

**Abstract:** “Paratext or Imagetext? Interpreting the Fictional Map.”

This article is concerned with the relationship between a fictional map and a fictional text and the way in which we understand and interpret that relationship. It seeks to explore visual/verbal relations (between map and text) through meaningful elements relating to the juxtaposition of these two forms within the covers of a book. Its primary interest is in determining the nature of the dynamic between map and text, arguing for a more integrated model of interpretation. The first part of the article, therefore, draws upon Gérard Genette’s account of the paratext in order to consider to what extent the fictional map functions in a paratextual role. The central section of the article explores the spatial and material relationship between map and text by applying Genette’s four key paratextual aspects – location, temporality, communication and function – to analysis of the fictional map, with particular attention to two examples from Ransome and Tolkien. The final section reflects on the strengths and limits of this approach and incorporates the alternative offered by W. J. T. Mitchell’s formulation of the “imagetext”.

**Keywords:** paratext; fictional map; visual/verbal; imagetext

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## “Paratext or Imagetext? Interpreting the Fictional Map.”

This article is concerned with the status, meaning and interpretative potential of a literary work for which a map is given alongside the text.<sup>1</sup> How do we address a juxtaposed visual-verbal relationship within a predominantly verbal form? What is the relative status of map and text when both represent the same object (the fictional world)? What has been overlooked if the visual form is marginalised and made entirely subordinate to the verbal?

Since the empirical presence of the map within the covers of the book is a vital element bearing upon meaning, the relationship between fictional map and text here is primarily considered in *material* terms. Thus, the main part of the article adopts a largely materialist approach to the visual-verbal problematic, applying Gérard Genette’s concept of “paratext” to explore the dynamic between map and text. Whilst this concept proves richly rewarding, the final section of the article also reflects upon the limits of such an approach and the possibility of an alternative way of reading offered by W. J. T. Mitchell’s account of the “imagetext”. More broadly, it is to be hoped that careful consideration of the relationship between explicit visualisation as embodied in the map, and spatial meaning as held within the text, will begin to enable larger understanding of the spatial dimensions of literary representation and the reader’s experience of it.

Despite the proliferation of fictional maps in popular genres such as Children’s literature and Adventure Fiction from the 19<sup>th</sup> Century onwards, and Fantasy from the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Centuries, (initiated by Tolkien’s influential use of maps in *The Lord of The Rings*) there has not been a significant amount of corresponding critical work focussing on the map itself or on its role and function as part of the work. Whilst J. B. Post’s *An Atlas of Fantasy* (1973)

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<sup>1</sup> Since my interest is in exploring integrated meaning across word and image my primary interest is in first editions for which the map is authorial or approved by the author, rather than post-authorial maps.

stands as an early and influential attempt to gather together examples of fictional and imaginative maps, it makes no attempt to analyse the maps themselves.<sup>2</sup> Instead, the mapping of an imaginary world has been vulnerable to criticism, in similar ways to fantasy as a genre, so that it is “either taken seriously (and enthusiastically), or seriously rejected.”<sup>3</sup> The proliferation of maps within the genre, rather than being seen as an integral element worthy of critical attention, is more often a cause for suspicion. So, for example, in *Rhetorics of Fantasy*, a work which sets out to offer a fresh taxonomy for fantasy, Farah Mendlesohn views the map negatively as part of a Tolkien-inspired attempt to create a fixed and pre-existent history for the alternate world: “The structure becomes ideological as portal-quest fantasies reconstruct history in the mode of the Scholastics, and recruit cartography to provide a fixed narrative”.<sup>4</sup> Mendlesohn notes that “since the late 1970s, genre fantasy has frequently been signalled by these two devices: the map . . . and the fixed and narrated past”.<sup>5</sup> In such an account, the map is viewed as a subordinate part of a static pre-existent superstructure intended to make the alternative world more convincing, but actually reducing it. Peter Hunt, whose article on the subject of fantasy maps provides a rare early attempt to consider them critically, returns to the subject in *Alternative Worlds in Fantasy Fiction* (2004) but makes a similar point to Mendlesohn (whilst seeing the meticulous map of a pre-

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<sup>2</sup> Other similar collections of imaginative maps are found in Martha Hopkins and Michael Buscher, *Language of the Land: The Library of Congress Book of Literary Maps* (Washington: Library of Congress, 1999); Katharine Harmon, *You Are Here: Personal Geographies and Other Maps of the Imagination* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2004).

<sup>3</sup> Peter Hunt, “Introduction: Fantasy and Alternate Worlds,” *Alternative Worlds in Fantasy Fiction*, Peter Hunt and Millicent Lenz (London and New York, 2001), 4.

<sup>4</sup> Farah Mendlesohn, *Rhetorics of Fantasy* (Middletown CT, 2008), 14.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

existing world as a positive rather than a negative).<sup>6</sup> Hunt distinguishes between places that can be fully mapped and seem to exist prior to the author's writing of them ("Le Guin claimed that she explored and found Earthsea, rather than creating it") and those for which a map is given but which do not provide a total world.<sup>7</sup> The latter present only a "nebulous geography" which functions as "a space where things happen, not a place of itself".<sup>8</sup> So Hunt notes the importance of the fictional map, but immediately responds in an implicitly evaluative way in terms of the "accuracy" of the map in relation to the world represented, rather than thinking more creatively about what different kinds of map are seeking to do.

A more recent study, Stefan Ekman's *Here be Dragons* (2014) suggests that this depreciation of the fictional map may be about to change, however. In a chapter explicitly on fantasy maps Ekman provides a fuller critical survey than I have given here.<sup>9</sup> He also notes that "the status of the fictional map in relation to the text is in no way clear-cut and various points of view yield different insights".<sup>10</sup> As a result he briefly considers them as paratexts as well as "docemes" – additional material that is part of a documentary process – stating that "the two perspectives are not mutually exclusive but relate the map differently to the text".<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> See Peter Hunt, "Landscapes and Journeys, Metaphors and Maps: The Distinctive Feature of English Fantasy," *Children's Literature Association Quarterly*, 12.1 (Spring 1987): 11-14.

<sup>7</sup> Hunt, *Alternative Worlds*, 13.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>9</sup> Stefan Ekman, *Here Be Dragons: Exploring Fantasy Maps and Settings* (Middletown CT, 2014), 15-19. Ekman also undertakes various useful statistical surveys of the amount of fantasy novels containing maps (between 27 and 40%) and of other cartographic elements such as orientation, forms of relief etc.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 22. I wrote this paper before reading Ekman's book but am reassured to find that he also considers them as functioning both paratextually and in ways beyond the paratext. My paper undertakes a far more

Like Ekman, this article aims to restore value to the fictional map by viewing it as a dynamic element of meaning, integral to the genre in which it occurs. What this article offers that is distinctive, however, is an approach that is not primarily generically-determined, but that approaches the fictional map as an object held within another object and that seeks to focus upon the material and hermeneutic tensions and transactions that occur between the map and the text to which it corresponds.<sup>12</sup>

### *Fictional Map as Paratext*

A highly productive way into the kind of material and visual-verbal readings I wish to undertake is offered by applying the concept of the paratext to the fictional map. Across a number of books, French critic and theorist Gérard Genette defines different ways in which texts form relationships with other texts, articulating a larger structure of transtextuality, of which paratextuality is a part.<sup>13</sup> As a structuralist inhabiting a post-structuralist world, Genette's project seeks to negotiate influential concepts of intertextual unboundedness without giving up on the attempt to maintain a focus within a determinate field. Graham Allen provides a helpful summary of the "open structuralism" or "pragmatic structuralism" that results from this. He describes it as:

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detailed literary engagement with the issues involved in terms of the relationship between map and text than Ekman's book does.

