Geographical Imagination and Memory: Maps, Places, Itineraries

Alessandra Bonazzi

To ask for a map is to say, "Tell me a story".

Peter Turchi

Memories are motionless, and the more securely they are fixed in space, the sounder they are.

Gaston Bachelard, The Poetics of Space

Abstract This chapter considers the dynamic nature of the relationship between place, memory and identity, with reference to a map of Terténia drawn by A.M. This is pursued in three ways. First, via a discussion which argues that topography and biography, memories and maps are closely connected. Second, through an analysis of the map with reference to the formal categories defined by Gunnar Olsson and Kevin Lynch. It follows that the map is characterized by a "comprehensible appearance" and points to intrinsic meanings. Comprehensible appearance implies an implicit connection between place of origin and identity; intrinsic meanings refer to the function of the map, whose overall meaning is *geographically imagined* as *post-journey*. The map will thus related to the category of hodologic space, as defined by Pietro Janni and inspired by the work of memory of the specific category of geographers whose work was aimed at providing full sense and coherence to the places they explored. Third, in a survey of the toponimy in the map, between memory and experience. What appears on this map of routes is the very personal signs of the *explorer* that inscribes itself in place of the existing toponymy of Terténia, and presupposes some form of appropriation of the place itself. The chapter passes over the established ideas of place and identity to arrive at the idea that place and identity are from time to time processes constructed and imagined in a complex and dynamic game of topicality, position and forgetting.

A. Bonazzi (✉)
Department of Philosophy and Communication, University of Bologna,
Via Azzo Gardino 23, Bologna, 40122, Italy
e-mail: alessandra.bonazzi@unibo.it

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1 Introduction: "For a Successful Excavation a Plan, Truth Is Needed"

> I have long, indeed for years, played with the idea of setting out the sphere of life – bios – graphically on a map. First I envisaged an ordinary map, but now I would incline to a general staff's map of a city center, if such a thing existed. Doubtless it does not, because of ignorance of the theatre of future wars. I have evolved a system of signs, and on the gray background of such maps they would make a colorful show if I clearly marked in the houses of my friends and girl friends, the assembly halls of various collectives, from the "debating chambers" of the Youth Movement to the gathering places of the Communist youth, the hotel and brothel rooms that I knew for one night, the decisive benches in the Tiergarten, the ways to different schools and the graves that I saw filled, the sites of prestigious cafés whose long-forgotten names daily crossed our lips, the tennis courts where empty apartment blocks stand today, and the halls emblazoned with gold and stucco that the terrors of dancing classes made almost the equal of gymnasiums.[1]

I would like to start with Walter Benjamin's masterful cartography from *Berliner Chronik*.[2] The above quotation traces the possibility for memory, of finding in the grey topography of the city of Berlin, places, routes, events and connections. In other words, it endows cartographic space with the power to synchronically represent the past. Cartographic spaces sustain a colourful planimetry of memory articulated by personal coordinations of experiences and through temporal scales. To colour fragments of this space also means to transgress the continuity and the authority of the colour grey, to superimpose the official topography of Berlin made up of distances and places with a "self-topography", a personal mediation composed of a constellation of places and routes. It means, in short, to start a performative act of appropriation that gives form to the dynamic relation between places and identity (Heddon 2008). Edward Said would have called this "imaginative" geography; a sur-plus to objective knowledge that sediments through a prejudice (Said 1978: 54–55). With reference to Benjamin's map, the prejudice depends on his position and distances depend on memories. The act of playing with the idea of the map mentioned at the beginning of the *Berliner Chronik* is not a mere fancy, it becomes, as noted by Carol Jacobs, the epistemological operator of memory and the map the surface on which its writing is inscribed (Jacobs 1992):

> Reminiscences, even extensive ones, do not always present [Darstellung] an autobiography (amount to an autobiography). And these quite certainly do not, even for the Berlin years that I am exclusively concerned with here. For autobiography has to do with time, with sequence and what makes up the continuous flow of life. Here, I am talking of a space, of moments and discontinuities. (Ivi, p. 28.)

In the above quotation the use of the expression *Darstellung* – representation, presentation, performance – indicates that Benjamin's memory is structured *as if* it was a cartographic representation whose space contains different disconnected

[1] Benjamin, Walter. 1972. *Gesammelte Schriften*. VI. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp. The English translation of *Berliner Chronik* is from the 1979 edition by Peter Demetz (1979: 5).

[2] As noted by Gunnar Olsson, an opening citation works as a launching pad for what will follow (Olsson: 1991), an anticipation, a framework for the subsequent discourse.

snapshots, deviations and digressions. The flat surface of the chart initiates the workings of memory. Through these (unusual) connections the act of remembering becomes connected with cartography and the affirmation of this act depends on a cartographic impulse. Benjamin writes:

> Suddenly, and with compelling force, I was struck by the idea of drawing a diagram of my life, and knew at the same moment exactly how it was to be done. With a very simple question I interrogated my past life, and the answers were inscribed, as if of their accord, on a sheet of paper that I had with me. A year or two later, when I lost this sheet, I was inconsolable […]. Now, however, reconstructing its outline in thought without directly reproducing it, I should, rather speak of a labyrinth. I am not concerned here with what is installed in the chamber at its enigmatic center, ego or fate, but all the more with the many entrances leading into the interior. These entrances I call primal acquaintances; each of them is a graphic symbol of my acquaintance with a person whom I met, not through other people, but through neighborhood […]. Whether cross-connections are finally established between these systems also depends on the intertwinements of our path through life. This is what the sketch of my life revealed to me as it took shape before me on that Paris afternoon. Against the background of the city, the people who had surrounded me closed together to form a figure. (Ivi, pp. 30–32.)

