Mapping Memory:

Cartography in Contemporary Holocaust Culture

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Abstract

In recent years, new scholarship in cartography has emerged that has begun to challenge the apparent non-neutrality of maps as representations of physical space. In the eyes of some, the 'memory boom' of the 1980s and 1990s, which was in no small part occasioned by an exponential increase in works of Holocaust memory, posed a similar challenge to the authority of traditional historiography. Despite such developments, there has hitherto been little research that seeks to systematically connect cartography to memory as a means of representing cultural-memory phenomena, despite the fact that maps are at times employed in cultural works that aim to address such questions. As such, this thesis asks how authors and artists respond to the legacy of the Holocaust in contemporary cultural works through the use of cartography. Particularly, it is concerned with establishing what relation questions of memory – both cultural and individual – bring to bear on the cartographies included within the works of Miriam Katin, Amy Kurzweil, Jérémie Dres, W.G. Sebald, and Nikolaus Gansterer. Accordingly, a theoretical framework combining scholarship in both cartography and memory studies will be employed. Broadly, maps within the works of these authors can be conceived of as fluid, flexible entities that challenge traditional conceptions of cartography as near-objective; this is in part owing to their connection with the questions of Holocaust memory inherent to each work – maps tend to mirror mnemonic concerns in accordance with their fluidity. Consequently, this thesis offers a potential avenue for an increased understanding of how spaces of the Holocaust are interpreted from a contemporary (cultural) perspective.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

Acknowledgements

> '*And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow /*
> *Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings.*'

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, University. All sources are acknowledged as References.

1. *Introduction*

Mapping Holocaust Memory

This then, I thought, as I looked round about me, is the representation of history. It requires a falsification of perspective. We the survivors see everything from above, see everything all at once, and still we do not know how it was.

<div align="right">

- W.G. Sebald, *The Rings of Saturn*

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Figure 1.1. - Map from the Stahlecker Report, titled 'Jewish Executions Carried out by Einsatzgruppe A,' taken from a report by SS-Brigadier General Stahlecker, February 1942 (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM), 2015).

Is it possible to map the destruction of a people? If such a thing is possible, what does it mean to do so? Figure 1.1 depicts a map produced for a report on the murderous actions of Einsatzgruppe-A, authored by SS-Brigadier General Stahlecker and 'presented to the Reich Security Main Office in Berlin in February 1942.'[1] The sparse emptiness of the expanse of land depicted belies the immense weight of the information the map carries. This artefact demonstrates unequivocally the non-neutrality of maps, heralding as it does the priorities of its creators which are, of course, implicit in the reason for its very existence – to record the murder of Jews across the Baltic region. Clearly, it is one example among many of the Nazis' famed attention to bureaucratic detail – we see the meticulous recording of Jewish deaths figure heavily here, inscribed upon the landscape of the Baltic states with greater prominence even than the names of the towns and cities of the region around which these deaths occurred. It is telling that the largest, boldest written text on the map is devoted to the word '*JUDENFREI*' ('Jew-free'), which dominates the area around Reval (now Tallinn). The representational imbalance between physical, concrete places and horrifying statistics marks this artefact *first* as a record of death, and *second* as a means of orientation in space; markers of place here orient the viewer primarily as a device for contextualising the scale of murder from Kaunas to St. Petersburg. This effect is compounded in the scattering of peculiar, hexagonal-shaped coffins that accompany the statistical information of the text; these pictoral markers of murder further emphasise the map's stripped-back scope of representation that allows for little more than death and place. Topography and natural features are wholly absent, as are all but a handful of population centres, yet the illustrator of the map has chosen – despite its starkness – to repeatedly (and non-euphemistically) emphasise the fact of death. Further, the use of a coffin in this context is also cruelly and bitterly ironic; it is well known that victims of the Einsatzgruppen were not afforded the privilege of a proper burial, and were instead often forced to dig

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[1] United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 'Map from the Stahlecker Report, entitled, "Jewish Executions Carried out by Einsatzgruppen A," showing coffins and numbers of executions carried out in Europe.' *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum* [online], 13 April 2015 <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/pa1177426> [accessed 25 August 2020] para.3.

– and then lie directly within – the mass graves in which they were shot. Unlike the ethereal coffins floating abstractly above the map, Jewish deaths in reality were inextricably tied to *specific* places of murder. Finally, the map implies a continuation of the horrors already committed across the Baltics in the sinister footnote '*GESCHATZTE ZAHL DER NOCH VORHANDENEN JUDEN 128,000*' ('estimated number of remaining Jews 128,000'); despite brazenly proclaiming a grotesquely warped sense of success in its spotlighting of statistics, the map seems to suggest that there is yet much 'work' to do, and might thereby be viewed as a kind of call to action, too. Evidently, this artefact is no neutral representation of space, and abundantly illustrates the notion that 'cartographic facts are only facts within a certain cultural perspective'; this map is infected to its core with murderous Nazi racial ideology.[2] It is a racist cartography of death.

While contemporary cultural texts will be the focus of this thesis, it is clear that, in this historic example, the question of whether it is possible to map the destruction of a people is callously answered in the affirmative. The question of *what it means* to map the destruction of a people, meanwhile, is answered in precisely the terms in which it is posed; the meaning of this map is *destruction* – mass murder – per se, while the relative geographical non-specificity of the map's annotations suggest that space and place are secondary in significance to the statistical record of death. Yet, simultaneously, this text cannot help but demonstrate the acute significance of questions of space to the unfolding of the Holocaust across Europe; the very act of *mapping* such grotesque data implies the significance of the spatial imagination to understanding the development of its events. This is a map produced *by* perpetrators *for* perpetrators, and as such the demands placed upon this act of mapping are specific to those who produced it and those for whom it was intended. Again, such a fact demonstrates the non-neutrality of maps; later in this introduction I will offer a stark counterpoint to the opening example provided in figure 1.1, as I will discuss a concentration camp 'sketch map'

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[2] J.B. Harley, 'Deconstructing the Map,' in *Classics in Cartography: Reflections on Influential Articles from* Cartographica, ed. Martin Dodge (Hoboken, N.J.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), pp.271-294 (p.276).

produced by two Auschwitz escapees, the creation of which necessarily suggests a vastly different set of concerns.

The purpose of this introduction is to outline some of the ways in which questions of space are of central importance to the history of the Holocaust, but beyond these opening pages this thesis will not be concerned with investigating historical maps produced at the time of the event, from any perspective. Rather, I will focus on contemporary cultural texts that represent the Holocaust, and the use and depiction of maps (and practices of *mapping*) within such works. Inevitably, the demands placed upon cartography within such contemporary texts are vastly different to those that underlie the Stahlecker map. Particularly pertinent to each of the works under discussion is the question of memory – a fact that is unsurprising given their contemporary vantage point on the events of the Nazi genocide of the Jews – and as such I will be particularly concerned with the interaction of memory and mapping. In other words, I will attempt to begin to answer – in a necessarily limited fashion – the question of what it means to map the destruction of a people in the less-than-quantifiable terms of the (cultural) memory of such destruction. This thesis represents an attempt to understand how contemporary creative responses to the Holocaust seek to *map* the legacy of the event.

I will, presently, outline in greater detail the aims and scope of this thesis, and in the following chapter I will likewise offer a detailed explanation of the theoretical underpinnings that have informed this piece of work. Before this, however, I believe that it will be useful to offer a brief overview of some of the historical and theoretical context from which this work germinated; as such, the next few paragraphs are intended to situate the thought that underpins this thesis alongside specific issues and debates that pertain to cartography, space, and Holocaust history. Such material is intimately connected to the theoretical work that has guided my interpretation of the texts under discussion, but is not necessarily comprised of the selfsame sources, hence its discussion here and not later, alongside the theoretical framework for this study (nonetheless, much of it is important to keep in mind throughout). Particularly significant to the present chapter are questions surrounding the inherent constructedness of maps, and notions of the Nazi

spatial imagination and the significance of space to the events of the Holocaust themselves – and, of course, to its victims; this is an important point to raise now in relation to the contemporary works that will be discussed later, because it reaches to the heart of the ethics of using maps in relation to remembering the Holocaust: from where does the power of the cartographic gaze in this context originate, and why? Further to this – and in a strongly related sense – I would also like to briefly introduce, at this juncture, some more recent debates on the ethics of utilising 'geographical information systems' (GIS) in writing histories of the Holocaust.

1.1 Maps and power, maps and ethics

Maps are inevitably instruments of power. Indeed, the geographer J.B. Harley refers to them, in his seminal essay 'Deconstructing the Map,' as 'a form of power-knowledge,'[3] and even labels them 'authoritarian images';[4] having already discussed the Stahlecker map, it is difficult to argue with at least the *possibility* of this latter statement, if not its universal applicability.[5] Harley notes that '[in] modern Western society maps quickly became crucial to the maintenance of state power – to its boundaries, to its commerce, to its internal administration, to control of populations and to its military strength.'[6] Indeed, historically, maps have often acted as a reflection of the 'sweeping spatial arrogance of Imperialism,' according to Matthew Sparke.[7] In his work *Maps and Civilization*, Norman J. W. Thrower traces the development of cartography across the breadth of human history. In his chapter on the Renaissance, which deals with the rapid growth of overseas exploration and the beginnings of European colonialism, Thrower makes specific mention of the practice of 'European "acquisition" of territory through cartographic

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[3] *Ibid*, p.286.
[4] *Ibid*, p.289.
[5] It probably does not, for instance, apply to the texts that will be discussed in the following chapters.
[6] Harley, p.287.
[7] Matthew Sparke, 'Between Demythologizing and Deconstructing the Map: Shawnadithit's New-found-land and the Alienation of Canada,' in *Classics in Cartography: Reflections on Influential Articles from Cartographica*, ed. Martin Dodge (Hoboken, N.J.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), pp.343-377(p. 344).

nomenclature,'[8] and describes the absolute centrality of maps and exploration to the expansion of European colonial territory and the 'exploitation of overseas areas.'[9] Antonio Sousa Ribeiro, likewise, notes that '[modern] cartography can be understood as being part of an act of domination, as a key aspect of the violent appropriation of the world in the course of European expansion' – he goes further, in fact, and positions cartography as a crucial source of knowledge across the history of *modernity*, instrumental to the 'vital tenet of the dialectics of Enlightenment' that 'there should remain no uncharted territory.'[10] Further, Ella Shohat argues that, in the era of colonial expansion, '[numerous] narratives of penetrating new regions, involving detailed descriptions of maps, were inspired by the new science of Geography,' and that, as a consequence, 'image-making of the land determined the significance of places through its power of inscription on the map with the compass on top as the signifier of scientific authority' – a process of 'transforming the unknown into the known.'[11] Jerry Brotton, finally – in his popular work, *A History of the World in Twelve Maps* – summarises the development of the scholarly understanding of maps when he observes that, in recent years, '[b]elief in the objectivity of maps has found itself subject to profound revision, and it is now recognised that they are intimately connected to prevailing systems of power and authority.'[12] In all of this we see that mapping, in its attempted mastery of physical space, has long been central to the implementation of power – particularly state power.

Much of the above can be said to apply to Nazi cartography. Certainly, the notions of power, control, and military strength are all pertinent to the history of the German occupation of Europe during World War II. Beyond this, and as Stef Craps and Michael Rothberg note:

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[8] Norman J.W. Thrower, *Maps and Civilization: Cartography in Culture and Society,* 3rd edn, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007), p.67.
[9] *Ibid*, p.63.
[10] António Sousa Ribeiro, 'Cartographies of non-space: journeys to the end of the world in Holocaust literature', *Journal of Romance Studies*, 11:1 (2011) 79-89 (p.79).
[11] Ella Shohat, 'Imaging Terra Incognita: The Disciplinary Gaze of Empire', *Public Culture*, 3:2. (1991), 41-70 (p.45).
[12] Jerry Brotton, *A History of the World in Twelve Maps* (London: Penguin, 2013), p.13.

the Holocaust, slavery, and colonial domination are in fact interconnected, and by refusing to think them together (except in a competitive manner) we deprive ourselves of an opportunity to gain greater insight into each of these different strands of history and to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the dark underside of modernity.[13]

Cartography is a spatial practice shared by both Nazi and colonial power and employed as a tool of domination, whether or not one chooses to view the process of (particularly *eastward*) Nazi expansion *as* colonial in character – the chapters that follow will not be concerned with entering this debate, but the point is an important one to make now in terms of demonstrating the uses of cartography as an instrument of power.

The practice of mapping was undoubtedly central to much of the National Socialist spatial imagination, and was intimately intertwined with the fanatical racial ideology of the regime; indeed, Paolo Giaccaria and Claudio Minca suggest that 'the broader geographies of the Holocaust and Nazi spatial racialized thinking were linked to the biopolitical project of crafting a German New Man,' an observation that is borne out in the horrific detail of figure 1.1, which clearly demonstrates an attempt to alter the population of Baltic states under German occupation.[14] As Tim Cole, Anne Kelly Knowles and Alberto Giordano note, '[the Nazis'] geography of oppression includes not only broadly territorial ideas such as *Lebensraum*, which distinguished Aryan versus non-Aryan space, but also the specific work of planning and designing Germanified cities, Jewish ghettos and concentration camps.'[15] David B. Clarke, Marcus A. Doel, and Francis X. McDonough go slightly further, and suggest (following Zygmunt Bauman) that 'two fundamentally *spatial* concerns underpinned the Nazis' desire for a New (socio-spatial) Order' – *Lebensraum*, as we have seen, and *Entfernung,* which was concerned with the wholesale removal of Jews

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[13] Stef Craps and Michael Rothberg, 'Introduction: Transcultural Negotiations of Holocaust Memory', *Criticism,* 53:4 (2011), 517-521 (p.518).

[14] Paolo Giaccaria and Claudio Minca, 'Nazi biopolitics and the dark geographies of the *selva*', *Journal of Genocide Research*, 13:1-2 (2011), 67-84 (p.69).

[15] Tim Cole, Anne Kelly Knowles, and Alberto Giordano, *Geographies of the Holocaust* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014), p.3.

from the space of the Reich.[16] Indeed, Clarke, Doel, and McDonough assert that Bauman's 'greatest contribution…to the understanding of the relationship between modernity and the Holocaust' lies in his insistence upon the 'rupturing of the imaginary social space of the Reich by the diasporic space of the Jews.'[17] This is amply illustrated in figures 1.2 and 1.3, which depict a pair of propaganda maps illustrating the 'spread of the Jews,' first 'in the 1,500 years since the birth of Christ,' and then from the 17th century to the 20th century.[18] Both of these images are taken from a lecture by '"Der Reichsfuehrer SS, der Chef des Rasse-und Siedlungshauptamtes" [the Leader of the SS, the Chief of the Race and Settlement Main Office]' – Heinrich Himmler, in other words – on the topic of 'Jewry, Its Blood-based Essence in Past and Future.'[19]

Figure 1.2 - Propaganda Slide, 'The spreading of the Jews in the 1,500 years since the birth of Christ.' (USHMM, 2003).

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[16] David B. Clarke, Marcus A. Doel and Francis X. McDonough, 'Holocaust Topologies: Singularity, Politics, Space', *Political Geography*, 15:6-7 (1996), 457-489 (p.472), original emphasis.
[17] *Ibid*, p.474.
[18] United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 'Propaganda slide entitled "The spreading of the Jews," featuring a map illustrating the expansion of the Jewish population in the 1,500 years since the birth of Christ', *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum* [online], 10 February 2003 <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/pa1141740> [accessed 25 August 2020], para.6.
[19] *Ibid*.
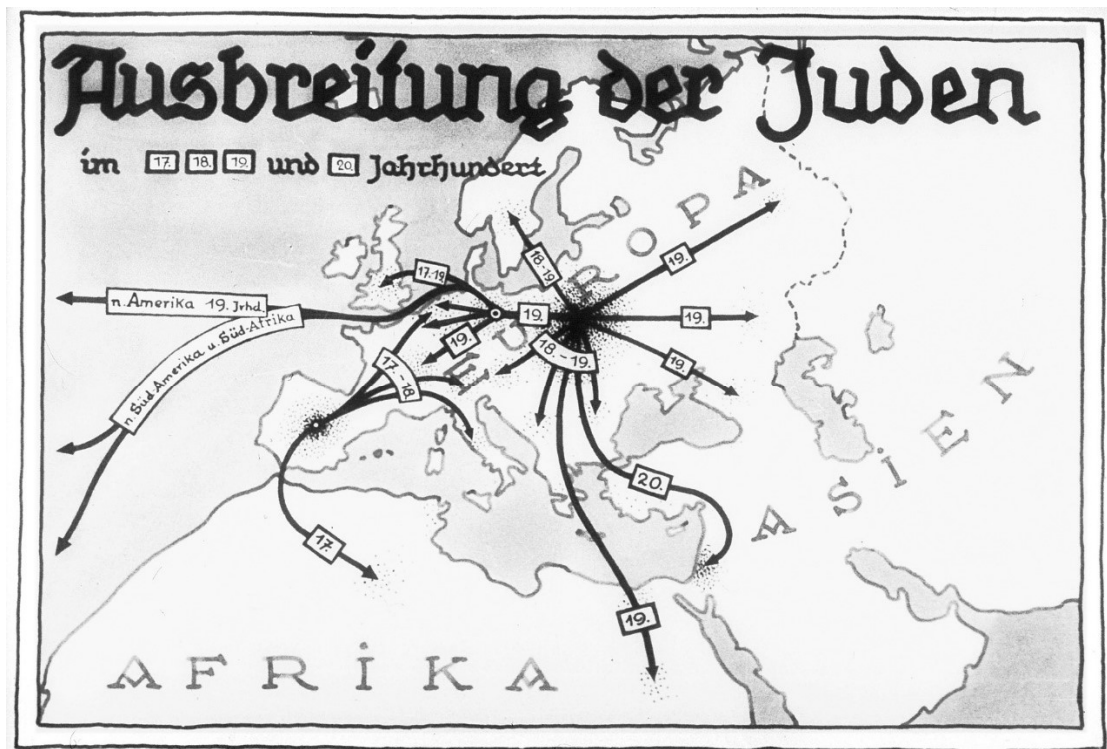
Figure 1.3 - Propaganda slide, 'The spreading of the Jews in the 17th, 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries' (USHMM, 2003).

Leaving aside the somewhat dehumanising use of 'spreading' (perhaps in the sense of a pandemic) with reference to a human population, these maps (particularly the second) clearly demonstrate the imagined penetration of German space by Jewish bodies. Crucial to the representation of this movement is a kind of mirroring process, whereby the *centre* of Jewish expansion is reversed; in the earlier map, Palestine is at the centre of this movement, while in the second (temporally *closer*) instance, Poland and other areas of Central and Eastern Europe appear to be at the core of Jewish movement, according to the producers of these maps. This clearly places the source of such population transfer significantly closer to Germany, in what we might read as a deliberately alarmist move. Moreover, the arrows used to depict these movements in space and time further correspond to Nazi racial ideology in aesthetic terms; as we find ourselves closer in *time* to the maps' present (figure 1.3), we see the depiction of Jewish movement take on the visual aspect of a kind of swarm or rash through a messy proliferation of black dots, which appears to blight the otherwise-flawless surface of the European

continent. These arrows, too, imply a significantly broader scope of movement than those which adorn figure 1.2; indeed, there are twenty arrowheads in figure 1.3, which appear to move in all directions, including beyond the confines of Europe and the Middle East. Once again, the apparent neutrality of maps as representations of spatially-oriented data, can certainly be called into question. Instead, in the case of these images, the perception of a 'rupturing of the imaginary social space of the Reich by the diasporic space of the Jews' is carefully manufactured.[20]

In the case of these two (somewhat ahistorical) propagandistic images, we see a pre-war example of racialized spatial thinking; in figure 1.1, we see an imagined space that is particular to the early stages of the so-called 'Final Solution.' More broadly, the Holocaust and the Nazi era were, inevitably, fundamentally inextricable from the spaces within which they were played out, as the words of Cole, Giordano, and Knowles – above – begin to intimate. Spatial concerns proliferated at all levels of society. Boris Michel notes, for instance, that, at the time of the Third Reich, 'Geographers often supported or assisted Nazi ideology and the war, be it in their academic or public writing or in the more practical form of planning the spatial reorganization of the occupied countries such as...*Generalplan Ost*.'[21] In his work *Holocaust City*, Tim Cole details at great length the spatial practices involved in the creation of the Budapest ghetto by the Nazis' Hungarian allies. In his introduction Cole notes that across occupied Europe 'a multitude of architects, engineers, and cartographers implemented smaller architectural and spatial solutions' in concert with the vast scale of the implementation of the Holocaust over time.[22] He notes, further, that 'planning and implementing ghettoization was, in part at least, an act of urban planning,'[23] while the camps themselves were specifically designed as 'demarcated genocidal space.'[24] In all, Cole suggests:

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[20] Clarke, Doel and McDonough, p.474.
[21] Boris Michel, '"With almost clean or at most slightly dirty hands". On the self-denazification of German geography after 1945 and its rebranding as a science of peace', *Political Geography*, 55 (2016), 135-143 (p.135).
[22] Tim Cole, *Holocaust City: The Making of a Jewish Ghetto* (London: Routledge 2003), p.16).
[23] *Ibid.*
[24] *Ibid,* p.22.

> The assumption of these doctors of space [Nazi engineers, architects, cartographers etc.] was that there was a pathological space, which demanded a spatial cure. They imagined a series of "Jewish questions" in spatial terms, each of which demanded spatial solutions.[25]

As figures 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3 begin to suggest, *imagining* such a space, and its concomitant 'spatial solutions,' was greatly aided through cartographic practice.

In using the phrase 'doctors of space,' Cole directly quotes Henri Lefebvre, and his work *The Production of Space*.[26] In this text – as its title suggests – Lefebvre attempts to theorise the *production* of space, and notes that '*([social]) space is a (social) product*,' typically 'engendered' by 'social and political (state) forces.'[27] In the spatial examples listed above, we have seen the determined production of a particular space ('*Lebensraum*,' '*Judenfrei*'), initiated by 'the Nazis' desire for a New (socio-spatial) Order.'[28] Closely echoing Lefebvre's notion of 'doctors of space,' Giaccaria and Minca suggest that the development of the Nazis' 'Final Solution' (including, the authors suggest, its pre-genocidal 'territorial' (i.e. resettlement) phase) demonstrates an attempt at 'the "surgical" removal of the Jewish presence in Europe.'[29] The examples of Nazi spatial and mapping practice listed here are but a handful of manifold instances of the uses of cartography and the conception of space in the context of the Holocaust and Nazi expansionism. What is crucial is that they each demonstrate the importance of *control* as per Harley's notion that '[in] modern Western society maps [are] crucial to the maintenance of state power – to its boundaries...to control of populations and to its military strength.'[30] In the case of figures 1.2 and 1.3, for instance, we see an attempt to (spatially) quantify (and thereby begin to control) a perceived problem (but equally, in the propagandistic nature of these images, to control *perceptions*

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[25] *Ibid*, p.26.

[26] Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. By Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991) p.99.

[27] *Ibid*, p.26, original emphasis.

[28] Clarke, Doel and McDonough, p.472.

[29] Giaccaria and Minca, p.74.

[30] Harley, p.287.

of this imagined problem); in figure 1, meanwhile, we see the beginnings of the implementation of a 'solution' to this supposed problem. Tim Cole's exploration of the Budapest ghetto, likewise, emphasises the notion of population control, as do Knowles and her collaborators in their chapter on mapping the concentration camps, while the notions of *Lebensraum* and *Entfernung* convey a similar process that further incorporates a particular consideration of control over boundaries. In all of this, we see attempts to *produce* particular spaces; Giaccaria and Minca, in fact, suggest that the production of such space – in the context of eastward expansion – involved the transplanting of 'a new generation of Germans' to 'conquered/occupied territories,' in a 'radical reterritorialization of the Eastern lands' (a project that they explicitly describe as 'colonial').[31] Cartography appears as a vital tool in the process of attempting to *control* such spaces.

Yet, as the work of many of the scholars listed above begins to suggest, issues relating to physical space were not only pertinent to the Nazi perpetrators of the Holocaust. While space under Nazi occupation was controlled by Nazi authorities and their allies, such factors had a profound impact on the daily lives of victims of Nazi persecution and could, in many instances, mean the difference between life and death. In an article on the space of the forest during the Holocaust, for instance, Cole amply illustrates the significance of this environment to persecuted Jews and partisan groups, and the ways in which such spaces either helped or hindered the chance of survival, depending upon the circumstances. 'The materiality of hiding places,' he notes, 'tends to be downplayed in a field that emphasizes chronology over geography.'[32] Much the same could be said of his study of the Budapest Ghetto, referred to above, in which – in addition to exploring the spatiality of segregation as enacted by the Hungarian authorities – Cole explores the specific impacts of the spatial configuration of the Ghetto on the lives of its inhabitants. In a related article, authored in conjunction with Alberto Giordano, Cole traces the 'spatial networks' of Budapest Ghetto inhabitants, and finds that complex patterns of movement and a series of porous borders

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[31] Giaccaria and Minca, p.73.
[32] Tim Cole, '"Nature was helping us": Forests, trees, and environmental histories of the Holocaust', *Environmental History*, 19 (2014), 665-686 (p.667).

emerge in the ghettoised space according to the physical concentration of Jewish populations across the city; significantly, in some cases, being forced to live in an apartment that was physically distant from (for example) shops, or family members, could have disastrous consequences for victims' capacity to cope with incarceration.[33]
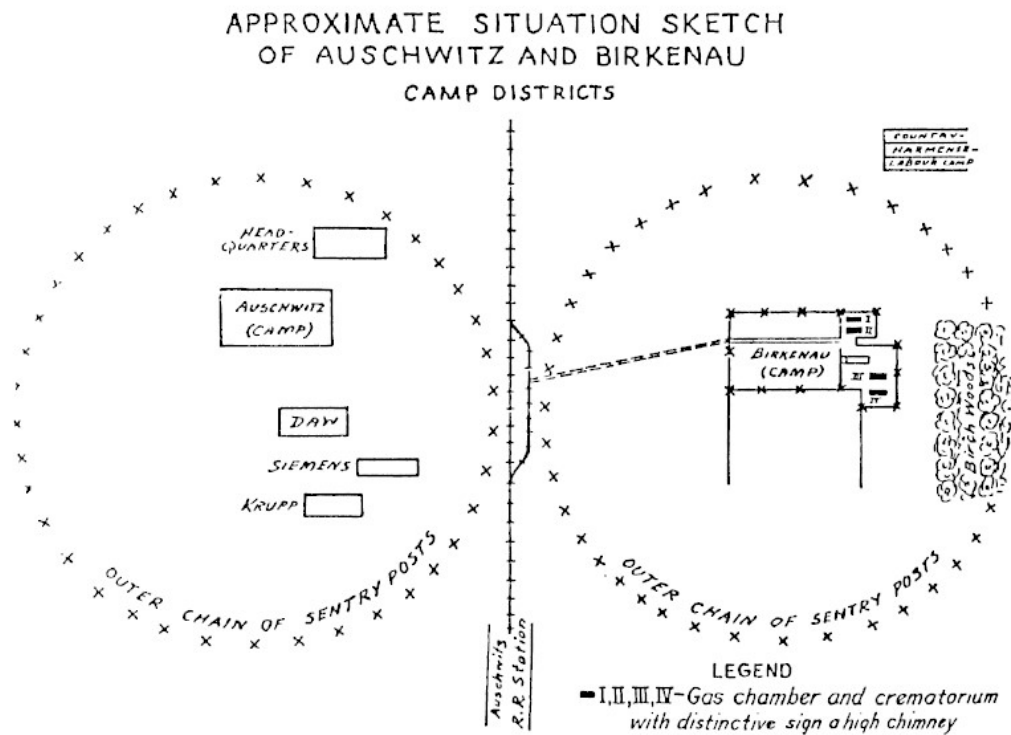
Figure 1.4 - Sketch map of Auschwitz-Birkenau, as included in the Vrba-Wetzler report, titled 'German Extermination Camps - Auschwitz and Birkenau,' and published on 22 November 1944 by the United States War Refugee Board.[34]

For those trapped in the hell of the camp system itself, the intertwining of space and survival was perhaps highlighted at its starkest. There are, of course, multitudinous testimonial accounts that suggest the benefit of obtaining indoor work for survival, particularly during the winter, or the opportunities for extra food to be gained from securing a job in a camp kitchen, along with a vast array of other benefits and disadvantages to be gained or suffered according to one's placement in the camp at any given moment. In Art

[33] Tim Cole and Alberto Giordano, 'On place and space: Calculating social and spatial networks in the Budapest Ghetto', *Transactions in GIS*, 15:1 (2011), 143-170; See also: Tim Cole, *Holocaust City*.

[34] Richard Foregger, 'Two Sketch Maps of Auschwitz-Birkenau Extermination Camps', *The Journal of Military History*, 59 (1995), 687-696 (p.692).

Spiegelman's seminal work of postmemory, *Maus*, for instance, his father Vladek describes how something as simple as a prisoner's location in the soup queue could determine whether or not they would be able to stave off complete starvation for another day:

> One time a day they gave a soup from turnips. To stand near the first of the line was no good. You got only water...Near the end was better – solid things to the bottom floated. But too far to the end it was also no good ...because many times it could be no soup any more [*sic*].[35]

Beyond the daily business of survival, too, spatiality was of paramount importance to more unique matters, such as escape and resistance. In his article 'Toward a spatial historiography of the Holocaust,' Richard Carter-White offers readings of film-texts in order to demonstrate the significance of spatiality to acts of resistance at the extermination camp Sobibor. He explains that the 'spatial complexity of the camp system, and how its destructive logic was grounded in the routinized regulation of camp space-time' were significant factors in the process of mass murder, yet such systems also offered opportunities in which inmates could foster acts of resistance.[36] One example he provides concerns the (real-life) murder of camp officers, as depicted in the film *Escape from Sobibor*; Carter-White notes: '[t]he plan to kill the SS officers was...dependent on a geographic understanding of the camp, since individuals had to be isolated in the camp environment to ensure they could be quietly killed.'[37] 'Thus,' he continues:

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[35] Art Spiegelman, *The Complete Maus* (London: Penguin, 2003), p.209.
[36] Richard Carter-White, 'Toward a spatial historiography of the Holocaust: Resistance, film, and the prisoner uprising at Sobibor death camp', *Political Geography*, 33 (2015), 21-30 (pp.28-29); It should be noted that, while readings of cinematic texts underpin Carter-White's concern with developing a 'spatial historiography' of the Holocaust, he does not propose to read these texts *as* historical documents per se; rather, he suggests that such works offer a depiction of camp life that highlights the crucial interlinkage of space and routine (and, in this case, its implications for resistance), in a manner that may henceforth be more broadly applicable to historical artefacts, testimony, and so on. Particularly, Carter-White suggests that he views spatial narratives as an effective means through which to disrupt and 'defer the historiographical normalisation of the Holocaust' (p.29).
[37] *Ibid*, p.24.

...the resisters had to know in advance where each of their targets would be located from 4 pm onwards, where would provide a quiet location for murder, and what obstacles might obstruct the task of leading the target from the first location to the second. It was the incredible spatial regularity of the perpetrators' daily routines that made this plan possible, the same regularity that ensured the Nazi machinery of mass murder functioned efficiently.[38]

In each of the above examples, then, the significance of *space* to the lives of Holocaust victims is clear, whether those fleeing persecution by hiding in forests, or those incarcerated within the concentration camp system.

Given the circumstances in which Holocaust victims found themselves it is – understandably – relatively uncommon (at least compared to the perpetrators) to find textual examples in which such spatial understanding is schematised in the form of a map, not least due to a lack of access to the requisite materials to do so; this fact accords with the discussion of cartography and power, above, in the sense that victims typically found themselves forced into spaces dictated by their Nazi persecutors, over which they had little or no control, and few (if any) opportunities to chart or document them. The perpetrators held all the spatial cards.

As a consequence, extant textual evidence of victim map-work is all the more striking. One relatively famous example,[39] which I would like to briefly discuss before moving on to consider some more contemporary theoretical discourse around Holocaust space and mapping, is the 'sketch map' of Auschwitz-Birkenau which can be seen in figure 1.4. This map was one of a number of sketches produced for a report by two escapees from Auschwitz – Rudolf Vrba and Alfred Wetzler – into activities in the camp. Richard Foregger

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[38] *Ibid.*

[39] The Vrba-Wetzler report was, for instance, the subject of a recent BBC documentary, *1944: Should we Bomb Auschwitz?* This programme first aired in September 2019. (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p07ngm6n>, BBC, 2019 [accessed 05 May 2020]).

describes the circumstances surrounding the production of the Vrba-Wetzler report:

> On 7 April 1944 Rudolf Vrba and Alfred Wetzler, two young prisoners, succeeded in a daring escape from the Birkenau concentration camp, and arrived at Zilina, Slovakia on 25 April. They had held important positions at the camp, which had allowed them to collect exact information on the activities there...A detailed report from these two eyewitnesses was compiled in Slovak and German that confirmed that Auschwitz-Birkenau was an extermination centre. The German original of the Vrba-Wetzler report contained a map of the camps.[40]

This report was then translated into several languages and distributed worldwide to a variety of interested organisations; it was at the War Refugee Board in Washington D.C. and the British Foreign Office that it found itself at the centre of debates regarding the possibility and desirability of bombing Auschwitz. In his article, Foregger engages with these specifically with a view to establishing the *feasibility* of such action based on the spatial data provided by the sketch maps included in the reports (of which the image in figure 1.4 represents the version accompanying the English-language translation). Ultimately, he concludes that such an operation would not have been possible on the basis of the cartography included; the drawings were simply too inaccurate for any bombers to be able to precisely determine a suitable target (specifically, the gas chambers and crematoria).[41]

'The maps,' notes Foregger, were in fact not produced by Vrba and Wetzler themselves, but were instead 'drawn by the architect/engineer André Steiner'; crucially, for our purposes, the images were produced 'on the basis of the *descriptions* of Vrba and Wetzler *from memory* after leaving the camp, and not by exact measurements.'[42] Given this information, it is unsurprising that the maps in and of themselves were not sufficiently accurate for the

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[40] Forreger, pp.688-689.
[41] *Ibid*, p.696.
[42] *Ibid*, p.693, emphasis added.

purpose of a bombing raid; memory is notoriously unreliable and imprecise. This situation once more returns us to the question of the interconnection of mapping and power. During their incarceration, Vrba and Wetzler (inevitably) had no recourse to measuring equipment, or the materials necessary to produce a map. Even upon their escape, they were forced to rely on the vagaries of memory to reproduce a diagram of the camp, and even this image was produced in a mediated form, via the hand of a third party. As we will see, questions of mediation (often) and memory (always) are crucial to the texts discussed here. While the nature of the memory and mediation at play in Vrba and Wetzler's case is, clearly, very different to that which informs the contemporary texts in this thesis, it is striking that, even while the camps were still in operation, we see memory and cartography intertwined in an attempt to understand the spatial realities of the Holocaust. In Vrba and Wetzler's case, we see memory employed in an attempt to *map back against power*, in stark contrast with the cold, apparently-objective (data-heavy) examples of Nazi cartographic practice we see in figures 1.1-1.3. This is highly significant for the chapters that follow, as will become clearer later, when I outline some of the specific contemporary cartographic theory that underpins the discussion herein.

Clearly, I have explored at some length here the interconnection of genocide, mapping, and power and the different understandings of spatiality held by perpetrators and victims; partly, this is owing to the simple fact of the significance of spatiality to the events of the Holocaust, and the fact that the contemporary texts under discussion in this thesis will be concerned precisely with the spatiality of the *memory* of that same event (and some of its specific spaces in both the past and present) so there is, in a sense, some contiguity between these concepts. Perhaps most significant in this regard, however, is the question of power and the particular subjective vantage point offered in the maps under discussion. As will become clear, it is my belief that there is a closer affinity, in ethical terms, between the spatial imagination of the *victims* (and hence, texts such as the Vrba-Wetzler map) and the contemporary texts under discussion in this thesis; this is largely owing to the influence of certain contemporary theories of cartography that will be introduced in due course.

In terms of explicating the origins of this thesis, however, the preceding discussion has focused on historical examples, along with contemporary scholarly responses to them. In each case, the significance of questions of space to the events of the Holocaust is clear; mapping is, naturally, one means by which this pivotal concern can be understood. For the remainder of this introduction I would like to turn to one final example, this time a contemporary theoretical dialogue that is predominantly concerned with questions relating to how the spatiality of the Holocaust is represented in academic historiography; this material anticipates some of the theoretical discussion to follow in chapter 2. It is, more broadly, an example that sits much more closely to the content of this thesis – each chapter's focus on contemporary cultural works – in the sense that it too deals with a significant temporal remove from the event, and the use of spatial information (in the form of maps and mapping) by writers who were not themselves witnesses to the event.[43] Specifically, the following paragraphs will be concerned with the 'spatial turn' in Holocaust studies, and particularly the gradually-increasing use of 'Historical Geographical Information Systems' (or Historical GIS) in this field. This discussion offers an ideal platform from which to begin exploring the aims of this thesis in greater detail, returning us as it does to our contemporary moment.

The title of both the chapter and book that will form the core of my discussion here are instructive in and of themselves. The work in question bears the querying heading, 'A "Spatial Turn" in Holocaust Studies?' and was written by Claudio Fogu for the recent edited collection *Probing the Ethics of Holocaust Culture*. In it, Fogu discusses the notion of such a 'spatial turn' within the discipline through an analysis of the scholarly work *Geographies of the Holocaust*, edited by Cole, Knowles, and Giordano, to which I referred above. He describes the contribution of the book to academic discourse as follows:

> The epistemological novelty of the project rests not only
> in studying the Holocaust "from a geographical point of

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[43] Although this is not strictly true of the works of Miriam Katin, which I will discuss in the first chapter proper of this thesis; Katin survived the Holocaust as an infant child.

view" but also in its utilization of special software to digitize and organize huge quantities of data into databases that can translate these data into interactive maps. The ensemble of software, database construction, and map visualizations is what practitioners in the field refer to as Geographic Information Systems (GIS).[44]

Fogu hints toward the apparent potential of such a methodology as he goes on to describe the 'large and very diverse corpus of sources' that can be incorporated into such databases, ranging widely from 'lists of survivors and victims,' to 'unique narratives such as Elie Wiesel's memoir' and 'photographs, documents, maps, and any other sort of documentation present in…archives' – virtually anything carries the potential to be *mapped*.[45] In the case of *Geographies of the Holocaust* [*GoH*], this method results – crucially – in a range of maps which form the core of each of its chapters. Fogu has some praise for the work of the authors and editors of the *GoH* collection; he notes, for instance, the 'toggling between text and paratext' (i.e. maps and explanations) that is characteristic of the work, and at its best delivers, he suggests, 'a dynamic navigational experience' that creates a 'frisson of beating the Nazis at their own game: it shows them enslaved to a static and controlling gaze, subdued by their own idolatry of mimesis.'[46] This is a notion that echoes much of the preceding discussion. Nonetheless, his praise is tempered by caution, as he notes that this characteristic entails a 'risky ethical position for both authors and readers,' and it is one that *GoH* is only 'capable of pulling off most of the time…not always.'[47] Typically though, Fogu's chapter is sceptical – and at times overtly critical – of the GIS methods employed in the work; some of his criticisms bear discussion here.

Fogu discourses at length on the parallels he perceives between the 'spatial turn' in the humanities disciplines and the 'linguistic turn' of the latter half of the twentieth century. Particularly, he draws links between authors

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[44] Claudio Fogu, 'A "Spatial Turn" in Holocaust Studies?', in *Probing the Ethics of Holocaust Culture,* eds. Claudio Fogu, Wulf Kansteiner, Todd Presner (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016) p.219.
[45] *Ibid*, p.219.
[46] *Ibid*, pp.230-231.
[47] *Ibid*, p.231.

such as Hayden White – whose work famously challenged many of the assumptions underlying narrative historiography – and *Geographies of the Holocaust* and its authors; he suggests that, like White, Cole, Giordano, Knowles and their various collaborators seek to pose a similar challenge to historical writing to that proffered under the 'linguistic turn.' Unlike White's explorations of the relative *constructedness* and subjectivity of historical writing, however, Fogu suggests that the work produced for *GoH* 'may be said to foreground a *navigational* conception of narrative quite unlike that of mainstream historiography.'[48] This is, he suggests, intimately tied to the methodology of the works on display. He notes that:

> all GIS visualizations are only as telling as the database preparation allows them to be; yet, they are also digital interpretations of the data that need to be analysed visually by the researcher, who, on the basis of this analysis, will then derive new research questions leading to new GIS, and so on and so forth, in a virtual loop between...writing and visualizing...[49]

As the above description begins to suggest, there is a constant oscillation within the work between visual-spatial data and explication. On this basis, Fogu is profoundly critical of the methodology employed within *GoH*, given that its authors devote so much space to detailing (often in very self-reflexive terms, which is no doubt to their credit) the decisions taken to produce their intricate datasets. As a consequence, Fogu observes, 'each chapter in *GoH* has two narrative lines going on: one is entirely self-reflexive and procedural, referring to the process of scholarly construction...the other is historical, referring to the events under analysis'; this results, says Fogu, in historical explanations 'amounting to little more than a Wikipedia entry.'[50] In essence, Fogu's argument at this juncture rests on the notion that *GoH* is effectively composed of historical analysis that exists in the role of a kind of footnote to the reams of explanation that accompany the GIS-led mappings, resting as

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[48] *Ibid*, p.224, emphasis in original.
[49] *Ibid*.
[50] *Ibid*, p.225.

these cartographies do upon the construction of complex databases which are often composed from a complicated array of sources. Moreover, Fogu observes how the focus on different spatial scales within *GoH* results in a 'frenzy of dynamic interactions' by virtue of the complex array of variable factors necessary to analyse the 'spatial-temporal layers within a chosen set of observations.'[51] This results, says Fogu, in a situation that may leave the 'uninitiated reader bewildered'; more importantly, perhaps, he suggests that this characteristic – the zealous belief that 'scaling connects!' – results in the placement of the viewer in a position of uncomfortable proximity to the 'Nazi architect peering over a map of Auschwitz' (an image of which is in fact reproduced within *GoH* itself).[52] Ultimately, the issues raised here by Fogu boil down to a tension between scientific method (here in the form of GIS) and the types of methodology typically employed in humanities disciplines, particularly history; when it comes to spatial information, which gets us closer to the truth in the case of the Holocaust? As we will see shortly, this is a question that is significant for this thesis, although it is not one that I will attempt to answer definitively – such a task is far beyond the scope of the following chapters, if indeed it is possible to conclusively settle at all.

