The University of South Australia

David Homer

Maps, Writing and Autobiography: Explorations in Ransomania

In what follows I have juxtaposed four pieces of autobiographical work which are given coherence, if at all, by the recurring themes of maps/mapping and exploration/naming. None of them is complete or therefore conclusive; they are work in progress directed at accounting for a life, but at a stage where many gaps remain, and many links are missing. To give just one example, there is allusion to my Primary schooling, but nothing about the two extraordinary teachers who provided it and are probably more responsible than Arthur Ransome's novels for the life's direction.

Maps and Teaching

Maps are not just maps. As Richard Phillips puts it

> Maps, naturalized as facts, are received with trust…Maps construct taken-for-granted worlds in which geographies and identities are naturalized. They seem to provide firm ground on which to stand, a sense of security for those who like to know where they are. But maps are more ambivalent than this, more open. Like other texts, their meanings are neither fixed nor singular. They can be slippery. (Phillips 1999: 71)

Very slippery. I am reminded of this every year in a course that I teach called *Writing and Text Workshop*, a re-orientation of Rob Pope's *Textual Intervention* (Pope 1996) towards creative writing. In one of the activities, groups of students are allocated maps - large maps, of islands like those in Kiribati, Tonga, Fiji, which are *terra incognito* to them. They are asked to talk about them as texts, beginning as follows

- *The map is put in front of you; you see it for the first time. How do you feel? What is your first impression of the map and the place it depicts? (* represents points of discussion from which writing might result).
- How big is the area covered by the map? Some simple Mathematics is required. How far from top to bottom? Side to side? Roughly how would the area and distances equate to areas and distances around Adelaide?

and continuing as set out in Appendix A, through a series of steps which engage them with the vegetation, climate, topography, economic activity and from this the naming of the area depicted, and the principles which appear to have guided it. They have to imagine themselves into the map/place ('if you were standing at X, facing east, what would you see?' etc), and questions are put to them about which bits of the interpretation they can be sure of, which are guesses, and why this seeming binary exists. It's not really a binary since guesses can be educated or not; facts can be wrong.

Although the maps contain enough information (scale, co-ordinates, explanation of symbols and colours and so on) to answer the questions, what the students see is not really a map. It is a picture, and once it is a picture it is on the way to being a story. Within the classroom, indeed within each of the students' heads, is suddenly a boxful of tales, characters, beasts and birds, exotic vegetation, extraordinary topographic features. None of these readings are 'true' to the map, even when they are grappling with the more factual discussion of, say, distance which (in theory at least) can be worked out from the scale bar. This is not (really) a critique of the geographical shortcomings of current school curriculum. As anyone knows, who as a traveller has tried to find their way around with *London A-Z*, a *Fodor's* or a *Lonely Planet Guide* to anywhere, let alone a Gregory's or Melway's to unfrequented parts of their own city, maps

only work in interaction, in reading, and in this lies their slipperiness. Trust in maps can be dangerous.

This general activity is followed by one which is specifically directed at the class's discussion of *Robinson Crusoe*, preparatory to developing texts by intervention in Defoe's text, work which raises issues central to postcolonial interpretations of literature. I first came across the basics of this method when I read the chapter 'Ilonds and Chapbooks' in H. Caldwell Cook's *The Play Way* (Cook 1917); the activity begins like this.

- Each group will be provided with a piece of paper and a set of felt pens. This activity involves creating your own island as a map, and eventually showing it to the class and talking about the kind of place it is. Talk among yourselves about the kind of place you want to create, before you start - but don't talk for too long. Work most of it out as you go along.
- Draw the outline/coastline of your island. Decide how big it is and put in a scale bar to remind you how far it is between the places and features that you are going to put on it.

The rest of the instructions are included in Appendix B, and as can be seen reflect the points raised in the first set of discussion points about 'real maps', leading to the link with *Robinson Crusoe*.

- Look at your map and run through the discussion points to Activity 1 in relation to your fictional place. Use this as a basis for discussion of the following.