Benjamin's narration provides three points that are central in relation to the map we are going to analyze here. The first is the co-existence at the center of the diagram of one's life (and of all maps) of the *ego* (point of view) and *fate* (vanishing point); the second is that all memories of relations and events are anchored in space; the third is that the movement of memory implies the *montage* of a map that shows one's path through life (Schlögel 2003). And it is of little consequence whether the map has a geometric form as an abstract Euclidean surface or a personal labyrinth of places and directions. Whatever its form, all cartographic representation aims to "charter the world of thought and action", functioning as a "theatre on whose stage the absent is made present, the present made absent" (Olsson 2007: 57, 111). Or, in the words of Benjamin, acting as *geographer*: "language shows clearly that memory is not an instrument for exploring the past but its theater. It is the medium of past experience" (Ivi, pp. 25–26). Whether we call it memory or map, to remember is an act of spatialization of time that fragments linear progression, and whose fragments *attract each other*, like *magnets*, here and now in the spatial synchrony of an eccentric plane.[3] It is only here and now that it is possible to fully understand the meaning of "the images, severed from all earlier associations, that stand – like precious fragments or torsos in a collector's gallery – in the prosaic rooms of our later understanding".[4]

Prior to the contemporary theorization of the *spatial turn,*[5] Benjamin's geographic imagination in-between memory and routes already showed that topography

[3] For a geographic interpretation of Benjamin's work, see Derek Gregory (1994); Mike Savage (2000: 33–35).

[4] Walter Benjamin, cit. p 26.

[5] For an illustration of the idea of spatial turn, see Gaston Bachelard (1957), Michel Foucault (1966) Henri Lefebvre (1991) and Yi-Fu Tuan (1977). The spatial turn has also played a key role in human sciences. See David Harvey (1989) and Edward Soja (1989, 1996).

Fig. 1 A. M. place of origin's map

and biography, memories and maps are closely connected (though Benjamin's map deviates from social topography as it has the labyrinthine form of a *rhizome* with multiple entryways and exits, digressions and temporal scales[6]). As I have already argued, and in respect to the cartographic legitimacy of this rhizomatic form of detachment, the geographical lines traced by Benjamin function as guiding tools that intersect the lines traced by Pozzato in this volume that cross heterogeneous planes of places of origin.

The act of knowing also implies an act of re-cognition and, among the drawings collected in our corpus, the following, in particular its routes and title, has caught my attention (Fig. 1).

Our choice to take into consideration only one map in the *Atlas of Places of Origin* we have collected is inspired by Brian Harley's well-known theory according to which every cartographic representation should be seen as a text, an individual narration constructed through a system of signs (Harley 2001: 149–168).

Harley's conceptualisation of the map rejects the idea that the map is simply a mirror of the world, an objective graphic representation that uses a scale to provide a

[6]This definition provides an apt illustration of Benjamin's cartographic plan: "the rhizome pertains to a map that must be produced, constructed, a map that is always detachable, connectable, reversible, modifiable, and has multiple entryways and exits and its own lines of flight. It is tracing that must be put on the map, not the opposite": Deleuze, Gilles, Guattari, Félix. 1980. *Capitalisme et schizophrénie*. Tome 2, *Milles Plateaux*. Paris: Les Editions de Minuit. English edition: 1987. *A Thousand Plateaus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. London: Continuum. p. 23.

truthful rendering of some elements of the Earth.[7] Following this line of reasoning, in our view, what a map really represents is a translation of the surface of the Earth on a table whose ordering principle is represented by the coordinates of social relations and cultural/political practices that together shape the world. Or, to put this slightly differently, as Franco Farinelli has stated, the map is the sum of relations that characterize human life according to priorities or preferences that are defined *ad-hoc* (Farinelli 2003: 6). In short, we are talking about models of mapmaking of the cultural and affective "invisible social world", rather than a visible rendering of the surface of things. Harley's point is that power prescribes cartographic rules that define a kind of realism and styles of truth that socially recognizable representations of the world should follow. Scale – which provides truth value – measures a maps' position within the tautological oppositions objective/subjective, true/false. But, it should be pointed out that no map is technically authentic, as it is still not possible to transfer a curved space on a flat surface without producing deformations or losing the continuity of its form.[8] To return to Harley's coordinates – which are not limited to the criticism of a mimetic kind of realism – each diagram of life of our Atlas can be included in the category of cartographic representation, as all of these are a projection on paper of invisible cultural relations and socio-spatial practices (Harley 1990), or, technically, of reversed perspectives, of a personal rhizome held together by memory's logic.

2 Frame: "My Map"

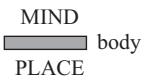
Let us now consider A.M.'s map of Terténia drawn as response to our initial request to "draw a kind of map of your place of origin". This request implies an initial triangulation of three elements: 1. the representation of the workings of memory; 2. the movement created by the act of memory; 3. the surveying of an idea that is called "place" and the implicit element of all maps – the so-called subject of the map. Had A. M. produced a cartographic representation according to modern projective geometry, the form of the subject of the map would have been a disembodied geometrical point of view and its projection would have conformed to the vanishing point on a Euclidean plane. The result would have been a geometrical selection of a series of elements of the territory that the author deemed significant, placed in a homogeneous and isotropic tabular space. However, in this map the triangulation contains a movement (the act of remembering) that re-defines the position and nature of the map (the subject) and therefore also the structure and content (place) of the map itself. According to Edward Casey "*The memory of the World* is very

[7] We privilege the work of Brian Harley because, along with Denis Wood, he is the founder of the History of cartography. See Harley and David (1987)

[8] As Pavel Florenskij has noted: "There is simply no way that an eggshell, or even a fragment of it, can be laid over the surface of a marble table. To do so one would need to obliterate its form by grinding it into the finest powder. For the same reason it is impossible to represent an egg, in any exact sense of the word, on paper or canvas". This quotation is taken from the English translation of Florenskij's study (1919) edited by Nicoletta Misler (2000: 159).

much the memory of being bodily in the world, being a central memorial presence there" (Casey 2000: 180). The body as lived and remembered is a locus that *mind* and *place* traverse in order to meet, it is what remains between two dimensions and it resembles a thick interstitial border line: "it not only takes me into places; it habituates me to their peculiarities and helps me to remember them vividly." (Casey 2000: 180).

