5. ‘But first, Master William, we must make a proper well’ The Discourse of Engagement with the Physical World in Children’s Literature

> “But first, Master William, we must make a proper well at the spring, so as to have plenty of fresh water.”
>
> *Masterman Ready*[1]

This chapter is about science and technology. To oversimplify, the former is about understanding how things work, all the way from tsunamis to sub-atomic particles, or from motor car engines to butterfly’s wings, and the latter is about how to turn that knowledge to our own ends. Each comes with its own discourse, but as you can see from the chapter heading I have combined them to call it the discourse of engagement with the physical world; and thus, in the examples I shall be looking at here, we will find children understanding things, exploring things, making things, and doing things. The examples involve detailed accounts of process, and in each case the events described have a bearing on the development of the narrative as a whole. The context that most lends itself to such activity is the desert island, for if there is a setting where the control and mastery of the physical world is essential for the survival of the characters, then abandonment on a desert island is it. *Robinson Crusoe*[2] of course provides the template for such stories, and in it we find a central character on his own on a deserted island with no means at hand to get away; and what follows are accounts of what he has to do to survive. So we have detailed descriptions of the making of rafts and canoes, of the building of palisades, of the digging out of caves and the domestication of wild goats and etc. As an adjunct to this, Crusoe also needs to find out what the island has to offer, to which end he surveys the entire island bit by bit. (The genre brings other elements with it, notably an invasion by savages[3] and of course the final rescue, neither of which, however, are my central concern here.) Various of these features are very obviously evident in nineteenth century children’s books modelled on the original, and several Robinsonades, as the genre came to be called, were published for the juvenile market, Wyss’s *The Swiss Family Robinson*[4], Marryat’s *Masterman Ready*[5] and Ballantyne’s *The Coral Island*[6] to name but three.

Let me start with *Masterman Ready* which, as well as providing a nice example of the didactic text which I discussed in the previous chapter on teaching and learning, also offers plenty of examples of the discourse of engagement with the physical world. The one I want to look at here is the search for water and the building of a well. Just to briefly re-cap the story, the Seagraves, mother, father, and three children find themselves wrecked on a desert island with seasoned old seaman, Masterman Ready. Amongst other things they have managed to rescue several kegs of water from the wreck; that, however will run out soon enough and there is none where they have landed, and the narrative about the need to find water is soon established. Here is Ready identifying the first problem, the size and topography of the island,

> “I expect a little difficulty with regard to water, for the island is low – very low, and small;”[7]

And a bit later on he re-iterates the need.

> "… we have not yet found any water, and that is the first necessity of life. If there is no water on this side of the island, we must pitch our tents somewhere else.[8]

They must explore, and Ready, taking with him William, the oldest boy, and Romulus and Remus, two of the dogs that they have also rescued from the wreck, sets off to do exactly that. They take with them a spade, and when William asks why, Ready explains that, '"…very often, there will be water if you dig for it."'[9] When William asks him how he knows all this he tells him that other seamen in similar circumstances have worked it out for themselves, and in a sentence that very neatly sums up my theme in this chapter, tells him,

> "Necessity, they say, is the mother of invention; and it's very true, Master William[10], for it sharpens man's wits; and it is very curious what people do contrive when they are compelled to do so.[11]

They proceed, and find to Ready's relief that the island is not as flat as he had at first feared.

> "I am very glad to find the island is not so flat here, Master Willy; we have a better chance of finding water."[12]

And when they do finally get to the other side of the island,

> Ready turned his eyes inland to see if he could discover any little ravine or hollow that might be likely to contain fresh water. "There are one or two places there," observed Ready, pointing to them with his finger, "where the water has run down in the rainy season: we must examine them carefully .." [13]

We then have a more detailed account of the pros and cons of digging for water.