<sup>12</sup> Fictional maps tend to occur with far greater frequency in some genres than others. For some critics (e.g. Mendlesohn) genres such as children's fiction; adventure fiction; utopian fiction are all subsumed under the heading of fantasy. I treat these as distinct (not least because the maps function differently).

<sup>13</sup> Genette articulates this theory across a trilogy: *The Architext: An Introduction*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Berkeley CA, 1992); *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*, trans Channa Newman and Claude Doubinsky (Lincoln NE, 1997) and *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Cambridge, 1997).

a poetics which gives up on the idea of establishing a stable, ahistorical, irrefutable map or division of literary elements, but which instead studies the relationships (sometimes fluid, never unchanging) which link the text with the architextural network out of which it produces its meaning . . .<sup>14</sup>

It is worth noting, then, that the concept of the paratext is open to criticism and attack from post-structuralists, who see it as a reductionist approach, seeking to delimit the freedom of the textual condition. Certainly, the attempt to maintain some kind of structuralism within a fluid structure, is a compromise position and one which leads Genette towards near-contradiction at times. Nevertheless, the concept of the paratext has proved popular and helpful, particularly in terms of its interdisciplinary application: “the seductive power of the framework endures, no matter what the object of study and however broadly its tenets may be interpreted”.<sup>15</sup> Thus, the power of a paratextual approach has clear strengths and weaknesses that we will return to in the final part of the article.

Genette defines paratextual materials as “accompanying productions” to the text that “surround it and extend it, precisely in order to *present* it”.<sup>16</sup> In Genette’s account the paratext is centred upon the concept of “a *threshold*, or – a word Borges used apropos of a preface – a “vestibule” that offers the world at large the possibility of either stepping inside or

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<sup>14</sup> Graham Allen, *Intertextuality* (Abingdon, Oxon, 2000), 100.

<sup>15</sup> Eds. Nadine Desrochers and Daniel Appollon, “Introduction,” *Examining Paratextual Theory and Its Applications in Digital Culture* (Hershey PA, 2014), xxv. They note that the appeal of the concept lies in its “highly concentrated but readable form” (xxv) with the introduction the most cited part of the text. The conciseness of the analytic model it presents also makes it highly accessible and easy to apply: “The definition of a paratextual element is dependent on the answers to the following questions: where, when, how, from whom, to whom, to do what” (xxxv).

<sup>16</sup> Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, (1987) trans. Jane E. Lewin, foreword Richard Macksey (Cambridge, 1997), 1.

turning back”.<sup>17</sup> This central spatial sense determines a distinction between the two secondary forms of “paratext” that Genette is concerned with: a “peri-text” (within the book) and an “epitext” (outside it).<sup>18</sup> However, as Genette makes clear elsewhere, “the paratext is neither on the interior nor on the exterior: it is both; it is on the threshold”.<sup>19</sup> The paratextual space is not *just* a territory or zone but also possesses distinctive characteristics and operates for both writer and reader with a clear and simple function: “to present and comment on the text”.<sup>20</sup> As this function suggests, the concept of the paratext is also strongly authorial. In his conclusion, Genette states: “the main issue of the paratext is not to “look nice” around the text but rather to ensure for the text a destiny consistent with the author's purpose”.<sup>21</sup> This is felt particularly strongly in relation to the epitext, where it is clear that this only concerns broader paratextual materials that relate directly to authorial intent (e.g. interviews; diaries; journals; correspondence etc.). As such, the epitext extends beyond the text but also has fixed limits. If the paratext is concerned with authorial mediation it is also open to the possibility of manipulation:

The effect of the paratext lies very often in the realm of influence – indeed, manipulation – experienced subconsciously. This mode of operation is doubtless in the author's interest, though not always in the reader's.<sup>22</sup>

As we shall see, this point is particularly relevant to the fictional map as a form of paratext that may, or may not, actually operate on the reader in the way intended by the author.

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 2. The French title of the book is simply “Seuils” (“thresholds”).

<sup>18</sup> Technically this entire discussion should be adopting the more specific secondary term “peri-text” but since “paratext” is the more familiar general term I have used this instead.

<sup>19</sup> Gérard Genette, “Paratexts,” *Poétique* 69 (Paris, 1987) (quoted in *Paratexts* Foreword, xvii).

<sup>20</sup> Genette, *Paratexts*, 345.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 407.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 409.



In view of the complexities involved in working across visual and verbal forms it is perhaps not surprising that Genette's study deliberately chooses to focus on *textual* paratexts.<sup>23</sup> Ostensibly, this is because he wishes to keep the focus on material that “shares the linguistic status of the text” but that in turn raises the question of whether a visual paratext (which is *not* of the same order or status) functions in the same way.<sup>24</sup> It is at least possible that one reason that a map in a literary work is often overlooked or undervalued may be because it is defined as a paratext, which *allows* it to be treated as marginal, even where this is clearly not the case. We may want to consider, then, whether the meaning and value of a literary map is *constrained* by its paratextual identity or potentially *exceeds* it.

Nonetheless, while bearing such issues in mind, the concept of the paratext can still help to identify a number of core characteristics that the literary map possesses, as well as the potential contradictions it embodies. Genette usefully identifies key factors that relate to and determine paratextual materials:

defining a paratextual element consists of determining its location (the question *where?*); the date of its appearance and, if need be, its disappearance (*when?*); its mode of existence, verbal or other (*how?*); the characteristics of its situation of communication – its sender and addressee (*from whom? to whom?*); and the functions that its message aims to fulfil (*to do what?*)<sup>25</sup>

This definition identifies four core aspects of the material relationship between map and text within the covers of a book: their relative *location* as part of the literary work; relative

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 7. Genette states: “almost all the paratexts I consider will themselves be of a *textual*, or at least verbal, kind” (7).

<sup>24</sup> In his conclusion, Genette clearly authorises the definition of visual materials as paratext. He also refers to three maps or plans (Perec's floor plan in *Life: A User's Manual*; Faulkner's map of Yoknapatawpha County; Eco's plan of the abbey in *The Name of the Rose*), 405.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 4.

*duration* and *temporality*; the *situation of communication* established and the *function* or use value of the map in relation to the text (an element which is brought to the fore in literary mapping). By considering each element in turn I want to examine both the extent to which the literary map truly does partake of such paratextual characteristics and the extent to which the meaning of the map is bound up with the meaning of the text (and vice versa) to a greater extent than this concept perhaps implies.

### *Material Location*

I want to begin, then, by considering *location*. A normative position for a literary map might be determined as at the front of the book where it is most likely to appear after the title page as a “specific illustration” in Genette's terms.<sup>26</sup> However, there are at least three other locations that occur regularly: as endpapers (on the inside front, and often also back, cover); within the text; at the back of the book. To what extent does the physical position of the map affect the dynamic between map and text? We need to consider each location in turn. Where a map appears as an *endpaper* it is likely to involve a strong design element intended to have an aesthetic appeal. Critical cartographer, Mark Monmonier, reminds us of the tensions in play here between the iconic power of the map (and thus its value to publishers in making a literary work attractive and aesthetically pleasing) and the communicative value of its content in relation to the narrative: “Visual balance is the prime goal in page layout, so maps are positioned to make the book look good rather than to make the reader look at the maps”.<sup>27</sup> At the same time, the likely emphasis on design in an endpaper map misleadingly encourages

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>27</sup> Mark Monmonier, *Mapping it Out: Expository Cartography for the Humanities and Social Sciences* (Chicago and London, 1993), 243.

the reader to respond to it as primarily illustrative or decorative and thus serves to devalue its integrative meaning.