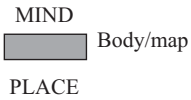
This is how we could represent this relation:



Hence the relation between memory and place can be understood only indirectly, that is to say through the translation/mediation of the *body as lived and remembered*. The embodiment of remembering implies a particular perspective and position. To put this in Casey's words "it is to have not just a point of view but a place in which we are situated" (Casey 2000: 182). From this position and with such a body it is possible through memory to recall the image of experiences and facts that took *place* in a specific *place of origin;* it is possible make a (memory) map (Norment 2012:10) that spontaneously selects and coordinates what is worth remembering, leaving a void for what can be forgotten. On the intrinsic possibility of places to evoke and keep memories alive, Casey has written:

> places are *congealed scenes* for remembered contents; and as such they serve to situate what we remember. Here we encounter once more place's *periechon* being, its containing/surrounding function. Place is a *mise en scène* for remembered events precisely to the extent that it guards and keeps these events within its self-delimiting perimeters. Instead of filtering out (as a place can do for inappropriate, ill-placed memories), place holds in by giving to memories an authentically local habitation: by being their place-holder (ivi: 186).

From places' originary power to keep and evoke memories, Casey postulates a structural analogy between place and memory based on the fact that both provide an intelligible form to depict distant and different positions and events: in the same way in which place keeps together heterogeneous objects and positions, so memory gathers in a coherent narration different moments that occured at different times in the past. In this way, Casey seems to say that any act of imagining in the past has essentially a cartographic nature. Given this premise, it follows that maps are geographic imaginings whose center is a subject defined body as lived and remembered, a *mise en scène*, materially *congealed* of the place in which this body has lived. To the scheme represented above, one should therefore add at least another term and make the interstitial line thicker as shown below:



This is a local translation of what Olsson calls simply map, or sign. In the interstitial space between MIND and PLACE, geographical imagination "forms as a

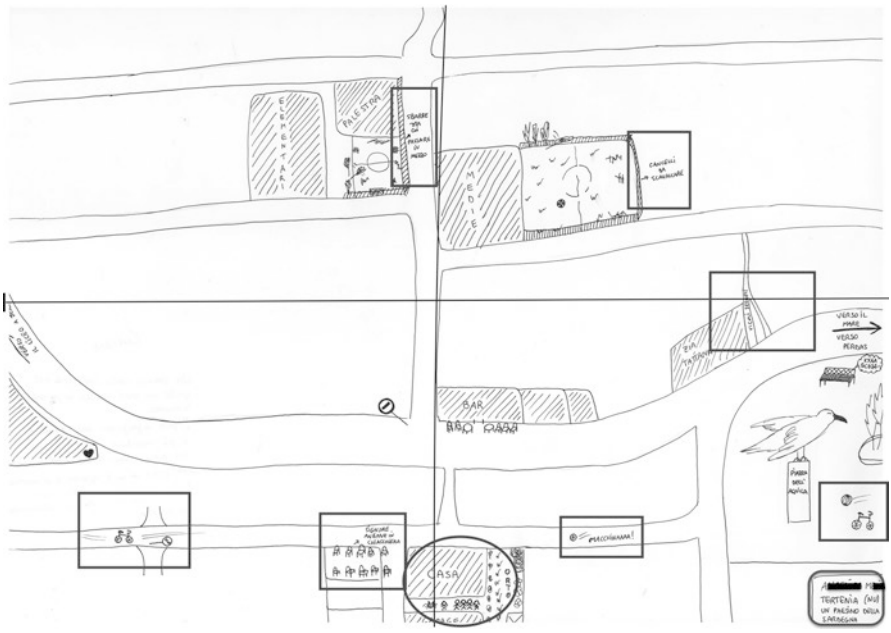


Fig. 2 Coordinates and fixed points in "My Map"

body", at once originary and memorial. As Olsson has noted: "every map is a projection of the self, every self a projection of its culture […] partly because imagination is essentially memorial, partly because the art of memory is not an art of recitation but an art of invention" (Olsson 2007: 115). Just as geography.

Let us analyze more closely the modes and the content of A.M's map, or, more precisely, the montage of A.M.'s *intentional* geographic imagination, that Casey defines as "object phase". A. M. writes:

Map in which I have highlighted certain practices (such as entering in the shut courtyard area of the primary schools, close alleys that become secret places, gates to leap over) and people (old ladies sitting together, kids that play in the street). We played ball in the street near our homes, someone used to shout car and everyone moved off the street. I have drawn the cat and the family, the monument with the eagle is by a famous artist in the village (Albino Manca), he has given a certain notoriety to the village (Fig. 2).

What is immediately noticeable is the systematic absence of people in Terténia space, with one very marginal exception: the old ladies sitting together are evoked by small chairs, the courtyard, gates and alleys are empty, the kids that play in the street are invisible, probably they have already retreated in a safe place. Only the ball remains, the bike and the sound "caarrrr".

The apparent contradiction between what A. M. writes and what she draws is mediated on the plane of memory, and takes into account the so-called "frame".[9]

[9] On the function of the frame see Paul Duro (1996).

The frame of the map is technically structured according to the *remembering-that* principle, characterized by the predominant representation of qualitative connoted situations. These are not constructed by the juxtaposition of elements, but by their correlation and interaction, establishing in this way an internal articulation that refers to a "quasi-narrative" structure (Casey 2000: 54). The result is a skeleton-like structure of a situation in its bare "thatness" that in this case traces spatial practices and pathways. This frame contains two main factors: the Heideggerian "world-hood" and the "self-presence of the rememberer". The first is made up of "scenes" – the exact where in which the action unfolds (gates, alleyways, courtyars, streets, small chairs) – and of "surroundings" – the immediate vicinity of this scene that, following Casey, stands out because of its emptiness. This emptiness is clearly expressed by the white cartographic space. The second factor logically intersects with the first, as "where there is such worldhood within the memory-frame, the self-presence of the rememberer may became a noticeable component of the object phase of remembering" (Casey 2000: 69).

