

ED 400 859

IR 056 174

AUTHOR Ranson, Clare
 TITLE Cartography in Children's Literature.
 PUB DATE 96
 NOTE 4p.; In: Sustaining the Vision. Selected Papers from the Annual Conference of the International Association of School Librarianship (24th, Worcester, England, July 17-21, 1995); see IR 056 149.
 PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)
 EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
 DESCRIPTORS *Cartography; *Childrens Literature; Fantasy; Fiction; Foreign Countries; Graphic Arts; *Illustrations; Locational Skills (Social Studies); *Maps; Map Skills; Visual Aids

ABSTRACT

Maps have been used as an illustrative device in children's books for a long time; however, they are an area of illustration that has been largely ignored by critics. Maps are most commonly used as frontispiece illustrations in adventure and fantasy books. They have also generally been aimed at the male reader when children's books were marketed separately for boys and girls. A good map will complement the text and internal illustrations and add another visual level to the text. Children are now less skilled in cartographic recognition, due to geography being taught differently than it was in the past. Maps in children's books can be divided into three groups: (1) maps which depict a real place; (2) fantasy maps which have no basis in reality and are the creation of the author and cartographer; and (3) maps which combine both reality and fantasy--when the map shows an area that is real but has been altered to fit the plot. Maps in selected children's books are described and discussed to show how maps are a branch of illustration worthy of critical attention. (AEF)

 * Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
 * from the original document. *

Cartography in Children's Literature

by
Clare Ranson
Trinity College, Dublin

Maps have been used as an illustrative device in children's books for a long time, certainly since 1883, when a map was incorporated in Robert Louis Stevenson's book *Treasure Island*. They are, however, an area of illustration that has been largely ignored by critics. While children's picture books have evoked a great deal of critical attention, particularly in the last twenty years, map illustration has been forgotten. This is probably because critical attention has focused on the picture book for the under ten age range, while maps are generally used for textual illustration for the ten to fifteen year age group.

Illustrations are often deemed unnecessary for this age range, who can, or should be able to, read quite adequately and therefore do not need added explanation through pictures. Although surely having given a child reader good quality illustrations in picture books, to train their artistic eye, increase reading enjoyment and comprehension, we can do the same for the older age range. Maps are most commonly used as frontispiece illustrations in adventure and fantasy books. They have also generally been aimed at the male reader, when children's books were marketed separately for boys and girls. Maps usually appeal to boys, who prefer the factual diagram of the map to the artistry of a picture. Maps have induced many a reluctant boy reader to delve into a book. Girls now have more of an opportunity to enjoy these illustrations as well.

A good map will complement the written text and internal illustrations, and add another visual level to the text. In an illustrated text it is unusual for the map to be drawn by the illustrator, so the book becomes a three-point collaboration between writer, illustrator and cartographer. Often the map is the sole illustration of the book, and therefore sets the tone of the book. It is vital that the map is in keeping with the subject matter, style and tone of the text.

On an educational note, children are now less skilled in cartographic recognition techniques, than in the 1800s when *Treasure Island* was published, due to geography being taught in a different way. Any literate child in 1883 would have been schooled in cartography, and would have read the map with relative ease. The contemporary child will probably have more difficulty with it. The more modern maps in my selection, e.g. *A Wizard of Earthsea* are certainly simpler, with fewer traditional cartographic devices, such as longitude and latitude and sea depths. Even though the modern child may not understand the map as fully as previous generations, I still believe that the map is a valuable illustration. The modern child brings greater artistic appreciation to the text, which compensates for the lack of technical cartographic knowledge.

Maps are a useful tool in helping to manage the text for a young reader. It is especially helpful when the text spans a large geographical area, or a foreign part of the world. The reader can reorientate through reference to the map, and the hesitant reader can check that he or she is still on the right track. Maps, like many illustrations often suffer in the size reduction from hardback to paperback copies. For instance, the map of the lake in *Swallows and Amazons* is reduced from a 26cm by 20cm size color illustration, to a 20cm by 18cm size black and white map. The map is a much more impressive and effective visual medium, in the hardback copy. In describing maps, the Art critics terms of form, shade, style, color, detail, background and technique can be employed. The specific cartographic terms of accuracy, line, emblem and framing can be combined with the art critics terms to develop a rich critical language to use in reference to maps.