The latent potential of the endpaper as a paratextual space is probably most fully exploited in the field of children's literature. In "The Playground of the Peritext" Margaret Higonnet argues that "children's literature offers a particularly rich domain for the exploration of the functions and effects of peritexts" in part because "the brevity of the average text throws [the peritext] into the foreground".<sup>28</sup> Similarly, Sipe and McGuire explicitly consider endpapers as peritexts, arguing that these function as "a space between' where the reader is neither outside nor yet inside the story" and that the endpapers in young children's picture books form an important part of the overall experience and are not just a design element.<sup>29</sup> Front and back covers are "the first parts of the interior of the book to be seen when the book is opened, as well as the last to be seen after the story has been read and the book is about to be closed".<sup>30</sup> As such, they work first to anticipate, then to review, the framed verbal narrative that occurs between visual images. If the endpaper image is also a *map* then this process of anticipation and review is intensified by being focused specifically on the space and place of the text. The presence of map as endpaper thus functions to heighten spatial awareness in the text to come, as well as requiring to be read alongside the verbal content (enriching readerly experience of both forms).

One British children's author who powerfully maximises the potential of this space is Arthur Ransome. In fact, he does this *so* successfully that all of his children's books are still available in facsimile hardback colour editions with endpaper maps that respect the first

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<sup>28</sup> Margaret R. Higonnet, "The Playground of the Peritext," *Children's Literature Association Quarterly* 15.2 (1990): 47-49, 47.

<sup>29</sup> Lawrence R. Sipe and Caroline E. McGuire, "Picturebook Endpapers: Resources for Literary and Aesthetic Interpretation," *Children's Literature in Education* 37 (2006): 291-304, 292.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 292.

edition. A good example is provided by Ransome's most realist narrative: *They Didn't Mean to Go To Sea* (see Fig 1). In this book, four children (John, Susan, Titty and Roger) are left accidentally alone on a boat in the fog. When the boat ships its anchor they have no choice but to sail far out to sea (driven by a storm) and ultimately right across the Channel to Holland. Here, by great good luck, they meet up with their naval father, returning home on leave, who sails them back. As is immediately visually apparent, the endpaper map is largely centred upon the empty space of the English Channel (a zone that represents both safety from hidden rocks and shoals, and danger in terms of a wide unknown) with the English and Dutch coastlines given only marginally, and corresponding safe harbours (Harwich and Flushing) marking the start and endpoints of the voyage. The map succinctly visualises the entire narrative through comparison of outward and return journeys marked upon it (with the father's solidly marked return route being far steadier and straighter than the dotted line of the children). Language on the map provides direct points of connection between the visual and the verbal, tying the narrative to linear marks representing the spatial route: "Here they met a stranger in the dark"; "Here they rescued a kitten" etc.<sup>31</sup> (This is a distinctive feature of Ransome's maps as well as literary maps more generally). The map title provides a purely factual account of what happened: "Voyage of the Goblin Showing How She Went Across and Came Back" making it clear that the map is provided retrospectively and for the reader, as does the use of third person in the note: "They did not know how to allow for the tides".<sup>32</sup> The doubled endpaper (at front and back) thus first anticipates and then reflects upon the work as a whole (providing reassurance of a happy outcome).

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<sup>31</sup> Arthur Ransome, *We Didn't Mean to Go to Sea* (London, 1937), endpaper.

<sup>32</sup> Ransome sometimes presents his endpaper maps as explicitly authored by the children themselves, sometimes as made by an adult who is implicitly the author (as here) and sometimes he leaves attribution unclear. This can be confusing since the distinctive, primitive style of all the maps remains the same.

At the same time, however, when we compare the *visual* endpapers with the *verbal* representation framed between them, the orderly controlled image of the map contrasts sharply with the panic and terror of the narrated experience in which events rapidly run out of control. Not only this, but within the story, John's panic (as oldest boy and enforced Captain) is partly expressed through his lack of experience in map-reading in this particular context where he must interpret a sea-chart rather than a land map:

[H]e had the chart out in a moment. He laid it flat on the cabin table and stared at it for a full half minute before he saw that he had it upside down. His cheeks burned. But it was all right. Susan had not noticed. It would never do for her to think that he was worried too.<sup>33</sup>

It was not as if he had had charts to look at every day. Maps are easy, with the roads marked in red and the rivers marked in blue. Charts are different altogether. Land and sea are so much alike.<sup>34</sup>

In the sequentiality of the narrative, with a rapidly changing situation that compels the children to respond whether they like it or not, cartography becomes another fearful (adult) activity that is forced upon them and one that is useless in any case (in a deep fog). The two endpapers thus function as a kind of visual holistic relief in contrast to the deep levels of spatial anxiety that drive the main part of the verbal narrative.

If we return to the question of location, two further non-standard locations that affect the integration of visual and verbal meaning occur when the map is either given *within the text* or at the *back of the book*. The choice of location within a text is not that common and is closely

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 127. A detailed sea-chart of the same area as the endpaper map is also given as one of the illustrations on p. 49.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 129.

associated with particular genres, such as detective fiction, in which the map is frequently presented in a physically integrated way. This encourages the reader to view the map as a kind of “clue” or puzzle and to treat it as something of use *at a particular stage* of the investigation rather than to read it more holistically (as the reader is far more inclined to do if it appears at the front). Paradoxically, this suggests that the map is ephemeral (to be used and discarded) in relation to the working out of narrated events but such a map is often more respected (retained over time) than one at the front of the book. In contrast, the map at the *back* of the book is somewhat perilously positioned. As already noted, Genette cites George Perec's book, *Life: A User's Manual*, in which a plan of the Paris apartment and its different inhabitants over time is given as part of a mock-academic appendix *after* the narrative. The danger (or deliberate provocation) of placing the map at the back is obvious: readers may not know it is there until they finish reading, in which case the map cannot have an active function during the reading process. To mitigate against this, authors who place a map at the back, but want to ensure that the reader will be aware of it, are likely to emphasise its materiality, drawing attention to the map as an object by presenting it as a fold-out map or in a pocket. The disadvantage of placing the map after the narrative is thus compensated for by the advantage of physical juxtaposition of text and image whilst reading. The way that such maps physically relate to the book – being partially stuck onto the inside back cover or entirely removable – also emphasises the capacity of the fictional map to exist apart from and *beyond* the text to which it corresponds (in opposition to Genette's affirmation that “The paratext is only an assistant, only an accessory of the text”).<sup>35</sup> It should be clear, then, that the location of the map in relation to the text strongly affects readerly perception and map use and thus bears upon the overall meaning and experience of the work.

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<sup>35</sup> Genette, *Paratexts*, 410.

### *The Temporality of the Fictional Map*

A second major aspect of the fictional map when considered as part of the paratext concerns its vulnerability over time in comparison with the text and its temporality. Genette denotes an “*original paratext*” which is that of the first published edition.<sup>36</sup> This moment in time is of great importance for the fictional map because it marks its first appearance in the world at a point when it has the greatest degree of authorial intention invested in it and its fully integrated (visual/verbal) meaning is most able to be interpreted. However, few modern editions respect the integrity of the first edition map over time (Ransome being a rare exception), with the result that subtle meanings held within that map form, or in the dynamic between original map and text, are lost. Genette notes that “If, then, a paratextual element may appear at any time, it may also disappear, definitively or not, by authorial decision or outside intervention or by virtue of the eroding effect of time”.<sup>37</sup> This suggests that paratextual material is more vulnerable to the ravages of time than the text to which it is connected, and this is certainly true for the literary map. A key factor here is the degree of authorial intention that is associated with the map and respect (or a lack of respect) for that intention. Modern editions rarely, if ever, respect the original (first publication) form of the map and some omit the map altogether.<sup>38</sup> One major reason for this is the distinction between the printing of hardback and paperback editions of a text. The move into paperback for large, cheaper print runs also involves a reduction of page size which has significant consequences for the quality and size of the map and thus its usefulness. The map is far more vulnerable to change, reduction and even removal over time than is the text.