A. M.'s map provides an example of an ordered plot that is sustained by the systemic and precise to and fro between remembering and the cartographic impulse, between a coherent spatial architecture and heterogeneous temporal scales. A *mise en scène* of the *art of memory* and the *art of geography* coordinated within the same *frame*.

The prerequisite and object of this *Darstellung* occupy the most important place in the lower part of the map, as place-holder of the map's structure (a sort of "I am here") (Vaughan 2010: 93). A. M. places his/her house exactly at the centre of the line that coincides with the lower margin of the page and the threshold of the map itself (the garage and part of the vegetable patch are partially outside the map). Opposite the house are the only figures of the map: A.M., A.M.'s family (including the cat). This represents the topological "where" that technically provides the direction of the map, and orients all subsequent spatial practices – a geographic originary point for all pathways. In the corner on the right, the spot that seems to indicate the end of the narration is a rectangle that contains the anagraphic and topographic indication for the map: A.M. and Terténia respectively. This is a concise identification document, that in maps is technically called cartouche (from the Latin charta). In this small chart/document, the space that separates the name and surname of the author of the map (personal proper name) and the toponym (name of the geographic place that is defined as "a small village in Sardinia") is compressed and continuous, at least if we consider cartouche as a text. No punctuation separates the two *as if* they together were a sort of signature. Even in this very personal diagram of life, the cartographic triangulation – the unfinished process that is essentially dynamic and temporal – requires a close contiguity of biography, topography and place of origin. As A.M. said after she had made the drawing: "what really has *made* me what I am was this village". Its map as far as points, orientation and coordinates are concerned is similar to the categories of the "embodied map" as theorized by the most radical branch of feminist geography.[10]

[10] See Elizabeth Grosz (1995), Matthew Sparke (1998), Massey (1994).

3 Geographical Pathways

Let us know consider the rhizome of places of origin through geographical terminology, that is to say the signs and the structure of A.M.'s map beginning from its geographical determinations. The first thing to note is the orientation of the map, that is to say those fixed points that anchor the invisible coordinations of the space of the representation. Terténia's map does not aim at communicating geographical *information* but, as already noted, at finding nodes and pathways of childhood memories that are staged in a geographical *setting*. From a cartographical point of view, this map is oriented so that the north is placed on its upper part. Eastwards we find an exact notation that says "towards the sea, towards Perdas" and westward "towards the Jerzu liceo". The point that coordinates the unfolding of memory is in the lower part of the map, that geographically corresponds to the south, where the drawing of the house and the family group appears. It is precisely this landmark that orients A.M.'s social and individual life, whose symbolic significance transforms it into the fixed point of the representation – the point that determines meaning.

This is the space on the map where the existential coordinates of the subject (remembered lived body) and the abstract ones, that define the totality of geographic space and make this map technically "cognitive", come together. The co-existence of both categories could be explained with the double dimension (spatial/ temporal and biographic/topographic) of A.M.'s diagram; or its logical and functional contiguity to that model that geographers have defined *map* (Harvey 1991), that is to say what in the medieval period was designated as "the blanket of the world" (Farinelli 2009: 20–21) whose meaning exceeds conventional ideas of mapping, and that ever since the beginning of the 1970s have been redefined as cognitive or mental maps (Tuan 1975; Gould and White 1974, Wood 1990). All these definitions are but ambiguous labels; what remains true though is that in order to begin to understand how a map functions one should

> approach it as a palimpsest, a parchment written on twice, the first text erased, the second covering the traces of the old. Since its rhetorical force depends on the internal coherence of the narrative, and since the spiritual world is always emphasized over the physical, the pictured scenes are positioned to fit the temporal logic of the story rather than the realities of geographical space (Olsson 2007: 57).

Accordingly here we will attempt to consider both aspects of the map: the topographic aspect and the topological narration. As we have already considered the fixed points of the coordinates of A.M.'s map, now we have to consider their unfolding.

With reference to Kevin Lynch's well known categories of the *form* of the city (Lynch 1960), A.M.'s map can be defined as a "cognitive map" because of its exact correlation with geographical space. Moreover, this map shows a precise use of all the five elements that, according to Lynch, provide the degree of imageability of a map in relation to the form of a city:

1. "paths" (the map is structured around the intertwining of roads and pathways);

2. “edges” (the lower and upper edges provide a sort of spatial and existential gap beyond which all is invisible, all movement stops and memory is erased);
3. “districts” (that can be referred to the various functions and uses of the places in Terténia: schools, public gardens, space for spare time, the social space of casual conversations and the convivial space in which adults meet);
4. “nodes” (gates, nets and secret alleyways);
5. “landmarks”(the family home and the home of aunt Tatiana).

All in all it provides a good survey between memory and experience of the intricate details of the A.M.’s diagram that refer both to spatial practices and social nodes. It is a map that communicates a strong sense of place and belonging, because the relationship between the subject and the spatial structure of Terténia is never alienating.

As regards dimensions, in maps the dimension of symbols is directly related to meanings and memories. In this map roads take up space; therefore, from a formal point of view and according to a cartographical analysis informed by topo*graphy* and topo*logy*, A.M.’s map is readable and plausible. From a technical point of view, it appears vividly comprehensible in that it expresses the above mentioned intrisic meanings. However, differently from Lynch maps, this has no use. This is not an attempt to either recall Terténia space to measure its imageability, or to establish whether the mental map recalled helps A.M. to find her way here and now. As regards logic, we are far away from the purpose of the environmental image according to Lynch: a generalised image that is the product of the intertwining of memory and present sensations that has the instrumental function to interpret information and guide others. No map of the place of origin serves to orient oneself in the present, as this supports memory and serves to re-present the past from a “here and now” position. This kind of map does not point to a direction to take, but shows the way that took us to where we are now. It is a *a-posteriori* narration of events and as such the analogy of cartographical form, meaning and function does not always work.

