



Terrestrial Globe
Vicenzo Maria Coronelli, Italian
1698
Ink on paper, plaster, brass, and oak

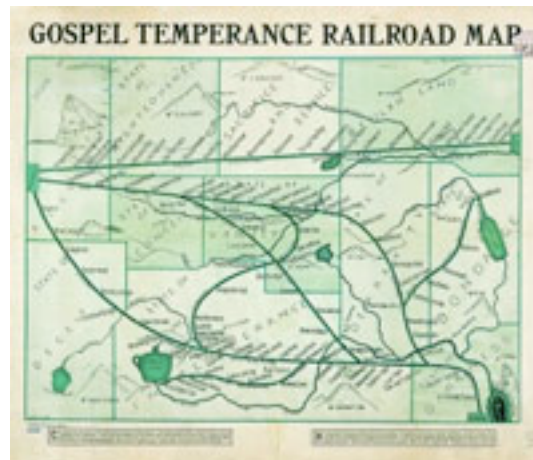
This 1688 masterpiece globe by Vincenzo Coronelli show many details including ocean currents, jungles with groups of trees, constellations of mythical beasts and the known contours of the continents. Private Collection, Virginia Mapping. Imaginary. Worlds All maps are in some sense a product of the cartographer's imagination, requiring leaps of creativity to conceptualize the world as a sphere, or discern geological formations. But some maps push the limits of imagination, representing realms that exist only in our minds. Fantastical maps created for literary works are a clever twist on the mapmaking process: instead of using imagination to visualize physical places, these maps use practical techniques to represent imaginary places.

- Sir Thomas More's map of Utopia, from his 1516 work of the same name
- Several maps created by the author J.R.R. Tolkien, including a map of Minas Tirith and Thror's Map from The Hobbit
- A map of A.A. Milne's Hundred Acre Wood from 1926



(From Maps: Finding Our Place in the World November 2, 2007 — January 27, 2008 Filed Museum Chicago IL)

How do you define "world?" Is it limited to the planet Earth? Or does it include spiritual realms Across time and cultures maps encompass worldviews from the scientific to the mythical. From a tour of this recent exhibit¹ in Chicago with my daughter I was struck by how close the imaginary and real worlds were to the original cartographers who had not reticence nor embarrassment by charting the spiritual worlds and figures on the sides of the charts and maps of the real world. Which got me thinking! What is a map? The University of Chicago recently, commenting on the Field Museum's exhibit had this to say about allegorical maps:



Gospel Temperance Railroad Map
G. E. Bula, "Gospel Temperance Railroad Map" (1908). Library of Congress.

The "Gospel Temperance Railroad Map" is an example of an allegorical map. It was published in 1908 by G. E. Bula and looks very much like the typical American railroad map of its day. It presents the traveler with three main lines diverging from Decisionville in the State of Accountability at the left-hand side of the map. The routes of the lower two lines, the Way That Seemeth Right Division and the Great Destruction Way Route, pass at first through towns representing relatively minor vices and self-deceptions of alcohol use, but lead inevitably to more serious "states" of Depravity, Intemperance, and Bondage. A River of Salvation offers hope for some, but those who stubbornly remain on the path of drink and debauchery end, without escape, in the City of Destruction. The upper line from Decisionville, the Great Celestial Route, is not without its trials, represented by such station stops as Bearingcross, Abandonment, and Long Suffering; but the final destination, The Celestial City, is clearly more desirable than its counterpart.

First a definition:

A map is a representational A representation, usually on a plane surface, of a region of the earth or heavens. It is also something that suggests such a representation, as in clarity of representation.

