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# Visual and Linguistic Representations of Places of Origin

An Interdisciplinary Analysis

 Springer

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# Introduction

**Maria Pia Pozzato**

**Abstract** The research is focused on the representations, both visual and linguistic, which people give of their own places of origin. The factual work of collection of the texts was not merely “empirical” because all the members of the research group proceeded in a predetermined way, following a protocol carefully and preliminarily discussed. In other words, we have made a list of the most relevant questions to address in the analysis of the corpus in order to obtain the answers we are looking for. Some of those answers concern: (1) how the visual language and the oral language integrate each other in the reconstruction of a memory; (2) how people nowadays experience the memory of their places of origin, in an era marked by large displacements and diminished sense of belonging to a place; (3) how emotional and cognitive components work together in the reconstruction of the past; (4) how the past is expressed through its spatial dimension. Interviewees were asked to draw their own place of origin on a white A3 sheet, using either a pencil or a coloured pen, according to their choice. If they did not remember their native place precisely because they had moved away many years before, they could draw the place they remembered as the scenario of their early childhood. The team is formed by scholars from different disciplines such as Semiotics, Psychology and Geography, because we aimed at understanding the materials under investigation from various and interdisciplinary points of view.

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**Part I**  
**Maps, Place of Origin, Identity:**  
**Underlying Cultural Models**

# Navigating Maps of Memories

Federico Montanari

**Abstract** The main purpose of this essay is to present and discuss a hypothesis concerning the semiotic and cultural transformation of the ideas of ‘map’ and ‘mapping’. Today, in our society, maps work more like navigation logs than traditional charts. What does this mean and what does this new dimension of mapping mean? We will try to investigate these issues not only as a theoretical hypothesis, but also through the observation of a corpus of maps drawn by a group of young students coming from a homogeneous geographical area (North Eastern Italy). We will develop this analysis using semiotic and socio-ethno-semiotic tools, taking into account the possible influence that social media and technologies, such as mobile phones, other digital media and devices (like Google maps, etc.) might have had on the authors of maps and their mapping activities. Drawing on visual cultural anthropology, and ethnography, and particularly Oliver Sack’s work on memory, the first part of this study will be devoted to a definition of the ‘map’, and of ‘mapping activity’, with particular reference to their transformation from traditional mapping to digital and locative media. In this first part reference will be made to the main literature on this subject, from Cognition studies and their connections with recent Visual Studies, to sociological methodology and STS (Science and Technology Studies, in particular Bruno Latour’s works; see also Akrich (1992) and Akrich and Latour (1992)). Finally, in last part of this essay, some analysis of maps of places of origins drawn by students will be provided.

Magnani was billed as “A Memory Artist,” and one had only to glance at the exhibit to see that he indeed possessed a prodigious memory – a memory that could seemingly reproduce with almost photographic accuracy every building, every street, every stone of Pontito, far away, close up, from any possible angle. It was as if Magnani held in his head an infinitely detailed three-dimensional model of his village, which he could turn around and examine, or explore mentally and then reproduce on canvas with total fidelity. [...]

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This, then, was an exhibit not of a “pure” memory but of memory harnessed to a single, overwhelming motive: the recollection of his childhood village. And, I now realized, it was not just an exercise in memory: it was, equally, an exercise in nostalgia – and not just an exercise but a compulsion, and an art (O. Sacks, *An Anthropologist on Mars*, pp. 200–201).

## 1 From Maps to Memory Visions

The aim of this work is twofold. Firstly, we re-consider some concepts and hypotheses concerning the contemporary transformation of the idea of map and mapping. Mapping is integral to our society in that its socio-technological dynamics are centered, as we shall see, on the practice and use of different forms of mapping. Secondly, we aim to study a specific experience of the drawing of a map of the place origin, beginning from the research group’s initial request of “drawing of a sort of map of one’s birthplace, or the place in which one lived early on in life, which shows one’s home and around it spaces that were significant” (see the introduction by Maria Pia Pozzato; see also Barthes (1967); Cervelli and Sedda (2006); Choay (1969); Eugeni (2010, 2016); Greimas (1976); Hammad (2003)). The interviewees had to express their memories of their place of origin by drawing maps; the scholars involved have provided an analysis that shows the meaning of these visual expressions of memories. My experience involved a large group of students (more than 150) that during November 2015 attended the first and second year course of Product Design at ISIA at Pordenone in the north east of Italy. The maps produced by these students were later included in the research group corpus.