Memory, map and place and their dynamic triangulation seem to take another and further direction that leads towards a specific line whose meaning is revealed when the map is viewed from the point of view of the so-called “local mind” (La Cecla 2000). From this viewpoint, the clear totality of pathways and itineraries begins “to take space”, as this totality graphically interrupts the indistinct white and decidedly leads towards places filled with memories. From a topological point of view it is precisely these pathways and itineraries that are “voiced”; these constitute and organize the skeleton of memory: the unfolding on the archive of our steps. In other words, the map synchronically stages that dynamic process of systematic appropriation of space that can be realized through the progressive distancing from the area of the house. From the safety of lower margin of the map, we can imagine a movement towards the outside that step after step moves towards the attainment of a full geographical orientation. Furthermore, we can foresee the development of a self-consciousness/ knowledge that allows A.M. to move freely without getting lost. This topology narrates the process of “growing up” through an appropriation of space that offers protection against the “dramatic consequences of getting lost”. In

this map, we can see our subject able to orient herself without a guide through the snares of closed gates and the enclosed courtyard of the school, through the maze of closed alleyways transformed into secret labyrinths (La Cecla 2000: 15–16).

There are at least two conclusions to be drawn. The first concerns the position of the subject in relation to the motion of memory, the second refers the meaning of this relation in respect of the meaning and the function of the form of the map. The following passage by Fredric Jameson is enlightening:

> Yet Lynch's work also suggests a further line of development insofar as cartography itself constitutes its key mediatory instance. A return to the history of this science (which is also an art) shows us that Lynch's model does not yet, in fact, really correspond to what will become mapmaking. Lynch's subjects are rather clearly involved in pre-cartographic operations whose results traditionally are described as itineraries rather than as maps: diagrams organized around the still subject-centered or existential journey of the traveler, along which various significant key features are marked: oases, mountain ranges, rivers, monuments, and the like. The most highly developed form of such diagrams is the nautical itinerary, the sea chart, or *portulans*, where coastal features are noted for the use of Mediterranean navigators who rarely venture out into the open sea. (Jameson 1991: 51–52)

On the threshold of modernity, the diagram of the nautical itinerary in the form of portulans implies a new practice that involves the compilation of the captain's log-book on whose flat surface the captain of the boat every day transcribes the act of sea travelling – the art of piloting a boat – where the most important rule is to keep sight of the coastline (Livingstone 1992: 36–41). Nautical charts and diaries consist of a complete recording of exploration that will be read only at the end of the journey, this very recording is also used by explorers on land. Jameson brief cartographic reflections are organized around a chronological principle and refer to the different dimensions that space has taken in history. What Jameson calls pre-cartographic practice – tracing a linear itinerary of pathways whose form cannot be reduced to a map in the totality of space – provides an apt comparison with the internal mechanism that regulates projection, structure and the functioning of all maps of the place of origin. As a matter of fact, this mechanism presupposes the need for a caesura whose recomposition depends on the presence of a mnemonic trace of the itinerary. Memory retraces the footsteps of this itinerary, recomposing a coherent and full rhizome of the place of origin. This itinerary recalls the emblematic line that measures the double distance between the present of A.M.'s position and the past of her place of origin, the same line that each geographical imagination must overcome.

Pre-cartography should not be understood as an operation that comes before, but as providing an indication for a return movement that begins with the archive of all the steps made by A.M. For this reason, it is strategic to intertwine the temporal and the spatial dimension, the plane of memory and that of its recording, because it is precisely in this complex encounter between metaphor and metonimy that the double nature and position of the subject can be found. Self-estrangement is the term used by Jonathan Flatley to mean the distance that would allow one to observe oneself from outside. This term also implies a separation that makes the structure of

feeling unexpected and surprising, paving the way for a new kind of observation analysis (Flatley 2008). The dimension studied by Flatley is in this case central:

> "Affective mapping" is the name I am giving to the aesthetic technology – in the older, more basic sense of a *techne* – that represents the historicity of one's affective experience. (Flatley 2008: 4)
>
> I mean "mapping" here, I should emphasize, in a slightly unexpected manner. That is, the affective map is not a stable representation of a more or less unchanging landscape; […] I mean the term to suggest something essentially revisable; when it works, it is a technology for the representation to oneself of one's own historically conditioned and changing affective life. […] The revisable, rhizomatic affective map not only gives us a view of a terrain shared with others in the present but also traces the paths, resting places, dead ends, and detours we might share with those who came before us (Flatley 2008: 7)

Hence, an affective map that points to the feeling of being at home. Let us then begin to move in the direction of the dynamic aspect of this place of origin, along the line of its development, re-tracing that movement backwards that all acts of remembering imply.[11]

4 Writing Geographical Memory: Exploration and Itinerary

Let us consider the following fragment from the introduction of *Geography and Memory. Explorations in Identity, Place and Becoming* that describes the aims of this volume:

> It remains one of the greatest unknown lands for science to explore: that of the detailed working of the brain and questions of consciousness in relation to unconsciousness, emotions, affect and memory. […] We feel that geography, and related disciplines, have their role to play in this venture, and that exploring the process and implications of memory and geography is a demanding and exciting venture. This book walks with that challenge and seeks to map the relationships between geography and memory along three critical pathways: identity, place and becoming. (Jones, Garde-Hansen 2012: 1)

Let us consider also the famous title of David Lowenthal's study *The Past is a Foreign Country* (1985) along with its exotic cover image and several examples of time travellers. These two volumes, along with an image and a crowd of the most diverse travellers would suffice to demonstrate that the metaphor of the journey and of the exploration of a strange territory and/or a *terra incognita* is the most common metaphor for the relationship between memory and space. The metaphorical entanglement with a traditional geographical practice is charged with meaning and exceeds the well known connection between places and the act of remembering. We think that it is the signifier that stands for the recognition of the geographical primacy of the recording technique, as well as the data collection (the signified).

