



# The Writer's Map: An Atlas of Imaginary Lands

*Huw Lewis-Jones (Editor)*

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It's one of the first things we discover as children, reading and drawing: Maps have a unique power to transport us to distant lands on wondrous travels. Put a map at the start of a book, and we *know* an adventure is going to follow. Displaying this truth with beautiful full-color illustrations, *The Writer's Map* is an atlas of the journeys that our most creative storytellers have made throughout their lives. This magnificent collection encompasses not only the maps that appear in their books but also the many maps that have inspired them, the sketches that they used while writing, and others that simply sparked their curiosity.

Philip Pullman recounts the experience of drawing a map as he set out on one of his early novels, *The Tin Princess*. Miraphora Mina recalls the creative challenge of drawing up "The Marauder's Map" for the *Harry Potter* films. David Mitchell leads us to the Mappa Mundi by way of *Cloud Atlas* and his own sketch maps. Robert Macfarlane reflects on the cartophilia that has informed his evocative nature writing, which was set off by Robert Louis Stevenson and his map of *Treasure Island*. Joanne Harris tells of her fascination with Norse maps of the universe. Reif Larsen writes about our dependence on GPS and the impulse to map our experience. Daniel Reeve describes drawing maps and charts for *The Hobbit* film trilogy. This exquisitely crafted and illustrated atlas explores these and so many more of the maps writers create and are inspired by—some real, some imagined—in both words and images.

Amid a cornucopia of 167 full-color images, we find here maps of the world as envisaged in medieval times, as well as maps of adventure, sci-fi and fantasy, nursery rhymes, literary classics, and collectible comics. An enchanting visual and verbal journey, *The Writer's Map* will be irresistible for lovers of maps, literature, and memories—and anyone prone to flights of the imagination.

## The Writer's Map: An Atlas of Imaginary Lands Details

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# From Reader Review *The Writer's Map: An Atlas of Imaginary Lands* for online ebook

## Marc Cooper says

This is a book that needs to be held with two hands. It's a beautifully printed, heavy thing where the maps provide most of the value. The words (and their authors) are of variable quality, but oh! the maps. The maps printed are not only those from the authors' books, but cover much of printed literature and, indeed, map history. One such is a full page of colour from 1025. It's printed opposite the map of the Isle of Berk from *How to Train Your Dragon*.

I do think a tighter rein should have been held on the writing in some cases. It's quite enlightening how many of the storytellers failed to tell a story! That really doesn't detract from the whole, though; there are less interesting passages in almost every book, but here you can skip over the words while ogling the maps.

I am so grateful that this book came to print. It's a marvellous thing.

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## Nostalgia Reader says

3.5 stars.

A love letter to literary maps, written by 24 writers and illustrators. Each brief essay gives the reader a glimpse into the author's childhood, creative process, what maps they've found to be most influential on their careers as illustrators of maps or authors of books with maps (and oftentimes, both). The essays are complemented by many photos of a variety of maps, ranging from historical atlases to drafts of worlds (including original drafts of Narnia and Mordor) to the final elaborate endpaper maps.

Each essay focuses on the author's personal experience with maps and adventure, and how they morphed that into their creative employment of today. Some focus more on their present works, detailing their processes of how they start mapping before they write (or sometimes the other way round), while others detail their journey through maps of childhood, whether mapping their childhood explorations or losing themselves in the endpaper maps of a kids book.

Even if some of the essayist's names don't immediately sound familiar, after reading their essays (or their bios), you'll realize you've likely been familiar with their work for quite some time. Although many of their journeys and observations are similar, they each have their own path that brought them to their love of maps today—much like a map itself.

While I was hoping for a bit more of a historical bent to the book, rather than personal essays, I still enjoyed the journey through multitudes of worlds and maps, and was introduced to a few new books and maps along the way (most influential find: "An ancient mappe of Fairyland" from Bernard Sleight).

Thank you to NetGalley for providing me with a free copy to review!

(Cross posted on my blog.)

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## Etienne says

No really what I was expecting. I would have taken more maps and less writing. This is an interesting concept and the maps are beautiful. Just not necessarily the way I would have done it or wanted it. Good idea but the execution could have been better!

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## Cheya says

What a delightful book. Different authors talk about their love of maps and how they've used maps in their stories. It will make a great coffee table book as you enjoy looking at the pictures of maps featured on literature. Expect more than a coffee book, though. You'll want to spend time reading the stories that will increase your love of maps. A great present for Christmas.

