The Poet and the Map: (Di)versifying the Teaching of Geography

This paper focuses upon four twentieth-century poets who write about maps. Spanning three generations and countries, they offer lessons on geography to children (John Fuller, May Swenson) and reminisce about their own geography classes (Don Gutteridge, Fiona Pitt-Kethley). Since their poems have much to teach regarding the meanings and uses of maps, this paper suggests that we introduce students to their verses and apply their ideas to (di)versify the way we teach about maps and geography.

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Aristophanes' *Clouds* provides a comical glimpse at one map in an Athenian classroom during the late fifth century BCE. When the dull-witted hero, Strepsiades, is confronted for the first time with a map of the world, he protests that Socrates' students have placed Athens *much too close* to her enemy, Sparta (Aristophanes 1924, 1:282-83, lines 214-17). Twenty-five centuries later, poets are still reflecting on the map's role in education. Today, widely-read geographers and educators recognize that poetry is a memorable and unique way to teach maps. While writing a book on twentieth-century poems about maps, I have collected thirty that provide instruction or focus upon a student's view of maps. I wish to introduce four of the most engaging to further the dialogue between scientists and humanists that began in ancient Greece.

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Each of these poems offers a different experience of maps. We begin with the two that appear in children's collections—John Fuller's "Geography Lesson" and May Swenson's "The Cloud-Mobile"—since both are accessible, on some level, to every reader. This is particularly true of "Geography Lesson," the only one of the poems to be illustrated by a map. Fuller's work highlights the peculiar relationship between text and image: it teaches us as much about translating maps into verse as about translating poetry into graphic form. But like the quote from Aristophanes above, "Geography Lesson" has a political lesson lurking behind its satire. May Swenson, on the other hand, prefers the subtlety of nature's riddles and discards the static map entirely. In "The Cloud-Mobile," she conjures up a map of time and change that can be used as an elegant introduction to physical geography. Don Gutteridge's "My Story: Maps" and Fiona Pitt-Kethley's "Geography" are complex autobiographies. In his five-part poem, Gutteridge employs a variety of maps to situate, decenter, and simultaneously recover the places of childhood. The focus of "My Story: Maps" becomes our sense of where we fit—or don't fit—on a map. Pitt-Kethley's acerbity contrasts with Gutteridge's nostalgic memory of the way he was taught geography in school. Recalling her boredom in "Geography," Pitt-Kethley urges us to find maps that fire a child's imagination, whether they be medieval representations of the world or maps of classic adventure stories. Her suggestions, in turn, act as springboards to other captivating texts, maps, and poems.

ANTHROPOMORPHIC MAPS AND POLITICAL SATIRE

English poet John Fuller (1937-) first published "Geography Lesson" in his collection of children's verse *Come Aboard and Sail Away*. Accompanied by Nicholas Garland's delightful anthropomorphic map, "Geography Lesson" (Figure 1) nevertheless conveys a serious message—that England is a poor nurse to baby Ireland (1983, 8-9: reprinted by permission of John Fuller):

With Highland hair and arms of Wales
Reaching for Ireland, England trails
A lonely distance behind Europe
Trying impossibly to cheer up:
A sloppy nurse who hopes that maybe
No one will see she's dropped her baby
Splash into the Irish Sea
While bouncing it upon her knee.

With hips of Norfolk, bum of Kent,
Her posture's more than strangely bent.
Yorkshire gives backache with its Ridings.
The Midlands, full of railway sidings,
She blames for burps of indigestion.
Her Birmingham has got congestion.
Her Derbyshire is full of holes.
London's asleep at the controls
And her subconscious shifts the worry
Out to Middlesex and Surrey.

Yet Devon's a comfortable shoe
From which old Cornwall's toes peep through.
On Lleyn, sedately, Anglesey
Is balanced like a cup of tea,
While clucking in her tea-time mirth
Her mouth's the open Solway Firth
Ready to swallow if she can
The little cake of the Isle of Man.

Even asleep she falls apart:
Dreams of the Orkneys make her start
And stitches of the Isle of Wight
Drop off from Hampshire in the night.
With bits of knitting in the Channel,
Most of East Anglia wrapped in flannel
And snores exhaling from Argyll,
The dear old lady makes you smile:
What can you do with such a creature
To whom each county lends a feature?
She'll still be there when I am gone.
Through all *your* lives she'll shamble on,
Grubby, forgetful, laughing, hatless—
The silliest country in the atlas.