  1. What is the relation between setting in a story and the way it is told and plotted?

  2. What do these exercises show about the appeal of islands as settings for particular kinds of stories (and what are these stories)? Name examples.

  3. Can you map Robinson Crusoe's island? What do you need to know that Crusoe doesn't tell you? Why doesn't he tell you?

As an English and later a Writing teacher, maps have always been a major and natural part of my pedagogical kit. Wherever possible I have encouraged students to map settings in novels and to view maps which 'come with the book' - Earthsea, Narnia, Middle Earth, Wessex - as integral parts of the text. One of my most treasured memories is of following the action of William Mayne's *Earthfasts* with a class of Year 9 students using the Ordnance Survey map of Swaledale and Arkengarthdale, prior to visiting the area, and actually walking it, finding that the places from the novel are not only also on the map, but 'there' in the Yorkshire Dales. There is an experiential triangle, the points of which are reading/writing, place and map, an idea with rich potential for teaching writing, and since this is about teaching autobiographical writing a couple more examples are appropriate.

I find it useful to use both published and students' sketch maps (often in conjunction with photographs) as part of the planning and drafting process. With autobiographical accounts of childhood, a good way to start is to ask for a plan of a schoolroom to be sketched, followed by one of the school and grounds, then perhaps the immediate surrounds, the walk or drive to school. The same might be done with a house or other significant building. In suburban settings it is interesting to do this as part of a 'then and now' study. This 'gives' you content at one level, helping you to remember before you decide what you are going to write about it. And of course 'real' settings are often used for *fictional* tales, often after they have been tampered with.

A variation, which I use in the course *Writing the City*, an experiential, fieldwork course, uses a detailed map of the Adelaide CBD (see Homer 2001; Homer 2004). Much of my writing teaching has taken place under such circumstances - in mangrove swamps, bushland and mountains, out of the way places, beaches, clifftops, shopping malls, zoos. Maps are an essential part of it. In *Writing the City* the *very first* thing that students do is a piece in which they 'write themselves here', and later in the day they plan, walk and write about a journey through part of the city.

They are asked to identify two points on the map of the city and to mark in a route between them. They then walk the route, noting as they go such things as street, place and business names, other signs, general impressions of people, individuals, 'zones' they pass through, sensory impressions including snatches of conversation, spruikers' words, etc. In particular they are asked to bear in mind the naming of the route and changes in direction. This takes about three quarters of an hour.

On return to class they write (a first draft of) their journey and share it in workshop mode. Discussion follows about such matters as whether their writing is about them or Adelaide, in what proportions, the notion of versions of cities, and what they have included and left out. In general this is a good introduction to 'writing space' and participants are also asked to consider what their account might be used for, when included in a longer piece (establishing atmosphere, introducing character, establishing 'the typical' or 'the unusual' in autobiography, driving a plot, etc).The course reader includes a section of Defoe's *A Journal of the Plague Year* (which uses street and place names as images), the opening of *Mrs Dalloway*, 'Two Gallants' from *Dubliners*, and a chapter from Barbara Hanrahan's *Where the Queens All Strayed* set in Rundle Street (now Mall), all of which show individuals *moving through familiar space*, mapping it.

In a recent article, Piia Posti writes about *cartographic literature*, citing among its characteristics the fact that 'writers since the rise of the novel have infused their writing with maps' (Posti 2000: 184). Swift, Borges, Conrad and Tolkien are examples. Maps, of course, are an aspect of realism which in turn is one of the defining tropes of the novel. Posti's article discusses work by J.B. Harley and Graham Huggan indicating converging directions of critique used for both cartography and cartographic literature, and suggests 'instead of approaching maps *in* fiction why not initiate a reading of maps *as* fiction and fiction as cartography?' (Posti 2000: 184). My own teaching and writing, exemplified in these teaching activities and the autobiographical writing that follows, embody a closely related principle. The author whose work is at the centre of what is to follow, Arthur Ransome, wrote novels saturated with cartography.

