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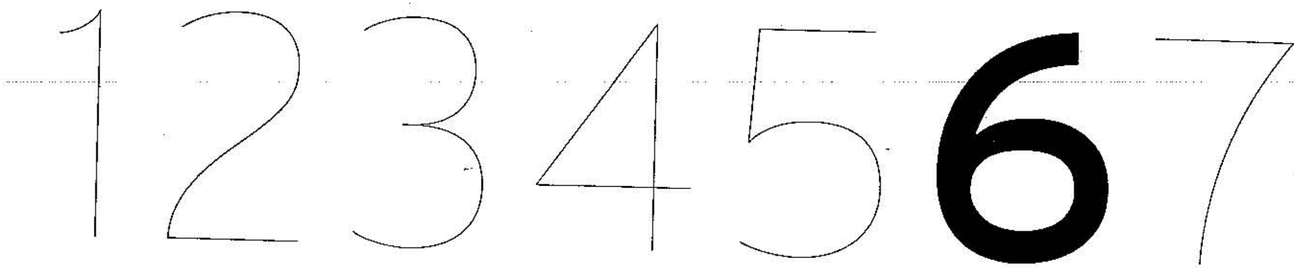



# MAPPING IMAGINARY WORLDS

Ricardo Padrón

Anyone who has read J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* knows very well just how helpful a map can be when we're trying to follow the story line of a travel narrative. The adventures of Tolkien's characters range across a geography just as detailed as it is imaginary, making the maps that accompany each of his volumes an indispensable tool for finding our way through his stories. But this hardly exhausts the interest that Tolkien's imaginary world inspires. At least two atlases have been published providing myriad maps of Tolkien's imaginary universe at all different scales, dedicated to different themes, and charting the course of different events (fig. 145). Their authors combine painstaking attention to Tolkien's writing with considerable technical and artistic skill as mapmakers—as well as hefty doses of imagination—to round out, fill in, and extrapolate from the geographic information provided by the texts themselves (Fonstad 1991; Strachey and Tolkien 1981).

The sheer effort expended in producing these atlases speaks to the intrinsic fascination of such projects. Far from serving merely as reader's aids, maps of imaginary worlds, be they Tolkien's Middle Earth, Dante's Inferno, C. S. Lewis's

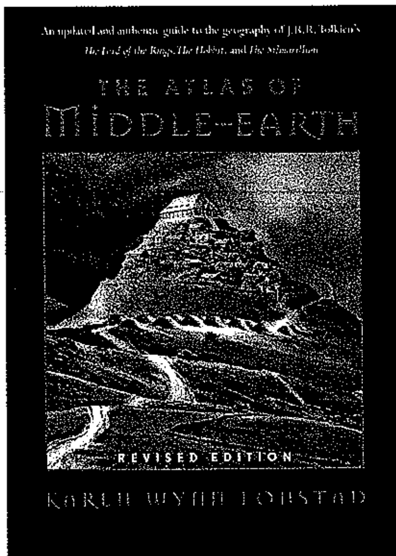



FIGURE 145.
*Edoras*, by Alan Lee; cover of Karen Wynn Fonstad, *The Atlas of Middle Earth* (1991).

Narnia, Frank Baum's Oz, or any other, have value as creative endeavors in their own right. Their appeal is not unlike that of other art forms, whether verbal or plastic. Maps of imaginary worlds delight. They distract. They reveal truths. They whisper secrets. They unsettle. They reassure. Yet, like any artifact of the human imagination, maps of imaginary worlds do all these things in particular ways, and for particular purposes. This chapter explores some of these maps, in the hope of understanding at least some of the possibilities involved in this vast but peculiar branch of mapmaking.

But what makes a world "imaginary"? And what makes a representation of such a world a "map"? When our example is the map of Middle Earth, then these questions have answers so obvious they don't bear repeating; but when we cast our nets more widely, we soon run into problems. As the literary scholar Thomas Pavel reminds us, the fictionality of fictional worlds often lies in the eye of the beholder (1986, 80). Sacred geographies represent the most obvious example. To the believer, maps of the afterlife or of the worlds of the gods are anything but imaginary, while to the nonbeliever, they are anything but real (D'Aulaire and D'Aulaire 2005) (fig. 146). What about maps of lost continents like Lemuria or Atlantis, which are mere myths for most of us, but have at different times by different people been believed to be real?[1] The worlds of many literary works have been subject to similar changes in perception (Pavel 1986, 81). There is a whole genre of literary maps dedicated to tracing the real-world settings of fictional events, or the location of events once thought to have been real but now recognized as fiction (see Hopkins, Buscher, and Library of Congress 1999) (fig. 147). Do these maps count? How about disproportionate maps that tell us how certain people perceive certain spaces (fig. 148), or maps that show how territory would have worked out had some war been won by the losing side (Post 1973, vii)? What about allegorical maps, which render moral lessons or philosophical ideas as territories (see Swaaij and Klare 2000; fig. 149)?

And why limit ourselves to iconographic maps? After all, as Denis Cosgrove reminds us in chapter 2 of this volume, "'World' is a social concept." There is a difference, in other words, between a physical geography, however vast, and a "world," conceived as a structured set of social, political, or cultural affairs, or a more or less systematic collection of ideas. For this reason, many imaginary worlds, from those of ancient mythology to the fanciful creations of contemporary literature, are known to us primarily, if not exclusively, through stories and verbal descriptions. Whether or not these worlds are mappable, the fact remains that very many of them remain unmapped. Sometimes these worlds are explicitly described, as is the case of the labyrinthine library of Jorge Luis Borges. Sometimes these worlds are constructed piecemeal by the story, as in the case of Macondo, the fictional town that serves as the setting for *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, by Gabriel García Márquez. And so it goes with many other fictional worlds that we can identify in the writing of Italo Calvino, Franz

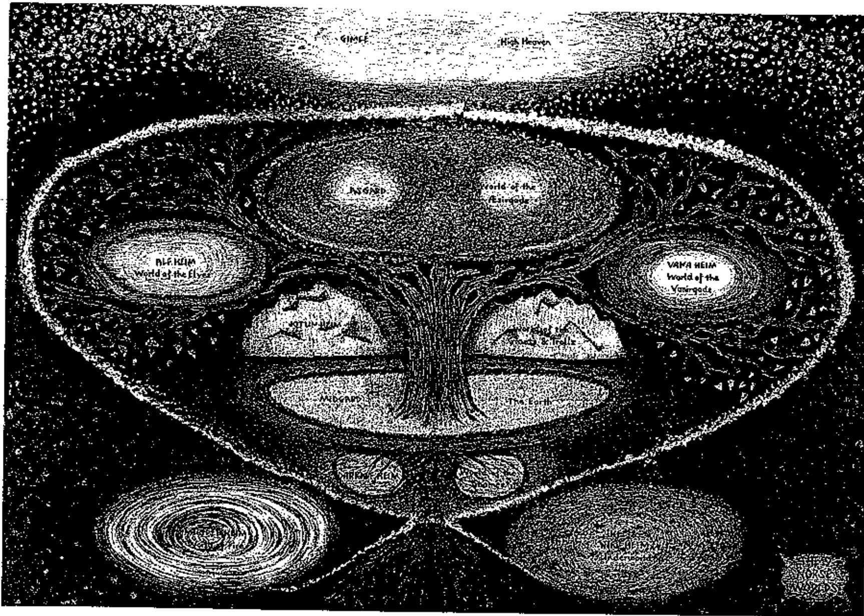
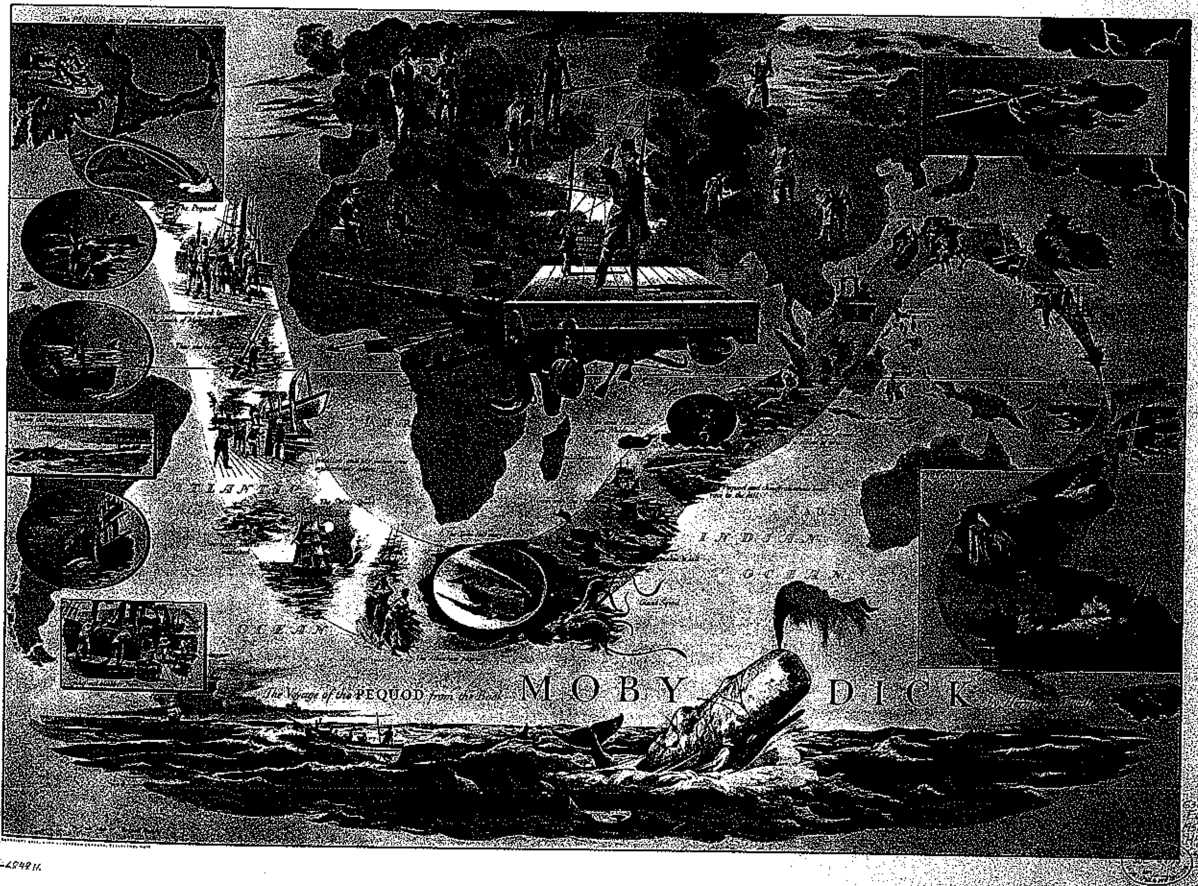



FIGURE 146.
Ingri and Edgar Parin D'Aulaire, "The Nine Norse Worlds" (2005). Copyright © 1967 by Ingri and Edgar Parin D'Aulaire. Copyright © Renewed 1995 by Nils Daulaire and Per Ola d'Aulaire.

FIGURE 147.
Everett Henry, "The Voyage of the *Pequod* from the Book, *Moby Dick*, by Herman Melville" (1956).



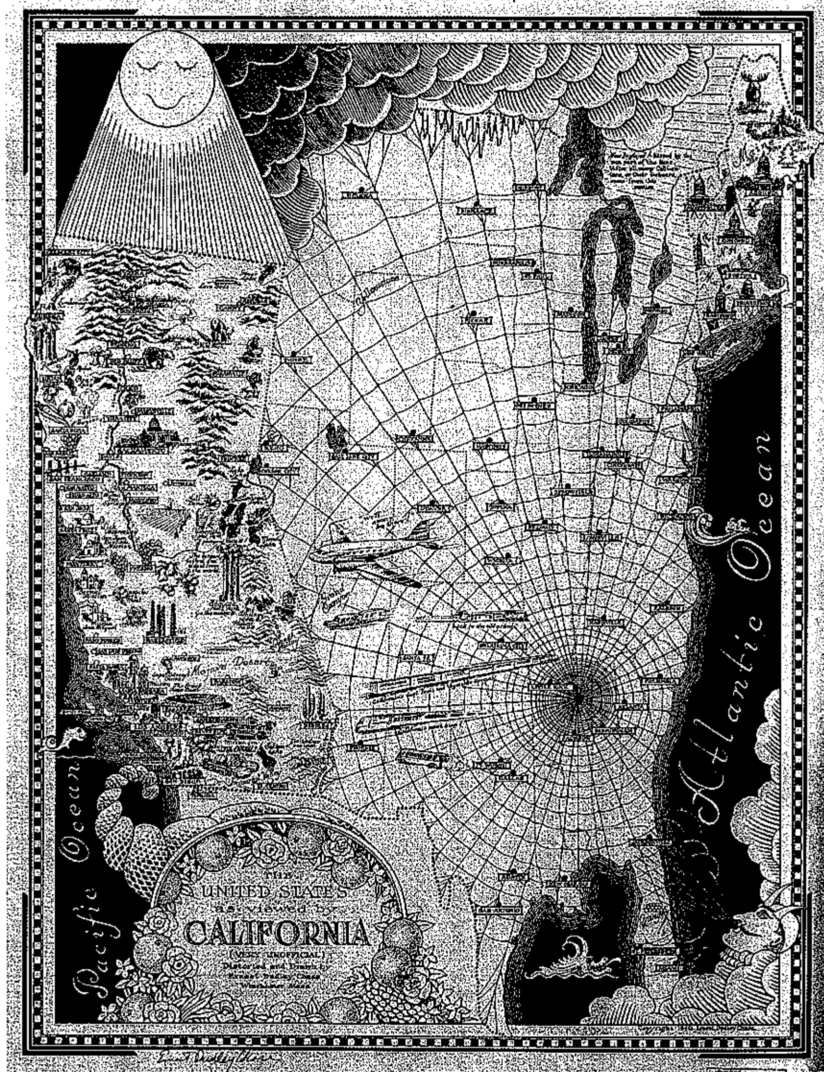



FIGURE 148.
Ernest Dudley Chase, "The United States as Viewed by California (Very Unofficial)" (1940).