"By converting countries and islands into figures, Fuller pokes fun at England's penchant for tea, nannies, wool and dowdy clothes. And by associating geographical regions with places on a nurse's body, Fuller transforms into a mischievous game the exercise of locating places on an ordinary map."

"Geography Lesson" cleverly conceals its instruction in an appealing package. As its title indicates, Fuller's poem teaches the various "parts" of the British Isles. By converting countries and islands into figures, Fuller pokes fun at England's penchant for tea, nannies, wool and dowdy clothes. And by associating geographical regions with places on a nurse's body, Fuller transforms into a mischievous game the exercise of locating places on

Figure 1. Nicholas Garland's illustration of "Geography Lesson" by John Fuller. Reprinted by permission of Nicholas Garland from Come Aboard and Sail Away *by John Fuller (Edinburgh: The Salamander Press, p. 8). Copyright ©1983 John Fuller (text) and Nicholas Garland (illustrations).*

an ordinary map. Here he follows a tradition dating back to another of Aristophanes' plays, the bawdy *Lysistrata*. After its heroine's pan-Hellenic sex-strike abruptly ends the Peloponnesian War, the inebriated Athenian and Spartan ambassadors skirmish over the scantily clad Reconciliation, whose desirable parts the ambassadors identify with strategic sites lost in the war (Aristophanes 1924, 3:110-111, lines 1162-1170; Parker 1984, 447-49 and 467).

If Aristophanes' *double entendres* and comic performance emphasized his political message, Nicholas Garland's illustration of "Geography Lesson" certainly adds to the pleasure and understanding of Fuller's poem. One might wish that his labels were placed more accurately ("Yorkshire," "Kent"), that the boundary between England and Scotland were less ambiguous, or that more of Fuller's place-names appeared on the map. Yet all maps are generalized, simplified, and selective views of the world. In focusing on the memorable image of nurse and child, Garland highlights England's policy towards Ireland—a detail that otherwise could be lost as the poem progresses.

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from the late eighteenth to the early twentieth centuries (see Hill 1978). Fuller's poem and Garland's illustration are inspired by at least two of these maps—both of which depict Ireland as a caricatured peasant woman with her baby. Robert Dighton's *Geography Bewitched!* or, *a droll Caricature Map of Ireland* represents Ireland as John Bull's wife "Lady Hibernia Bull" carrying an infant on her back (Bowles and Carver, London, c. 1794; see Rose 1981, 63). And the illustration William Harvey ("Aleph") made for his *Geographical Fun: Being Humorous Outlines of Various Countries* shows Ireland as a woman laden with goods for the market. Tied to her back, a child of indeterminate age clutches a herring and gazes not at the reader, as in the Bowles and Carver map, but at Protestant England and Scotland (Harvey 1868; and see Yale University Map Collection).

"Garland, obliged to make Ireland look *like a baby in his illustration, plays with scale and shrinks the island considerably. For him, the clarity of the human figure takes precedence over geographical accuracy and detail. But by representing Ireland as much smaller than Great Britain, Garland's map seems to reinforce the notion of dependence."*

Fuller is obviously not the first to portray Ireland as a child dependent on England. Like William Harvey, he and Garland have made geography appealing to children, in part by depicting Ireland as a youngster. Yet each conveys subliminal messages. Harvey imagines the Irish as servants to stately England (Lewes 1999, 39). Garland, obliged to make Ireland *look* like a baby in his illustration, plays with scale and shrinks the island considerably. For him, the clarity of the human figure takes precedence over geographical accuracy and detail.[1] But by representing Ireland as much smaller than Great Britain, Garland's map seems to reinforce the notion of dependence. Furthermore, despite Fuller's criticism of the way England has handled Ireland, the England of his "Geography Lesson" has "usurped" Welsh Anglesey and Lleyn as well as the Scottish Orkneys and Argyll. Substituting "Britain" for the metrically equivalent "England" would have resolved the problem. Yet Fuller's poem is ultimately about his country's "Englishness".[2] In spite of England's repeated failures in Northern Ireland and her Celtic neighbors' nationalistic movements during the 1970s, she remains for him "the dear old lady who makes you smile." However self-mocking the tone, Fuller's "Geography Lesson" invites analysis of cultural stereotypes and personal biases inherent in verse and on maps.