> "I don't expect water above ground, but there may be some below it. This beach is hardly is hardly far enough from the water's edge, or I should try in the sand for it."
> "In the sand! – but would it not be salt?" replied William.
> "No; not if at a good distance from the sea beach, for you see, William, the sand by degrees filters the sea water fresh, and very often when the sand runs in a long way from the high water mark, if you dig down you will find good fresh water, at other times it is a little brackish, but still fit for use.[14]

All this time Ready has denied the dogs water because by doing so he hopes the dogs will sniff out water for themselves, and so lead them to a naturally occurring source. So we then have a detailed account of the dogs doing just that as they move from promising dell to promising hollow.

> They soon came to the dell and the dogs put their noses to the ground, and sniffed about. . . . at last they lay down panting.
>
> “Let us go on, sir,” said Ready thoughtfully; they went on to where the run of water appeared to have been – the dogs sniffed about more eagerly than before. . . . “Look, Ready, at Romulus and Remus – how hard they are digging with their paws there in the hollow. . . . why do they dig?”
>
> “Because there is water there, poor animals.” . . . . Ready walked quickly to where the dogs continued digging: they had already got down to the moist earth, and were so eagerly at work that it was with difficulty he could get them out of his way to use his spade. He had not dug two feet before the water trickled down, and in four or five minutes the dogs had sufficient to plunge their noses in, and to drink copiously.

They leave the hole to clear, and then return to ensure that the water is drinkable.

> They found the hole that Ready had dug quite full of water, and, tasting it, it proved very sweet and good.

And having found water, ‘“Now we have everything we could wish for on this island,”’ says Ready; and they have also thus found the location for their more permanent settlement, ‘“Where we are now will be a capital spot to build our house on.”’ (It will not have escaped the reader’s notice that there is plenty of teaching and learning going on here, and in many ways this whole sequence could have been discussed just as easily in the previous chapter as in this one.)

So far, then, in the search for water narrative, the discourse of engagement with the physical world has taken a number forms. We have first of all established the need to find water and the narrative urgency of doing so. The first question to be answered is whether the topography and size of the island will be conducive to finding it, and when they discover that it is not as flat as they had feared then the chances improve. Next we have an account of the process of digging down to find it, and the problems that may be encountered in doing so; and finally we see how they are able to use the naturally occurring needs of the dogs to help them. Not only that, but the finding of a source of water also determines where they are going to live. In narrative terms the finding of water couldn’t be more important. We are however not done yet, hence the title of this chapter with regard to building a well. To start the process Ready explains that.

> “We must clear it out further up among the trees, where the sun cannot reach it, and then it will be cool, and not be dried up,”[15]

Mr. Seagrave and William are given the job.[16]

> “You observe, Mr. Seagrave, we must follow up the spring till we get among the coco-nut trees, where it will be shaded from the sun; that is easily done by digging towards them, and watching how the

> water flows. Then, if you will dig out a hole large enough to sink down in the earth one of the water casks which lie on the beach . . . then, when it is fixed in the earth that way, we shall always have the cask full of water for use, and the spring filling it as fast as we can empty it.

This they proceed to do, but discover that sinking the cask comes with its own problems. William articulates them, and his father encourages him to think them through to find a solution.

> "Oh dear," said William, "we shall have to throw all the water out to get the cask down."
>
> "Think a little, William," said Mr. Seagrave, "for the spring runs so fast that it will not be an easy task. Cannot we do something else?"
>
> "Why father, the cask will float, you know," replied William.
>
> "To be sure it will as it is; but is there no way of making it sink?"
>
> "Oh yes. I know – we must bore some holes in the bottom, and then it will fill and sink down of itself."

Luckily Ready has a gimlet to hand – conveniently rescued from the wreck. (Wrecks are terribly useful things in Robinsonades!)

> Ready bored three or four holes in the bottom of the cask, and as it floated the water ran into it, and by degrees it gradually sunk down. As soon as the top of the cask was level with the surface, they filled it all round with the spade and shovel, and the well was completed.
>
> "Tomorrow, when the water is settled, it will be as pure and clear as crystal, and remain so, if not disturbed," observed Ready.

