Peace among the British Empire, France, Italy, Japan, Greece, Rumania, the Serb-Croat-Slovene Kingdom, and Turkey was signed in Lausanne on July 24, 1923. People situated on the wrong side of the new international borders were told to abandon their fixed property in exchange for some of equal value on the other side. Yet, before the treaties had been signed and the maps inscribed on the landscape, no one was on the wrong side because neither community existed before the inscription of the map; each came into being as a product of the map. While there had been binary-othering relationships prior to the imposition of

this one on the Balkan Peninsula, all others (the most pronounced was probably the Christian-Muslim one) were suddenly defined in relation to this new one.

The population transfers that were dictated by cartographic representations sought to give the nation a shape which was itself derived from the very representation that made the nation visible. Like Saussure, who understood the spoken word to be prior to writing, the scientific cartographers saw the human landscape as preceding the map. Upon closer inspection, however, it was only through the mapping and inscription process that the human landscape was made visible and then manipulated to re-present the presentation. The origin of authority was to be “the governed” (Seymour, 1951: 7), but “the governed” were in fact created with the inauguration of the state through the inscription of the map. Derrida calls this a *coup de force*, “since the origin of authority, the foundation or ground, the position of the law can’t by definition rest on anything but themselves” (1992: 14). According to Derrida, the most sovereign of people:

[D]o not exist as an entity; it [the United States of America] does *not* exist, *before* this declaration [of Independence], not as *such*. If it gives birth to itself, as free and independent subject, as possible signer, this can only hold in the act of the signature. The signature invents the signer. This signer can only authorize him- or herself, to sign once he or she has come to the end. ... if one can say this, of his or her own signature, in a sort of fabulous retroactivity (Derrida, 1986: 10).

While we may sincerely believe that the roots of authority lie with the people (in Derrida’s example, with the people of the United States of America), upon closer examination, the people do not even exist as a people before their existence is called into being through the signing process. The treaties of Neuilly and Lausanne, and all of the Balkan wars since the signing of these treaties have been about matching human geography to political geography. Yet political geography was said to have been created in order to mirror human geography. The source of authority is indeed mystical, as the priority of one over the other has been militarized in order to preserve this order. Order (in the sense that things cohere, not in the sense of a lack of lawlessness) had most certainly existed on the Balkan Peninsula before World War I, but it was a sense or system of order that enabled numerous societies to be complexly integrated spatially. They shared the same territory but not the same political identity, that is, a political identity beyond that of subject of the Ottoman Empire (Drennon, 2001).

In our metaphysical world, where we access reality through concepts, codes, and categories that we pair and privilege, hierarchies are formed. In order to preserve the hierarchy between two binaries in a pair, “the discursive (w)riting

of a place is [often] followed by its violent (w)riting (slitting and slashing) by military war machines" (O'Tuathail, 1994: 538). Two million people were displaced by these treaties, people who, with the creation of the new states based on the "consent of the governed" (Seymour, 1951: 7), found themselves in the wrong place at the moment of foundation (despite the foundation being a product of their own human geography).

Although this is an interesting observation, is it merely pedantic? What are its implications? Prior to reordering, the Balkan landscape and population were unreadable. The region was the epitome of ethnic complexity. That complexity produced two things. One was what was described as chronic racial warfare and continuous carnage, and the second was the introduction of the term 'Macedoine' into culinary vocabulary, which referred to the most exotic, chaotic fruit salad imaginable. The Balkans are, and remain, "dangerously unstable." Instability has not been reduced. In our bipolar world, the play of the system between two terms – him and her, in and out, straight and gay, reality and re-presentation – is arrested when one term seizes power, thus forming a center and posing as a foundation. The other term is then marginalized, repressed, and even oppressed and persecuted. A violent hierarchy is formed as the centralized member becomes instituted as the Real. In one of the more recent Balkan wars, maps were "on the walls of barracks, in the soldiers' handbooks, pinned up in cafes and framed above the hearth" (Vuilliamy, 1994: 8). Maps are understood as sources of (author)ity. But by whose authority do they act? By the authority of the people? It appears that maps in fact created the people they were to house. The locus of authority is indeed a mystical one, as fighting continues to preserve the sanctity of the borders. But, as Michael Shapiro warns, "[T]he apparent stability of the dominant models is belied by the energy that must be spent to maintain them" (Shapiro 1997: 36-37). The center only retains its position through suppression or oppression.

Derrida not only exposes this hierarchical tension between the present and its re-presentation, but he also calls for its release, making possible the play of differences, for this difference is the source of all value (Derrida, 1976: 52). He does not seek to simply reverse the hierarchy and thus overturn the privileged term ("it is not a question of rehabilitating writing in the narrow sense, nor of reversing the order of dependence when it is evident"), but rather to recognize that neither exists without the other – neither comes before, just as neither is the author of the other (1976: 56). Instead, "[O]riginal, natural etc. language had never existed, never been intact and untouched by writing, that it had itself always been a writing" (1976: 56). All these propositions must be understood as more than simple reversals of a metaphysics of presence or of conscious

subjectivity (1976: 68). The two terms in any hierarchy must be allowed to exist in the tension that produces both as a product of difference.

So if the international borders were moved such that minorities would no longer find themselves on the wrong side, would the violence stop? Those who advocate that Kosovo Province be granted independence assume such a supposition. In universalizing the European state model of space, in which boundaries mark the edges of difference (Shapiro, 1997), these mixed communities – these places where people find themselves on the wrong side of the line – are denied a presence until they conform to the model. The map remains at the center of the model.

I began this essay with two questions: 1) Are the boundaries in the wrong place, or 2) Is the foundation on which these boundaries were calculated a mystical one, i.e., not where it appears to be? Does the foundation lie with the people? And if so, why have the people been rearranging themselves over the landscape in order to better fit the map? I have used deconstruction techniques to explore both of these questions. While Brian Harley asked the interesting questions, he was not altogether successful in answering them. While I cannot claim to be altogether successful in answering these questions either, I draw my inspiration from Harley. And following Harley's groundbreaking work, I too reject the notion that maps are mere replicas or signifiers of the real situation on the ground. My contribution to Harley's legacy may be my insistence on looking beyond the contents of the map and the accuracy of the contents, in order to investigate the role that the map itself plays as a re-presentation of a pre-existent reality.

And what about the states on the Balkan Peninsula? Since the institution of these states, (author)ity has not laid with the people but with the map. A tremendous amount of energy has gone into maintaining this relationship ever since. To release the two terms – map and people – and allow them to define one another through the constant play of difference is the solution that the deconstructionist can offer. I believe that through exposing the mythical foundations of authority on which conflict is constructed, the possibility of transformation opens up. However, sovereignty must be re-visited and re-envisioned before this can happen.

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Figure 2. Map of Bulgarian-dominated Macedonia made by Vacil Kunccev around 1900.



Figure 3. Map of Jovan Cvijic of Serb-dominated Macedonia made around 1918 and printed in the *Geographical Review*



Figure 4. and 5. Inquiry maps of Macedonia and the Balkan Peninsula published in *Geographical Review* in 1918