ANIMATED MAPS, NATURE'S RIDDLES, AND SCIENTIFIC THEORIES

Offering another playful map-poem for readers of all ages is May Swenson (1913-1989). An American poet and MacArthur Fellow, Swenson published "The Cloud-Mobile" in 1958 (Swenson 1958, 28). With its disarming simplicity and wonder, this poem earned a place in her children's book, *Poems to Solve* (Swenson 1966, 29), and later in the collection from which our version derives, *The Complete Poems to Solve* (Swenson 1993, 41: reprinted with the permission of Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing Division. Copyright © 1993 The Literary Estate of May Swenson):

> Above my face is a map
> where continents form and fade.
> Blue countries, made
> on a white sea, are erased;
> white countries are traced
> on a blue sea.
>
> It is a map that moves
> faster than real
> but so slow;
> only my watching proves
> that island has being,
> or that bay.

It is a model of time;
mountains are wearing away,
coasts cracking, the ocean
spills over, then new
hills heap into view
with river-cuts of blue between them.

It is a map of change:
this is the way things are
with a stone or a star.
This is the way things go,
hard or soft,
swift or slow.

May Swenson enjoyed riddles. Although her verses capture the ephemeral motion of clouds, Swenson allows only the title to give her subject away. Within the poem, she refers to maps and models—to representations of clouds rather than to clouds themselves.

By comparing a sky filled with clouds to a map of continents and countries, Swenson calls attention to a map's most basic characteristics. Her description of clouds as "white countries...on a blue sea" accords with our cultural stereotypes of an icy white Antarctic and blue seas, in nature and on our maps. But the initial shock of "blue countries...on a white sea" makes us re-evaluate our assumptions about mapped space. Historically, maps have shown water as white—and a host of other colors besides blue (Ehrensvärd 1987, 123-46; Woodward 1987, 326-27; Wood 1992, 99 and 121-22). Just as the sky's shifting pattern of clouds alters our perspective, so a reader's view of a map determines, from minute to minute, whether land or water is the figure or the ground (Wood 1992, 140). "The Cloud-Mobile" also reverses the normal way we look at a map, forcing us to lie on our backs to look at a map over our heads. Yet her map, while alluding to its paper cousins flattened in atlases or behind glass frames, has a vitality that technology could not match until computers began generating animated maps (see Hall 1992, 264).

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Fascinated by "form as it *becomes* what it is" (Howard 1980, 604), Swenson moves us onto her map of time. Not only are clouds subject to change, but so are the mountains and continents that appear so securely moored beneath our feet, and on our maps. Rivers, ice and wind build up the earth's surface and erode it away again. Oceans reclaim land exposed during colder periods; waves shatter and reshape coastlines; rivers excavate valleys. In addition to these external forces, "The Cloud-Mobile" suggests some of the internal processes at work in landform development. From the late 1950s through the mid-1960s, as Swenson was writing and republishing her poem, new evidence concerning the earth's magnetic patterns and the mid-Atlantic Ridge broadened interest in the theory of continental drift, an idea hotly debated since the German meteorologist Alfred Wegener detailed it in his 1915 study, later translated as *The Origin of Continents and Oceans* (Wegener 1924; see LeGrand 1988 and Stewart 1990). As elaborated in the current theory of plate tectonics, all the earth's landmass at one time formed a single supercontinent that Wegener named Pangaea ("all-lands"). Pangaea began to split apart some 200 million years ago, as the plates under the continents shifted, dividing Laurasia in the north from Gondwanaland in the south. These massive continents split in turn about 100 million years ago, creating the continents whose shapes and positions appear so familiar on our maps. Yet our continents continue to drift. Within 50 million years the Mediterranean will disappear as Africa collides with

Europe. Only the earth's inevitable cooling will end the continents' cloud like motion on convection currents within our planet (McKnight 1992, 26 63, and Scotese 1999, for illustrations). Swenson's "Cloud-Mobile," in oth words, helps us visualize the forces that continually reshape our earth ov the vastness of geologic time, and challenges us to continually re-examine our scientific explanations for such changes.