As is well known, geographical technique is nothing but the elaboration of a network that produces a "logical image" of the world so that lands that have been

[11] See Bingham and Thrift (2000).

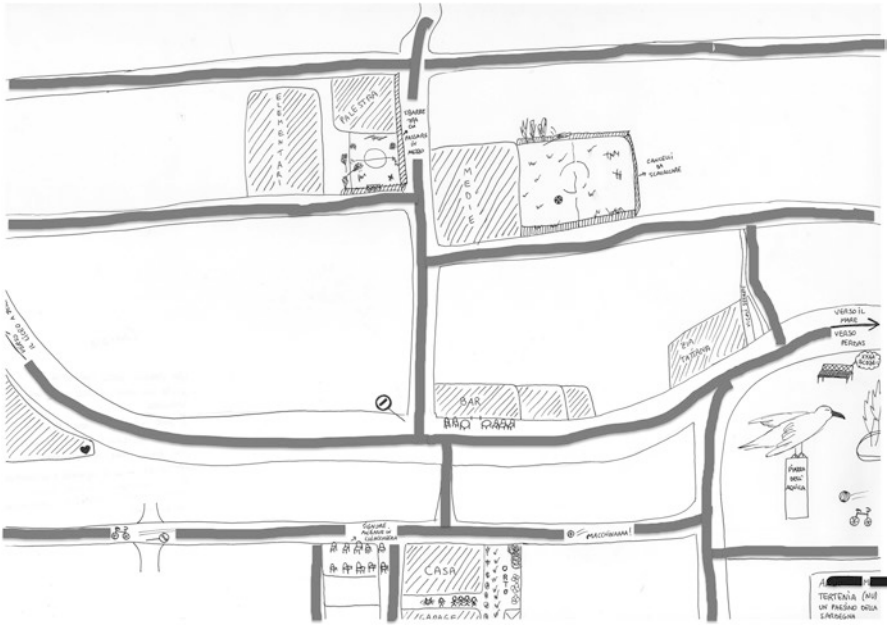


Fig. 3 The itineraries of "My map"

explored are not forgotten. This is more similar to a mnemonic technique than a description. From this point of view the chart functions as requirement for discovery and starts that recurrent and asymmetric process of accumulation of knowledge that has characterized the unfolding of modernity (Sloterdijk: 2005). As Bruno Latour has noted, the chart is the most efficient mobile technology to record, preserve and reproduce all fragments of explored lands (Latour 1989: 357). However, exploration (practice), *terra incognita* (object), map (quasi-narrative re-presentation) should be seen as three moments in a dynamic process that logically and functionally comes after the originary act of discovery: to walk through unexpected *critical pathways*; in other words that "research for" that begins through what Casey describes as "insertion into place by means of the body" (Casey 2000: 191). Precisely because the development of A.M.'s map is about pathways of place (*periechon*) of origin, it is necessary to return to the originary model of the *periplo* or the *períodos* in order to define the space that originates the map, while to understand its sense – that is to identify that relationship between exploring and mapping necessary for geographical imagination – it is necessary to reflect on the practice of modern exploration (Fig. 3).

A.M.'s map can be defined as a bidimensional result of a trajectory of what Pietro Janni defines hodologic space, that space that depends on the linear dimension of movement, whose logic is opposed to the heterogeneous relation among points, roads and places that can be found on a map (Janni: 1984). Exemplary of hodologic space are the *períodos* of Strabo's *Geography*. For Strabo the order of geographical

discourse depends on the order of appearance of places in relation to the movement of the geographer. Moreover, this space presupposes the systematic absence of charts and is unusual for its "curious dynamic elements" in which localities are described as if they could move or take a certain direction. What Janni sees as substantive in these kind of maps is the way the description of movement is founded on a rigorously uni-dimensional language characterized by recurrent formulas that recall those of the peripli. As in Strabo's *Geography*, the geographer's task is to find a guiding principle to put order into the inarticulate mass of Earth forms, so that these can acquire an intelligible form – a guiding principle that also functions as an *aide memoire*. What are the characteristics of the dynamic line that provides order in the narration and the practice of geographical space?

A first necessary consideration is that whoever lists a series of places in order of appearance does so by starting from his/her own personal knowledge and placing him/herself as the exclusive reference point; consequently listing places starting from his/her own interests and actions. It follows that:

1. the direction "of point B in relation to point A is not the straight line that connects A and B […] rather it is the direction that who is in A must follow to get to B in the easiest, most comfortable way";
2. the shortest way "is not a segment of the line […] rather the line that marks the quickest way for the most frequently used, or safest, or most comfortable means of transport, in short the most *economic* way in its broadest sense";
3. the distance between two points "is measured by the number of steps necessary to go from one to the other, and by the total effort necessary […] moreover the distance AB is not necessarily equal to the distance BA";
4. "hodologic space knows points that have hightened value and meaning and that contribute to its structure and introduce marked dissimmetries";
5. orientation always depends on the starting point that "look" in the direction X (Janni 1984: 84).