Kafka, Margaret Cavendish, Edgar Rice Burroughs, Jules Verne, Jan Amos Komensky, Henri Michaux, Julien Gracq, and so many others: they become real to us in the reading.

Couldn't we say that these texts themselves, therefore, constitute some sort of map, even if they do not come accompanied by illustrations? After all, they allow us to create mental images of the places they describe, even in the absence of actual illustrations. Not only do they allow us to picture places and spaces, but by telling stories that take place in them, or by sculpting characters associated with them, they give those places life and meaning. Indeed, any iconographic map of the worlds imagined by these texts might even miss the

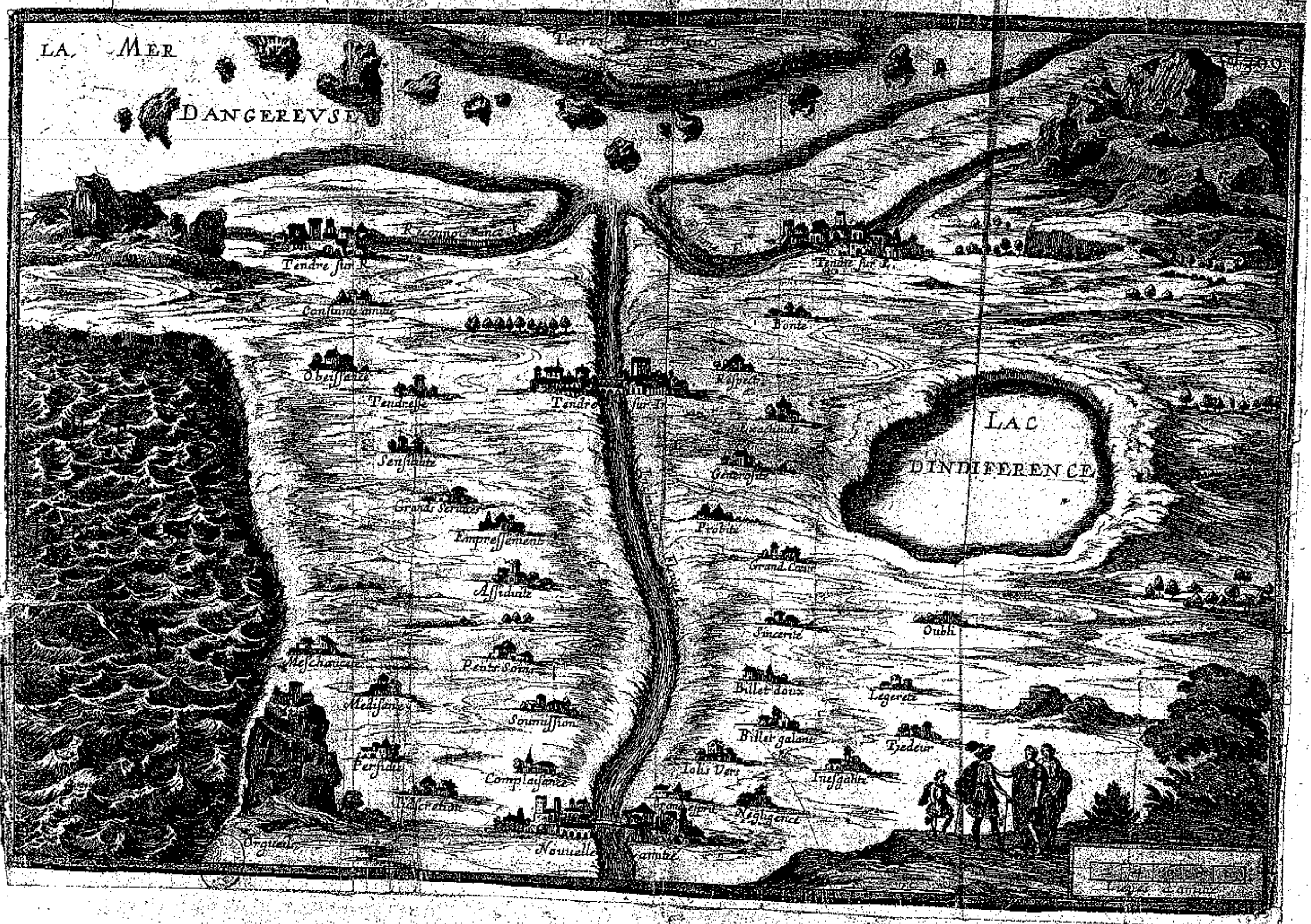



FIGURE 149.
"La Carte du Tendre" (Map of Tenderness). From Madeleine de Scudéry, *Clélie* (1654).

point, by reducing their rich engagement with space and place to the fixity of a cartographic image. It is even possible that the words themselves can be considered a map of sorts, when their arrangement on the page suggests cartographic meanings in the manner of a concrete poem (Conley 1996).

But to cast the net so widely would blow this discussion out of all manageable proportion, and would lose sight of some important distinctions. There is something unique that happens when we take pen in hand and attempt to draw a map of an imaginary world, or when we have the opportunity to explore such a map drawn by someone else. However effective words may be at helping us imagine spaces, at allowing us to enter them and inhabit them, however com-

mon and even powerful verbal mapping may be, words do not have the sam impact, do not provide quite the same experience. That impact has everythin to do with the seductions of *seeing* a world that is not our own. Like all seduc tions, this one offers both pleasures and perils.

And so I will make remarks about verbal worlds only in conjunction with the maps that depict them, and I will limit my discussion primarily to icono graphic maps of imaginary worlds. I will also limit myself to those imaginary worlds that are depicted as some sort of physical geography invented at a particular time by a particular person, a geography that all readers in their right minds understand to be fictional.[2] Furthermore, I will favor those worlds that have some kind of connection with literature and storytelling. To some extent this decision stems from the limitations of my own expertise, but it also represents an attempt to turn that limitation into an opportunity. Maps of imaginary worlds that are linked to literature and storytelling come with a prepackaged point of comparison, the text that they purportedly illustrate. By comparing the map with the text, however generally, I hope to get at some of the things that the maps do. After a voyage through some interesting maps of fictional worlds that will regrettably leave out many fine, charming examples, I will have some things to say about another category of creative maps that I have no choice but to leave out: the maps and mapping practices of the visual arts.

## THE RENAISSANCE GOES TO HELL

We learn something crucial about maps of imaginary worlds by looking at some of the earliest efforts to map one of the most famous literary worlds in Western culture, Dante's Hell. Most people are familiar with the general outline of the *Divine Comedy*, the long narrative poem in which Dante tells the story of an imaginary journey through Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven. Along the way Dante witnesses the fates of dozens of individuals, past and present, general and specific, who count among the damned or the saved. The poem constitutes a rich and complex meditation on the philosophical, theological, moral, and political issues central to Dante's time, and indeed to other times as well. It also maps the afterlife in a very rough manner, by telling the story of the journey through it. Along the way, we encounter a smattering of descriptive passages like this one, from the eleventh of the *Inferno*'s thirty-four cantos:

> "My son, within these rocks," he then began, "are three lesser circles, one below another, like those you are leaving. All are full of accursed spirits; but in order that hereafter the sight alone may suffice you, hear how and why they are impounded. . . . All the first circle is for the violent: but because violence is done to three persons, it is divided and constructed in three rings. To God, to one's self, and to one's neighbor may violence be done." (Dante 1980, 11.16–33)

Virgil addresses Dante as he leads him from one part of Hell to another, and maps out what they will be seeing as they descend to its lowest levels.

During the fifteenth century, a Florentine architect by the name of Antonio Manetti decided that one could gather the information presented in these passages and extrapolate from it to map out precisely the size, shape, and location of Dante's Hell. Manetti's work would not make it into print for some time, but his ideas would be popularized in summary form by others, fueling what John Kleiner (1994, 24) has called "the heyday of infernal cartography," stretching, roughly, from 1450 to 1600.[3] Italian intellectuals, particularly Florentines, debated, questioned, and refined Manetti's "Dantean cosmography," and even converted his argument to maps that accompanied their own editions of Dante's poem and their commentaries on it.[4] Dantean cosmography became an intellectual fad that attracted the attention of some leading thinkers, including no less a figure than Galileo Galilei (Kleiner 1994, 24–26).

One of the earliest and most important contributions to the cartography of Hell was made by none other than Sandro Botticelli, one of the leading artists of the Italian Renaissance. His detailed and colorful chart of Hell formed part of an ambitious series of illustrations for the *Divine Comedy* that he drew during the 1480s and 1490s at the behest of Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de' Medici, a cousin of Lorenzo the Magnificent (fig. 150).[5] Unlike previous illustrators, who had mapped Hell as a schematic vertical cross section, Botticelli rendered Dante's Hell in three-dimensional space, and populated it with minute figures derived from scenes in the poem itself (Morello 2000, 323). Hell appears as a large funnel tapering down from the top of the parchment page to the bottom-most ninth circle, where we find Satan trapped in eternal ice. In the upper left-hand corner, we can spot the figure of Dante, dressed in a red tunic, as well as that of his guide, Virgil, dressed in blue. The two figures then reappear at other places in the chart, marking different encounters between them and the damned. Specific scenes from the *Inferno* can be made out quite clearly. At the upper left, we see Dante and Virgil entering Hell, and approaching the ferry of Charon, the boatman of the Underworld. At the upper right, the city of Limbo houses the virtuous pagans who have died without baptism. Although Botticelli's image never made it into print during the Renaissance, other maps of Hell, like the one printed in Venice in 1515 (fig. 151), clearly follow the model he established (Morello 2000, 324).