Maps in children's books can be divided into three groups, the first is of maps which depict a real place, such as in *Kim*. The second group is of fantasy maps which have no basis in reality and are the creation of the author and cartographer, such as the maps of *A Wizard of Earthsea*. The third group combines both real and fantasy, when the map shows an area which is real, but has been altered to fit the plot, as in Arthur Ransome's *Swallows and Amazons*.

The first map that I shall examine in detail is the frontispiece to *Kim* by Rudyard Kipling. This is a factual, accurate map of Northwest India, during the period of British rule in which the book is set. The map is an important aid to reader understanding, since the modern map of India

is very different since the partition of India in 1947. The child of 1901, when the book was published would already have been familiar with the map of Empire India. The contemporary child needs the map to fully understand the text. No cartographer is acknowledged, merely a company name, Emery Walker Ltd, suggesting, perhaps that this was a commercial ordinance survey map, rather than a commissioned work. This map utilizes professional cartographic techniques, with land height above water indicated by shading, and borders, rivers and roads indicated by line variations. It is the only map in my collection to have the latitude and longitude marked on it, which shows the area that the map covers, a far larger area than any of the other maps. The map has no artistic flourishes, and the key states that the map is measured in "English miles" which fits the nationalistic tone of the book.

The other factual map, by Mr. or Ms. Mann, is in Rosemary Sutcliff's *The Eagle of the Ninth* and is similar in style to Emery Walker Ltd's map. It is an historical map, with Roman place names and their modern variations, for reader reference. One of the most immediately striking things about this map is its frame. It is very tightly framed, with northern Scotland actually touching the border. This gives a regimented, almost claustrophobic feel, which is exacerbated by the small squashed key in the right hand corner. Even though the map depicts Roman Britain, the coastal outline is of present day Britain and Ireland. This is an anachronism but a necessary one so that the map is recognizable to the child reader. The map is the second illustration of the text, positioned after a drawing of the book's hero, Marcus. This is to show that humans are more important than geography in this book, and indeed the text does concentrate on Marcus and his adventures rather than on the geography of Roman Britain.

The imaginary maps of *Treasure Island* and *A Wizard of Earthsea* are very different in style to the "real" maps. They have a great deal more character and individual artistic expression and a looser, less formal style. The map of *Treasure Island* is distinctly nautical, as befits the book. Much of the detail has, unfortunately, been lost in the transition to paperback, and the handwriting has become very difficult to read due to the size reduction. The map purports to be of the treasure island of the book's title, the discovery of which begins the action of the book. The map in print helps to convince the reader of the reality of the tale, and the map's proximity to the beginning of the text indicates its importance to the story. It is an unframed map and its limitlessness is increased by the absence of longitude and latitude, which, the map states, Jim Hawkins removed. The map is drawn in the cartographic style of the 1750s, with mountains and trees drawn as if viewed obliquely, whereas the rest of the map is viewed as if from above. The nautical devices of the elaborate compass, ships, beach lines and leading light lines, are all echoed in the map of *Swallows and Amazons* where the erstwhile explorers attempted to replicate an old nautical map. One slight mistake is that the three sets of writing at the base of the map are supposed to be by different people, written at different times, but the handwriting is identical in them all.