Here I wish to focus on the relationship between memory of places of origin and mapping experiences connected with the use of new technologies, such as for example Google Maps and several other visual applications that can be downloaded on electronic devices (smartphones, iPad and similar others; see Bratton (2008)). Close observation of the maps drawn by my students reveal not so much the direct employment of these new technologies, but rather the cultural traces that this produces. We can hypothesize a relation between a general idea of “memory” and “reminiscence” of place of origin and the socio-cultural transformations caused by the use of new technologies in our daily lives.

I want to start by considering some ideas of memory and its visual perceptions and representations in an impressive study by Oliver Sacks “The Landscape of his Dreams” included in the above-mentioned volume *An Anthropologist on Mars* (Sacks 1995). This is dedicated to the case of Franco Magnani who has spent his whole life painting accurate – and yet not completely realistic – pictures of Pontito, his own place of origin and a small village in Tuscany, near Pescia. After the devastations during World War II and the death of his father, Franco Magnani has travelled around everywhere in the world searching for jobs. Eventually he arrived in San Francisco. Magnani is not one of the several pathological cases described in Sack’s well-known studies; indeed he was never one of Sacks’ patient. Sacks came to know about Magnani’s life after he visited one of his exhibitions during a conference on memory, after that the two became friends.



The famous neurologist has hypothesized a relation between Magnani's way of painting and the "*interictal personality syndrome*" first identified in the nineteenth century and which once again drew the attention of scholars in the 1950s. This is a pathology that leads to involuntary and very intense visions and "reminiscences" connected to forms of epilepsy or migraine. Some of the scholars quoted by Sacks have hypothesized that famous artists and writers such as Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Vincent Van Gogh, Edgar Allan Poe, Marcel Proust, Philip Dick were also affected by this syndrome. This a fascinating hypothesis but also excessively generalized, so much so that Sacks himself has declared that it is impossible to use. Yet, Sacks notes a detail that is important for this study: despite the fact that Magnani had never seen his small village again after he left, he was able to reproduce it in a way that can be defined hyper-realistic, even though some formal and stylistic features concerning both expression and content diverge from the definition of hyper realistic painting. We are referring here to the lack of inhabitants, a sort of "suspended time", the intensity of vision, some oneiric features in the painting, as well as the recurrence of partial views, the details of his bedroom, the representation of narrow streets and panoramic views of the nearby countryside (always devoid of human beings). Perspectival choices are either too wide or composite in comparison with those that can be obtained with a camera. In his late paintings these partial views seem to be projected onto an extra-terrestrial space waiting for an apocalypse to happen. Several years after he left his village, Magnani returned to visit the village following an invitation by the major. On a second later visit Sacks accompanied him.

These visits and his grief at the death of first his beloved mother and later of his wife caused a temporary interruption of Magnani's ability to paint his memories.

There is no space in this article to consider the details of this artist's life and work<sup>1</sup>; here we will concentrate only on what in Magnani's case is relevant for our study of representation of places of origin. Sacks has commented not just on the reconstructing dimension of the workings of memory, but also on its *constructive* and *productive* characteristics, that are particularly evident in the processes of "re-evocation", or "evocation" of one's place of origin. According to Sacks, this connects the individual psyche with a cultural and anthropological dimension. This is not a process intended to merely "register and set aside", a sort of "movie of the memory" or a "database" of the mind. Sacks relates Magnani's extreme case with other scientific data that emerged during the 1990s<sup>2</sup> and also with Proust's well-known definitions of poetic memory. This, has been defined by Sacks as 'a collection of moments,' the memories of which are not 'informed of everything that has happened since' and remain 'hermetically sealed,' like jars of preserve in the minds's larder" (Sacks, *op. cit.*, pp. 228–229). These reflections connect with Gilles Deleuze's

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<sup>1</sup>For example of primary importance is the figure of the mother (a sort of clairvoyant), or the shock felt by Magnani in discovering the state of decay of his village, almost abandoned with its the fallow fields. Sacks also provides interesting and more general neuro-psychological considerations concerning processes and pathologies of memory that we will not mention here.