One might well ask why anyone would go to so much trouble. After all, in our own day, this sort of project has been thoroughly discredited. The most influential modern Dante critics insist that there is no coherence to be found in the descriptive passages that punctuate the *Inferno*, that passages like the one cited above have a primarily stylistic purpose, that of enhancing the *Inferno*'s realism.[6] In the *Divine Comedy*, Dante feigns that his story of a journey through Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven is actually the account of a dream vision that he has experienced, and so takes measures to make his story as convincing as pos-

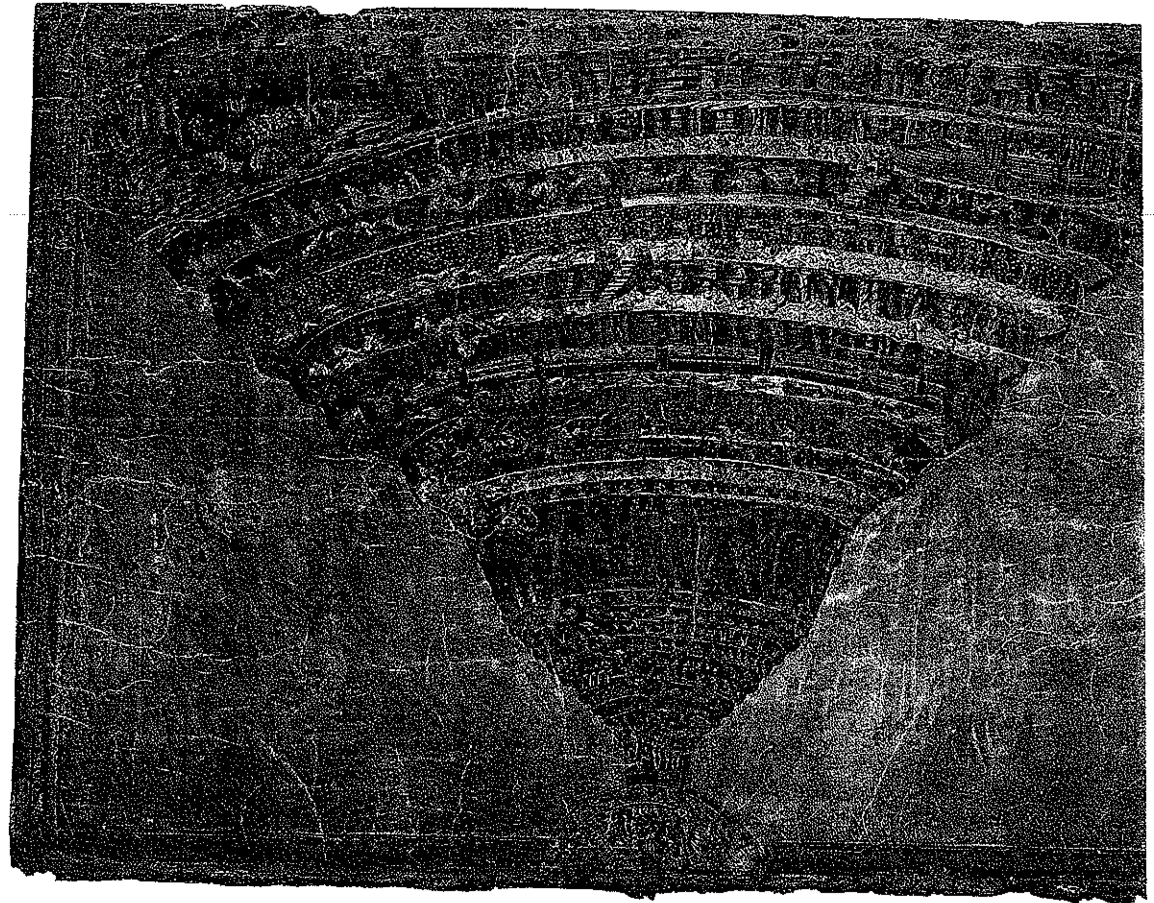


FIGURE 150.
Sandro Botticelli, chart of Hell (ca. 1490). © Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (Vatican) (reg. Lat. 1896 f. 101).

sible. The descriptive passages contribute to the illusion he is tryin
and nothing else. They cannot be made to yield Hell's overall desig
not with the precision sought by the Dantean cosmography of the Re
without making any number of unwarranted assumptions and qu
interpretations. According to these critics, Manetti and the rest d
cover the infernal architecture that underpinned Dante's poem, b
projected onto the poem their own aspirations for it.

In their defense, they were not alone in their attempts to pic
Dante's poetic depiction of the kingdom of the damned is so vivid, s
ling, that it seems to cry out for illustration. Artists as diverse as Jea
Salvador Dalí, Renato Guttuso, Tom Phillips, Robert Rauschenberg
Blake, and Gustave Doré have responded to the challenge with drawin
ings, or engravings (Nassar 1994). Auguste Rodin cast a series of sce
the *Inferno* in bronze in his monumental *Gates of Hell*. Yet there wer
reasons why Renaissance intellectuals may have wanted to map Hel
they did, with greater precision than the poem seems to allow. John

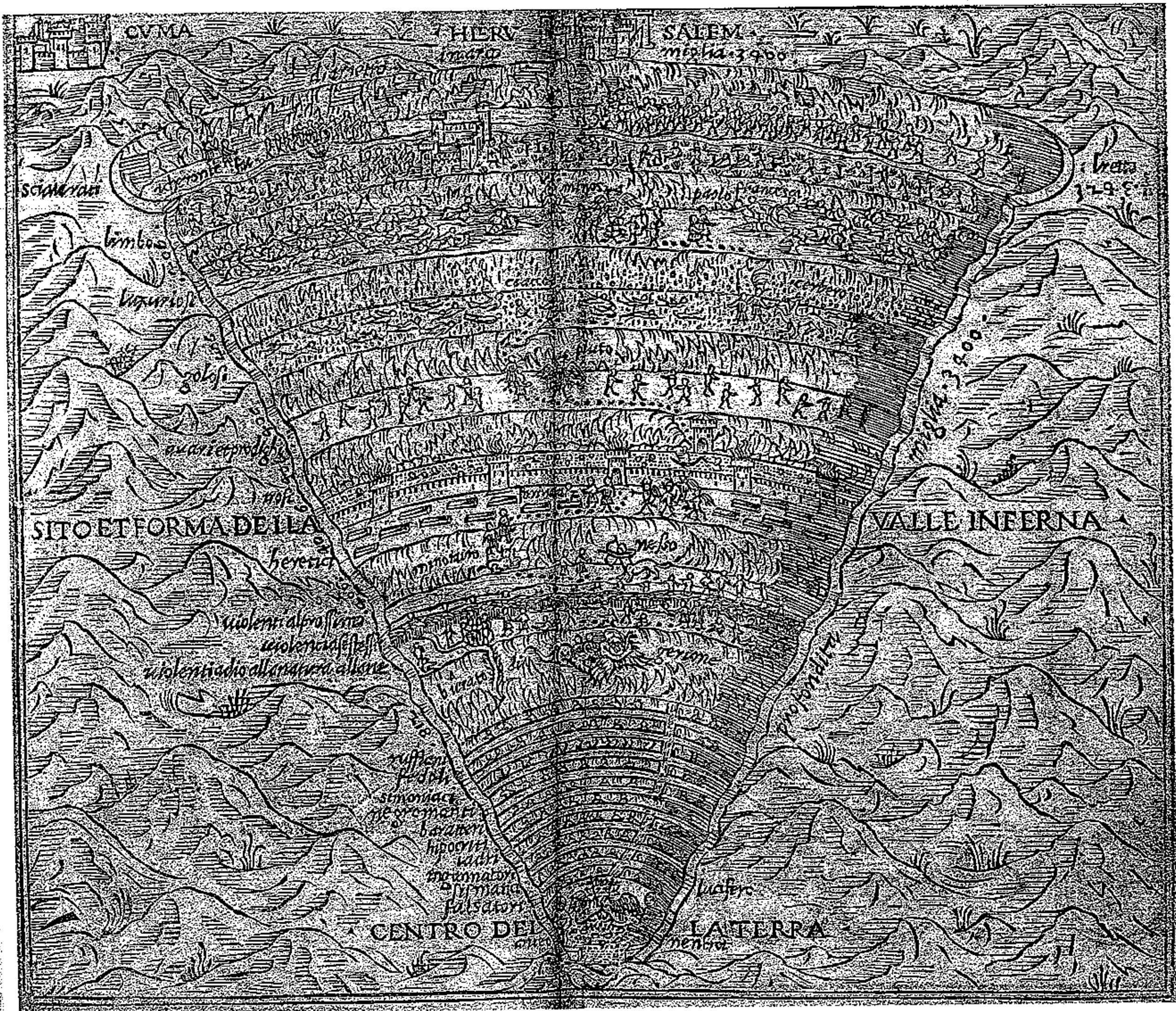



FIGURE 151.
"Sito et forma della valle inferna" (Position and Form of the Valley of Hell) (1515).

points out that much of the work that was done in Dantean cosmography bore the stamp of civic pride, that Florentine intellectuals were eager to reclaim Dante as one of their own. He also reminds us that Renaissance Florence was abuzz with the excitement of the new scientific cartography that issued from the rediscovery of Ptolemy, and that this excitement was itself related to a strong taste for an aesthetics of order and geometric rationality (Kleiner 1994, 26–33). These men who were so committed to mapping Hell, in other words, were trying to find in Dante a mirror of their own modernity. And so when they read the *Inferno* and tried to extrapolate the size, shape, and site of Hell from its meager descriptive details, they found the sort of symmetry and geometric order that shows up not only on all Renaissance maps of Inferno, but on so many

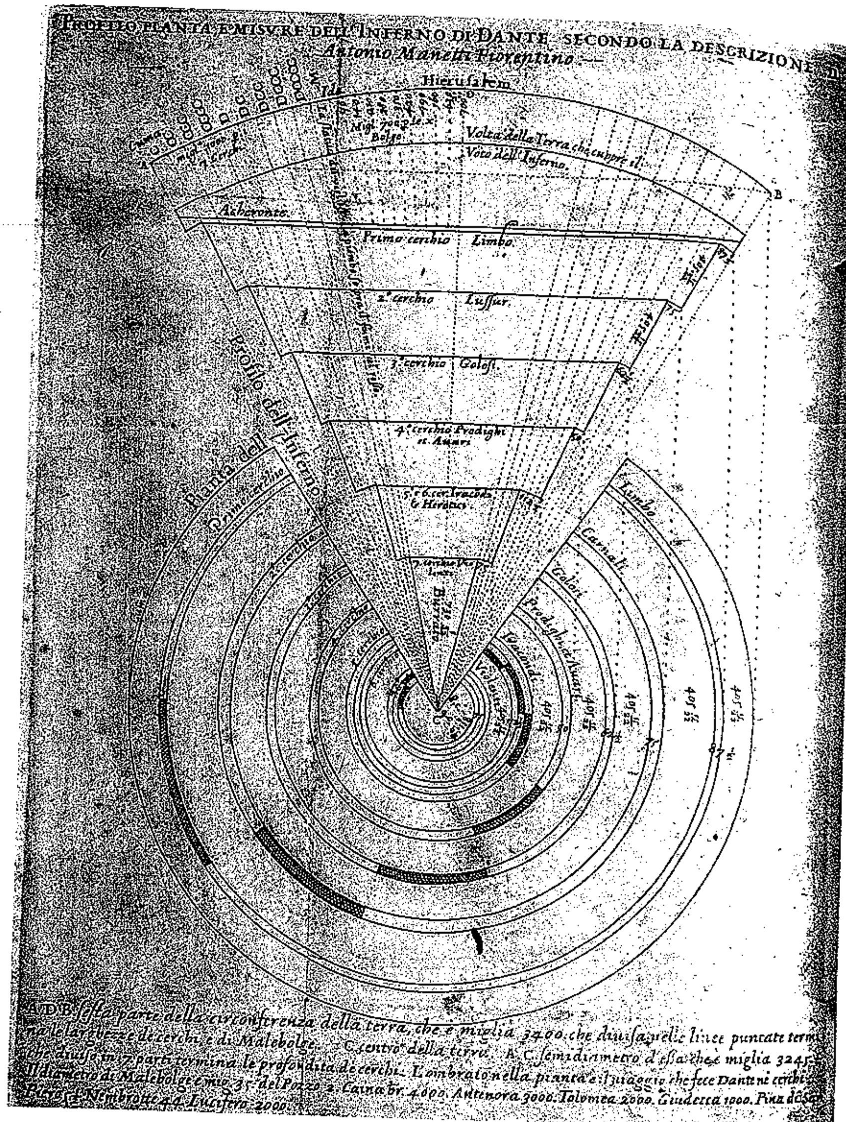


FIGURE 152.
"Profilo, pianta, e misure dell'Inferno" (Profile, Plan, and Dimensions of Hell) (1595).

Renaissance maps of real places (fig. 58). This interest in symmetry and order can be readily seen in Botticelli's map, and even more so in the very abstract and geometric map that accompanied the 1595 edition of Dante prepared by Florence's Crusca Academy (fig. 152). In this way, Renaissance Florence made Dante its own, just as every place and time makes literary classics its own by reading them in the light of its own concerns. It sought and found in the poet's vision of Hell the sort of order and symmetry that it hoped to find in its own world.

What is true of these maps of Hell is true of many maps of imaginary worlds. Rarely do literary texts provide enough of the right kind of detail to al-

low us to map their worlds in conclusive, indisputable ways. Mapping involves interpretation, and interpretation always contains an irreducibly subjective component. Sometimes that interpretation may take unwarranted liberties, particularly when it ignores contradictions among descriptive passages that make the world of the text impossible to map without ignoring certain details. In fact, Dante's *Inferno* may be precisely just such a text. Sometimes mapping these worlds may be beside the point. Literature of all kinds has a great deal to tell us about space and place, but the things it has to communicate are not necessarily of the sort that lends itself to cartographic representation. Mapping involves visibility, stasis, hierarchy, and control. Literature often works to subvert these things. It has us experience space and place in myriad ways that have little to do with mapping it, just as it has us experience time in many ways that cannot be measured by a clock.[7] Yet people make and enjoy these maps. In doing so, they make the text and its world their own, and in doing so may be mapping themselves just as much as anything else.

