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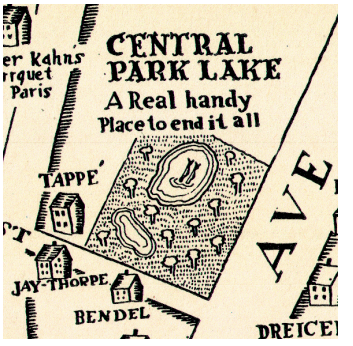
ARTICLES

REGULAR ITEMS



Front cover Detail from Don Francesco de Afferden's world map, 1696. From the Glen McLaughlin Collection of California as an Island. Courtesy Stanford University Libraries. (https://exhibits. stanford.edu/california-as-an-island/catalogue/kr227cw4505

WILFUL WILDLIFE

An overview of animals in persuasive maps

Chris Lane

Where a map is mentioned in the article, but not shown, a URL link to the image is provided in the endnotes.

Animals have appeared on maps since the early sixteenth century, used as decoration or to show them in their natural habitats in different parts of the world.

Fig. 1 Joan Blaeu, 'Nova Belgica et Anglia Nova'. [1635]-1662. Detail showing the large variety of native animals suitable for the fur trade. David Rumsey Historical Map Collection.

However, they have played a much more active role on maps than just decoration or zoological information, for they have long been lively participants in what is called persuasive cartography.

Persuasive maps can be defined as 'maps intended primarily to influence opinions or beliefs – to send a message – rather than to communicate objective geographic information'.[1] and animals have often been used on these maps as part of their persuasive intent.

Joan Blaeu's map 'Nova Belgica et Anglia Nova' **(Fig. 1)** shows the adjacent regions claimed by the Dutch and the English in America in the seventeenth century. The Dutch had established New Netherlands in 1623, along the Hudson River and into what is today western Connecticut. About the same time, the English settled in New England, which extended south into today's eastern Connecticut. The Dutch were dependent on the fur trade, and by including images of fur-bearing animals, especially beavers, (their pelts were much sought-after in Europe) Blaeu was messaging Dutch control of the area, and reinforcing the colony's importance for the Netherlands. The animals depicted on 'Nova Belgica et Anglia Nova', though central to Blaeu's design to promote Dutch interests, are straightforward representations of the creatures themselves. There is no encoded meaning attached to them. They are, in effect, just part of the geography.

However, in most persuasive maps animals are symbols packed with meaning beyond their simple identity or geographical habitat. This can include our understanding of the animals' primal nature, their appearance, characteristics, and in many cases social associations. Mapmakers exploit their widely understood attributes to convey their encoded message to the reader.

Animals representing people and nations

Animal images used as representative symbols of particular groups of people or nations are one example of embedded content. These national animals have sometimes been inherited, from folklore or heraldry – such as the British lion, – sometimes intentionally adopted, – as with the American eagle, and sometimes

imposed on by others – the French rooster and Russian bear. National animals are generally widely known and instantly recognizable and so are perfect for use in graphic media like maps.

A 1918 German World War I propaganda map makes excellent use of national animals representing the four Allied powers: the English lion, French rooster, Russian bear, and – perhaps uniquely – an American buffalo **(Fig. 2**). The map attacks the Allied powers for seeking self-determination for German controlled lands, the title asking what would remain of the Allied forces if they let go of the reins holding their own colonial possessions. Even though a key to the animal symbols is included, their meaning is obvious and effective.

Over the years, the use of national animals to identify different countries has been particularly popular device on maps of Europe. There are so many countries that need to be included within the small area of a map that the animals are a convenient shorthand, simplifying the map and making clear which nations are important in the mapmaker's message. The Johnson, Riddle & Co. 1914 map, 'Hark! Hark! The Dogs Do Bark!' [2], is one example. Inspired by an old English nursery rhyme, the satirical map of Europe at war depicts the nations as combatant dogs: an aggressive British bulldog bites the nose of a Pickelhaube-wearing German dachshund, watched on by a baying Austrian mongrel and a dapper French poodle.

National animals often play an even wider role than simply identifying a country, they can also convey meaning about particular characteristics of the country represented. In Don Francisco de Afferden's 1696 world map, a lion is shown holding the two hemispheres with its paws **(Fig. 3)**.[3] While the lion now usually refers to England, here its attributes of fierceness and nobility are specifically used, as it were, to lionize King Carlos II of Spain, stating that if irritated, he would tear the world to pieces.

Illustrating the covers of a pair of songbooks *Plantation Melodies. What We Have We'll Hold* are a lion and eagle, both functioning a message of their might and power.[4] They are shown standing on maps, their