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>38</sup> E.g. popular editions of *Swiss Family Robinson*.

The temporality of the map not only relates to duration (its ability to last over historical time) but is also bound up more immediately with the reading process in relation to the sequentiality of the narrative. It may be helpful to distinguish three *phases* of use for the fictional map during the reading process: a phase of anticipation; of active experience and repeated return; of retrospect. The first “reading” of the map is likely to dwell upon its aesthetic appearance rather than to engage closely with details on it. As much as anything this is because the map does not have a correspondence in the real world for the reader to relate to it. When we use a walking map the value of the map lies in the degree to which we can make a direct connection between what we see around us – a church tower, a railway line, a bridge – and the symbolic representation that allows us to situate ourselves in the world to which the map corresponds. This is what the walking map is *for* (to guide and reassure us on a walk through unknown territory). Equally, when we know a place well, if we look at a mapped representation of it, we can imagine that place in our minds, so that the map “comes to life” through a correspondence with memory of lived experience of place (an internal visualisation). Because a fictional map does *not* directly correspond to actual places in the world the reader must come to it cold. If we assume a normative position for the fictional map at the front of the book, then it represents spatial relations that will strongly bear upon events within a sequential narrative that the reader has not yet encountered. Only once the fictional world within the book becomes meaningful can the map have integrative meaning. Dismissal of the map as mere illustration stems from this. The reader with limited spatial interest glances at the map initially and then disregards it so that the map is never actually “used” and thus remains in a state of passive illustration rather than being engaged with actively to enlarge spatial understanding (and internalised mapping) of the literary space for the reader. Here, then, an assumption of the map's paratextual status interferes with its function as a powerful form of communication capable of working with the text. In contrast,



the spatial reader, alert to the potential the map offers for a more grounded and richer experience of the spatial dimensions of the text, will make use of the map at multiple points in multiple ways during reading, as well as potentially returning to it afterwards to review the entirety of the narrative.

### *Two-facedness*

The issue of *when* the reader chooses to juxtapose map and text and *how* he or she does so, leads directly into a related concern over the doubleness of the map and its audience. The fictional map itself commonly (though not always) functions at two levels “simultaneously”, one of which is represented within the text and involves use of the map by the characters, the other by the reader (usually through the mediation of the narrator), with these two levels vitally connected. Genette's primary definition of the paratext (already given above but quoted more fully here) is itself centred upon this potential doubleness when he describes it as:

a *threshold*, or – a word that Borges used apropos of a preface – a “vestibule” that offers the world at large the possibility of either stepping inside or turning back. It is an “undefined zone” between the inside and the outside, a zone without any hard and fast boundary on either the inward side (turned toward the text) or the outward side (turned toward the world's discourse about the text) . . .<sup>39</sup>

This Janus-faced account of paratext (“turned towards the text” and “turned towards the world”) bears strongly upon the doubled communicative nature of the literary map.

To understand what is going on here it may be helpful to turn to the work of Christina Ljungberg who applies Charles Peirce's account of semiotics to the reading of fictional maps.

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<sup>39</sup> Genette, *Paratexts*, 2.

In Peircean semiotic terms, a map is a sign system employing at least three major forms of code: iconic; indexical and symbolic. An *index* is a sign that has an actual physical connection with its object (e.g. a weathercock for wind direction; smoke for a fire). An *icon* is a sign based on perceived likeness between sign and referent. A *symbol* is a sign determined by convention (e.g. language; mathematics). Ljungberg points out that when Peirce's account of the icon is applied to the form of a map then it can be understood to refer to two different objects (referents):<sup>40</sup>

In Peircean semiotics, a map has at least two objects, one dynamic and one immediate object. The dynamical object is the reality of the geographical facts (in the case of a map), whereas the immediate object is what could be called the mode of imaging intrinsic to the map itself . . . which will influence the ways in which the map will reflect our cultural and personal knowledge.<sup>41</sup>

In other words, the map as an iconic sign "represents" or "is like" a geographical region (say) that forms its object in terms of what it purports to depict, but at the same time it *also* exists in the mind of the reader (as interpretant). This is because, as an icon, its power lies in its ability to evoke a corresponding mental image *of itself*. Ljungberg's work thus draws attention to the "self-reflexivity of the iconic sign" because "According to Peirce, 'An *icon* is a sign which refers to the Object it denotes merely by virtue of characters of its own which it

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<sup>40</sup> Peirce defines an icon as follows: "The Icon has no dynamical connection with the object it represents; it simply happens that its qualities resemble those of that object, and excite analogous sensations in the mind for which it is a likeness. But it really stands unconnected with them" (*Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, ed. Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss. Vols. I and II. [Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1960]), 2.299; p.168.

<sup>41</sup> Christina Ljungberg, "Cartographies of the Future: Julie Mehtretu's Dynamic Charting of Fluid Spaces," *The Cartographic Journal* 46.4 (2009): 308-315, 309.

possesses”<sup>42</sup> Reading maps within literature thus means “working with two sets of references, one referring to the universe of the text, the other one to the lifeworld and the memories of the reader”.<sup>43</sup> This doubleness in terms of map *correspondence* (to places and objects in the fictional world *and* to the reader's internalised experience of place and space) is a *fundamental* feature of literary mapping. So, characters within the fictional world either find or make a map, while the reader is ostensibly provided with “the same map” (or a copy; or the final version) made by one of the characters. This enables an extension of map use *from* character to reader with the intended result that when the characters consult the map *within* the story, the reader is also prompted to turn to his or her copy at the front of the book. In theory, direct visual communication to the reader thus works to strengthen and reinforce imaginative spatial engagement with the verbal representation of the fictional world. In a slightly contradictory way, the reader is taken *out* of the narrative in order to undertake a mimetic act that draws him or her further back *into* the narrative. However, this activity is risky, unpredictable and reliant upon the strength of imaginative engagement by the individual reader (as well as the convincing nature of correspondence between externalised fictional map and fictional world and correspondence between internalised readerly map and fictional map and world). At the same time, the doubling of the map creates all kinds of representational problems in terms of gaps between visual and verbal representations and draws attention to the illusory nature of both. Sometimes the readerly map purports to be the map being used within the text (which of course does not really “exist” at all); sometimes it is explicitly presented as a copy of the “original”; sometimes it is made retrospectively and clearly presented only for the reader.

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<sup>42</sup> Christina Ljungberg, “Dynamic Instances of Interaction: The Performative Function of Iconicity in Literary Texts,” *Sign System Studies* 38 (2010): 270-97, 272.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 276.

The two-faced nature of the paratext and thus, by extension, its potential for double-meaning also proves highly relevant for the literary map where an apparent primary use value is often undermined by how it *actually* functions (consciously or unconsciously for the characters; intentionally or unintentionally for the author) as well as *who it addresses*. When understood as a speech-act, the paratext is a problematic utterance, “situated as it is between the first-order illocutionary domain of the public world and that of the second-order speech-acts of fiction”.<sup>44</sup> As Genette points out, certain paratextual features (such as dedications) are explicitly performative, easily directing their message outwards (“I dedicate this book to you”) but for other paratextual elements the two “orders” create difficulties and tensions.<sup>45</sup> For the fictional map, this characteristic of two-facedness emerges strongly in relation to the third paratextual element defined by Genette; illocutionary force. The question of *who has provided* the map bears strongly upon its communicative nature and on how much it can be relied upon and trusted (this is true for both sender-addressee relationships within and outside the text).