## ISLANDS AND INSULARITY

One of the reasons that Dante's Hell lends itself toward the sort of speculation I have just discussed is because the *Inferno* clearly suggests that Hell is an orderly, well-bounded space, however vague and contradictory it may be about the details of size, proportion, distance, and location. Spaces of this sort seem like they should be visible, and therefore suggest that they might be mappable. In this way, Hell resembles an island, one of the favorite spaces of the cartographers of the imaginary. An island is clearly bounded and set off from the rest of the world. It has no *terrae incognitae*, no feisty neighbors, no disputable borders, no porous frontiers. Unlike a continent, with its vast spaces, islands can be taken in at a glance, giving us the impression that we can know them completely (Lestringant 1980). Many imaginary islands even come conveniently equipped with a centrally located mountain or hill from which to do so.

Islands are also the perfect setting for an adventure story. Georg Simmel notes that adventures, like islands, are set apart from life and have clear-cut boundaries, that is, clear-cut beginnings and endings (1959, 244–45). Arrival on an island, particularly by ship or shipwreck, is one of the very definitions of embarking upon an adventure. Departure from that island clearly marks the end of the ride. It is no surprise, then, that we can point to any number of adventure stories, including *Robinson Crusoe* (1719–22) and *Treasure Island* (1881), that are set on imaginary islands.

In the case of *Treasure Island*, the island and its map play an illuminating role. In this instance, the map of the island came before the adventure story (fig. 153). Robert Louis Stevenson drew it with his father and stepson, and

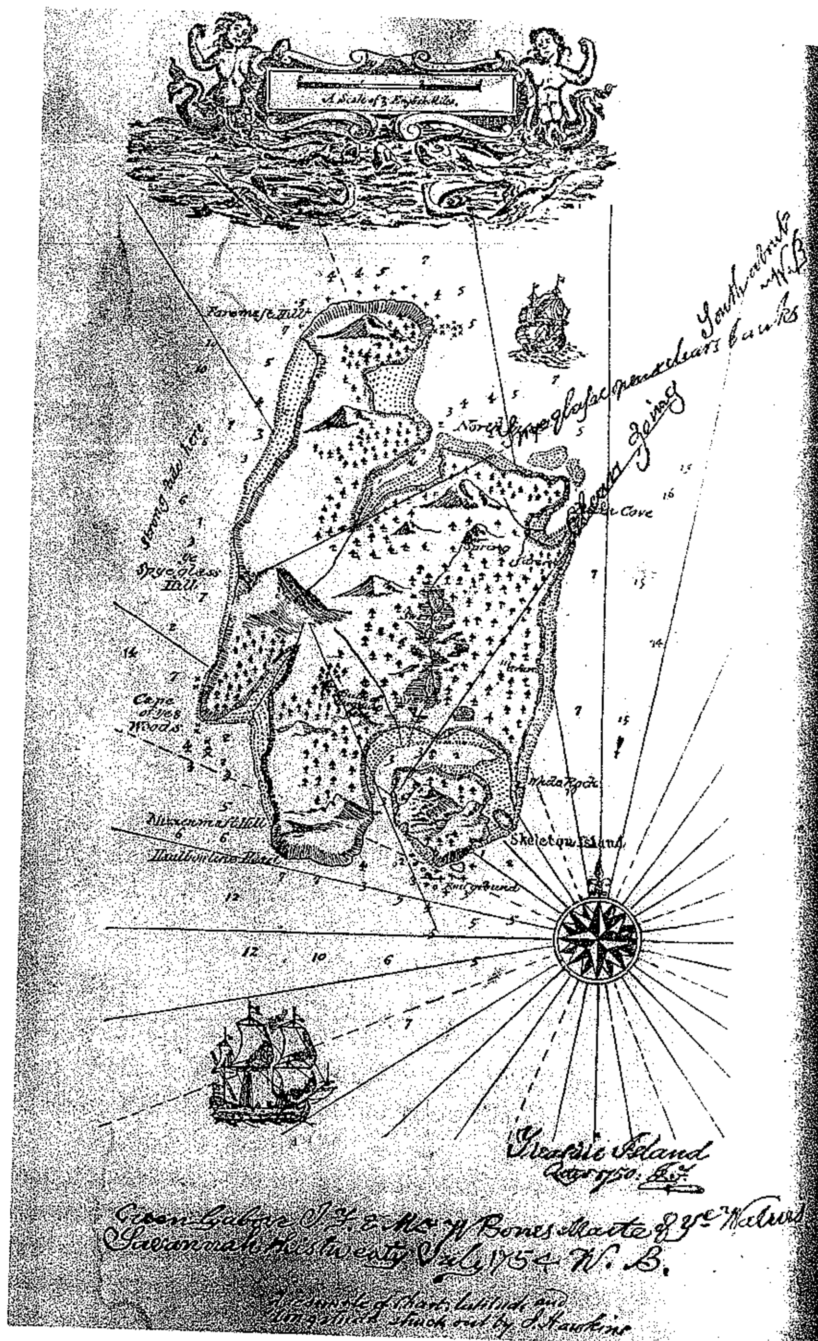



FIGURE 153.
Robert Louis Stevenson, "Treasure Island" (1883).

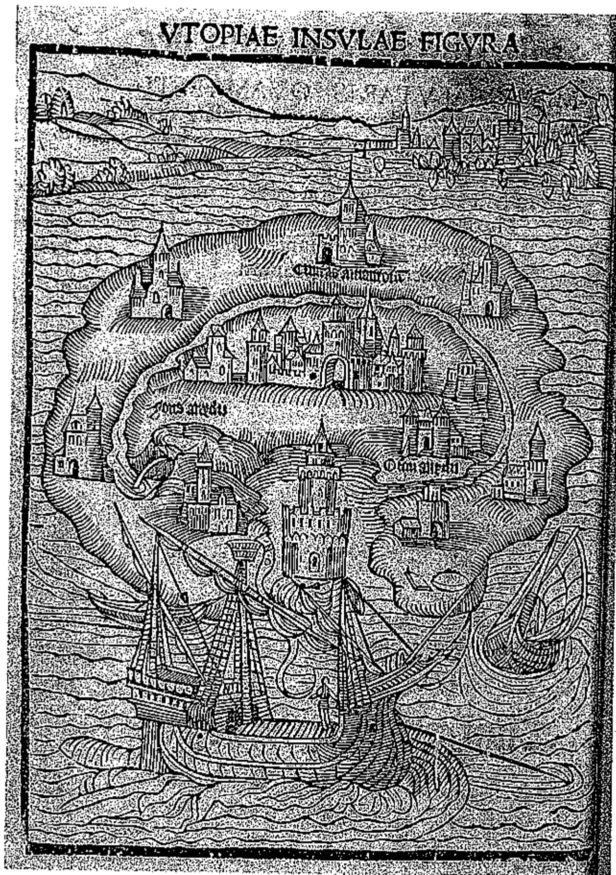
only afterward thought to write a pirate story to go with his treasure map. The combination of the insularity of the island with the possibility of discovering treasure there must have proved irresistibly seductive for Stevenson, as it does for readers of his book and as it has for real-life explorers. We discover the map

with Jim Hawkins, and we have to get to the island, find out what's there, see what happens. The island itself, that perfectly possessable geographic object, displaces the treasure as the reader's object of desire, and the map becomes the symbol that draws us to it. Angus Fletcher even suggests that "the map seduces the reader into an expectant state of unfulfilled desire. . . . One wants to say that in its magically seductive power the map is the most dangerous symbol in the world" (2005, xxxvi).

With their clear geographic distinctiveness, islands are also perfect settings for utopias and dystopias (as are planets, their science-fiction cousins). This has been true since the origins of Western utopian literature in the writings of Sir Thomas More. His *Utopia*, originally written in Latin and entitled *Concerning the Best State of a Commonwealth and the New Island of Utopia*, first appeared in 1516. It packages a program for social and moral reform in a learned and witty literary device. More tells the story of a fictional meeting with a fictional traveler, Raphael Hythloday, who claims to have visited a hitherto undiscovered country on the far side of the globe. During the conversation, Raphael describes this country, Utopia, an ideal state set on an island, in which a wise government keeps its people on the straight and narrow by implementing a sober constitution based on a small number of reasonable principles. The result is a microcosm removed from the tumult of history, blessed with order, peace, prosperity, and virtue (see Schaer, Claeys, and Sargent 2000).

Both the first (1516) and the third (1518) editions of *Utopia* came equipped with maps (figs. 154 and 155). Like the Renaissance maps of Inferno, these renderings take some liberties with the geographic descriptions provided by the text in order to produce a coherent, mappable geography that may not, in the end, be supported by every interpretation (More 1992; Bony 1977; Goodey 1970; McClung 1994). Unlike those Inferno maps, however, the first of these seems to have been authorized by More himself, and the second seems to have been produced, if not with his consent, then at least without his interference (More 1965, 276–77). It thus becomes more difficult to dismiss these maps as external impositions by others seeking to advance a particular critical agenda. But what is their relationship with the text? They so simplify or distort Utopia's geography that they are useless as reader's aids. For this reason, they have been subjected to various symbolic interpretations. Scholars have speculated about the meaning of Utopia's crescent shape; about the way it encloses the central bay as if it were a womb of some kind; about its insularity; about its relative closure to the outside world (Jourde 1991, 110–11; Marin 1984). I add that these maps also extend what *Utopia* has to tell us about the links we make among bounded geographies, mapping, visibility, and knowledge.

More's description of Utopia is shot through with all sorts of ironies. Even its name is built out of an erudite pun with opposites. *Utopia* is a coinage of More's that puns on the Greek *ou-topos*, meaning "no place," and the Greek *eu-topos*, meaning "best place." It is the best place, but it exists nowhere. Uto-



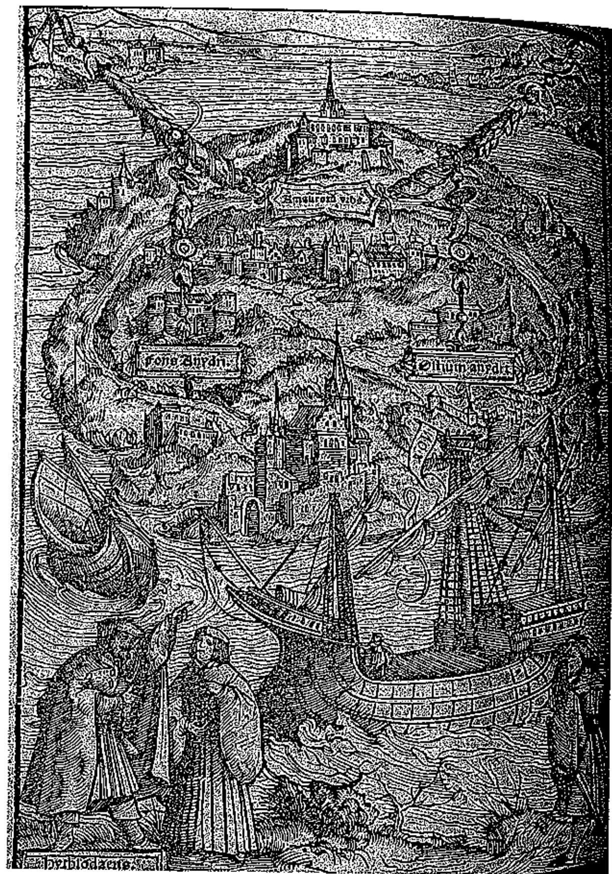



FIGURE 154.
(above, left) "Utopiae insulae figura" (Map of the Island of Utopia) (1516).

FIGURE 155.
(above, right) Ambrosius Holbein, map of Utopia (1518).

pia is presented to us, moreover, in the form of a questionable traveler's tale, drawing on a long tradition of dubious travel accounts describing fantastical places, to be believed only by the gullible. And what is presented to us is a country built upon principles so alien to sixteenth-century European society that it could hardly be reproduced back home without changes so radical as to be unrealizable. For all these reasons, scholars have debated how to understand *Utopia*'s message regarding politics and ethics: whether to interpret it as a literal blueprint, as an impractical ideal, as a yardstick of progress, or something else.