From the above discussion it would appear self-evident that, on a sliding scale ranging from empiricism to free creative expression, we would find *Geographies of the Holocaust* much closer to the 'objective,' 'scientific' end of the spectrum. This is not straightforwardly the case, however, as we see clearly when Fogu also takes to task the aesthetic choices employed by the book's authors and editors. Broadly, his critique rests on a tension between such choices and the implied aspiration toward a degree of scientific objectivity that is suggested by the above discussion.

One key aspect of his unease rests on Saul Friedländer's notion of the 'kitsch of death.' Certain images within *GoH* veer uncomfortably close to such an aesthetic, in his view. One example is to be found in the image which introduces the chapter 'Mapping the SS Concentration Camps,' in which we see statistical information reproduced in the form of a charcoal-grey, cloud-like visualisation which hovers – along with labelled concentration camps –

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[51] *Ibid*, p.226.
[52] *Ibid*.

atop a map of Europe. The effect here is, to my mind at least, akin to an image of dark smoke rising from the vast span of the continent – the significance of such an image in the context of a chapter on concentration camps should need no further explanation; suffice it to note only that the label 'Auschwitz' is accompanied by the largest, darkest patch of cloud on this map.[53] Of this image, Fogu notes that '[i]t surely is arresting, provokes uneasiness…and, positioned where it is, cannot but be aimed at provoking the frisson denounced by Friedländer.'[54] Fogu's unease, then, lies with the aesthetic choices made by the authors; the same applies, he says, to the text's 'chapter-heading images,' each of which is more artistic or abstracted in form than other illustrations within *GoH*, yet still rests upon the very same databases that underpin the other maps.[55] Fogu suggests that there is 'only a porous boundary between…purely imaginative projection…and the aestheticizing visualizations based on "data" that introduce the…five chapters of the book.'[56] This porosity, he continues, also comes to extend to many of the visualisations *within* the chapters, too, at least later in the book.[57] This tendency toward creative elaboration develops steadily, in a move that he characterises as

> …the schizophrenic movement of *GoH*'s iconophilia between repeated and ever-emptier declarations of being grounded "in objective geography" or, more generally, "empiricism," and a much more powerful yearning for the sensory appeal of presence, that is, for gaining access to "experience."…[W]hen we encounter the last methodological box of the book [a text-box within which methods are explained in each chapter]…we are not surprised to find the definitive

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[53] *Ibid*, p.231.

[54] *Ibid*.

[55] Fogu also discusses at length, for example, the 'image of phantasms of the Einsatzgruppen' (p.234) that accompanies the opening to a chapter on that topic, and the 'rope of history' map (p.235), which depicts in highly-abstracted form the spatial information pertaining to a death march from Auschwitz to Wodzisław, which is discussed in the accompanying chapter in *Geographies of the Holocaust*. In each case, to varying degrees, the spatial facts of the matter are melded (often in abstract fashion) with a degree of artistic expression.

[56] Fogu, p.234.

[57] *Ibid*.

conflation of mapping and experience in a discussion of
the methodologies needed to "map experience
rigorously"'[58]

Such a notion returns us, in some regards, to the friction I outlined above – that between scientific method and the techniques employed in humanities scholarship. Here, however, Fogu is discussing something that goes a step further than historical method; the core point here is one of (visual, cartographic) aesthetics.

In effect, Fogu's reservations regarding *Geographies of the Holocaust* appear to stem from a tension between an aspiration to scientific objectivity on the one hand – as evidenced by the use of GIS and vast databases of information – and a free-wheeling creative impulse on the other, one which is embodied in some of the text's aesthetic choices, and not least in the apparent desire to gain access to 'experience' through diagrammatised spatial information. In fairness to the authors and editors of *GoH*, however, they are clearly aware of the many and varied pitfalls that attend their chosen method, and they are not afraid to make their readers conscious of them; Knowles and her collaborators warn, for instance, against the dangers of '[making] cartographic arguments lightly' when seeking to undertake processes of 'analytical mapmaking' in relation to Holocaust history; this is owing, they tell us, to the 'morally suspect' (i.e. colonial, hierarchic) lineage of cartography which might place readers and researchers alike in the 'morally suspect company of imperial powers that used cartography to conquer, subject, and destroy defenceless people' –indeed, in the company of Nazi commanders and engineers.[59] Elsewhere, too, Knowles freely concedes that the more abstracted, aestheticized visualisations of *GoH* were born of 'frustrations with the limits of [the authors'] factual evidence.'[60] The problem, it would seem, can be expressed in the following terms, astutely put by Todd Presner in an interview with the editors and some of the collaborating authors of *GoH*: the text sits

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[58] *Ibid*, pp.234-235.
[59] Cole, Knowles, and Giordano, p.44.
[60] Todd Presner and Claudio Fogu, 'Interview with Anne Knowles, Tim Cole, Alberto Giordano, and Paul B. Jaskot, Contributing Authors of *Geographies of the Holocaust*', in *Probing the Ethics of Holocaust Culture*, eds. Claudio Fogu, Wulf Kansteiner, and Todd Presner (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016) p.242.

within a 'borderland between visualization tending toward the factual and visualization tending toward the fictional.'[61] This is perhaps not an ideal position for a work of scholarship that aspires to factual precision; it is, though, precisely (and perhaps *more naturally*) the territory upon which we find the texts under analysis in the following chapters.

1.2. A mnemocartography of the Holocaust?

Clearly, a significant temporal gulf separates our present moment from the events of the Holocaust; indeed, it is little more than a truism to state that as each year passes there are inevitably fewer and fewer individuals left alive – whether survivors, perpetrators, bystanders, or other actors, such as those who liberated the camps – who remember the Holocaust era directly. Much of the preceding discussion, in which I situated the following chapters within the context from which they stemmed, focused on questions of a spatial nature that were concerned with the events of the Holocaust itself. What, though, is the significance of spatiality to contemporary creative works that seek to remember the Nazi genocide of the Jews? Clearly, the issue of spatiality remains highly pertinent, as is amply demonstrated in the works of a number of the authors I have already mentioned and, not least, in the idea of a 'spatial turn' in the humanities (and indeed more specifically within Holocaust studies), as discussed by Fogu. Certainly, questions relating to space have been posed of many cultural works – contemporary or otherwise – that seek to represent the Holocaust. In particular, though, I am concerned here with the question of whether – like the abovementioned work of academic history, *Geographies of the Holocaust* – contemporary cultural, creative works in fields such as literature, film, visual art, graphic novels, and so on, employ *maps and processes of mapping* in their quest to remember and come to terms with the Holocaust.

Investigating the use of maps within such texts remains a line of enquiry that has scarcely been applied at all to cultural works within the context of the arts and humanities generally, despite the apparent 'spatial turn' in

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[61] *Ibid*, p.242.

humanities disciplines, and has been probed even less so with respect to works that are specifically concerned with the task of representing and remembering the Holocaust. This might be considered a puzzling state of affairs when we consider that, in the context of the study of Holocaust culture, the now-predominant focus upon spatiality within the humanities runs parallel to a deep-rooted concern with literary and artistic works as popular carriers of the memory of the Holocaust; as Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney explain, in their article 'Literature and the Production of Cultural Memory,' literature can be understood as a vessel for the memory of the past (or a 'medium of remembrance,'[62] in the authors' terms), as an explicit 'object of remembrance'[63] in its own right (i.e. the specific object of cultural memory), and as a 'medium for observing the production of cultural memory' – much the same could surely be said of other forms of cultural expression, such as film and visual art.[64] In other words, cultural works are often a significant means through which popular understanding of the Holocaust is shaped; it would seem to be remiss, then, to allow the use of cartography within such works to slip through the net of academic inquiry, given that it may represent a crucial factor in readers' understanding of spatial information therein. In short, maps and mapping help to shape the narratives and formal properties of the texts under discussion here; it is my view that an analysis of the cartographies on display within them can help cast further light on the nature of these texts' contribution to the vital task of perpetuating Holocaust memory.

In an ever-more-globalised world, in which diasporic communities, porous borders, transnational movement (and the concomitant transnational/transcultural movement of memory) figure ever more heavily, can Holocaust memory remain anchored to the spaces within which the events it remembers took place? As the last remaining survivors die, how do those who came later, and now view the Holocaust from the perspective of our contemporary moment, perceive the events? Specifically, how do they understand the spatiality of the event, and how do they represent the spaces of wartime Europe (and elsewhere) in cartographic form? Finally – and perhaps

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[62] Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney, 'Literature and the Production of Cultural Memory: Introduction', *European Journal of English Studies*, 10:2 (2006), p.112.
[63] *Ibid.*
[64] *Ibid*, p.113

most significantly: What do their cartographic interventions tell us about the ways in which they understand the Holocaust, and the spaces and places within which it unfolded? Broadly, the above are the questions with which this thesis is concerned. Naturally, however, I am constrained to proffer only partial responses to such questions; there is simply not enough space here to begin to answer them in all their prospective fullness, such as by identifying, cataloguing, and analysing *all* works of Holocaust memory that make use of maps and processes of mapping.

Nonetheless – as will become clear throughout – I have found, based on the necessarily limited corpus of texts analysed, that cartography in cultural works of Holocaust memory can broadly be conceived of as *fluid*, *relational*, and often largely *subjective* constructions, even if they are simply based on apparent geographical facts. Often, we may assume that such an effect goes someway against the intentions of the authors; in such cases, maps tend to be regarded uncritically as wholly-objective representations of spatial data. In other words, oftentimes, when the authors of the texts under analysis here *believe* that they are proffering objective spatial information, they are not. This is not, however, merely in the sense expressed at the opening of this introduction – that no map can truly be a wholly objective representation of space; rather, there are distortions and alterations of fact that come into play. In the next chapter, in which I will discuss the theoretical literature that underpins my reading of these texts, I will elaborate a little more fully upon the findings of this thesis in tandem with my explanation of the relevant scholarly sources.

On a similar note to the above, the exploration of *creative* responses to the Holocaust that I offer here seeks to move away from debates around the apparent empirical accuracy of cartographic renderings of Holocaust space, such as the discussion on the use of historical GIS in *Geographies of the Holocaust* which I outlined above. The cartographies under analysis here are categorically *not* – and cannot be – objectively accurate representations of Holocaust spaces, or Holocaust history and its (spatial) legacy, and as such an enquiry of this nature would be misguided. Instead, I am concerned with what these maps and mapping processes tell us about the *memory* of the Holocaust that is expressed within each text. In this regard, I am in part following the

lead of Tessa Morris-Suzuki who, in her work *The Past Within Us*, proposes the value of a greater understanding of degrees of historical 'truthfulness' within historical accounts and works of cultural memory, rather than overly simplistic notions of apparently-objective 'truth.' Morris-Suzuki suggests that, '[r]ather than debating how far a particular representation of the past is "true" – in the sense that it approximates closely to an absolute and finite reality – it may be more useful to try to assess the "truthfulness" of the processes by which people create meaning about the past.'[65] This endeavour, she notes, entails 'an effort to understand [the] chain of relationships' between events, those who record and represent them, and those who receive narratives about them, and 'to trace, as far as possible, the series of mediations through which narratives and images of the past reach us, and why we respond to them as we do.'[66] These chains of relationships, she continues, 'may create obscurity as well as clarity, incomprehension as well as understanding, indifference as well as empathy,' but ultimately Morris-Suzuki believes – and I am inclined to agree – that a focus on 'historical *truthfulness*' may '[provide] a possible starting point for combatting historiographies of oblivion [i.e. revisionism, which is the author's specific concern for much of her monograph] while accepting the impossibility of any complete and perfectly "correct" representation of the past.'[67] Framed in these terms, we might re-evaluate the critique levelled at *Geographies of the Holocaust* by Fogu as one which rests on the degrees of mediation through which the historical data on display has to pass, and how appropriate such complex – and perhaps, confused – layering is for historical information in the context of an academic study. Despite the many notes of caution attached to their work by the authors of *GoH*, to add the aestheticization of such historical data atop an already-intricate combination of databases, historical analyses, and methodological critiques may account for the potential for readerly bewilderment highlighted by Fogu; perhaps the 'truthfulness' of the work suffers, therefore, as a consequence of its somewhat-convoluted method, particularly in the awkward combination of methodologies and

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[65] Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *The Past Within Us: Media, Memory, History* (London: Verso, 2005), p.27.
[66] *Ibid*, p.28.
[67] *Ibid*.

representational devices that differ in their aspirations to objective accuracy, such as the melding of creative interpretation with empirical cartography.

In any case, the works under discussion here are straightforwardly creative, and are historically (or perhaps more accurately, *mnemonically*) truthful in their presentation of Holocaust spaces and the (spatial) legacy of Holocaust events – subjective, fluid, and contingent as their cartographies may be – since no claims are made that these works are *empirically* accurate; to have the texts function in this way is patently not the intention of any of the authors under discussion, and these works are hence *truthful* in the sense that they (typically) confine themselves to the representation of specific (here, subjective) experiences. As such, some of the observations drawn from the cartographies contained within these texts may offer some insight for academic or historical works on the Holocaust that may in the future seek to make use of maps and processes of mapping. Particularly instructive in this regard, perhaps, is the artistic work *Memory Map*, which was produced by the artist Nikolaus Gansterer for a public memory initiative in Vienna, and which I discuss in the 'coda' chapter that accompanies the conclusion to this thesis. Here, Gansterer employs databases and maps (i.e. GIS) in the production of a cartographic artwork, in a manner not entirely dissimilar to the work in *Geographies of the Holocaust*; in this case, however, the layers of mediation, production, and reception involved in the presentation of the work's historical information are balanced in an equilibrium that (in my view) renders it successful: despite making innovative use of digital mapping and large quantities of data, the *Memory Map* is clearly intended first and foremost as a work of public art, one which was unambiguously designed for the instruction of the Viennese public in relation to the city's Holocaust history. The intentions behind this map-text, in other words, are significantly clearer, and it did not come to fruition through so-convoluted a process as that (arguably) employed by the authors of *Geographies of the Holocaust*.

In essence – and as will become evident in the next chapter – my aim here is to create a plausible theoretical framework that is capable of analysing *mnemocartographies* of Holocaust culture. As I alluded to above, however, the extent of this endeavour is necessarily prescribed by the space available to me within which to conduct it. In the interest of a tighter focus, therefore, I

have chosen to offer analyses of forms of artistic expression with which I am most familiar – namely, literature, in the form of novels and graphic novels. This combination of texts thereby offers the opportunity to analyse both written and visual forms of works of cultural memory that seek to represent the Holocaust, and at the same time include maps (or employ processes of mapping) within their narratives. Likewise, as I highlighted above through reference to the work of Erll and Rigney, there exists an extensive body of scholarly work which explores literature in relation to the production, dissemination, and perpetuation of cultural memory, some of which has informed my reading of the texts under discussion here. In addition to this – as I mentioned above – I have also included a brief analysis of Nikolaus Gansterer's *Memory Map*, which melds visual art in both material and digital forms, and digital databases; this was chosen in order to gesture towards a perhaps-fruitful line of future enquiry (digital mapping) that I did not have the space to include within this thesis at length in addition to the existing chapters on literature. It would certainly have been possible, however, to expand my scope of enquiry to include texts in other forms, such as theatrical performances, poems, popular works of Holocaust history, and films, to name but a few (Adrienne Rich's poetry collection *An Atlas of the Difficult World* springs to mind, for instance). In the end, I can only hope that the somewhat idiosyncratic selection of objects for analysis that makes up this thesis can nonetheless proffer some answers – even if only partial ones – to the questions posed above; in turn, it is my hope that some of the analysis contained within the following chapters may carry some broader implications (again, if only limited ones) for the academic study of Holocaust culture, memory and, perhaps, cartography too.

For the remainder of this introduction it will be useful to outline the overall structure of this thesis. In the broadest terms, it is comprised of a literature review, two sections (each containing multiple chapters), and an amalgamated 'coda' and conclusion. The first section comprises three chapters (in addition to a short 'section introduction' – chapter 3), each of which is concerned with the use of *literal* (i.e. visually-realised) maps within graphic

novel (or 'comics') texts.[68] The first of these chapters discusses *Letting It Go*, a work by the Hungarian-American comics artist Miriam Katin, who survived the Holocaust in Hungary as an infant child. The second chapter tackles the work of Amy Kurzweil, the granddaughter of a Holocaust survivor, who weaves her grandmother's narrative into her own quest to come to terms with her Jewish identity as a young adult; her book is titled *Flying Couch*. Finally, the last of these three chapters will discuss *We Won't See Auschwitz*, a work by the French-Jewish comics artist Jérémie Dres, in which the author returns to his grandmother's homeland – Poland – following her death; throughout, the author evinces a settled determination *not* to engage with the figurative centre of the Holocaust camp network at Auschwitz-Birkenau, and instead endeavours to seek out examples of Jewish *life* in contemporary Poland, as well as attempting to take a longer view of Jewish history within the country. In all three works, the authors engage in a variety of ways with maps, which they all reproduce in a hand-drawn fashion befitting of their medium. Each of these comics-texts shares a profound concern with family relationships and family memories, and in all cases the intergenerational exchange of memory is therefore paramount. Typically, it is the case in these works that, whether or not the authors intend it, the maps they produce – even those that they attempt to produce in as 'objective'-as-possible a manner – are idiosyncratic, subjective productions that are highly flexible in their relationship to the spaces they depict. More often than topographical accuracy, these maps are in fact more usually indirect depictions of the vagaries of memory.

In the second section of this thesis there are two chapters (again, in addition to a brief overall introduction – here, chapter 7), each of which is concerned with a novel by W.G. Sebald – *The Rings of Saturn* and *Austerlitz*, respectively. In both cases, I argue that the texts can be read as fundamentally *map-like* constructions; these are works that are intimately concerned with processes of mapping (i.e. the charting of physical space), regardless of whether or not the reader is made explicitly aware of such processes. Each of these novels maps the route of a narrative journey that incorporates a complex multitude of times and spaces, histories and memories, and a blend of fact and

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[68] A note on this particular aspect of terminology is to follow in the introduction to the first section.

fiction. As such, I am conceiving of these works as cartographic in a *figurative* sense, in contradistinction with the *literal* maps on display in the works in the first section. Much like the texts in that first section, however, these works contain a fluid, subjective relationship to space – here, though, there is a far greater emphasis on the multidirectionality, or transcultural nature, of memory. The decision to focus on *Sebald's* works specifically, and not those of any other literary or testimonial author, can largely be attributed to the fact that a certain, flexible, map-like spatiality is particularly strongly pronounced in Sebald's works, thereby allowing for an effective illustration of the concepts under discussion. Nonetheless, I believe that it would be possible to conceive of other literary works in a similar fashion, and to apply a similar framework to their analysis to that employed here.

Finally, and as I have already mentioned here, within the conclusion to this thesis I will offer a short 'coda'– one that speculates on some potential further directions of study for this topic. Again, this chapter is specifically concerned with Holocaust memory in Vienna, and a digital project that incorporates visual art, cartography, digital platforms, and large-scale digital archiving. Gansterer's work, I believe, brings us back full-circle (in some ways) to the debates around the use of historical GIS that I outlined earlier in this introduction.

To my mind, the two sections of this thesis, which deal, respectively, with *literal* examples of mapping in graphic narratives, and mapping in a *figurative* sense in the works of Sebald, each gesture toward a different approach to tackling the uses of cartography in creative works; this was my intention, given that there is little pre-existing work on the topic. The literal maps evident in the graphic works naturally lend themselves more readily to cartographic theory and certain, more readily-quantifiable aspects of the study of memory. By contrast, the novels of W.G. Sebald call for a more literary-critical approach. Nonetheless, I believe that it would have been equally possible to have reversed the emphases evident in each section, such as by offering a reading of Sebald along the lines of, say, ontogenetic mapping, or to have focused more heavily on the notion of fluid cartography in Miriam Katin's *Letting It Go*.

Crucial to all of the chapters within this thesis is the theoretical undergirding of two areas of academic discourse – 'memory studies,' on the one hand, and work concerning cartography on the other. I will devote the next chapter to outlining the theoretical framework that underpins my reading of the texts under discussion. In this way, too, I will elaborate more fully upon some of the specific arguments that I will be making in the chapters that are to follow. This will not be a *fully* exhaustive list of the material which has informed my readings of the texts under analysis – a great many more sources will emerge as the thesis progresses; rather, it is intended to convey a sense of the range of thought which underpins these readings. Before this, however, I would like to very briefly explore one final pair of examples of mapping, this time of the use of maps in a contemporary cultural context that is fundamentally concerned with the Nazi Genocide of the Jews.

Given the extensive discussion above, I believe that it is important to pose one final question here, one to which I will not *specifically* return in the following chapters, but which nonetheless colours all of the work herein. *What is the broader significance of investigating maps in the context of the Holocaust?* In the first instance, mapping is a topic that has received relatively scant attention under the rubric of 'Holocaust studies,' and this is particularly true of investigations into the uses of maps and mapping in cultural texts; this is a situation that I alluded to above. I would also re-emphasise that an awareness of the non-neutrality of maps as textual constructions is a useful conceptual tool for scholars of the Holocaust, given that spatial concerns permeate the study of the Nazi genocide at all levels; as we have seen, the Nazi racial imaginary was profoundly spatially-informed, while contemporary texts that seek to represent the events of the Holocaust (in various contexts) are often likewise deeply invested in the spaces of genocide. To provide some final, brief examples, figures 1.5 and 1.6, below, consist of images taken from the websites of the Sachsenhausen and Ravensbrück Memorial Museums. In these images, we can see how, when one hovers a cursor over particular sections of the site map, the associated space becomes highlighted in red. The choice of this colour – carrying, as it does, obvious associations with blood – seems to be a peculiar one in the context of an organisation with a vested interest in sensitively handling the history of the Holocaust; it was surprising to see, when

hovering my cursor over the Sachsenhausen map for the first time, a triangle of red overlaid atop the 'Prisoner's camp' (as we see in figure 1.5), a site that was undoubtedly host to much death and violence. Clearly, this device is intended as a means of signalling the boundaries of a particular area of the camp, but – whether consciously or not – the producers of the Ravensbrück and Sachsenhausen maps have succeeded in transplanting the fact of spilled Jewish blood into an (ostensibly neutral) diagram meant as a guide for the contemporary memorial site. One might also note, too, that the *red triangle* recalls the badges worn by political prisoners at many sites in the SS system of camps, and indeed the fact that red is also, of course, the colour of the field upon with the swastika badge sat on the Nazis' state flag. Clearly, in each of these examples, particular aesthetic *choices* have been made in the (digital) cartographic representation of these sites of genocide, not all of which are necessarily successful; these contemporary examples provide ample evidence, if any more were necessary, of the non-neutrality of cartographic practice and design, and the need to carefully evaluate any application of mapping in the context of the Holocaust.

1   Visitor Information Centre
2   Models
3   Camp Street
4   SS Toop Camp
5   Entrance to Command Headquarters and Prisoners' Camp
6   Command Headquarters
7   Commandant's House
8   New Museum
9   Signs of Commemoration
10   Entrance to the Prisoners' Camp "Tower A"
11   Security System
12   Roll-call Area
13   Shoe-testing Track
14   Small Camp
15   Barrack 38
16   Barrack 39
17   Prison
18   Passage to Zone II of the Soviet Special Camp
19   Prisoners' Camp
20   Site of the Gallows
21   Prisoners' Laundry / Meeting Room
22   Prisoners' Kitchen
23   Memorial of the "National Memorial" (1961)
24   Camp Wall near "Station Z"
25   Execution Trench
26   Burial Ground with Ashes of Victims of the Concentration Camp

Figure 1.5 - Sachsenhausen Visitors' Map, Brandenburg Memorial Foundation, 2020.

Orientierung auf dem Gelände der Mahn- und Gedenkstätte Ravensbrück
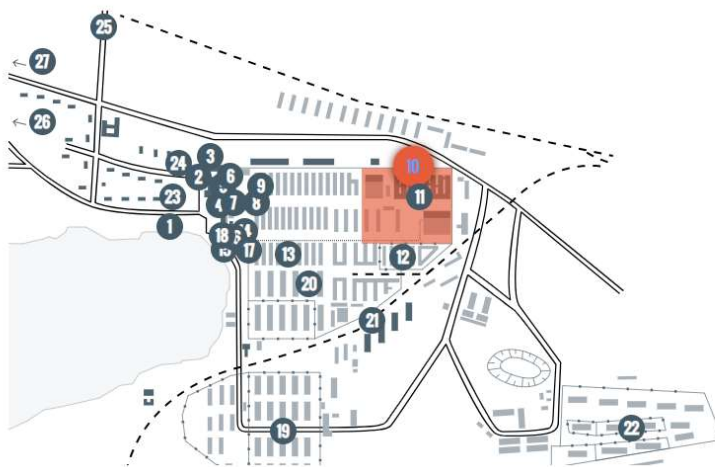
Lageplan Mahn- und Gedenkstätte Ravensbrück

1 Visitor Centre | 2007
2 SS Headquarters | 1940–45
3 Waterworks | 1940–45
4 Garage Complex | 1940-45
5 Camp Gate and Guard Station | 1939-45
6 Prisoners' Campound | 1939-45
7 Utility Building | 1939-45
8 Roll-Call Square | 1939-45 and Camp Street 1 | 1939-45
9 Huts, Sickbay | 1939-45
10 Industrial Estate | 1940–45
11 »Tailors' Workshop« | 1942–45
12 Men's Camp | 1941–45
13 »New Camp« | 1940–45
14 Cell Building | 1940-45
15 Memorial | since 1959
16 Crematorium | 1943-45 and Gas Chamber | 1945
17 Burial Ground | since 1959
18 Executions
19 Siemens & Halske Production

Figure 1.6 - Ravensbrück Visitors' Map, Brandenburg Memorial Foundation, 2020.

2.

Towards a Mnemocartographic Framework?

In the introduction I outlined some of the ways in which the question of space is of central importance to the history of the Holocaust, I began to provide some examples of how mapping was employed in various contexts at the time of the events taking place, and I touched upon some of the contemporary debates surrounding the ethics of mapping the Holocaust from the perspective of our present moment. In order to address the specific concerns of this thesis, however – namely, to analyse how maps are employed in artistic works that seek to represent processes of Holocaust memory – a particular framework is required, one that will incorporate scholarship relating to both maps and memory. In what follows, I will outline some of the theoretical insights that have informed my overarching understanding of the texts under discussion. Rather than risk artificially erasing the difference between these two areas of scholarship, I have opted to separate this chapter into two discrete sections, with the first tackling cartography and the second memory. The affinities between the two sections, however, should become clear as this chapter progresses, and I have pointed out on a number of occasions – particularly in the second section – some specific points of similarity between some of the different studies outlined here. It should be noted that it is not necessarily the case that every work mentioned here will necessarily be referred to frequently throughout the rest of this thesis (though many will); rather, the following constitutes a representative sample of the various strands of scholarship in these two areas that have informed my readings of the following texts, and the broader notion of a certain sympathy between cartography and memory. There is undoubtedly, as Anne Whitehead remarks, 'a strong affiliation between place and memory,' and maps – given their typical use as a means by which to chart space and place – would seem to be ideally placed to explore this

affiliation; combining theoretical works such as those outlined here provides a tool by which to explore how cartography has been used in this manner.[1]

2.1. On cartography

I have already outlined at some length here the notion of the map as an instrument with deep historical associations with the foundation and maintenance of power – particularly power exercised by the state – and likewise the notion that maps are not neutral, objective constructions. In terms of establishing an understanding of this state of affairs, the influence of J. B. Harley's pathbreaking 1989 essay 'Deconstructing the Map' – to which I referred in the introduction – cannot be overstated. Indeed, Jeremy Crampton emphasises the article's reach beyond the confines of the academic study of cartography, citing its wide record of citation and array of reprints as evidence of its reach.[2] Despite its enormous popularity, however, he notes that, with respect to the study of cartography (and geography more broadly), 'it's not today the same landscape that Harley was writing about.'[3] Indeed, within such areas of academic study, there is now an awareness of the constructed, political nature of maps to such an extent that 'even the most ardent GIS practitioner' is wholly aware that 'maps are not apolitical.'[4] This is significant for the theoretical material that helps to form the basis of my analyses of cartography within this thesis; the sources I will discuss in the following paragraphs were typically published much more recently than Harley's essay, and as such do not largely focus on the subjective constructedness of maps, nor on the notion that maps are potential tools of power (although such assumptions are often implicit within the interpretations they put forth). Rather, the works of cartographic analysis under discussion here instead tend to focus on issues such as the subjective, embodied experience of using maps, the use of maps in contemporary, globalised, and digital contexts, and maps as an instrument

[1] Anne Whitehead, *Memory* (London: Routledge, 2009), p.10.
[2] Jeremy W. Crampton, 'Reflection Essay: Deconstructing the Map', in *Classics in Cartography: Reflections on Influential Articles from Cartographica*, ed. Martin Dodge (Hoboken N.J.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), pp.295-304 (p.299).
[3] *Ibid*, p.230.
[4] *Ibid*.

through which the disenfranchised can 'map back' against power. While Harley's essay may no longer be at the cutting edge of thought in cartography and geography, it is nonetheless possible to conclude that his work paved the way for studies such as those referred to here.

Before I move on to discuss such works, however, I would like to briefly note the continued relevance of Harley's essay in relation to the texts under analysis in each of the chapters of this thesis. First, I would suggest that the notion of map-construction as dictated by political, cultural, and social forces is perhaps not quite so thoroughly understood outside of the academic contexts discussed by Crampton; as will be demonstrated, there are a number of occasions on which the authors under analysis appear to rely uncritically on the apparent epistemological *stability* and *authority* of the map as a form of knowledge. As such, keeping in mind Harley's notion of the map as an entity assembled on the basis of external influences is significant. Likewise, the notion of the relative subjectivity of mapping is itself also of significance here *conceptually*, given that – in the context of the topic of this thesis – it mirrors rather neatly the notion of memory as a similarly subjective construction (a point to which I will return under the following section on memory; this last point is notwithstanding, of course, the fact that the conditions in which maps and memory are produced are inevitably very different). In many cases (with the exception of Sebald and his map-like prose) it seems that the works under analysis here attempt to apply cartography as a kind of bulwark against the intangible, unquantifiable natures of memory, history, and identity. This accounts for their occasionally unselfconscious application of the apparent objectivity of maps to their narratives of Holocaust memory; these are perhaps intended as a kind of spatial anchor upon which to attach more nebulous concepts. The very maps themselves tend to undermine this position, given that they inevitably display a specific viewpoint, or subjective interpretation of the space depicted; this is natural, given the inherent subjectivity of each of the works under discussion.

In this regard, there are two areas of contemporary cartographic scholarship that carry a particularly strong resonance for the following chapters. The first comprises the related notions of 'countermapping' and 'fluid cartography.' Specifically, I will argue that the texts under discussion

engage with maps predominantly through processes similar to those described as 'countermapping,' which is defined by Joshua P. Ewalt as characteristic of a collection of 'certain [recent] maps [that] have been used to organize geographies around themes of injustice, oppression, or political resistance.'[5] Ewalt suggests that countermaps have typically been employed by 'social movement organizations, nongovernmental organizations, and even some government entities to resist social, economic, or global oppression,' and refers specifically to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's (USHMM) *World is a Witness* project – hosted on Google Earth – as an archetypal example of this process.[6] They are, in essence, acts of mapping that attempt to reclaim the processes of cartography by, or on behalf of, those who are in some way disenfranchised; in the case of the *World is a Witness* project referred to by Ewalt, this takes place at the hands of the USHMM on behalf of victims of atrocity and displacement in Darfur, for the educational benefit of (particularly Western) viewers, and in the hope of engendering sympathetic action. The works under discussion here, by contrast, *map back* against the near-wholesale destruction of the Jewish people (and hence, in effect, Nazi state power, as described in the introduction), on behalf of victims, family members (in some cases) and the authors themselves (in most cases), in an attempt to perpetuate the memory of the Holocaust; this entails quite a different intent to the example discussed by Ewalt, which is consciously activist and pedagogical in its approach to the memory of atrocity.

On this basis, I would like to extend Ewalt's characterisation of countermapping in order to incorporate the texts under discussion here, which are not (typically) institutional productions, but are instead individuated, creative works of memory that engage with the history of the Holocaust. Ewalt suggests that '[in] a global world, where spaces of oppression are increasingly difficult to locate…maps help us locate and articulate geographies of resistance'; in the texts I will explore here, it is Ewalt's notion of 'place-framing' in particular that is crucial to the function of maps within them.[7]

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[5] Joshua P. Ewalt, 'Mapping Injustice: The World is Witness, Place-Framing, and the Politics of Viewing on Google Earth', *Papers in Communication Studies*, 36 (2011), 333-354 (p.333).
[6] *Ibid.*
[7] *Ibid*, p.334.

Ewalt notes that 'the process of interactively mapping the virtual earth is an act of place-framing, a process by which space is transformed to place so as to motivate action on the part of those constituencies potentially sympathetic to the organization's goals'; ultimately, he argues, this process constructs a 'motivated subject characterized by a distanced empathy.'[8] Instead, I would argue that the texts under discussion here – given their individuated, creative nature – engage in a similar process of *transforming space into place*, but also seek to construct an *empathic* subject (both in terms of the reader and of the protagonists of certain works), and are typically characterised by a concern with memory and knowledge, as opposed to oppression and resistance (although such concerns naturally figure at times, given the subject matter). Rather than creating a distanced viewing-figure, the maps produced in many of the texts discussed in the following chapters instead seek to *collapse* distance, to varying degrees of success. Simply put, in many cases here maps are used to bring *spaces of the Holocaust* closer to the reader – to imbue them with a sense of *place*, in other words.

In the context of re-evaluating colonial power via the lens of cartography, Matthew Sparke observes that:

> reading European maps against the grain – and paying
> attention to different, sometimes autonomous traditions
> of non-European cartography – has also led scholars
> such as Harley to an increasing awareness of how people
> living in the lands mapped as Empire could and can 'map
> back.'[9]

Here, the notion of '[mapping] back' recalls the notion of countermapping, in the sense that both appear to entail a kind of *mapping against* the controlling strictures of state, or 'official,' cartography. Sparke, for instance, discusses in his chapter the production of historical maps by a prominent native Canadian, while Ewalt, as we have seen, discusses the institutional 'countermapping' of the USHMM in an attempt to explicate the processes of genocide in Darfur. According to the accounts of these scholars, both of these examples attempt to

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[8] *Ibid*, p.335.
[9] Sparke, p.344.

map differently, against 'official' reproductions of the same spaces – they seek to present the topologies of Newfoundland and Darfur according to a different gaze, particularly by including information that would be unlikely to find its way onto any official map (this latter point will be of great significance for this thesis). As such, it is my contention that the process of 'countermapping' (or '[mapping] back') aims at producing an epistemology of space that does not hinge on – or strive toward – control. Rather, such texts aim to engender new ways of thinking in those who view them; we might recall, for instance, Ewalt's assertion that the USHMM's *World is a Witness* project sought to construct a 'motivated subject characterized by a distanced empathy.'[10] Much the same could be said of the texts under discussion here; in each case, the concern is with *knowledge and understanding*, rather than the mastery of physical space.

In this particular sense – the notion of understanding as an object of the mapping process rather than control – the concept of 'fluid cartography' shares a significant affinity (in my view) with the notion of 'countermapping.' In their introduction to a special edition of the *Journal of Romance Studies* dedicated to 'fluid cartographies,' Isabel Capeloa Gil and João Ferreira Duarte emphasise the notion of cartography as a tool for control, much like many of the scholars discussed here already. They note the status of the medium as a 'key instrument for…European expansion,' and suggest that cartography is 'certainly one of modernity's favourite daughters.'[11] They go further, however, and note that cartography has also 'become a preferred metaphor for critical cultural and literary studies' – think, for example, of the reams of paper upon which scholars have tried to 'map out' new concepts, or 'chart' analyses of particular texts.[12] In this way, 'maps, atlases and charts have [long] served the dynamics of power and knowledge.'[13] At first glance, this interpretation of the use of cartography as a metaphor may appear suspiciously close to my above assertion that the works under discussion in this thesis aspire to knowledge and understanding; in Capeloa Gil and Ferreira Duarte's insistence on 'critical

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[10] Ewalt, p.335.
[11] Isabel Capeloa Gil and João Ferreira Duarte, 'Introduction: modernity's fluid cartographies', *Journal of Romance Studies*, 11:1 (2011) 1-9 (p.1).
[12] *Ibid.*
[13] *Ibid.*

cultural and literary studies,' however, they signal a particular kind of knowledge – specifically, the somewhat hierarchical, deeply institutional knowledge of the academy; by contrast, the works under discussion here aspire to a different kind of knowledge – one that is more intimate, personal, poetic, and often idiosyncratic.

The special journal to which the authors' introduction is attached, meanwhile, is concerned with 'fluid cartographies,' a concept that will be of key significance here, and represents a further example of a reaction against top-down cartographies of control such as those discussed earlier and, particularly, a reaction to the displacements and disengagements of modernity and contemporary life. Fluid cartographies, note Gil and Duarte, are 'deeply relational, and [aim] at *understanding instead of controlling*'; fluid cartographies:

> [address] the fluid disengagement of the modern world, the *diasporic displacements* and the complex changes that mark the transitive and transitional reality of modernity...A fluid cartography, moreover, traces *connections in contact zones* and perceives the limits that mark territory not as borders but rather...*borderlands*...A fluid cartography, then, perceives the territory as an emerging surface where *charting is equated with inscribing and translating, where different identities, times and locations come together*.[14]

The definition offered here by Gil and Duarte applies neatly to each of the texts under discussion in the following chapters; the special journal edition they introduce, in fact, is (perhaps unsurprisingly, based on the above) composed largely of readings of creative texts such as those I will analyse here. In the same journal, for instance, António Sousa Ribeiro offers readings of literary descriptions of journeys to concentration camps in cattle cars as 'cartographies of non-space,' given the sense of confinement, movement, and sensory deprivation that such an experience would have entailed; these works, he

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[14] *Ibid*, p.3, emphases added.

notes, 'assign the *topos* of the voyage a central position,'[15] and 'delineate a cartography of non-space derived from a radical experience of exclusion and confinement and, as such, build up a powerful critique of modernity.'[16] As I suggested above, the notion of a cartography that strives for 'understanding instead of controlling' appears connected to the notion of 'countermapping' – this is, too, a vital characteristic of the texts that form the basis of discussion in what follows. Each creates a situation (often multiple situations) in which a protagonist (or protagonists) seeks to negotiate Holocaust memory through engagement with cartography or processes of mapping and charting. It is my feeling that such processes, as they occurs in these texts, correspond to *both* the notions of countermapping and fluid cartography; much like Ewalt's notion of countermapping, the texts seek to construct a particular, empathic viewing subject (if not a 'distanced' one, as with the *World is a Witness* project), and they likewise attempt to transform space into place;[17] the characteristics of fluid cartography outlined by Gil and Duarte above, meanwhile, are very closely mirrored within the texts – each of these characteristics applies to all of the works under discussion in some way. Crucially, these texts – in their openness, relationality, and attempts to *understand* – can be read in opposition to the cartographies of control I have already outlined here. Fundamentally, an attempt to understand (through mapping) one's family history of the Holocaust (for instance), bears scant relation to the cartography present in SS reporting on Jewish deaths, or pseudo-scientific Nazi propaganda images designed to stoke the embers of racial animosity, the like of which we see in figures 1.1-1.3.

The second area of contemporary cartographic theory that comes to bear heavily upon the texts under discussion here is to be found in the works of a collection of scholars that are concerned with what is known in some quarters as the '*ontogenetic turn* in thinking about maps.'[18] In essence, such thinking appears to derive from what Crampton has elsewhere described as an

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[15] Ribeiro, p.82.
[16] *Ibid*, p.80.
[17] Ewalt, p.335.
[18] Tania Rossetto, 'The skin of the map: Viewing cartography through tactile empathy', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 37:1 (2019), 83-103 (p.84), original emphasis.