Schooling

What I seem to have written so far is part of what might be called a pedagogical or hermeneutic autobiography, a tracking of one of my most personal modes of teaching and learning. This probably has its roots in my primary education at a small village school in the north of England during the forties and early fifties, in which maps played a central role. There were those big roll-up maps of the Holy Land, The World, The British Isles, printed on oil cloth, so shiny in some lights that you couldn't see what was on them. Then there were the ones we traced into our Geography and History books showing the fishing ports of Britain (now a sad chronicle of empty docks and vanishing quotas) or the location of long-past battles, Bosworth, Culloden, Marston Moor, the stories of which and their significant personalities made up the history of the realm. And there were the maps in books, of which the greatest and most exciting was *Treasure Island*. The important thing about all these maps was the fact that they served as pictures, and accompaniments to stories. Map *making* as part of Geography came later, at secondary school and university.

My primary schooling was thus rich in narrative and immensely visual. Much of it moved around inside a triangle, the points of which were place, reading and writing, whatever school subject you were talking about. This constituted a way of interdisciplinary thinking and planning. It was a mindset that prepared me perfectly for the novels of Arthur Ransome which I first met at age nine.

For those who don't know them, Ransome's twelve 'Swallows and Amazons' novels are about a group of children who spend a lot of time away from adult supervision, and use it to have adventures. Sailing is a central activity and the children cast themselves as explorers, while adults and the people who occupy the country in which they are adventuring are 'natives.' Each child has a personality, what we might call a character, and these even develop through the series as they grow older. But more importantly each possesses a set of skills which contributes to the purposes of the projects and expeditions they undertake: for example, prospecting for gold in *Pigeon Post*, reaching the North Pole in *Winter Holiday* or catching two (minor) criminals in *The Big Six*. Seven of the books are set either in The Lake District of Northern England or the Norfolk Broads. Eleven of the twelve involve sailing. The books are classic examples of late colonial adventure writing, though in some ways (for example, the depictions of the female characters) are surprisingly forward looking. They are highly autobiographical.

I was instantly attracted to Ransome's settings as much as the adventures his characters had in them. One of the features of the books is their end-papers and other maps, often drawn in a semi-pictorial style. Most Ransome fans find it hard to separate text, maps and the author's own illustrations when they are discussing the work, so complementary are they. Place, as impetus for action, characterises the work, which Ransome embodies as arrivals in the beginning chapters of most of his novels, as in *The Picts and the Martyrs* (Ransome 1943):

> …for nearly a year they had not been in the north. There were the hills, with patches of purple heather, glowing in the evening sun. There were other boats. A steamer came out of Rio Bay, and shook them with its wash, as it churned past on the way to the head of the lake. There was the distant peak of Kanchenjunga. Somewhere behind the nearer hills to the south of the great peak lay High Topps where they had been prospectors, found copper, and ended by fighting a fell fire. Looking astern over Rio Bay, they could see High Greenland on the skyline. No matter where they looked, there was always something to remind them of the adventures of the past. (Ransome 1943: 21)

This is a fairly typical episode, redolent of Ransome's lifelong love of the English Lake District. The setting can be read as a map, which appears in the endpapers, though no Ransome enthusiast would need to refer to it. The lake on which 'they' are sailing is an amalgam of Windermere and Coniston Water, Rio is Bowness, Kanchenjunga is Coniston Old Man. Each item in the landscape is a reminder of past adventure and a promise of more. Place and specific events are inextricably linked.

I began with Arthur Ransome in my first incursions into autobiography, because it had always puzzled me why, after over fifty years of living happily and successfully in Australia, the desired landscapes in my head are not, and have never been, what you'd call 'typically Australian'. They are not the red desert or tropical rain forest, not 'The Outback', but rather are found in temperate, South Eastern Australia and Tasmania - tidal inlets, mountains and water in close conjunction, and it has to be said, a human occupation (small fishing ports) and framing of these landscapes. They are places 'not far away'. They are manipulable and mappable. Places for play.