The key to understanding the maps is to recognize that they do not help us understand Utopia or its meaning: they *just* help us visualize it, and in doing so, they play a subtle game with us. It is a game quite common to the sort of playful, literary travel narratives that More draws upon. Even as they describe absurd and fantastical locales, they insist upon their own veracity, and offer different kinds of evidence to "prove" that they are telling us the truth.[8] The map of Utopia can be interpreted as just this sort of "evidence," a real map of an

imaginary place, meant to blur the line between the fictive and the real, meant to play with our credulity when it comes to images.[9]

Our suspicions only intensify when we turn to the map that Ambrosius Holbein prepared for the 1518 edition. Like the 1516 version, Holbein's image follows the general outline of Raphael's description, but it alters some aspects of the composition of its predecessor, and adds some crucial elements of its own (Bony 1977). These include three signs naming Utopia's capital city, and identifying the source and the mouth of its principal river, the Anydrus. The signs hang from a garland that is itself suspended from the frame of the map. In this way, signs and garland contribute to the creation of an illusory third dimension. They hang in the frame through which we look out over Utopia, and even block part of the view. We share the view with three figures in the foreground. One of them, identified as Raphael Hythloday, points at the island while he speaks with one of the other two men. These men, we can presume, are More himself and his companion Peter Giles, Hythloday's interlocutors in the text. The 1518 map, therefore, does not just allow us to picture the island, but to picture the scene in which Raphael describes the island to his friends.

A profound irony immediately leaps out at us. The image has us *see* Raphael *showing* the island to More and Giles, and it makes it possible for us to *see* Utopia along with them. But all of this looking and seeing stands in marked contrast with what is actually happening. Utopia cannot be seen, by us or by anyone else, because it does not exist. Raphael is a dubious fictional traveler who describes Utopia to More and Giles, and we read More's imaginary recreation of this fictional conversation. Utopia, in other words, is an idea that comes to us through a series of narrative filters of questionable reliability. The 1518 map erases these filters, staging an illusion of immediate visual access to the country that Raphael describes. It invites us to forget the mediating role of words, and the possibility that those words might be distorting the message. In this way, ironically, it underscores the caginess of More's text.

That text, the critics tell us, is deeply ironic. It is just as much about the problems involved in knowing the truth and putting it into practice in the here and now as it is about painting an ideal image of a utopian world (Wooden and Wall 1985, after Berger 1965, 40; and Greenblatt 1980, 23). This is the reason why fully half the book is dedicated to a conversation among More, Giles, and Hythloday in which they lament the sorry state of sixteenth-century society (Baker-Smith 1991). This is the part that sets Utopia at a distance that is not just geographic but philosophical as well. It sets it behind the mediating role of representations, and underscores our place in the here and now, where these questionable representations are all we have. It invites us to think about how far we are from the ideal, and about what we could do, if not to make Utopia real, then at least to make our own world better. The maps, therefore, are not just maps of an imaginary island, made available so we can see and know it.

They are emblems of our *desire* to know and possess that island, itself a symbol for the true, the beautiful, and the good, those treasures that so often elude us in real life. Our job as readers is to recognize these maps for what they are: fantasies about not only Utopia, but our quest for knowledge itself.

Something similar happens two hundred years later, in the *Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World* (1726), by the master of English satire, Jonathan Swift. In this early protonovel, better known as *Gulliver's Travels*, the Englishman Gulliver visits a series of imaginary places, all of them set on islands or, in one case, an isolated peninsula. Each island features a distinctive, self-contained culture that serves to satirize some aspect of English or European society, or of the human condition more generally. The original edition of *Gulliver's Travels* included five maps of these countries: Lilliput (fig. 156), Brobdingnag, Laputa, Balnibarbi, and the Land of the Houyhnhnms. Like the maps of Utopia, these work in tandem with the text they illustrate to trigger a critical reflection upon the nature and value of certain kinds of knowledge.

On one level, the object of that reflection is cartography itself, with all its claim to scientific authority. Swift disdained geography and cartography as one of those modern sciences that provided knowledge of the physical world, but added nothing to the moral improvement of human beings (Bracher 1944, 73). In his poetry, he ridiculed it memorably:

> So Geographers in *Afric*-Maps
> With Savage-Pictures fill their gaps;
> And o'er unhabitable Downs
> Place Elephants for want of Towns. (Ibid., 65)

Like the geographers of these lines, Gulliver is keen to fill in the blank spaces on existing maps. He reports that he has shared his geographic discoveries with the geographer Herman Moll, a real person, for incorporation into his world map. But Moll, he tells us, has rebuffed him, and "hath rather chosen to follow other authors" (Swift 2004, 269). This eagerness to round out the map of the world, however, is just an aspect of Gulliver's own foolishness. Swift's protagonist, it has often been said, acquires knowledge but not wisdom: he accumulates information but undergoes no real transformation (Hunter 2003, 224). He has learned where these countries lie, but has not assimilated any of the real lessons they have to teach him. His eagerness to fill in the map, like all cartography, turns out to be nothing but empty pedantry.

One of the ways the satire works is by mapping the islands Gulliver has discovered into real-world spaces traced from a 1719 map of the world by Herman Moll himself (Bracher 1944). Lilliput, we see, lies not too far from Sumatra, while Brobdingnag constitutes a peninsula on the Pacific coast of North America, and so forth. Certain inconsistencies with the text of *Gulliver's Travels* suggest that Swift did not have a hand in producing these maps, but neither

did he come out against their addition to the text by his printer (Bracher 1944, 64). Why would he? As a parody of a real travel narrative, it is only fitting that *Gulliver's Travels* come equipped with parodic maps. Their addition only extends the many ways in which Swift blurs the boundaries between fact and fiction in order to satirize the value his contemporaries attached to certain kinds of writing and knowledge.

But the relationship between the maps and Swift's satire may run deeper than that. Carole Fabricant (1995) points out that one of the fundamental characteristics of *Gulliver's Travels* is its constant transgression of boundaries that should be stable. The text blurs the line not only between fact and fiction, but also between novel and travel narrative, understanding and ignorance, the human and the nonhuman, wisdom and foolishness. In book 4, Gulliver finds himself among the hyper-rational Houyhnhnms and the basely passionate Yahoos, and it is clear that his own humanity constitutes a blend of these two thoroughly distinct and segregated creatures, or lies somewhere in between them. Gulliver, however, never understands how he blends the two, or where he lies in relationship to them. Speaking metaphorically, we can say that the text can map (that is, identify, locate, describe) the reasonable Houyhnhnms and the passionate Yahoos, but not the human being.

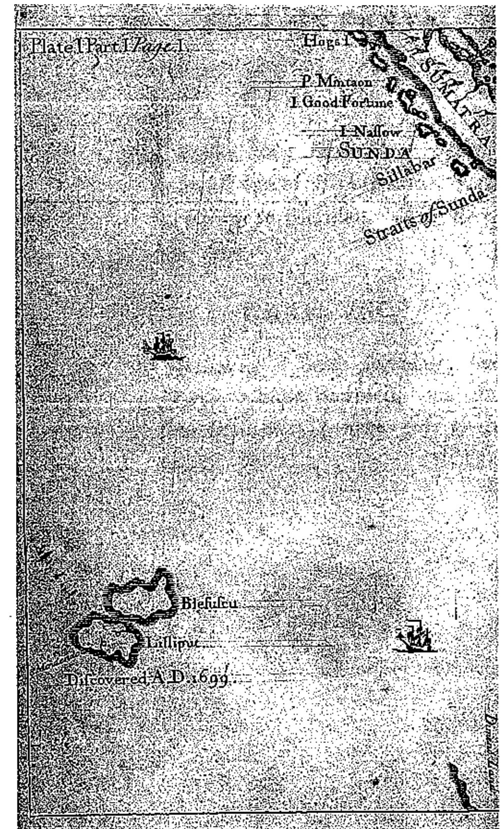



FIGURE 156.
Herman Moll, map of Lilliput (1726).

The maps, therefore, in their enthusiastic attempt to locate these new discoveries, miss the point just as thoroughly as does Gulliver himself. No man, in *Gullliver's Travels*, is an island—but not in the sense that we usually understand this expression. Human nature is contradictory, slippery, difficult to pin down. Unlike an island, the boundaries of the human are difficult to delineate, and its location relative to other beings, difficult to pin down. In this way, it is fundamentally "unmappable." The maps that accompany *Gulliver's Travels*, by contrast, confidently map the islands inhabited by the settled, well-bounded, mappable, and therefore phony cultures that Gulliver discovers. Like the maps of Utopia, the maps of Gulliver's discoveries need to be handled with caution. They masquerade as reader's aids, but should be understood as traps. They invite reverie, but their invitation needs to be resisted. In order to learn their wisdom, we cannot just look at them, we cannot inhabit them imaginatively. We must learn how to interpret them, how to recognize them for the deceits they are.

## FANTASY, FUN, AND FAIRIES

Not so with what are certainly the most famous maps of imaginary worlds of our own day, the ones that accompany twentieth-century works of fantasy and science fiction (Post 1973). These literary genres have roots deep in the past of literary history, and draw on Swift, More, Dante as much as on anything else; but they do not emerge in their modern forms until the mid-nineteenth century (see Mathews 1997; Roberts 2006). According to Richard Mathews, fantasy

as we know it—an adventure story set in an imaginary world constructed from fragments of medieval literature and history, mythology, folk legends, and the like—develops primarily in the English-speaking world as a reaction to both literary and historical trends. It rejects the realism that was then dominant in the novel, and reacts in ways that are sometimes quite conservative and at other times quite radical to the profound changes wracking the Western world at the time, such as industrialization and secularization (Mathews 1997, 16–20). From early on, landscape, geography, and even maps figure prominently in fantasy literature, and through the influence of C. S. Lewis and John Ronald Reuel Tolkien, they become standard fixtures of the genre.

The maps that accompany the fantasy novels of J. R. R. Tolkien are undoubtedly the best known of all, and they are by far the most interesting.[10] Part of their appeal must have to do with the way in which they help to make Middle Earth so palpable. Not only do they help us picture Tolkien's world, but like the map from *Treasure Island*, they allow us to imagine that they themselves constitute artifacts from Middle Earth. This is especially true of Thror's map, which appears as one of the endpapers to *The Hobbit* (1937). The map depicts the Lonely Mountain, where the dragon Smaug guards the treasure that the dwarves in the story want to recover (fig. 157). Like the Marauder's Map in J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (1999), this is a map used by the characters themselves to understand their world and plan their adventures. The narrator in *The Hobbit* even invites the reader to join the characters in doing so. As Gandalf, Bilbo Baggins, and the dwarves decipher the runes on the map, the narrator addresses us directly, in a parenthetical remark: "Look at the map at the beginning of this book, and you will see there the runes in red" (Tolkien 1996a, 19).

The other maps that come bound with *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings* (1954–55), and *The Silmarillion* (1977) are not presented the same way; they are clearly authorial or editorial impositions, rather than feigned documents from the imaginary world itself (fig. 158). But they too work to make Middle Earth palpable, primarily by providing a surfeit of geographic information. All are rich with place-names that figure very slightly in Tolkien's stories. Their presence on the maps invites us to explore. Traveling across the map of Middle Earth, we encounter places like the Mountains of Angmar, or the *terrae incognitae* of Rhûn and Hardwaith. In various ways, Tolkien links these places to his archvillain Sauron, but tells us little about them. Like the young narrator in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899) gazing at the blank spot in the map of Africa, we find these places where the known meets the unknown and wonder what they might contain (Jourde 1991, 127). There, the world created for us by the author recedes into the mists of what Tolkien has left unsaid, allowing us to imagine and speculate.