<sup>2</sup>We are referring here to Edelman studies, or the new definitions of distributed cognitive systems, later works by Hutchins and Bruner – also quoted by Sacks – on the relationship between cognition and narrativity.

work on Proust (1964), where he focuses attention on details similar to those noted by Sacks: nothing in Proust is “remembering”, not even the *madeleines* or the wet *paveés*. All of this is reactivation and at the same time “telescope”, pre-cognition and observation of future time and space. Objects and sources of memories, memory of places, of the sensations felt in a more or less remote past become occasions for the activation and construction of future pathways. According to Deleuze (ib.), in Proust the artistic-aesthetic memory produces signs for the future.

Nowadays, after decades of studies in the fields of neuro-psychological and cognitive science, anthropology and semio-linguistics about the plastic and “autopoietic” abilities of cognition and perception, it appears superfluous to talk about the “productive and constructive” or representational abilities of memory. And yet, in Deleuze’s analysis of Proust there is a further interesting aspect that connects with our discussion of “memory of the origin” and memory in general. I am referring to his idea of “pro-active” memory. One could object that with Proust and in the case of Magnani we are faced with art – in the specific case of Magnani, a pathological aspect of art – and therefore that these cases are very different from what we are analysing here. Sacks would probably answer this objection by saying that the case of Magnani is on the one hand an extreme case but on the other it also shows a visionary ability that is common in all representations of places of origin; this in fact implies more than a mere mnemonic effort, but requires that places are reconstructed, literally *hallucinated* through the activation of an “intense” re-evocation. It is important to remember here the strong connection between this kind of representation and the emotive dimension including nostalgia, memories of loved ones that lived in those places<sup>3</sup> and all those anecdotes that revolve around these memories.<sup>4</sup>

Concerning the specific case of Magnani, Sacks writes:

What seemed to have occurred, by a singular fortuity, was the co-occurrence, the concurrence, of an acute need and a physiological state. For if his sense of exile and loss and nostalgia demanded a sort of world, a substitute for the real world he had lost, his experiential seizures now supplied what he needed, an endless supply of images from the past – or rather, an almost infinitely detailed, three-dimensional ‘model’ of Pontito, an entire theater or simulacrum he could mentally walk about and explore, capturing new aspects, new views, wherever he looked; this, clearly, depended equally on his prodigious, preexistent powers of memory and imagery (Sacks, *op. cit.*, p. 214).

The heightened intensity and emotive charge of the images that “translate” memories of place of origin do not solely depend on memory, but, as theorized by Sacks, are activated by memory; it is a process through which “*Franco’s personal, nostalgic feelings become cultural, transcendent ones*” (Sacks, *op. cit.* p. 233). The memories of “that” place (the village of Pontito) become special “in embodying a precious culture – a mode of building, a mode of living, that has almost vanished from the earth”

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<sup>3</sup> On the affective dimension and the importance of interpersonal relations during childhood and the meaning of place of origin, see Mazzeo’s, chapter “[Maps of Places of Origin or Maps of Self: A Graphic and Conversational Analysis](#)”, in this volume.

<sup>4</sup> On the importance of the narrative in the construction of sense, see Greimas 1986 and Pezzini 1998. Concerning space: Lotman (1987); Marrone (2009); Marrone and Pezzini (2006, 2008); Marscianni (2007); Montanari (2008); Pozzato (2006). Concerning emotional mapping, see Nold (2006).

(p. 233). Imaginative memory in general, continues Sacks, not only preserves fleeting moments of perception, but it transfigures and distances them giving them with a new life and transforming them into harmless entities. At the same time, “it also transfigures distances, vivifies, defangs – reshapes formed impressions, turns oppressive immediacies into wide vistas [...]” (p. 232). As we have noted, in Deleuze’s study of Proust, memory – and in particular memory of places of origin – becomes the ability to reconstruct the past to face present needs, fears and interests. On this issue Sacks quotes the psychoanalyst Frederic Bartlett that in turn confirms the views of more recent scholars quoted also here, such as Hutchins (1995), “Remembering is not the re-excitation of innumerable fixed, lifeless and fragmentary traces. It is an imaginative reconstruction, or construction, built out of the relation of our attitude towards a whole active mass of organised past reactions or experience.” (p. 230).

## 2 Navigable Maps Today

How is it possible to connect this “active”, constructivist and affective idea of landscapes of memory, of the act of representing and remembering the place of origin through maps with the present cultural situation as delineated at the beginning of this chapter? Our daily life is marked by the maps of all kinds, by a myriad of trajectories and pathways made available through social media, the web and satellites directly on our electronic devices. In light of this, can this reflection on the “creativity” of memory’s journeys to places still be pertinent today? Before considering some examples from our corpus, it is necessary to briefly describe the possible transformations brought about by today’s technological and cultural context.