THE MAP AS "GRAPHIC AUTOBIOGRAPHY"

Canadian poet Don Gutteridge (1937-) reminisces about his childhood geography class in "My Story: Maps." Like the Fiona Pitt-Kethley poem th follows, "My Story: Maps" appears in a collection for adults, yet is acces- sible and comprehensible to younger readers. Opening *A True History of Lambton County*, Gutteridge's poem tells how one teacher in southern Ontario taught him, at the age of twelve, to view his native Lambton Cour (1977, 5-9). For brevity, section 3 of "My Story: Maps" has been removed a ellipses indicate verses I've omitted at the end of sections 1 and 4 (excerpt reprinted from *A True History of Lambton County* by permission of Oberon Press):

"Opening A True History of Lambton County, *Gutteridge's poem tells how one teacher in southern Ontario taught him, at the age of twelve, to view his native Lambton County."*

1
SS No.12
Sarnia Township: 1948
map of our county
etched in smoke
on the blackboard

looks like Labrador
north and remote
edged in blue
never-ending on the
corner-globe . . .

2
In class we chant
the townships' names,
the song of the shape
that holds us in:

Lambton County: Bosanquet
Sarnia Moore and Sombra
Plympton Enniskillen Dawn
and Warwick Brooke Euphemia

Louder now!

Lamb tun Coun tee bows an kay
Sarn ya Moor an Som bra
Plim tun En askill an Don
an War wic Brook you feem ya

A dance, a riddle:
sidewalk skipping-song
with no meaning at all—
but leave it out
and nothing works

4

Today we add the creeks
the Plank Road to Petrolia,
Highway 22 zig-zag at Warwick,
the London Road drifting
at the border . . .

my map's bones are
bloodied with
indelible veins, the
looped intestines
of a mythical beast—
home-grown, lurking
behind the white page,
ready to charge the
second we say the
password, sketch in
the crucial line . . .

5
We add the towns,
a circle for Petrolia
at the dead-centre: a
drop of perfect oil,
pencil-smudges for
Watford, Wyoming,
balmy Port Lambton—
Sarnia is an ink-blob
oozing at the page—

the Point is a
dot, a blink in
somebody else's eye

I am ashamed:
demand bigger maps
Miss Kernohan draws down

Neilson's [sic] Mercator Projection of the World
and shames us all . . .

For over sixty years, Don Gutteridge has not strayed far from "the Point"—his nickname for Point Edward, the village where he was raised in Sarnia Township. Now Professor Emeritus in the Faculty of Education at the University of Western Ontario, he lives only an hour from Point Edward (Atherton 1997). Gutteridge's proximity to Point Edward reflects a profound attachment to his childhood home. A eulogy to the place of his youth, "My Story: Maps" also reveals his interest in pedagogy.

Framing the poem and its classroom are the corner-globe and Mercator Projection of the World, published by Thomas Nelson and Sons (Gunn 1931, 2-3). On the blackboard, the class busily maps Lambton County. To reinforce its visual image, Miss Kernohan teaches her class to chant the names of its townships. A map of Lambton County shows the order of these names within the song (Figure 2). Bosanquet ("bows an kay") leads as the most northerly of the townships. Next come, from north to south, the three