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## Pop Bop says

A Very Mixed Bag of "Story-Maps"

Read this book blurb carefully - "The Writer's Map is an atlas of the journeys that our most creative storytellers have made throughout their lives.". It tells you more about this book than perhaps the publisher intended. A great deal of the text, (and there is a lot of text), is by writers and illustrators who share their personal histories with maps - as children, as readers, as "book lovers", as professional writers, and as artists. The book is illustrated with examples - some familiar, some unique, some prosaic, and some odd and lovely - but for the greater part this is a collection of personal essays, mixed up with a rather disordered and idiosyncratic survey of maps in literature and also maps generally through the ages.

There are some hits, (the story behind the Harry Potter Marauder's Map or the challenges of creating the various maps used as props in the "Lord of the Rings" movies), and some juvenilia and ephemera that may be of interest mostly to devoted fans of the Brontes, Thoreau, "Pilgrim's Progress", Arthur Ransome, "Treasure Island", Moominland, and so on. Interspersed through this, (the book has chapter and section headings, but they are more poetic flights of fancy than an actual table of contents), are first person testimonials by a wide and varied cast of writers. These bits range considerably in appeal and interest. (I did think it was especially interesting to compare the maps that were doodled by authors with the final maps that were prepared for publication by professional illustrators based on those doodles.)

The maps themselves are first rate, and range from the familiar to the odd, with lots of stops inbetween. The appeal of the text varies, and sometimes the contributors lay it on a bit thick. But there is something for everyone, since the list of contributors is rather impressive. You'll find lengthy essays from Chris Ridell, Cressida Crowell, Robert Macfarlane, Francis Hardinge, Joanne Harris, David Mitchell, Kiran Hargrave, Lev Grossman, Brian Selznick, and a host of other contemporary writers with whom you may or may not be familiar. The upshot for me was that this ended up being a quite satisfying, if somewhat haphazard, browsable book.

(Please note that I received a free advance will-self-destruct-in-x-days Adobe Digital copy of this book

without a review requirement, or any influence regarding review content should I choose to post a review. Apart from that I have no connection at all to either the author or the publisher of this book.)

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## **Vintage says**

This book is enchanting! I love it!

I bought it for my son as he loves maps, geography, fantasy, history, imagination and the list goes on.

For avid readers of children's literature particularly fantasy and magic (*Harry Potter*, *Narnia*, *LOTR*, etc) the book has detailed black and white and color copies of all the popular maps plus more. I've already found one map The Land of Make Believe map which is so charming and would make a great addition to a child's room.

There are chapters from either the point of view of the author and how maps from other books impacted their imagination and writing as well as one from the illustrator that created the letters and Marauder's Map for the Harry Potter movies. The details of what was needed to create a magical letters map that was beyond the norm was fascinating.

This is one of those books that I want to give to each and every long-time fantasy reader and friend as it has so many old literary favorites as well as new ones you will want to explore.

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## **Literary Soirée says**

I have read a ton in my life but never a book like *The Writer's Map*, which is a wonder! So captivating to look at and read, this gorgeous book contains the world — literally — within its 167 full-color images. Included are medieval maps and others related to the classics, sci-fi and fantasy, adventure, collectible comics, and nursery rhymes. For readers who fancy maps, literature and high adventure. 5/5

Thanks to the author, the University of Chicago Press and NetGalley for the review copy. Opinions are mine.

#TheWriter'sMap #NetGalley

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## **Kendra says**

A collection of writers', cartographers', artists' and scholars' accounts of maps of fictional places and how maps influence and guide fiction writing. While many of the essays included here are beautifully written and thought-provoking, every contributor is white, and although a few mention historical maps of non-Western places or non-Western influences, almost all of the maps and writers and places they cite are also predominantly white. So although I enjoyed reading about how ancient maps sparked writers' imaginations, how some authors begin by making maps of their new worlds, and so on, I was enormously disappointed in the lack of diversity represented in the collection. Where was N.J. Jemison to discuss the geography of the Broken Earth or the Hundred Thousand Kingdoms? Where was Nnedi Okorafor to write about the worlds of

Binti or Sunny's Nigeria? Why weren't Amy Tan or Haruki Murakami or other Asian writers included?

In addition, it's pretty clear that this book needs to be read in hard copy to be enjoyed. The Kindle edition I read was a terrible mess in terms of layout and design.

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## **Jill says**

We love maps and atlases. We have a very large collection of atlases, and maps adorn most of our walls. Jim likes historical and topographic maps, and I prefer maps of fantasy lands. This gorgeous book, which features all kinds of maps along with essays about them, is the perfect addition to our library, but not one to file; rather, it will stay out, to be savored over and over again.

Most of the authors who have contributed to this book report having spent hours in their own childhoods looking at maps and imagining the worlds depicted in them. I too, spent hours doing so, beginning with maps in *The Story of Doctor Dolittle* by Hugh Lofting. Even today, when I read a fantasy with a map at the beginning, I return to it over and over as I read.