Projects of different kinds of “mapping” (scientific, practical, commercial etc. etc.) concern not only urban places, but “spaces” and places in general. The pace of the production, transformation and construction of charts and maps has become overwhelming (also from an economic point of view), and crosses the boundaries of traditional disciplines. Recently, “cartographic practice” has become a diffuse social practice with commercial characteristics, but also “bottom up” (Lammes and Wilmott 2013; Montanari 2010, 2014). Let us consider cases that are now well-established such as Google, Google Maps or Google Earth, or electronic devices and interfaces such as smartphones and Gis and Gps (initially limited to professional users i.e. geographers, geologists, archaeologists, military engineers but now made available to car drives, trekking enthusiasts, skippers or even tourists). Quoting the geographer Franco Farinelli (2009) we can say that from the “crisis of cartographic reason” we have shifted to its possible sublimation and reconversion within economic, cultural and social practices.

All this is not of secondary importance in a study focused on personal mapping (though this is limited to places of origin). Particularly, as the aim of this study is to start an interdisciplinary discussion that encompasses human and social sciences (Kern [1983 (2003)]; Lefebvre 1974; Lynch 1960, 1976); in this case forms of representation and visualization through maps or territories and spaces past and present are crucial.

Bruno Latour (1992) has provided an important contribution to a more precise understanding of the “mediations” on forms of “delegation” between human social actors and “non human” in the technological field. Latour has pointed out that social sciences – and prior to these our cultural universe and societies – have been changed by the extraordinary and ever-pervasive phenomenon caused by “visualization devices”.

Recently, due first to the Internet and the computer and later technologies and devices for “imaging”, social attitudes, our daily life, human sciences and scientific research have undergone revolutionary innovations. The most recent cases are represented by VR (*Virtual Reality*) or AR (*Augmented Reality*) systems (see Montani 2014), though for a long time all kinds of information, and data – from historical to economical ones and those concerning social trends – have been given a visual form. This causes various kinds of transformations on different levels: ideological, practical, discursive and in terms of values systems, particularly for younger generations. This essay does not intend to be the beginning of a discussion about the use and impact of the Ipad and various other electronic devices, rather it is an attempt to evaluate this phenomenon in a wider sense. The question is: What happens to vision when everything becomes subjected to a visual device (to use Michel Foucault’s expression) and all we can possibly talk about is visualized? The answer to these questions takes us straight into the socio-anthropological point of our survey.

Given all this, what form do maps take today? According to the geographers involved in this project (see the chapters by Bonazzi and Frixia, chapters. “[The Representation of the Places of Origin: A Geographical Perspective](#)” and “[Geographical Imagination And Memory: Maps, Places, Itineraries](#)”, this volume), the transformations in our corpus retain connections with memory; as Alessandra Bonazzi rightly suggests, mapping is the act of registering what “explorers have left behind”. In this direction socio and ethno-semiotic disciplines propose a sort of parallel approach they do not to pretend to “see more” rather they analyse situations and relative mappings from another point of view: the point of view of cartography intended as a specific form of textuality that is the result of hybrid practices (de Certeau 1984). From a semiotic point of view, there are textual stratifications, such as discursive, semantic and value networks, that structure, but also de-structure the form of maps and charts. More specifically, what is important to study from an ethno- and socio-semiotic point of view is the visualization mechanism of the viewer (Acquarelli 2013; Cray 1992): it is to understand what relationship is constructed between the subject that drew the map and the map itself. Which and how many points of view are being instantiated? And what perspectives and organizations both spatial and temporal (such as memory and narration) are represented?

But the general question remains: what has then happened today, concerning the recent fashion and large use and diffusion of every kind of mapping technologies? Several scholars have said that we are in the midst of a “geo-locative turn” of the media and communication devices (Thielmann 2010; Farman 2012; Frith 2015; de Souza e Silva and Sheller 2015; de Souza e Silva and Frith 2012). We could think of the above-mentioned examples as part of a pragmatics of digital media. This geo-locative dimension seems to be at the heart of a wider transformation that also includes possible rules for a new media pragmatics. A characteristic of locative media is obviously geo-localization (Wilken and Goggin 2014): this word however

should not be intended simply to mean to find one's position in a territory, but also, and above all, to have the possibility of "navigating" it, to perform operations and actions in this territory and in relation it.