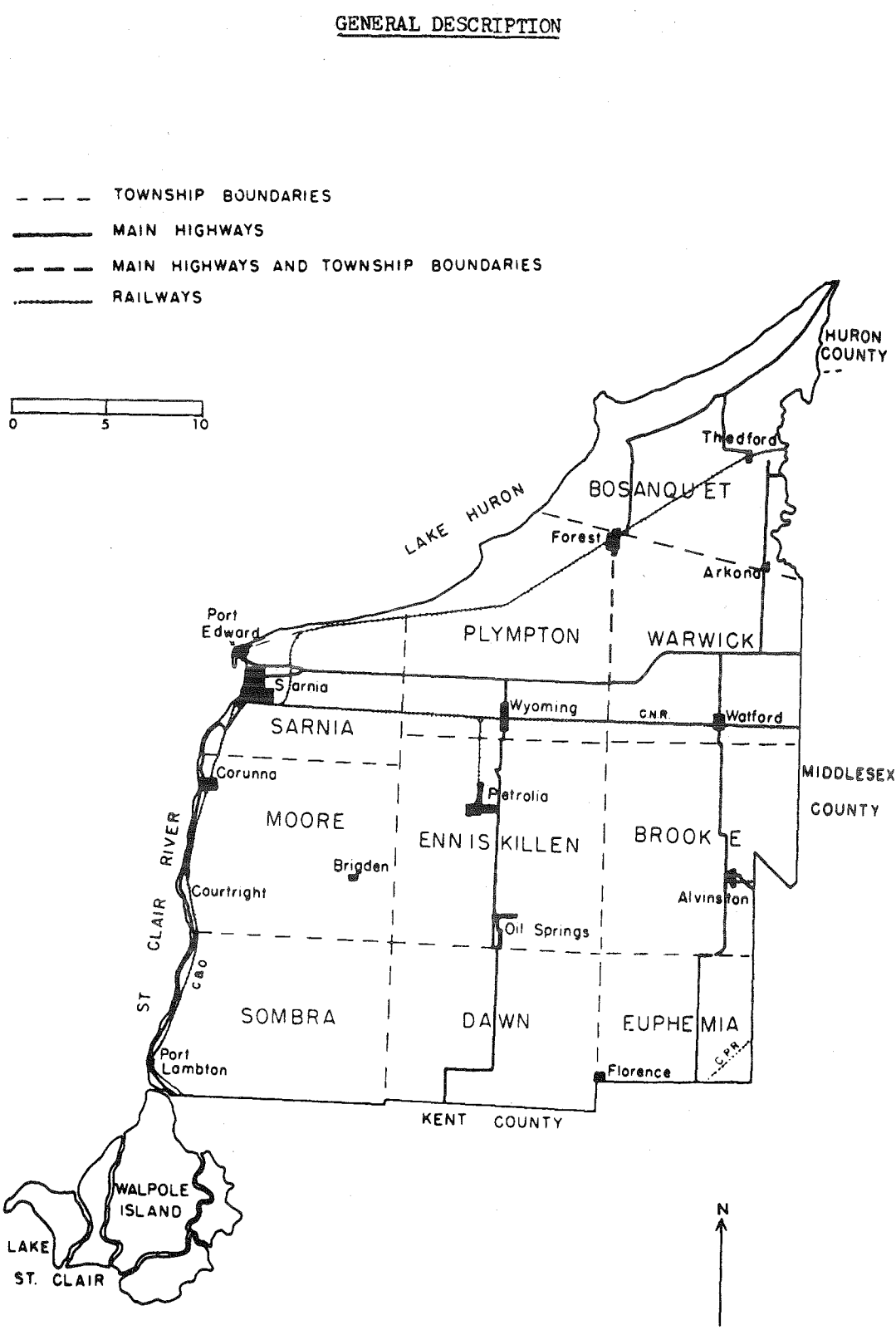

Figure 2. "General Description" of Lambton County, Ontario. Reprinted by permission of the Lambton County Historical Society, from A Physical and Cultural Atlas of Lambton County *by Frank G. Higgins and Michael R. Kanouse (Sarnia, Ontario, p. 2). Copyright ©1969 The Lambton County Historical Society.*

townships bordering the St. Clair River; the three directly to their east; and last, the three bordering on Middlesex County.

The Lambton County song is a verbal map. Gutteridge's ability to recall the words thirty years later indicates how tenaciously a familiar verse can lodge in our memory. As a poet and educator, Gutteridge is concerned with intersections of place, identity, and verse: for him, a map—whether verbal or graphic—becomes memorable when a person discovers how to read his own experience in it. From the Lambton County song, the boy learns not only his county's townships but that language is "a riddle," a code like the symbols on his map.

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"My Story: Maps" is about making sense of the world and one's place in it. On the blackboard, the map of Lambton County reminds the boy of Labrador. The association is particularly Canadian. With a coast extending nearly 700 miles and an area of over 100,000 square miles, Labrador dwarfs Lambton County. Yet his comparison has merit. In terms of shape, Gutteridge's county is a mirror image of Labrador. And while the coast of Labrador forms a section of Canada's eastern boundary, the western edge of Lambton County forms part of the boundary between Ontario and Michigan, dividing Canada from the U.S. along its sixty-mile border. To a child raised beside the heavily trafficked St. Clair and the immensity of Lake Huron, even his township's ten miles of lakeshore and motley collection of villages must have seemed like a world barely explored, especially since *his* distances were traversed on foot.

Yet by the end of the poem, the childish illusion that his home is the world shatters. Some Lambton County towns, like Petrolia, boast symbols of respectable size. Its "circle at the dead-centre: a drop of perfect oil," reminds us that Lambton County gained prominence as Canada's first oil capital and home to Imperial Oil. But Gutteridge's Point Edward is only a dot on the map of Lambton County. And the village disappears entirely on the world map his teacher displays.