These five characteristics – all of them present in A.M.'s map – lead to the following conclusion: knowledge of geographical space as a whole is something that does not concern journeying, or better the measure of this knowledge depends on the number of paths that we actively manage to find and follow. It is therefore necessary for a certain period of time to elapse to manage to reconstruct the totality of our itineraries and endow them with a form through mapmaking. Hence the bidimensional medium of the map "triumphs over the three-dimensional, and *ipso facto* the image over the body" (Sloterdijk 2005: 98) giving up its active role in the production of knowledge. It is also important to point out that the temporal difference is necessary to recognize the value of what we encounter on our path. The movement implied in the act of drawing depends on the movement of thought to recall (here and now) the steps we took (then) in space (elsewhere). The dynamic nature of the itinerary of the places translated on the map is evoked by the temporal difference that is at the basis of all mapmaking, that is to say making present and recalling through the imagination practices that are temporally distant. As noted by Benjamin, we can dream the moment of learning to write, but we cannot perform that any longer. What is crucial

in this reflection is above all the irreversibility of the loss of the bodily dimension and the "discovery", and it is precisely this that is connected with the impulse to actively unveil *terra incognita* by way of a line.

Paul Carter considers the practices that produce discovery. According to him, the crucial moment of these practices is represented by the translation of "explorer narratives" in "Spatial History":

> The explorer journals describe the country in its pre-mapped state: but this state is soon superseded not only by the explorers' own draft charts, but by later travelers linking up their routes to other routes. Before long the one-sidedness of the first journey has been replaced by the ubiquitous view of the map (Carter 1992 :9).

Different lines (routes) come together and isolated narrations are transformed into a complete image, which enables relations and intersections that would otherwise be invisible. Besides the reduction of heterogeneous local stories into a unifying Spatial History, what is crucial here is Carter's musings on the systematic absence of maps during explorations. Carter refers in particular to the absence of photographs. These are defined as a positive image and, for this reason similar to cartography due to their common logic and manipulatory power. In relation to the geographical debate about explorers' resistance to the techniques of the photographic image, Carter has suggested that this can be explained by the pre-visual nature of the explorers' experience, and in particular the difference between the photographer/cartographer's gaze and that of the explorer/narrator:

> Dealing in perfect reproductions, in repeatable events, photography shared the outlook of the scientific geographer with his map: it assumed the reality of the journey lay in the facts it established, the landmarks, the track, the permanent features in their permanent, static relations. Yet exploration by its very nature occupied a pre-visual realm, one in which directions remained to be defined, journeys were one-way and lookouts (the sine qua non of pictoresque touring) had still to be found (Carter 1992: 35)

What is suggested here is that the cartographer behaves like someone who travels with a map and from time to time compares the reality of space and its cartographical re-presentation. In this way, he forgets that the way the journey unfolds depends on the explorer's personal experience and his/her choices concerning the route, denomination of the places he travels through, where to camp, or, more simply, experiences that distract him. On the contrary, the gaze of the explorer determines territorial markers and emergency points in order to structure and provide meaning and congruity to the explored space. In short, this difference between explorer and cartographer depends foremost on a direction: the explorer proceeds step by step outwards because his/her route is yet to be fully formed. Carter adds, with reference to the process of constructing reality, "exploration, […] was precisely what photography could not visualize" (Carter 1992: 36).

Notwithstanding the faithfulness and efficacy of the cartographic/photographic document, according to Carter, what criticism fails to come to terms with is that a photograph (or a map) transforms reality into a Spatial History only *a posteriori*, through a sort of *post-journey*, because it is only in the dimension of the *post* that, for example, the promontory that the explorer passes through during his journey can

be represented on the map, following a process of re-cognition. The promontory is transformed into an artefact with new characteristics and ready to partake of a new context of meaning that re-designs its nature and function. It is at this point, when the promontory becomes an image, that technically it has been discovered. Because explorers act in a pre-visual environment, they become cartographers only on their return journey, when they remember the camping site or a certain promontory that are transformed in artefacts through a process of *re-calling*. In other words, the map is realized when the explorers' footsteps acquire a privileged meaning, marking an itinerary that previously was a disorienting and indifferent locus of possibilities (Carter 1992: 45). In this way, the protruding rock with a bizzarre shape where the previous season the explorer camped is transformed into a familiar place; a group of acacia trees resembling a skeleton at the bifurcation of a valley marks the place where a difficult choice had been taken, the remainers of a camping site are transformed into a place of encounters. It is at the end of the journey that explorers realize that all these events have acquired an *iconic* meaning and are ready to be drawn and named on a map. And yet, no translation is possible without the narrative memory recorded on the journey. No map is possible without the periplo that structures the diagram of experience. In conclusion, the world drawn on the map is exclusively the world re-cognized on the return journey, when events experienced during the journey are transformed into an oriented image and places come to light – re-represent themselves – through the act of denomination. Maps record all that explorers are leaving behind and can materialize only when they look back to see the effect produced by their own movement, much like Timothy O'Sullivan and his footsteps in the Nevada desert.[12]

If we transpose this short digression to the case of the map we are analyzing, we can immediately retrace A.M.'s movement and see that this is akin to practices of exploration and discovery. A.M. also can map her origin as soon as itineraries are complete and places have been walked through. In this way, from this vantage point, the actions of trespass and entering a place without being seen find their place on the map along with gates and fences; the act of chatting is represented by empty little chairs, football games and friendships mark a particular stretch of street.