As mentioned above, recent years have been characterized by a huge production of maps<sup>5</sup> – albeit this is hardly a historical novelty. Therefore, another issue that arises concerns accumulation: we are surrounded by maps and the stratification of maps. We continuously need charts and maps to find more charts and maps from the past. Accumulation and connection seem to be two discursive practices that act within the present semiotic system. It could be objected that maps and map-making have always existed. But the change seems precisely to concern the transformation of the statute of maps. This concerns first of all new forms of intersubjectivity (Farman 2012) and at the same time the possibility of using maps as geo-referential and geo-localized devices. The mobile device is itself, according to Farman, part of a wider interface made up of an interactive map and the body that enters a territory; a "concrete metaphor" of navigability that has led to concrete practices of access to maps and their territorial experiences. Maps themselves have become performative, because through these and the employment of *digital navigation*<sup>6</sup> we do and obtain things. Their components resemble those used for video games: navigational bars, acquisition and management of data, possibility of resetting, results output, place holders, correspondences and data recollection. Scholars have pointed out repeatedly that maps are metaphors for navigational routes; maps in this sense become again, as Bruno Latour has indicated, a sort of "ancient strip" or a sort of "parchment roll", on a two-dimensional surface. The digital therefore has forced us to leave the mimetic to embrace the navigational and locational made possible primarily through mobile devices. Moreover, Latour et al. (2010) quotes the cognitive psychologist Hutchins (1995) because he has widened the concept of mind and cognition to encompass the instrumental, cultural and environmental domain. This is the well-known idea of *distributed* and *embodied cognition*: the object is transformed because the body, in positioning itself in the space and in place, re-composes the interaction with that object, the space and the technology that allows these interactions.

The opposition between mimetic and navigable hybridizes in the concrete experiences of map-making, as we shall see when we will consider the forms of "memory maps". According to scholars influenced by Latour and his group working on *Science and Technology Studies* (see for example Lammes and Wilmott 2013), these forms of map-making are hybrid in-between "*located*", "pseudo video-games" and game surfaces where, besides the hybrid form, what is of central importance is also fluidity. In these kinds of experiences, it has become more and more common to lose sight of the difference between ludic and "serious" planes of the experience.<sup>7</sup> More generally, when studying today's navigable maps it has therefore become of main

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<sup>5</sup>This has been the subject of several conferences: *Médiations Sémiotiques* at Albi (July 2015); or *Geomedia* in 2015, in which several conference speakers declared that "the market of maps" is one of the most thriving in the whole world.

<sup>6</sup>Along with Latour this issue has been studied together with Latour, November, Camacho-Hubner (2010).

<sup>7</sup>We are referring here to the well-known case of social media such as *Foursquare* or others.

importance to take into consideration these experiences that look like a sort of “serious gaming” activity, and all the more so when these maps have been drawn by young “quasi millennials” and digital natives.

### 3 The Case of a Map and Drawing of the Memory of Origin

The analysis of this corpus and this one particular case provide some references to the above-mentioned hypotheses. Firstly, it is important to note that the students in Pordenone study design and for this reason have more technical and artistic skills than other students involved in the same research project. These students see themselves as “competent” in graphic design and, in part, it is so. Their skills can emerge in a more or less explicit way in their drawings and their general expressive ability. Some of their maps have been analyzed by others scholars that took part in the project. In the same way as my colleagues, I have asked students to include brief comments on the margin of their drawings. All this took place during university lectures, laboratories and a course of visual ethnography. This approach was of a global type and half way between macro and micro, to quote what already noted by Maria Pia Pozzato, in the chapter “[Introduction](#)”, to this volume. In other words, we have considered some common segments and stylistic traits and asked ourselves whether these could have been generalized; at the same time, we have also taken into consideration specific characteristics<sup>8</sup> to see whether these can be a unique and individual discourse in the sense given to stylistic traits by semiotics (see in note 8).

Let’s then offer a first description for a semiotic analysis of this set of maps, drawings and representations of places. On the one hand, we find here what we have called a kind of “navigable maps” (see for example, Figs. [7.1](#) and [7.3](#)). The mappers have here tried to bring back some typical elements of electronic maps and websites, or representations of navigable and geolocated maps. But at the same time they recall, significantly, the style of some ancient maps, in a sort of “pop-up” style, where a specific object is emphasized and made to come out. There is therefore the presence of some “symbolic” elements of places (such as monuments, etc.) as well as “tag signs”, typical of electronic maps such as Google maps. Secondly, there is another prevalent element. The link between the already mentioned “empty place” feature (see below), a particular point of view that characterizes the viewer’s position (such as a window) and the “memorial and affective” dimension of those places. And this allows us to formulate some hypothesis about the content organization, in particular concerning the link between the definition of the “place of origin”, the spatial dimension and the temporal dimension.