This invitation to daydream arises not only from the wealth of information on the Tolkien maps, but also from the way in which most of them are drawn

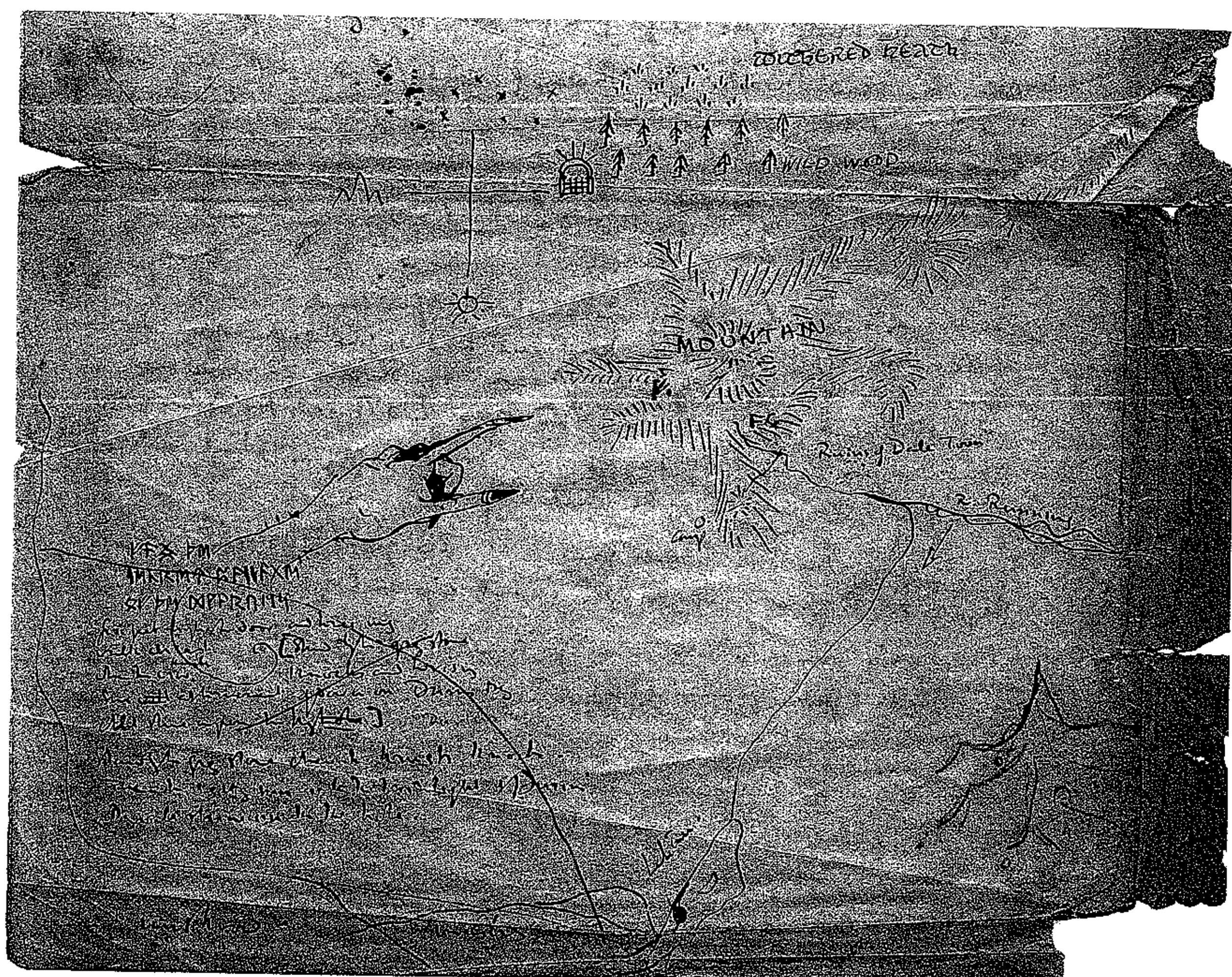



FIGURE 157.

J. R. R. Tolkien, "Thror's map of the Lonely Mountain" (author's manuscript draft, ca. 1935–36). © The J. R. R. Tolkien Copyright Trust 1937.

The relatively large-scale map of the kingdoms of Gondor and Mordor is exceptional in this regard. It depicts the mountain ranges surrounding the kingdoms with modern contour lines. The other maps, by contrast, demonstrate more consistency of style. Although they bear a scale and sport a compass rose, on the whole they resist the abstraction of modern cartography, preferring a deliberate, stylized archaism that echoes Tolkien's writing. Mountains, hills, and forests are depicted iconographically, in profile, rather than with contour lines or abstract symbols. The lettering looks vaguely old-fashioned. We get the impression that these are maps from times long gone by, of a world that has vanished. But we are also drawn into the maps. The places drawn in profile do not allow us to remain aloft, looking down on Middle Earth from that imaginary point of view way on high that maps usually assign to us (see Wood and Fels

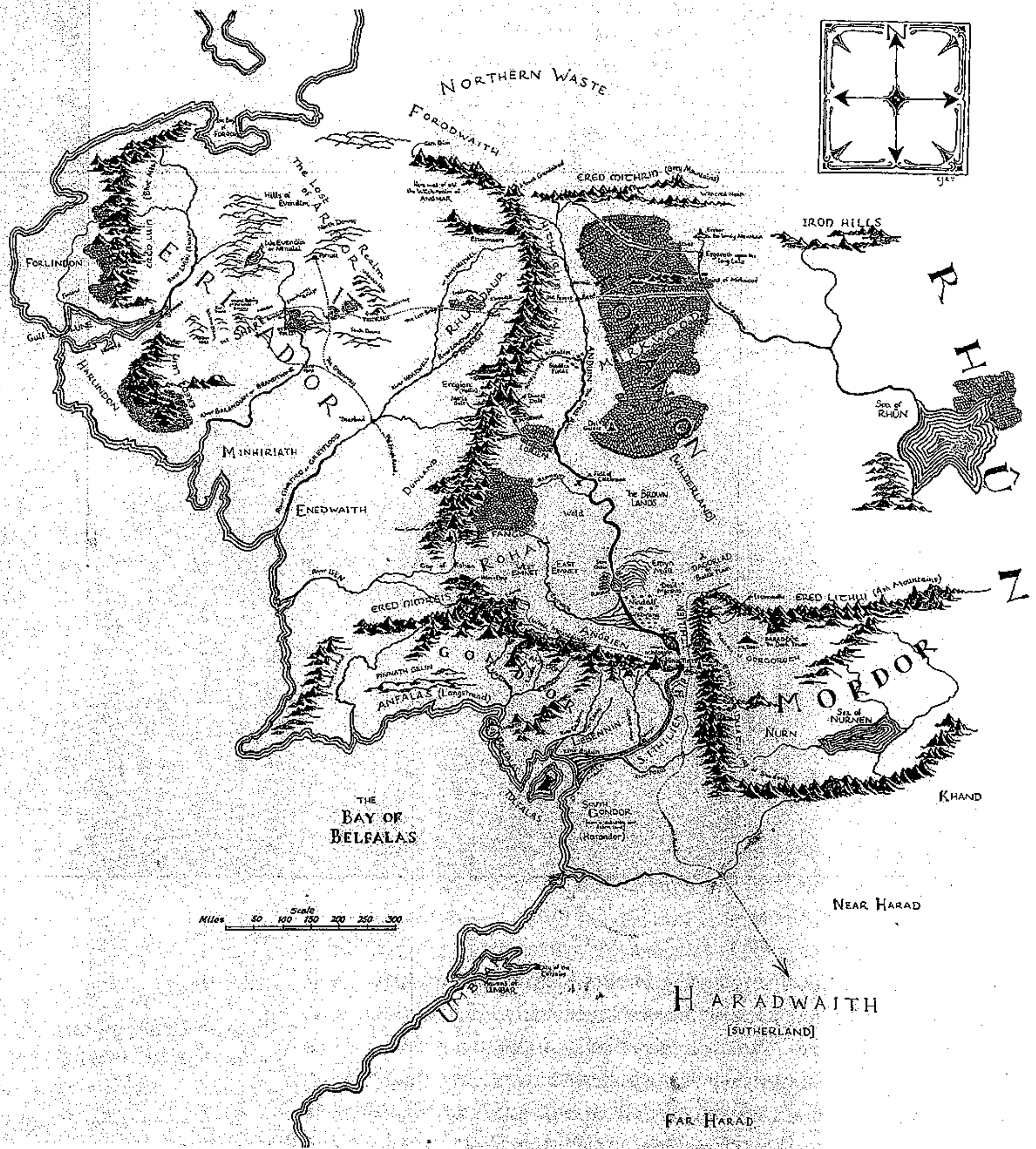



FIGURE 158.
Christopher Tolkien, "The West of Middle-Earth at the End of the Third Age" (1954). © Christopher Reuel Tolkien 1954.

1992, 152–76). They pull us down to earth (to Middle Earth, that is), inviting us to consider the landscape from the perspective of someone traveling through it. We follow the roads through the forests, across the mountains, along the rivers, sometimes tracing the paths of Frodo and the others, and sometimes forging our own way.

The world we move in, moreover, is fraught with danger. Pierre Jourde outlines this for us by way of a contrast with More's Utopia (1991, 126–29). While Utopia is orderly, balanced, proper, and unchanging, Tolkien's Middle Earth is shot through with a menacing opposition between Good and Evil. The west of Middle Earth is divided into two well-bounded regions, Eriador and Gondor, the lands of civilization and of Goodness, while the east is divided into two regions of wildness and Evil, Rhovanion and Mordor, regions that themselves open up to the mysterious *terrae incognitae* allied with Sauron. In this way, the map sandwiches the lands of the good guys between Evil and the sea. While its many place-names speak of a rich past, in the form of stories half forgotten or entirely unknown, its structure attests to the uncertainty of the future. Middle Earth lies suspended between a deep past and an impending apocalypse, and this is encoded on the map.

Many readers have associated that apocalypse with the real-world troubles that plagued Tolkien himself. It has often been said that his fiction reacts against many of the horrors of the modern age, just as nineteenth-century fantasy novels had reacted against the changes wrought by industrialization and secularization. As a veteran of the trenches of the First World War, Tolkien had seen firsthand the destructive potential of the machine age, and longed for a simpler, quieter time more closely linked to the rhythm and beauty of the natural world. The Shire, in effect, is his utopia. It is a fantasy recreation of an arcadian Britain that never was, one that finds itself threatened by evil forces that themselves represent the destructive forces of the machine age. It is no accident, then, that the landscapes of the Shire, on Tolkien's map, features rolling hills and folksy names. It is also no accident that Saruman, the lesser of the two evil wizards in *The Lord of the Rings* but the one that has a direct impact on the Shire, is associated with the destructive possibilities of wheels, machines, and gunpowder (Tolkien 1996b, 525).

Danger of this kind explains much of the appeal of fantasy literature, and of some of its more recent successors. In many ways, such novels are less about the triumph of Good over Evil than they are about the restoration of safety in the face of menace. The same is true for many of the imaginary worlds of massive multiplayer online games (MMOGs) like EverQuest, Westward Journey, and World of Warcraft. In such games, players with a subscription and the appropriate software use their computer to enter an online virtual world in the guise of a fictional character. There they interact with other characters, some controlled by the program and some by other players the world around. The games can accommodate thousands of people at once, and are available for play twenty-four hours a day. One of their attractions is their vast and varied physical environment, which is rendered graphically, and even breathtakingly so, in three dimensions on the player's computer screen. Another is the sense of adventure, and even of danger, that the games offer. Players take on various tasks, develop exotic skills, and, depending on the game, battle myriad foes.

None of the other imaginary worlds I discuss here pose the difficulties presented by these virtual worlds. As Edward Castronova (2005) has amply demonstrated, these games tend to blur the psychological, emotional, and economic boundaries between the real and the imaginary in ways so striking as to force us to rethink the distinction. But what interests us here is their cartography. Maps of the virtual world can be indispensable for game play, particularly when the game involves exploration and quests. When the makers of EverQuest, a fantasy-world MMOG descended from Tolkien by way of the tabletop role-playing game Dungeons and Dragons, failed to provide their world with a map, players assembled an online atlas of their own (*EQ Atlas* 2006). Players of another such fantasy game, World of Warcraft, have done the same. The makers of the game provide a base map depicting the two continents that constitute the world of the game, Kalimdor and The Eastern Kingdoms, along with some accompanying islands (fig. 159). World of Warcraft players have collectively turned this world map into the base map of an online atlas (World of War 2006). There are maps of individual regions and of cities. There are thematic maps depicting the resources available in different areas, and the quests one can undertake there.

But just as the fascination of Tolkien's maps does not end with their usefulness as reader's aids, so the attraction extends far beyond their role in facilitating game play. According to Richard Bartle, a pioneer in the design of such virtual worlds, people come to online-gaming because they are interested in social interaction, achievement, conquest and control, or exploration. The explorers "come to see what there is and to map it for others. They are happiest with challenges that involve the gradual revelation of the world. They want the world to be very big, and filled with hidden beauty that can only be unlocked through persistence and creativity" (Bartle 2004, 130; see also Castronova 2005, 72). These are the players for whom the game map holds a special appeal. What sort of appeal? As one avid player explained to me, he feels that he knows the world of World of Warcraft better, in some ways, than he knows the suburban area where he lives. After all, his journeys through that world are limited to a repetitive commute: he does not explore, and even if he did, what would he find? World of Warcraft offers things suburbia does not: novelty, adventure, and danger. It offers a rare commodity: a blank map and the opportunity to discover new worlds, all without having to abandon the security of suburban life (Scarborough 2006). While Tolkien's maps speak nostalgically of a preindustrial landscape, the maps of the World of Warcraft offer an escape from the drudgeries of a postindustrial one.

Imaginative travel is indeed one of the functions of all of these maps. While More and Swift warn us of the perils of such travel, Tolkien, Stevenson, the MMOGs, and others invite us to revel in it. Those who have played Risk know the thrill of embarking upon the conquest of Asia, and those who have

FIGURE 159.
Map from the online fantasy game World of Warcraft (2006).

shared Candyland with a small child know how much fun it can be for them to make their way to the Candy Castle. One map, in my opinion, stands out for the pleasures of this kind that it has to offer children, Jaro Hess's *The Land of Make Believe*. Jaro Hess was a Czechoslovakian artist who immigrated to the United States, where he eventually entered his oil painting, *The Land of Make Believe*, into a contest at the Century of Progress Exposition, the world's fair hosted by Chicago in 1933.[11] The picture was enthusiastically received, and has gone into print as a poster various times since (Rosen-Ducat Imaging 2006). It collects various characters and scenes from well-known children's stories into a single landscape view. Among these we find the wall that Humpty Dumpty fell from, the Emerald City of Oz, and The City of Many Towers Where the Beautiful Princess Lives. Everything is depicted pictorially: nothing is reduced to cartographic abstraction.