It is not reality but a representation of reality whether on earth or in the heavens. Whether allegorical or metaphysical, whether figurative of spiritual. Yet a map is also material, it is made of paper or parchment, has ink dyes on it each having significance for a county place or hegemony. The

¹ See especially the map of Double hemisphere projection *Nova totius orbis mappa ex optimis auctoribus desumta* (New Map of the Whole Earth Drawn from the Best Authorities) Pieter van den Keere, Dutch 1611

pictures are drawings and the space taken up by the map is also real. There is this dual quality to the map, both real and representational. As technology advances the presence of virtual maps gets ever more sophisticated just like the cartographer's representations of the earth improved dramatically after the explorations of the 15 and 16th centuries. Thought it becomes more and more accurate, say the global positioning networks and satellites, the actual imaging of reality gets less and less true. Like the MRI which gets more and more accurate the actual representation of the brain itself gets less and less true. Different maps reflect different organizations of reality, Road maps, freight train maps, underground maps, shipping lanes, flight plans, defense maps all place their view of reality onto a grid of the same geographical landscape. Spiritual road maps also differ as to the lens used to view reality. There are different paths to the infinite light. The way different traditions have experienced the infinite light of the divine gets reflected in the very maps used to allow initiates along similar pathways. Even within a single tradition the rational versus the mystical pathways differ to such an extent that parallel traditions may seem more similar in their subdivisions than within their traditions, for example maps of mystical paths in Sufism, Kabala and Christian mystical circles may look more alike than between the rational and mystical branches within each tradition.

Finally I learned from the exhibit that yesterday's maps cannot help us today. We need a constant refinement of the cartography of the spiritual world, just like we need to improve on the physical layout of the world, to allow for more accuracy and safety. We have an obligation to refine the spirit maps each generation for the sake of the next one.

In a post-Holocaust world what does our spiritual map look like now? Mostly like a graveyard, a ghostlike town in the desert, an eerie grey landscape of shattered memories and mussel men inhabiting a world of halachic robots. We look frum, we look as if we are the same page spiritually as our forefathers but we who live in the shadow of nuclear bombs and deformed limbs, where human life is measured in one country's interest over another, where the scale of human misery and suffering now has the quantum addition of technology and where torture has become so refined that we can tamper with definitions and get "Talmudic" about whether "water boarding" is or is not! In order to justify methods that are reminiscent of the Spanish Inquisition.

In such a world what can we give our children, what map of spirituality can we honestly bequeath? We see such movements that make use of old world spirit maps like the kabalistic tree unfortunately they seem to using these maps for personal growth and happiness. What if those maps were of a different order? What if they represented a mythic realm where human beings were placed on this earth to serve through self sacrifice the interests of the Divine? What if we were misusing these maps for the sake of self interest? What might happen?

Maps tell us how to get oriented in a world whether physical or spiritual; they are only representational, they are not reality itself. Yet as I claimed they do also take up space. This dual quality makes them resistant to easy analysis.

The human body is also a plane of reality that has had a history of mapping. Its anatomy and physiology have always been the subject of explorers of the inner landscape of the skeleton, the sinews and muscles the organs within and the brain. As time progressed the tools improved and the era of representation became more and more accurate with imaging techniques not readily available or discovered. Mapping of the human brain is a fine example of the relationship between the map

and the reality. No one has ever represented the soul although many have attempted in pictures etc.² Leonardo...(1452-1519)

It is very difficult to define Leonardo da Vinci's scientific notebooks within the Representational: His illustrations owe some of their merit to the clarity of the diagrams, what they convey is simplified and abstracted without losing any detail. Like all truly great visual work they have an undefinable, ephemeral quality that also tells us a lot about the artist, his times and life and as such they are also introspective as well as expressive.



Andreas Vesalius (1514-64) was a Belgian anatomist and physician whose dissection of the human body and descriptions of his findings helped to correct misconceptions prevailing since ancient times. Vesalius wrote the revolutionary texts, *De Humani Corporis Fabrica*, a work of seven volumes on the structure of the human body. The volumes were illustrated with fine engravings based on his own drawings. These were the most accurate and comprehensive anatomical texts to date. Being medical illustrations, they are, of course, intended to be and indeed are, representational and illustrative as well as schematised. But on the other hand Vesalius' anatomical illustrations are truly shocking by the depiction of cruelty that is inflicted upon the human body during dissection. We do not see the body laid out on the dissection table but rather in an upright position, flesh hanging off of bared bones, suspended in the most horrifying poses imaginable: Quite literally hung, drawn and quartered. As such these illustrations are a bizarre combination of the narrative, the abstract, the symbolic and the expressive with the above mentioned scientifically illustrative aspects.