In this direction the structural elements that have caught our attention are basically two. The first is what, referring to Sacks, we can call the “Magnani effect”. Several of

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<sup>8</sup>For stylistic traits we mean the complex configuration that keep together plastic and figurative elements of the place of expression that can later be associated to elements on the plane of content, that is to say of “forms of experience”. (Fontanille [2015](#)).

these maps show deserted “*empty spaces*”; and yet these do not appear to be desolate, often they appear serene, as sometimes happens in dreams. The characteristic of emptiness has already been noted by other scholars involved in this research.<sup>9</sup> What is interesting though is to note the specificities of this emptiness, particularly in light of Sacks’ reflections. The main differences with all the other maps is that students have drawn partial views, places whose perspective recalls the one relayed in *Street View*: a street, seen from inside a bedroom, a corner of the village; these are spaces without life (see Figs. 1, 2, and 3), and yet drawn in their finest details.

While Sacks’ case would seem to highlight a tendency towards the emotive and passionate, our maps produce an effect of suspension in time; time is frozen in a “then” whose vision can be re-evoked. It is also possible to theorize that this “emptiness” or “thatness” effect is something that is connected to the “mapping instinct” mentioned by Harmon (2003), which can be likened to the “language instinct”.<sup>10</sup> This “instinct” nurtures several human practices and cultures (for example the famous graffiti in Valcamonica mentioned by Harmon). It could be connected to places of origin.

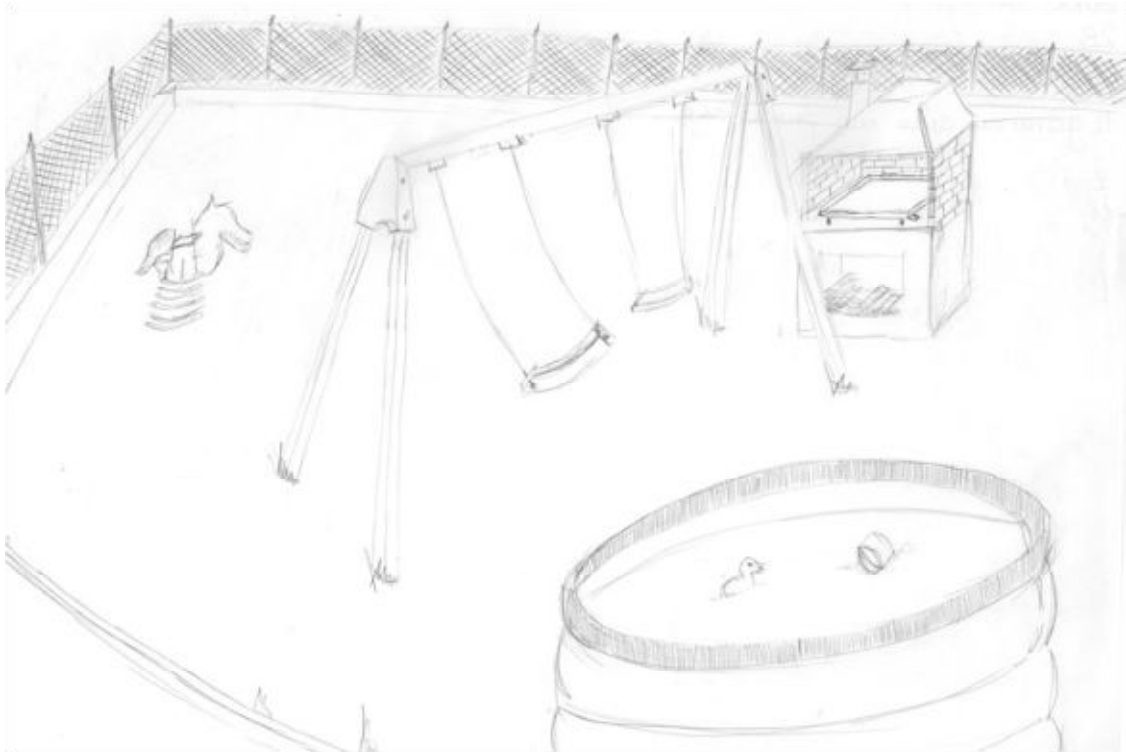
According to Harmon (ib., p. 10), [...] “humans have a urge to map – [...] In this part of Lombardy, glaciers retreated and left smooth swaths of rock, on which, over a



**Fig. 1** *Empty spaces*: the street

<sup>9</sup> See for example the idea of “thatness” in Alessandra Bonazzi’s chapter, or the cases of negated places in Maria Pia Pozzato’s chapter or again indicative voids of loneliness in the cases studied by Giulia Mazzeo.