For all that it is clear that the adults in this particular little exchange already had the solution to the problem in their head, by forcing William to think it through the reader is informed of all the reasoning behind the process and is able to follow it through step by step. At every stage, then, there is a detailed account of process, which in itself then becomes an exemplary example of the discourse of engagement with, and mastery of, the physical world. (It might also be noted that the positioning of the well has an important bearing on the denouement of the novel, where it ends up outside the stockade that they have built to keep the savages out, and when the necessity arises for Ready to go and get water because they have run out, he gets fatally wounded.)

For my next example I am going to return to Beverly Cleary's *Henry Huggins*,[17] a book that couldn't be further away from a Robinsonade if it tried. The example is on a much smaller scale than the previous one, but it is nonetheless still very much an account of engagement with the physical world in order to solve a problem. As the reader may remember from my discussion of the book in a previous chapter, the book consists of a series of self-contained chapters, each detailing an incident / little adventure in eight year old Henry Huggins' life. In Chapter 2 Henry has used his savings, a whole dollar, to buy a couple of guppies, plus the bowl to keep them in, from the local pet store. The first question is how does he look after them. Here the pet shop man is very helpful. He tells Henry that they are tropical fish that ‘came from jungle rivers where the water was warm’ and that thus the water in the bowl must not get too cold.

> “Now be sure to put the bowl near a heater in cold weather so the fish won’t get chilled and catch ick.”
> “Ick?” said Henry.
> “Yes, ick. It’s short for *ichthyophthirius*. When the fish get chilled, they catch ick and are covered with tiny white spots.”[18]

Changing the water, how often, when, and why, is the next question.

> “You shouldn’t have to change the water. The snails help to keep it clean. . . . It’s only when the fish don’t eat all their food or when you have too many fish in a bowl that the water gets dirty."

(As may be gathered the bowl came complete with snails.) However a further problem immediately arises since when Henry gets them home he, and his parents, somewhat to their dismay, discover that he has inadvertently bought a number of baby guppies in the same bowl – Henry counts thirty-eight of them. What is to be done? Henry goes to the library to see if he can find the answer, and gets a book out of the adult section which his father has to read.

> “According to this book you can’t keep so many fish in one bowl . . . you’re going to need some more fish bowls.”

They go hunting in the basement to find some, and the process continues.

> Henry and his father rummaged through the basement until they found a gallon jar Mrs. Huggins used for making dill pickles. . . . They carried it upstairs and washed it. Mr Huggins filled it with hot water and carried it into Henry’s room. “Now when the water cools we can move some of the little guppies. They can’t live in cold water right out of the faucet. They need water that has stood, or hot water than has cooled. While it’s cooling, we can make a net.” He found a piece of wire and bent it into a circle. Mrs. Huggins took an old stocking and sewed it to the wire to make a little fish net.
>
> Henry and his father took turns catching the tiny fish with the net and moving them into the pickle jar.

The guppies multiply, using up more and more jars from the basement and Henry is faced with the task of looking after them. He runs out of pickle jars, and has to use quart jars instead, but ‘He couldn’t keep many fish in a quart of water.’ He has to re-organise his bedroom to cope with them all.

> He had jars on his dresser. He had them on the table by his bed. He put jars on the floor all the way around the edge of the room. When

> he had one row of jars all the way around the floor, he started another row.[19]

Feeding the guppies requires careful judgement and becomes very time consuming.

> It took Henry the rest of the morning to feed his fish. He had to put the tiniest pinch of the finest fish food into each jar.[20]

He has to adjust his habits to look after them all.

> … he no longer had time to play with the other children on Klickitat Street. He spent all his allowance on fish food, snails, and plants for his jars. He slept with his windows shut if he thought the night were going to be cold.[21]

Finally his mother needs the jars and Henry has to face the fact that the guppies' days are numbered, and he puts them all into a single jar and takes them back to the pet shop man who, it turns out, is pleased to have them and compliments Henry on the way that he has kept them. '"Nice heathy ones too. You must have taken good care of them."' he tells him,[22] and even offers to pay for them in kind, seven dollars' worth of goods.