'epistemic break' in the geohumanities, between 'a model of cartography as a communication system and one in which it is seen in a field of power relations, between maps as a presentation of stable, known information and exploratory mapping environments in which knowledge is constructed.'[19] The essentials of 'ontogenetic mapping' were laid out by Rob Kitchin and Martin Dodge, in an influential article simply titled 'Rethinking Maps.' In it, the authors take issue with the limitations of the critical cartography instituted by Harley, noting that, owing to its somewhat-piecemeal application of Foucauldian thought to its objects of analysis, following studies in the same vein are necessarily limited, and hence fail to acknowledge that 'there is no escaping the entanglement of power/knowledge.'[20] They also lament the fact that 'counter mappings,' on this same basis, '[do] not challenge the ontological status of the map,' and instead merely '[reveal] the politics of mapping' (though this is an extremely valuable endeavour nonetheless).[21] 'For us,' they note, 'maps...have no ontological security; they are *ontogenetic* in nature.'[22] They continue:

> Maps are of-the-moment, brought into being through practices (embodied, social, technical), always remade every time they are engaged with; mapping is a process of constant reterritorialization. As such, maps are transitory and fleeting, being contingent, relational and context-dependent. *Maps are practices* – they are always *mappings*; spatial practices enacted to solve relational problems.[23]

In their formulation, a map is 'a co-constitutive production between inscription, individual, and world; a production that is constantly in motion, always seeking to appear ontologically secure.'[24] In occasioning the aforementioned 'ontogenetic turn' in academic discourse on cartography, this

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[19] Jeremy W. Crampton, 'Maps as Social Constructions: Power, Communication and Visualization', *Progress in Human Geography*, 25:2 (2001) 235-252 (pp.235-236).
[20] Rob Kitchin and Martin Dodge, 'Rethinking the Map', *Progress in Human Geography*, 31:3 (2007) 331-344 (p.332).
[21] *Ibid.*
[22] *Ibid*, p.335, original emphasis.
[23] *Ibid*, original emphasis.
[24] *Ibid.*

article paved the way for a raft of further studies on the theme. Tania Rossetto, for instance, has written of the potential to view maps through a lens of tactile empathy. In her article on the topic, she seeks to interpret maps in terms of 'images *as* environments in which we exist, as well as objects we encounter.'[25] She notes, astutely, that the 'spatialities of maps' may be understood in a number of ways, including 'as the cartographic surface through which our bodies move, as the space we navigate while using maps and as the spatial context in which we encounter maps.'[26] Each of these situations is encountered in the various texts I will investigate across the following chapters. Indeed, Rossetto makes special mention of literature in her article, noting that, 'literary texts are places where cartographic tactility can be vividly experienced,' and that 'maps emerge from literary texts as animated surfaces; they are given depth, movement, enlivenment and three-dimensionality through these means.'[27] Such descriptions, as we will see, certainly hold true when we come to scrutinise the works of those authors represented here; this is perhaps particularly relevant to the graphic novels under discussion, since (given the dimension of visual representation inherent to them) they often *directly depict*, in more or less mimetic fashion, a range of tactile, bodily encounters with maps. Nonetheless, Rossetto's thought holds true within all the texts, whether or not they consciously describe or depict direct, physical engagements with cartography. Rossetto's work on the embodied, tactile experience of map-usage is a good example of the kind of work conducted under the rubric of the 'ontogenetic turn' in cartography; in it, she demonstrates amply the shifting meanings that can come to be attached to maps in a variety of contexts. While Kitchin and Dodge and others who have followed their lead have tended to highlight how *conventional* maps and mappings are ontogenetic, the works discussed here nonetheless conform strongly to this notion, too; in virtually all cases, the maps under analysis are not static objects, but are living creations, heavily dependent upon surrounding context, and often 'relational' and 'contingent,' sometimes to the point of being idiosyncratic, or even esoteric.

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[25] Rossetto, 'Skin of the map,' p.88, original emphasis.
[26] *Ibid*, p.95.
[27] *Ibid*, p.90.

Elsewhere, in an article summarising the movement of geography and its subdisciplines toward an understanding of maps as 'processual' and contingent (in the manner described by Kitchin and Dodge), rather than straightforwardly 'representational,' Sébastian Caquard elucidates the lacuna filled by Kitchin and Dodge's proposition, when he notes that maps certainly 'cannot be divorced from the practices, interests and understandings of their makers and users,'[28] and yet they can only 'come to life…when people start using them in a particular setting for a particular purpose.'[29] This accords with the position of a number of other authors writing on topics that align with the 'ontogenetic turn' in cartographic theory, such as Clancy Wilmott, whose article 'In Between Mobile Maps and Media: Movement' argues that 'mobile mapping' (particularly, using a digital mapping application on a smartphone for the purpose of navigation) entails 'a hybridized perspective between the static topdown view of the map and the ground level vantage point adopted by de Certeau's walkers as they weave their way through the city.'[30] As users move through time and (urban) space, Wilmott notes, 'multiple, mobile mapping practices' unfold;[31] as such, 'the term *mobile mapping*…describes more than just maps — it describes a cartographic experience, an urban cartography in action.'[32] In a similar vein Jason Farman demonstrates, in his article 'Mapping the Digital Empire,' how Google Earth – containing as it does, 'a social network that engages users as embodied interactors rather than disembodied voyeurs' – is able to 'present user-generated content and dialog spatially on the very object that such content critiques'; it contains, in other words, tools through which users can pass comment upon the 'authorial structure' of Google Earth, *within* that very structure itself.[33] In the course of reaching his conclusion, Farman makes two points regarding bodily engagement with maps that are

[28] Sébastien Caquard, 'Cartography III: A post-representational perspective on cognitive cartography', *Progress in Human Geography*, 39:2 (2015) 225-235 (p.230).
[29] *Ibid*, p.229.
[30] Clancy Willmott, 'In Between Mobile Maps and Media: Movement', *Television and New Media*, 18:4 (2017) 320-335 (p.323).
[31] *Ibid*, p.322.
[32] *Ibid*, p323, original emphasis.
[33] Jason Farman, 'Mapping the digital empire: Google Earth and the process of postmodern cartography', *New Media and Society*, 12:5 (2010) 869-888 (p.869 [abstract]).

particularly striking in relation to the texts analysed in this thesis; first, he notes that 'despite the postmodernist views of several cultural geographers, the reliable nature of maps (i.e. accurately connected to "reality") is essential to our everyday navigation of lived space.'[34] This is precisely the point addressed by the 'ontogenetic turn' in response to work such as Harley's, and is an important one to raise here, given that on a number of occasions protagonists and author-protagonists in the texts under discussion make use of maps in order to physically navigate spaces in which they find themselves, or to trace routes taken by themselves or others; they are not merely static, symbolic insertions within these works. The embodied experience of utilising cartography, then, cannot help but highlight the fact that – despite the impossibility of accurately depicting an 'objective' reality – maps necessarily must bear at least *some* relation to 'reality' in order to, first, make sense, and second, to be of any practical use, if that is the purpose for which they were designed.[35] When maps are *used* (actively, by characters) in the works discussed here, such usage often accords with the basic ideas of the ontogenetic turn; namely that it is contingent upon – and shifts and changes according to – protagonists' evolving understanding of the spaces in which they find themselves.

Second, Farman also notes that '[since] the science of cartography has historically overshadowed the art of mapmaking...hand-drawn maps close the ambiguous gap between product and authorship.'[36] This is a point that is again intimately connected to an embodied engagement with maps, and the notion of mapping-as-practice. Particularly, this carries significant relevance for the graphic novels under discussion; in each case, the maps contained within them are hand-drawn, a fact that is perhaps unsurprising given the medium in which they occur. This is the case even when the map-images depicted are (for instance) taken from atlases, or from Google Maps. As such, an additional process – that of (re-)mediation, and sometimes of re-interpretation – is layered within the mapping process in these works. The notion, then, of maps

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[34] *Ibid*, p.874.

[35] This is, clearly, excepting wholly-fictional cartographic creations. Nonetheless, to understand such creations necessarily entails an understanding of how to *read* a map, and the navigational processes that are inherent to such a reading.

[36] Farman, p.875.

being 'contingent, relational and context-dependent,' as expressed by Kitchin and Dodge, is evident not only in the spatial information expressed, or in how they are used, but also in the very fact of their existence within the pages of these graphic novels; they are *contingent*, for instance, in both senses of the word – contingent upon the choice of the authors to include and re-draw them, but also contingent in the sense that they are subject to change (either throughout each text, or indeed from their original appearance), given that they are inherently exposed to the creative whims of the author.[37]

In all, the ideas expressed under the rubric of the cartographic 'ontogenetic turn' are of import here in part owing to the status of the texts under discussion as *narrative* works of art. Within each, maps and mappings are, typically, fundamentally tied to the narrative, and as such are always contingent; as each narrative evolves, so too does its use of maps (including the repeated use of the same maps) and processes of mapping within it. In a similar vein, it is through narrative that each work under discussion here attempts to construct (or reconstruct) some semblance of knowledge about the events of the Holocaust; in this light, the notions of countermapping and 'fluid cartography' are of significant relevance. The collision of different times, identities, and places, too, marks these texts as particularly 'fluid' in their creative mapping practices, as per the definition proffered by Gil and Duarte. In some cases, the maps and processes of mapping on display betray a naïve belief in the security of cartography as a stable source of knowledge, while at other times (indeed, sometimes within the pages of the same text) authors appear to be profoundly aware of the social construction of maps; such a situation emphasises the continued relevance of the work of Brian Harley. To summarise in short, throughout this thesis I will be treating the maps on display as 'fluid,' ontogenetic – in the sense of processual, always-becoming, and embodied – constructed, either socially, culturally, or politically, and as cartographies that in some ways *map back*, or *against*, 'official' maps. As we will see in the following section, a number of these characteristics share some affinity with the ideas relating to memory that comprise the second pillar of scholarly discourse that underpins this work.

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[37] Kitchin and Dodge, p.335.

2.2. On memory

Given its fairly short existence as a specific field of academic enquiry, the history of 'memory studies' has frequently been delineated by scholars in many works on the topic, including in a number of the studies I will refer to here. As such, and in the interests of space, it is my intention to provide merely a brief introduction to this history here, before moving on to more contemporary material that is of much greater consequence to the present work. Indeed, works by scholars such as Maurice Halbwachs and Pierre Nora – foundational as they are for many subsequent enquiries on the topic – are not necessarily of *direct* relevance to the analyses offered in the following chapters, and so on this basis, too, it seems prudent not to delve into historical developments within the field at any great length. To begin, however, I would like frame the following discussion with reference to Andreas Huyssen's remark that 'the shift from history to memory represents a welcome critique of compromised teleological notions of history rather than being simply anti-historical, relativistic, or subjective'; Huyssen is here referring more generally to 'memory' as a cultural phenomenon, particularly in relation to the 'memory boom' of the early 1990s, but it follows that the flowering of academic discourse that accompanied this 'boom' can be viewed as offering a similar alternative to traditional historiography, particularly given its more flexible, accommodating relationship to cultural texts such as those under discussion in this thesis.[38] It is also important to note too, in the context of this thesis, the fact that, as Anne Whitehead puts it, '[t]he horrors of the Holocaust, in particular, are understandably accorded central importance in many accounts of contemporary memory studies'; in its contemporary iteration, the discipline is one that is firmly rooted in the exploration of the upheavals of the twentieth-century, with the Nazi genocide of the Jews assuming a particularly keen prominence in this regard.[39] While many of the scholars under discussion here (and throughout) work predominantly under the banner of 'memory studies'

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[38] Andreas Huyssen, *Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia* (London: Routledge, 1995), p.6.
[39] Whitehead, p.84.

in rather general terms, there are scarcely any who have not engaged with questions of Holocaust memory in some capacity, at some stage.

Astrid Erll, in her work *Memory in Culture*, notes the significance of 'Maurice Halbwach's sociological studies on *mémoire collective*' to the development of memory studies.[40] This is perhaps particularly true of his 1925 book *Les Cadres Sociaux de la Mémoire* (or, *The Social Frameworks of Memory*, some of which was translated into English as *On Collective Memory*), which has been widely and frequently cited as a specific point of origin for the discipline.[41] Indeed, according to Erll, '[t]oday...virtually no theoretical model of cultural memory exists without recourse to [Halbwachs].'[42] Of his work, she notes that Halbwachs

> ...attempted to establish that memory is dependent on social structures. In this he opposed the theories of memory of his contemporaries such as Henri Bergson and Sigmund Freud, who emphasized the individual dimension of memory. Halbwachs's theory...sees even the most personal memory as a *mémoire collective*, a collective phenomenon.[43]

On this basis, Erll continues, Halbwachs was accused by detractors of 'an unacceptable collectivization of individual psychological phenomena.'[44] In response, Halbwachs's later works elaborated upon the theories he first put forth in *The Social Frameworks of Memory*. Whitehead traces the history of memory as a broad concept, and not solely as an academic discipline in her book *Memory*; it is worth quoting her summary of the essentials of Halbwachs's thought:

> His...model emphasises the partial and incomplete nature of past recollections, and he attributes the ability to remember not to internal processes but to the

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[40] Astrid Erll, *Memory in Culture*, trans. by Sara B. Young (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011) p.13.
[41] Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, trans. by Lewis Coser (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992).
[42] Erll, *Memory in Culture*, p.14.
[43] *Ibid.*
[44] *Ibid.*

> reawakening of former experiences by external stimuli...Halbwachs considers that our world...is never a solitary one; ...we carry within us a number of distinct persons and are always enclosed within some group, be it familial, religious, political, economic, or social....The group, in Halbwachs' understanding, provides the individual with a 'framework' into which remembrances are woven.[45]

'It is in this sense,' notes Halbwachs, 'that there exists a collective memory' – social frameworks are essential, in his view.[46] Nonetheless, Halbwachs notes that 'the individual remembers by placing himself [*sic*] in the perspective of the group, but one may also affirm that the memory of the group realizes and manifests itself in individual memories.'[47] Elsewhere, Jeffrey K. Olick and Joyce Robbins suggest that, '[f]or Halbwachs...studying memory was not a matter of reflecting philosophically on inherent properties of the subjective mind; memory is a matter of how minds work together in society.'[48] One final point that is of particular significance here relates to Halbwachs's consideration of material mnemonic artefacts. Erll summarises this evolution in Halbwachs's thought when she notes that, in a later work, 'he turns his attention to collective memories whose temporal horizons reach back thousands of years...and therefore need objects and topographical sites of memory to provide structure.'[49] This is significant because Halbwachs is, at this point, considering 'the area of culturally constructed knowledge about a distant past and its transmission through the creation of traditions'; this development 'broke the ground for later historical and cultural studies approaches which deal with the transmission of cultural knowledge and national sites of memory,' such as the significant works of Pierre Nora and Jan and Aleida Assmann, some of which I will discuss in the following

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[45] Whitehead, p.126.
[46] Halbwachs, p.38.
[47] Halbwachs, p.40.
[48] Jeffrey K. Olick and Joyce Robbins, 'Social Memory Studies: From 'Collective Memory' to the Historical Sociology of Mnemonic Practices', *Annual Review of Sociology*, 24 (1998) 105-140 (p.109).
[49] Erll, *Memory in Culture*, p.18.

paragraphs.[50] Despite the breadth and depth of his thinking on the topic, it is perhaps also of relevance, in the context of this thesis, to observe that Halbwachs's contributions to scholarly discourse were nonetheless tragically cut short; he was deported by the Nazis to Buchenwald, on account of his wife being Jewish, in August 1944, and he was murdered there on March 16th, 1945.[51]

If Halbwachs's work tends to represent the first significant milestone in most surveys of the history of memory studies, the second is typically situated some sixty-or-so years later, in the form of Pierre Nora's *Les Lieux de Mémoire*, which was published in its original French between 1984 and 1992, and in English as *Realms of Memory* between 1996 and 1998.[52] Nora's work represents a revival of interest in the idea of memory as a 'collective phenomenon which constitutes and maintains culture' from the 1980s onwards, and had remained largely unexplored within academia in the wake of Halbwachs's pioneering work.[53] This re-emergence of the topic of memory into academic discourse was in no small part occasioned by the gradual collapse of the wall of silence which had hitherto often characterised Holocaust memory in many countries; this was not, however, Nora's specific concern. In 'Between Memory and History,' the essay which introduces *Les Lieux de Mémoire* (published separately in English in 1989), Nora notes:

> Our interest in *lieux de mémoire* where memory crystallizes and secretes itself has occurred at a particular historical moment...where consciousness of a break with the past is bound up with the sense that memory has been torn – but torn in such a way as to pose the problem of the embodiment of memory in certain sites where a sense of historical continuity persists. There are *lieux de mémoire*, sites of memory, because

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[50] *Ibid.*
[51] *Ibid*, p.14.
[52] Pierre Nora, *Realms of Memory: The Construction of the French Past, Volume 1 - Conflicts and Divisions*, ed. by Pierre Nora and Lawrence D. Kritzman, trans. by Arthur Goldhammer (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).
[53] Erll, *Memory in Culture*, p.22.

> there are no longer *milieux de mémoire*, real
> environments of memory.[54]

'Sites of memory,' the phrase Nora uses in the above passage, is the term around which English-language analyses of his work tend to revolve, rather than the more abstract and amorphous 'realms' of memory employed in the title of the full English translation. This is perhaps appropriate, given that Nora's focus is on *specific sites* within which (national) memory accretes, be they physical, material places, literature, music, dates of remembrance, particular individuals, or anything else which can act as a *container*, of sorts, for cultural memory.

According to Nora, *lieux de mémoire* must meet three criteria to be considered as such: 'material, symbolic, and functional.'[55] Materiality here refers to the fact that sites can be considered 'cultural objectivations in the broadest sense of the term,' and therefore 'include not only "graspable" objects such as paintings or books,' but also 'past events,' and 'minutes of silence,'[56] since such events 'literally [break] a temporal continuity,' in his reading.[57] With respect to the functional dimension, this indicates that, as Erll puts it, such objects 'must fulfil a function in society'; they must first be 'created for a particular purpose,' before they become memory sites.[58] This purpose can be, of course, the explicit intention to prompt remembrance, such as a statue or, again, a minute of silence.[59] Finally – and perhaps most significantly – the 'symbolic' dimension of *lieux de mémoire* is quite self-explanatory, and refers simply to the fact that sites of memory must carry a particular, symbolic meaning – they must be, or become, imbued with what Nora refers to as a 'symbolic aura.'[60] Erll summarises this last point: 'It is this intentional symbolic signification – whether ascribed to the objectivation already at the point of its creation or not until later – that first makes a cultural object a site

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[54] Pierre Nora, 'Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*', trans. by Marc Roudebush, *Representations*, 26 (1998) 7-25 (p.8).
[55] *Ibid*, p.19.
[56] Erll, *Memory in Culture*, p.24.
[57] Nora, 'Between...', p.19.
[58] Erll, *Memory in Culture*, p.24.
[59] *Ibid*.
[60] Nora, 'Between...', p.19.

of memory.'[61] 'To begin with, there must be a will to remember. If we were to abandon this criterion, we would quickly drift into admitting virtually everything as worthy of remembrance' – intentionality, then, would seem to be a crucial factor for Nora himself.[62]

Nora's work emerges from his conviction that '[m]emory and history, far from being synonymous, appear now to be in fundamental opposition';[63] he notes that '[w]e speak so much of memory because there is so little of it left.'[64] For Nora, 'sites of memory function as a sort of artificial placeholder for the no longer existent, natural collective memory.'[65] Whitehead, meanwhile, outlines succinctly Nora's view of the development of collective memory throughout history, noting that this historical evolution comprises 'three distinct phases':

> the 'pre-modern,' which represented an era of natural, spontaneous and unselfconscious memory practices; the 'modern,' which coincided with the rise of the nation state and within which a historical consciousness began to prevail over a memorial one; and the current 'postmodern' age of media culture, in which representations of the past emerge and are consumed at the rapid and frantic pace of media consumption itself.[66]

In Nora's view, Whitehead continues, such a narrative of collective memory is 'implicitly one of decline and loss.'[67] The problem, for Nora, is that 'sites of memory' represent an abnegation of the work of memory on the part of the population at large. He notes: 'Memory has been wholly absorbed by its meticulous reconstruction. Its new vocation is to record: delegating to the *lieu de mémoire* the responsibility of remembering, it sheds its signs upon depositing them there, as a snake sheds its skin.'[68] As James E. Young notes in

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[61] Erll, *Memory in Culture*, p.24.
[62] Nora, 'Between...', p.19.
[63] *Ibid*, p.8.
[64] *Ibid*, p.7,
[65] Erll, *Memory in Culture*, p.23.
[66] Whitehead, pp.141-142.
[67] Whitehead, p.142.
[68] Nora, 'Between...', p.13.

his seminal work *The Texture of Memory*, this results in a situation whereby 'the memorial operation remains self-contained and detached from our daily lives. Under the illusion that our memorial edifices will always be there to remind us, we take leave of them and return only at our convenience.'[69] In his work, Young specifically analyses Holocaust memorials in what might generally be considered a conventional sense – public works of art in sculptural or architectural form which seek to perform a commemorative function – but his analysis of Nora's thought probably holds true for all of the examples listed by Erll, above.

Later in her survey of Nora's thought, Erll outlines some of the potential pitfalls that undermine his analyses. She notes, for instance, that, as Nora's work progresses, the tightly-defined triumvirate of criteria to which any *lieu de mémoire* must conform is steadily 'deconstructed bit by bit,' and becomes confused to the extent that it would seem that virtually 'any cultural phenomenon…which a society associates with its past and…national identity' can be considered an example of a *lieu de mémoire.*[70] She also suggests, astutely, that his 'strict separation of history and memory is not entirely unproblematic,' particularly since 'blocking out the memorial function of historiography' appears strange in light of the debates around the 'nature, subjectivity, and perspectivity' of history writing that were prevalent within academic discourse from 'as early as the 1970s.'[71] Finally, perhaps the most significant criticism to be levelled at Nora's work is 'its nation-centredness,' given the current tendency toward transnational or transcultural analyses of memory.[72] Nevertheless, Nora's work on sites of memory represents, in Erll's words, 'the most prominent example of a mnemohistorical approach, in which [a]…theoretical conception of cultural memory is borne out by a rich variety of case studies illuminating the dynamics of cultural remembrance.'[73] Its influence in prompting similar studies cannot be overstated, and Erll notes that '[t]he concept of *lieux de mémoire* is [not] restricted…to the discipline of

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[69] James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), p.5.
[70] Erll, *Memory in Culture*, pp.24-25.
[71] *Ibid*, p.25.
[72] *Ibid*, p.26.
[73] *Ibid*, p.25.

history...[O]n the contrary it has inspired scholars of the most varied of disciplines to undertake memory research.'[74]

Briefly, one final set of contributions that are of profound significance to the development of memory studies (and which also hold relevance for the chapters to follow) is to be found in the work of Jan and Aleida Assmann, who introduced a streamlined, clearly-delineated notion of 'Cultural Memory' to the discipline in the 1980s.[75] In an essay titled 'Collective Memory and Cultural Identity' – published in its original German in 1988, with the present quotations taken from a 1995 English translation – Jan Assmann outlines the basic parameters of the concept of 'Cultural Memory':

> We define the concept of cultural memory through a
> double delimitation that distinguishes it...from what we
> call "communicative" or "everyday memory," which in
> the narrower sense of our usage lacks "cultural"
> characteristics.[76]

This leaves us with the separation of 'Cultural Memory' from 'communicative' or 'everyday memory,' which is, in essence, the core of the Assmanns' theory.

'Communicative' memory refers, according to the Assmanns, to 'those varieties of collective memory that are based exclusively on everyday communications'; they are characterised by 'a high degree of non-specialisation, reciprocity of roles, thematic instability, and disorganisation.'[77] Communicative memory circulates within groups (as per the notion of collective memory), but the 'most important characteristic' is to be found in their 'limited temporal horizon,' the span of which, suggest the Assmanns, reaches back no further than eighty to one hundred years.[78] Crucially, Assmann notes:

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[74] *Ibid*, p.25.

[75] *Ibid*, p.27; Erll capitalises the term 'Cultural Memory' when referring to the work of the Assmanns in order to distinguish it from more general applications of the phrase.

[76] Jan Assmann, 'Collective Memory and Cultural Identity', trans. by John Czaplicka, *New German Critique*, 65 (1995), 125-133 (p.126).

[77] *Ibid*.

[78] *Ibid*, p.127.

> The communicative memory offers no fixed point which
> would bind it to the ever-expanding past in the passing
> of time. Such fixity can only be achieved through a
> cultural formation and therefore lies outside of informal
> everyday memory.[79]

This, then, is where the 'Cultural Memory' of the Assmanns' formulation
enters into the picture – in contradistinction with 'informal everyday memory.'

'Cultural Memory' is, in this sense, 'characterized by its difference from
the everyday':

> Cultural memory has its fixed point; its horizon does not
> change with the passing of time. These fixed points are
> fateful events of the past, whose memory is maintained
> through cultural formation (texts, rites, monuments)
> and institutional communication (recitation, practice,
> observance).[80]

Critically, '[c]ultural memory,' Assmann continues, 'works by reconstructing,
that is, it always relates its knowledge to an actual and contemporary situation.
Erll summarises the distinction between the two forms, when she notes that
'*Communicative memory* comes into being through everyday interaction,'
while '*Cultural Memory* is a memory which is tied to material objectivations.
It is purposefully established and ceremonialized.'[81]

Many of the works under discussion here sit between 'communicative'
and 'Cultural' memory, as the Assmanns would have it. In many cases, the
works themselves represent precisely the 'cultural [formations]' described
above, in the sense that they are texts created with an explicit mnemonic
function in mind. They are, as such, examples of 'Cultural Memory' in the
'narrower sense' described here. On the contrary, however, I would argue that
in many cases, these works also *represent* the processes of ordinary, 'everyday'
interaction that constitute the work of 'communicative memory,' even if these
processes become codified (or perhaps, ossified) in the form of a cultural text.

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[79] *Ibid.*
[80] *Ibid*, p.129.
[81] Erll, *Memory in Culture*, p.28, original emphases.

I would suggest, therefore, that in many cases, these texts inhabit a borderland between 'communicative' and 'Cultural' memory, a situation that often results in a dynamic interplay between past and present.

In broad terms, the ideas outlined above represent some of the thinking that forms the lynchpin of academic memory studies – particularly in the notion of collective or cultural memory as a socially-constructed phenomenon – and lead us up to the state of play that existed in (approximately) the 1980s and 1990s. From this point onwards, however (and particularly in the last two decades or so), studies conducted under the rubric of the discipline proliferated extensively, and have begun to diversify widely in the scope of their concerns. In her 2011 article 'Travelling Memory,' Erll poses the question, 'whither memory studies?' in order to signal the concerns of her enquiry, and her subsequent explication of her own proposal for a future direction for the academic study of memory.[82] Erll contends that 'we have now arrived at a point of saturation with memory,' a conclusion that she draws from her reading of the trajectory of memory studies in the years leading up to her article.[83] The position Erll subsequently lays out in the work – her notion of 'travelling memory,' which I will discuss shortly – places her voice firmly in the company of a growing chorus of critics keen to break from the scholarly conception of memory prevalent from around the 1980s, one which was heavily shaped by the work of Nora in his *Les Lieux de Mémoire*, and characterised in part by a particular focus on the nation-state as a key 'carrier' of collective memory. As a consequence, in recent years we have seen a range of innovations that lead us to, variously, 'prosthetic,' 'cosmopolitan,' 'multidirectional,' 'travelling,' 'palimpsestic,' and 'remediated' memories, to name but a few.[84] Theories such as these have tended to present cultural or collective memory in terms of mobility, movement, exchange, transnationality, and transculturality, and are likewise reluctant to remain ineluctably tied to the nation state and concrete sites of remembrance as the *predominant* avenues for investigating memory. Elsewhere – away from the investigations of larger social groups typically conducted by those researchers

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[82] Astrid Erll, 'Travelling Memory', *Parallax*, 17:4 (2011), 4-18 (p.5).
[83] *Ibid*.
[84] For each of these theories see, respectively: Landsberg, 2004; Levy and Sznaider, 2006; Rothberg, 2009; Erll, 2011; Silverman, 2013; Brunow, 2015.

listed above, and closer to the Assmann's in-group concept of 'communicative memory' – other scholars have focused on questions such as the intergenerational transmission of memory (and, in many cases, trauma), the most notable example of which is perhaps to be found in Marianne Hirsch's pioneering work on the concept of 'postmemory,' though we see similar concerns emerge in works such as E. Ann Kaplan's book *Trauma Culture*, and Gabrielle Schwab's *Haunting Legacies*.[85] Inevitably, too, there has also been a vast increase in the number of studies relating to the impact on cultural or collective memory of digital and technological innovations; these have emerged from a range of traditional academic disciplines, yet can often be grouped under the broad heading of memory studies. Evidently, the nation state – the core of Nora's notion of *lieux de mémoire* – can no longer be said to be the predominant vessel for the containment of collective memory (if indeed it ever was); it exists instead alongside a wide variety of different social mnemonic contexts, the scale of which varies greatly.

Given the enormous diversity of existing scholarship, it is perhaps simplest to first outline precisely how I will be conceiving of 'memory' in this thesis, in order to devote the last paragraphs here to a kind of approximate typology of the theoretical works on the topic that have informed my analyses. In broad terms, I will be applying critical sources that treat memory as *transnational* (or indeed, transcultural, 'travelling,' or portable*)*, *mediated*, and *personal*, or *familial* (in the sense of the Assmanns' 'communicative memory'). Across the final paragraphs of this summary, then, I will outline each of these three roughly-delineated groupings in turn.

2.3. Memory on the move

One dimension that is shared by all of the texts under discussion in this thesis is their global nature; this is, naturally, a situation that reflects the near-global nature of contemporary Holocaust memory. In all cases, the authors under discussion depict protagonists whose narratives are not confined within the parameters of a single nation state; rather we see journeys to sites of

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[85] See: Hirsch, 2012; Kaplan, 2005; Schwab, 2010.

significance in the context of the Holocaust, communication with distant others via telephone or internet services, contemplations upon the history of nations other than those in which characters find themselves, and (in the case of Gansterer in particular) the international transfer of Holocaust documentation and other texts. As such, it is entirely appropriate to view the memory-work evinced by these texts in similar terms, whether as transcultural (i.e. across or between cultural contexts), transnational (memory across national borders), or simply 'travelling,' or 'portable' (in the sense expressed by Erll and Rigney to which I referred in the introduction).

Astrid Erll's notion of 'travelling memory' represents a useful starting point here, given that it provides a broadly-applicable framework through which to conceive of memory in these terms. In delineating this theory, Erll notes that she aims to present a view of mnemonic practices as they exist 'in culture' as opposed to 'the specific memories of (allegedly stable and clearly demarcated) cultures.'[86] Nonetheless, she still acknowledges nation states as a key 'social framework of remembrance,'[87] but instead shifts the terms of the debate toward the notion of memory as inherently mobile, and indeed 'constituted first of all through movement.'[88] She writes: '[what] we are dealing with, therefore, is not so much ... "sites" of memory, but rather the "travels" of memory, *les voyages...de mémoire*,' thereby clearly situating her critical intervention as a direct challenge to the work of Nora in his *Les Lieux de Mémoire*.[89]

While I do not necessarily agree with Erll that 'memory is constituted *first of all* through movement,' her argument is nonetheless convincing.[90] In order to elucidate her theory, Erll outlines five broadly-applicable 'dimensions of movement' that are each relevant to the works under discussion in this

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[86] Erll, Travelling Memory, p.6, original emphasis.
[87] *Ibid*, p.7.
[88] *Ibid*, p.11.
[89] *Ibid*.
[90] *Ibid*, emphasis added. What Erll seems to be describing, as she indeed intimates herself at various points, appears to be, rather, the processes by which memory is *perpetuated* through movement, although on that note one might justly point out that memory can only exist in its perpetuation. Nonetheless, a memory or set of memories still require a particular point (or points) of origin which, in my view, must necessarily remain as a static point of reference, even if the nature or content of memories associated with it may shift and change over time.

thesis; these dimensions are 'carriers, media, contents, practices, and forms,' and each constitutes a particular building block for any iteration of 'memory in culture.'[91] 'Carriers' in this context refers to the individual human subjects who engage in mobile memory work, while 'media' indicates the textual or discursive means of representing and perpetuating memory, be it through oral narration, film, comics, novels, the internet, and so forth.[92] 'Contents of memory,' writes Erll, 'largely consist in shared images and narratives' (tellingly, she cites 'Holocaust' and 'Apartheid' as two particularly salient examples that each have 'a virtually global reach'), while 'practices' constitute such acts as 'two minutes of silence' and the adoption of '[tombs] of the unknown soldier' in some nations following the First World War.[93] 'Forms,' finally, relate to the 'condensed figures (symbols, icons, or schemata) of remembering that enable repetition,' such as 'Exodus,' 'Somme,' and 'Fall of the Berlin Wall [*sic*],' according to the author.[94] These five 'dimensions of movement,' then, can act as a useful means of theorising the specific contextual configurations that constitute each act of Holocaust memory represented in the texts I will be analysing; the authors, protagonists, symbols, and indeed, works themselves are, at points, mobile, and thus in all cases constitute at least some of the 'dimensions' listed above. Oftentimes, such travels are delineated upon the graphic surface of cartographic inserts, or traced through narrative that mirrors mapping processes.

One work that is of similar significance to the following chapters, and treats collective memory in a transcultural sense, is Max Silverman's notion of 'palimpsestic memory.' This idea – while concerned with the overlapping memories and connected histories of sociocultural groups – focuses upon the superimposition of different historical memories in certain spaces (particularly, textual space) as they are represented in artistic works. Drawing on Derrida, Freud, Benjamin and others to develop a 'poetics of memory,' Silverman suggests that palimpsestic memory is in evidence when (in a creative work) 'the present is shown to be shadowed or haunted by the past,' and thereby exists within the pages of, say, a novel in a kind of superimposed

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[91] *Ibid*, p.12.
[92] *Ibid*, pp.12-13.
[93] *Ibid*, p.13.
[94] *Ibid*.

form, in which 'different temporal traces…constitute a sort of composite structure, like a palimpsest.'[95] The model of the palimpsest, Silverman continues, 'captures most completely … the productive interaction of different inscriptions and the *spatialization of time* [that are] central to the work of memory.'[96] In short, Silverman views such a method of representation – a kind of collage, bricolage, or layering of historical times and sites in creative works – as being apposite to the depiction of memory and its processes. This is particularly significant because, according to Silverman,

> artistic works may be more suited than historical or sociological method to making visible the complex interaction of times and sites at play in memory, as a fundamental feature of imaginative (poetic) works is to overlay meaning in intertextual space and blur the frontiers between the conscious and the unconscious, the present and the past, and the personal and the collective.[97]

In all cases discussed here, there is a similar blurring of the boundary between past and present. In some of the works under discussion, this blurring takes place within the space of cartographic visualisations, or passages of text that resemble cartographic processes. Likewise, Silverman's observation that 'artistic works may be more suited than historical or sociological method' to demonstrating the interplay of the diverse times and sites of memory is of great significance here, and recalls some of the debates around aestheticization that I outlined in the introduction; each of the works under discussion is, of course, an example of an artistic creation.

In a similar vein, Michael Rothberg's notion of 'multidirectional memory' is worth briefly mentioning here as a further example of a concept that investigates mnemonic practices as they exist across the boundaries of nation states and cultures. 'Multidirectional memory' was intended to function

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[95] Max Silverman, *Palimpsestic Memory: The Holocaust and Colonialism in French and Francophone Fiction and Film* (New York: Berghahn, 2013), p.3.
[96] *Ibid*, p.4, emphasis added.
[97] *Ibid*, p.29.

as a rebuttal to the notion of public or collective memory-work as a competitive 'zero-sum' game between different social groups; instead Rothberg seeks to highlight the interconnectedness and interactions between different histories.[98] This bears particular relevance to those works analysed here in which Holocaust memory brushes up against the remembrance of other historical events – such a situation is particularly true of the works of W.G. Sebald. Further to this, and on a similar note, Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider's work on 'cosmopolitan' memory cultures in *The Holocaust and Memory in the Global Age*, will also be of some relevance. They suggest that, traditionally, collective memories – particularly on a national scale – have acted as a 'bulwark against encroaching globalization,'[99] but that 'this container [the nation state] is in the process of slowly being cracked.'[100] In the modern era they suggest that 'cosmopolitan' memory cultures are emerging (or have emerged), whereby 'cosmopolitanism refers to a process of "internal globalization" through which global concerns become part of [the] local experiences of an increasing number of people.'[101] With respect to the Holocaust, the authors note that it represents 'a paradigmatic case for the relationship of memory and modernity,' and that 'the abstract nature of "good and evil" that symbolizes the Holocaust' contributes significantly to its development into an equally-paradigmatic 'cosmopolitan memory' of the kind they describe.[102] They continue: 'when we talk about Holocaust memories becoming more cosmopolitan...we are not suggesting that they are now "universal" in the sense that one unified interpretation exists'; rather, Levy and Sznaider seek to illustrate how 'meanings of the Holocaust emerge through encounters between the global and the local.'[103] This is a dynamic that is often in evidence within the works under discussion, in which we see a blend of global and local concerns. Clearly, the question of global and local interaction is a question of spatial scale, of the kind discussed by Cole, Giordano, and

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[98] Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in an Age of Decolonization* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), p.3.
[99] Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider, *The Holocaust and Memory in the Global Age* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006), p.1.
[100] *Ibid*, p.2.
[101] *Ibid.*
[102] *Ibid*, p.4.
[103] *Ibid.*

Knowles in *Geographies of the Holocaust*; there is an affinity, then, between Levy and Sznaider's notion of 'cosmopolitan memory' and questions relating to space, and in the case of the texts under discussion here, the different scales of global and local are often illustrated through the medium of cartography.

Finally, and with respect to the texts under discussion here as material mnemonic artefacts in their own right, I would like to make brief mention of Ann Rigney's notion of literature as a form of 'portable monument.' Conceptually, this is an idea that bears some relation to Rigney and Erll's observation that literature can act as a vessel for historical memory, which I referred to briefly in the introduction. In a separate, slightly earlier article, however, Rigney introduces the notion that works of (historical) literature can be considered as '"portable" monuments which can be carried over into new situations.'[104] 'The idea that texts resemble monuments,' notes Rigney, 'is very old. Like statues or gravestones, textual artefacts have a fixed character which allows them to play a role in recalling some person or event of yore and in bearing witness to them'; such texts, however, 'are not [fixed to a particular site] and hence they may be recycled among different groups of readers living in different parts of the globe and at different historical moments.'[105] Each work under discussion in this thesis encapsulates multiple temporal moments, since all are concerned with events of the Holocaust and their contemporary resonance – how they are remembered, in other words; as a consequence, their status as material artefacts – 'portable monuments' – allows for the circulation of the particular rendering of history and memory proffered by each author. While the 'portable' status of the texts themselves is perhaps not of central concern to the readings I offer of each, it is nonetheless an important factor to consider; the nature of the memory and history on display (particularly in the form of cartography, as per my focus) is intimately connected to the circulation of these texts, given that this is the information that is received by readers. In other words, while I am predominantly concerned with analysing the *content* of these works, their 'portable' nature constitutes their very *raison d'être*. This matters because, in Rigney's assessment, 'literary texts may have a role to play

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[104] Ann Rigney, 'Portable Monuments: Literature, Cultural Memory, and the Case of Jeanie Deans', *Poetics Today,* 25:2 (2004), 361-396 (p.383).
[105] *Ibid.*

in drawing interest in histories which are *not* one's own, in the history of groups with which one has hitherto not identified.'[106] Naturally, this remains precisely the goal of many works of Holocaust culture.

There are a number of other works in a similar vein that I might have mentioned here, some of which will emerge as the chapters of this thesis unfold; the above are some of the most significant works for this thesis which treat memory as a mobile phenomenon, however. Crucially – in relation to the cartographic theory introduced above – the spatial orientation of these notions of memory is of great importance. In a number of ways, there is a particularly strong affinity between the notion of 'fluid cartography' and the ideas discussed here; it is worth revisiting Gil and Duarte's definition at this point, and the notion that fluid cartographies capture

> the fluid disengagement of the modern world, the *diasporic displacements* and the complex changes that mark the transitive and transitional reality of modernity...A fluid cartography, moreover, traces *connections in contact zones* and perceives the limits that mark territory not as borders but rather...*borderlands*...A fluid cartography, then, perceives the territory as an emerging surface where *charting is equated with inscribing and translating, where different identities, times and locations come together*.[107]

When we consider the notion of fluid cartography as an act of 'charting...different identities, times and locations,' there is a clear interconnection with the ideas of Silverman, Levy and Sznaider, and Rothberg in particular, in the sense that these authors seek to highlight the sometimes-symbiotic interaction of different cultural memories; the same could be said of the notion that fluid cartography seeks to delineate 'connections in contact zones' and the space of the borderland. Such ideas are applicable to the other

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[106] *Ibid*, p.389.
[107] Gil and Duarte, p.3, emphases added.

theories of memory discussed here, too, though perhaps not so neatly. Likewise, with respect to the idea of 'diasporic displacements,' there is an echo of Erll's notion of travelling memory, and perhaps Levy and Sznaider's 'cosmopolitan memory' – such displacements inevitably involve movement (and hence, travelling memory, in a variety of the senses expressed by Erll), and the very notion of diasporic displacement would seem to suggest an interdependence of global and local concerns, given that significant global migrations tend to have their roots in particular (local or regional) events, such as the Holocaust, nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century pogroms in Tsarist Russia, the great Irish famine of the nineteenth century, and the current war in Syria, to name but a handful of examples. Diasporic communities, we might conclude, may have contributed in a significant way to the 'cracking' of the container of national memory described by Levy and Sznaider, thereby driving the globalization of the memory of particular events; similarly, it is entirely reasonable to assume, too, that such communities engage in memory-work that encompasses the local or regional level of their places of origin, alongside a novel status as a globally-mobile group. In all of this, the crucial point rests upon the notion of fluidity – a characteristic that is shared by both the theories of memory and some of the theories of cartography discussed here. This is particularly true of the notion of 'fluid cartography,' though similar arguments might be made in relation to 'countermapping' (for instance), which also tends to encompass cross-cultural encounters. We are dealing here with concepts that treat both memory and cartography in an inherently flexible way, and that seek to trace interconnection, movement, transition, and blurred boundaries. Fluid conceptualisations of space and cartography are a highly adept tool to combine with theories that treat memory in a similar fashion – fluid maps for fluid memories.