<sup>10</sup> Important are the pre-verbal forms of children who very early on learn to map and trace routes.



**Fig. 2** *Empty spaces again: the courtyard, games*



**Fig. 3** *As in Sacks, the gaze from the window*

period of eight thousand years, prehistoric people carved one of the world's greatest collections of petroglyphs. This image dates to the Iron-Age and is thought to be among the oldest-known maps extant, perhaps showing a farming settlement at the bottom of the valley it faces. Four thousand or so years ago someone sat on the rock



and made this map, and it captivates me. [...] Maps intrigue us, perhaps none more than those that ignore mapping conventions. These are maps that find their essence in some other goal than just taking us from point A to point B. They are a vehicle for the imagination, fuelled up and ready to go. We look at these maps, and our mind knows how to do: take the information and extrapolate from it a place where they can leap, play, gambol-without that distant province of our being, the body, dragging them down.

Of course, part of what fascinates us when looking at a map is inhabiting the mind of its maker, considering that particular terrain of imagination overlaid with those unique contour lines of experience”.

Although this “mapping instinct” is much more cultural than natural, as it has been well underlined in another important book (see, *A history of the world in Twelve Maps*, Brotton 2012), such a key environment for our affective being is not merely remembered but literally re-mapped or re-mediated in order to construct and re-constitute our “having being here, then”; or in trying to imagine what it is like to be “there”, in that place and at that time, not for us but for another map creator.

Coming back to our map corpus, the second stylistic characteristic that has caught my attention in these drawings is the window, or what we can call the “screen effect”. Here window should be understood in the meaning this word has acquired from information technology, as in multi-screen vision with “windows” (see Figs. 4 and 5). But, more generally, windows stand for the viewer’s ability to cut something from a space and time, but also to emphasize the boundary, the spatial-temporal boundary, and hence the link between what is inside and what is outside window’s frame.

Sometimes this even contains, as said, markers of the enunciation that refer to the “Google Maps” style, complete with google marker place symbol. What is the meaning behind this kind of form, and what does this stylistic cypher hide in the process of construction of memory of the place of origin? The answer we think is in the concept of “navigation” (see in particular Fig. 4) as derived from Latour’s work on STS maps and visualizations. Several drawings include these stylistic features that transform the drawings into a unique discursive genre within the whole corpus. To navigate means once again to connect different spaces and points of view on a given territory: a zoom vision, a gaze on a specific detail and at the same time a sort of navigation “bar” that, as in video games, enables a panoramic vision and controlling vision; in other words, a different kind of observer and form of enunciation in the drawing/map (see Fig. 1). This feature connects some of our maps of places of origin to a ludic kind of vision, a “gaming” a dimension that is a familiar feature of the lives of all the authors of these maps, a dimension that produces new technological and navigable maps, whose textual and semiotic form is similar to that of games.

This form brings forth the idea of a sharing (or co-habitation) between the individual and the collective dimension. As if to say: in presenting the map of my origin in this way, I show you that this place has become potentially navigable and can provide you with conditions and instructions to navigate it. This is a huge socio-cultural transformation in the way of representing and presenting places and spaces of the origin: as de Certeau would have said, these cease to be a distant memory, but spaces that can be managed, navigated through tactics, strategies and practices that can be more or less complex. In other words, places are made “manageable” from an affective point of view by creating narrative pathways that can be shared. In one



**Fig. 4** Navigable map

of the maps I have chosen, the place of origin is shown as a navigable route and yet the effect is moving. This route is contemplated by a family that is seen from the back and represented in a stylized fashion, reminiscent of those ancient maps in which the onlooker was represented on a hill, or on the margin of a city or a battle-field (Fig. 6).