The map of *A Wizard of Earthsea* is of the islands of the Archipelago, literally depicting the "earth" and "sea" of the title. It is a reference point for all four books of the Quartet and depicts some islands that are never mentioned in the text, which evokes the feeling of a whole world, not just a created entity. The map is frameless, indicating the freedom of Earthsea and the possibility of further unmapped lands. The figure to the left of the compass is possibly a depiction of Ged, who was certainly a person who has the freedom to roam the islands. It could reflect his importance to Earthsea, as the Archipelago's greatest magician and savior of the known world in the third book of the series. It is certainly a male figure in Earthsea travelling dress, and his prominent position the map is a reflection of the male dominance in the world of Earthsea, which is one of the subjects of *Tehanu*, the last book of the Quartet. The Ged figure is in opposition to the wind, which symbolizes man's battle against the elements and the Earthsea attempt to subdue the natural forces by magic. The only incongruous note is in the scale, which is in miles rather than an Earthsean measure.

My final two maps are combination maps, the frontispiece map by E. H. Shepard in Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows* and Steven Spurrier's map in Arthur Ransome's *Swallows and Amazons*. E. H. Shepard was, of course, the illustrator as well as the cartographer of *The Wind in the Willows* and the map is in the same artistic style as the rest of the illustrations, and is the most picture-like of all the maps. This map is the frontispiece of the 1954 Reprint Society Edition, but it is not included in several other editions. As the text also has additional

illustrations, it could be that the map and extra illustrations were originally excluded but put in later editions when Shepard's illustrations came to be considered as an integral part of the text.

The map is a view of the River Thames, which Grahame knew well but which he altered a little for literary purposes. The river is the focus of the map as it is of the book, with all the action set around it. The map is in green ink which is a reflection of the verdant countryside of the Thames area. This is the only map with movement and character figures in it. The river and canal are flowing while Toad languishes on the lawn, Rat punts up the river and Badger surveys the scene. The map covers a small area, the confines of the book, and is only framed by the limits of the characters experiences. Significantly, the Sea Rat is leaving and has nearly passed off the map. The view is across the scene rather than looking down from above, and the character figures are larger than the correct scale, as they often are in the illustrations.

Steven Spurrier's map in *Swallows and Amazons* is skillful amalgamation of the two lakes in the Lake District that Arthur Ransome had combined for the setting of the book. All the other illustrations in the book are by Ransome, although he only began to illustrate the series with *Peter Duck*, the third book, and then worked backwards to add illustrations to *Swallow and Amazons* and *Swallowdale*. The map is nautical in tone and the lake is the focus, with the children's place names, such as "Rio" and "Wild Cat Island", being used throughout. The map shows the area that the children explore during the book, with the limitations being marked "Unexpected" and "Arctic" and "Antarctic". The map is in line drawing with green and blue decoration, which is lost in reproduction. The important places on the map, the friendly native settlements and savages, are drawn on a larger scale and from an oblique angle. The map has a small frame and it entirely fills the double spread on the inside of the cover.

The maps that I have commented on are just a small selection chosen from among my books. There is scope for a great deal more study in this area, on a far wider range of maps from several countries. Through these observations about maps, I hope that I have shown that maps are an interesting branch of illustration and worthy of more critical attention.

Bibliography

Kim by Rudyard Kipling, MacMillan and Co. Ltd, London, 1942. Cartographer - Emery Walker Ltd.

The Eagle of the Ninth by Rosemary Sutcliff, Puffin Books, Harmondsworth, 1984. Cartographer - Mann.

A Wizard of Earthsea by Ursula Le Guin, Puffin Books, Harmondsworth, 1984. Cartographer - Ruth Robbins.

The Wind in the Willows by Kenneth Grahame, The Reprint Society, London, 1954. Cartographer - E. H. Shepard.

Swallows and Amazons by Arthur Ransome, Jonathan Cape, London, 1953. Cartographer - Steven Spurrier.



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)



NOTICE

REPRODUCTION BASIS



This document is covered by a signed "Reproduction Release (Blanket)" form (on file within the ERIC system), encompassing all or classes of documents from its source organization and, therefore, does not require a "Specific Document" Release form.



This document is Federally-funded, or carries its own permission to reproduce, or is otherwise in the public domain and, therefore, may be reproduced by ERIC without a signed Reproduction Release form (either "Specific Document" or "Blanket").