I have used Ransome to work autobiographically on this privileging of landscapes. As will emerge, it is a process that has worked imaginatively in both writing and 'reality' at different times of my life. It is part of that kind of 'calling to account' that makes up, even indulges autobiography. The next section (and the accompanying map) is an adaptation of part of an autobiographical piece published in 2002 in *Mixed Moss*, the journal of the Arthur Ransome Society, which deals with my early teenage years, beginning when my family has just arrived in Australia. In the original it is preceded by an account of my introduction to Arthur Ransome's work (reading) and the Lake District (place) which were not at the time one and the same.

The writing shows the triangular mindset of my early education at work. Place is represented by maps, depictions, generalisations, representations which can be 'real' as in Ordnance Survey maps, or fictional. Reading is represented by the series of twelve novels written by Arthur Ransome between 1930 and 1947. Obviously I have been an avid Ransome fan since late childhood but I also have, over the past twenty years, become a serious researcher of his extraordinary life and enormous body of other work. I have visited most of the places 'in' the novels and others connected with his life. Thirdly, writing (autobiography) is here my own work.

Autobiography

> At age twelve I had settled down to being an Arthur Ransome fan in Australia.
>
> What I was settling into was what generations of Australian writers and commentators have unhelpfully called 'the immigrant experience', which Australia being what it is, was actually a whole raft of experiences, of which mine was an English version. Greek, Italian, Irish and German Australians of my own age have shared with me over the years their affinity with and interest in two countries - one of the everyday and one of the mind and mementos which have travelled the great journey with them, like a battered copy of [Ransome's] *Pigeon Post*.
>
> During my lifetime this "experience" has come to include people from almost every country on earth. In my own case, it has to account for the fact that as an Australian I carry in my head a set of ideal landscapes, shaped not by The Red Heart, tropical rain forest or Barrier Reef, but by a few parts of England and Scotland in which I have spent some seven or eight weeks of my adult life, about which an author once wrote some books

for children. These landscapes are most closely matched by mainland Australia in its south eastern corner, and Tasmania. Mountains, lakes and inlets of the sea, islands, bird infested wetlands, tarns, small ports, long beaches.

The England that arrived in 1952 at Port Melbourne in my head and baggage was maybe not Arthur Ransome's altogether, but it certainly looked like it. And it was this "England" that mediated my assimilation as an Australian. Assimilation was what in those days was supposed to happen to immigrants. While it was easier for those of us from the British Isles than elsewhere in Europe, it wasn't necessarily a smooth process for anyone. In a small country town east of Melbourne in the early fifties I quickly learned a new received pronunciation and vocabulary, new versions of fame and prestige, and set about balancing this with a process of rewriting, exploring and renaming of the local topography as Ransome country.

Here sailing boats would have been useless even had they been a possibility. My modes of transport were foot and dromedary, and the activities from the Ransome books that I was most able to replicate in real life were connected with mining and geology (*Pigeon Post* again), ornithology, exploring and mapmaking. All this was logged - which was the beginning of a life as traveller and journal-keeper. The great thing about the twelve books is the immense number of interesting things to do which they suggest, and practical advice on how to do them. Their appeal is that they are invitations to live them out, not only through the stories themselves but the visual aspects, the maps and illustrations. These command as much attention as anything in a Ransome book - they are adventures in themselves.

And so are the books' covers. There has never in the history of books been a set of covers so guaranteed to excite and arouse expectation as the collages which make up the dust jackets of the twelve. Even today I shiver when I see a row of them on a bookshelf, as much as I ever did in the 1950s, when they represented an unknown world, or on finding them in my new school's library, twelve thousand miles further on, a piece of familiar ground. The bright colours and the tantalisingly chosen centrepieces on the spines are supreme moments of imagination - the Ds climbing on to their ice yacht, Captain Flint reaching the end of the plank, Mrs Tyson with her arms raised in horror at the blast furnace ("Put it out, Miss Nancy. Put it out and no more said.").