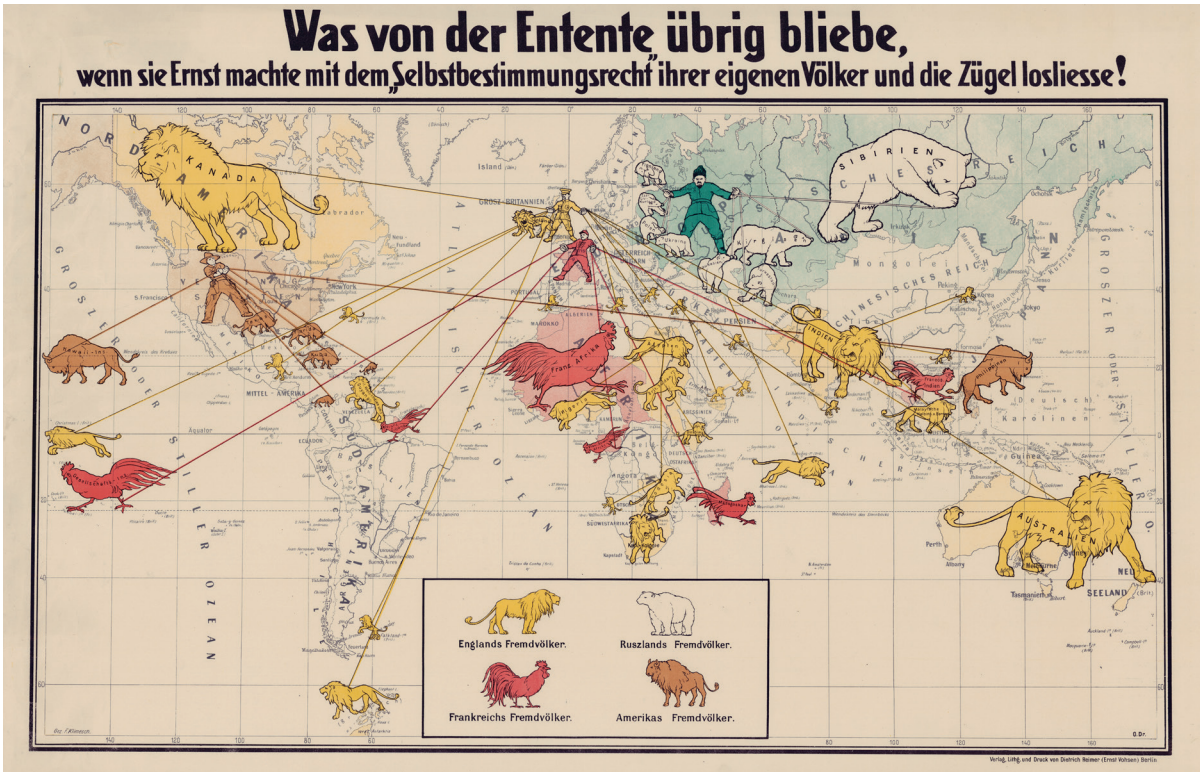


Fig. 2 'Was von der Entente übrig bliebe wenn sie Ernst machte mit dem Selbstbestimmungsrecht iher eigenen Völker und die Zügel losliesse!' (What would remain of the Entente if it took seriously the self-determination right of its pwn nations and let gp of the reins!), 1918, 51 x 89 cm. PJ Mode Collection.

Fig 4. Bernhard Gillam, 'Circumstances Alter Cases!' *Puck*, 8 Feb. 1882. 22 x19 cm. PJ Mode Collection.

paws/talons firmly planted on the colonies of the nations they represent. The lion straddles India, Canada, Australia and Britain reinforcing Britain's global ownership while the eagle spreads its wings across Puerto Rico, Cuba, and the Philippine islands. These animals are used not just for their national identification, but because of their widely understood characteristics.

The lion and eagle also appear on Bernard Gillam's 1882 cover of *Puck* magazine **(Fig. 4)**. This image concerns the conflict between Britain and America over the latter's plans for the Panama Canal. While both the lion and the eagle are perceived as brave and strong, here the American Eagle displays fierceness in protecting the American continent, It holds in its talons the Monroe Doctrine, a foreign policy that regarded any intervention in the affairs of the Americas as an act of aggression against the United States. The eagle's stance has forced the prideful British lion to turn tail.

Of course, what characteristics are intended to be conveyed by the animal depends on the viewpoint of the map designer. On a poster map entitled 'Agresión!'[5] probably published by the 'Honduran Mothers for Peace' in about 1986, the American eagle is used not for its noble attribute but for its ferocious aggression. It is shown tearing the countries of Central America apart with its bloody talons.

Animals are sometimes used for their characteristics in representing a nation even when there is no customary link between that animal and that country. In a World War II German propaganda leaflet, the USSR is represented by a gargantuan pig. It wears Joseph Stalin's face, and gorges itself on the blood of its enemies. The pig is used not because there was any traditional association with the USSR, but for its representation of gluttony. The map asks the British if they really want to shed their blood in fighting Germany as it only ends up strengthening the Red Pig **(Fig. 5)**.

Interestingly, pigs do not appear in many persuasive maps. Lions and eagles do, as does the snake, an example of which is the Civil War print of 'Scott's Great Snake' by J.B. Elliot **(Fig. 6)**. Winfield Scott (1786–1866), General-in-Chief of the US Army, devised what was called the 'Anaconda Plan', a strategy to defeat the Confederacy. It called for a naval blockade of all the southern ports on the Atlantic and Gulf coasts and then attacks by land and water up the Mississippi River valley in order to asphyxiate the Confederacy. This plan is wonderfully depicted in Elliot's map, the strength and fierceness of the snake sending the rebels fleeing.

More often snakes tended to have a negative connotation rather than a positive one, as evidenced by a pair of maps depicting a serpent malevolently encircling the earth. In 1878 an Italian satirical journal, *Il Papagallo*, included a persuasive map showing the English Empire, represented as a snake wrapped around the globe crushing people in its coils **(Fig. 7)**.

A century later, a similar map by Eugene Majied – 'The Serpent Deceived the Whole World',[6] – was issued in '*Muhammad Speaks* the official newspaper of the Nation of Islam, an African–American organization. It depicted a malign rattlesnake with the head of Uncle Sam trapping people around the globe in its coils.

Another animal frequently appearing on persuasive maps because of its evil associations is the spider. It is often perceived as sinister, trying to capture its prey in its web and so, like snakes, the spider has been a popular denizen of persuasive maps.