"My Story: Maps" ends with the shame Gutteridge felt at the absence of Point Edward on the authoritative "Mercator Projection of the World." The way Gutteridge has overcome his childhood dilemma is to create maps of his own. Throughout his works, he recognizes the power of maps to document an era and the mind of their creator. For over twenty-five years now, he has turned his once rural Canadian village into the subject of a multi-volume epic spanning two centuries. *A True History of Lambton County* is the second volume of *Time is a Metaphor* (1974-), which Gutteridge envisions as a large-scale map of the people and events that have shaped Lambton County and his own life.

Into volumes 5 and 6, he has inserted large-scale maps depicting Point Edward and Lambton County during the late nineteenth century, a period he depicts in novel form (Gutteridge 1987b and 1988). Gutteridge modeled his maps on *Belden's Illustrated Historical Atlas of the County of Lambton, Ontario, 1880* (Phelps 1973), one of the thousands of county atlases sold by subscription to local residents during the second half of the nineteenth-century (Conzen 1984). By recovering authentic maps of individual towns and landholdings, Gutteridge—in his own words—"reconstructs history-as-art" (Gutteridge 1987a, 255).

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But what animates "My Story: Maps" is the relationship between maps and the viewer's personal history. In this respect, Gutteridge's poem has much in common with J. B. Harley's breathtakingly poetic article "The Map as Biography." Reflecting on the power of one Ordnance Survey map to evoke the most poignant memories of his own life, Harley concludes (Harley 1987, 20):

> The map has become a graphic autobiography; it restores time to memory and it recreates for the inner eye the fabric and seasons of a former life . . . Till other landscapes and their maps crowd it out, this w remain my favourite map.[3]

MAPS THE FIRE THAT IMAGINATION

English poet Fiona Pitt-Kethley (1954-) is more critical of her youthful education. "Geography," published in her first collection *Sky Ray Lolly*, slangs the Philips' Atlas she was required to read in her English public school and suggests that medieval world-maps or Mark Twain are more exciting ways to teach geography (1986, 60-61: reprinted by permission of the poet, ©Fiona Pitt-Kethley from *Sky Ray Lolly*, Chatto and Windus, 1986

> Each year they passed out Philips' Atlases
> full of unmeaning maps I'd try to read—
> first the Political—bright pastel rags
> of land with river veins—the Physical,
> earth colours, yellow, brown and green. I'd scan
> the sticky label in the front to see
> the book's lineage of fellow-sufferers.
> If there were many there, I'd garnish it,
> anthropomorphise coastlines—put eyes
> in inlets, nostrils in peninsulas.
>
> I used to do my homework lying by
> the pale gas fire for warmth. Visitors would
> step over me. One trod right on the map
> I'd drawn. Miss Foxton, a walking advert
> for the role of shoe-adviser, her own
> brown leather lace-ups polished like conkers,
> thought Africa no place for that grubby
> Man-Friday-print and gave me 'E'—a grade
> used only for those beyond redemption.
>
> I think I could have liked the subject in
> the Middle Ages; but modern textbooks
> lack wonder and humanity—précis
> of précis, their glossy pages never
> show monopods or anthropophagi.
> Their servant-teachers are not Mandevilles,
> nor like eighteenth century gentlemen,
> who, when in Rome, got out their tape measures
> to find the truth about St Peter's dome.
>
> Outside school walls, my mind could travel to
> Haggard's poetic Zululand, Mark Twain's
> fanatically detailed microcosm
> of the Mississippi, Verne's islands, ice,
> lighthouses and subterraneous wonders.
> And I was angered for the dynasty
> of navy-ink strangers in my Atlas,
> who, in the name of learning, signed to hear
> the world chewed up, spat out in terms of tons
> of jute, asbestos, cocoa crops and tin.

One glance at a *Philips' New School Atlas* convinces us that Pitt-Kethley has a point. Published by the firm of George Philip and Son, founded in

1834, the atlas boasts a distinguished pedigree. It is, in fact, the twentieth-century descendant of the school atlases produced by George Philip to fill a niche in Great Britain's national system of elementary education (Philip 1934, 38-89). The fifty-fifth edition appeared in 1967, the year that Pitt-Kethley turned thirteen. It is a slim volume containing 64 pages of maps, 6 pages of climate graphs, and 23 pages of index. Mingled with the physical and political maps are other maps with such disheartening titles for children as "Rainfall, Isobars and Winds" or "The British Isles—Climate, Population, Agriculture and Industries" (Fullard 1967).