In this account we have seen Henry engaging with the physical world at a number of levels. First of all he has to understand the nature of guppies and the specifics of keeping them, that they like warm water, that he needs snails to keep their bowls clean, that they need the tiniest pinch of fish food every morning, and that they breed! Very rapidly! All of this impacts on his actions: the collection of jars, the organising of his room, the consumption of his free time, the changing of his sleeping habits, all of which actions are described in some detail, and constitute a fair bit of the narrative, and all which can certainly be construed as engagement with the physical world; and his success is reflected by the fact that in the process he not only has kept the fish nice and healthy, he has also gets to make a very considerable profit!

By comparison with building wells on desert islands upon which your whole survival depends, keeping guppies on the dresser in the bedroom may seem like small potatoes. But the discourse of engagement with the physical world remains the same. In each case the characters meet with physical problems and have to work out ways of overcoming them, and in each case we have a detailed account of what they did, all the way from finding glass jars in the basement and reorganising your bedroom to digging out wells and boring holes in the bottom of barrels. And in each case, as it happens, the characters make use of the natural capacities of the animals to hand. The dogs can be used find water, the snails can be used to keep the fishbowl clean. And in both cases the discourse has considerable narrative importance.

Finally let me turn my attention to Arthur Ransome's *Secret Water,*[23] a novel where the entire narrative is dominated by and indeed built around the discourse of engagement with the physical world, this time in the form of the exploration and mapping of terrain. In the book the Walker children, John, Susan, Titty, and Roger, plus their small sister, Bridget, collectively known as the Swallows, (the first four of whom we have met earlier when I discussed *We Didn't Mean to Go* *to Sea*), are given the task by their father of exploring and mapping what is effectively a little inland sea consisting mostly of saltmarsh and mud – in reality Hamford Water just south of Harwich on the Essex coast at Walton on the Naze, named 'Secret Water' by the children. He gives them the vaguest of charts, telling them '"It's the sort of map people might have of a place that had never been explored . . . You'll just be a wee bit better off than Columbus . . . you'll be marooned fair and square."'[24] From the children's perspective it will be '"Unexplored until we've explored it . . . This is the real thing."'[25] By the time they get to the end of the book they will have named every creek, gully and island. Their father's chart just shows vague land masses, and their task is to discover the extent to which those land masses are separated into islands by creeks, and to map their findings. John takes on overall responsibility for the task, aided by Titty, whose job it is to produce the final definitive map of the islands, and who sums it up nicely.

> "Our map's going to show all of them separately," said Titty. "We're going to put in all the channels we can sail through when the tide's up."[26]

The children have two obstacles to overcome, one naturally occurring, the tide, and one unpredictable, time. The tide, because they can only map the channels definitively at high tide, and time, because they have to get it all done before their parents come to pick them up and they don't quite know when that will be. Much of the narrative is given over to a detailed account of the processes of exploring, of surveying, and of mapping. I will analyse one such detailed account of process from early on in the book as the children start their mapping by surveying the island they have camped on.[27] (You will note that they have with them all the paraphernalia they need for the job, a compass, bamboo surveying poles, a set of parallel rulers, etc.) To start with they need working maps on which to record their findings. John proceeds to trace them off the original that their father has given them.

> John, putting a piece of paper on the top of Daddy's blank map and then holding it up to the light was making a careful tracing . . . . Then for the purpose of the survey, he made on a larger scale a copy of the big blob that on Daddy's map showed the island on which they had landed. In the corner of it he made a copy of the compass rose that daddy had drawn, using the parallel rulers to make sure it was pointing in the same direction.

There follows an account of the surveying itself as they use triangulation to determine the position of the nearby farm, 'the kraal'.

> Roger was sent off to plant one of the bamboo surveying poles at the corner of the dyke to the south of the camp, while John and Titty went off with the map, the compass, a notebook and another bamboo to the corner north of the camp where the dyke turned sharply eastwards . . . Titty planted the post, and John took a bearing from one post to the other, which was easily seen with Roger standing beside it.