2.4. Memory, mediated

Huyssen, in his work *Twilight Memories*, notes that 'the issue of media is central to the way we live structures of temporality in our culture,' and in this regard a further connection between all of the works under discussion here is

the fact that each represents a particular form of *mediation* with respect to the events (and memory) of the Holocaust.[108] Indeed, later, in *Present Pasts*, Huyssen notes that 'memory culture fulfils an important function in the current transformation of temporal experience in the wake of new media's impact on human perception and sensibility,'[109] and that academic '"mnemohistory," memory and musealization,' have been perceived as insurance against an ever-present threat of 'obsolescence and disappearance.'[110] In the case of the graphic novels under discussion, they tend to present the personal or familial memories of the author-protagonists, while in the works of W.G. Sebald the histories and memories of certain places and groups, along with the more-or-less fictional memories of the narrator-protagonist are transposed into literary form. In the case of Gansterer, meanwhile, artefacts of memory (specifically, letters from the Holocaust era) are re-mediated into the form of a cartographic artwork.[111] In all cases, the abstractions and vagaries of memory and history are codified and transmuted into the specific vessels represented by each of the different artistic forms on display – they are *mediated* (and sometimes *re-mediated*), in other words. This is an important point to consider; Richard Crownshaw, in his work *The Afterlife of Holocaust Memory in Contemporary Literature and Culture*, suggests that, to some extent, '[t]he memory of memory studies has been stripped of mediation,' and warns that 'if memory texts are read as unmediated reflections of the process of memory, then questions of reception are ignored. Texts may be read differently than intended by their authors or authorising institutions and discourses, or not read at all as significant to memory.'[112] In a similar vein, Huyssen notes that 'even if the Holocaust has been endlessly

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[108] Huyssen, *Twilight Memories*, p.6

[109] Andreas Huyssen, *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), p.31.

[110] *Ibid*, p.33.

[111] 'Re-mediation' here refers to the notion of transferring a text from one form (e.g. a novel) into another (such as a film); see: Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (Cambridge: MIT University Press, 1999). This is the sense in which the term is used by Dagmar Brunow in her work *Remediating Cultural Memory*. While Brunow employs the term 'remediation' in an unhyphenated form, I have chosen to add a hyphen here in order to avoid confusion with remediation in the sense of a remedy, or 'remedial' action.

[112] Richard Crownshaw, *The Afterlife of Holocaust Memory in Contemporary Literature and Culture* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p.64.

commodified [i.e. through mediation], that does not mean that each and every commodification inevitably banalizes it as a historical event'; rather, 'the specific strategies of representation and commodification and…the context in which they are staged' are of crucial import in assessing any such representation.[113] None of the texts under analysis here can be considered an unmediated reflection of the process of memory, and nor should they be. Indeed, even *within* each text, such (re-)mediation often incorporates the use of cartography as an additional layer of the process, of sorts, whereby mnemonic content is refigured in cartographic form within a text that is already itself a (re-)mediation of a particular set of memories.

Within Astrid Erll's five 'dimensions' of travelling memory, we have already seen one example of a concept of mnemonic mediation, in the form of her 'media' dimension. This, Erll tells us, denotes the specific means by which memory is represented in a textual or discursive fashion, be that through novelistic depiction, visual art, film, or any other cultural form.[114] In essence, this dimension of Erll's theory designates the means by which memory travels from a state akin to the Assmann's 'communicative memory' – a kind of uncodified form existing only in its own perpetuation – into a mediated iteration that, in some ways, represents the Assmann's more specific definition of 'Cultural Memory.' This is a situation that pertains to each of the works under discussion here, since in every case the memory of the Holocaust has 'travelled' into a particular artistic form, thereby fixing it for posterity; in some texts, for instance, we see the recording of familial memories, while in others certain aspects of Holocaust history are incorporated into a text that is concerned with tracing the personal memories of a protagonist. In each case, *memory has become media.* Cartography, in this sense, sits as one device among many by which this process occurs.

It is also worth briefly mentioning here the work of Dagmar Brunow who, in her book *Remediating Transcultural Memory*, presents documentary filmmaking as a particular variety of archival practice, one which is informed by the specific characteristics of the documentary-filmic form. She observes that, '[t]he role of media in the construction of memory…needs to be

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[113] Huyssen, *Present Pasts*, p.29.
[114] Erll, 'Travelling Memory', pp.12-13.

reconsidered: from being regarded as an "outlet" of memory, as an externalization, to acknowledging cultural memory as inextricably linked to its specific media forms.'[115] This is a point that is of significant relevance to all of the works under discussion here and, particularly, in their relationship to the use of maps and practices of mapping within them; the graphic novels, for example, carry an inherent potential – given their verbal-visual form – to *produce* or *reproduce* maps in image form; the same could be said of the novels of W.G. Sebald, given the author's frequent use of images (particularly in *Austerlitz*), but this potential is limited by the predominantly written form of the novel, at least when compared with the comics texts; as such I argue that Sebald's work, more often than not, engages in a form of narrative that is akin to a process of *mapping*.

One further, more specific point raised by Brunow is of relevance here, too. In this work she introduces the possibility that certain acts of 'remediating' memory – i.e. transplanting memory work from one cultural form into another, such as from an archive into a documentary film, or from a novel into a graphic novel – can function as expressions of 'counter [memory],' whereby such mnemonic expressions 'challenge the hegemonic master narrative' that surrounds a given event or history.[116] This carries significant echoes of the notion of 'countermapping' (and perhaps, too, 'fluid cartography'), and I would argue that it is, in some ways, evident in all of the texts analysed here. In Sebald's novels, for instance, we can discern a reaction to linear spatial and temporal conceptions of history; in Miriam Katin's memoir *Letting It Go*, we see the author-protagonist struggling against a long-held perception of the irredeemable terror of Central and Eastern Europe, fostered by her lengthy diasporic exile from her home continent; in Jérémie Dres's *We Won't See Auschwitz*, by contrast, we see the author attempt to redeem Poland's Jewish history in the face of its historiographical rendering as the literal and figurative centre of the Nazis' programme of mass murder. Brunow sounds a note of caution, however, when she argues that the 'notion of counter practice is not unproblematic,' owing to its 'inherent binarism and risk of essentialism.'[117]

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[115] Dagmar Brunow, *Remediating Transcultural Memory Documentary Filmmaking as Archival Intervention* (Berlin: DeGruyter, 2015), p.4.
[116] *Ibid*, p.9.
[117] *Ibid*, p.9

'Non-official memory,' she continues, 'is not always more emancipatory than official memories.'[118] In the case of 'official' and 'non-official' memory, Brunow argues, the 'dichotomy' between them runs the risk of 'hegemonic discourses [influencing] and [reworking]...collective memory.'[119] Nonetheless, when taken alongside Brunow's focus on the interconnection of memory and media (particularly in its re-mediation), this is a valuable insight. Once again, cartography can be viewed, in these terms, as a further layer of (re-)mediation; Brunow's thought is particularly useful in highlighting the ways in which maps – as a specific media form – interact with the mnemonic content of these works.

This, really, is the crucial point to emphasise here, and the one with which to close this discussion of memory and its mediation. The use of maps within the texts functions in a similar fashion to the broader process of (re-)mediating memory; spatially-focused memories and spatially-oriented historical information are transplanted into cartographic form in all cases. In this way, the maps within these texts function, in essence, as one layer of a larger and more complex (re-)mediation of the memory of the Holocaust.

2.5. On memories personal and familial

Given the circulation of the texts analysed in this thesis as mnemonic artefacts in their own right, we can certainly view each as an example of cultural or collective memory in many of the senses expressed above; they are, in each case, memory expressed for the consumption of anonymous readers (or viewers, in Gansterer's case). Nonetheless, in each of the texts under discussion there is also a significant element of the *personal, intimate* nature of memory on display, and indeed in many cases the very genesis of the text is to be found in precisely these kind of relationships to the past. This fact returns us to the very earliest iteration of 'memory studies'; we might recall Erll's paraphrasing of Halbwachs's assertion that '[c]ollective and individual

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[118] *Ibid*, p.10.
[119] *Ibid*, p.11.

memory are...mutually dependent.'[120] This returns us, too, to the notion of 'communicative memory' as it is lain out by the Assmanns in various works on the topic. It is important to remember the crucial question of mediation here, and particularly Crownshaw's warning against decontextualizing the media of memory. No text under discussion here should be taken as a straightforward reproduction of the contents or processes of memory – no matter how intimate they may at times be – but in investigating such factors as familial and personal memory, in conjunction with those outlined above, we can begin to garner a much richer understanding of the contents of each text, and (in some cases) the contexts which led to their production.

Anne Whitehead's *Memory* is predominantly concerned with advancing the argument that 'the current memory boom [is] simply the latest of a series of preoccupations with memory which have punctuated Western culture';[121] she argues for an understanding of memory as a 'historically conditioned' phenomenon (i.e. one that 'bears...the stamp of its own time and culture') which yet remains a concern that has been of great significance near-continuously across the span of human history.[122] As such, Whitehead presents a long-view of the history of the concept of memory, and discusses a range of phenomena, including ancient mnemonic arts (*ars memoriae*), collective memory, individual memory and identity, and traumatic memory. On the topic of *collective* memory (and in some respects harking back to Halbwachs's assertion of the interdependence of collective and individual memory), Whitehead argues that 'collective remembering is more effective in closely tied social groups or networks.'[123] According to her astute analysis, 'there are a range of models of what constitutes the collective, which posit varying distances in the relation between the self and others'; in Whitehead's estimation, 'close relations and affective bonds, with people who count for us, operate to some extent between individual and collective memory.'[124] This, then, accounts for her assessment that more tightly-knit groupings of individuals account for a more effective dynamic of collective memory.

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[120] Erll, *Memory in Culture*, p.16.
[121] Whitehead, p.3.
[122] *Ibid*, p.4.
[123] *Ibid*, p.8.
[124] *Ibid*, p.8.

In my own interpretation of Whitehead's analysis, this explanation brings to mind a kind of spectrum, one based on group size and closeness, and which ranges from the lone individual on the one hand to the large-scale groupings of the national or supranational (for instance) on the other. Whitehead's analysis, in other words, demonstrates clearly that there is not necessarily a definitive cut-off point between individual and collective memory, and that in fact the issue is rather more blurred when it comes to the question of smaller-scale – particularly, intimate – groupings of people. In the case of the texts under discussion in this thesis, there are a number of examples in which this spectral dynamic is clearly illustrated; in the case of the three graphic novels, for example, we see a combination of individual memory (in the form of the author-protagonists of each text), small-group memories (particularly, families), and large-scale memory work (in the form of the texts themselves, as memory-media with a wide circulation). In fact, Whitehead notes that 'autobiography constitutes an important art of memory,' and in all three of these cases elements of autobiography are present.[125] With respect to the maps within all of the texts under discussion, their relation to different aspects of this scale – whether they relate most closely to personal, familial, or collective memory, in other words – varies between (and indeed, within) each work. In some cases, we see maps that are concerned primarily with – for instance – more general questions of memory *per se*, while in others we see maps that chart specific aspects of family history, or even personal, individual identity. Simply put, this is another way in which the maps carry echoes of the processes of memory that animate each text.

It would be remiss to enter into a discussion on the topic of familial memory without reference to the work of Marianne Hirsch. Hirsch's concept of 'postmemory' is certainly one of the most well-known theories to emerge from the field of memory studies, and is one that has been adopted widely in a variety of academic disciplines. Broadly, postmemory addresses the intergenerational transmission of trauma, and is concerned with delineating the manner by which traumatic memories are passed to a second (and even, third) generation who did not experience the originary events. In her book *The*

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[125] *Ibid*, p.10.

Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture after the Holocaust,
Hirsch summarises her theory in the following manner:

> "Postmemory" describes the relationship that the
> "generation after" bears to the personal, collective, and
> cultural trauma of those who came before – to stories
> they "remember" only by means of the stories, images,
> and behaviours among which they grew
> up...Postmemory's connection to the past is thus actually
> mediated not by recall but by imaginative investment,
> projection, and creation.[126]

As this thesis progresses, there will be a number of occasions at which Hirsch's
notion of postmemory comes to the fore. This is perhaps particularly true of
the graphic novels under discussion, each of which tackles memories
expressed within the space of the family.

For now, however, I would like to introduce one final, closely-related
work of scholarship – namely, Brett Ashley Kaplan's book, *Landscapes of
Holocaust Postmemory*. Kaplan's work in this monograph represents a key
critical source for this thesis, given that it seeks to investigate the interaction
of postmemory with a number of spaces that are of significance to the
unfolding of the Holocaust over time; naturally, given the dual focus of this
work on memory and mapping, there is a strong affinity with Kaplan's critique
and my own readings of the texts under discussion. This is not to erase the
difference between maps and landscapes as distinct facets of spatiality; rather,
it is in the intersection of (post)memory and space that the relation lies. Kaplan
summarises her focus as being the following phenomenon: 'the continued
presence of the Holocaust in the memory of its survivors and the
postmemories of successive generations who have overlaid the contemporary
landscape with echoes of the past.'[127] She makes the shrewd observation, too,
that '[t]he concrete existence of spaces where events associated with the Nazi

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[126] Marianne Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture
after the Holocaust* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), p.10.
[127] Brett Ashley Kaplan, *Landscapes of Holocaust Postmemory* (New York:
Routledge, 2011), p.6.

regime and its atrocities happened forces us to grapple with how time affects trauma, with how memory embeds in space.'[128] This is, in part, a significant concern for this thesis, too. In particular, the notion of the embedding of memory within particular spaces is here traced through the uses of cartography employed by the various authors in question. 'The landscape of Holocaust postmemory,' notes Kaplan, 'forever shifts and changes shape'; how, then, do authors who seek to orient Holocaust memory within specific spaces attempt to chart the vagaries of both memory and space itself through the form of cartography?[129]

To conclude, I would like to briefly return to the work of Anne Whitehead, in order to introduce some of her thoughts on the connections between space and memory. This is, according to Whitehead, a connection with a long tradition; she notes both 'the important role played by place in early-modern conceptions of memory'[130] and '[t]he emphasis on place in contemporary work in collective memory' which in turn 'recalls the central position that place occupied in Romantic memory.'[131] Indeed, ancient *ars memoriae* are, in some cases, spatially-oriented, such as the particular mnemonic technique whereby users recall information by imagining symbols placed in a familiar space such as their own house. In the Latin *memor* (mindful) and *mens* (mind), she identifies a 'bias towards mental processes of remembering in the very etymology of the language we use,' yet we know that much memory-work is also sensual, textual, material, digital, or spatial, as evidenced by the works under discussion here.[132] 'There is a strong affiliation between memory and space,' notes Whitehead, so – with respect to this thesis – I would repeat the question: why have there been so few attempts to understand how people remember in conjunction with the use of maps?[133]

In the above chapter I have outlined, in rather broad terms, the theoretical basis for the following 'mnemocartographic' study. In some cases I have explicitly highlighted the specific connections between different, yet

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[128] *Ibid*, p.3.
[129] *Ibid*, p.35.
[130] Whitehead, p.124.
[131] *Ibid*, p.125.
[132] *Ibid*, p.4
[133] *Ibid*, p.10.

affinitive theories of memory and cartography, such as the similarities between (for example) Max Silverman's 'palimpsestic memory' and the notion of 'fluid cartography,' or the fact that the maps within these texts in many cases represent an additional layer to the mediation of memory therein. In broad terms, however, the connection between the two strands of academic enquiry outlined here can be best understood in terms of their shared flexibility. For example, just as the majority of the studies of memory discussed here have moved away from a somewhat-static conception of memory as neatly contained within the confines of a nation-state, the cartographic works I have introduced conceive of maps in ways that are vastly different to previous understandings of maps as static, objective texts. Superficially, it is possible to conceive of such innovations as having arisen from postmodern theory, ever-increasing globalisation, and the widespread mediatisation of the modern era, or perhaps some combination of these and other factors; in any case, both maps and memory, thanks to theoretical innovations in each field, can now be conceived of as, in some senses, 'ontogenetic' – always-becoming. Neither is simply fixed or static. Memory and mapping can therefore – at least in these terms – be considered well-suited partners in the endeavour to understand the relationship between space and memory. The specific manner in which this relationship operates in practice will be the primary concern of the following chapters.

3. *Introduction:*

(Comic) Arts of Memory:

Mapping Family Histories of the Holocaust in the Graphic Novels of Miriam Katin, Amy Kurzweil, and Jérémie Dres

I think [Will] Eisner was unique in feeling from the start that comic books were not necessarily this despised, bastard, crappy, low-brow kind of art form, and that there was a potential for real art.

– Michael Chabon

In an article for the *New York Times*, published in June 1989 and titled 'Art and the Holocaust: Trivializing Memory,' Elie Wiesel warns that '[w]e are, in fact, living through a period of general de-sanctification of the Holocaust.'[1] Wiesel lists a wide array of then-recent cultural productions that address the topic of the Nazi genocide of the Jews, including *Sophie's Choice*, Joshua Sobel's play *Ghetto*, the television drama *Holocaust*, and *The Night Porter*, among others, as egregious examples of what he terms 'cheap and simplistic melodramas.'[2] Later, he appears (albeit implicitly) to draw a connection between such works and undeniably contemptible figures such as Holocaust revisionists and anti-Semites, thereby suggesting that such cultural production is the first step on the road to oblivion.[3] While Wiesel does not mention comics specifically here, one would have to assume that he would have likely placed Art Spiegelman's seminal work *Maus* (which was contemporary to the article, given that it was originally published in three

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[1] Elie Wiesel, 'Art and the Holocaust: Trivializing Memory', *New York Times* [online], June 11 1989<https://www.nytimes.com/1989/06/11/movies/art-and-the-holocaust-trivializing-memory.html> [accessed August 25, 2020], para. 11.
[2] *Ibid*, para.5.
[3] *Ibid*, para.11.

parts between 1980 and 1991) in the same category.[4] 'Perhaps the most controversial form of Holocaust representation,' notes Joanne Pettitt, 'is that of the comic book, owing at least in part to its perceived status as a lower form of artistic expression';[5] this is perhaps particularly true of *Maus* given that, as Michael Rothberg notes, 'Spiegelman *transgresses the sacredness of Auschwitz* by depicting in comic strip images his survivor father's suffering and by *refusing to sentimentalize the survivor*.'[6] Despite running the risk of 'de-sanctifying' the event, however, the influence of *Maus* cannot be overstated in the context of representing the Holocaust. It has proven to be an enduringly-popular work of Holocaust memory, it remains the only graphic novel to date to have been awarded a Pulitzer prize, and, indeed, Marianne Hirsch notes that she 'first came to [the notion of postmemory] in reading…*Maus*.'[7] Perhaps most significantly, however, Spiegelman's *Maus* has probably done more than any other work – with the possible exception of Will Eisner's *A Contract with God*, which is widely regarded as the first 'graphic novel'[8] – to reveal the potential of the comics form as 'uniquely suited to the quintessential narrative themes of the Jewish imagination: mobility, flight, adaptation, transformation, disguise, metamorphosis.'[9] Spiegelman was the first to tread a path which others were quick to follow; in its wake, an abundance of graphic novels and comics emerged which sought to tackle similar topics. I am not concerned with analysing *Maus* over the following pages; this work has been dealt with extensively within the critical literature on both comics and the Holocaust, and it was my intention here to address a less-familiar collection of works within the limited space available to me. Nonetheless, these texts are, in effect, more recent examples of works in the tradition of *Maus*, and there are

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[4] See: Spiegelman, *The Complete Maus*.

[5] Joanne Pettitt, 'Memory and genocide in graphic novels: The Holocaust as paradigm', *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics*, 9:2 (2018), 173-186 (p.2).

[6] Michael Rothberg, '"We Were Talking Jewish": Art Spiegelman's *Maus* as "Holocaust" Production', *Contemporary Literature*, 35:4 (1994), 661-687 (p.665), emphases added.

[7] Marianne Hirsch, 'Surviving Images: Holocaust Photographs and the Work of Postmemory', *The Yale Journal of Criticism*, 14:1 (2001), 5-37 (p.9).

[8] Hillary Chute, 'Comics as Literature? Reading Graphic Narrative', *PMLA*, 123:2 (2008), 452-465 (p.453).

[9] Samantha Baskind and Ranen Omer-Sherman, 'Introduction', in *The Jewish Graphic Novel*, ed. by Samantha Baskind and Ranen Omer-Sherman (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2010), pp.xv-xxvii (p.xvii).

a number of moments at which references to Spiegelman's text emerge that suggest the strength of its continued relevance.

In the following three chapters, then, I will consider works of predominantly *visual* Holocaust culture – graphic novels – that present their readers and viewers with somewhat unconventional forms and processes of mapping. Usually, given the pictoral form in which they occur, the maps depicted are themselves *visual* examples of cartography; in this regard at least, they are maps in a conventional (or literal) sense, in that they follow (to varying degrees) the conventions of cartography in their depictions of space. Particularly I will argue that, in a variety of ways, the cartographic interventions within these works can be broadly grouped as examples of 'countermapping,' given that they organise specific geographies (as per Joshua P. Ewalt's description of countermapping), but they do not only do so 'around themes of injustice, oppression, or political resistance.'[10] Whilst these works do occasionally confront such themes, it is often the case that the texts under discussion here instead organise specific geographies around individual and familial memory, questions of return to sites of Holocaust memory and pre-war Jewish life, notions of experience (both of the Holocaust itself and of coming to terms with the event), and the mnemonic landscapes of contemporary cities.

Clearly, the morphology of the term '*counter*mapping' calls out for a confrontation, of sorts, between an originary map or process of mapping, and a later intervention that responds to the original (or '[maps] back,' in the terms employed by Matthew Sparke).[11] In the case of each text discussed here – and as intimated by the list of themes in the previous paragraph – the circumstances against which each author '[maps] back' vary quite widely; in some cases, for instance, we see a gradual shift in individual knowledge and perception, while in another case we see specific mnemonic interventions which see maps engaged in direct conversation with questions of memory.[12] What is common to each example, however, is a shift away from the use of

[10] Ewalt, p.333.
[11] Sparke, p.344.
[12] *Ibid.*

maps as a vessel for control and instead toward the creation of maps that act as sites of increased understanding.

In this sense, we might recall Ewalt's assertion that countermapping (in the context of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) project which he discusses) involves 'the process of interactively mapping the virtual earth [as] an act of place-framing, a process by which space is transformed to place so as to motivate action on the part of those constituencies potentially sympathetic to the organization's goals'; in each text under discussion here, the maps included within them offer readers and viewers an altered perception of certain issues surrounding the memory and commemoration of the Holocaust, albeit in the context of creative, often more personalised or individuated responses to the need to remember than the institutionally-led undertaking discussed by Ewalt.[13] Accordingly, his assertion that countermapping in the case of the USHMM constructs a 'motivated subject characterized by a distanced empathy' is not necessarily true of the works under consideration here; given the often highly personal context within which the maps in these texts exist, the empathy they seek to engender is intimate, rather than distanced, while the question of 'motivation' remains unclear – these works, after all, were not typically created to advocate for a particular cause, as was the case with the USHMM project discussed by Ewalt.[14] Rather – and in accordance with the notion of a shift from control to understanding – these texts also conform to the concept of 'fluid cartography,' as outlined by Isabel Capeloa Gil and João Ferreira Duarte. As we will see, in each example (to varying degrees) the notions of 'fluid disengagements,' 'diasporic displacements,' and the 'transitive and transitional reality of modernity,' along with 'contact zones' and 'borderlands,' all come to the fore in a variety of ways.[15]

Across the following pages I will demonstrate how the character of each text – their creative aims and scope, in other words – comes to determine the nature of the maps they incorporate, thereby revealing these authors' processes of mapping to be flexible, and responsive to the lived realities of a

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[13] Ewalt, p.335.
[14] *Ibid.*
[15] Gil and Duarte, p.3.

particularly weighty mnemonic burden. I will begin by discussing Miriam Katin's 2013 work *Letting It Go* in the first chapter, alongside Amy Kurzweil's *Flying Couch* in the second. These comics are similar in the sense that they are profoundly invested in questions of family, and tackle the events of the Holocaust predominantly through this lens; in Katin's case, we see how her direct experience of the event (as a child survivor) comes to resonate within the domestic spaces of her later life, and comes to impact upon her relationship with her adult son; in Kurzweil's work, we see her attempts to establish her own identity as a young Jewish woman in America become entwined with the lives of her mother and grandmother, the latter being a Holocaust survivor who gave birth to the former in a displaced persons camp in Germany. I will demonstrate how maps and mapping assist both authors in navigating their shifting understandings of themselves and the events of the Holocaust, despite the generational differences between them. I will move on to discuss Jérémie Dres's 2011 work *We Won't See Auschwitz* which, like Kurzweil's work, is written from the perspective of a grandchild of a survivor. In this case, the maps drawn by Dres are imbricated in questions of Holocaust tourism in general, the nature of Jewish tourism in Poland in particular, and Polish sites of Jewish history. In this work, maps are fundamental in allowing Dres and his brother – who accompanies him on the trip – the autonomy to decide their own route around Poland, thereby allowing them to avoid the death camps (as they wish) and to chart their own mnemonic pilgrimage around the country. Equally, cartography is similarly fundamental in allowing the brothers to come to a more nuanced understanding of Polish-Jewish history and memory.

Given the above, it is worth highlighting – briefly – the significance of Marianne Hirsch's notion of postmemory to the following chapters; this is owing to the fact that all three works are invested in questions of family, and the variety of perceptions of the Holocaust held by members of different generations. In all cases, we are witness to 'the relationship that the "generation after" bears to the personal, collective, and cultural trauma of those who came before' – indeed, this is even true of Katin's *Letting It Go*;

while the author-protagonist is herself a child-survivor of the Holocaust, we are also privy to the reaction of her son to his mother's trauma.[16]

Owing to constraints of space, it is not my intention to provide a general overview of scholarship in the field of comics studies here, although it will be useful to sketch out (again, briefly) some of the features of the comics form that are salient to the questions of memory and mapping in particular.[17] With regard to the question of the medium's salient properties, the work of Hillary Chute is of particularly keen significance to this thesis, and can be used to offer a succinct overview of such features. Crucially, and particularly with respect to the question of the intersection of personal experience and collective memory, as per some of the material outlined in the previous chapter, two of Chute's major book-length works of comics criticism – *Graphic Women: Life Narrative and Contemporary Comics*, and *Disaster Drawn: Visual Witness, Comics, and Documentary Form* – tackle these different (if related) aspects of the study of memory.

In the earlier of these works, *Graphic Women*, Chute argues strongly for comics as a unique and convincing means of representing personal (often traumatic) histories. She writes: 'Against a valorization of absence and aporia [in traumatic narratives], graphic narrative asserts the value of presence, however complex and contingent,' thereby emphasising the importance of visuality in the representation of such experiences in this form.[18] She notes that '[graphic] narrative establishes…an *expanded idiom of witness*, a manner of testifying that sets a visual language in motion with and against the verbal in order to embody individual and collective experience, to put contingent selves and histories into form.'[19] Such a process occurs, according to Chute, through the formal 'enactment of certain key constellations,' including hybridity and autobiography, the visualisation of trauma, and, crucially,

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[16] Hirsch, *Generation of Postmemory*, p.10.

[17] As a side note, I would suggest that a particularly intriguing aspect of comics scholarship is to be found in the amount of energy that has been expended in the process of comparing writing and reading comics to other phenomena, such as (as we will see) remembering and map-making – the reason for this is unclear, however, and to determine it will not form the basis of my analysis in what follows.

[18] Hillary Chute, *Graphic Women: Life Narrative and Contemporary Comics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), p.2.

[19] *Ibid*, p.3, original emphasis.

'textuality that takes the body seriously' (and here we may be reminded of Tania Rossetto's work on the tactility of maps); each of these factors bears a particular significance for the representation of individual memory, and we see a wide array of examples of such processes at work in the texts discussed here, particularly those of Katin and Kurzweil.[20] Crucially, Chute notes, comics '[unsettle] fixed subjectivity' in their presentation of multiple, fragmented selves across the expanse of frames in a graphic work – selves that the artist-author crafts through the embodied act of drawing.[21]

In addition – and perhaps most significantly with respect to the theories of memory listed in the previous chapter – Chute explicitly aligns the process of remembering with certain fundamental properties of graphic narrative. She suggests that 'comics and the movement, or act, of memory share formal similarities,' particularly with respect to the construction of both through fragmented images, the interweaving of pauses and absences as fundamental aspects of their respective narrative structures, and the central importance of the interaction of word and image in generating meaning.[22] In all of this, the comics form offers, Chute insists, an ideal vessel for the representation of personal narratives of memory; in its 'hybrid [i.e. word-image] and spatial form, comics lends itself to expressing stories…that present and underscore hybrid subjectivities,' as they offer the opportunity to present multiple selves, spaces and temporalities, layered within the same textual space (and there is a strong affinity here with the spatial focus of Silverman's palimpsestic memory).[23] Mnemonic complexity is reflected, too, in other, more specific formal features: word and image 'entwine, but never synthesise';[24] meanwhile, frames (which Chute characterises as 'boxes of time') construct the narrative of graphic texts, yet this narrative is invariably one that is 'threaded through with absence' in the form of narrative 'gutters' – the blank spaces between frames – in which so much meaning is necessarily generated on the part of the reader in order to facilitate narrative progression.[25] One aspect of the hybrid

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[20] *Ibid*, p.4.
[21] *Ibid*, p.5.
[22] *Ibid*, p.4.
[23] *Ibid*, p.5.
[24] *Ibid*.
[25] *Ibid*, p.6.

mnemonic constructions that these three works represent, is cartography; if we are to follow Chute's line of thinking, it would appear that maps constitute one aspect of the texture of memory expressed within these works.

The personal, then, is tackled comprehensively by Chute in *Graphic Women.* The more recent of the works mentioned above, *Disaster Drawn,* offers an expansion upon the notion proposed in her earlier text on life writing – particularly that comics '[which] bear witness to authors' own traumas or to those of others materially retrace inscriptional effacement' – and moves toward the notion of comics as an equally viable vessel for the transmission of witnessing in a more general, larger-scale sense that corresponds in some regards with the question of collective memory.[26] Applying similar lines of thought to those outlined in *Graphic Women,* Chute offers a comprehensive reading of three authors' works that tackle such global-historical events as the Holocaust, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, war in Bosnia, and the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima; each of these works '[intervenes] against a culture of invisibility by taking what [Chute] think[s] of as the risk of representation.'[27] Significantly, she notes that, 'despite the prevailing views of representing trauma after the Holocaust, we see that trauma does not always have to be disappearance,' a statement that echoes her words in *Graphic Women,* and that might equally apply to some of the works under discussion here.[28] Between these two studies, Chute provides a critical framework for the following reading of these comics as – in part – spaces for the representation of individuals at the interface of personal and collective memories of the Holocaust. Indeed, Pettitt makes a similar observation in her article 'Memory and Genocide in Graphic Novels'; she notes:

> comics and graphic novels are ideally suited to articulate
> the   complexities   between   global   and   local
> memories...because they are always engaged with the
> relationship between language (as a signifier for national
> identity) and image, which transcends local knowledge

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[26] Hillary Chute, *Disaster Drawn: Visual Witness, Comics and Documentary Form* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016), p.4.
[27] *Ibid,* p.5.
[28] *Ibid,* p.6.

and allows for accessibility on a more universal level. Of course, this leaves us with questions about 'how universal is an image', or how 'national' is a language; but I would argue that similar issues arise when we look at memory: how global is a memory?[29]

Indeed, in a similar manner to Chute's insistence on the affinity between organic (i.e. cognitive) memory processes, Pettitt goes on to draw a parallel between global memory and the process of meaning-making in comics: 'Meaning is created in graphic novels through the interaction of both forms: text and images; just as in the age of global memory identity is created through the interactions between the local and the global.'[30] This is an observation that neatly encapsulates some of the key concerns of the following chapters: (global) memory, identity, and comics representation. It is perhaps unsurprising that, given the often-confusing morass of information that must necessarily underpin the notion of 'global memory,' maps come into play as a means by which authors seek to clarify and delineate spatially-oriented questions of identity, memory, and Holocaust history.

In formal terms, some of the broader points Chute emphasises about comics – such as the status of comics as an embodied act of representation through drawing, the importance of absence to the narrative structure of graphic texts, the inherent nature of hybridity in comics, and the spatialisation of time, among others – will be of great significance here. In some cases, for example, we see maps of locations that have been reproduced by hand for inclusion within a particular comic, thereby intersecting the embodiment of the medium with the process of map-making in a manner recalling Jason Farman's assertion that 'hand-drawn maps close the ambiguous gap between product and authorship.'[31] Hybridity, too, is a factor that is of clear significance here, given that the presence of cartography within these comics texts represents, in some regards, a dimension of multimediality, and may likewise recall questions surrounding the mediation of memory that were raised in the previous chapter.

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[29] Pettitt, p.2.
[30] *Ibid.*
[31] Farman, p.875.

While I will be focusing on instances in which cartography has been inserted into the narratives under discussion, it is intriguing to note, finally, an article by Giada Peterle, titled 'Comic Book Cartographies,' in which the author seeks to develop a 'cartocritical' framework for investigating comic books, particularly via a reading of their formal properties as strongly akin to processes of map-making. In Peterle's estimation, '[t]he comic book is a map of time which needs to be passed through, traversed and crossed to be deciphered.'[32] As she puts it elsewhere: 'as narratives organized through a spatial grammar, comics appear as an incredibly promising resource to develop 'geocritical' and 'cartocritical' analyses in space-centered literary theory and criticism,' the latter being, in a certain (albeit narrower) sense, very similar to what the present thesis aims to do, too.[33]

Particularly, Peterle emphasises the fragmentation of the medium, much like Chute, when she notes that '[b]oth the comic author, who composes the comic by making spatial decisions, and the reader live in a fragmentary cognitive and embodied spatial experience that is similar to that of…composing and reading a map.'[34] With regard to the similarity she perceives between comics and maps, Peterle remarks that '[b]y alternating reticence and representation and linearity and discontinuity, writing becomes…spatial practice for the construction of sense, and reading becomes a wayfinding experience'; this is a remark that, in many ways, characterises much of the following analysis, not only in the next three chapters on graphic narrative, but more broadly, too.[35] Critically, with respect to the presence of actual maps *within* comics (as opposed to formal similarities between the two mediums) – and in line with much of the cartographic criticism I outlined in the previous chapter – Peterle highlights the ontogenetic nature of maps presented in graphic narratives, and notes their 'emergent' quality as objects characterised by 'performative engagement,' against an interpretation of them as mere 'static objects.'[36] In this same vein, she makes the following perceptive

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[32] Giada Peterle, 'Comic book cartographies: a cartocentred reading of City of Glass, the graphic novel', *Cultural Geographies*, 24:1 (2017), 43-68 (p.50).
[33] *Ibid*, p.44.
[34] *Ibid*, p.45.
[35] *Ibid*, p.49.
[36] *Ibid*, p.45.

remark, with which I will close here: 'through their peculiar spatial language, comic books seem able to *activate* a geographical and mapping experience, rather than simply describe or depict it.'[37] This offers a neat summary of a situation that readers vividly experience in the opening pages of Dres's *We Won't See Auschwitz*, when we observe, in an oscillating fashion, the protagonist struggling with an oversized map of Krakow and images of the map itself; Peterle's remark here, however, can be said to describe the nature of mapping within all of the works under discussion in the following chapters. Particularly, the experience that the maps here capture, rather than merely depict, is that of coming to terms with the spatial realities of Holocaust memory in a globalised world.

3.1. What's in a name?

Before moving on to the chapters proper, I would like to offer one final, short clarifying note regarding terminology. There is much debate within the field of comics studies with respect to the correct application of the terms 'graphic novel,' 'graphic narrative,' and 'comics' (which is regularly used in this context in the often-awkward form of a singular noun – 'comics is,' rather than 'comics are,' for example). In her article 'Reading Comics as Literature,' Chute offers some useful definitions. Of 'comics,' she notes:

> Comics might be defined as a hybrid word-and-image form in which two narrative tracks, one verbal and one visual, register temporality spatially. Comics moves forward in time through the space of the page, through its progressive counter point of presence and absence: packed panels (also called frames) alternating with gutters (empty space). Highly textured in its narrative scaffolding, comics doesn't blend the visual and the verbal or use one simply to illustrate the other but is rather prone to present the two nonsynchronously; a reader of comics not only fills in the gaps between panels

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[37] *Ibid*, p.49.

but also works with the often disjunctive back-and-forth
of reading and looking for meaning.[38]

Entering into this debate is not a concern here, and as such I will use the terms 'graphic narrative' (Chute's preference), 'graphic novel,' and 'comics' more-or-less interchangeably across the pages that follow, much as I have done so far.[39] Nonetheless, Chute's definition offers a useful reminder that the formal properties of the *comics form* can be applied in other contexts, such as short-form narratives, or even individual comics panels, perhaps placing the term 'comics' closer to words such as 'poetry' or 'prose,' while 'graphic narrative' and 'graphic novel' are more analogous to terms such as 'novel,' 'poem,' or 'film,' in that they refer to the type of work being discussed, rather than its formal properties per se.

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[38] Chute, Comics as Literature, p.452.
[39] *Ibid*, p.453.

4.

Mapping Across Generations in Miriam Katin's *Letting It Go*
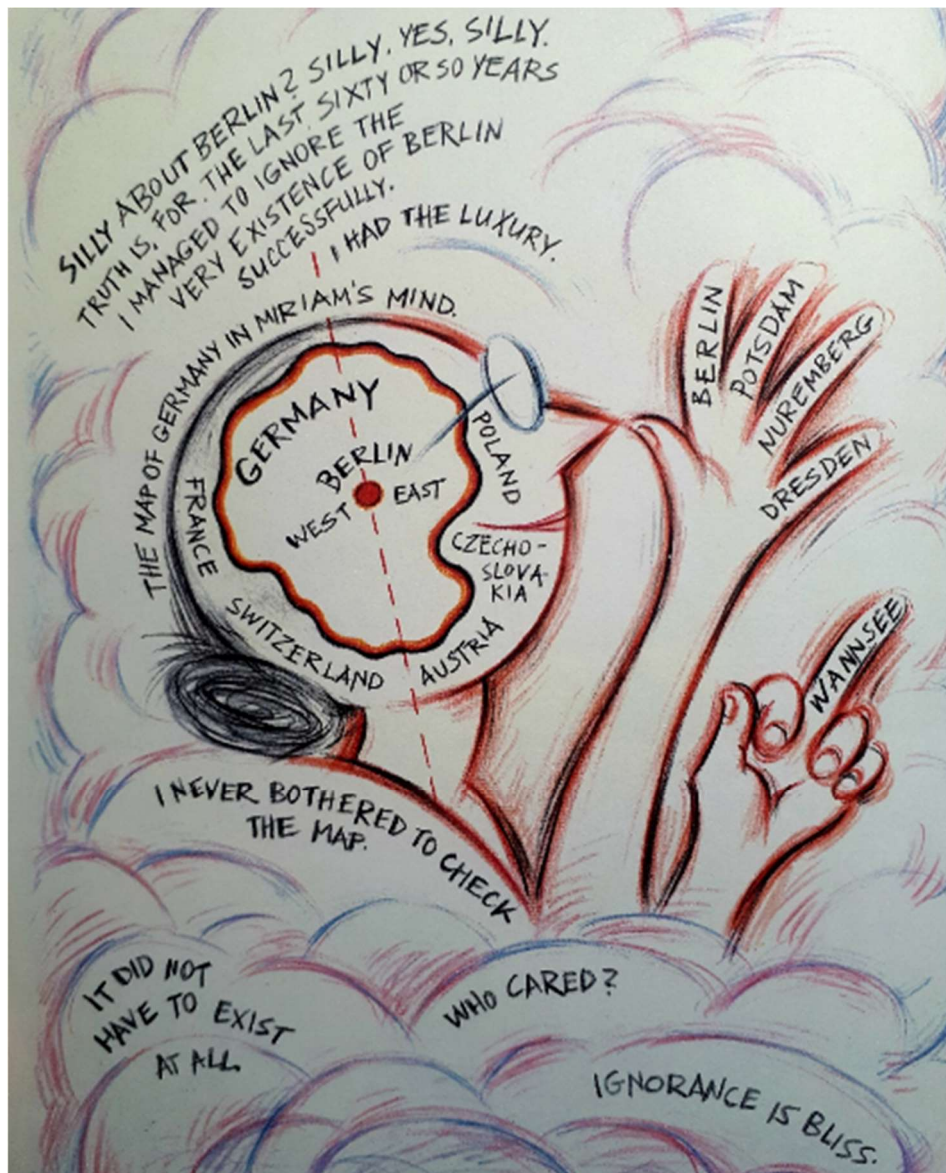
Figure 4.1 - 'The Map of Germany in Miriam's Mind,' Katin, *Letting It Go*, p.46.

Miriam Katin is a New York-based comics author and illustrator of Hungarian origin, who has in the past worked for Nickelodeon, MTV, and the Disney Company.[1] She has authored two graphic memoirs, one of which forms the basis for my analysis here: 2006 saw the publication of *We Are On Our Own*, which was followed in 2013 with the release of *Letting It Go*. It is the latter text upon which I will focus in this chapter. Broadly speaking, both of these works are – in different ways – concerned with the author's personal history as a child survivor of the Holocaust and the echoes of that history throughout her adult life. Her earlier memoir, *We Are On Our Own*, concerns itself with Katin's experiences as a young child – specifically, it describes how she survived the maelstrom of the Holocaust by hiding in the Hungarian countryside with her mother during her early years. By contrast, *Letting It Go* offers the reader a complex investigation into the lasting effects of these traumatic early-life memories, particularly through the lens of her relationship with her adult son, Ilan, whose decision to move to Berlin constitutes the text's central conflict; indeed, Diederik Oostdijk suggests that '[t]his seemingly innocuous move by Ilan, who must be in his late 30s or early 40s at this time, occasions such emotional turmoil for his mother that it can only be understood as her belated response to the Holocaust.'[2] While I would suggest that it is perhaps rather extreme to conclude that the narrative of *Letting It Go* represents such an unambiguous, singular response – we see, after all, moments of intense introspection and reflection from a younger adult version of Katin in her work *We Are On Our Own*, too – I agree without hesitation that the impact of Ilan's decision is momentous, and certainly causes the author-protagonist a great deal of distress. Much of this unease is captured through the use of maps within the text, as Katin attempts to reconcile her own past with her son's future. It should be noted that, since the author represents a version of herself in the text, from this point forward I will refer to Katin in her role as author-illustrator by her surname and in her role as protagonist of the text by her first name, Miriam.