Having established that the imaginative world of Ransome was still freely available, I set about transforming this new, physical one that I found around me. My family had come to rest at Pakenham, some forty miles east of Melbourne. in what was then a small village (or country town in Australian terms) and is now an outer suburb. Pakenham occupies ground between the main road and railway which run east from Melbourne, skirting the foothills of the Great Dividing Range, or the Dandenong Ranges, as they're called locally. Immediately to the north of the town the country rises steeply into farms and orchards, among a lot of bush. To the south stretches the flat, drained plain of the Koo Wee Rup Swamp with barely a hillock between the town and the shores of Westernport Bay, twenty miles away. Here was a *Secret Water*-land, of mangroves, mudflats and winding creeks, tempting bird-watching country, but not at first accessible on a regular basis. What I had to live with was a Holly Howe in Roger Street, Pakenham, where my bike was only sometimes a dromedary, and where re-naming the landscape took what now seem impossible leaps of the imagination. A narrow, open drain became Goblin Creek and what I called High Greenland peaked at around 400 feet.

As anyone who's been through it knows, immigrant experience is one of careful mediation where you use the familiar when you must, to accommodate the new. At twelve and in my early teens I didn't find Australia difficult - I quickly made friends and with them did Australian things. But at home, and on my own, things were different. England was ever present through books, letters, talk and the many BBC programs on

ABC radio. In 1956 I shouted encouragement to British competitors at the Melbourne Olympics, and I never lost touch with the English football results. The reading was quite often re-reading of the Ransome twelve and it was at this stage that they surreptitiously achieved a pecking order which can today be seen in the relative states of wear of my original set.

I had so much material and confidence that one summer holiday I even began to write my own Swallows and Amazons novel. I seriously doubt whether my plot would have occurred to Ransome himself, but this intervention was at an extreme end of my Australian Swallows and Amazons mindset, and I have subsequently met several people who, in different places around the world, at about the same time, were having a go at a similar project.