> "This bit of the dyke's about north by north east. It will do for the kraal." He turned and faced inland towards the clump of trees and the farm chimneys. "South-east. Got the parallel rulers?"
>
> Kneeling on the ground, he ruled a line between the two posts, and then ruled another across the middle of the island from the dot on the map that marked the northern post.
>
> "It's somewhere on that line," he said. "Come on. Now we'll take a bearing of it from the other post."
>
> The two surveyors hurried along the dyke to join Roger, who was getting a little tired of holding up his post, because he had not been able to drive it far enough in to make it stand by itself.
>
> John jammed it in, and then, compass in hand, looked across at the distant chimney of the farmhouse. "Bit south of east," he said.
>
> "Let me try," said Roger, put the compass on the ground for steadiness and straddled above it. "Jolly nearly east-south-east."
>
> Titty tried. "It looks to me just between the two."
>
> John looked carefully across the compass at the farm, agreed . . .
> He made a mark on the compass rose half way between east and east-south-east, and putting one edge of the rulers on the centre of the rose, and on this mark, he used the other edge to draw a line east by south through the dot that marked the position of the southern post.
>
> "It's all right," he said. Look."
>
> The two lines crossed each other just about in the middle of the blob where Daddy had put a little square to mark the farm

In both passages the technical aspects are emphasised, with John copying the compass rose onto his working map, 'using the parallel rulers to make sure it was pointing in the same direction', then taking a bearing 'from one post to the other' and concluding, '"This bit of the dyke's about north by north east,"' then ruling his first lines and concluding, '"It's somewhere on that line,"', then finally using the parallel rulers to align the third line with the correct compass bearing, and arriving at his conclusion, 'The two lines crossed each other just about in the middle of the blob.' This sort of technical account is then embedded in other details about what they had to do in order to get the task done, which in their way are just as much accounts to process – the enumeration of the things that John and Titty are carrying for instance, or Roger not being able to drive the post into the ground, and a bit later placing the compass on the ground so that it will remain steady in order to get a more accurate reading than John, who was holding it in his hand, managed to do. The children continue surveying the rest of the island that they are camped on, and end up with an initial map covered with a criss-cross of lines which we see in one of Ransome's own illustrations inserted into the text at this point. The maps recur in the text throughout, with the final completed map being reproduced inside the front cover of the book, and are an integral part of the narrative serving to demonstrate the progress of the exploration.

This sort of detailed account of process recurs again and again throughout the narrative, and for a good chunk of the book it is all the narrative there is. A problem arises, however, when other characters turn up: some friendly local children, and the Walker's friends Nancy and Peggy from the Lake District. They want to play a game of war between explorers and savages, complete with corroborees and human sacrifices, but John and Titty immediately realise that the game will use up precious time.

> John and Titty looked at each other in horror . . . "But there won't be time for any war," said John.[28]

Nonetheless the game does get to be played, with the reverse result that finding enough time for the mapping becomes an ever stronger narrative imperative. The conflict between the two narratives comes to be focussed around the exploration of a final creek to ascertain whether the last piece of land that they haven't yet surveyed, provisionally named Blackberry Coast, is an island or not. (The Red Sea is the name they have given to another stretch of water.)

> "We won't put 'Coast' in till we're sure it isn't an island," said John. "Just look over there. All that mud and water. Nearly as big as the Red Sea. Either it's a lake or it comes into this creek. And if there's a way through further up Secret Water, a North West Passage, that'll be a sort of Arctic Sea and Blackberry's an island, not a coast.[29]

John is continuously frustrated in his agenda to discover whether there is a North West Passage or not, as here. (Mastodon is the name they have given to one of the local children.)