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[1] Miriam Katin, *We Are On Our Own* (Montreal: Drawn & Quarterly, 2006), p.127.
[2] Diedrik Oostdijk, '"Draw yourself out of it": Miriam Katin's graphic metamorphosis of trauma', *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies*, 17:1 (2018), 79-92 (p.82).

There are just three moments within *Letting It Go* at which Katin engages explicitly with cartography, but each is particularly revealing. Within this chapter, I will demonstrate how these moments help to spotlight one of the text's central thematic concerns, which I interpret as a gradual movement away from a relatively ossified form of (lived) experience toward a broader, more nuanced (albeit distanced) understanding of the realities of European life in the twenty-first century; in very broad terms, the text portrays a relaxing of a fixed perspective, which is in some respects appropriate to the title of the work – *Letting It Go*. Given the transnational dynamic within which this shift in perception occurs, it is perhaps to be expected that, at times, maps come to play a vital role in allowing Miriam to organise and assimilate the changing nature of her thoughts; her anxiety and unease are, in fact, spatially-oriented. In the case of *Letting It Go*, the processes of 'countermapping' on display tend to evince a particular, acutely negative form of 'place-framing,' whereby Miriam's childhood experiences (understandably) cloud her perception of contemporary Europe, and particularly the city of Berlin; countries within which the Holocaust took place are – initially, at least – portrayed in unfavourable terms.[3]

With respect to Ewalt's notion of place-framing as a process of transforming space into place, then, we see Katin redraw the map of Europe according to her perception of particular spaces, through which lens we witness their transmutation into specific *places* of unambiguous horror, often through deliberate omission or distortion.[4] Rather than the 'distanced empathy' that Ewalt suggests is engendered by the USHMM Darfur maps, in the case of *Letting It Go* mapping offers the reader a privileged perspective on the interior workings of Miriam's mind (indeed literally at one point, as we see in figure 4.1), particularly at moments in which this perspective is challenged by the divergent opinions of her family and friends. As such, Miriam's maps can be interpreted as countermaps because they 'map back' against the prevailing views of those around her; by implicitly asserting the profound resonance of the author-protagonist's childhood experiences, these maps resist the notion that she should simply let go of the past, at least at first.

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[3] Ewalt, p.334.
[4] *Ibid*, p.335.

They represent Miriam's initial reluctance to engage with a process of coming-to-terms that ultimately concludes in a more nuanced understanding of the world around her. Nonetheless, the fact that these maps exist in self-conscious dialogue with divergent opinions ensures that they simultaneously testify to the shifting of perspective that occurs throughout *Letting It Go*. Indeed, the fact that Miriam engages in such a process recalls Hillary Chute's insistence that 'graphic narrative asserts the value of presence, however complex and contingent'; we will see how, despite often being thousands of miles away in America, mapping allows the protagonist to be *cognitively* present within certain spaces of Europe, as she confronts from afar her troubling memories, before eventually stepping foot on European soil again.[5] Likewise, Chute elsewhere insists on the inherently dialogic nature of the comics medium, and we will see how, in many instances, this is a key factor in Miriam's ability to begin to come to terms with the weight of her mnemonic burden.[6] The text itself becomes, in this sense, a kind of 'portable monument' – to use Rigney's term – to the author-protagonist's own memory.[7]

Of course, given that the text represents the gradual relaxing of a fixed worldview, the maps on display in *Letting It Go* also conform to the notion of 'fluid' cartographies as 'deeply relational' texts that aim 'at understanding instead of controlling'; they are clearly cartographies of the world *as Miriam sees it*, rather than attempts to map the world as it is in reality (bar one example, but even in this case the map in question passes through Katin's own interpretation in a moment of re-mediation).[8] As such the maps are examples of authorial *control* on the part of Katin, but they undoubtedly constitute a gesture toward nuanced understanding in the sense that they outline unflinchingly Miriam's difficulties with her traumatic memories in contradistinction with the apparently-prevailing view of those around her who seem to believe that she should let go of the past – there is room for dialogue and heterogeneous subjectivity around these maps.

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[5] Chute, *Graphic Women*, p.2.
[6] Hillary Chute, '"The Shadow of a Past Time": History and Graphic Representation in *Maus*', *Twentieth-Century Literature*, 52:2 (2006), 199-230 (p.209).
[7] Rigney, p.383.
[8] Gil and Duarte, p.3.

Moreover, I will demonstrate how these works can be viewed as fluid in the sense that they address precisely the 'diasporic displacements,' 'borderlands,' and coming together of 'different identities, times and locations' that Gil and Duarte posit as being so central to the workings of fluid cartography – the author-protagonist is herself a member of a diasporic community, finding herself very much at home in the United States, and within the text Miriam ultimately comes to experience Berlin as a kind of borderland between past and present, and a 'contact zone' within which many different identities come to co-exist. In this regard, we might recall the work on memory conducted by Max Silverman and Michael Rothberg, who both emphasise the productive interaction of diverse (and sometimes disparate) memory-traces in a range of contexts.[9] In the case of Katin's *Letting It Go*, the 'multidirectional' or 'palimpsestic' aspects of the memory on display span the Atlantic, incorporating the Jewish-American diaspora, the contemporary European project, Berlin's (and Germany's) Cold War history, and Holocaust history; in essence, we witness Miriam gradually *letting go* of the notion of memory as 'competitive,' or a 'zero-sum struggle,' to use Rothberg's terms.[10] Moreover, the maps themselves (despite functioning as signifiers of Miriam's early reluctance to accept her son's decision) are necessarily the very products of her diasporic displacement, and likewise represent attempts to assimilate an unwelcome collision of past and present within the Katin family.[11]

Drawing on the work of Rothberg, Dana Mihăilescu explicitly characterises the trajectory of *Letting It Go* as follows: 'Katin's narrative suggests [that] her gradual change of perspective in favour of Berlin is triggered by the city's incorporation of a "multidirectional memory" approach to its traumatic historical past.'[12] Oostdijk goes slightly further in this regard, when he makes the perceptive remark that '[o]nly by literally and figuratively transcending boundaries – mental, cognitive, national – is Katin able to both integrate and let go of the most painful memories of her childhood trauma'; in

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[9] See: Silverman, *Palimpsestic Memory*; Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*.
[10] Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, p.3
[11] Gil and Duarte, p.3.
[12] Dana Mihăilescu, 'Haunting spectres of World War II memories from a transgenerational ethical perspective in Miriam Katin's *We Are on Our Own* and *Letting It Go*', *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics*, 6:2 (2015), 154-171 (p.160).

this sense, we see how a gradual thawing of frozen experience and the loosening of paralysed mnemonic frameworks are central to the process highlighted by the text's title, and I will demonstrate here how the maps drawn by Katin take us to the heart of this shift, particularly as they chart the layout of some of the cognitive boundaries the author-protagonist must overcome.[13]

Finally, before I move on to discuss the maps within *Letting It Go*, it is important to note the particular space within which their production occurs. Elsewhere – specifically, in an article on Amy Kurzweil's graphic novel *Flying Couch*, which I discuss in the next chapter – Mihăilescu has emphasised the importance of the familial transmission of memory in Katin's graphic texts. Discussing Kurzweil's work, Mihăilescu observes that she 'uses a similar approach to that adopted by Miriam Katin who explored the relationships between an adult-survivor-mother, a child-survivor-daughter and a son of the latter in her 2006 and 2010 [*sic*, 2013] graphic narratives *We Are on Our Own* and *Letting It Go*.'[14] Here, Mihăilescu's use of Katin's works as a kind of comparative touchstone for the depiction of the familial transmission of memory suggests the centrality of this process to her works, and this atmosphere of intergenerational exchange profoundly informs the impetus behind Miriam's cartographic interpretations of the world.

Of course, with respect to the question of the intergenerational, familial transmission of memory, there is a clear and obvious connection with the 'postmemory' scholarship of Marianne Hirsch and many others who have followed her lead; here, this is particularly true of the fact that this narrative inextricably connects Miriam's son Ilan to her own Holocaust past. It is important to note at this stage, however, that the precise nature of Katin's relationship to Holocaust *memory* (and indeed that of her protagonist-self) is difficult to determine, given her status as a child survivor. Her earlier work *We Are On Our Own* is decidedly written as if from the perspective of conscious memory, and depicts the years 1944-1945, corresponding with the delayed

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[13] Oostdijk, p.80.
[14] Dana Mihăilescu, 'Mapping transgenerational memory of the Shoah in third generation graphic narratives: on Amy Kurzweil's *Flying Couch* (2016)', *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies*, 17:1 (2018), 93-110 (p.94); this is an error on Mihăilescu's part – *Letting It Go* was *first* published in 2013; no earlier edition of the text exists.

unfolding of the Holocaust in Hungary;[15] in *Letting It Go*, we see a copy of Miriam's birth certificate, dated 1942,[16] and later her mother remarks that a Berlin gallery has made a mistake on a pamphlet advertising an exhibition in which Miriam's work is included, noting that 'they wrote 1941.'[17] Given that she would have been between two and three years of age at the time of the Holocaust in Hungary, at least some conscious memory is certainly possible, although conscious comprehension is most definitely not; as Sue Vice notes of Holocaust child narratives in her work *Children Writing the Holocaust*, 'a historical perspective can only be supplied with hindsight,' and this is precisely the process the author engages with throughout *We Are On Our Own*.[18] As such, I have situated Katin/Miriam as a member of the '1.5 generation' – a term that, in recent times, has often been attached to the children of first-generation immigrants, but which Susan Suleiman has also provocatively applied to child-survivors of the Holocaust; she labels as such those who were 'too young to have had an adult understanding of what was happening to them, but old enough to have *been there* during the Nazi persecution of the Jews.'[19] Given the muddled relationship between childhood memory and later, adult reappraisal, I have consequently (and somewhat tentatively) placed the nature of Katin's/Miriam's memory of the Holocaust as somewhere between memory and postmemory; this is a position that may be supported by the fact that Miriam visits her elderly survivor-mother at a number of moments throughout *Letting It Go*, particularly in order to make sense of her feelings regarding her son's decision to apply for Hungarian citizenship and permanently relocate to Germany. These visits, along with Miriam's wider dismay at the situation, carry echoes, too, of Suleiman's assertion that members of the '1.5 generation' share a certain experience of 'premature bewilderment and helplessness,'

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[15] Katin, *We Are On Our Own*, p.125.

[16] Miriam Katin, *Letting it Go* (Montreal: Drawn & Quarterly, 2013), p.70.

[17] *Ibid*, p.119.

[18] Sue Vice, *Children Writing the Holocaust* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p.8; in this work, Vice comprehensively delineates the devices used by authors attempting to tackle the difficult task of writing the Holocaust from a child's perspective, whether from experience or through fiction – a plethora of these devices are in evidence in *We Are On Our Own*.

[19] Susan Rubin Suleiman, 'The 1.5 Generation: Thinking About Child-Survivors of the Holocaust', *American Imago*, 59:3 (2002) 277-295 (p.277).

which necessarily has consequences for later adult life.[20] In any case, works on postmemory such as those of Hirsch and Brett Ashley Kaplan are of significant relevance here, as are questions of personal memory; indeed, such complex dynamics of familial memory are, at a number of points, precisely what plays out across the surface of the map.

4.1. Mind-maps

Certainly, the most striking map-based intervention throughout the narrative of *Letting It Go* is to be found in the 'map of Germany in Miriam's mind,' which we see in figure 4.1 (p.94, above). Contained within the space of the protagonist's head is a sparse illustration of the outline of Germany as it is situated within the context of its neighbouring countries; the only geographical information included within its borders are its name, a red dot to indicate Berlin, and a line of dashes which anachronistically (and inaccurately) divides the country into 'West' and 'East' through the heart of the capital. Meanwhile, we see a list of four German cities – Berlin, Potsdam, Nuremberg, and Dresden – each occupying one of the four outstretched fingers of Miriam's left hand, while on her right hand we see just one finger raised – her middle finger – upon which rests the name 'Wannsee.' Mihăilescu summarises the import of these specific choices as follows: 'Berlin (the capital of the Reichstag and Hitler's seat of power), Potsdam (where the Reichstag was first established in 1933), Nuremberg (where the racist anti-Jewish laws started to be enforced from 1935 onwards), Dresden (the place of the most significant Nazi war industry companies), and Wannsee (where the Final Solution was officially decided upon in January 1942).'[21] Finally, accompanying this corporeal cartography is the following grumbling observation on Miriam's part (stemming from a preceding argument with her husband), which intermingles haphazardly with the background of clouds: 'Silly about Berlin? Silly, yes, silly. Truth is, for the last sixty or so years I managed to ignore the very existence of Berlin successfully. I had the luxury. I never bothered to check the map. It did

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[20] *Ibid.*

[21] Mihăilescu, 'Mapping…', p.158.

not have to exist at all. Who cared? Ignorance is bliss.'[22] Clearly, then, this illustration represents an example of mental mapping that conveys a lack – or rather, wilful absence – of certain facets of geographical and historical information; by way of example, in the map in Miriam's mind, Berlin sits at the very centre of the country, with the east-west dividing line running directly down the middle and splitting the nation neatly in two – clearly, in reality Berlin is much further toward the east, and West Berlin was entirely surrounded by the German Democratic Republic during the Cold War. Katin makes it quite clear through both illustration and text that this map is not intended as an accurate representation of the German nation and its borders, and is instead an entirely subjective instance of mental mapping; it is an illustration which focuses on places of import to Miriam, particularly as a consequence of her personal history – her memory.

The disgruntled musings that accompany the map ('Silly about Berlin? Silly, yes, silly') imply the conflict that surrounds its inclusion in the text; Katin introduces this interpretation of Germany relatively early in the narrative, at the height of her anxiety around her son's proposed move to its capital. This cognitive creation functions solely to highlight for the reader some of the specific sources of her unease. On the subject of 'mental mapping' – this map being explicitly labelled as such ('the map of Germany in Miriam's mind') – cultural geographer Lars-Erik Edlund notes that, in the broadest terms, 'mental maps reflect what is important to an individual or a community,'[23] and goes on to observe that maps (of all kinds, including those cognised rather than imprinted upon the page) 'can also contain *conscious silences*';[24] Barbara Osóch and Anna Czaplińska, meanwhile, in their study on mental maps of Szczecin, note that '[t]he [mental] image of a city is an outcome of individuals' knowledge, experience, emotions and external stimuli,' and it is the 'image of the city' that these two authors attempted to access by engaging Szczecin schoolchildren in tasks designed to tap into their 'mental maps' of the local

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[22] Katin, *Letting It Go*, p.46; It should be noted that the pages of *Letting It Go* are not numbered, but for the purpose of referencing the text here I have taken as page 1 the first page of the narrative proper, on which Katin discusses 'Knuss' coffee machines.

[23] Lars-Erik Edlund, 'Some reflections on mental maps', *Journal of Cultural Geography*, 35:2 (2018), 274-285 (p.278).

[24] *Ibid*, p.283, emphasis in original.

area (in Miriam's case we are dealing with her image of a country);[25] finally, Dario Musolino, in his study of the mental maps of Italy in the minds of Italian entrepreneurs, asserts that '[t]he term "mental mapping" has taken on different forms and meanings,' including the 'intuitive' notion of a mental map as an 'image of a place that exists in someone's mind,' but also that of 'sketch [maps] drawn by an individual to represent their spatial understanding of an area,' 'cartographic [representations] of [more specific] spatial knowledge,' such as infrastructure or geographical characteristics, and 'cartographic representations of attitudes and preferences that people hold about places.'[26] Much of the above is abundantly evident in 'the map of Germany in Miriam's mind.'

In this regard, we are reminded of the words of Kitchin and Dodge, who – when introducing the notion of cartography as ontogenetic – note that maps are

> of-the-moment, brought into being through practices (embodied, social, technical), always remade every time they are engaged with; mapping is a process of constant reterritorialization. As such, maps are transitory and fleeting, being contingent, relational and context-dependent.[27]

In the case of Miriam's mental map of Germany, we see a creation that is certainly context-dependent, given that it is based on her memories of the Holocaust, and a process of 'reterritorialization,' in the sense that it frames Germany as a place of historical terror accordingly; on the other hand, it represents a spatial understanding that is seldom 'engaged with,' and hence remains *static* and inactive (and inaccurate) rather than 'transitory or fleeting.' When we consider that this map of Germany is based on Miriam's own (post)memories of the Nazi genocide of the Jews, its anachronistic inaccuracy suggests that her Holocaust past is terrain that she has not consciously

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[25] Barbara Osóch and Anna Czaplińska, 'City image based on mental maps — the case study of Szczecin (Poland)', *Miscellanea Geographica*, 23:2 (2019), 111-119 (p.111).

[26] Dario Musolino, 'The mental maps of Italian entrepreneurs: a quali-quantitative approach', *Journal of Cultural Geography*, 35:2 (2018), 251-273 (p.252).

[27] Kitchin and Dodge, p.335.

traversed for some time. Like the Germany of Miriam's imagination, which remains trapped in the Cold War-era, we might also conclude that the protagonist is similarly (and poignantly) immobilised by painful memories, given that she has apparently not revised her perception of Germany for a very long time.

We see for instance – particularly in Katin's striking inclusion of 'Wannsee' on the middle finger of the right hand – a defiant anger toward the Third Reich and the Holocaust that is clearly profound for Miriam, and hence inflects her spatial understanding of the German nation. Mihăilescu suggests that Miriam's attitude toward Germany reflects 'a deeply internalised' – and indeed, profoundly understandable – 'reason on her part to reject any connection with Germany given the destructive effects on her own family during World War II.'[28] This is a state of mind that we observe quite clearly in the text's opening pages, in which Miriam expresses her anxiety that booby-trapped German-manufactured coffee machines (including her own) all over the United States will one day explode and kill millions at the push of a button in Berlin.[29] Such anger and unease is coupled with 'conscious silences,' to use Edlund's term, in the map of Germany in Miriam's mind – the omissions and distortions of fact that characterise it, in other words, which in themselves represent a similar defiance toward the country given their definitive refusal to engage with it (the fact that the only place names included are ones intimately associated with the Nazi regime provides a good example of this studied non-engagement). Mihăilescu describes Miriam's relationship to Germany as one to a 'location frozen in time,' correctly observing that, before the protagonist visits Germany, all the images included in *Letting It Go* that are associated with the country are drawn by Katin in black and white, a device that she employs only to represent the past (her earlier work, *We Are On Our Own*, for instance, is almost entirely sketched out in black and grey tones).[30] As I noted above, I would go a step further, to suggest that this paralysis reflects the fact that Miriam's understanding of her own history is similarly 'frozen in time.' Thus, in addition to Miriam's mental map representing what

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[28] Mihăilescu, 'Haunting…', p.156.
[29] Katin, *Letting It Go*, pp.1-2.
[30] Mihăilescu, 'Haunting…', p.158.

is important to her, Musolino's notion of 'cartographic representations of attitudes and preferences that people hold about places,' as well as Osoch and Czaplińska's assertion of the importance of knowledge, experience, and emotion in mental mapping (given the life experiences of the author-protagonist) are significant here, too.[31]

With respect to the obvious corporeality of Miriam's mental map, Mihăilescu offers two interpretations:

> The fact that Katin chooses to represent these places visually by inscribing them upon her body suggests two possible readings. On the one hand, writing the names of these Holocaust-marked locations on her fingers clearly pinpoints Katin's deeply internalised negative attitudes to these places that function for her at the same level as body organs, beyond her rational control. On the other hand, their association with Katin's smiling, self-satisfied, upward-looking face and empowering disapproving gesture suggests how, prior to her son's announced decision to move to Berlin, she had fixed the meaning of these places once and for all as the theatres of deploying anti-human actions; hence, her disapproving attitude towards these locations culminates in drawing Wannsee on her middle finger.[32]

The map, she goes on to note, is part of a process of '[providing]… readers with necessary initial insight into her beliefs in order to understand her complete shock once her son comes home to tell her of the decision to move to Berlin.'[33] Each of these readings rings true, but the second is more convincing; the notion that Miriam has 'fixed the meaning of these places once and for all' as the locus of 'anti-human actions' is clearly conveyed by their sparse, inaccurate rendering and the protagonist's accompanying musings regarding her steadfast unwillingness to have ever 'check[ed] the map' – Germany appears

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[31] Musolino, p.252.
[32] Mihăilescu, 'Haunting…', pp.158-159.
[33] *Ibid*, p.159.

to have been resolutely and defiantly held at arm's length throughout Miriam's life, with the exception of the information most significant to her (Nuremberg, Wannsee, and so on) which she regards with contempt and disgust (recalling Edlund's assertion of the function and significance of mental mapping as a kind of rendering of the information most important to individuals and communities).[34] That Katin chooses to represent this somewhat abstracted, yet deeply-felt perception on (and within) the *body* (and particularly the head) of her protagonist suggests its profound, continued emotional resonance.

I do not necessarily wholly agree with Mihăilescu's assertion that Miriam's perception of Germany operates at a level beyond rational thought and control – on the contrary, in fact; she is entirely cognizant of her studied avoidance of Germany, suggesting that she is well aware of her state of mind regarding the country and the reasons for it, while her inclusion of her fingers suggests that she is quite consciously *tallying up*, or justifying, the reasons for her hatred. Nonetheless, these feelings are undoubtedly 'deeply internalised.'[35] Further, the fact that Katin has chosen cartography as the medium with which to convey these perceptions at the level of the body suggests (particularly in the anachronistic, erroneous rendering of Germany's political boundaries) their reduction to a kind of fundamental, simplified schema, here distilled into a spare, diagrammatic cartography that is coextensive with the space of the protagonist's body. In Musolino's terms, we might read the 'attitudes and preferences' on display in this mental map as simultaneously being of anger and defiance on the one hand (quite literally), and a desire for avoidance and non-engagement on the other, particularly in the form of the sparse map in Miriam's head itself.[36] Clearly, at this early stage in the text, Katin has taken the conscious decision to illustrate for her readers – via the clear, simplified form of her mental map – the visceral nature of her hatred towards, and mistrust of, Germany, all of which is based on memory.

In all of the above, there is a strong echo of Tania Rossetto's work on the tactility of maps. Rossetto writes that maps constitute 'images *as* environments in which we exist, as well as objects we encounter'; while in this

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[34] Katin, *Letting It Go*, p.46.
[35] Mihăilescu, 'Haunting...', p.158.
[36] Musolino, p.252.

instance Miriam depicts a cognitive creation that represents a space in which she definitively *does not* exist, it nonetheless provides some clues regarding the boundaries of her spatial perception – it would seem that Germany (and indeed, a wider swathe of Europe, as we will see) is considered a no-go zone, a place fixed in her memory by the cryogenic effects of past atrocity.[37] One of the specific, embodied 'spatialities of maps' outlined by Rossetto is 'the spatial context in which we encounter maps,' and this context in the case of Katin's protagonist-self is one that is inflected by the memory of past horror, and experienced at a trans-Atlantic remove, from the safety of New York City.[38] In *Landscapes of Holocaust Postmemory*, Brett Ashley Kaplan notes that '[t]he concrete existence of spaces where events associated with the Nazi regime and its atrocities happened forces us to grapple with how time affects trauma, with how memory embeds in space.'[39] It would seem that, here, a particular *space* has embedded itself in Miriam's memory, rather, and indeed this accords strongly with Kaplan's broader assertion of 'the continued presence of the Holocaust in the memory of its survivors and the postmemories of successive generations who have overlaid the contemporary landscape with echoes of the past.'[40] In this case, however, given Miriam's significant spatial remove from the continent of her birth and her apparent unwillingness to confront the past, it is *cartography* that acts as a substitute for Kaplan's landscape, in the form of a simple, diagrammatised mental-map that has hitherto warranted little consideration on the protagonist's part. As we will see, this stalemate is to be interrupted by the reality of her son's life, and the 'spatial context in which [Miriam] encounters maps' will become vastly expanded.[41]

4.2. Manipulating the map

Mihăilescu observes that, at the moment of Katin's inclusion of the mental map, the author has chosen 'her head rather than her heart to suggest her shock at Ilan's decision [to move permanently to Berlin],' and this is precisely

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[37] Rossetto, 'Skin of the map', p.88, original emphasis.
[38] *Ibid*, p.95.
[39] Kaplan, *Landscapes…*, p.3.
[40] *Ibid*, p.6.
[41] Rossetto, 'Skin of the map', p.95.

the uneasy situation with which the son must contend.[42] The second map to emerge within the narrative of *Letting It Go* deals much more explicitly with the impact of Ilan's decision upon the family, particularly in relation to Miriam's feelings toward her son's desired new home (or perhaps more accurately, her feelings toward his desired new *continent*). At the time of his decision to move Ilan is already living away from his parents, who are in New York, and is resident in Europe (specifically, it appears, *Berlin*) with his Swedish partner, Tinet; some time after Katin has introduced the reader to 'the map of Germany in Miriam's mind' we see a similar rendering of a work-related trip taken by Ilan and Tinet through Poland, from Berlin to Kežmarok in Slovakia (figure 4.2).[43] Here, however, the map depicted is not a mental map *per se* but rather one taken from a book, which is consulted by the protagonist with some urgency after having finished talking to her son and his partner about their upcoming trip via an online video chat service – 'Quick. The map.'[44] Given the preceding illustration of the protagonist hurriedly consulting the map-book, we might expect that the cartography reproduced in the next panel will resemble something akin to what she is looking at, yet what Katin actually presents to the reader has more in common with the mental map discussed above. We see, once again, an extremely sparse image of a section of Central Europe – here, a border region – upon which Katin has highlighted in red the journey to be taken by Ilan and Tinet; this route leaves Berlin, crosses the border and travels almost the entire length of south-western Poland before diverting into Slovakia and terminating in Kežmarok. What is striking once more, however, is the paucity of specific geographical information included – we see only the names of the four countries depicted – Germany, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Poland – the names of the start and end points of the journey – Berlin and Kežmarok – and, finally, Oświęcim (more commonly known, of course, by its German name of Auschwitz) which sits close to the couple's route at a point near to their destination.

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[42] Mihăilescu, 'Haunting…', p.159.
[43] Katin, *Letting It Go*, p.75.
[44] *Ibid.*

Figure 4.2 - Miriam traces her son's route. Katin, *Letting It Go*, p.75.

Equally crucial here are Miriam's musings, which again hover around the edges of the illustrations: 'Drive into Poland. Great. Just Great'; 'If they drive into Poland, along the border, to their right will be the Czech Republic and to the left is the whole of Poland'; 'Ah! There. They pass right by it. Nasty places. There it is. Of course the map has no place named Auschwitz, only Oświęcim.'[45] Her ruminations at this point convey an acute – if implicit – sense of concern for her son's safety; this perception appears to be confirmed by a statement made to her husband shortly afterwards, in which Miriam confesses her anxiety: 'I hate having him wandering around those places.'[46] Combined with the lack of information conveyed by the map itself (as reproduced by Katin), the reader can readily detect a sense of Central and Eastern Europe – and particularly Poland – as a threatening, frightening place for the protagonist; the notion of 'the whole of Poland' being to the couple's left, for instance, appears to convey the sense of a seemingly endless expanse of threatening territory, as if Ilan and Tinet are to be wandering isolated through a dangerous landscape (indeed, this image of isolation and threatening surroundings carries specific echoes of Katin's childhood experiences, as they are depicted in her earlier work, *We Are On Our Own*). This is, much like the mental map, closely aligned with Kaplan's notion of an '[overlaying of] the

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[45] *Ibid.*
[46] *Ibid.*

contemporary landscape with echoes of the past,' here transplanted to the context of Poland, of which – like Germany, it must be noted – Miriam has no direct personal experience, at least in the context of Holocaust history.[47]

Moreover, her thoughts betray a sense that even the (ostensibly objective) map that she turns to is itself against her; her exclamation – '[a]h!' – and the observation, '[o]f course the map has no place named Auschwitz' seem to imply that she feels as though she has *caught out* the cartography she is consulting in the midst of a conspiracy to suppress information that is relevant to her. As a consequence, this sense of threat is further confirmed in the artistic choices made by the author in her reproduction of the map, too, as if she cannot trust the printed version to convey her feelings accurately. Germany, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia are each bordered with a colourful cross-hatched line (in green, orange, and blue respectively), while Poland is the only country of the three whose border remains blank; it has instead been coloured in with a block of scratchy grey shading which resembles a black cloud, the only country of the four to have been filled in in this way. In the next panel we see an image of the atlas Miriam consults (figure 4.3) – albeit from such a distance that it is impossible to discern any detail – in which the countries are clearly printed in full, block colours. Moreover, in choosing to reproduce the particular section of the map that she has, Katin has created an image of the border region in which Poland seems to loom large over its neighbours, as if ready to encroach on their territory; in this regard it shares some similarity with the map of Germany in the mind of her protagonist, in which the Federal Republic seems to sit outsize and defiant in the midst of its neighbours, which are overshadowed by its bold black and red borders.

Here, however, the specific target of her anxiety is Poland; given the country's obvious, deep, and complex imbrication with Holocaust history this is perhaps equally as understandable as her unease regarding Germany, yet the fact that *Germany* itself is here one of the countries apparently being buffeted by the looming presence of its eastern neighbour readily suggests that her discomfort lies not with the state of Germany (or indeed Poland) *per se*, but rather with any and all countries with a historical connection to the Nazi

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[47] Kaplan, *Landscapes*, p.6.

genocide of the Jews – particularly, it seems, in Central and Eastern Europe. Such a state of mind would naturally preclude any sense of ease on Miriam's part in relation to a huge swathe of the European continent; we might conclude, then, that it is not necessarily Germany or Berlin in and of themselves *as specific places* that trouble the protagonist, but rather the events of her childhood, and those of the Holocaust more broadly. Thus, Oostdijk's observation that *Letting It Go* represents, in part, Miriam's 'belated response to the Holocaust' – while certainly not the first nor only example of such a response, in my view – holds true with respect to the cartographic interventions introduced into the text by the author.[48] Again, this reinforces the notion of the continued resonance of Holocaust spaces expressed by Kaplan, and in this case we can actively detect the ontogenetic nature of cartography in action – as per Kitchin and Dodge, Rossetto, and others – as we see how Katin has distorted the surface of the map for dramatic effect; her depiction here is contingent upon her own subjective experience – based on memory – of spaces akin to those in figure 4.2. Janne Holmén, in an article on mental maps of the Mediterranean and Baltic seas in the minds of residents of the two regions, observes that 'mental maps are not simply based upon the reception of information from the surrounding world, but upon an active search [for] and interpretation of information'; in the case of *Letting It Go*, Miriam is forced to tackle head-on an intensely difficult aspect of both her past and her identity as a result of her son's decision to settle in Berlin, which in turn drives her to confront hitherto wilfully-ignored sources of information.[49] She interprets the spaces of contemporary Central Europe (and schematises them in cartographic form for the reader) according to her own memory of atrocity.

Clearly, this is all in contradistinction to the reality of the map that the protagonist is looking at in this scene, which could not possibly contain such an idiosyncratic *lack* of geographical markers; there is no doubt, for instance, that the couple would have passed hundreds of other settlements beside Oświęcim on their way to Slovakia, suggesting that its inclusion conforms to

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[48] Oostdijk, p.82.
[49] Janne Holmén, Changing mental maps of the Baltic Sea and Mediterranean regions, *Journal of Cultural Geography*, 35:2 (2018), 230-250 (p.247).

Edlund's assertion that mental maps 'reflect what is important to an individual or a community.'[50] Likewise, in the next panel (figure 4.3), we see a drawing of the protagonist ferociously poring over the map, which is rendered here in much fuller detail (albeit, as mentioned above, in so small an illustration that readers cannot possibly make out any specific information). We might, then, interpret Katin's cartographic reproduction of this information as having more in common with the 'map of Germany in Miriam's mind,' in the sense that the official map is only consulted for the most basic geographic information – specifically, tracing the couple's route and locating Auschwitz – and is reproduced along the lines of a mental map for the benefit of the reader, thereby highlighting the gulf between Miriam's perception and the true geographical complexity of the region.
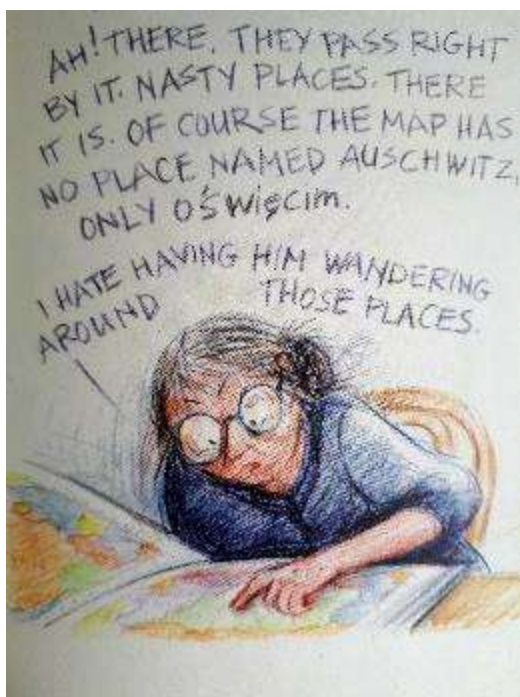
Figure 4.3 - Catching the map in the act. Katin, *Letting It Go,* p.75.

Such complexity – albeit of a socio-political, rather than spatial nature – is also reflected in the discussion between mother and son preceding Miriam's consultation of the map.[51] Both this moment and the above sequence arise because she has contacted Ilan to inform him that – after finally

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[50] Edlund, p.278.

[51] Such moments, at which Ilan and Tinet attempt to convey something of the genuine, complex reality of life in contemporary Europe to Miriam, recur throughout *Letting It Go*; at these moments, the generational and geographical divisions within the family appear particularly acute.

acquiescing to his wishes and assisting his application – she has received his Hungarian passport. Their discussion runs as follows:

> [Miriam:] 'Great news. I picked up your Hungarian passport. Congratulations. Now we have a new Hungarian relative. Frankly, in this photo you look like a terrorist. I sure wouldn't let you into *my* country. And then you're a Jew'…[Ilan:] 'Well. They don't ask you to pull your pants down at the border.' [Miriam:] 'And did you hear that in Hungary they're killing gypsies?! [*sic*] And rumors are spreading about Jews secretly buying up properties around the country?' [Ilan:] 'Yes. I read those things too. But look what's on that passport. EU. They try hard. It will be all right [*sic*] Mom. Please don't worry.'[52]

Here, the chasm between the experiences of the two Katins is revealed with clarity (and is heightened by their physical distance from one another – as with a number of others in the text, this conversation takes place via an online video chat). In this moment, Miriam's concern is with neither Germany nor Poland, but rather Hungary, the country of her birth and the country in which she survived the Holocaust in hiding with her mother. Despite the fact that her anxieties clearly centre on the region as a whole, at this moment, as with the two maps discussed above, Miriam chooses the framework of the nation state as a means of pinpointing such worries, perhaps in an echo of the 'place-framing' discussed by Ewalt. Ilan, meanwhile, is content to place his faith in the supranational institution of the EU. In each case, both members of the family appear to assign greater weight to their own preconceptions and experiences than those of the other: in Miriam's case this is evident in her insistent questioning of her son's awareness of Hungarian issues surrounding anti-Semitism, and her production of an emotionally-charged if less-than-accurate map of the region; Ilan, meanwhile, demonstrates this in the fact that he is aware of the issues raised by his mother, and yet offers the (somewhat insipid) counterargument that the EU '[tries] hard,' along with his sardonic

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[52] Katin, *Letting It Go*, p.74, original emphasis.

response to her concerns about the implications of his Jewish identity ('they don't ask you to pull your pants down at the border'), which is perhaps born of the freedom of movement (at least hitherto enjoyed by his partner, and now himself) that is evinced by the work trip to Slovakia that he proposes to embark upon.

In this generational difference, Ilan's perspective presents something of a challenge to Brett Ashley Kaplan's notion of Holocaust postmemory and landscapes. Given that he is the son of a survivor – a member of the 'generation after,' in Hirsch's terms – we can assume that his relationship to his mother's past is more straightforwardly one of *post*memory, in distinction to the slightly more muddled mnemonic picture occasioned by Miriam's '1.5 generation' status.[53] Given his significantly more relaxed attitude to the spaces in which he finds himself, we can infer that he has not 'overlaid the contemporary landscape with echoes of the past' to anywhere near the same extent as his mother – indeed, we know that he is strongly concerned with settling in Berlin, and is prepared to seek Hungarian citizenship (in tension with his mother's intense anxiety at the prospect) in order to do so.[54] It would seem, then, that Ilan is willing to overlook Berlin's status as the heart of the former Third Reich, and that Hungary is the country in which his mother suffered such horrific early-life experiences. Levy and Sznaider's notion of 'cosmopolitan memory' can offer something of an explanation here; they note that 'meanings of the Holocaust emerge through encounters between the global and the local,' and the *local* for Ilan is constituted by the ordinariness of contemporary life in Europe – he has created a home for himself on the continent, as suggested by his relationship with Tinet, who is Swedish, and the work trip they plan to take together.[55] Miriam, by contrast, still views the continent through the prism of her traumatic memories, from afar. In this map, then, we can detect a trace of Rothberg's notion of multidirectional memory or, more precisely, the dynamic against which Rothberg argues; it represents a surface upon which a 'competitive,' 'zero-sum' face-off between different interpretations of

[53] Hirsch, *Generation of Postmemory*, p.10.
[54] Kaplan, *Landscapes*, p.6.
[55] Levy and Sznaider, p.8.

contemporary Europe takes place, occasioned by a clash between lived experience and traumatic memory.[56]

Given this chasm between mother and son, we might interpret the map that Katin produces of the southwestern Polish border region as an example of countermapping in the sense that it defiantly asserts her own experiences and perceptions in the face of Ilan's insistence that she should not worry. In response to his perspective, Katin engages in an act of 'place-framing,' whereby Poland (and earlier, Germany, in the mental map) as an abstracted space 'is transformed to place' – here, a place of threat signified by the specific geographical marker, 'Oświęcim' – 'so as to motivate action on the part of those constituencies potentially sympathetic' to Miriam's perspective.[57] In other words, Katin engenders sympathy for Miriam's viewpoint through her inclusion of these maps, which give her readers a privileged perspective on how she views this part of the world. That this occurs as a rebuttal to the views of those around her is perhaps most clearly evidenced by the internal monologue (and, occasionally, external dialogues) with which each of the maps discussed above is surrounded; in the case of Germany, the map emerges as a response to the suggestion (on her husband's part) that Miriam's reaction to Ilan's news is 'silly' – 'Silly about Berlin? Silly, yes, silly' – while in the case of Poland, as we have seen, she is reacting to both her son's insistence that things will be fine and, later, to her husband's angry assertion (in response to her anxiety about Ilan's 'wandering') that 'he won't be wandering around. They're heading there to do some work!'[58] As a consequence of such resistance to Miriam's anxiety, we might view her inclusion of these maps as her attempt to 'map back' against the prevailing perspective of her family, and assert her own unease.[59]

Despite this, the maps nonetheless display elements of Gil and Duarte's notion of 'fluid cartography,' as well as evidence of the gradual change that occurs in Miriam's perception and understanding throughout the text. In each case – as per Chute's assertion of the dialogic nature of comics – the cartographic intervention is preceded and followed (and in some cases,

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[56] Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, p.3.
[57] Ewalt, p.335.
[58] Katin, *Letting It Go*, p.75.
[59] Sparke, p.344.

surrounded) by dialogue, particularly with Miriam's husband Geoffrey, Ilan, and Tinet. Around each map, we see a kind of collision of identities and perspectives that creates an inherently dialogic context; this is particularly true of the generational gap between Ilan and his mother, although Geoffrey tends to concur with Ilan's perspective, too. We see this in the sequence discussed above, for instance, as the mother and son struggle to reconcile their differing opinions on Ilan's life choices. Within the context of the Katin family, this constitutes an example of a battle over the Assmann's 'communicative memory' – the 'ordinary,' 'everyday' transmission of memory that they distinguish from collective or cultural memory; in a manner consistent with Jan Assmann's assertion of the fundamental 'disorganisation' of communicative memory, the family are effectively tussling over the *endpoint* to Miriam's Holocaust memories, in the form of her perception of contemporary Europe.[60] Such a collision echoes Gil and Duarte's assertion that fluid cartographies occasion the '[coming] together' of 'different identities' – in the scenes discussed above, the maps act as a kind of (subjective) focal point around which a heteroglossia of divergent opinions coalesce.[61]

The same could be said of Gil and Duarte's suggestion that fluid cartographies are also adept at capturing the 'diasporic displacements' of modernity, as well as the interaction of different times and locations within the same textual space.[62] In each of the examples discussed above, the maps produced by Katin (as well as the anxieties that drive their production) are born of the gaps between Miriam's memories, her current lived experience (in New York), and the reality of life (particularly for Ilan) in contemporary Europe. Thus, the collision of these two sites – North America and Europe, as a consequence of Miriam's eventual displacement to the United States after the end of the war – and indeed the collision of two times – Miriam's past and Ilan's present – are implicit in these maps. These cartographies only exist within the text as a result of Ilan's decisions in the present yet, as we have seen from Mihăilescu's observations, Miriam's interpretation of these locations

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[60] Assmann, p.126.
[61] Gil and Duarte, p.3.
[62] *Ibid.*

appears as if frozen in time, heavily (and again, understandably) influenced by her early-life experiences. The maps represent, in essence, the collision of contemporary globalisation with individual, traumatic memory.