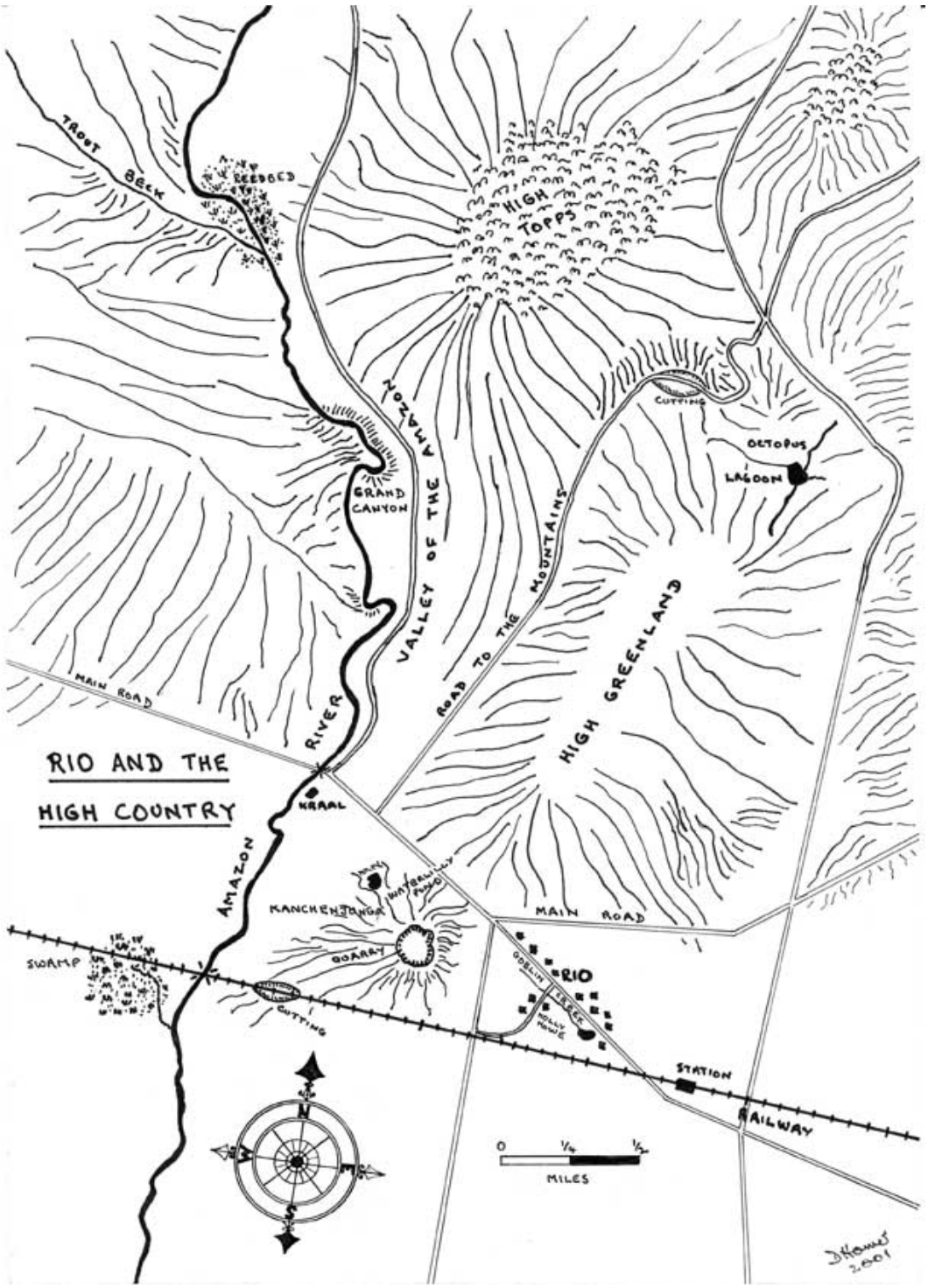
I had embarked on a re-naming of the area where I now lived, in a way determined by what I was using the countryside for. Most of the names I used came from Ransome, but they were not always directly related to activities in the books. My Octopus Lagoon was a favourite bird-watching site in the hills above Pakenham and was actually an artificial, reed-choked pond several acres in extent, formed by a confluence of several farm drainage channels. Kanchenjunga was a hill, not far from Holly Howe, to the slopes of which now cling a suburb and Pakenham High School. It is perhaps 200 feet high, something of a pimple outlier of the main range but it contained an abandoned, flooded quarry which was, when required, redolent of the Lake District books. Nearby was Waterlily Pond, now part of a public park. It was in places like this where I advanced my interest in ornithology and geology, in a process of part-re-enactment. In the 1950s the exploration of Kanchenjunga was not entirely straightforward, as the natives whose land it was on, and whose kraal could be seen from its peak, were decidedly unfriendly. An ancestral grave on its upper slopes marked by a simple headstone was there, according to local legend, so that its occupant could forever guard his lands from interloping mushroomers.

Probably the most authentically Ransome places were along my Amazon River, aka Toomuc Creek. This rises in the foothills of the Dandenongs and flows south towards the former swampland where it is eventually incorporated into the drainage systems dug during the 1930s. But north of the Princes Highway it's a regular river, winding its way through increasingly high hills, through orchard and grazing country and natural forest. There are some wonderful, large reed-beds and at times the creek flows in quite deep gorges. I came to thoroughly know about ten kilometres of the Valley of the Amazon and its surrounding country and produced my own maps of it.

You can learn all you need to know about mapmaking from *Secret Water* and my maps had their own particular look, being based on the semi-pictorial style as in the endpapers of *Pigeon Post* and the one inch to one mile Ordnance Survey maps which I learned to "blow up" to larger scales, using the grid squares as reference. This was a technique that I also used on some of the Ordnance Survey maps of Britain I managed to collect, and I remember making a huge map of Windermere which was about eight feet long. Making these maps was a way of being there. Finally, my exploration was recorded in what was called "The Log of the Swallow", though I couldn't say why this was the "vessel" which I chose. Being my kind of Ransome reader is marked by visual and tactile experiences and learning which spill over as enthusiasms into other parts of your life.