The essays in the book are delightful, but it is the illustrations that accompany the text that make this book so wonderful. It includes famous maps as well as idiosyncratic maps that inspired writers, often on two page colorful spreads. For example, one can spend hours examining the details of "The Land of Make Believe" drawn by Jaro Hess in 1930. It shows everything from "Old Mother Hubbard's Place" to the hill climbed by Jack and Jill. Other landmarks indicate that "Peter Rabbit Lived in This Hole" and "Here the Blackbird Picked Off The Maid's Hose."

In Huw Lewis-Jones's own chapter, he opines:

"[It is] what is *not* on the map [that] proves tantalizing. The edges of the maps, the blanks, the borderlands, this is where many writers, myself included, are inexorably drawn. It's good to head to places where we're not sure what is going to happen."

I, on the other hand, am drawn to what *is* included. My favorite maps when I was little were maps from the earliest times that had features like the representations of the four winds in each corner, turtles holding up the world, or dragons in the unknown areas.

Lewis-Jones reports that the first atlases were made in sixteenth-century Italy, containing many features from classical mythology, such as a representation of Atlas holding up the Earth. [In Greek mythology, Atlas was a Titan condemned to hold up the sky for eternity. The great cartographer Gerardus Mercator, born in 1512, was the first to title a collection of maps (and a treatise on the universe) as an "atlas." He chose the word as a commemoration of the legendary King Atlas of Mauretania whom he considered to be the first great geographer. This King Atlas was a son of the Titan Atlas but the two myths coalesced.]

Individual maps were made much earlier; this book includes a reproduction of Ptolemy's world map from 1482 - the first to appear in color.

The historical maps reveal much about the state of epistemology at the time. We saw some wonderful early maps in the Vatican Gallery of Maps in Rome, and notably they reveal religious conceptions of the shape of the world, with Jerusalem at the center.

Lewis-Jones also uses the idea of mapping as a metaphor for the way authors plot out a story as part of their creative process. Readers can often "see" such maps hovering above texts when, for example, they dive into mysteries with red herrings and/or clues strewn throughout the text - these elements had to be figured out in advance, with physical or mental maps carefully followed so both author and readers wouldn't get lost along the way.

Sometimes writers don't include actual maps in their work, but depict places so real you envision them yourselves, as, Lewis-Jones points out, did Samuel Taylor Coleridge in his poem "Kubla Khan", which begins:

"In Xanadu did Kubla Khan  
A stately pleasure-dome decree:  
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran  
Through caverns measureless to man  
Down to a sunless sea.  
So twice five miles of fertile ground  
With walls and towers were girdled round;  
And there were gardens bright with sinuous rills,  
Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree;  
And here were forests ancient as the hills,  
Enfolding sunny spots of greenery."

Maps in the book that also have essays about them include Robert Louis Stevenson's story of Treasure Island, Jonathan Swift's tales of Gulliver's Travels, A. A. Milne's Winnie-the-Pooh (with maps of the Hundred Acre Wood), C.S. Lewis in The Chronicles of Narnia, the Mary Poppins books by P.L. Travers (illustrated by Mary Shepard, whose father E.H. Shepard had drawn Winnie-the-Pooh), and of course the works of J.R.R. Tolkien. The works of some authors have inspired maps to be made by others, like J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter books. As one essay notes, "Each new generation finds its favourite literary maps..."

Isabel Greenberg, in her chapter, expresses the opinion:

"Maps of places that would be impossible to traverse in reality, or visit, are the ones that are most exciting: Faerie, Heaven, the Constellations, Middle-earth, Earthsea; even old maps of our Earth, long before we knew what lay beyond the fringes of experience. The kind of maps with wide-eyed women blowing winds from the four corners, and shaky, beautiful penned lines. It doesn't matter that you can't follow them; in fact that makes them better."

I totally agree. And this book allows you to visit many of those types of maps over and over, via not only the essays but also from the 167 beautiful full-color images. Chapters include, *inter alia*, not only discussions of grid maps and story maps, but explorations of women cartographers, anatomical maps, maps of other planets, and a survey of discoveries that were made in pursuit of erroneous information on maps (e.g., the discovery of America).

Huw Lewis-Jones wraps up the book by discussing the accuracy of Google Earth maps, juxtaposing these maps with the need we retain for "there to be some mystery in the world":

“Imaginary places can offer us new kinds of discovery. Some of the pleasure of spending time with maps comes not only from the idea of exploring areas unknown, but also from remembering that where we stand is just a small part of a massive, and bewildering, whole. Maps remind us that there is so much more out there, and so much more at stake.”

**Evaluation:** What a great gift this book would make to any lucky recipient who still takes time to revel in travels of the imagination. It is true the book primarily highlights works done in the West, and a companion book that would include more diverse contributions and influences would be most welcome. Nevertheless, it is highly recommended.