Looking back at her childhood, Pitt-Kethley understands that there are ways to entice youngsters to fall in love with geography. One is to introduce them to medieval maps and travelogues. For those taught that maps are merely static expositions of geographical facts plotted on a grid at a particular scale, the *mappaemundi* or medieval "maps of the world" are a revelation. Hand-painted on parchment or vellum, they reveal the humanity of their artists. On the majority, the earth appears as a circle of land comprising Europe, Asia and Africa—all surrounded by a circumfluent ocean. Crowded inside are illustrations of Biblical stories, myths inherited from Classical antiquity, and novelties from travelogues (Woodward 1987). Many maps depict the monstrous races thought to exist on the earth's unexplored extremities (Friedman 1981; Haft 1995). The fourteenth-century *Travels of Sir John Mandeville*, based on accounts like Marco Polo's, popularized such creatures as *anthropophagi* or "man-eaters" and the Ethiopian *monopods*, whose "single foot" was used for shade as well as speed (Pollard 1964, chpts. 17, 20-21). Didactic guides for the faithful, *mappaemundi* and travel tales inspired "wonder" at the variety of God's creation and man's history in a transient world saturated with meaning. The glossy political maps of the *Philips' New School Atlas*, by contrast, emphasize the unstable barriers between nations and peoples, while its physical maps broadcast man's exploitation of the earth.

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Another way of hooking children on geography, Pitt-Kethley suggests, is to base lessons on the adventure stories they are already reading "outside school walls." Each of the four authors referred to in her poem—Daniel Defoe (1660-1731), Sir Henry Rider Haggard (1856-1925), Mark Twain (1835-1910), and Jules Verne (1828-1905)—offers a unique view of the world's geography and of "civilization's" effect upon even the most remote places and peoples.

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The disgruntled teenager was ahead of her time. Beginning in the 1970s, the way geography was taught underwent a small revolution. Out of that period came texts that would have appealed to Pitt-Kethley. Closest to her interest is *An Atlas of Fantasy* compiled by J. B. Post, the former map librarian for the Free Library of Philadelphia (Post 1973, 1979). With over one hundred maps from works of literature and science fiction, *An Atlas of Fantasy* enchants every student introduced to it. *The Dictionary of Imaginary Places* also acquaints readers with places-that-never-were on earth: utopias and magical lands mingle with Mandeville's legendary lands, Crusoe's island near the mouth of the Orinoco River, Haggard's fictitious Kukuanaland in central-southern Africa, and Verne's "mysterious island" (Manguel and Guadalupi 1987).

Equally noteworthy is *Landscape in Literature: A Geographical Analysis*, published by the Association of American Geographers. Packed with quotations from Twain and other regional authors, this guide for teaching geography declares (Salter and Lloyd 1977, 1):

> Landscape in literature should not be thought of as a substitute for the more conventional modes of geographical study, but rather as a supple-

mental and special source of landscape insight, one which has remained largely untapped until now.

A decade later, English professor William Mallory teamed with geographer Paul Simpson-Housley to compile a series of essays entitled *Geography and Literature* (Mallory and Simpson-Housley 1987). Meanwhile, in Great Britain, Herbert Sandford focused on "the psychological aspects of school atlas design and presentation" (Sandford 1984, 173). And Denis Wood, with his usual hyperbole, lambasted the conventional "reference" atlases given to children, and labeled them nothing but "emptiness and lies" (Wood 1987, 37-38).

In their place, Wood recommends narrative atlases that "speak" to young people: e.g., Michael Kidron and Dan Smith's *The War Atlas* (1983) or Norman Myers' *Gaia: An Atlas of Planet Management* (1984, 1993). College students are instantly engaged by Wood's own *Power of Maps* (Wood 1992). And John Kerrigan suggests even more recent postmodern studies (Kerrigan 1998), like *Reading Human Geography: The Poetics and Politics of Inquiry* (Barnes and Gregory 1996) or Franco Moretti's *Atlas of the European Novel* (1998).

Fiona Pitt-Kethley certainly would applaud such efforts.