The map that faces *towards* the reader is most commonly presented by the narrator, who (ostensibly) gives it in order to further illuminate and authenticate the narrative he or she is relating (e.g. Jim Hawkins provides the map for *Treasure Island*). In such cases, the sender-addressee relationship ties map and narrative closely together. At the same time, the corresponding inward-looking map, represented *within* the narrative, is often introduced by means of a lengthy account of its own history and a full description of its materiality and contents. The fictional sender-addressee relationship is felt to be strongly arbitrary: the map does not know in whose hands it will eventually land. This also means that the map *within* the narrative has to prove itself worthy, or reveal itself not to be so, to the person who now

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<sup>44</sup> Genette, *Paratexts*, Foreword by Richard Macksey, xix.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

owns it. Sometimes, the map attempts to reduce confusion by facing in *only* one direction; that is, it presents itself as explicitly readerly. Where there is no corresponding use of the map within the text this reduces the likelihood of confusion between the two different orders of communication (and the underlying referents) but can also create a powerful visual/verbal juxtaposition or contrast (as in the Ransome example).

### *The Function of Map as Paratext*

Thus far I have used Genette's account of the paratext to explore different aspects of material meaning created by the juxtaposition of map and text, by looking at issues of location, time and audience and seeking to show that the meaning of the map is closely integrated with that of the text and enhances the reader's awareness of spatial meaning and internalised spatialisation. It is now time to turn our attention directly to the apparent "primary" function of the fictional map. By its very nature, a map is a thing of use; what appears on (and is left off) a map – and thus what we understand a map to be – is determined by anticipated audience and function. For literary maps, the existence of a map alongside a text naturally leads to the assumption that its main purpose is one of visual elucidation of spatial elements in the written text. As such it is highly likely to be considered as *secondary* to the text and expository in nature. Mark Monmonier's account of a comparable (though non-fictional) expository relationship in *Mapping it Out* is helpful here. The presentation of a map alongside a text in a scholarly work (for example, with maps of battlefields, or naval battles, in a history text) operates fairly straightforwardly as a visual aid to clarify a verbal account. In considering what the expository map "adds" to a text, Monmonier covers areas that are of particular relevance to literary mapping and reinforces some uses of the map already considered. First, he discusses the way in which the linguistic code of the map (words and

font types) provides “a needed link between the cartographic symbols and the natural language of authors and readers”.<sup>46</sup> Monmonier argues that: “Words that reflect the author's ideas and terminology are needed to tie the map to the written text and to integrate the structurally diverse realms of cartographic and literary representation”.<sup>47</sup> A closely related point is the way in which such a map functions in relation to narrative but *also* displays narrative elements itself. Monmonier states that: “By organizing information chronologically as well as spatially, maps can support a variety of historical narratives addressing long or short periods of time”.<sup>48</sup> The literary map often *does* attempt to do this in a distinctive way that an ordinary map does not by providing far more text (often narrative information) than would ordinarily appear on a map. Spatial points are linked to dramatic events within the narrative and thus pull together the hermeneutic codes of map and text. The map raises questions that *only* the text (and a re-reading of the map in the light of the text) can resolve.

Tolkien's first map for *The Hobbit* (“Thror's Map”) provides an excellent example of the literary map's self-conscious integration with narrative and plot (see Fig 2). Visually and textually the map signals to what it does *not* contain on each boundary, by means of four arrows and texts, rather than supplying that information within itself. Arrows and texts, pointing in each cardinal direction, self-consciously gesture to what is “off the map”, thus drawing attention to its own limits. The map also contains two kinds of language, one readable and one not. At the bottom/centre-right of the map image lies a block of unreadable text that self-consciously presents itself as a secondary message needing to be decoded, while the odd marginal space included on the left of the map contains a second unreadable runic message alongside a rather sinister hand. The *meaning* of the runes, is not uncovered until the

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<sup>46</sup> Monmonier, *Mapping it Out*, 93.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 93.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 204.

narrative is well underway when the characters arrive at Rivendell. It is revealed to its owners when they show the elf lord, Elrond, the map and he is able to translate both sets of runes:<sup>49</sup>

He held up the map and the white light shone through it. “What is this?” he said.

“There are moon-letters here, beside the plain runes which say “five feet high the door and three may walk abreast.”<sup>50</sup>

Elrond then translates the message in the centre of the map: “Stand by the grey stone when the thrush knocks,” read Elrond, “and the setting sun with the last light of Durin's Day will shine upon the keyhole”.<sup>51</sup> Even at this point, however, although the characters are now able to literally “read” the words they still have not decoded them. Full understanding is only able to be finally achieved when the map's meaning is made material (within the narrative) – understood in the place it represents at an exact moment in time (Durin's Day) which is “the first day of the last moon of Autumn”.<sup>52</sup> Thus, the map repeatedly *withholds* information as much as it supplies it. The fact that it does so, on the one hand, draws attention to its primary function as a map that corresponds to a fictional text: its expository nature (a primary function that is paratextual). In a way that is highly characteristic, it both anticipates and awaits the text that will fully unfold its meaning. Yet, at the same time, site-specific information on the map also proves crucial to the success of the quest and to resolution of the

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<sup>49</sup> Hammond and Scull describe Tolkien's original ambitions for the map: “Tolkien wanted *Thror's Map* to be inserted in chapter 1, at the first mention of it in the text . . . or else in chapter 3, when the moon-runes are discovered by Elrond. . . . In addition he wanted the moon-runes to be printed as a mirror-image on the back of the map . . . so that they could be read correctly through the paper when it was held as directed by the legend at lower left, simulating the effect of the runes as they are revealed to Elrond by moonlight” (93).

<sup>50</sup> J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Hobbit or There and Back Again* (London, 1937) 72.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 73.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 73.

narrative. So the map functions in an expository (paratextual) way at one level in relation to the text, but also displays the potential to *exceed* that assumed function and move towards a position of far more active, complex, visual-verbal synergy.

Monmonier also makes the important point that, *despite* its clear function, the expository map is easily overlooked in favour of the text so that: “the first goal of integrative cartography is to get the reader to look at the map”.<sup>53</sup> Literary mapping is a particular form of “integrative cartography” but achieving this goal is not always straightforward and thus a range of explicit and implicit tactics are employed. To ensure that the map fulfils its primary purpose, Monmonier advises that a text needs to explicitly direct its readers towards the map: “Expository cartography works best when the author tells the reader to look at the map”.<sup>54</sup> In literary mapping, for certain genres in which the map is presented as if it provides an objective, almost scientific, aid to meaning there is no difficulty with a similar use of explicit instructions by means of footnotes or direction within the text. So, in Erskine Childers' *The Riddle of the Sands*, the reader is repeatedly directed back to the maps at the front of the book by means of footnotes or references within the text: e.g. “'Here it is,' said Davies (see Map A), and I looked with a new and strange interest at the long string of slender islands”.<sup>55</sup> John

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<sup>53</sup> Monmonier, *Mapping it Out*, 242.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 94.

<sup>55</sup> Erskine Childers, *The Riddle of the Sands: A Record of Secret Service Recently Achieved* (London, 1903), 84. For an alternate application of the concept of paratext to fictional maps see Matthew Graves, “Maps and Texts: Reading Literary Maps: The Case of *The Riddle of the Sands*,” *TRANS. Internet-Zeitschrift für Kulturwissenschaften* 16 (2005): 1-15. Graves distinguishes between: *para-textual maps* (“the frontispiece, or appended map”); *Intra-textual maps* (“maps which occur within and alongside the text”); and *Logo-textual maps* “word-maps or narrated maps that are pure text, bereft of graphic form, but which perform an iconic function” (3). Graves considers the empirical map within the text to be an “intra-text” rather than a “paratext” (a distinction that I do not make).