Certainly, the two maps discussed above are largely reliant on (and serve to illustrate) Miriam's own preconceptions based on memory; nonetheless, they also serve to highlight the differing viewpoints of those close to the protagonist, in the sense that they are actively (and self-consciously) positioned in such a way that these perspectives surround them. This has the effect of undermining the validity of the maps themselves to a certain extent (although each map discussed so far is clearly an inherently idiosyncratic creation in any case), yet the inclusion of the map-diagrams nonetheless still asserts Miriam's own views and feelings forcefully. This tension is assimilated into the narrative through moments of tongue-in-cheek self-awareness on the part of the author-illustrator; we see one such moment, for instance, at the point at which Miriam and Ilan are discussing his work trip. Katin, introduces this sequence with the subheading 'Dictionary note: P is for Poland. Also for paranoia,' thereby highlighting to the reader her self-awareness regarding the anxious nature with which she reacts ('and so it goes with me,' she notes shortly after this), while still allowing space for this worry to express itself fully in the form of the map.[63] In this sense, the maps become (somewhat paradoxically) a symbol of the gradual relaxing of Miriam's fixed worldview that we witness throughout the text, in that they demonstrate a willingness to engage with (and indeed, incorporate) the dissenting views of others into her text, while still asserting the profound resonance of the events of the Holocaust on her daily life. An observation by Chute, on the topic of Art Spiegelman's *Maus*, is again pertinent here:

> The comics medium, as Spiegelman makes us aware, is
> not only *dialogic* – able to represent the competing
> voices of autobiography and biography in one layered
> text – but cross-discursive, as when Spiegelman draws
> against his father's verbal narration, turning what he

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[63] Katin, *Letting It Go*, p.75.

calls the "cognitive dissonance" between the two of them
into representational collision.[64]

A similar effect is in evidence in Katin's inclusion of these maps, which sit in the midst of directly competing opinions and perspectives; in her maps, she 'draws against' (and, hence, 'maps back' against) the knowledge and experiences of Ilan and Tinet, while the 'cognitive dissonance' on display here is perhaps best understood as a generational and experiential gap. Despite this gap, the fact that the page remains an inherently dialogic space is testament to the gradual loosening of an ossified perspective on Miriam's part that we witness throughout the progression of *Letting It Go*.

4.3. Mapping as monument

The final map on display in the text differs substantially from the two discussed here already in terms of both its content and the aesthetic choices made in its inclusion, yet it still displays a kind of 'cognitive dissonance,' and remains in a state of dialogue with both Miriam and other characters (albeit, in this instance, ones who are not intimately connected to Miriam). It emerges during the course of the first of two visits to Europe (specifically, Berlin) taken by the protagonist in the text. The map is found during a layover in Lithuania, at the entrance to the Vilna ghetto ('Vilniaus Geto') in the old town of Vilnius, as Miriam and her husband explore the old Jewish quarter.[65] The map itself (figure 4.4) appears to be a reproduction of a specific granite memorial plaque that is housed in this area (figure 4.5), particularly given the very close approximation in Katin's reproduction of the font used on the physical map, and the Lithuanian spelling of 'Vilniaus.' It is included in the text with only minor changes to its composition (relatively speaking – certainly in comparison with the map of Poland discussed above, for instance), the most significant of which is the fact that it has been condensed – some of the title and the entire legend have been removed, for example, while the empty spaces

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[64] Chute, 'Shadow...', p.209.
[65] Katin, *Letting It Go*, p.85

in the original seem to have been compressed and are overlapped by some of the surrounding illustrations. Rather than the grey colours of the original, too, Katin has chosen to render her version of the map in warm brown and yellow crosshatched tones, which appear to recall the glow of the setting sun in the preceding panel, as well as the yellow wall and brown wood that surround the original granite map.
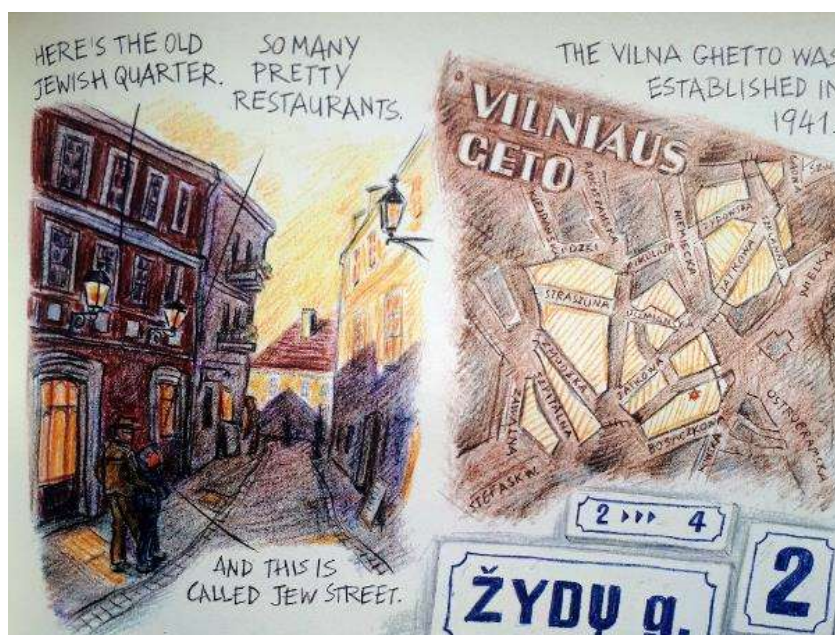
Figure 4.4 - Re-mediating the Vilnius Ghetto map. Katin, *Letting It Go*, p.85.

Figure 4.5 - Vilna Ghetto Map, Vilnius tourism online[66]

[66] Vilnius Tourism, 'What to see: top 20', *Vilnius Tourism* [online], <http://www.vilnius-tourism.lt/en/what-to-see/top-20/stikliu-zydu-gaono-streets/> [accessed January 08 2020].

This is certainly the most fixed example of cartography within the text; rather than the intensely personal, somewhat-idiosyncratic maps discussed above, this ghetto map represents a public-facing act of commemoration that is rendered in stone. Such fixity is appropriate, given that the introduction of this map immediately follows a heated exchange between Miriam and another American tourist, in which the protagonist reacts angrily to being castigated for not wanting to visit a memorial forest at the site of a Holocaust massacre. The tourist is portrayed as frowning and pointing angrily at an initially forlorn-looking Miriam, noting that 'if we don't visit these places they will be forgotten!'[67] At this point, Miriam responds with equal anger, pointing back at her accuser and offering the retort: 'I don't need *you* to tell *me* where I should go and what I should see. I live with this stuff every day. That's enough for me. You go.'[68] As she walks off under the arm of her husband, who implores her to 'take it easy,' Miriam looks back over her shoulder at the retreating tour group, muttering, 'bunch of free range Jews. Brooklynites.'[69] It is at this point that they enter the old Jewish quarter and come across the map.

Much of the abovementioned sequence demonstrates a certain fixity of perspective on the part of both interlocutors, and an obvious collision of such cemented worldviews. This exchange demonstrates the gulf between Miriam's life experiences and the 'official' presentation of the Holocaust in memorials and institutions, such as the memorial forest to which the group are travelling, the museum that we see them visit over the course of the pages preceding the heated exchange, and the stone memorial plaque that houses the map of the Vilna ghetto. Broadly, the tourist's perspective aligns with the notion of the 'need to remember' that is the stated aim of many Holocaust- and genocide-focused museums and memorial initiatives, while Miriam's own life experiences do not map neatly onto the more typical survivor experiences of internment in either ghettos or concentration camps; rather, in her earlier work, *We Are On Our Own*, we see the horrifying detail of how she survived the Holocaust as a young child by hiding with her mother in the Hungarian countryside, each disguised as a Gentile (which, in and of itself, is certainly not

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[67] Katin, *Letting It Go*, p.84.
[68] *Ibid*, original emphasis.
[69] *Ibid*.

a completely atypical experience of the genocide). Here it is the events of the Holocaust themselves – fixed in stone in the form of the *ghetto* map – that do not quite match up with Miriam's experiences. Moreover, with regard to the notion of 'diasporic displacement' discussed by Gil and Duarte, Miriam's snide characterisation of her fellow tourists as 'free range Jews' and 'Brooklynites' implies an assertion of her *otherness* – here, her *European* identity and Holocaust survivor status (and hence, *authenticity* in this context) – against the sanctimonious touristic behaviour of her accuser in particular, but also (it seems) her fellow travellers more generally.[70] This is in stark (and somewhat ironic) contrast to the scenes discussed above, in which Miriam lectures Ilan from afar, fretting over his relocation from the substantial remove of her apartment in New York.

Nonetheless, the fact that Katin has included the exchange with the tourist suggests the same self-awareness and discursive impulse that characterised the maps discussed above. In fact, as well as a *countermapping*, of sorts – in the sense that it represents Katin's own reinterpretation of a particular monument that has been repurposed for this text, and speaks to her own memories rather than the specific, local experience that it signifies – we might also interpret Katin's reproduction of the Vilna Ghetto map as a *countermonument*, in the manner described by James E. Young in *The Texture of Memory*. In contradistinction with the semantic fixity of traditional monuments, Young identifies – specifically within German contexts of Holocaust commemoration – a tradition of *countermonuments* that respond to the 'tortured, self-reflective, even paralyzing occupation' of 'Holocaust memorial-work' in the country from which the Holocaust originated.[71] In broad terms, such responses tend to signify absence or invite dialogue through their formal properties, and tend to eschew traditional (i.e. figurative) sculptural forms, instead preferring to opt for aesthetic and conceptual abstraction as a means of encouraging intellectual engagement on the part of their viewership. While Katin's image of the Vilna Ghetto map is itself a relatively-straightforward reproduction of the original – albeit one altered according to creative license – some of the surrounding dialogue constitutes a

[70] Gil and Duarte, p.3.
[71] Young, p.20.

challenge to the author-illustrator's worldview (and hence, implicitly, to the affective impact of Holocaust memory upon her adult life). Readerly sympathy at the moment of the exchange with the tourist is likely to lie with Miriam, the protagonist of the text with whom we are invited to identify, but in this exchange, and in the accompanying fixity of the granite map, we are likewise invited to question whether Miriam's studied non-engagement with Holocaust history necessarily constitutes the most ethical position, even if her rationale for this avoidance is abundantly fathomable; the reader is, ultimately, left to make up their own mind. In this regard, there is an echo of Jochen and Esther Gerz's Hamburg 'countermonument' – discussed by Young – which consisted of a 'twelve-meter-high, one-meter-square pillar…made of hollow aluminium, plated with a thin layer of soft, dark lead'; styluses hanging from the top of the monument invited passersby to mark the soft surface, and the monument was designed to be lowered into the ground in one-metre sections over time.[72] The range of responses to the Gerzs' work varied widely, from the innocuous and mundane ('Jurgen liebt Kirsten,' 'funny faces daubed in paint and marker pen'), to the sinister, particularly in the form of swastikas.[73] Nonetheless, the monument was undoubtedly successful in working 'against the authoritarian propensity in all art that reduces viewers to passive spectators.'[74] In some regards – albeit in a far subtler, far less extreme iteration – this is precisely the impulse that lies behind Katin's decision to exploit to the full the dialogic nature of comics in order to present the reader with a range of views that dissent from her own; such a gesture does, however, inevitably become codified and fixed in the form of the printed comic book, unlike the Gerzs' dynamic monument. Nonetheless, Katin's Vilna Ghetto map is testament to the fact that, if we are to consider *Letting It Go* as a 'portable monument' in Ann Rigney's sense, then it is a monument to uncertainty, to lacunae in understanding, and – above all – to the lasting resonance of traumatic Holocaust memory.

It is likewise significant that the anonymous tourist's direct and personal challenge is included within the text at the moment that Miriam is

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[72] *Ibid*, p.30.
[73] *Ibid*, p.35.
[74] *Ibid*, p.28.

making her way to Berlin to see Ilan for the first time, thereby suggesting a significant (if unsurprising given that, ultimately, he is her son, who it is clear that she loves dearly) shift in attitude from the early pages of the text, in which we saw (among other things) her immense worry regarding exploding German coffee machines,[75] and her avowedly disengaged mental map of Germany.[76] On both of the trips to Berlin that she takes within the text, we see that – while remaining stubbornly resistant, particularly at first – Miriam becomes impressed with the city's engagement with the process of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (a concept explained to her by Tinet) with respect to its preservation of both its Second World War and Cold War histories.[77] This change in perspective is echoed in Mihăilescu's observation that the protagonist is won over 'by the city's incorporation of a "multidirectional memory" approach to its traumatic historical past.'[78] At one point in the text, after returning from her first trip, Miriam insists that she wants its retelling to be 'as nasty as possible,' and suggests that she will alter the outcome of one part of her story (the loss and eventual retrieval of her husband's wedding ring) to suit this purpose – 'in the story I'm working on it will stay lost…it will be meaner that way.'[79] That Katin ultimately chooses to tell the story as it (apparently) happened and has her husband find his ring at the airport suggests that she has paid heed to Ilan's response – 'lying about the ring conveys the idea that we should continue to hold on to our prejudices. Based on history and not based on direct experience. We know you had a nice time in Berlin.'[80] This is, clearly, a meta-textual comment on the production of the text itself, indicative of the process of mediating a personal narrative. Ultimately, each of the three maps discussed above suggest, in slightly different ways, a desire for *truthfulness* – if not necessarily a sense of *objective truth* – on Miriam's part, in the sense expressed by Tessa Morris-Suzuki; in *Letting It Go*, Katin foregrounds 'an effort to understand [the] chain of relationships' between events, their recording and representation, and their

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[75] Katin, *Letting It Go*, pp.1-2.
[76] *Ibid*, p.45.
[77] *Ibid*, p.137
[78] Mihăilescu, 'Haunting…', p.160.
[79] Katin, *Letting It Go*, p.111.
[80] *Ibid*, p.112.

reception, and begins to highlight 'the series of mediations through which narratives and images of the past reach us, and why we respond to them as we do.'[81] All three of the maps discussed here are surrounded by opinions that challenge Miriam's own perspective, thereby signifying the process of production and the competing demands of differing interpretations; yet, at the same time, each map simultaneously asserts Miriam's own view (bar perhaps the Vilna ghetto map, which does this indirectly by compounding the challenge brought against her).

As Jason Farman notes, 'hand-drawn maps close the ambiguous gap between product and authorship,' and what is certainly true of all of *Letting It Go*'s cartographies is that Katin's hand-drawn, soft-edged style of illustration renders them more intimate, and incorporates them more fully into the rest of the narrative by blurring their hard edges into the surrounding illustrations.[82] This is an appropriate response to the question of scale; these are not, after all, historical maps, or military maps, or even purely topographical creations, but rather idiosyncratic documents from a journey of personal and familial conflict and reconciliation. Meanwhile, applying the iconography of mapping to her own thoughts and thought processes (in the case of the first two maps, at least) allows Katin to render her mindset in a recognisable, readily-communicable manner for her readers, thereby facilitating a degree of privileged access that engenders empathy for her situation. We might interpret the maps in *Letting It Go* – particularly given their hand-drawn renderings and intensely personal content – as a kind of appropriation of the processes of mapping that moves away from a strict concern with the straightforward, apparently 'objective,' display of spatial and geographical data, and towards an engagement with less-than-quantifiable factors, such as familial relations, personal history, and personal anxieties. In this sense, these maps represent precisely the move toward understanding and empathy that is proposed as a characteristic of fluid cartography by Gil and Duarte.

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[81] Morris-Suzuki, p.28.
[82] Farman, p.875.

5.

Cartographies of Identity and Holocaust (Post)Memory in Amy Kurzweil's *Flying Couch*

Flying Couch is a graphic novel that is fundamentally steeped in questions of identity and, like *Letting It Go*, family. Particularly, Amy Kurzweil – who, like Miriam Katin, assumes the role of both writer-illustrator and protagonist[1] – seems to grapple with the question of how to define her own identity in the face of the immense shadows cast over her life by the identities of her mother, Sonya, and grandmother, Lily Fenster (referred to throughout as 'Bubbe'); respectively, a renowned psychotherapist who was born in a displaced persons camp and a Holocaust survivor who is explicitly presented as 'larger than life' within the text.[2] Kurzweil herself is a writer, cartoonist, and educator who is based in New York City.[3] Hannah Baker Saltmarsh illustrates the extent to which *Flying Couch* is a work of self-exploration on the author's part:

> The title of Kurzweil's debut graphic novel encapsulates the way Jewish womanhood is passed from generation to generation on the sofa in the living room where women hold court, sit with each other, laugh, dream, or wander to other worlds in therapy and in books — except, notably, couches are not heirloom furniture in Kurzweil's work, but like Wordsworth's "Spots of Time,"

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[1] As in the previous chapter, with the distinction between 'Miriam' and 'Katin,' I will here refer to the in-text protagonist as 'Amy,' while using the author's surname when referring to Kurzweil in her role as author-illustrator.

[2] Amy Kurzweil, *Flying Couch: A Graphic Memoir* (New York: Black Balloon, 2016), p.37.

[3] Amy Kurzweil, 'Me', *Amy Kurzweil* [online] <http://amykurzweil.com/about-3/> [accessed Jan 28 2020].

Coleridge's "Winged Thought," or Woolf's "Room of
One's Own," they are the furniture of self-telling.[4]

That this item of 'self-telling' furniture happens to be of the *flying* variety suggests the wide-ranging nature (both figuratively and literally) of the explorations undertaken within the text. Naturally, this self-exploration entails grappling, at times, with the fact of being the granddaughter of a Holocaust survivor, and the grandmother's own narrative has a significant role to play within *Flying Couch*. As Dana Mihăilescu notes:

> Kurzweil's narrative primarily attempts to represent an uncertain, fluid sense of Jewishness in contemporary times in which she integrates her mediated knowledge of the grandmother's Holocaust experiences with other pressing issues in the present.[5]

Indeed, she goes further with regard to the significance of the Holocaust to the text, suggesting that *Flying Couch* is in fact specifically concerned with the 'transmission of Holocaust memory from the first generation survivor-grandmother to the second-generation daughter…and the third-generation granddaughter.'[6] While I agree that this is certainly a key concern, it is important to keep in mind that it is Amy's search for her own sense of 'Jewishness,' as Mihăilescu observes, and her own emerging identity as a woman (in negotiation with her family history) that ultimately remain the primary focuses of the text, and it is not – as is the case with Art Spiegelman's *Maus* – a more straightforward work of Holocaust postmemory. Nonetheless, *Flying Couch* is still the product of what Marianne Hirsch refers to as 'imaginative investment, projection, and creation,' as we will see.[7]

In this chapter, I will demonstrate how – much like Katin's use of maps in *Letting It Go* – in *Flying Couch* Kurzweil employs the processes and visual language of mapping as a means of schematising various spaces of the family,

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[4] Hannah Baker Saltmarsh, '"I Feel Jewish Because….": Roots and Reflections in Amy Kurzweil's Flying Couch: A Graphic Memoir', *Tikkun*, 32.2 (2017), 52-55 (p.53).
[5] Mihăilescu, 'Mapping…', p.106.
[6] *Ibid*, p.94.
[7] Hirsch, *Generation of Postmemory*, p.10.

but also her childhood, her young adulthood, and her grandmother's memories. We will see how Kurzweil's cartographies, much like Katin's, once again represent deeply personal re-imaginings of the process of mapmaking, the majority of which aspire to 'understanding instead of controlling' in the manner of 'fluid cartography,' as described by Isabel Capeloa Gil and João Ferreira Duarte.[8] Like Katin, Kurzweil's maps represent attempts to make sense of herself and her own feelings, as well as the identities and emotions of her family (here, specifically, the mother and grandmother) – the cartographical insertions exist in dialogue with those around Amy, much as Katin's maps are surrounded by the responses of her family and other interlocutors; they are, in this regard, 'deeply relational' constructions, in that they place a diverse set of personal narratives into conversation with one another, particularly those of Amy and her grandmother.[9] Indeed, as Mihăilescu notes: 'Kurzweil's maps do not serve their usual purpose, that of helping the readers orient themselves in space. Instead, these maps underline how the acts of seeing and being seen depend on one's vantage point or positioning in space and time which become, in turn, ways of mediating one's understanding of others.'[10] Particularly (and again, much like Katin's work), Kurzweil's maps become the site of an 'intergenerational dialogue.'[11] In this way, too, the ontogenetic nature of maps becomes clear. Kurzweil's cartographies are not static, fixed representations of space, but they are instead 'relational and context-dependent,' responding as they do to events and memories; in Kitchin and Dodge's terms, they represent 'spatial practices enacted to solve relational problems,' and in some cases *literal* relational problems in an interpersonal sense, as they occasionally appear as a vessel through which Amy seeks to directly *navigate* the complex female relationships within her own family.[12]

As well as sharing some affinity with Katin's work, I will demonstrate here how Kurzweil's cartographies also echo the work of Jérémie Dres (who I discuss in the following chapter) in some ways; this is not least in the shared

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[8] Gil and Duarte, p.3.
[9] *Ibid.*
[10] Mihăilescu, 'Mapping...', p.107.
[11] *Ibid.*
[12] Kitchin and Dodge, p.335, original emphasis.

third-generation status of the two authors, but also in the fact that, unlike Katin, Kurzweil also actively employs maps in an attempt to trace and make sense of *actual* journeys that she has herself undertaken, spaces in which she lives, or has lived, and indeed journeys taken by her grandmother at the time of the Holocaust. Specifically, we will see how Kurzweil makes use of modern digital technology to do this, albeit in a somewhat restricted fashion; she is primarily concerned with using such tools as a means of comparing her present spatial realities with those of her grandmother's past. Modern digital cartography is employed, in other words, in search of a postmemorial understanding of her grandmother's Holocaust memories.

In this vein, Mihăilescu suggests that the use of maps within *Flying Couch* is a direct consequence of the 'transcultural' approach to Holocaust memories that is often seen in works produced by third-generation writers; in other words, according to Mihăilescu, a tendency to explicitly portray the Nazi genocide of the Jews in terms of a globalised memory, often with a strong diasporic element.[13] This observation carries strong echoes of the work of Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider, and their emphasis on the interaction of the global and the local in their notion of 'cosmopolitan memory'; such an interaction – particularly in relation to the Holocaust narrative expressed within the text – is abundantly clear in *Flying Couch*.[14] Mihăilescu notes:

> In Kurzweil's case, this transcultural approach is visible in her use of maps throughout the narrative. Unlike the second-generation Spiegelman who employs maps only to pinpoint the location of bunkers, hiding places, the inside and outside of the four crematorium buildings in Auschwitz or other facets of his father's camp life...throughout *Flying Couch* third-generation Kurzweil goes beyond the Holocaust and uses them to illustrate her own past and inner life. These maps are

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[13] Mihăilescu, 'Mapping...', p.106.
[14] Levy and Sznaider, p.3.

> linked, for example, to the homes in which Amy, her
> mother and grandmother have lived.[15]

Much like Katin, then, the notion of 'mapping' personal history and a sense of a character's inner life comes to the fore once again in Kurzweil's work, and presents itself to the reader with a particularly 'transcultural' character. I would add that Kurzweil also strives to map the experiences of others in this way, too – particularly her grandmother's. We might note, at this juncture, that reading the varied use of maps as a specific differential factor across the works of members of different generations – as Mihăilescu seems to imply in the above quotation – does not really hold here when we consider that Katin's use of maps (as a survivor) shares a far greater affinity with those of Kurzweil than those of an author such as Art Spiegelman. In Tessa Morris-Suzuki's terms, where Spiegelman searches for some version of objective 'truth' in his attempts to verify (sometimes through maps and diagrams) specific facets of his father's life in the camp, Katin and Kurzweil seek a more general sense of 'truthfulness' in their fluid, relational, sometimes-imprecise, and sometimes-idiosyncratic maps.[16] In any case, with respect to both Katin and Kurzweil it is the maps themselves, and the information included in and around them, that demonstrates a generational difference and an intergenerational dialogue, and that will be my concern here, rather than following Mihăilescu's lead in attempting to determine the specific connections between Kurzweil's third-generation status and the particular characteristics of her use of maps. As this chapter progresses, I will trace how these maps chart the author-illustrator's attempts to assert herself in her young adulthood, while at the same time tracing her grandmother's experiences of the Holocaust. Before this, however, I will begin by turning my attention to the domestic spaces in which the three protagonists live, and the manner in which Kurzweil has reimagined these spaces into the diagrammatic form of the map. In essence, throughout *Flying*

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[15] Mihăilescu, 'Mapping…', p.106.
[16] Morris-Suzuki, p.27; this is not to say, of course, that Spiegelman is unaware of such a distinction, and has an uncomplicated belief in being able to access the pure, unmediated truth of the past – on the contrary, at moments such as those described here he is often passing ironic comment on his own need to ascertain specific, precise details, and the fact that, at times, his father's memories do not necessarily line up with official history.

Couch it is the Assmann's 'communicative memory' – memory in its 'informal everyday' guise – that largely underpins the intergenerational exchanges within the text, and in the first instance – as per the observation by Saltmarsh, with which I opened this chapter – such exchanges take place within the intimate space of the home.[17]

5.1. Mapping domestic space

The first page of *Flying Couch* opens the narrative with a convergence of all of the issues highlighted above: intergenerational transmission of Holocaust memory, mother-daughter and grandmother-daughter relationships, the domestic space of the home, and the mapping of intimate spaces and interior worlds are all clearly evident. At this point we see a sequence – presented without conventional comics panels, as with the rest of the narrative, and much like the works of Katin and Dres – that begins with a pile of notebooks, labelled with the note 'Amy – Here are Bubbe's stories... love Mom.'[18] The words 'love' and 'Mom' appear to tumble off the page and into the surrounding white space; as we follow a further string of letters cascading downward – accompanied by images of the notebooks gradually forming the shape of a building – we find that we arrive at a fully-formed, tiled house (made of the same notebooks, however, as indicated by the ring-binder roof ridge) in which the letters are either descending into, or rising from, the chimney (here composed of the letters that make up the words 'stories' and 'memories'). In the final image of the opening page, we are provided with a bird's-eye-view of the house, in which the roof gives way to reveal a floor plan of the upper storey (figure 5.1). This small-scale, domestic map goes on to constitute the double-paged spread that forms the background to the first four pages of the narrative proper. Evidently, the transmission of Holocaust memory (as indicated by the presence of 'Bubbe's stories,' which appear so significant that they come to form the house itself) is of central concern here; the opening pages of the text – with their diagrammatic backdrop of the domestic space – make clear that the transmission of this memory begins at home, and is initially mediated by

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[17] Assmann, p.127.
[18] Kurzweil, *Flying Couch*, p.1.

the figure of the mother ('...Love Mom'). Indeed, as Mihăilescu notes, the fact that the 'granddaughter's access to her grandmother's stories is often mediated by the mother' constitutes a 'new layer' to the intergenerational transmission seen in works such as those by Katin and Spiegelman.[19]
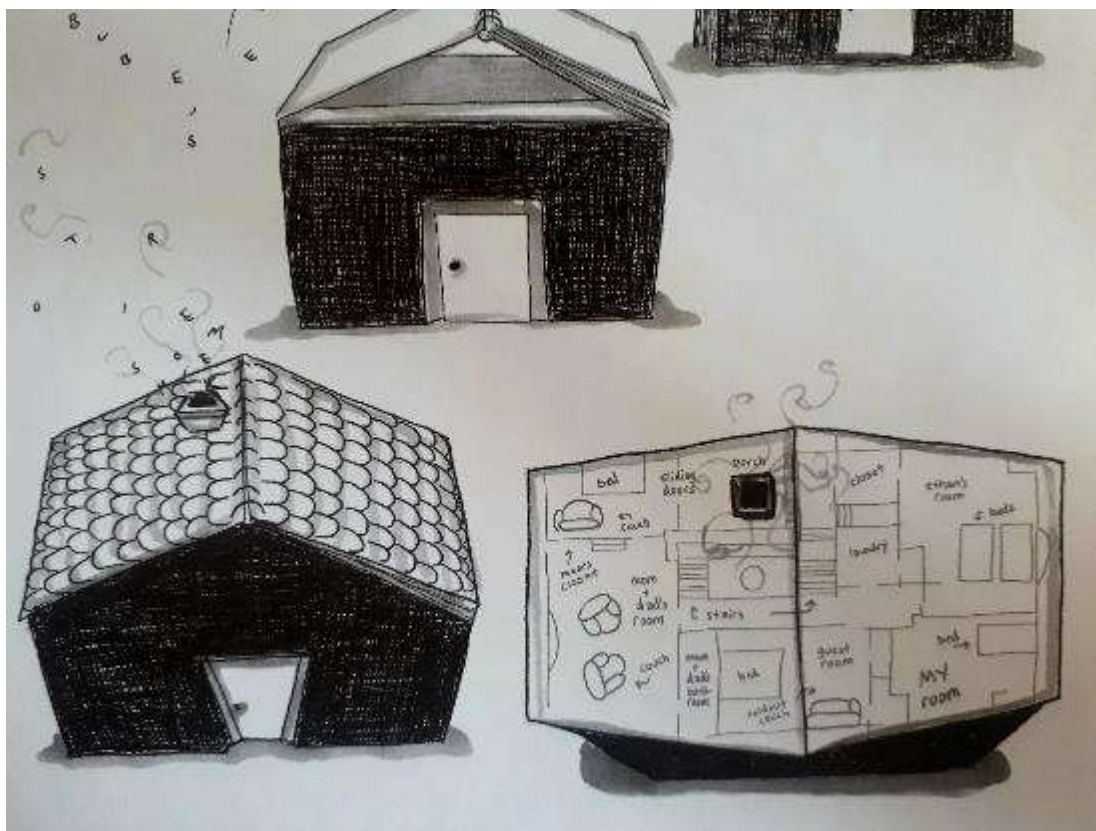
Figure 5.1 - At home with memory. Kurzweil, *Flying Couch*, p.1

Saltmarsh observes of *Flying Couch* at large:

> The obsessively layered density of creative expression page-by-page in *Flying Couch* attests to the fullness of life scrawled upon the templates of desk surfaces, computer screens, open suitcases, purses, windows, and couches. Words are images and vice versa: photo captions, computer filenames, Post-it notes, thought bubbles, nightmares, and book titles on shelves feel imagistic like memory, functioning beyond language.

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[19] Mihăilescu, 'Mapping...', p.96.

> The sharp lineation of birds, roots, branches, couches,
> and windows are transformed into a way of speaking.[20]

As we move past the opening, in which we see the notebooks containing the grandmother's stories, we see that the density of expression described by Saltmarsh extends to the diagram-backdrops of the Kurzweil family home, too (figures 5.2, 5.3, and 5.4). At this point, the image of the family home is presented in a pale grey colouration, and is clearly hand-drawn. While comprehensively charting the floor-plan of both the lower and upper storeys of the house, as we can see in figures 5.2, 5.3, and 5.4, the diagrams also contain much evidence of the 'fullness of life' described by Saltmarsh. Kurzweil has added a wide array of annotations, many of which offer a child's-eye view of the day-to-day activities of the Kurzweil household: 'hallway (leave shoes here)'; 'big rug (good for practicing cartwheels when no one is looking)'; 'piano (I should be practicing)'; and 'sink (don't leave dishes here or mom gets mad)' are but a few examples.[21] This 'fullness of life,' – with respect to the notion of maps in an ontogenetic sense, as 'co-constitutive production[s] between inscription, individual, and world' – conveys a clear impression of the 'context-dependent' nature of the mapping process.[22] From their child's-eye perspective, these maps capture a particular moment in time within a wider context of change and growth; it is difficult to imagine the adult Amy, for example, feeling guilty about not practising the piano, or performing cartwheels on the hallway rug. These cartographies signify *memories* of a particular moment at which these spaces meant these specific things to the young protagonist; the ontogenetic nature of the map has been frozen here according to memory. The opening pages of *Flying Couch*, then, contain maps (of a sort) that chart the intimate, domestic spaces of the Kurzweil family home, and provide some insight into the life that exists there, at least within the narrative present of the text's opening.

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[20] Saltmarsh, p.53.
[21] Kurzweil, *Flying Couch*, p.4
[22] Kitchin and Dodge, p.335.
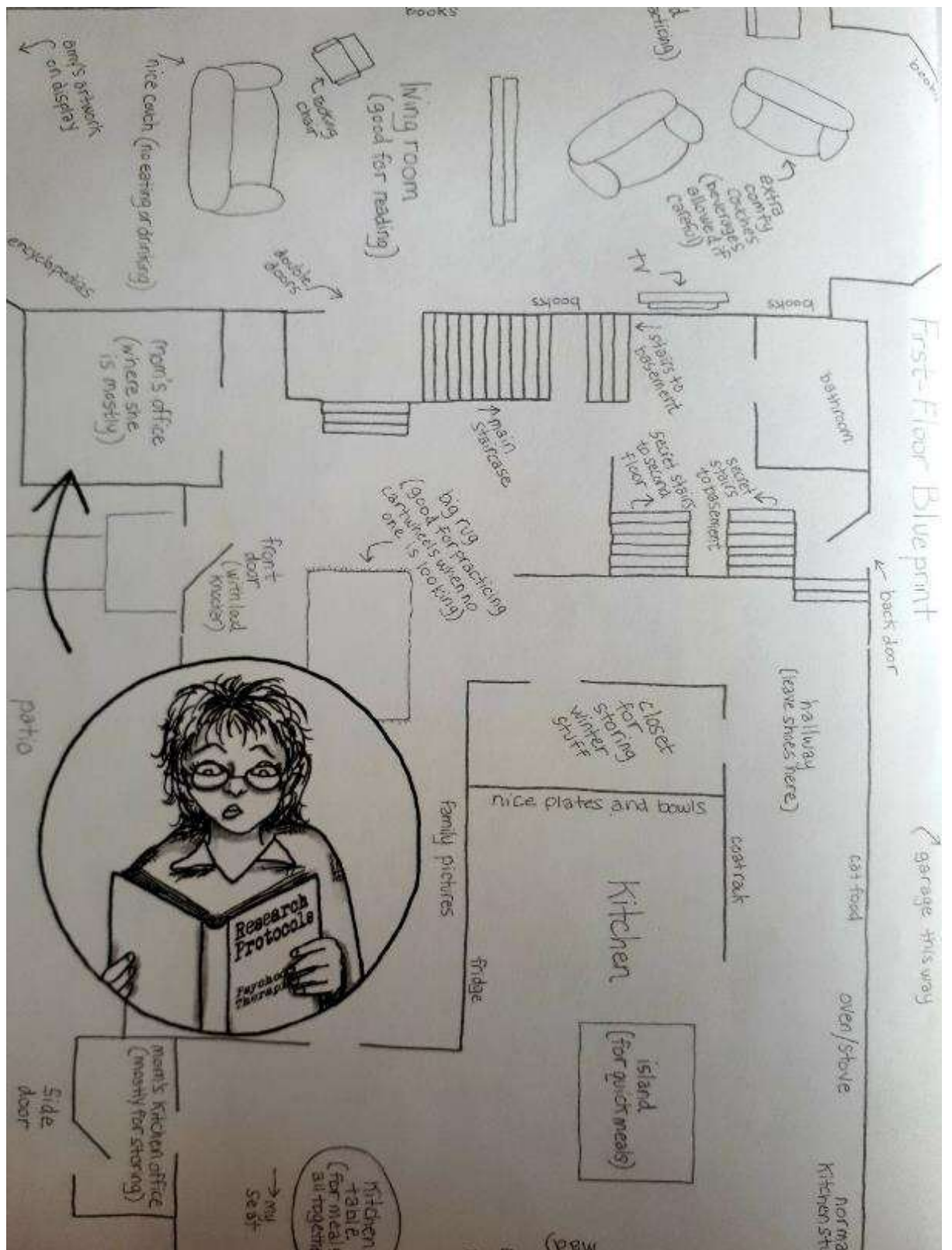
Figure 5.2 - The Kurzweil home. Kurzweil, *Flying Couch*, p.4.

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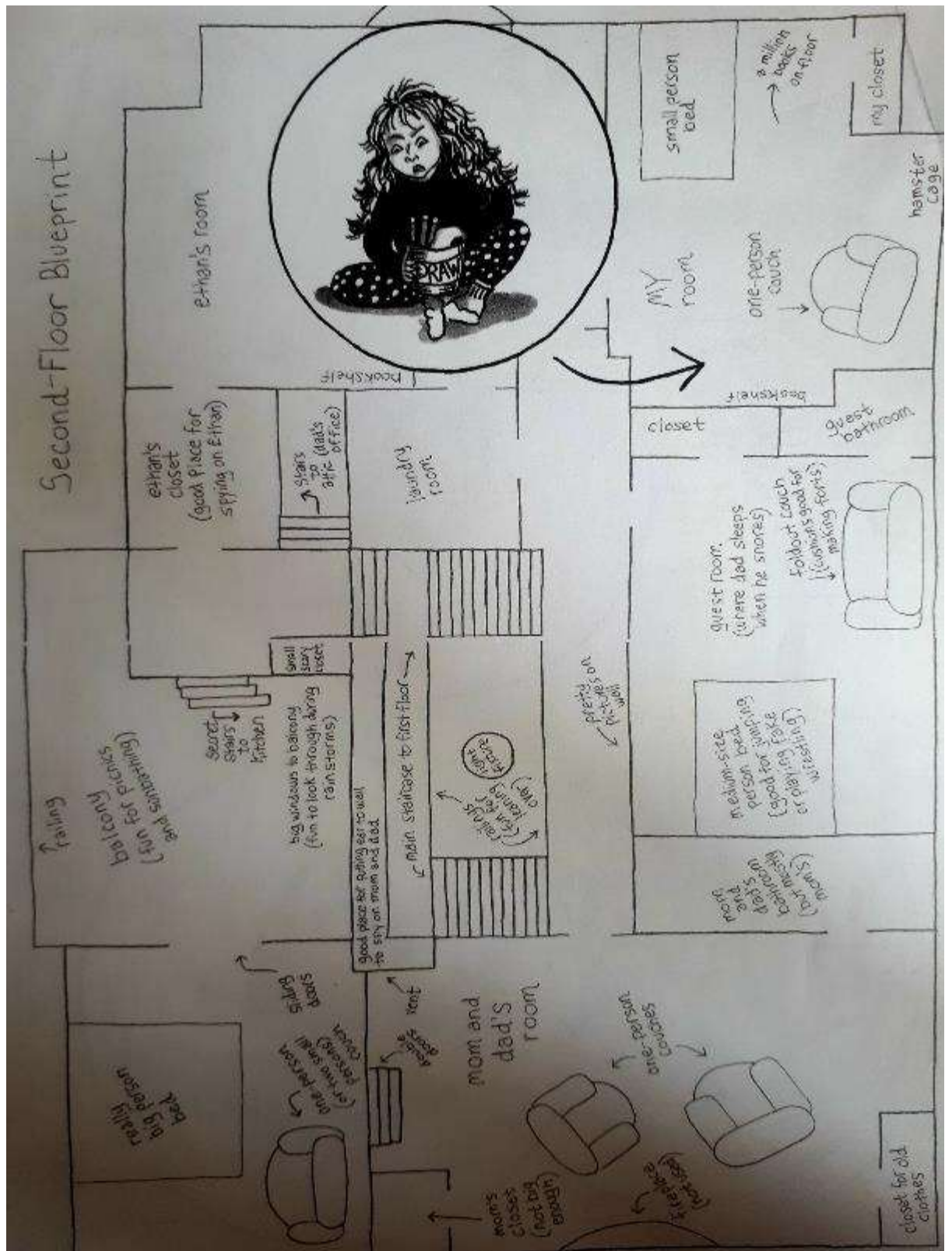
Figure 5.3 - The Kurzweil home. Kurzweil, *Flying Couch*, p.5.
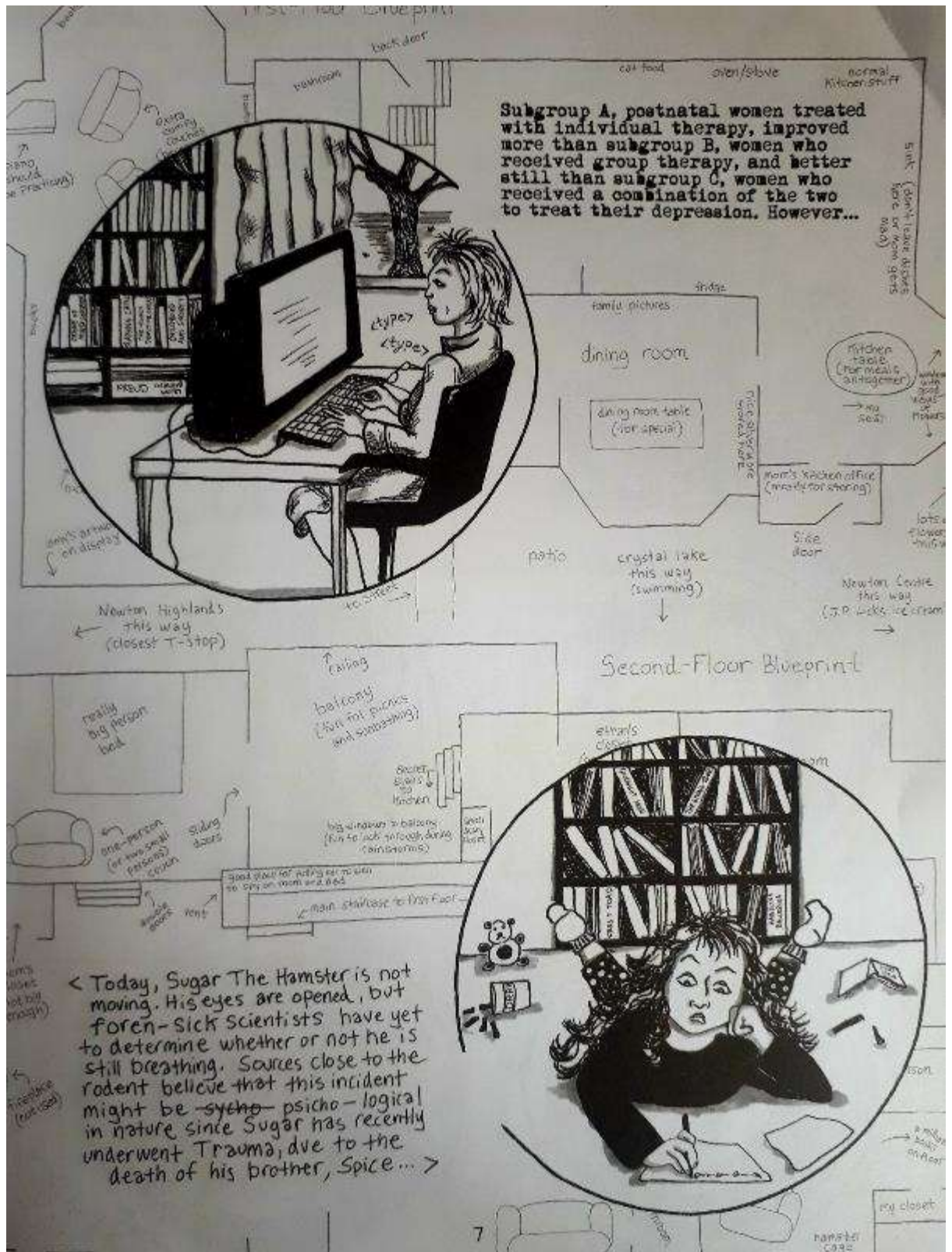
Figure 5.4 - Imitating the mother. Kurzweil, *Flying Couch*, p.7.