A.M.'s map recalls the logic of the *post journey* – and more in general of exploration and surveying – also in relation to what geographers call "domestication" or dis-distancing to mean a process of appropriation that begins by assigning names, or re-assigning names to what already has a name. This process causes a practical, material manipulation and/or a change in the use of an element (does the rock protrusion prove to be a good shelter? Then it is with this function in mind that it will be re-named so that it can be used again as a sheltering place) (Sloterdijk 2005, Gregory 1994). As regards the cartographical aspect, this produces a legitimized legal appropriation of the place, as regards the emotive one, this produces familiarity with the place, so that the latter is perceived as safer and domesticated in the deepest sense of this term. *Geographical imagination* begins right here: between

[12] The reference here is to the famous image made by O'Sullivan during the so-called King Survey for the geological exploration of the fortieth parallel. [in bibliography]

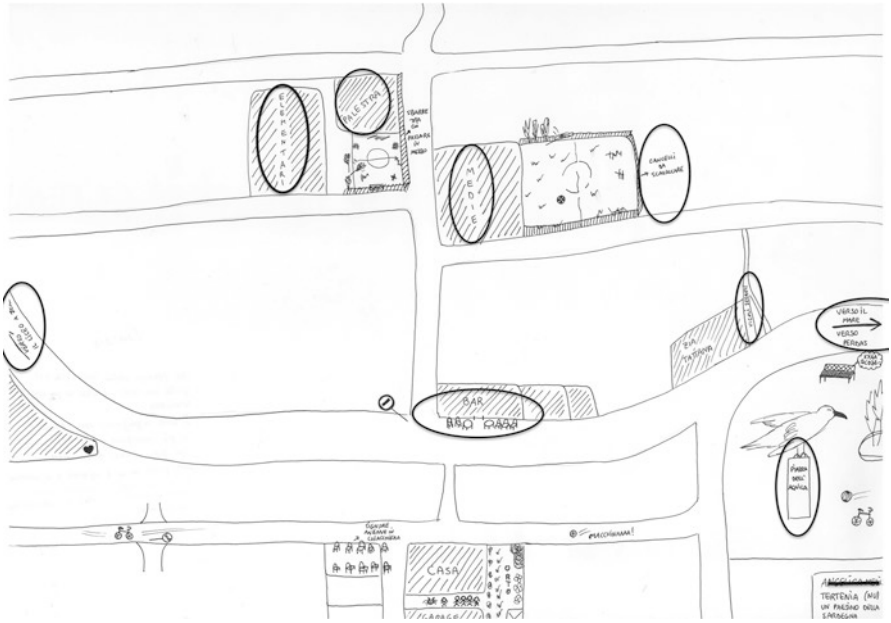


Fig. 4 Toponymy in "My map"

thought and action, between the act of remembering and memory. Elements of this form of imagination can be found in Edward Casey's description of the act of remembering and of the plane of memory, and also recur in the form and toponymy of A.M.'s map.

In concluding, let us now try out and measure the incidence of the practice of exploration and mapping on the act of remembering, and, "topographically speaking", of making a map of the routes of our lives, bearing in mind the distinction, already noted by Benjamin, of the compass of memory: now I know how to walk therefore I cannot learn to walk any longer (Fig. 4).

Though the place of memory and "the place of place in human memory" for Casey remain *terra incognita,* he offers enlightening definitions of memory: memory as "reproductive imagination; memory as "imagistic recollection"; memory as "the having of an image regarded as a copy of that which it is an image". All of these definitions speak the language of the cartographer: *lever une carte*, this is an expression that provides a meaning for the very first function of a map, that is to say the act of making portable all that can be remembered. Memories can be folded and put in a pocket. A.M.'s map is exactly this: a plane of memory that can be carried around, a crinkled handkerchief that can be fished out when it is needed. Memory of place, continues Casey, is selective and depends on the ability of places to anchor memories of specific actions that *took place in that precise place*. But this can be realized exclusively through "the lived body" that moves in place:

> As psycho-physical in status, the lived body puts us in touch with the psychical aspects of remembering and the physical features of place. As itself movable and moving, it can relate at once to the movable bodies that are the primary occupants of place and to the self-moving soul that recollects itself in place. Above all, through its active intentional arc, the lived body traces out the arena for the remembered scenes that inhere so steadfastly in particular places: the body's maneuvers and movements, imagined as actual, make room for remembering placed scenes in all of their complex composition. (Casey 2000: 189)

The relation that connects body place and memory encompasses also the consideration of the orientation and direction that the body assigns to places (North/South, right/left), as well as the capacity of this body to measure spatio-temporal distances. According to Casey, the very same capacities, but of an exploratory nature, constitute the condition to "be *familiar* with a particular place *in* which we are located". I use the term *act* because, as will become clear, "to be familiar" does not merely imply feeling at home, rather it presupposes some form of appropriation of the place itself:

> feeling at ease in a place that has become *one's own* in some especially significant way. "One's own" does not imply possession in any literal sense; it is more deeply a question of *appropriating*, with all that this connotes of *making something one's own* by *making it one with one's ongoing life*. The appropriation of familiar places is accomplished by the lived body, which has "a knowledge bred of familiarity that does not gives us a position in objective space". (Casey 2000: 191–192)

The penultimate movement to conclude the final *step* regarding the so-called disdistancing: "such work of the customary body is domesticating in function; it forges a sense of attuned space that allows one to feel *chez soi* in an initially unfamiliar place" (Casey 2000: 193), a place about which it is then possible to write a Local History. Further, the recall to memory of the experiences lived in places implies to *desire* to return to that place, "whether by memory or in some other way"; for example through a map, the geographical imagination that travels through the *line of desire* aims at possession (Farinelli 1992: 3). To return to A.M.'s map, the process of manipulation prior to the surveying of Terténia as a place of origin is evident. Given this we can proceed with a last act of imagination and see A.M. actively exploring and going through all the itineraries within the space of the village, journeying from her home to school, leaping over gates, exploring alleys; speeding on her bike, listening to old ladies *a convegno* [chatting] and playing with a ball in the park. Routes, intersections, buildings do not need to be named because they are made there, present; they belong to A.M. as points to mark out places. What appears on this map of routes – one that marks the lively rhizome of memory evoking voices and games long past – is the very personal signs of the explorer that inscribes itself in place of the existing toponymy of Terténia. No official indication of the names of streets appear on A.M.'s map. Signs say on the other hand: home, school, park, gates, secret alleys, etc. For each of these signs the possessive adjective "my" is implicit, made redundant by the renomination procedure. It explicitly says that is truly and deeply "My map".

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