> John turned round to look for the gap once more. "I say, Mastodon, I ought to go and try that gap," he called. "It may really be a North West Passage."
>
> "Tomorrow," called the Mastodon. "You couldn't do it now, not if you're coming with the rest of us."[30]

A bit later John, aware that time may be running out, makes another bid to explore the channel. This time the problem is that they have been invited for supper in the Mastodon's lair, the aft cabin of an otherwise wrecked boat named *Speedy*. (Dee is another of the local children.)

> "Dee," said John. "Will there be time to look at that North West Passage?"
>
> "No," said Dee. "Not unless we give up going to *Speedy* for supper."[31]

And a couple of pages later, after yet another delay:

> John looked at his map. "There isn't an awful lot left to do," he said. "The most important bit's that northern shore we didn't finish. We've got to settle whether there's a North West Passage or not round behind the Blackberry Coast."[32]

Then news comes that their parents are to pick them up the next day, which means they will have to spend the morning packing up. John has run out of time and faces faces failure. 'The map was not finished. They had failed after all.'[33] However, realising the importance of finishing the map, Titty and Roger get up early on the last morning to find out if there really is a North West Passage. We then have a description of their struggle to get the boat through, as detailed an account of the process of engagement with the physical world as you could wish for. It is a substantial account that goes on for a number of pages, and in the middle of it there is the following passage. The two children have managed to get quite a way through when they come upon a stretch of mud that finally looks impassable.

> It was true that there was mud in front of them. It was as if they had run aground in a sort of bay. The mud stretched right and left to the low green line of the land. But straight ahead, on the other side of the mud, there was water again, another bay cutting into the mud on the opposite side. Titty watched it carefully.
>
> "I say, Roger, could you go up the mast? The boat's sitting firm. She won't turn over. And I'll sit in the bottom."
>
> "Of course I can," said Roger.
>
> "Go up then and have a look at the water the other side of the mud."
>
> Roger was up the mast in a minute and hung on there looking out.
>
> "Just water," he said.
>
> "Isn't it nearer that it was?"
>
> Roger watched. "Of course it is," he said at last. Tide's rising."
>
> "Then there must be another way out," said Titty. "Or how does the tide get at it? Where does the water come from?"
>
> There was no answer to that. From the masthead it was easy to see that there were two sheets of water creeping towards each other over the mudflats. One was the water that had brought them so far. The other was coming to meet it.
>
> "How soon'll they meet?" said Roger. "Look here, I can't hang on for ever, I'm coming down."
>
> "We're going to get through," said Titty.
>
> Inch by inch the waters came nearer to each other. The *Wizard* stirred, floated, moved on and stopped again. Titty, busy with her map, sketched in as well as she could as much of the coastline as she could see. . . . . "Roger," said Titty. "That's the way we'll have to go. Towards the place that other water's coming from. About North-east."
>
> "She's moving. No, stuck again. She's Moving." . . . . Every few minutes the boat stopped, moved on and stopped again. Suddenly she was off, moving steadily, faster and faster.[34]

The whole scientific process: – observing, thinking, applying previous knowledge, speculating, questioning, theory building, coming to conclusions, deciding to act on them in practice, results, recording their findings.

Observing:– ‘Titty watched it carefully’, and sending Roger up the mast, ‘Go up then and have a look at the water the other side of the mud.’ We learn what he observes, ‘Tide’s rising,’ and ‘From the masthead it was easy to see that there were two sheets of water creeping towards each other over the mudflats.’
Thinking and applying previous knowledge:– Titty knowing that she must sit in the bottom of the boat to keep it more stable when Roger goes up the mast, and by implication understanding that Roger will get a better view if he gets a bit higher; and at a more obvious and general level knowing that if the tide keeps rising then it will be possible to get through.
Speculating and questioning: – of the water on the other side of the mud: ‘Isn’t it nearer than it was?’; and ‘.. how does the tide get at it? Where does the water come from?’
Theory building and coming to conclusions:– ‘Then there must be another way out,’ and the climactic ‘We’re going to get through.’
Deciding to act on them in practice:– ‘Roger,” said Titty. “That’s the way we’ll have to go. Towards the place that other water’s coming from.’
Results:– Perhaps *the* climactic sentence of the entire book. ‘Every few minutes the boat stopped, moved on and stopped again. Suddenly she was off, moving steadily, faster and faster,’
Recording their findings:– ‘Titty, busy with her map, sketched in as well as she could as much of the coastline as she could see.’
And when they get back to the camp and inform John that there is indeed a North West Passage, he realises that ‘.. at the very last minute failure had been turned into success.’[35] The discourse of engagement with the physical world couldn’t be more central, for it is within that discourse that the whole climax of the book is articulated, and to add a personal note here, when I read the book when I was young, it was that climax that had the strongest impact on me, and when I came to re-read it many years later I discovered that I had completely forgotten the explorers and savages narrative.