Buchan (who frequently employs maps) also presents them in direct ways: ‘I had better explain here the chief features of the country, for they bulk largely in my story’.<sup>56</sup> The narrator draws explicit attention to the importance of physical and spatial understanding for a full response to the narrative that corresponds to it.

Elsewhere, readerly use of the map is less directly indicated by proxy. A character within the book pores over the map, reading it closely, as Jim famously does in *Treasure Island*:

I brooded by the hour together over the map, all the details of which I well remembered. Sitting by the fire in the house-keeper's room, I approached that island in my fancy from every possible direction; I explored every acre of its surface; I climbed a thousand times to that tall hill they call the Spy-glass, and from the top I enjoyed the most wonderful and changing prospects. Sometimes the island was thick with savages, with whom we fought, sometimes full of dangerous animals that hunted us; but in all my fancies nothing occurred to me so strange and tragic as our actual adventures.<sup>57</sup>

The map encourages imaginative projection twice over in Jim and the reader. In this case, whilst Jim goes out and has exciting, if terrible, adventures in the “actual” (represented) place to which the map corresponds, the boy-reader stays safely at home. At the same time the novel works at a level of colonial propaganda to encourage him to go forth and replicate such adventures out in the real world when he grows up. In such ways the nineteenth-century map of adventure frequently functions at an explicit level to initiate plot and action in relation to the text but also does so at a larger ideological level outside it.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> John Buchan, *Prester John* (London, 1910) 75.

<sup>57</sup> Robert Louis Stevenson, *Treasure Island* (London, Paris and New York, 1883), 36.

<sup>58</sup> For a full exploration of such ideas see Sally Bushell, “Mapping Victorian Adventure Fiction: Silences, Doublings and the Ur-Map in *Treasure Island* and *King Solomon’s Mines*,” *Victorian Studies* 57.4. (2015): pp.

## *The Limits of the Paratext*

Having applied the concept of the paratext to the map-text dynamic in a way that has proved productive, it is time to pull back and consider what is overlooked or missed by approaching the subject only in this way. At the start of this article I drew attention to the way in which the concept of the paratext is awkwardly situated in relation to a large and influential body of poststructuralist thought that famously declares, “there is nothing outside the text”. Graham Allen tells us:

At stake here is a distinction between the poststructuralist recognition of the text’s relation to the entirety of cultural signification and a more restricted, structuralist-inspired focus on the supposedly closed, or at least semi-autonomous, field of literature.<sup>59</sup>

So, on the one hand, paratextuality is both popular and capable of wide application across a range of media – such as film and digital cultures as well as literary texts – because of the delimited material aspect of the concept that makes it easy to grasp and apply. On the other hand, this is potentially limiting for the usefulness of the concept of the paratext and at times creates uncertainty about its nature as described by Genette. As Georg Stanitzek notes: “Paratexts have the effect of promoting the unity of a text, but they can only accomplish this without hindrance when . . . no questions are asked about details, when there are no inquiries into how they function”.<sup>60</sup> In a useful article on “Paratext and Digitized Narrative” that introduces a special issue on the subject, Dorothee Birke and Birte Christ consider the more controversial elements of the concept, identifying three key issues: materialization;

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<sup>59</sup> Allen, 102.

<sup>60</sup> Georg Stanitzek, “Texts and Paratexts in Media,” *Critical Inquiry*, 32.1. (Autumn 2005): 27-42; 7.

boundaries and authorization. There is, first, the problem of whether the paratext can be understood as an abstract spatial construct or a physical entity. Is it identified with Text or with a book? Then, at the boundary between paratext and text, the same problem of material/non-material relations occurs. So, the distinction between peritext and epitext “is clearly predicated on the case of the book as a unifying object” but the imagery of the paratext as a canal lock “leaves unclear what is still paratext and what is already context or, in Genette’s words, ‘beyond text’”.<sup>61</sup> The third problematic area concerns the way in which “Genette draws the line between paratext and context using the notion of authorization”.<sup>62</sup> It is not always clear whether Genette “seems to rely on the author as a real life person and thereby invites all the criticism that has generally been directed at intentionalist approaches” or “conceives of the author as a point of reference created by the paratext”.<sup>63</sup>

How do such criticisms bear upon the application of the concept of the paratext to the reading of the relationship between literary map and text? In positive terms it is clear that the implicit materialism of Genette’s approach proves extremely useful for this particular conjunction, where much of the meaning-production is centred upon direct juxtaposition of map and text within the covers of the book and where a material approach to the various tensions between the two forms proves highly productive in terms of enriching interpretation of the work. As Stanitzek notes, “the paratextual zone is observed to be a sphere of mobile, fragile, unstable, improbable relationships, a place of contacts and contracts and communication, or, as Genette puts it, of ‘transaction’” and this account of it fits directly with

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<sup>61</sup> Dorothee Birke and Birte Christ, “Paratext and Digitized Narrative: Mapping the Field,” *Narrative* 21.1. (2013): 65-87; 70.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 70.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 70.

the analysis undertaken.<sup>64</sup> However, this is still to understand the application of the paratext only within the remorseless logic of its own terms. Against this, we might note that to do so ties us into the dominant paradigm of a strongly structuralist, delimited, reading of the relationship but also glosses over a number of implicit issues that an alternative approach might allow us to explore more fully. These would include: the problem of subordination of paratext to text and image to word; the question of relative priority of representation; the possibility of a more complex dialectical relationship.

Perhaps the key issue here is that of subordination. Understanding the map's primary function in relation to the text to be expository (as discussed above) naturally fits with Genette's account of the paratext as always subordinate to the text, that is:

dedicated to the service of something other than itself that constitutes its *raison d'être*.

This something is the text. . . . the paratextual element is always subordinate to "its" text, and this functionality determines the essence of its appeal and its existence.<sup>65</sup>

However, to define the fictional map in such a way marginalises and limits its spatial power, which not only bears upon and shapes that text in generic and narrative ways but also illuminates it and potentially extends beyond it. Fictional maps are capable of acquiring meanings and values far beyond their primary "use" value. For Genette, though, the paratext always operates at a second order level, one step further away from reality than fictional representation with the result that:

the discourse on the paratext must never forget that it bears on a discourse that bears on a discourse, and that the meaning of its object depends on the object of this meaning, which is yet another meaning.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Stanitzek, "Texts and Paratexts in Media," 6.

<sup>65</sup> Genette, *Paratexts*, 12.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 410.

On the one hand, this might be said to be particularly true of the fictional map, as a visual representation of a verbal representation with no basis in real-world reference. But, on the other, what we see with the most powerful and influential literary maps, is that they have a capacity to release themselves, to work against the text in a number of ways, to become cultural icons, acquiring meanings beyond themselves and independently of the text. This also, of course, applies to authoriality (a problematic issue in any case for the literary map which is rarely drawn directly by the author). When the meaning of the map ultimately works against the meaning of the text (as is quite frequently the case, for example, in detective fiction) it is unclear whether or not this is intentional on the part of the author. Instead, the power of the map and its ability to convince us to trust it, emerges potentially counter to any “performance of authorship”.<sup>67</sup> To put it another way, the authority of the map overrides the authority of the author.