CONCLUSION

So how can these poets help us to teach our students? "The Cloud-Mobile" encourages each of us to reevaluate our basic assumptions about mapped space, including color and perspective. May Swenson's emphasis on the mutability of clouds suggests the more gradual movements of continental plates, the buildup and erosion of the earth's surface, and the advantage of animated maps for demonstrating their theoretical course over time. John Fuller, along with illustrator Nicholas Garland, contributes to one of the most playful and enduring graphic forms, the map made to resemble a living being. Yet to be successful, it must blatantly exhibit the very qualities that remain most opaque to untutored map-readers: the interests and biases of the mapmaker and his society. Don Gutteridge's autobiographical poem focuses on scale, setting the regional map into the context of national and world maps, and looks back at childhood from the vantage point of a forty-year-old, self-confessed "maker of maps" (Gutteridge 1977, 30). And Fiona Pitt-Kethley's "Geography" urges us all to find some map that engages us, that opens up an alternative world, so that in the end we can view our maps and our world more objectively—and, perhaps, make them both more vibrant.

"... Pitt-Kethley's "Geography" urges us all to find some map that engages us, that opens up an alternative world, so that in the end we can view our maps and our world more objectively—and, perhaps, make them both more vibrant."

Together, these poems link map-appreciation with playfulness and surprise. It can mean discovering unexpected shapes in the map: Fuller's nurse and baby, Gutteridge's "mythical beast," or Pitt-Kethley's deliberately "anthropomorphise[d] coastlines." It can entail the exoticism of faraway places, of monstrous races, of ethereal cloud formations. Yet the poems also emphasize that true understanding comes with the ability to read one's own experience in the map. And *any* map can become autobiographical.

The four poems that comprise this paper are, of course, just a beginning. In my book on maps in twentieth-century poetry, I will present many others that relate to the way we teach about maps. Gutteridge's poem, for example, is influenced by fellow Canadian James Reaney's "The School Globe," in which another first-person narrator flashes back to what he was once taught in the classroom (Reaney 1949, 30-31). For the disillusioned Reaney, however, the now "wrecked blue cardboard pumpkin" of his school globe represents the lost paradise of childhood. English poet Sir Stephen Spender focuses on the effects of poverty in London during the Great Depression. In "An Elementary School Classroom in a Slum," Spender's urgent appeal for

aid, the impoverished children find nothing of their own lives in the "open-handed map" of the "belled, flowery, Tyrolese valley" (Spender 1939, 28-29). For them, the classroom map and globe are "lies": no other world exists beyond the "slag heap" outside their school window.

On a lighter note, ten-year-old Nathalia Crane is concerned with the maps that children make. In "The Map Makers," the Brooklyn-born Crane compares a professional star-chart to her friend's "map" of a Brooklyn boulevard from Prospect Park to Sheepshead Bay (Crane 1924, 42). Written at a time when it was stylish to publish poetry by children, "The Map Makers" reveals how differently two children answer the question "What is a map?"—a question researchers still grapple with today (Downs, Liben, and Daggs 1988; Patton and Ryckman 1990). Finally, Karl Kirchwey's "The Geographer's Line" tells of the American poet's teenage years in London with his dysfunctional family (Kirchwey 1990, 60). The poem describes how he once labored over a map of "the continental United States in 1803," and compares his imminent growth with the westward expansion of the United States in the nineteenth century following the celebrated Lewis and Clark Expedition. "The Geographer's Line" conveys the almost magical belief of one child that he can control his own destiny—if he can get the map's "boundaries right somehow." For Kirchwey's youthful alter-ego, the map becomes prophetic of his future.

"Kirchwey's "The Geographer's Line" conveys the almost magical belief of one child that he can control his own destiny—if he can get the map's "boundaries right somehow.""

Perhaps there is no more valuable lesson that a map can offer.

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I dedicate this paper to my remarkable father-in-law, George Zinovich.

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FOOTNOTES

[1]For anthropomorphic maps generally, see Gilmartin 1994.

[2] One anonymous reader suggests that "The Geography Lesson" may echo Seamus Heaney's "Act of Union." Published in his politically charged *North*, this poem describes the aftermath of the unsuccessful 1798 Irish rebellion. For Heaney, a Catholic from Northern Ireland, England's abolition of the Irish Parliament in 1800 and enforced legislative union with Ireland was an act of rape, in which England (the male speaker) impregnates Ireland with the violent and "parasitical" child, Northern Ireland (1975, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 49-50). While Fuller does not present colonialism as rape, "Geography Lesson" reveals the biases of its own poet even as it satirizes the inequitable relationship between England and Ireland.

[3] Patricia Gilmartin told me that uses Harley's article as the basis for a class assignment: she asks students to choose a map that is meaningful to them and then has them write an essay about it. Gutteridge's "My Story: Maps" might encourage our students to compose a poem instead.