Vesalius' Anatomical Illustrations Francis Bacon (1909-1992)

Looking at Francis Bacon's chamber of horrors one is reminded of Vesalius' drawings above, except here it is not the human body but the human soul which is being dissected. The spaces are clinical and chart-like, almost like scientific/architectural drawings and yet rendered with expressionistic brushstrokes. Upon this backdrop is placed the operation table. To say that Bacon is expressionistic would be the silliest understatement imaginable: He screams out at us! There is no symbolism here:

² For a good introduction to the issue see "The Problem of Consciousness" by Francis Crick and Christ of Koch in *Scientific American* 1997 special issue "Mysteries of the Mind" p. 19-26

The suffering is portrayed as is: Representational, indeed illustrative. Then again there is a great deal of abstraction: It is almost as if the bodies are turned inside out to reveal the anguish lying below the skin...



Descartes established that we do not see by the direct transmission of images to the brain but by a coded version of the image; In reference to the rational soul Descartes declares "I had...described the reasonable soul, and shown that it could by no means be educed from the power of matter...but that it must be expressly created; and that it is not sufficient that it be lodged in the human body exactly like a pilot in a ship, unless perhaps to move its members, but that it is necessary for it to be joined and united more closely to the body, in order to have sensations and appetites similar to ours, and thus constitute a real man."³



"...you must conceive the nature of these images quite differently...for since [the philosophers] have no notion of the images except that they must be like the objects they represent, they cannot possibly explain how they can be produced by these objects, and received by the external sense-organs, and transmitted by the nerves to the brain. Their sole reason for the assumption is that they have noticed that a picture readily induces us to think of the object depicted, and have thus thought we must be led to conceive of the objects that affect our senses by tiny pictures formed within our head. But we have to consider that thought may be induced by many things besides pictures - e.g. by signs and words, which in no way resemble the things signified." Descartes: *The Dioptrics* (transl. Anscombe & Geach)

All the above chart new maps in the representation of the body and its inner landscape. What about the soul's map? Where do we find maps of the spiritual journey of the soul? I believe in the sacred texts of the world's spiritual traditions can be found such organizational charts. The Torah is such an example. It is a road map and the spirit cartographers of the ancient near east gave us this divine gift

³The Discourse on the Method of Rightly Conducting the Reason, and Seeking Truth in the Sciences by Rene Descartes.

to hand on generation after generation. However we were also given the oral law insisting as it does that each subsequent generation add to the accuracy of the original map and plumb its depths for new hitherto un-chartered territory. The spirit realms it refers to have a dual dimension taking as they do, space in the real world as well as being representative of another world. The sacred respect given to the Torah scrolls and all the laws applying to behavior around its presence and the sanctity accorded to it all reflect this second dimension of reality, the very presence of the map in the real world. So for me the midrashic tools and the mystical symbols applied to the spiritual map of the Torah all reflect the sequential obligation of subsequent generations of scholars to develop a more and more accurate reflection of the map itself without tampering with the original quality and sacredness of the Torah itself. This fluidity allows for development with reverence of the sacred texts of old.

What is our duty then today? Where rupture and discord, where fracture and wreckage mark the spiritual landscape of memory and nightmare? Surely to reflect accurate as we can the topography of the soul as it is today, to reflect to the best of our ability the true feelings in our relationship with the divine so that a future generation may begin to rebuild the relationship with the full memory of the martyrs and those who have suffered, without tainting or erasing, without whitewashing or easy theological solutions, without sanitizing the truth of their experiences.