Problems and methodology in the compilation of an atlas for American literature: Henry Thoreau: a case study

Author
Stowell, Robert Frederick

Date
1971

Permanent Link
http://hdl.handle.net/10092/12712

Thesis Discipline
English

Degree Grantor
University of Canterbury

Degree Level
Doctoral

Degree Name
Doctor of Philosophy

This thesis is an investigation of the “sense of place” in American literature and the use of setting in selected works by four major American authors. A theory about the importance of setting in American writing is postulated and four categories are established for defining an author’s use of setting in his work. Regional and local color writing are discussed because of their special interest in the physical environment of their characters. A survey is made of the importance of setting in the works of major authors from the time of Benjamin Franklin to that of Ernest Hemingway. The general problems involved in providing suitable maps and illustrations for an “Atlas for American Literature” are studied, and methods for solving these problems discussed. Examples of specific problems and solutions to these problems are provided by maps and illustrations for one book by each of three authors who represent important periods in American literary development, namely James Fenimore Cooper, Mark Twain and John Steinbeck. The latter half of the thesis is a comprehensive study of the setting of all of Henry David Thoreau’s writings and the provision of maps and illustrations to accompany them. Maps by Thoreau, contemporary maps and modern reconstructions are included, as well as selected illustrations relevant to the settings of his work. A chronology of all of Thoreau’s travels beyond the Concord and Boston area has been compiled and a partial index drawn up for the thirty-six maps.

Collections
Arts: Theses and Dissertations [1512]

Rights
https://canterbury.libguides.com/rights/theses
In the course of the twentieth century, Henry David Thoreau gained a reputation as a pacifist mainly because advocates of non-violence such as Mohandas Gandhi and Martin Luther King claimed him as an inspiration for their concepts of passive resistance to tyranny. However, a survey of Thoreau's major writings shows that he never strayed from the conviction that violent action is sometimes required either to prevent greater violence or to preserve political liberty. Henry David Thoreau (see name pronunciation; July 12, 1817 – May 6, 1862) was an American essayist, poet, philosopher, abolitionist, naturalist, tax resister, development critic, surveyor, yogi, and historian. A leading transcendentalist, Thoreau is best known for his book Walden, a reflection upon simple living in natural surroundings, and his essay "Civil Disobedience" (originally published as "Resistance to Civil Government"), an argument for disobedience to an unjust state.