There are other such maps, like Bernard Sleigh's "Anciente Mappe of Fairyland" (fig. 160), that do much the same thing (Post 1973, 90). The collection of these disparate characters and scenes into a single space is itself quite charm-

ing, but what makes these images truly captivating is the way that space is organized. Both maps set the individual elements into their respective landscapes quite carefully, placing some in the foreground, others in the background, and connecting them all with routes that invite the eye to wander from one to the next. Both maps provide commanding heights that the viewer can occupy imaginatively, creating a sense of mastery over the landscape. The Sleigh map, however, puts everything on an enormous island, producing the sort of coherent and well-bounded geography we saw earlier. The Hess rendering, by contrast, opens out in various directions through a particularly powerful use of horizons and vanishing points. This feature is what makes the Hess work stand out.

At the center of the image, a strange tower of earth rises precipitously above the castle of Old King Cole. Atop the tower sits the house of Grandfather Know-All. Here, it seems, is Hess's answer to the Spyeglass Hill that, in Stevenson, allows one to take in the whole of Treasure Island and the surrounding sea. And it is only one such site. The background features a row of towers and cities and mountains from which one could enjoy a similar perspective. And if one does not want to remain earthbound in order to survey the Land of Make

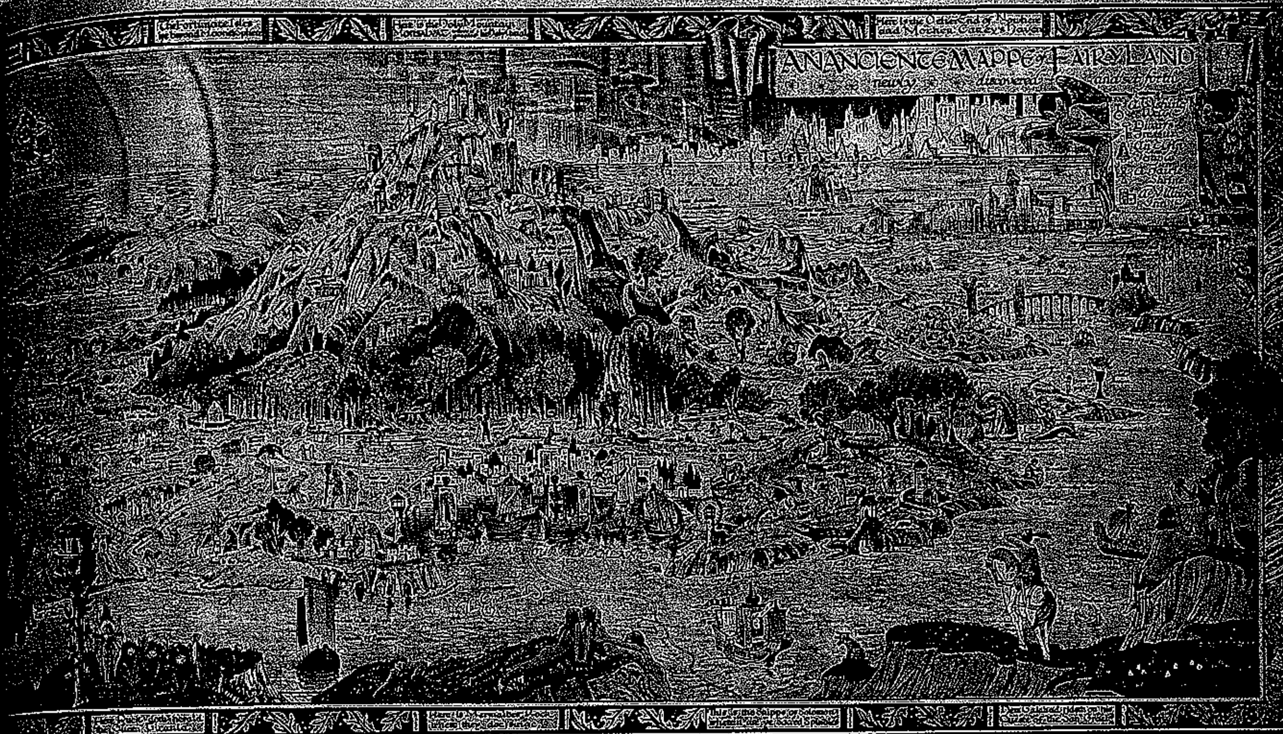



FIGURE 160.
Bernard Sleigh, "An Anciente Mappe of Fairyland" (1920?).

Believe, there are the magic carpet, the Moo-Moo Bird, and the Moon. All of them look down over this enchanting world, taking it all in.

But not quite all of it. Along the left-hand side of the image, a river winds its way into a fjord or canyon of sorts. A ship makes its way up that river, under a bridge, toward the place where the north wind lives, just past the point where the walls of the canyon seem almost to converge. In the center background, a placid sea recedes into the horizon. At the foot of Grandfather Know-All's strange tower is a dark Bottomless Lake. Along the right-hand side of the image, a waterfall drops from an equally dark ravine that snakes into the background. The blackness of the lake and the ravine stands in marked contrast with the bright colors that characterize the printing. We know the river leads upstream somewhere, but do not know what we will find there. Neither do we know what mysteries, perhaps dangers, lurk in the crevice, the lake, or the sea. As in the map of Middle Earth, the eye runs up against these vanishing points that articulate the known with the unknown. They create openings for our imaginations to travel beyond the geographies that the map provides, beyond the familiar world of fairy tales and nursery rhymes, into the uncharted spaces of our own imaginations.

We have seen maps that project onto stories the desires that certain readers have for them. We have seen maps that challenge readers to resist those desires, to recognize their dangers and deceits. We have seen maps that invite readers to extend their stay in imaginary worlds, courting make-believe dangers and charting the unknown reaches of their own daydreams. Yet another kind of map stands out from the many maps of imaginary worlds tied to literature and storytelling that we can explore. These are interesting because of the kind of literature they accompany, a kind of novel that would seem to eschew any sort of cartography. Yet both of the maps I have in mind were drawn by the novelists themselves.

One of these is very well known—or at least its author is. It is the map of Yoknapatawpha County drawn by William Faulkner in two separate versions: one to accompany the original edition of *Absalom, Absalom!* (1936) and the other the original edition of *The Portable Faulkner* (1946). The two maps depict the imaginary Mississippi county that provides the setting for some of Faulkner's most famous novels and stories. Yoknapatawpha's history and geography are derived from that of Lafayette County, Mississippi, Faulkner's adoptive home; but they differ in many ways from the real thing, and thus depict a place usually understood as imaginary and not merely "fictional," in the way that we might speak of the London of Charles Dickens, a real London inhabited by imaginary characters (Aiken 1977, 1979). Faulkner's depiction has been analyzed in its own right and has been pressed into service as a symbol for his entire body of work. Some have seen in it, for example, "a spiritual geography of Christendom," while others have found in it a microcosm of the American South (Aiken 1979, 331).

The other map is surely unknown to most English-speaking readers. It depicts a place called Región (fig. 161), drawn by the Spanish novelist Juan Benet and published separately as a supplement to his groundbreaking novel, *Volverás a Región* ([1968] 1996), which appeared in English translation as *Return to Región* (1985).[12] Región is the imaginary world for this novel and several others by Benet that reflect upon the trauma of the Spanish Civil War and its aftermath. His "Mapa de Región" (Map of Región; incorporated in Benet 1983) provides a dramatic contrast to Faulkner's maps of Yoknapatawpha, not to mention others. While Faulkner's maps exhibit the graphic simplicity of a novelist's sketch map, Benet's map, with its abstract cartographic signs, its contour lines, and its distance scale, is indistinguishable from a real topographic map of an actual place. It represents, as far as I know, the most ambitious attempt ever undertaken by a writer to map his or her imaginary world in the idiom of modern scientific cartography.

Yet neither Faulkner nor Benet is the sort of author from whom we might expect a map. Both are famous for their complex, modernist narrative style, a

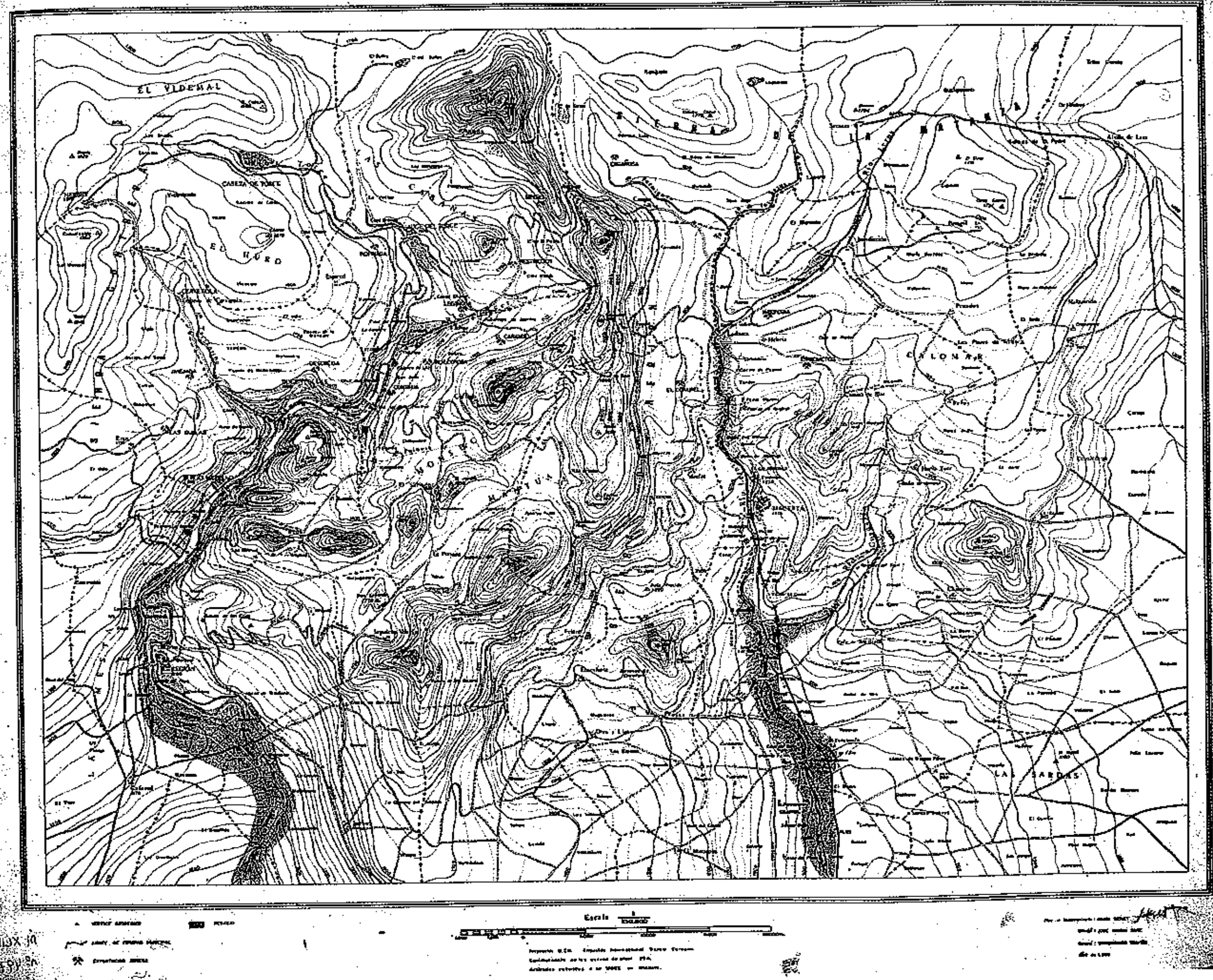



FIGURE 161.
Juan Benet, "Mapa de Región" (Map of Región) (1968).

style that belies the clarity and mastery of their respective cartographies. Take, for example, the crucial matter of point of view. Throughout this chapter, I have discussed the ways that maps of imaginary worlds comment upon the relationship between seeing and knowing, or wishing we knew, or thinking we know. At every turn, I have been able to assume that the maps in question, much like a painting constructed in linear perspective, imply a single ideal reader or onlooker eager to see and know the world depicted. Whatever the map may be saying to that onlooker about the world it depicts, we can always assume that he or she is there, implied by the map.[13]

But it is precisely this sort of singular, imperious onlooker that novels like *Absalom, Absalom!*, *The Sound and the Fury* (1929), or *Return to Región* do their best to undermine. These and other works by Faulkner and Benet tell their stories from different, incommensurable points of view, alter the natural chronology

of the tales, put them in the mouths of unreliable and even incompetent narrators, omit crucial episodes from any of the fragmentary narrative threads that together allow us to piece together the whole. They thereby frustrate the reader's efforts to master the characters, events, and even the settings of their stories. A paradox emerges: the maps provide precisely the sort of mastery that the novels undermine. They imply the sort of commanding perspective that the narrative techniques of the fiction abandon. We have seen tensions between stories and maps before, but here it is taken to an unprecedented extreme.