Worlds of the imagination and everyday life are never as separate as accounts like this make them. The everyday has first claim on you, and one small group of all the books you read cannot satisfy your entire imaginative appetite. But the Ransome experience was always there if I cared to look over my shoulder; a mindset that eventually influenced my choice of subjects to study at university, my interests in geology, ornithology and cartography, where I travelled to, how I spent holidays, much of what I chose to read.

The Map



The map is based on the 1:25,000 topographic series sheet 7921-1-1 (Pakenham) published by the Victorian Department of Property and Services. It covers most of the area which I describe as being re-named, over which I ranged in the 1950s. Although I drew it in 2001 to accompany a piece of writing, it is like many I compiled at the time of my first exploration. The roads, railway and Toomuc Creek (aka The Amazon River) are exactly faithful to the official map. The rest is imagined, though features (high/low land, reed-beds, wooded areas) are in pretty much their right places. They however, have been named and rendered pictorially in the style of the maps in the Ransome novels rather than cartographically, and thus have themselves *become* autobiographical. They are autobiographical in a special, private way. While I often travelled this country with other people, even family, on such occasions these names were not mentioned. As an extension of reading they moved directly from the imagination to the page, never shared.

In *About This Life* (Lopez 1998) Barry Lopez describes an incident where he and companions followed a polar bear through pack ice, photographing it, and how on returning to his ship he isolated himself and 'tried to recall every detail of the encounter with the bear.' He found that

'[w]hile the polar bear was doing something, I was checking f-stops and trying to focus from a moving boat (and) sensed I wouldn't pick up a camera again' (Lopez 1998: 233). In *Bad Land* (Raban 1996) Jonathan Raban devotes a chapter to his futile attempts to capture in photographs the ruined farms and towns that once constituted railroad companies' dreams and land sales publicity for Eastern Montana. Both books are superb examples of ethno/autobiography. Mapping (in the sense I am talking about it) is not photography (in the sense they are talking about it) nor yet writing, but it is closer to writing because it is similarly open to the imagination, and equally manipulable, whether before writing, as a means of 'thinking things out', or afterwards, as embellishment or closure.

Many writers have described the ambivalent 'accuracy' of maps. Thus Ralph Citron in *Angels' Town*:

> A map is a representation, an abstraction, "a surface that can be dealt with." It is the product of an exacting rationality, and it furthers the conquest of system-making over the melange of the everyday. It satisfies what the poet Wallace Stevens called "the blessed rage for order". (Citron 1997: 15)

But in the very next paragraph Citron is already describing how the ward map of Angels' Town is beside him as he writes ethnographically about the place (which at the time is 200 miles away). He writes about what he can read from the map - for example, what he makes of the difference in street layout between older and more recent parts of the city - and it quickly becomes clear that this large-scale, detailed map, and his ethnography, absolutely annotate each other, a similar relationship to the one between Ransome's novels, illustrations and maps. It is this relationship that underpins the approaches to teaching writing outlined above where place, and the writer's position in it, becomes every bit as slippery as its map. With photography, as Paul Carter says, you can 'assert a perfect fit between what you saw and the record of it' (Carter 1988: 47). With explorers' maps, the idea is that you can't.

Problems and Shortcomings

Carter bases his article 'Invisible Journeys' on the extraordinary fact that 'in the first fifty years of photography, *not a single [Australian] expedition was photographed*.' Explorers confined their accounts to maps, journals and sketches (Carter 1988: 48). We are talking here of Sturt, Mitchell, Stuart, Burke and Wills! After a fascinating journey of speculation taking in everything from the cumbersome nature of early photographic equipment to the emerging contests between exploration ('geography' as in The Royal Geographic Society), scientific exploration (prospecting, surveying, the diverging natural sciences) and the advent of travel/tourism, Carter concludes that