We might also note that, as an inevitable consequence of the assumption of subordination, paratextual elements are understood to have been written after, and in relation to, a pre-existing text. But in some of the most highly integrated examples of literary mapping, the map either precedes (*Treasure Island*; *The Hobbit*) is used alongside (Hardy's Map of Wessex) or actively helps to create (*Lord of the Rings*) the literary work to which it corresponds, immediately complicating this issue. This in turn raises an important question concerning the *relative priority* of map and text. In *Topographies*, J. Hillis Miller comments that:

[I]f the landscape is inside the novel, then it is determined by it and so cannot constitute its ground. The same thing may be said of the relation of any two members of the

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<sup>67</sup> Birke and Christ claim that “the paratext ‘performs’ authorship in order to direct the audience towards a specific reception” (70).

series: novel and map; real map and imaginary map; landscape and map. Each is both prior to the other and later than it . . .<sup>68</sup>

With an actual map, in the world, the map corresponds to a physically present place that makes of it a secondary representation. For the literary work, we might assume the same priority of world *over* mapped representation but since there is no “real” space for the fictional world either, the map corresponds to something which does not exist any more or less than it does. If *neither* is prior, and *neither* is underpinned by any referential reality, then the relationship between map and text is less about the hierarchy of the paratext and more about a complex totality that enables and brings about a deep experience of literary space and place. From one perspective this leads to the inevitable paradox that “the effort of mapping is interrupted by an encounter with the unmappable” as the reader engages with what Hillis Miller calls “a place that is everywhere and nowhere, a place you cannot get to from here”.<sup>69</sup> From another, or rather, at the self-same time, the paradox itself attests to the extraordinary nature of the spatial experience of literature – an active experience that simultaneously enables a response to either map or world “as if it were real” although the reader knows that it is not.<sup>70</sup>

Releasing the map-text relationship from the merely paratextual clearly begins to open up larger philosophical questions about the nature of different forms of literary representation and of the spatial experience of literature, but it also raises more fundamental questions about how we conceive of the visual-verbal relationship that is involved. Perhaps we should look instead to an alternative model that avoids subordination and potentially allows for a more

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<sup>68</sup> J. Hillis Miller, *Topographies* (Stanford, 1995), 21.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>70</sup> In fairness, Genette is not blind to the possibility of the paratext exceeding its intended role. He states: “like all relays, the paratext sometimes tends to go beyond its function and to turn itself into an impediment, from then on playing its own game to the detriment of its text’s game” (*Paratexts*, 410).

integrated dialectic of meaning. W. J. T. Mitchell's account of the "imagetext" may be of assistance here.

Mitchell's largest claim is to assert a "pictorial turn" occurring after the "linguistic turn" of the twentieth century.<sup>71</sup> Where the linguistic turn was centred upon a theoretical tension between speech and writing, Mitchell sees this as being replaced by a tension between image and word that has recurred over time and is doing so again now: "The history of culture is in part the story of a protracted struggle for dominance between pictorial and linguistic signs".<sup>72</sup> Mitchell looks towards a theory of the image that corresponds to some degree to the role linguistics has played in relation to language. This is far more problematic for the visual medium, however, which cannot express itself fully in the same form in which it occurs (as linguistics can). In methodological terms, therefore, his work constantly attempts to escape from the limitations of a logocentric world, aiming somehow to release images into their own discourse: "the theoretical moment was thus seen as immanent to, embedded in, specific visual /verbal constructions and practices, not as standing outside them in some master theory".<sup>73</sup>

Across two works (*Iconology* and *Picture Theory*) Mitchell argues that word and image have traditionally been set against each other for ideological reasons but that this is not the most productive way to address the nature of this ongoing dialectic. In *Picture Theory* he argues for a fully integrated mode of interpretation: "the interaction of pictures and texts is constitutive of representation as such; all media are mixed media, and all representations are

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<sup>71</sup> Mitchell, *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation* (Chicago, 1994), 11.

<sup>72</sup> Mitchell, *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology* (Chicago, 1986), 43.

<sup>73</sup> "The Last Formalist, or W. J. T. Mitchell as Romantic Dinosaur: An Interview with Orrin C. Wang" *Romantic Circles: Praxis Series* accessed 3.08.2015 <<http://www.rc.umd.edu/praxis/mitchell/interview/mitch-interview.html>> , 18.

heterogeneous; there are no ‘purely’ visual or verbal arts”.<sup>74</sup> For Mitchell, it is productive to think instead in terms of “an image-text structure” which might involve differing levels of conjunction and disjuncture.<sup>75</sup> At the heart of Mitchell’s position lies the concept of the “imagetext”. Mitchell describes it in an interview as:

the name of a recurrent gap or structural relationship among symbolic practices, a trope that signals a boundary or fold in the field of representation. The overall claim is that representation is heterogeneous . . . a mixed medium. . . . Meaning is relational all the way down and the imagetext is just one way of making that fact visible.<sup>76</sup> (4)

The imagetext is not something that can be resolved into a unity, just as the word-image problem is best considered as a necessary difference.<sup>77</sup> In a footnote to *Picture Theory* Mitchell defines three possible ways of conceiving of this mixed medium: image/text; imagetext; image-text. He describes:

"image/text" as a problematic gap, cleavage, or rupture in representation. The term "imagetext" designates composite, synthetic works (or concepts) that combine image and text. "Image-text," with a hyphen, designates *relations* of the visual and verbal.<sup>78</sup>

We need to return to the particular kind of visual/verbal relationship which is the focus of this article; the relationship between map and text in a literary work. Where Genette’s approach

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<sup>74</sup> Mitchell, *Picture Theory*, 5.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 90.

<sup>76</sup> Christine Wisenthal and Brad Bucknell, “Essays into the Imagetext: An Interview with W. J. T. Mitchell,” *Mosaic: A Journal for the Interdisciplinary Study of Literature* 33.2. (2000): 1-23; 4.

<sup>77</sup> Mitchell concludes “ ‘Word and image,’ like the concepts of race, gender and class . . . designates multiple regions of social and semiotic difference that we can live neither with nor without, but must continually reinvent and renegotiate” (W. J. T. Mitchell, “Word and Image,” *Critical Terms for Art History* eds. Robert Nelson and Richard Shiff [Chicago, 1996] 51-61; 60).

<sup>78</sup> Mitchell, *Picture Theory*, n.9, 89.



envisaged a core text + peritext + epitext in a model which suggests radiating circles of enlarged meaning emanating from a textual core, the concept of the imagetext potentially releases visual elements from the problem of subordination to the verbal into a more equal dialectic that can also allow for a developing relationship between map and text as the text is read over time. Approaching the relationship in this way re-determines the concept of the literary work itself, to allow a far more holistic interpretative model with the potential to reshape the method and nature of analysis and to alter the nature of the reading experience. Again, this is highly relevant for the relationship between fictional map and text where, ideally, that relationship is not static, nor merely dynamic, but iterative (each return to map or text re-informs understanding in part because of the move between different forms of representation). Both map and text are clearly “mixed media” in some senses; a map contains words as well as images and symbols and the text visualizes both the map and the fictional world it purports to represent. When the map is considered as a paratext the primary emphasis is on its (preparatory) function in relation to the text. When map and text are both considered as part of an imagetext then the emphasis shifts towards a far more integrated analysis of the nature of two different forms of representation that overlap and inform each other. The concept of the imagetext also partly does away with the problem of boundaries since it allows the boundary between visual and verbal meaning to be far more permeable and it further allows for varying degrees of priority between image and text. It works very effectively in relation to an author or artist who might be combining different forms in different ways over time. It allows us to move across and between multiple versions of maps, as well as between maps and illustrations and the relation of both to each other and the text.