It is yet another way to provide reading instructions, not necessarily through a map key for decoding signs, rather through gazes by active onlookers, or in some other cases toolbars, or again, maps within the maps. A map today seems therefore

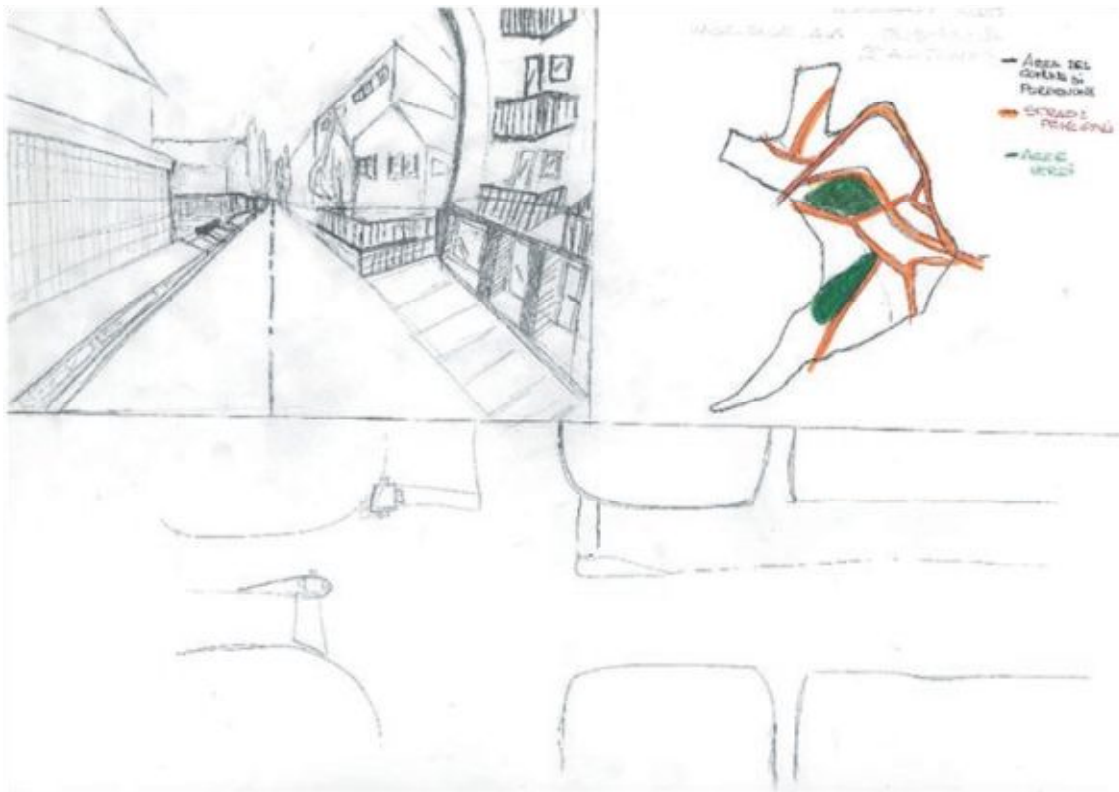


Fig. 5 Navigable map again screens and windows



Fig. 6 The onlooker in the landscape

to produce other maps that in turn become a new territory. We are faced in this way with an upturning of the well-known Korbynzki's axiom referred to by Bateson in his "map that is not the territory"<sup>11</sup> quoted in the famous Borges' short story, who in his turn, in a mis-en-abyme fashion refers to Lewis Carroll. And these intricate intertextual references could continue with Jean Baudrillard who proposes an extreme reading of this statement, not of the map of which only fragments remain but of the territory itself.

Electronic devices have transformed a map within a new navigable territory, providing new connections between people, places and things and producing perhaps new "Charts of Tenderness",<sup>12</sup> which means that, perhaps, young people today invent new forms of hybrid mapping, and that our whole culture is changing about the relationship between memory, places, and map forms.

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<sup>11</sup>As it is also noted in Giulia Mazzeo's, chapter "[Maps of Places of Origin or Maps of Self: A Graphic and Conversational Analysis](#)", in this volume with reference to the psychological-narrative dimension of maps. For a further deepening concerning the discussion on Korbynzki's statement, see again Brotton 2012, cit.

<sup>12</sup>*La Carte du tendre* (Map of Tendre) is a French map of an imaginary land called *Tendre* by several authors. It appeared as an engraving in the first part of [Madeleine de Scudéry's](#) novel *Clélie* (1654–61).

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