It will of course not have escaped the reader’s notice that even here the other trappings of the Robinsonade are not far away. The children are ‘marooned’, the game they play involves ‘savages’, and at one point Titty even invokes *Robinson Crusoe* itself: ‘“I say,” said Titty. “We ought to count days, like Robinson Crusoe,”’[36] and they proceed to do just that by cutting notches in their flagpole. *Robinson Crusoe* also gets a mention in the Marryat,

> “Were you ever shipwrecked on a desolate island, like Robinson Crusoe?”
> “Yes, Master William,, I have been shipwrecked; but I have never heard of Robinson Crusoe.”[37]

And as for Titty, her invocation of the Defoe is designed to re-contextualise as ‘real’ the ‘game’ that the children are playing as they explore the little inland sea. (The fact that the children constitute their activities as ‘real’ by comparison with another work of fiction opens up a whole other fascinating discussion, about reality itself, about narrative as a primary act of mind[38], about how we understand the world in terms of the narratives which we use to give an account of it, and about the way that those available narratives are constituted in and by the discourses that are available to us and that operate in the culture at a much deeper level than that which I am exploring in this book, which, as I have said elsewhere, I think of as being much more simply descriptive.) *Henry Huggins* as I have said couldn’t be more different and is a much simpler example, but when you consider it from one perspective it incorporates the discourse of engagement with the physical world just as strongly as do the other two. And just to add, what links the previous chapter with this one is that this too is about learning, in this case learning by and through experience. In the process of engagement with the physical world the characters are identifying problems and working out ways of solving them as they go along, and working out ways to solve problems is most decidedly a learning process.

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[1] Marryat 1841 p.92.

[2] Defoe 1719

[3] 'Savages' of course raises the issue of the inherent racism of the time that Defoe was writing in, and I shall be looking at racism in a later chapter.

[4] Wyss 1814

[5] Op.cit.

[6] Ballantyne 1858

[7] Op.cit p.38

[8] ibid. p.55

[9] ibid. p.65

[10] Ready's form of address to William (he even calls him sir on a couple of occasions) immediately raises issues of class, but I am leaving discussion of such matters to a later chapter.

[11] This, and the two previous quotes, ibid. p.65

[12] ibid. p.67

[13] ibid. pp.69,70

[14] This, and the following detailed accounts, ibid. pp.72-76

[15] ibid. p.74

[16] ibid. p.99 et seq.

[17] Cleary, 1950

[18] This and the following quotes, ibid. pp.29, et seq

[19] ibid. p.44

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[20] ibid. p.50

[21] ibid. p.46

[22] ibid. p.53

[23] Ransome, 1939.

[24] ibid. pp 17 & 30

[25] ibid p.43

[26] ibid. p.68

[27] ibid. pp.71 et seq

[28] ibid. p.136 (Wild Cat is a reference back to the very first book in the series, *Swallows and Amazons* Ransome 1930)

[29] ibid p.208

[30] ibid. p.253

[31] ibid. p.258

[32] Ibid. pp.264/265

[33] ibid. p.241

[34] ibid. pp.362/363

[35] ibid. p.371

[36] ibid. p.62

[37] Op.cit. p.2

[38] Hardy 1977