It is tempting, then, to understand Faulkner's and Benet's maps, quite simply, as very necessary reader's aids that help us make our way through the muddled worlds of their novels. As we saw, however, the fact that a map functions as a reader's aid does not mean it that it does not lend itself to other purposes as well. In the case of Faulkner, about whom so much has been written, we have no lack of attempts to interpret the maps. This is because space and place clearly matter, and matter deeply, in his fiction (Brooks 1990). J. Hillis Miller goes so far as to say that "Faulkner has a strongly topographical imagination" (1995, 272). His tales are spun in an elaborately mapped space in which people are associated with places, and places are invested with meanings. Those meanings, in turn, often unfold under the multiple curses of Civil War, slavery, racism, and incest.

The most interesting aspect of Faulkner's two maps of Yoknapatawpha, therefore, is not that they map the physical geography of Yoknapatawpha County, but that they map the characters and events of Faulkner's stories into that geography. We see the location of places like Sutpen's Hundred, the plantation at the heart of *Asbalom, Absalom!*, or of Compson's Mile, home of the once-aristocratic Compson family whose tale is told in *The Sound and the Fury*. Faulkner's rendering does not do so, however, merely for the purpose of helping us understand these texts. In fact, the map is probably too simple, not informative enough, to provide much help at all. Instead, it marks the profound connection that Faulkner makes between place, identity, and fate. It also identifies Yoknapatawpha County, Hillis Miller (1995, 272–73) argues, as a place built by human action over time, and in which human beings ultimately find themselves ensnared (see also Baldwin 1991–92; C. Brown 1962; Duvert 1986).

In Faulkner, then, it seems that a more or less realistic geography lurks beneath the modernist style. He can map Yoknapatawpha because he imagines its geography as something mappable, no matter what his writing style does to the stories that unfold there. Not so with Benet's Región: the relationship between the map and the novels is quite different, because the novels themselves handle space and place differently. *Return to Región* reads like something of a nightmare. Like a nightmare, it has moments of terrifying lucidity. Some of these moments can even be described as "cartographic" for the way they clearly describe places and spaces, going so far as to cite precise distances and elevations. But also like a nightmare, the story is radically incoherent. Its vari-

ous narrative threads return to many of the same scenes of violence as different characters dredge up their memories of the horrors of civil war. The reader struggles to piece together the whole, but finds him- or herself frustrated by Benet's "miswritings," the deliberate silences and contradictions that he builds in to the various accounts. In this way, his prose becomes what one critic has called "a study in the essential inapprehensibility of reality" (Margenot 1991, 38).

What a relief, then, to have such an accurate and detailed map! As I mentioned above, the map charts Región as if it were a real space, with all of the visual rhetoric of modern cartographic science. It doesn't even mark the boundaries of Región, suggesting that the place is perfectly contiguous with the rest of Spain, that its map is a slice of the map of the nation. Yet we soon discover that, on the map as in the novels, something has gone awry. As John Margenot (1991, 32–40; 1988) has demonstrated, there are various contradictions between the geography of the novels and that of the map, contradictions that make it very difficult to follow the narrative threads of Benet's novels. It would seem, then, that just as Benet miswrites the story of Región, he also mismaps it. His map promises to capture his imaginary world for us and guide us through it, but with its complex web of roads, rivers, and contour lines, it is probably better understood, following Margenot, as the graphic representation of a labyrinthine cosmos ready to bedevil and ensnare us.

## VISUAL ARTS: WILL THE REAL MAP PLEASE STAND UP?

We could go on exploring maps of imaginary worlds. It would be tempting, especially, to look at maps that have nothing to do with literature and storytelling, particularly maps that appear in the plastic arts, or maps that are drawn as a form of artwork. Maps have appeared in paintings since at least the Renaissance, and some early modern art has even been analyzed for the "mapping impulse" at the heart of the way it renders space (Alpers 1983; Woodward 1987). The twentieth century, particularly its latter half, witnessed an explosion of interest in maps and cartography on the part of visual artists. Early twentieth-century avant-garde movements sometimes incorporated maps into their collages, or drew parodic maps of various kinds. From the 1960s on, increasing numbers of conceptual, performance, and installation artists executed pieces that in various ways engaged questions of maps and mapping, often critically and in the service of political ends (Cosgrove 2005; Curnow 1999; Wood 2006a, 2006b). Very few of these can be said to "map an imaginary world," if by an imaginary world we mean the geography of a nonexistent place, country, or planet. Many of them, indeed, do not even look anything like what we are accustomed to calling maps. All of them, however, engage imaginatively with maps and mapping, and many of them could be said to map geographies that are in some sense "imaginary." Even when it is our own world that they map,

they invariably do so from a unique perspective, converting that world to its imaginary double.

Take, for example, Jasper Johns's *Map* (1963), a picture that maps the lower forty-eight states in oil on canvas (fig. 162). Obviously, the geography depicted is a real one, but the picture's rich textures, thick brushstrokes, and playful colors steer our attention toward the aesthetics of its surface, rather than to the geography it represents. In this sense, *Map* is the opposite of a map, a counter-cartographic composition that reminds us of something that we often forget: that the map is a kind of image, made of color, line, and letter, and that it can be appreciated as such, rather than an objective representation of a real space. In this way, like much of the map art produced since the 1960s, and like some of the maps we have seen in this chapter, Johns's composition questions the claims that modern maps make to truth and authority (Yau 1996, 34–40). But it also does something else. Yes, the piece can lead us to question the representational authority of maps, but it can also remind us—in a world where maps have become so commonplace that we take them for granted—that a cartographic image can be just as much about the beauty of its colors, lines, shapes, and lettering as anything else. That much is clear to a map artist at the other end of the spectrum of fame and recognition, a man in Michigan who finds this sort of beauty can even be found in a common road map. Adrian Leskiw (2006) creates road maps of imaginary places whose color and composition speaks of the aesthetic charm of even this most practical and commonplace sort of map (fig. 163).

## REAL WORLDS, IMAGINATIVE MAPPING

Like Mr. Leskiw's artwork, all of the maps mentioned in this chapter eventually refer us to maps of real worlds, although perhaps with a heightened awareness of what those maps have to tell us, or of what we can do with them. Some of them teach us to doubt the sort of knowledge we find in maps, suggesting that wisdom lies elsewhere. Some of them help us understand our interest in maps, with their promise of intellectual mastery over places and spaces. Some of them help us escape from our all-too-real world into fantasy realms that either speak of lost ideals or provide compensatory thrills. In doing so, however, all of them help us cultivate an imaginative relationship with maps and mapping that transfers quite well to maps of the real world.

Such a relationship is possible because all maps are, in some sense, maps of imaginary worlds in that all of them involve a process of selection, representation, and conceptualization that inevitably falsifies the territory they represent, even as they communicate valuable information about that territory. In this way, the production of a map introduces the values and the prejudices, the perceptions and the misconceptions, the insights and the blind spots, the ideology and the culture, of the mapmaker into the representation of the territory.

FIGURE 162.
Jasper Johns, *Map* (1963). Art © Jasper Johns / Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY.

FIGURE 163.
Adrian Leskiw, "Sanford Metro" (2006).

Truly, there are no maps of real worlds, only maps of not-so-imaginary worlds that we take for reality. All maps, moreover, mediate an imaginary relationship with that real territory. We do not make maps of spaces that we can, without effort, take in with our eyes. We only map what we cannot see, in order to be able to see it. Every map, therefore, provides for us the perspective that has been so important to my discussion here, the privileged point of view ordinarily enjoyed only by birds, pilots, astronauts, angels, and gods.

And any maps, when we engage them thoughtfully and sensibly, can provide many of the experiences that those depicting imaginary worlds are made to provide. What happens when Jasper Johns converts the map of the United States to a textured collage? Don't the function and the meaning of that map change? In this way, it becomes a worthy successor to the satire of cartography we saw in *Gulliver's Travels*. What happens when we sit in front of a map of our hometown or of a country whose history we know very well? We travel. We revisit memories. We march in the company of armies, explorers, or peaceful protesters. We recall childhood games and personal tragedies. Put simply, we recover the stories and meanings that we associate with those places and spaces (Harley 1987). What happens, then, when we come across maps of unfamiliar places, whether full of blank spots or dense with names? We explore, we imagine, we give play to our fantasies and desires.

And so, while maps of imaginary worlds do indeed delight, distract, reveal truths, whisper secrets, unsettle, reassure, perhaps they do not do so because they are maps of imaginary worlds, but because they are maps. We allow them to trigger our imaginations because the world they depict is imaginary, or because we encounter them in the context of dealing with works of art, such as stories, that get us thinking and feeling in ways that we don't think and feel when we unfold the tattered road map in the glove compartment of our car. Yet none of these maps insist upon their radical difference from other maps as maps, only upon the radical difference between the worlds they depict and the real world. On the contrary, they work by insisting upon their own similarity with those maps. And perhaps they teach us that any map, in fact, will do: that we would do well to give that tattered road map a chance.

### *Notes*

1. The Sacred Texts Web site has digitized the portions of Plato's *Critias* and *Timaeus* that gave birth to the myth of Atlantis, as well as numerous texts at the heart of the modern, occultist interest in the lost continent (Internet Sacred Text Archive). For an overview of the vast literature on Atlantis, see Ellis (1998).
2. I follow Pierre Jourde's definition of an imaginary world, which I translate here from the French: "A complex spatial ensemble identified by toponyms

the majority of which are invented, and that constitutes an autonomous structure clearly detached from the space known and explored at the time the author wrote" (1991, 16).

3. Manetti's ideas were recapitulated in an influential 1481 commentary on the *Inferno* written by Cristoforo Landino, and then in a 1506 dialogue written by Girolamo Benivieni.
4. A number of these images are available online, in an exhibition assembled collaboratively by the Newberry Library, the University of Chicago, and the University of Notre Dame. See "Dante's Hell," in Cachey and Jordan (2006).
5. For reproductions of Botticelli's illustrations for the *Divine Comedy*, including the map, see Botticelli (1976, 2000). The latter publication includes several useful interpretative essays. For the details of the commission, see Morello (2000, 318). The drawings may have been intended for a luxurious illustrated manuscript edition of Dante's text, but since the project was left unfinished, we cannot be sure of this, and we do not have any documentation that could shed light on the question (Schulze Altcappenberg 2000, 29).
6. Charles Singleton argues that Dante's "precise measurements are calculated to add realism to the description of Hell, but they in fact show a curious indifference to reality" (see Dante 1980, 2.558). For more on contemporary critical opinion, see Kleiner (1994) and A. Gilbert (1945).
7. As one scholar puts it, "The mapping of social spaces . . . privileges abstraction and the total grid. We need to augment maps with stories . . . While we need not—indeed cannot—get on without maps and clocks, their partial and abstract roles ought always to be kept in mind. Narrative space and narrative time are powerful and meaningful counters to the effects of abstraction created by clocks and maps" (Kort 2004, 165).
8. For one of the classics of the genre, and an important influence on More, see Lucian (1968).
9. So too can the "Utopian alphabet" printed with More's text.
10. Although I will occasionally refer, for convenience's sake, to "Tolkien's maps," I do not mean to suggest that these maps were drawn by J. R. R. Tolkien himself. The maps in *The Hobbit* were, while those in *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Silmarillion* were drawn by his son Christopher Tolkien. For more on the genesis of these maps, see Anderson's commentary in Tolkien (2002, 50), and Hammond and Scull (2005, lv–lxvii).
11. A clipping about Jaro Hess from an unidentified newspaper is available at Rosen-Ducat Imaging (2006). I have been unable to locate other sources about the artist or his piece.
12. Readers new to Benet may want to consult Herzberger (1976).
13. Technically speaking, this is completely untrue. Maps are unlike perspective paintings in that they are drawn as if that ideal onlooker were directly over each and every point. This technicality, however, is beside the point. For more on cartography and perspective, see Edgerton 1987 and Hillis 1994.