> photography and exploration were not mutually exclusive modes of seeing and knowing. Rather, photography corresponded to the explorer's backward view and return route - a discovery with profound implications for how we see the country when viewed through photographs or, indeed, when it is seen in terms of the picturesque viewpoints our paths construct for us. For the world of the photograph, like the world of the picturesque, is the world of returning: it is the world that lies invisibly behind on the outward route. To look into a country which is composed photographically is to look into a mirror revealing what lies behind the explorer's shoulder. The strangest place in this looking-glass world is where we stand looking into it but fail to see ourselves mirrored there, glimpsing instead the strangeness of our origins. (Carter 1988: 60)

Arthur Ransome's children's novels are intertextual with the great narratives of colonial exploration and their fictions. Indeed, the author's life was a highly adventurous one both professionally, as a foreign correspondent to major newspapers, and as a yachtsman, fisherman and recreational traveller. Carter's characterisation of nineteenth-century exploration provides a clue to the functional nature of much of Ransome's writing - its preoccupation with the practicalities of 'getting a job done', of achieving physical goals, of planning, but rarely of reflection. Of the way out, not the way home. Ransome's plots move only forward and at the end of each novel the children are anticipating the next action. They are absorbed with sailing and navigation, astronomy, ornithology, geology, and about enacting and writing adventure and romance stories. But in a strange way they are not interested in people, beyond the core group, the explorers and occasionally those who serve their fantasies. Emotion is directed to landscape, entering but not leaving it, as Carter describes.

I find it interesting that in the same way my attempt to understand my own feelings about landscape through autobiography has so far largely left out people. Important though they are, autobiography, indeed any writing, needs more than maps.

Appendix A

- Describe the area shown by the map in words, in terms of its physical features (rivers, mountains, plains etc).
- Add in details of vegetation, climate, agriculture and other human activity, especially settlement. Describe the lifestyle(s) of the inhabitants. Which of these details can you be sure of? How and why? How many have you guessed at? Explain why you have guessed as you did.
- Pick two or three points on the map and imagine you are standing there, looking in a specific direction (specify it). *What can you see, hear, feel, etc?
- *Look at the place naming of the map, and other wording on it (the map is the whole sheet, remember). What clues or information are there about who made the map, why, when, and what it could be used for (maybe several things).
- What kinds of stories do you think are generated best by settings such as the map depicts? *You might try to write one.
- Like all maps, yours has edges beyond which are other lands, seas, towns, forests, lakes, cultures… What is 'next' to yours, and how do you 'know'?
- *Try re-naming the map, or part of it. What does the re-naming do to the map? What difference would the re-naming make to your response to the above discussion points? What are the underlying principles driving the process of re-naming that you carried out? What seem to be the principles underlying the naming which is on the original map? Is there any evidence of a pre-mapping naming of the area? In what ways is this intervention similar to, or different from other textual interventions that you have tried in the course so far?

Appendix B

- Fill in the details of the map, checking with the work from Activity 1 on how this can be done. Remember this is a map (text) of a fictional island so all of the points from Activity 1 need to be attended to, but elements of fantasy or 'untruth' can be accommodated in your construction. Make sure that the naming system is logical, that is it can be accounted for in a way that 'makes sense'. Remember that place names are often clues to its history.
- Is it an inhabited island? If so who lives there? Did they make the map?
- *When your island is becoming well developed, turn your attention to the outline of a story that you could set on the island. This may require the addition, alteration or deletion of features from your original map, e.g. changing names, making mountains higher, or moving them.
- Then go back to the story. Move along in this cyclical way until you have some kind of a resolution to the story, at which stage your map will be 'complete', and you will be ready to tell the story/show the map to the class
- Look at your map and run through the discussion points to Activity 1 in relation to your fictional place. Use this as a basis for discussion of the following (see main text).

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David Homer teaches in the Professional and Creative Communication team at the University of South Australia. His writing and research interests include travel, biography and autobiography, and he has also published extensively on writing and literacy education in Secondary and Tertiary education settings. From 1999 to 2003 he was president of the International Federation for the Teaching of English.

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Editors: Nigel Krauth & Tess Brady
Text@griffith.edu.au