It is within this context that the transmission of Holocaust memory (again, as indicated by 'Bubbe's stories' on the opening page) begins to take place. Across the first four pages – the ones on which the backdrop is the map

of the home – Kurzweil introduces a child-version of herself and her mother (the grandmother is absent at this stage); the blueprint-backdrop is used to situate the two figures within the house, with the mother shown in her study, reading, while on the adjacent page – diagonally opposite – we see that Amy is in her bedroom on the first floor, extracting crayons from a carton (figures 5.2 and 5.3).[23] In each case, we see the mother and daughter ensconced within a bold, black-outlined circle that differentiates them, visually, from the background illustration of the house. In this way, each immediately appears to the reader as somewhat isolated from the other – particularly given the blankness of the frames in which they appear, their location on different floors of the house, and their evident engrossment in their respective tasks. We quickly learn, however, that there remains a certain closeness in this apparent isolation. Turning the page, we find that Amy is searching for crayons because she is busy imitating her mother's work (figure 5.4). Saltmarsh notes:

> In the first chapter of the book, Kurzweil portrays herself as a child imitating her mother who is typing up psychological research. One page…shows Kurzweil working in her bedroom on a different psychological study involving the effect of one pet hamster's death upon the other…Kurzweil playfully undermines scientific authority while also exploring the myriad ways in which girls imitate their mothers: the open window and the crayon bucket seem to offer women the chance to escape the merely rational. In Kurzweil's case, maternal imitation means aspiration, not only towards scientific conclusions, but also towards the dream-work of composing.[24]

This imitation of the 'dream-work of composing' might be viewed, in some regards, as the genesis of *Flying Couch* itself, and indeed this seems to be supported by the note from the mother on the opening page – 'Amy – Here are Bubbe's stories… Love mom.' In this moment it is strongly implied that the

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[23] Kurzweil, *Flying Couch,* pp.4-5.
[24] Saltmarsh, p.53.

mother is giving her encouragement (or at least, blessing) to the daughter's exploration of the grandmother's memories in her creative work – *Flying Couch* itself, in other words. Evidently, Marianne Hirsch's central notion of postmemory as a phenomenon characterised by 'imaginative investment, projection, and creation' is at play here, though it would seem that the torch has been passed, in a sense, from the mother to the daughter.[25] The opening pages of the text clearly suggest that the intergenerational transmission of Holocaust memory passes, in the case of the Kurzweil family, through the mediating figure of the mother, while simultaneously highlighting the complexity of the mother-daughter relationship itself; we see a kind of oscillation between closeness and distance at a number of other points later in the text, and this in fact becomes a key theme later on, as Kurzweil explores her young adulthood.

While this map-like charting of the Kurzweils' domestic spaces constitutes the opening to *Flying Couch*, the opening to the second chapter includes a sequence that is both a visual and thematic echo of these blueprint-backdrops. There is, too, a similar sense of the memory of a particular moment in Amy's past being frozen here, and Saltmarsh's notion of the 'fullness of life' is once again abundantly clear.[26] In this instance, however, the background is unquestionably a map in the conventional sense, given the now-expanded horizons of the young-adult protagonist – we see a depiction of the Stanford University campus, where Amy is now resident (figure 5.5).[27] The visual language is much the same as the opening to the first chapter; the map-background is clearly hand-drawn, it is rendered in pale grey, it is overlain with the same circular panels that offer glimpses of narrative progression, and it contains similarly personal, idiosyncratic markers – annotations that indicate day-to-day life (here, we see examples such as 'Escondido Village for grad students (avoid),' 'ex-boyfriend lives this way,' and 'you can't park here even though you want to').[28] Clearly then, the use of the map in this instance comes to signify the passage of time from the first chapter by highlighting Amy's growth and asserting a sense of her current independence; the world of

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[25] Hirsch, *Generation of Postmemory*, p.10
[26] Saltmarsh, p.53.
[27] Kurzweil, *Flying Couch*, pp.28-30.
[28] *Ibid.*

Stanford University constitutes a significant widening of the protagonist's horizons when compared with the space of the Kurzweil home.

With regard to the ontogenetic nature of cartography, we are clearly witnessing in this moment a significant expansion of the *context* within which these maps occur. The annotations on the densely-layered map confirm this, given that they signify a much broader range of concerns than those of the opening pages; through them, Kurzweil comments on the expense of living independently ('Bookstore ($)'), signals a growing awareness of issues around social justice ('White Plaza (good spot for protests…)'), and indicates a degree of self-awareness that is far less evident in the opening sequence ('Health Center (where I go when I'm feeling hypocondriachal)').[29] Particularly, these annotations also provide us with some sense of the protagonist's identity at this point in time (2008[30]) – we learn, for instance, that she is a dancer ('where I have dance performances sometimes,' 'dance rehearsals sometimes'), she appears to take her studies seriously ('fifth floor Bender Room best place to study'), and that she exercises ('good running loop,' 'workouts').[31] In short, at this moment mapping is used to signal both a temporal remove from the opening pages, and a much expanded world for the protagonist, which entails a degree of independence. It is via the form of the map, too, that facets of the identity of the protagonist are signalled; this search for – and expression of – identity and understanding ('self-telling' in Saltmarsh's terms) also occasions the entry of Holocaust memory into the text.

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[29] *Ibid*, pp.28-29.
[30] *Ibid*, p.31.
[31] *Ibid*, pp.28-29.
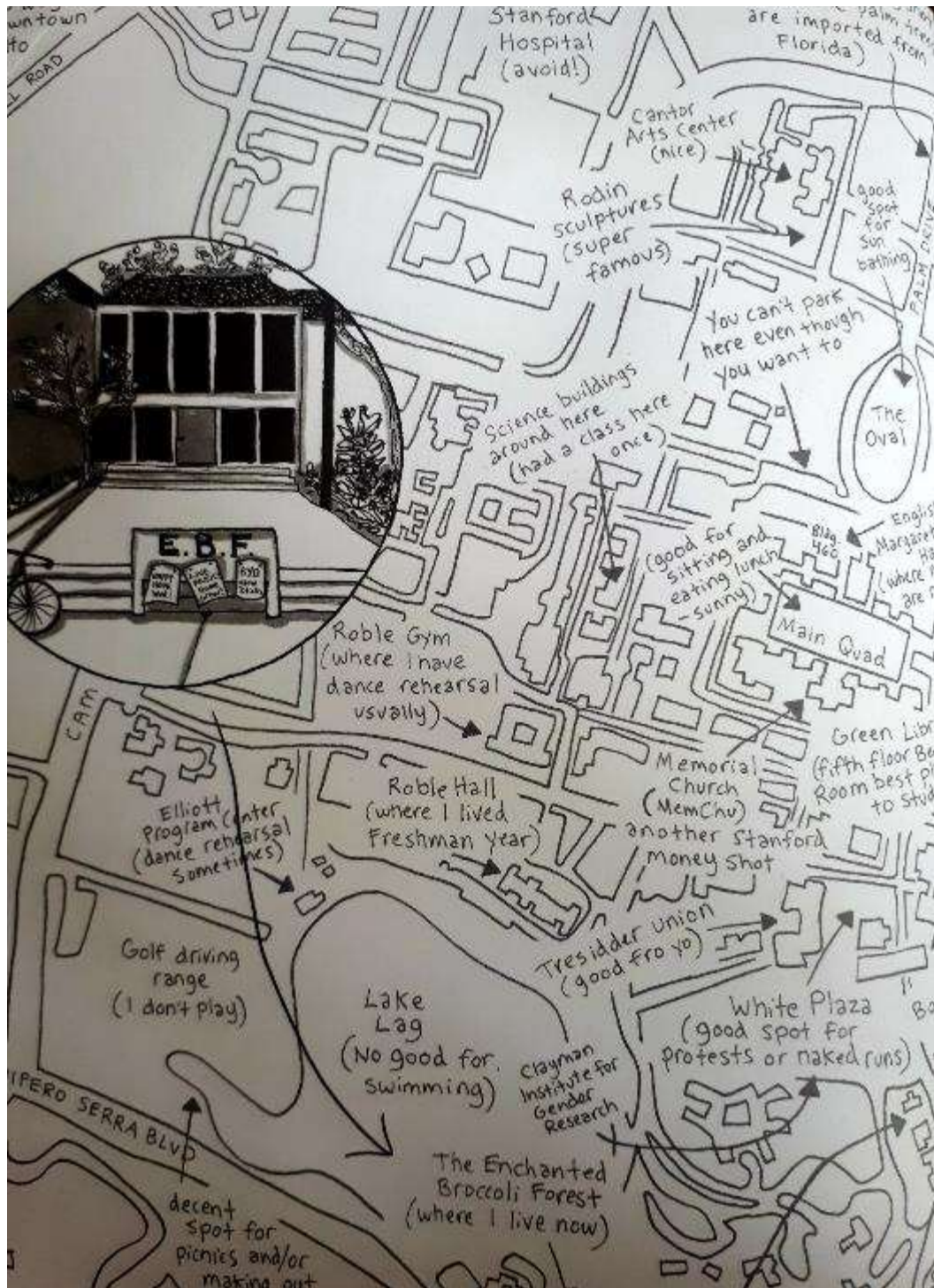
Figure 5.5 - Asserting independence; a section of Kurzweil's Stanford map. Kurzweil, *Flying Couch*, p.28.

Figure 5.6 - Calling Bubbe. Kurzweil, *Flying Couch*, p.31

Amy's relative independence is confirmed immediately after the map-pages, when we are presented with an image of an anxious-looking protagonist, clearly in a college dorm-room, deliberating whether or not to call

her grandmother (figure 5.6). As we can see, at this moment she is surrounded by the paraphernalia of college life, including a raft of post-it note reminders, and a number of perhaps-revealing books ('100 Demons,' 'Portrait of my mother,' Freud's 'On Dreams').[32] The map that forms the backdrop to the preceding three pages looms large over this moment, too – as we see in figure 5.6, it is in the centre of the image, in the form of a large poster titled 'STANFORD CAMPUS MAP,' which is pinned onto a corkboard behind the desk. Meanwhile – along with a reminder to 'call Bubbe' – there is also a photograph of the protagonist, her mother, and her grandmother, which sits to the right-hand side of the workspace. It is striking that in the heart of an intimate personal space, at the centre of the bric-a-brac of Amy's young adulthood (including signifiers of the close relationship between Amy and her mother and grandmother) sits a tool for navigation. Across the preceding pages – both in the case of Amy's home and college environments – we see how Kurzweil makes fairly straightforward (if subjective) use of mapping to provide the reader with some early sense of her personal life and day-to-day activities at two distinct temporal moments; the image of the protagonist's college dorm, however, provides some clues as to how the use of cartography will evolve as the text progresses. In the combination of the family photograph and the looming map – both of which occupy prominent positions in Amy's personal space – we can detect a hint of the forthcoming use of maps as a tool for staging, navigating, and attempting to untangle the complex familial relationships depicted within *Flying Couch*.

This particular application of cartography is made evident at the moment we first see the three generations of women together. 'Walking was always our activity of choice,' notes the protagonist upon visiting her grandmother with the rest of her family, shortly after the opening sequences discussed above.[33] When depicting these moments of intergenerational walking, Kurzweil tends to place the women on a blank, stylised pathway that visually recalls cartographic thoroughfares. As these paths snake across a number of pages of the text, the protagonists are represented multiply upon

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[32] *Ibid*, p.31; 'On dreams' is a pointed inclusion, given both her mother's profession and the fact that sleep and insomnia are recurrent motifs throughout the text.
[33] *Ibid*, p.35.

them, as if fragmented, recalling Hillary Chute's assertion that self-fragmentation is one feature of comics that makes the medium uniquely suited to life-writing;[34] indeed, at one point, Amy is depicted twice within the same image, with one figure of Kurzweil's Janus-faced rendering looking toward her mother and the other toward her grandmother, as the two older women argue.[35] At the moment Kurzweil first employs this device within the text, we see the group making their way to 'Cranbrook Gardens,' a place the young Amy believed was 'what "the old country" must have looked like,' perhaps owing to an association with her grandmother (figure 5.7); at this point, the entire journey reveals the fractious relationship between the mother and grandmother, punctuated as it is with bickering and gentle mockery. At the opening of this sequence, for instance, we see Amy positioned several steps ahead of her grandmother, alongside her mother, who asks 'left on Woodward to get to Cranbrook?' to which Bubbe's unhelpful response is 'no, it's a LEFT on Voodvard! [*sic*].'[36] In this first instance (the journey to Cranbrook), little concrete information is provided regarding the grandmother's background as a Holocaust survivor. Instead, Kurzweil offers hints and suggestions through the lens of her elderly relative's eccentric behaviour and 'larger than life' personality[37]: she has a pronounced accent, which is signalled orthographically ('Voodvard' for 'Woodward' for instance), and which appears to be Eastern or Central European, given the prevalence of 'V' sounds in the place of 'W' sounds, and the use of 'mit' rather than 'with' ('you like collecting cans mit Bubbe...')[38]; as the path winds its way across the pages, she repeatedly stops to collect discarded items from the floor (in a striking echo of Art Spiegelman's father Vladek, in his work *Maus*);[39] finally, when the three women arrive back at the grandmother's house, Bubbe takes great care over

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[34] Chute, *Graphic Women*, p.5.
[35] Kurzweil, *Flying Couch*, p.36.
[36] *Ibid*, p.35.
[37] *Ibid*, p.37.
[38] *Ibid*, pp.35-37.
[39] *Ibid*.

cleaning Amy's feet[40] – we later learn that she walked vast distances over Poland, often without shoes.[41]
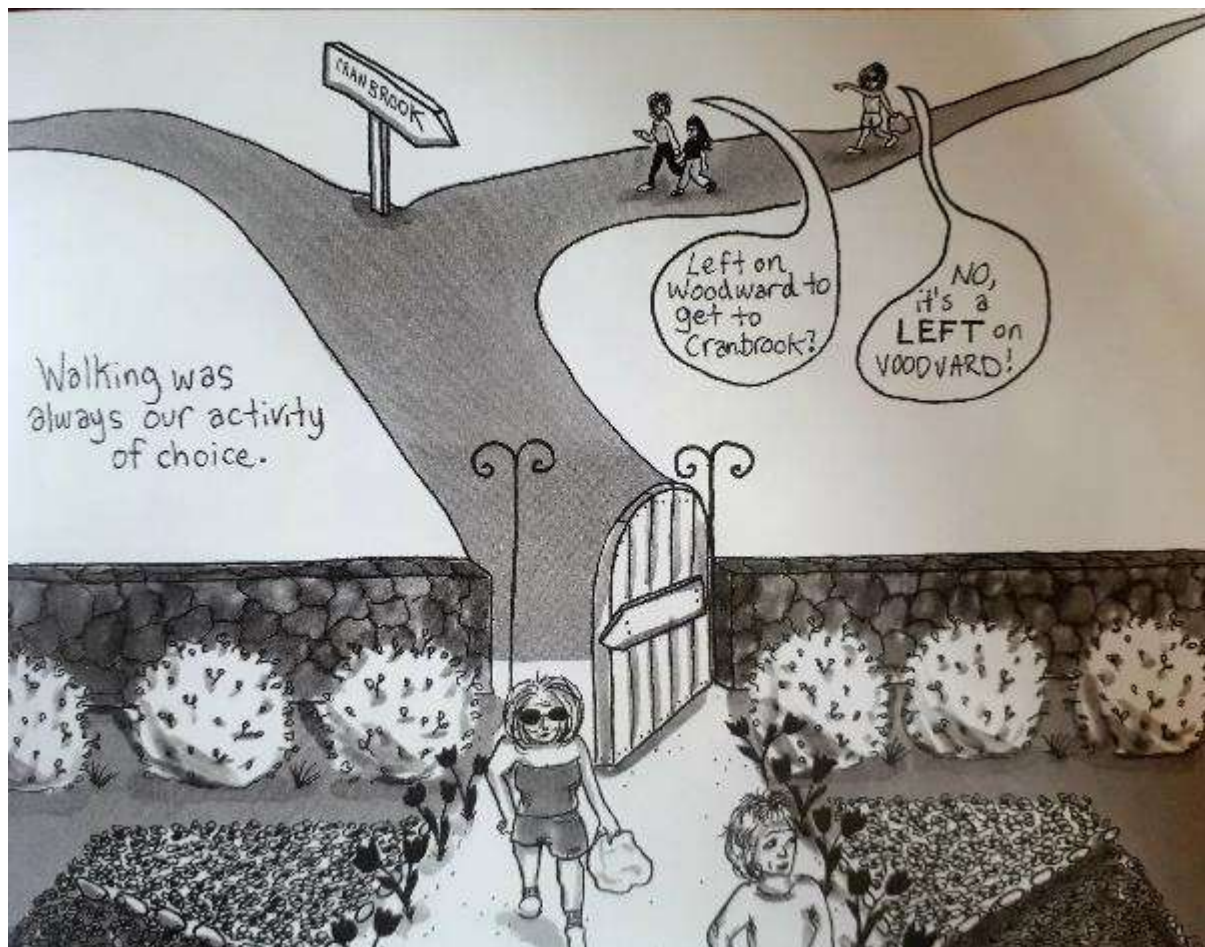
Figure 5.7 - Map-like paths. Kurzweil, *Flying Couch*, p.35.

At this moment, it is instead the interpersonal relationships between the three that come to the fore (Kurzweil presents her in-text self as a child at this point). We see the young Amy and her mother playing a guessing game relating to the names of plants (in which the mother seems eager to demonstrate her own knowledge), we see the grandmother hurrying them along impatiently, we see the mother's exasperation regarding Bubbe's appearance (expressed in a conspiratorial tone with her young daughter – 'you'd think she could comb her hair at least...'), and we see laughter and gentle mockery on the part of Amy and her mother when the elderly woman

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[40] *Ibid*, p.40.

[41] *Ibid*, p.92; the grandmother tells us, through her testimony – reproduced by Kurzweil within the text – that: '...I had shoes, but I didn't always want to wear them because I only had one pair. When I came finally to my aunt's house, my feet were so blistered.'

mispronounces 'good Samaritan' as 'good S'American.'[42] There appear, then, to be two simultaneous acts of wayfinding taking place here; as they negotiate the journey to Cranbrook Park, they also appear to be negotiating their relationship. This sense is heightened by the fact that this is one of few moments in the narrative when the three women spend time together – typically, they are separated from each other by great distances. In all of this, we see a striking literalisation of Tania Rossetto's suggestion that maps can be considered in terms of 'images *as* environments in which we exist, as well as objects we encounter.'[43] In addition to the embodied experience of walking the route to Cranbrook Gardens – with the space here depicted in a map-like manner – there are certain intersections between memory and mapping. First, we can assume that the images are themselves based on the memory of journeys such as these taken by the author-protagonist as a child, given that we are presented with a child-version of Amy at this point in the text. As such, the relationship between the mother and grandmother, which we see pictured here as somewhat fractious, is itself one based on *recollection*. Likewise, Bubbe's *otherness* in this (Middle-American) context is quietly signalled in a number of ways as the multiple, fragmented protagonists make their way across the map-path, reminding readers implicitly of her status as a Holocaust survivor, and suggesting the nature of some of the narrative yet to come.

In this regard, the significance of the grandmother's Holocaust memories to these familial relationships is first highlighted to the reader in *explicit* form via the same technique – the placement of the three female protagonists on a blank, winding, map-like road. We see this moment in figure 5.8, and it occurs – we are informed by a signpost – on the same walk to Cranbrook Park, though its placement in the narrative occurs just *after* the three have returned to Bubbe's house, lending it the quality of a kind of intrusive flashback in the manner described by Cathy Caruth in her book *Unclaimed Experience*: 'an event that…imposes itself again, repeatedly, in the nightmares and repetitive actions of the survivor.'[44] Here, the 'event' is the grandmother's re-telling of aspects of her own Holocaust narrative, suggesting

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[42] *Ibid*, pp.36-38.

[43] Rossetto, 'Skin of the map', p.88, original emphasis.

[44] Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience : Trauma, Narrative and History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), p.4. ProQuest Ebook Central.

that this is, in some regards, almost a kind of tripartite trauma, experienced (albeit doubtless to varying degrees) by all three women; the grandmother is reminded of her Holocaust past by her daughter and granddaughter, while they themselves are unexpectedly placed in association with this past in a manner that is clearly painful. The sense of a flashback is heightened, too, by Kurzweil's rendering of the scene; rather than the surrounds of Cranbrook Park that were on display in the previous depiction of the journey, we are instead confronted by a blank black and grey background which frames the equally blank, white road – the only feature of any kind at this moment is the sign pointing down the road to Cranbrook Park.

Given that this is the author-protagonist's recollection of events, and that Kurzweil has herself chosen to portray this scene in the manner described, we might conclude that she recalls this moment – at least from the later perspective of adulthood – as disturbing at least, if not actively traumatic. Kurzweil frames this particular discussion – in contrast with its more light-hearted, if somewhat fractious precursor – as an example of Bubbe 'reminding [them] of things [they would] rather have forgotten…or couldn't understand.'[45] The conversation at this moment runs as follows, punctuating the walk at various points along the winding, map-like path:

> [Bubbe:] *La la la di do da* – Sonyale! [Sonya:] WHAT?
> [Bubbe:] Did I ever tell you dat you have my sister's eyes?
> …[Sonya:] Mom, please – [Bubbe:] My baby one – mit
> BLECK eyes. [Sonya:] My eyes aren't even BLACK!
> [Bubbe, to Amy:] You too. Just like my baby sister mit
> dose eyes. She vas zo hungry. She ask me: Lily, please,
> for a piece of bread.[46]

This traumatic history – some of the detail of which we learn later in the text – is, then, a further facet of the relationship between the three women that must be navigated. The fact that it occupies a separate, visually-distinct segment of the chapter to the rest of the journey to Cranbrook Park – in the sense of its emptiness and bold, black and grey background – along with the

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[45] Kurzweil, *Flying Couch*, pp.44-45.
[46] *Ibid.*

fact that it appears almost as a kind of flashback, suggests that it holds particular significance in this regard. We see this significance, too, in the varied reactions of Amy and her mother; at the moment Sonya responds to her mother's story with 'Mom, please,' for instance, we see her horrified expression, and she wears a similar look of shock while pulling her daughter close to her when her mother first raises the prospect of her sister's memory ('Sonyale!...did I ever tell you...?').

The child-version of Amy, meanwhile, appears to regard this horror with a sense of curiosity, instead gazing serenely up toward her mother; likewise, when Bubbe settles her focus on her granddaughter, Kurzweil has annotated the image of her younger self with the caption 'secretly thrilled' in response to the grandmother's insistence that her granddaughter, too, looks like her sister.[47] The sequence ends with an image that we may take as representative of the grandmother's view, the granddaughter's perspective, or perhaps both; as Bubbe delivers the closing segment of the above conversation ('She vas zo hungry...') her words are accompanied by a close-up image of the faces of both the grandmother and granddaughter, staring intently at one another. Here, in the reflection in Bubbe's sunglasses – which partially obscure her view of her granddaughter – we see an image of her lost sister (indeed, one which is reproduced later in the text, during one of the sequences recounting the grandmother's wartime experiences). At this moment, we may be witnessing Kurzweil's interpretation of her grandmother's perspective (or memories), her own childish view of how Bubbe views (or viewed) her, refracted through the older woman's eyewear, or perhaps both. In any case, this moment adds significant weight to Mihăilescu's observation that, in Kurzweil's work, '...maps underline how the acts of seeing and being seen depend on one's vantage point or positioning in space and time which become, in turn, ways of mediating one's understanding of others.'[48] Once again, the winding, map-like road is employed as stage-set for the navigation of difficult familial relationships, here specifically intertwined with painful Holocaust memories. Inevitably, the piecing-together of Chute's fragmented selves is a more difficult task when there are three fragmented figures occupying the

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[47] *Ibid*, p.45.
[48] Mihăilescu, 'Mapping...', p.107.

same space. To use Max Silverman's terms, this scene of traumatic memory, alongside the preceding, more innocuous walk to Cranbrook Gardens, provide an example of 'the present [being] shown to be shadowed or haunted by a past which is not immediately visible but is progressively brought into view'; there are increasingly-significant hints here toward what is to come.[49]

Figure 5.8 - The past intrudes. Kurzweil, *Flying Couch*, p.44.

In all of the above examples – from the home space, through the college campus to the winding road to Cranbrook Park – Kurzweil employs maps and map-like devices as a means of presenting family, family relationships, and the negotiation of her young adult identity as being akin to acts of mapping or

[49] Silverman, p.3.

navigation. In each case, maps function on both a figurative level – as a metaphor for negotiating such relationships – and on a semi-literal level, as they form the backdrops upon which Kurzweil stages these relationships. This is a connection (and a device) that persists throughout the text. We see later, for instance, the reappearance of the blank, cartographic road when Amy attends the ironically-titled 'University-wide identity fair' at Stanford.[50] Here, she walks past stalls with titles such as 'Politically Active Black People' and 'Stoners for the Environment' and is eventually directed by a sign to a section titled 'Jews (various),' at which point she is encouraged to test a variety of identities in the form of face-in-the-hole boards with titles such as 'Ardent Pro-Israel Jew,' 'Radical Anti-Zionist Jew,' and 'Expert Educated Jew.'[51] Each of these identities is accompanied by a pros and cons list, by which means Kurzweil passes ironic comment on the characteristics of each stereotype. Here, a semi-cartographic depiction of navigation is again used in metaphorical conjunction with the search for identity, and is in this instance accompanied by a sardonic take on the confusing task of carving out a persona for oneself within the diverse milieu of the college campus. By way of one final example, we see a similar map to the image of the Stanford campus at the opening to chapter seven – at this moment, Kurzweil employs a map of the New York City subway system to signal the opening of a new phase of her life – her post-graduation move to Brooklyn. In the same way as the blueprint of the family home and the map of Stanford, Kurzweil has labelled a wide array of places of significance (particularly in the form of bus stops and subway stations).[52] In each of the above examples then, we see clearly the equivalence that is drawn between maps, acts of mapping, navigation, and questions of identity, family, and familial relationships. When it comes to representing the grandmother's wartime experiences, however, Kurzweil employs a much more sober use of maps, yet it is an application that often remains equally subjective.

5.2. Mapping the past

Throughout *Flying Couch*, Kurzweil relays her grandmother's experiences in parallel to the more recent events that take place in the context of the wider

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[50] Kurzweil, *Flying Couch*, p.104.
[51] *Ibid*, pp.104-107.
[52] *Ibid*, p.236.

family. At each point, the older woman's story is reproduced near-verbatim from her recorded testimony, which Kurzweil illustrates for the reader at a number of points in the text – we see at various moments, for instance, Amy looking at her grandmother's testimony online and listening to the recording, and the narrative opens, as we have seen, with the notebooks containing 'Bubbe's stories.' This is then, to use Astrid Erll's terms, an example of memory travelling through media, from oral testimony into the comics form;[53] Kurzweil has enacted a re-mediation of her grandmother's testimony that passes through her authorial control – this act constitutes her own performance of postmemorial 'imaginative investment, projection, and creation.'[54] At this point there is, in effect, a movement away from the Assmann's 'communicative memory,' as Kurzweil begins to engage with testimonial sources that are not based on direct, intimate expressions of memory on the part of her grandmother; these sequences represent an engagement with a broader cultural memory that surrounds the specific familial context to which we have hitherto been introduced. That we are receiving Bubbe's words (apparently) as they appear in the testimony transcripts is signified by Kurzweil's adoption of a typewriter-style font for her grandmother's narration; this differs significantly from the handwriting that charts the narrative throughout the rest of the text, suggesting a natural reluctance on Kurzweil's part to tamper in any substantive way with the testimony (we see the difference between the two typographies, for example, in the writing present in figures 5.8 and 5.9 respectively).[55] By contrast, it is broadly the case that when maps appear within the grandmother's narrative, they are usually employed by Kurzweil to orient the reader spatially, in a sense, albeit not with a view to specifically pinpointing locations of significance;

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[53] Erll, 'Travelling Memory', p.13.

[54] Hirsch, *Generation of Postmemory*, p.10.

[55] Lily Fenster's testimony, upon which many of these segments are based, was recorded by Dr. Sidney Bolkosky for the University of Michigan's Voice/Vision Holocaust Survivor Oral History Archive in 1994; the recordings and transcript are available here: <http://holocaust.umd.umich.edu/fenster/> [accessed 22 July 2020]. Kurzweil does appear to have made occasional minor alterations to word order and spelling in some instances; when we compare the account of an attempted sexual assault by a Nazi on p.97 of *Flying Couch* with the transcript under the heading 'Sexual Advances' on the University of Michigan website, there appear to have been a number of slight alterations and a condensation of a more expansive account, for instance.

rather, they provide a general sense of the space in which the reader finds themselves, while often acting as a backdrop in much the same way as some of the examples we have already seen. In many cases, the cartographies of the grandmother's past are overlain with other images that combine with the map to convey a particular sense of narrative progression, or a particular atmosphere appropriate to the events described and depicted. In this regard, questions of scale are particularly important.

By way of example, we first see a map applied to Bubbe's experiences at the moment in her testimony when she describes her incarceration in the Warsaw ghetto (figure 5.9). After recounting her life prior to the German invasion and conditions in the ghetto, Bubbe describes the 'bunker' in which she and her family were forced to live: 'We finally went to a bunker, the ganse mishpochah, the whole family, no water, smelly, dirty, little kids screaming, and other families too. The night would light up just like the day.'[56] At this moment, the backdrop to Lily's testimony is a map of the Warsaw ghetto, rendered by Kurzweil as a line-drawing, on which only roads and railways are depicted, alongside annotations indicating specific road names and other landmarks – 'Muranowski Square,' the Vistula river, and 'Traugutta park' are a few examples.[57] There are no tongue-in-cheek markers of everyday life here; rather, Kurzweil offers a rather sparse, sombre presentation of the space (albeit one that remains hand-drawn, and hand-annotated by the author). Instead of using the map in conjunction with the testimony to pinpoint the specific location of the bunker, meanwhile, a large section of the cartographic backdrop is overlain with an image of the bunker itself, presented in a kind of overhead cross-section, as we see in figure 5.9. Rather than signifying a specific, identifiable point on the map, this overlain image in fact obscures much of the cartography of the ghetto; instead of employing the map to denote specific, factual information then, Kurzweil makes use of it, in conjunction with the image of the basement, to convey a more general sense of her grandmother's experience – the overcrowded, dingy surroundings. This recreated aspect of her grandmother's experience is coupled, through the form of the map, with a general sense of place and time – the Warsaw Ghetto.

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[56] Kurzweil, *Flying Couch*, p.64.
[57] *Ibid.*

Contrary to the typical application of cartography as a means of pinpointing specific, objective spatial information, Kurzweil's use of the Warsaw Ghetto map in this instance recalls Tessa Morris-Suzuki's notion of *truth* versus *truthfulness* in its attempt to capture something of the dingy, cramped conditions described in the testimony. In terms of the 'chain of relationships' between event and representation that Morris-Suzuki discusses, the chain here is very short – it runs from survivor testimony, through the mediating hand of the granddaughter, to the reader; specificity is here limited to the map's depiction of the *particular* space of the Warsaw Ghetto at large, insofar as it signals road names, railway lines and so on, while the rest of the image conveys an attempt to access something of the subjective experience of discomfort and fear expressed in the testimony.[58] To take the question of scale as an example, for instance, at this moment the cartographic backdrop depicts the Warsaw Ghetto in the space of a single page, rather than the double-paged spreads we saw for the Stanford campus and even Amy's childhood family home, the latter of which is certainly on an entirely different scale in comparison with the ghetto; thus, in conjunction with the specific image of the basement (which encroaches heavily upon the space depicted by the cartography), the map itself likewise conveys a somewhat claustrophobic impression of imprisonment or entrapment, highlighting as it does the tight confines of the depicted area. Even the apparently-objective (albeit hand-drawn, re-mediated) cartography, then, has been applied in such a way here as to (attempt to) capture something of the experience of confinement. This is in stark contrast, as we will see shortly, with the use of maps to convey the grandmother's experience of wandering the Polish countryside after she has escaped from Warsaw. In all of this there is a strong echo of Gil and Duarte's notion of fluid cartography as a form of mapping that seeks understanding rather than control; in this moment, Kurzweil is applying the map as a specific vessel through which to understand something of the memory expressed within her grandmother's testimony.[59]

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[58] Morris-Suzuki, p.27.
[59] Gil and Duarte, p.3.

We went finally to a bunker, the
ganse mishpochah, the whole
family, no water, smelly, dirty,
little kids screaming, and
other families too.
The night would light
up just like the day.
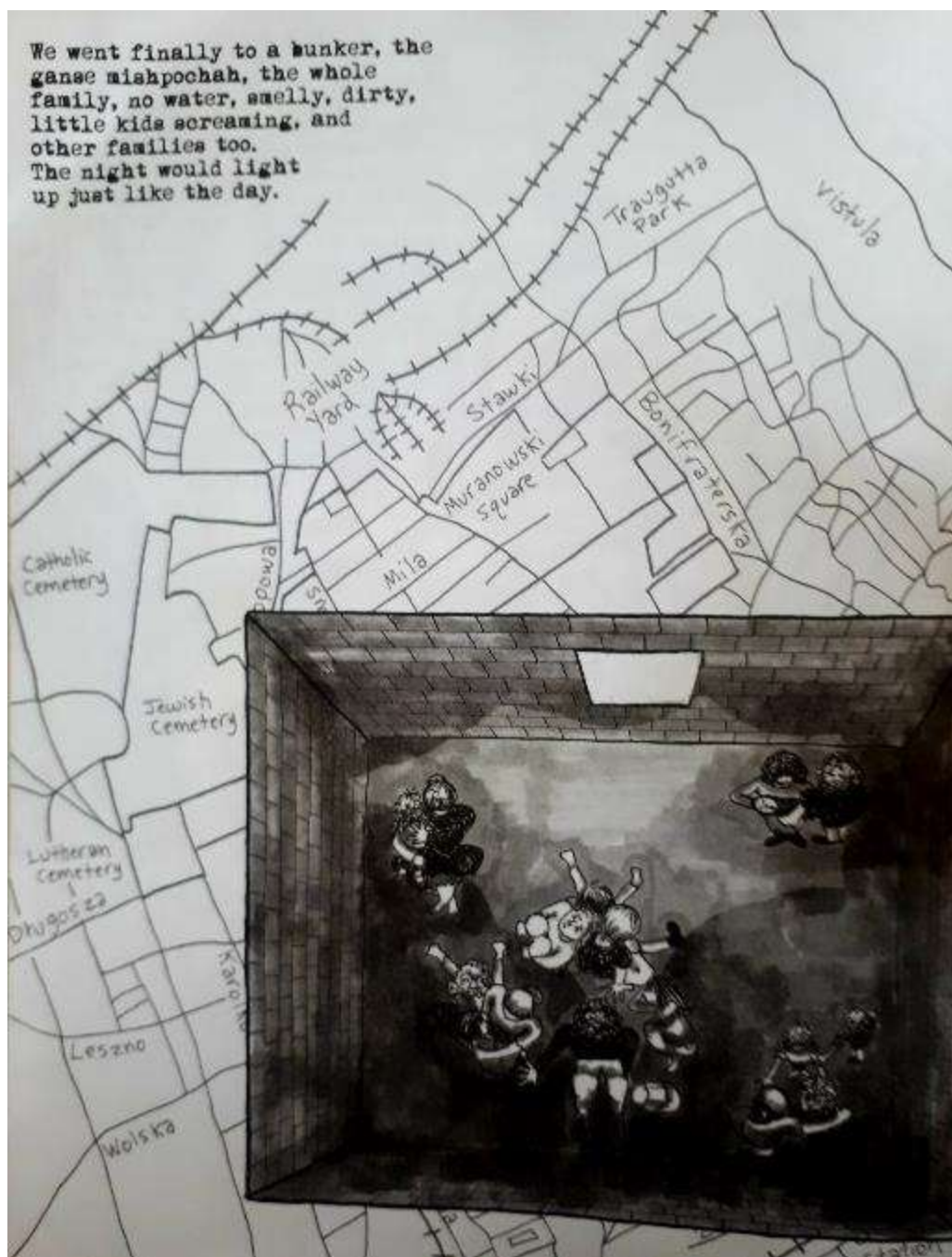
Figure 5.9 - Trapped in the Warsaw Ghetto. Kurzweil, *Flying Couch*, p.64.

We see a very similar effect, too, at the moment Bubbe tells (again, through her testimony) of how she learned of her own grandmother's death in the ghetto, after returning from a brief stay in hospital (figure 5.10); at this point, the sense of entrapment is even more acute, and the use of a cartographic backdrop serves to heighten this effect. She explains: 'When I come [*sic*] back to my family we was [*sic*] living in another little place. But she was gone. My Bubbe. She had died. And I had black metal in my hip. Can you

imagine? To come home...and home is gone.'[60] At this moment, we see a further representation of the Warsaw Ghetto in a map similar to that pictured in figure 5.9 – a sparse line drawing with only landmarks of significance and road names added by way of annotation. In this case, too, we also see a similar image overlain atop the cartographic backdrop; here, members of Lily's family are huddled together in what appears to be an even smaller space, while the protagonist (Bubbe/Lily, not Amy) is depicted kneeling, wearing an expression of horror; like the man in the previous image of the basement, she is looking toward the ceiling, as if projecting her despair in the direction of the reader. Through both this image and the map background, Kurzweil conveys a further-increased sense of confinement. The overlay consists of an even smaller living space, with the backdrop of bricks and cracks conveying the distinct impression that the walls are closing in; while being depicted at a slightly larger scale than the previous example, the cartography itself, meanwhile, suggests a similar sense of entrapment by highlighting the boundaries of the ghetto, which were not explicit on the ghetto map discussed above.

On the following page this sense of claustrophobia continues, as we see a depiction of three notebook-pages, each of which contains an image of Amy's Bubbe as a young girl; in the first two, she is encircled by the outline of the ghetto boundaries from the previous page, while in the final image she is seen removing her Star of David armband in disgust (signifying, we later learn, her decision to escape the ghetto and live out the remainder of the war posing as a Gentile Pole).[61] In this case, as with the preceding depiction of the basement, cartography and images combine to convey a particular sense of the events described by the grandmother's testimony; the specific location of (for instance) the family's new accommodation is not of particular import here, but the sense of despair and intense claustrophobia conveyed by the ghetto boundaries (here in cartographic form), the shocked face of the young victim, and the brickwork background that rests beneath the image of their new accommodation all combine to create a particular vision of the immense horror of Bubbe's wartime experiences. At this moment, too, the sense of despair conveyed by the images also justifies the act we see on the next page –

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[60] Kurzweil, *Flying Couch*, pp.68-69.
[61] *Ibid*, p.70.

the removal of the Star of David armband – which is a precursor to the action conveyed in the next sequence devoted to Bubbe's testimony, later in the text. As with the previous ghetto map, there is again here a sense of an attempt to convey *truthfulness*, rather than specific *truths* about Lily's experiences in the ghetto, in the sense expressed by Morris-Suzuki. Here, postmemorial creative engagement with Holocaust memory – 'imaginative investment' – meets fluid cartography; each process is pulling toward the same goal, namely, that of attempting to fathom unimaginable terror, and inviting the reader to do likewise.[62] That this is attempted in *spatial* terms is apt to the notion, expressed by Tim Cole, that 'planning and implementing ghettoization was, in part at least, an act of urban planning'; the claustrophobic spatial experience of the Warsaw Ghetto was one that was man-made.[63]
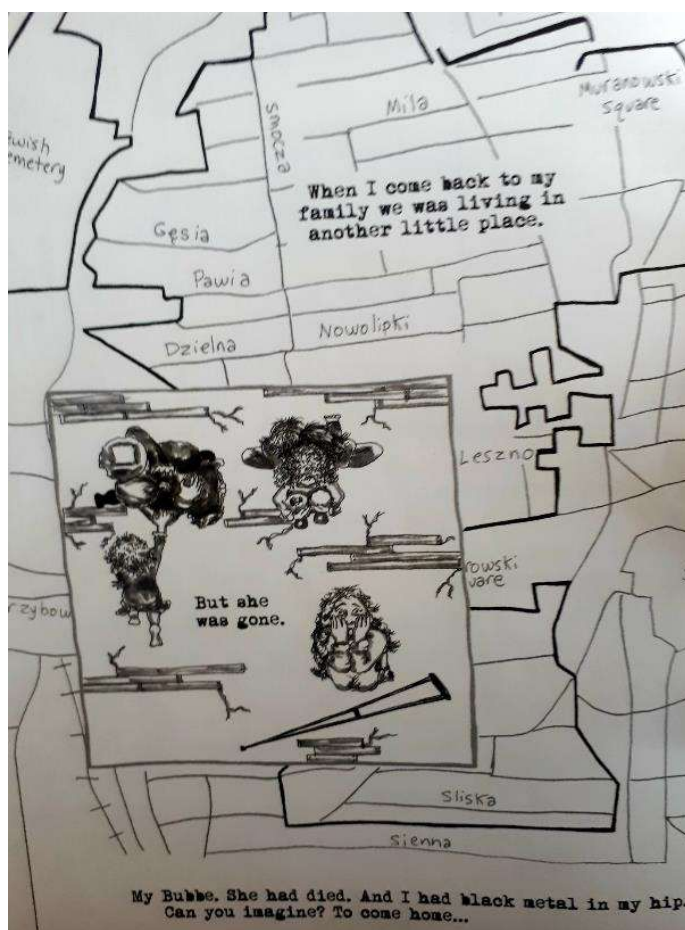
Figure 5.10 - Mapping a family tragedy. Kurzweil, *Flying Couch*, p.68.