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## **1b2gmama says**

(I was given a free, digital ARC of this book and the honest thoughts & opinions in the review below are my own.)

Love meandering down an unknown road? Love a good book whose setting is so very real in your head? Do you miss the days of sitting in the backseat of your parent's station wagon while on vacation and following the multi-day journey in the big car atlas? Do you use your phone's GPS app daily now? Is your house held together with bookshelves of your favorite reads and must reads? If any of those ring true, then The Writer's Map might be just for you.

This is NOT "just a book of maps" nor is it to be regarded as an atlas. Instead, The Writer's Map is a literary cartography book woven together with text to allow the reader to dig deeper into the imaginary lands of books they've read or have always wanted to read as well as thoughts and insights as to what maps of any kind offer a person.

I was delighted to come across Steven Spurrier's Swallows and Amazons map for the aptly named book by Arthur Ransome as we are currently listening to that audio book for in our homeschool. My favorite map offered in The Writer's Map is the full-color vintage map for Moby Dick. Created by Everyt Henry, the map, as told in marginalia of the book, is said to have been created for a printing company to showcase "its high-quality inks", all in the throws of Gregory Peck as Captain Ahab. That map alone is swoon-worthy. As a bibliophile I also really enjoyed seeing the pencil-sketched map in Jack Kerouac's working notes of On the Road. And the bit of trivia about the typing of the book, is quite a gem! It's little things like that that pop up throughout The Writer's Map which make this collection gift-worthy for all book lovers and a resource to refer to again and again.

Although I read this book via the free digital ARC provided to me, I will certainly be buying this as an actual paper-pages book! I highly recommend this book for your own self as well as your go-to for gift giving. It would be a boon to every librarian, English teacher, and bookhound. Map enthusiasts would certainly enjoy this for the originality and vast map collection contained within. This is a must-own for homeschoolers as no reading program, language arts program, English literature curriculum, or bookshelf should be without.

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## **Jim says**

Really nice book about fictional maps, map and world making and the art/craft of writing. Doesn't work well



on a Kindle (or i don't know how to do it) because the captions and art aren't together. i'll be buying this for a gift.

Netgalley was kind in letting me have a review copy.

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### **The Bookish Hooker says**

The Writer's Map has to be one of the most interesting concepts for a book that I've seen in quite some time. Within its pages, the reader is introduced to the great imaginary literary worlds and the maps that inspired them and the maps that came from their stories and descriptions. The book is divided into several sections, with each being written by a current author or illustrator. Details are given as to what fueled their love for writing about faraway places or their experiences that led to their interest in literary maps. The sections hit upon such famous maps and places as Mordor, The Marauders Map, PL Travers London, Treasure Island and many more. I always appreciate a glimpse into the history of books and the authors who write them, so I was fascinated with this unique topic.

I do think a physical book would be the best format for this read, as it would enable the reader a better way to really view all of the details in the photos of the maps provided.

Overall, this was truly a unique look into both the history of maps and imaginary worlds and, also the stories behind our favorite authors.

I received a free advanced copy of this book from the publisher via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

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### **Paul says**

Editor Huw Lewis-Jones collects the personal connections, the nuts and bolts of mapmaking, and the history of. Also, a ton of great maps! If you've ever dogeared or bookmarked that page in the front of the book, this is for you! It is an absolute joy to discover how storytelling and mapmaking connect and continue to inspire authors.

For the full review: <https://paulspicks.blog/2018/09/22/th...>

For all my reviews: <https://paulspicks.blog>

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### **Sissel says**

A delightful book about maps. I loved it so much!

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## Janet says

I received a DIGITAL Advance Reader Copy of this book from #NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

From the publisher, as I do not regurgitate the contents or story of books in reviews, I let them do it!

It's one of the first things we discover as children, reading and drawing: Maps have a unique power to transport us to distant lands on wondrous travels. Put a map at the start of a book, and we know an adventure is going to follow. Displaying this truth with beautiful full-colour illustrations, *The Writer's Map* is an atlas of the journeys that our most creative storytellers have made throughout their lives. This magnificent collection encompasses not only the maps that appear in their books but also the many maps that have inspired them, the sketches that they used while writing, and others that simply sparked their curiosity.

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I, too, love maps and have always been drawn to atlases of all kinds. This one was interesting and I really loved the one of Canada, being a Canadian and looking for books that I have read all over that map. Everyone's story and map read as its own chapter/novella which was enjoyable as it was not one that you had to keep reading on and on like an NF book for it to make sense. In fact, you may pick and chose maps like I did to follow your favourite reads and ignore the ones you loathed. (Hobbits, for me!..sheer torturous books those are)

A great book for a book lover and those with cartophilia (aka a map lover).

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