If we return briefly to two of the examples already analysed, we can consider how a more fluid conception of the totality of the work, implicit in the move from paratext to imagetext, alters understanding or interpretation. In the case of Arthur Ransome's *Swallows and*

*Amazons* series, from the second book onwards he provided a highly distinctive internal map on both endpapers as well as drawing all black and white illustrations within each book. The cover designs for the series were also authorial by extension, being a composite image of different internal illustrations and often including map elements.<sup>79</sup> So, for *They Didn't Mean to Go to Sea* the book cover includes: a compass; a labelled image of the boat and cross-section; and an illustration of the lightship buoy also marked on the map and featuring strongly in the narrative as the point of no return (see Fig. 3). In such an example, it could be argued that the whole book functions as a kind of imagetext in which the map is part of a visual-verbal totality in relation to the text to which it corresponds, but *also* to the larger series (for which every book contains the stylised cover and endpaper maps). This is (implicitly) recognised by on-going facsimile reproduction of the original editions. In another work in the series – *Secret Water* – the core narrative is centred upon the mapping of the region by the children, repeated versions of their map being drawn over time are given as map-illustrations within the book and some of the illustrations are of the children undertaking the necessary surveying and cartographic work.<sup>80</sup> Here, then, the endpaper map is still a paratext with a particular status (the final version made by the children) but the complex interrelations between verbal and visual, between writing and map-making across the whole mean that the map clearly exceeds its paratextual function and something else – such as the concept of the imagetext – is required to interpret it.

In the case of Tolkien's map for *The Hobbit*, a different paratext/imagetext issue arises in terms of map multiplicity over time. Although I previously discussed "Thror's Map" in isolation, this map appears as the front endpaper of the first edition with a second different

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<sup>79</sup> The first edition of *Swallows and Amazons* presented a non-authorial endpaper map by Stephen Spurrer that was *also* the cover design. The first edition of the second book, *Swallowdale* again used the endpaper map as the book cover design, before the composite design was adopted.

<sup>80</sup> Arthur Ransome, *Secret Water* (London, 1939).

map at a smaller-scale given as the back endpaper. That second map of “Wilderland” provides the larger topographical knowledge that the first map lacks, but is clearly intended only for the reader (whereas the front endpaper corresponds to that used by the characters in the verbal narrative). If the back endpaper map had been presented at the start it would have enabled the reader to spatialise the entire journey, rather than just the final section of it around the Lonely Mountain. By *withholding* it, the reader experiences the same sense of confused geography as the characters in their muddled journey eastward. So the placing of two maps at different scales at front and back has a complex paratextual function, with the pairing of the maps appearing to perform authorial intention by involving the reader in two different ways. A little further enquiry, however, reveals that Tolkien originally intended *The Hobbit* to contain *five* maps in total that would “trace Bilbo's journey” in “logical order, following the course of the story and they would have made a neat cartographic parallel to the text”.<sup>81</sup> In the author's original conception then, a *sequence* of maps would have directly corresponded to the narrative and the characters' movements across the landscape creating a very different structure of reading and mapping. Thus the framing and pairing of the endpaper maps at two scales in the first published edition, effective as it is, is undermined by an authorial intention that conceived of a developing relationship of map and text across the whole.<sup>82</sup> Furthermore, a larger number of draft versions of “Thror's Map” (at least five) survive as well as the information that this map *preceded* the text with which it is connected (apart from the first line) by some years:<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Wayne G. Hammond & Christina Scull, eds. *The Art of The Hobbit*, (London, 2011), 91.

<sup>82</sup> Also as previously noted “Thror's Map” was not intended to be an endpaper but to be presented within the text, an authorial intention over-ridden by the publishers.

<sup>83</sup> See Hammond and Scull for facsimiles of the draft maps (*The Art of The Hobbit*, 49-57).

On a blank leaf I scrawled “In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit”. I did not and do not know why. I did nothing about it, for a long time, and for some years I got no further than the production of Thror's Map.<sup>84</sup>

The realisation that the first published maps are *themselves* part of an alternative underlying narrative of creative mapping, destabilises these objects and their relation to the text and begins to suggest a need for understanding the relationship between map and text not just in the published work but right through the entirety of textual forms (including the preceding compositional material).

In both examples, then, we can see that the concept of the paratext is most helpful when considering a discrete material object (e.g. a particular edition) in the context of a particular historical and material moment, but it is less suited to the full underlying and on-going history of a literary work as a spatio-temporal object holding multiple layers of meaning. The restriction of paratextual material to that of the author is also problematic. So, in the case of Tolkien's maps, Genette's concept of the “epitext” could be applied to the pre-textual maps for *The Hobbit*, but would begin to prove problematic when faced with either the totality of the mapping of Middle Earth (of which *The Hobbit* is just a small part and for which many of the maps are made by the author's son) or with extraordinary on-going post-authorial re-mappings of Tolkien's fiction.<sup>85</sup>

Does this account of the fictional map mean that the final part of this article undermines the first part, displacing the concept of map-as-paratext since map-as-imagetext is much broader and more encompassing? I don't think so. Certain characteristics of the fictional

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<sup>84</sup> Humphrey Carpenter, ed. *The Letters of J. R. R. Tolkien* (London, 1995), 215.

<sup>85</sup> For example: Barbara Strachey, *The Journeys of Frodo, An Atlas of J. R. R. Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings* (London, 1981); Karen Wynn Fonstad, *The Atlas of Middle Earth* (New York, 1991).

map certainly *do* appear to be determined by its paratextual identity – most crucially its “doubled” nature and the physical and material juxtaposition of visual and verbal forms that the concept of the paratext brings to the fore. At the same time, if we return to the three different forms of imagetext articulated by Mitchell, then we can quite easily identify a “map/text” where the two forms are potentially in conflict (e.g. *Watership Down* where an OS map is provided but the entire narrative is told through the eyes of rabbits who cannot read a map); a “maptext” where the two forms are fully integrated and essential to each other (*The Selected Works of T. S. Spivet*); a “map-text” where relations between the two are vital and interlocking (*Treasure Island*; *Riddle of the Sands*).<sup>86</sup> Most examples are likely to fall somewhere between the second and third categories. Both approaches work and work to illuminate different aspects of the dynamic between map and text.

We should also bear in mind that the concept of “imagetext” is not itself beyond critique and raises its own questions in turn. Is the literary work still an imagetext where the map is not authorial? What are the implications of a map appearing and disappearing over time, with or without the author’s consent? For example, Thomas Hardy provides a map for *The Return of the Native* in the first and second editions but then removes it (and replaces it with a larger scale more generic map of Wessex). In such a case, the argument for a fully integrated model of visual-verbal interpretation seems to be undermined by the author himself. How do we allow for this? Do we need to accept that in certain rare examples (or for particular genres) maps *do* form part of an imagetext, but in others they function more paratextually – is the map-text essentially a paratext? Taken to its logical conclusion, aren’t all texts “imagetexts” by virtue of the fact that they initiate and stimulate internal visualization,

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<sup>86</sup> Richard Adams, *Watership Down* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1976) OS Map in first edition only; Reif Larsen, *The Selected Works of T. S. Spivet* (London, 2009); Robert Louis Stevenson, *Treasure Island* (London, Paris and New York, 1883); Erskine Childers, *The Riddle of the Sands: A Record of Secret Service* (London, 1903).

whether or not external visualization (in the form of a map or other illustrations) is present? If this is true, do we need an entirely new form of literary criticism to allow for the overlooked visual and spatial meanings held in the literary work? Focussing closely on the relationship between map and text raises as many questions as it answers. What I hope this article has shown, is that doing so is a worthwhile activity and – for a work where map and text appear together – should form an essential part of interpretation.