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[62] Hirsch, *Generation of Postmemory*, p.10.

[63] Cole, *Holocaust City*, p.16.
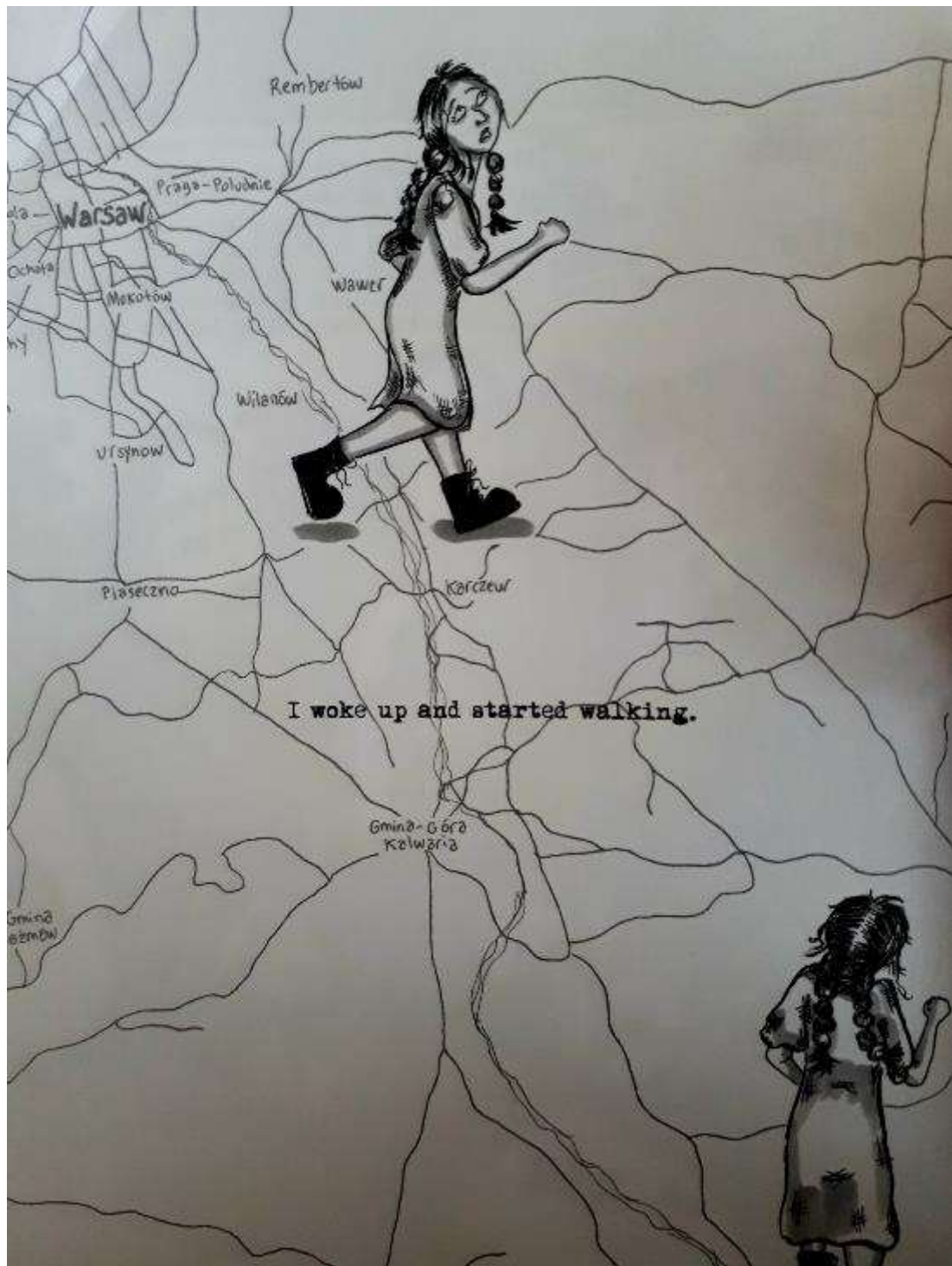
Figure 5.11 - A section of Kurzweil's depiction of her grandmother's journey across Poland. Kurzweil, *Flying Couch*, p.91.

Later in the narrative, when we return to the grandmother's story, we learn more of the detail of her flight from the Warsaw Ghetto, following the death of her youngest sister shortly after the death of her own grandmother. Upon her eventual escape from within the Ghetto walls, the young Bubbe's journey across Poland, from Warsaw to her relatives in Łuków, is depicted by

Kurzweil as a double-paged, line-drawn map (a section of which we see in figure 5.11).[64] The cartography itself is once more relatively sober and, again, there is no evidence of playful, idiosyncratic annotation; it is limited, too, to representing the roadways, rivers, and boundaries of the depicted region of Poland. Yet, once again – despite the broad geographical accuracy of the hand-drawn map – specificity is not of particular concern (again, recalling the truth versus truthfulness distinction); rather, Kurzweil depicts her grandmother as a walking figure at multiple points across its surface – facing away from the reader, looking up to the sky, looking down to the ground – seemingly scattered at random across the cartographic image. We get no sense here of the *specific* route taken by the young Bubbe, but Kurzweil instead provides the reader with a sense of *scale*, offering a notion of the vast distances covered on foot by the young escapee by providing a double-paged spread of the area covered. This sense of scale, too, is confirmed in the image of the grandmother's younger self, which appears to grow wearier as time progresses – as the figure moves across the two pages, her hair and attire appear to become more dishevelled, and by the second page she is clutching her lower back as if in pain, while gazing at the floor despondently.[65]

We see a similar effect, too, when Lily arrives in Łuków; here, Kurzweil offers a cartographic backdrop that features a line-drawn map of the city.[66] Overlain atop this image are three large houses (in this case, farmhouses), which are drawn from a perspective situated directly overhead and are placed at three separate points on the page, as if surrounding the city – between these, we see a trail of footprints left by the young Bubbe, as she circles between the three buildings looking for food, work, and shelter. Here, the buildings and the small figure of Lily – which is repeated around the circle of footprints – are vastly disproportionate, in terms of scale, to the map depicted beneath, yet they once again convey a sense of the scale of the grandmother's wanderings; the footprints seem to circle the full expanse of the city. That these footprints appear to revisit the same three farmhouses, too, suggests the repetitious nature of the grandmother's wanderings through space at this moment in time.

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[64] Kurzweil, *Flying Couch*, pp.90-91.
[65] *Ibid*, p.91.
[66] *Ibid*, p.94.

Whether or not she was visiting the same three farmhouses in reality is immaterial; rather, it is the repeated (here, literally *circuitous*) act of knocking on doors and asking for food and accommodation that is of significance, as per the accompanying testimony, which simply notes that she 'went to different farms.'[67] The exhaustion of this period of her life – as suggested by the size of her circular wanderings and their repetitious nature – is again captured in the accompanying testimony, too, when Lily notes that she 'was so hungry,' and that she 'would eat anything, even pork' – she '[needed] strength.'[68] On the next page – as if to confirm the relative futility of these journeys – we find that she has succumbed to typhus, and is gravely ill.[69]

By way of one final example of the use of maps as a means of illustrating the grandmother's testimony, I turn now to a later example that conveys a similar sense of scale to those discussed above, while once more avoiding the perhaps-expected use of maps as an objective tool for charting specific spatial information. Later in the narrative, Bubbe – through her testimony – describes how she managed to get her mother transferred to the Łuków ghetto from Warsaw after saving money, only to see her deported to Treblinka shortly afterward (a section of the large map which traces this journey is shown in figure 5.12).[70] To illustrate this deportation, Kurzweil employs the same device as she used to depict her grandmother's wanderings; she presents the reader with a double-paged, hand-drawn map, composed simply of lines representing roads and boundaries, and which covers a region that includes the area around Warsaw, Łuków, and Treblinka (pointedly, Treblinka is labelled here in capitals, along with Warsaw and Łuków – the only settlements on the map to be highlighted in this way). Once again, overlain atop this cartographic backdrop is a visual marker of the surrounding narrative; in this case, Kurzweil has added a single train carriage atop a track which runs horizontally across the length of the two pages. Here – much like the examples discussed above, in relation to the grandmother's journey on foot – Kurzweil offers the reader a sense of scale and atmosphere, while sacrificing specificity; we get no idea of where, precisely, the train deporting the author's great-grandmother runs

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[67] *Ibid.*
[68] *Ibid.*
[69] *Ibid*, p.95.
[70] *Ibid*, pp.157-162.

(although we learn elsewhere that she was deported to Treblinka), yet we are provided with some sense of the distance travelled given that the main locations are depicted. Meanwhile, the darkly-shaded, sealed, solitary train carriage depicted atop the map alludes to the horror of the experience in the sense that it suggests – in its small size, relative to the page at large, and its sealed doors, with no way for the light to get in – the cramped conditions within. In all, the map provides a general sense of certain aspects of the experience of Kurzweil's great-grandmother, rather than offering detail with regard to the route taken by the deportation train.

In an article on literary narratives which relate deportations such as the one described above (i.e. transportation to camps in cattle cars), António Sousa Ribeiro finds that accounts of such journeys 'delineate a cartography of non-space derived from a radical experience of exclusion and confinement and, as such, build up a powerful critique of modernity.'[71] This is owing to the fact, he goes on to note, that such accounts lend a powerful counterpoint to 'the *topos* of the voyage'[72] as it is expressed in travel writing, which Ribeiro views as (in some cases) a 'form of imperial discourse' akin to the notion of mapping as an expression of power and control.[73] Such journeys as Kurzweil's great-grandmother's inevitably terminate in an endpoint that Ribeiro refers to as 'the end of the world' in the title to his article; they end at the camps. In this regard, according to the author, 'a cartography of the camps cannot but be centred on an extreme *finis terrae*, where any meaningful sense of space and time is suspended and, in consequence, where the logic of representation reaches an apparently insurmountable limit.'[74] With regard to creative interpretations of such experiences, Ribeiro continues:

> Such an event, the product of a work of memory, can of course never be identical to the original experience itself; it is, literally, displaced, out of place, but it is precisely this displacement that allows the reader to gain access to that unliveable experience. Such a displacement creates

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[71] Ribeiro, p.80.
[72] *Ibid*, p.79.
[73] *Ibid*, p.80.
[74] *Ibid*, p.83.

> in each case a specific chronotope where time is suspended and space is constructed as the unliveable space of exclusion and confinement.[75]

Such a journey as the great-grandmother's deportation, in other words, is part of an extensive network of death – mass murder – and is, of course, an experience that cannot truly be accessed. The only ways in, as it were, are from the basic starting points of the *journey* and the experience of *confinement*. Kurzweil's attempt to seek *truthfulness* rather than specific *truths* in this and the three preceding examples, then, can perhaps be accounted for by Ribeiro's notion of particular chronotopes of similar experiences; indeed, in Ribeiro's article, he notes that the works he analyses 'assign the *topos* of the voyage a central position' – albeit a darkly ironic one – and this would seem to be very much the case in Kurzweil's depiction of deportation, too; it consists simply of a cattle car in a vast expanse of (cartographic) space.[76] In each case discussed here – be it the grandmother's journey on foot, confinement in the Warsaw Ghetto, or the great-grandmother's deportation – Kurzweil's map-based interventions attempt to capture a particular dimension of the experience and to convey it in spatial terms.

In their introduction to the concept of fluid cartography, Gil and Duarte provide some sense of what is happening in the abovementioned cartographic depictions of the grandmother's experiences, when they note that 'cartographic practice allows for space to emerge in literature as a non-passive surface, as a platform of dialogue between epistemologies that is neither simple nor natural.'[77] In the moments described above, the dialogue is between the grandmother's testimony, the granddaughter's interpretation of her memories, and the reader's reception of this interpretation. It is striking that Kurzweil so frequently turns to cartography – particularly with respect to the grandmother's Holocaust past – in order to make sense of developments within the narrative; throughout the text we see a kind of oscillation between Amy's own epistemological grounding in space (home, university, New York City, journeys she has taken, and so on) and the spaces of her grandmother's

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[75] *Ibid.*

[76] *Ibid*, p.82.

[77] Gil and Duarte, p.2.

memories. The two emerge in a kind of dialogue throughout the text which reveals the gulf in understanding between the two, but nonetheless represents, in the terms expressed by Gil and Duarte, a desire to *understand*, rather than to control.

The way it happened was a - it was a terrible miracle for me. God's watching over me. I don't know why. What did I do so good in the world? Or so bad?
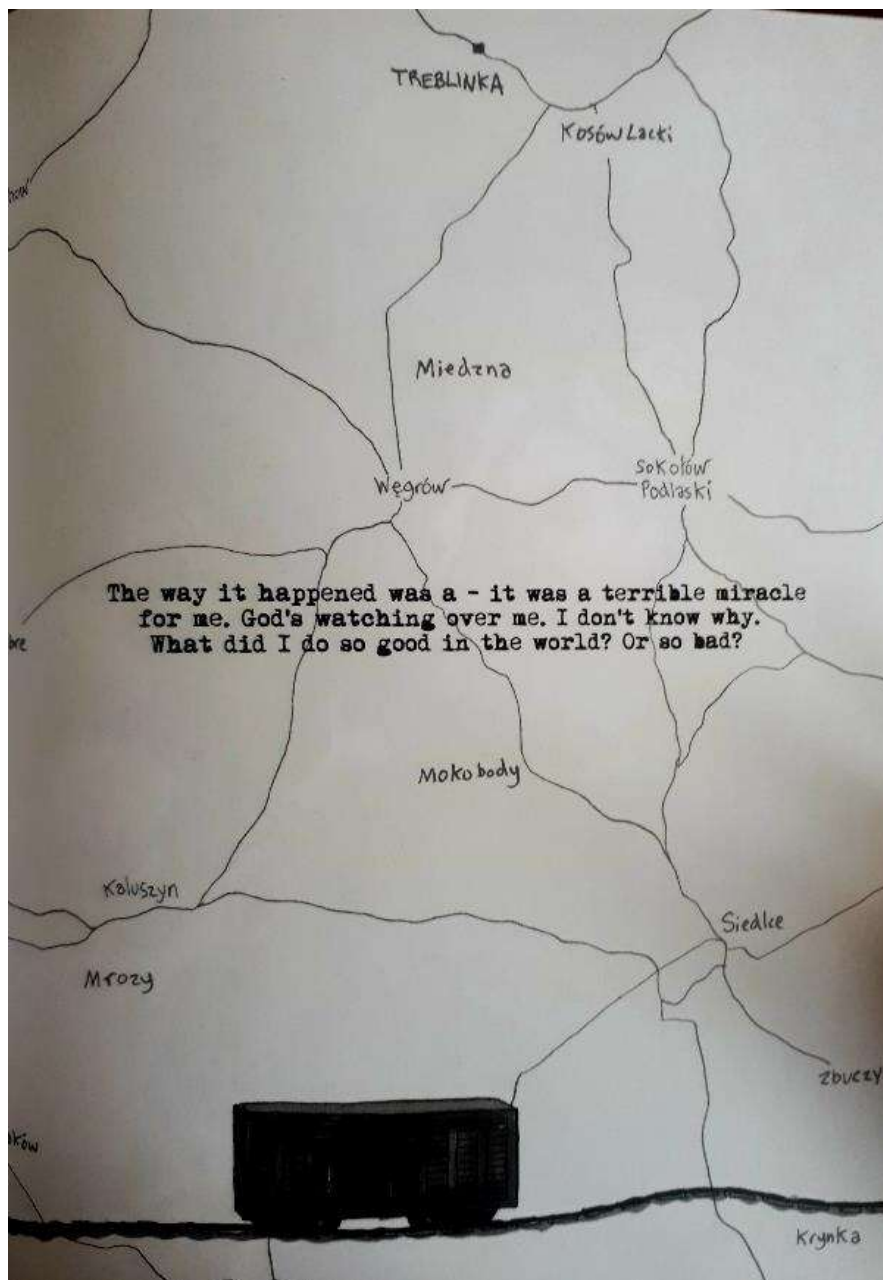
Figure 5.12 – A section of Kurzweil's depiction of her great-grandmother's deportation to the camps. Kurzweil, *Flying Couch*, p.159.

In the case of the frequent use of maps in Kurzweil's depictions of Bubbe's Holocaust experiences, then, we see cartography employed *not* as a tool of apparently-objective analysis. Despite their sober presentation (at least in comparison with the earlier maps and map-like drawings in *Flying Couch*),

and their relative accuracy and large size (typically a full page or double-paged spread), they are typically used to convey a particular *sense* or *atmosphere* related to the content of the grandmother's recorded testimony, which forms the basis for these sections of the work. In the above examples, for instance, the maps are used to convey a sense of scale, atmospheres of entrapment and confinement, death, movement, exhaustion, and more, each of which derives from the grandmother's (testimonial) expression of memory.

5.3. Mapping dialogic spaces

While there are a great many other moments of mapping in *Flying Couch* that I might have discussed here, to close this chapter I will focus on one particularly illuminating use of maps which occurs toward the end of the text and appears to amalgamate the lives of all three of the women that form the core of the narrative – Amy, her mother, and her grandmother (see figures 5.13 and 5.14). At this point in the text, the grandmother's testimony is reaching its conclusion, as she discusses her journey to a displaced persons camp in Bensheim, Germany, her emigration from Europe, and her arrival and early life in America. To convey a sense of these journeys, Kurzweil presents us, once again, with two pages of maps.[78] Particularly, she employs digital mapping as a means by which to make sense of the spaces of her family, both past and present. The three locations sought out by Amy in this instance are deeply significant to the grandmother's narrative but also, by extension, are of direct significance to the narratives of Amy and her mother, in that they represent the birthplaces of each of the three women and, therefore, a chain of familial connection (here signified by movement through space) to the horrific events of the grandmother's youth. The Bensheim displaced persons camp, we learned earlier in the narrative, was the birthplace of Amy's mother, while Amy herself was born in America.

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[78] Kurzweil, *Flying Couch*, p.222-223.

But it was the happiest day of my life still. To survive that boat trip. The ocean was very rough. And there were all sorts of people. Poles, Ukranians, nobody spoke English. We didn't know nobody in America to sponsor us, and we didn't want to go to Israel. Dear God forgive me, I did not. I said, I lost enough.

Map of Bensheim

Google Search   I'm Feeling Lucky

Warsaw
Bensheim, Ger

Via DK94   209 hours
List all steps 1,019 Km

Route Options

453. Continue onto K112
454. Turn left onto Hauptstraße   2.3 km
455. Continue onto Ronneburger Straße   450 m
456. Slight right onto Nordrand   130 m
457. Turn left onto Hauptstraße   190 m
458. Turn right to stay on Hauptstraße   11 m
459. Turn left to stay on Hauptstraße   170 m
460. Continue onto K113   700 m
461. Slight right to   K113   3.2 km
462. Continue onto   45 m
463. Slight right   700 m
464. Slight right   800 m
465. Continue onto   rger Straße   1.3 km
466. Turn left onto Allenburger Straße   650 km

Figure 5.13 - Retracing family footsteps on Google. Kurzweil, *Flying Couch*, p.222.
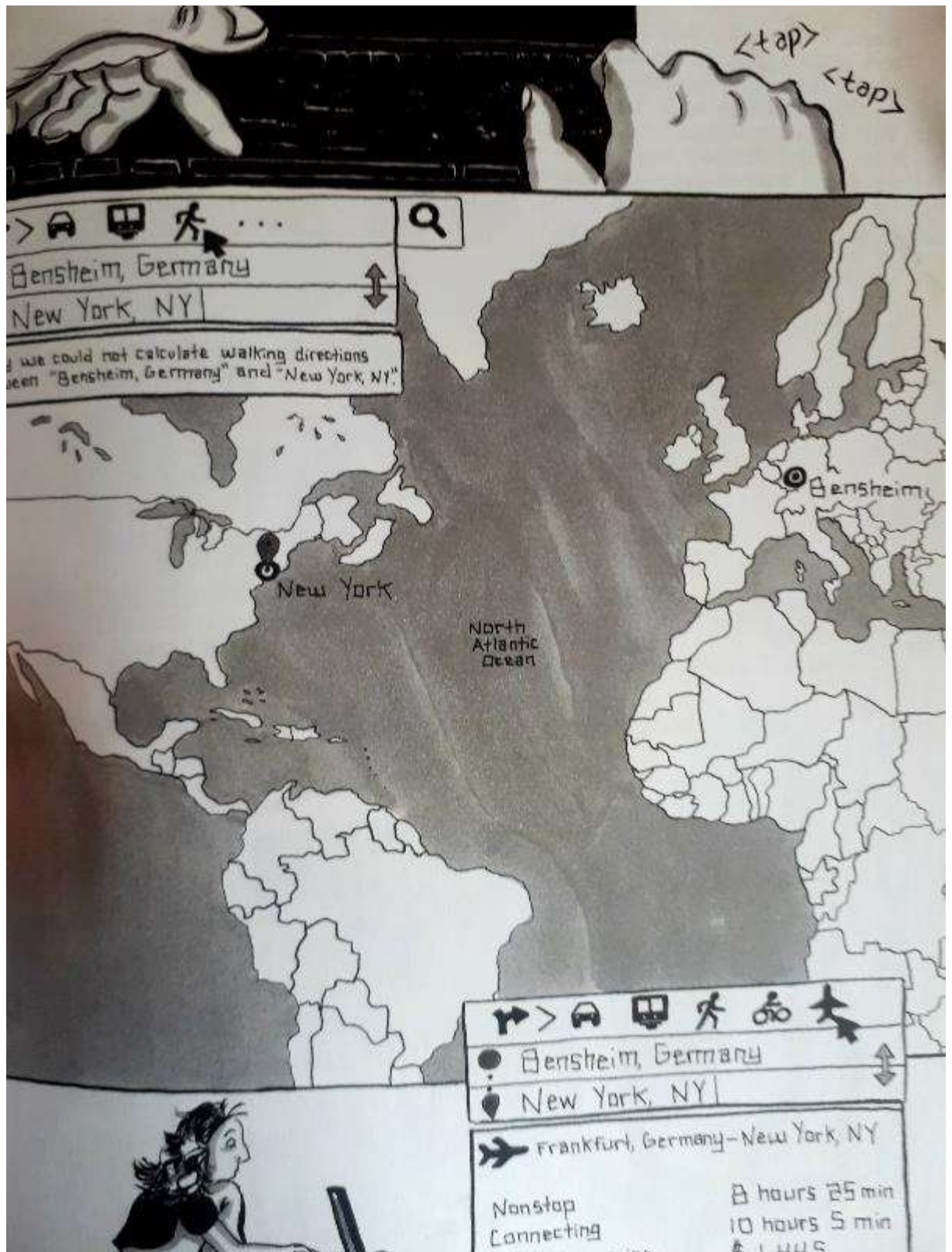
Figure 5.14 - Bensheim to New York City. Kurzweil, *Flying Couch*, p.223.

This is, then, perhaps the only moment within the text at which Kurzweil employs maps in a way that encompasses some aspect of the lives of all three women. Accordingly, there are multiple *scales* of representation at

play in these depictions. Perhaps most obviously, the scale of the grandmother's diasporic displacement is evident here, and may be viewed as the impetus behind the search made by Amy – to get a sense of the vast distances her elderly relative once travelled to escape post-war Europe. As the images of Amy progress across the two pages, Kurzweil presents subtle changes in her expression that suggest a sense of surprise at the vastness of the journey undertaken by Bubbe; her eyebrows raise and her eyes widen at the sight of the enormous list of directions from Warsaw to Bensheim, and a similar expression of bewilderment is etched upon her face as she looks at the distance from Bensheim to New York City. The immense scale of the grandmother's displacement is testament in and of itself to the continued global reach of the catastrophe of the Holocaust.

Bubbe's expansive displacement is particularly striking when compared with the relatively bounded existence lived by Amy; we are presented with cartographic or near-cartographic renderings of Amy's environments at various points throughout the text (her childhood home, the Stanford campus, and later, her immediate environment and daily commute(s) in New York), and despite her depiction of her own international travels (Israel, Europe) we get a distinct sense of a life lived in relatively stable fixity and freedom of choice. It is noteworthy, too, that Amy – as a young adult – employs an online search engine as a means through which to immerse herself in the spaces of her grandmother's memory; in his article, 'Mapping the Digital Empire,' Jason Farman notes:

> The "democratization" of maps and the ability to compare a wide variety of maps makes this a distinct era for cartography. While maps are designed with a specific purpose in mind (the Mercator Projection map, for example, was initially designed for nautical navigation in the 16th century), distribution of a variety of maps geared toward a multitude of purposes has been made available to internet users.[79]

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[79] Farman, p.871.

In this case – given that the maps are accompanied by lists of directions – we might assume that the 'specific purpose' of such cartographic tools as these is primarily one of navigation. Here, however, it is navigation of a different kind that is occurring, as Amy appropriates the tools available to her in an attempt to understand something of her grandmother's memories – in this case, particularly, the spatial experience of her displacement. As if to signal this appropriation of the process of digital mapping, we again see the cartography here re-mediated in a hand-drawn fashion; as Farman notes, 'hand-drawn maps close the ambiguous gap between product and authorship,'[80] and thereby undercut the 'tradition of disembodied visualization that is indelibly linked to the act of viewing GIS maps.'[81] Kurzweil re-embodies the disembodied gaze of the satellite and the computer through her subjective, familial quest for memory; the hand-drawn rendering of the map signals the absorption of such tools into the narrative at large, and enlivens the otherwise-clinical map with an individual gaze, recalling Mihăilescu's assertion that, in *Flying Couch*, 'maps underline how the acts of seeing and being seen depend on one's vantage point or positioning in space and time which become, in turn, ways of mediating one's understanding of others.'[82]

In terms of positioning in space and time, the immense expanse of the globe – by way of a full (digital) map of the world, and a vast amount of spatial and geographical information – is immediately available to Amy via the Google search engine. This has the effect of *shrinking* the world somewhat as is particularly clear in the fact that Amy can instantaneously access detail about distant places from a vast spatial remove. This effect is particularly pronounced in comparison with the specific journeys that Amy searches for – the walk from Warsaw to Bensheim (of some 1,019 kilometres) was one completed by her grandmother after the war, and the accompanying testimony notes that the subsequent journey to America was one undertaken by boat; arriving in America having '[survived] that boat trip,' notes Lily, was one of the 'happiest [days] of [her] life,' despite all the horrors that had gone before.[83] The sense of distance inherent in the journey to Bensheim and the days-long

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[80] *Ibid*, p.875.
[81] *Ibid*, p.876.
[82] Mihăilescu, 'Mapping...', p.107.
[83] Kurzweil, *Flying Couch*, p.222.

boat trip to New York contrasts strongly with the immediacy with which Amy can call up a set of walking directions for a route on a distant continent, or the instantaneous summoning of information for flights from Germany to the United States, which can be achieved at the tap of a button. Such a gulf in experience represents the fundamental inaccessibility of the grandmother's testimony; Amy attempts to access the spatial experience of Bubbe's departure from Europe via the medium of (what would appear to be) Google maps, but the best that this can provide is an inherently impoverished sense of scale. The temporal and experiential dimensions – what it truly meant to travel such vast distances as these in the immediate post-war period, in other words – cannot be accessed through the digital map, no matter how much information it offers. This is, instead, conveyed through the testimony alone, when Bubbe notes, for instance, that 'the ocean was very rough'[84] (perhaps explaining why reaching America after '[surviving]' that trip was one of her happiest days), or when she describes how – during part of the journey from Warsaw to Bensheim on a train – 'people were throwing stones' as they crossed the border,[85] or how an unborn Sonya was 'jumping in [her] stomach' and the vessel almost 'caved over [*sic*]' as they made their way by boat on one leg of their journey to the displaced persons camp.[86] No amount of mapping alone can adequately convey the affective impact of such experiences or how such experiences mutate and change across the course of a journey through space (though this fact in and of itself recalls, in some regards, the notion of cartography as ontogenetic); this can only be achieved in collaboration with testimony. In this way, the maps provided by Kurzweil do nonetheless offer – in their sense of scale – an idea of just how long the young Bubbe would have had to endure such circumstances, and thus implicitly signal the fortitude required to make such a journey.

To conclude, in Kurzweil's *Flying Couch* we see – much like in Miriam Katin's *Letting It Go* – the reproduction (and in some cases, consultation within the narrative) of maps for the purpose of ascertaining the bare geographical facts of a particular space for the benefit of the reader (and,

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[84] *Ibid.*
[85] *Ibid*, p.215.
[86] *Ibid*, p.216.

sometimes, the protagonist). These somewhat-spare cartographies are then adorned by – or surrounded with – subjective, and sometimes idiosyncratic, information which pertains to the (familial, personal) memories expressed within the text, be they Bubbe's memories of the Holocaust, or Amy's memories of her own childhood. Gil and Duarte's notion that 'cartographic practice allows for space to emerge in literature as a non-passive surface, as a platform of dialogue between epistemologies that is neither simple nor natural' is in evidence throughout *Flying Couch* largely owing to this explicit oscillation between past and present; the spatial realities of the grandmother's Holocaust narrative are juxtaposed with the spaces of the protagonist's childhood and young adulthood.[87] Different voices emerge throughout the text, meanwhile, and come to settle on different forms of cartography; the authoritative testimonial voice of the grandmother – reproduced with little alteration by Kurzweil – accompanies maps depicting the spatial aspects of her Holocaust memories, while Kurzweil's authorial voice qualifies her cartographies of spaces in the present, or her own, recent past.

The present-tense spaces of the text see a striking attempt to map both the development of Amy's own identity, and the difficulties of navigating familial relations in light of the intergenerational trauma of the Holocaust – maps in these instances are used as a stage upon which to enact the multiple fragmentation of subjectivity which Hillary Chute identifies as a key feature of graphic narrative, thereby highlighting both the potentially-fractious nature of both identity-formation and interpersonal relationships within the spaces of the family. By contrast, the cartographies of the past-narrative see Kurzweil striving for a sense of truthfulness, rather than a quantifiable objective truth (in Morris-Suzuki's sense of the distinction) in that they seek to convey something of a sense of atmosphere and the subjective experiences expressed in the grandmother's memories, rather than *specific* spatial detail relating to the sequences of the events narrated. This can perhaps be most clearly seen in the presence of comics panels containing narrative images, which sit atop the various maps and obscure the spaces depicted therein, without providing any sense of precisely *where* certain events are taking place.

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[87] Gil and Duarte, p.2.

In all cases – and again, much like Katin's work – the hand-drawn character of the maps signals Kurzweil's own authorship (in the manner described by Jason Farman), thereby *softening* the apparent objectivity of the map as an object for the display of spatial information, and highlighting the status of these cartographies as composite parts of the author's memory-work. Consequently, these maps highlight the fact that their inclusion within the text constitutes an act of re-mediation, and indeed we can see *Flying Couch* itself as a kind of bricolage of multiple re-mediations; the grandmother's Holocaust narrative, her testimonial account, the granddaughter's own childhood memories, blueprints, maps, digital maps, photographs, notebooks, and many other objects, documents, and artefacts are amalgamated - through the mediating figure of Kurzweil – into a narrative which puts the author's present into dialogue with her grandmother's past. These are, then, *fluid* cartographies which are 'deeply relational, and [aim] at *understanding instead of controlling.*'[88]

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[88] Gil and Duarte, p.3.

6.

Cartography in Conversation: Jérémie Dres's *We Won't See Auschwitz*

In his preface to Jérémie Dres's graphic novel, *We Won't See Auschwitz*, Jean-Yves Potel – the French 'Guardian of the Shoah Memorial for Poland,' who appears in the text himself[1] – offers a succinct summary of the 'paradox' at the heart of Dres and his brother's journey in search of their Polish-Jewish family origins:

> There is a paradox in this book. These days, when we are called on to remember, to honour our dead, to share the burden of memory for last century's great crimes, and to visit Auschwitz – for example – here are two young men who won't be going there. Two young Parisians, Jewish to boot – which is to say, grandchildren of a generation decimated by the Shoah. Worse yet, if they don't go to the camp, they're transgressing a family taboo. They leave for a hostile, even forbidden land, one reduced to a graveyard, an ancestral land others have occupied. Watch out for Polacks, they're told.[2]

In short, the brothers' search for memory is hampered from its outset by two problems: first, the looming presence of the Holocaust, which (in Dres's words) signifies 'five years of devastation for more than a thousand years of Jewish life and history' in Poland, yet carries the concomitant expectation that

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[1] Jérémie Dres, *We Won't See Auschwitz*, trans. by Edward Gauvin (London: Self Made Hero, 2012), p.153.
[2] *Ibid*, p.v.

'to remember' necessarily means to engage with this history of destruction;[3] second, the problem of anti-Polish sentiment expressed by the brothers' own family – they are repeatedly told, before and during their trip, to 'take care' and to watch out for the locals. It is perhaps something of a paradox, then – to use Potel's terms – that Dres and his brother should transgress this family taboo surrounding Poland only in order to undertake a search for memory that explicitly *does not* seek to directly confront the legacy of the Holocaust.

I would add, however, that it is perhaps equally paradoxical that the title of the text – *We Won't See Auschwitz* – and the *avoidance* of Holocaust memory that this signifies is, in fact, in direct tension with the actual trip undertaken by the brothers; the very name 'Auschwitz' conjures immediately the horror of the Nazi genocide of the Jews in Poland (and elsewhere); the dilapidated Jewish graveyards visited by the brothers are in a state of disrepair in no small part due to the displacement of Poland's Jewish population; the brothers do, in fact, visit the Warsaw Ghetto; these are but three of many reasons that the shadow of the Holocaust looms inescapably large over the text, no matter what the author's intentions. Nonetheless, early in the text Dres describes his stated aim for the trip (here expressed, again, in relation to Auschwitz) as follows: 'Auschwitz, a trauma still so present as to overshadow all the rest. But the rest was what I'd come looking for in Poland.'[4] *We Won't See Auschwitz*, then, recounts the trip taken by two French brothers – Jérémie and Martin Dres – in search of their family history, and particularly in search of evidence of pre-war Jewish life in Poland. The trip, we learn, is in honour of the protagonists' grandmother, who was a Holocaust survivor and who has died by the time the events of the text take place.[5] The reader is invited to follow the two brothers throughout their journey as they encounter a number of people, places, and organisations connected either to contemporary Jewish life in Poland, their own family history, or pre-war Jewish life in the country. I

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[3] *Ibid*, p.10.

[4] *Ibid*, p.11.

[5] In accordance with Dres's intentions, she is never explicitly identified as such in the text but she lived out the war in Paris, having arrived from Warsaw in 1931 (*We Won't See Auschwitz*, p.108), and can therefore be considered (at the very least) a survivor of the Nazi occupation of France; the specifics of her wartime experiences are, unfortunately, never detailed within the text, perhaps owing to Dres's reluctance to engage directly with the Holocaust.

would re-emphasise, too, that while they studiously avoid Auschwitz (as a kind of synecdoche for the Holocaust) they *do* visit the remnants of the Warsaw Ghetto, in a move running counter to the author's aim of looking for 'the rest' of Polish-Jewish history. The conversations that take place in the text, Dres tells us in a short author's note after the close of the narrative, are all real conversations that actually occurred, many of which were recorded for the purpose of accurate transcription.[6] In terms of their route, the trip begins in Warsaw, takes in the brothers' familial hometown of Żelechów, and finally comes to a close in Kraków, at a festival of Jewish culture.

The text depicts a direct engagement, then, with the question of Jewish tourism to Poland. As Jeffrey Podoshen and James Hunt explain:

> While it should be noted that the crux of Holocaust-related tourism centered on sites such as Auschwitz and Majdanek, an additional revelation among Jewish tourists in the post-Cold War era is the experience of Jewish life in Poland pre-Holocaust, with tours to Krakow, Warsaw and other towns and villages that were the center of Jewish life for hundreds of years. Tourism in Kazimierz, the largest Jewish center in pre-war Poland, has been steadily increasing since the 1990s.[7]

This is precisely the situation depicted by Dres. Indeed, Podoshen and Hunt's use of the term 'revelation' is apt to the experience of the two brothers, who are surprised to learn on a number of occasions that they are not the first to undertake specific journeys, or to speak to particular people – they are astounded to have often been 'beaten to it'; this is particularly evident, for instance, when they find that a woman they meet at the Jewish festival in Kraków has already undertaken a search for her own family in the tiny town of Żelechów on three separate occasions.[8]

Podoshen and Hunt go on to highlight one aspect of the tension that this revival in interest in Jewish heritage causes in certain Polish communities,

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[6] *Ibid*, p.189.
[7] Jeffrey S. Podoshen and James M. Hunt, 'Equity restoration, the Holocaust and tourism of sacred sites', *Tourism Management*, 32 (2011), 1332-1342 (p.1333).
[8] Dres, p.147.

noting that, for some locals, this has 'resulted in a revival of a feeling of anti-Semitism…with some fearful that renewed interest in heritage travel will result in increased efforts to reclaim expropriated property.'[9] They highlight the converse, too, suggesting that 'some Jews may avoid travel to Poland and/or Germany because they believe that today's relatively small exemplar of Jewish life in Eastern Europe…is a result of still-prevalent…anti-Semitism.'[10] Again, both situations are evident in Dres's work – they are warned by some of the Polish Jews they meet to be vigilant, for example, when visiting Żelechów for precisely the first of Podoshen and Hunt's scenarios, while the horror of a number of members of their family upon learning that the brothers will be visiting Poland is strongly indicative of the second. Two aspects of Jewish tourism to Poland that are oft-commented upon by scholars but are *not* engaged with directly in Dres's text, however, are the questions of authenticity and consumption (in the sense of the economics of such tourism and its impact on the communities in which it takes place). Podoshen, in a later article, for instance, highlights that there remain debates among Jewish communities worldwide surrounding the ethics of visiting (and *spending money in*) countries in which 'Holocaust harmdoers may still reside';[11] Daniel Reynolds, meanwhile, in an article titled 'Consumers or witnesses? Holocaust tourists and the problem of authenticity' investigates the notion of consumerism in this context, and questions whether Holocaust tourists 'are able to distinguish between the authentic and inauthentic dimensions of their experiences.'[12] While Dres does not depict a specifically *Holocaust*-focused trip, the question of authenticity goes unremarked upon when (for instance) he engages with the Jewish festival and the number of 'Yiddish' or Jewish-inspired restaurants in the Kazimierz district of Kraków (many of which, notes G. J. Ashworth, were

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[9] Podoshen and Hunt, p.1333. This is precisely the situation that is captured in Rutu Modan's 2013 graphic novel, *The Property*, which deals with the return to Poland from Israel of a Holocaust survivor and her granddaughter.
[10] *Ibid*.
[11] Podoshen, 'Trajectories in Holocaust tourism', *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 12:4 (2017), 347-364 (p.352).
[12] Daniel Reynolds, 'Consumers or witnesses? Holocaust tourists and the problem of authenticity', *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 16:2 (2016), 334-353 (p.335).

founded in recent (i.e. post-Cold War) years, at least in part to cater for the regular excursions to Auschwitz that depart from Kazimierz).[13]

I raise the spectre of the somewhat fraught question of Jewish tourism to Poland now owing to its significance to the use of maps throughout *We Are On Our Own*. Across the pages of this chapter, I will demonstrate how maps become fundamental in allowing the brothers to carve out their own tourist trail through the country – one based on personal, familial memory, rather than, say, conventional touristic daytrips to Auschwitz. Specifically, we will see how maps within the text assume three particular (occasionally overlapping) roles. On the one hand, they are used (at least ostensibly) in a relatively conventional sense as a means of orienting the reader in space, providing a snapshot of the brothers' location and movements within a broader spatial context than that depicted by the narrative images; put simply, they are used to *map the journey* taken by Jérémie and Martin. By contrast, they are employed with equal frequency as a tool by which Jérémie and his brother *orient* themselves; in other words, Dres often represents their attempts to *use maps*, again, in a conventional sense. This happens with varying degrees of success, and tends to hinge upon whether the brothers are attempting to decipher the map for themselves, or whether they engage with maps in collaboration with local interlocutors, who aid them in their interpretation; this is the second category of the use of maps within the text. In each case, there is a strong element of the ontogenetic nature of cartography on display; particularly, their use and experience of maps shifts and changes according to the dictates of their mnemonic journey, and is altered on an ad hoc basis in accordance with advice received from locals; maps in this text, in other words, are certainly 'contingent, relational, and context-dependent,' and their changing nature has a tangible effect on the brothers' trip.[14]

Finally – and strongly related to the second of the above categories – we also see the use of maps 'in conversation,' as it were, with specific figures who Jérémie and Martin meet throughout their journey, whereby maps directly aid the illustration of a range of conversations within the text; at these

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[13] G.J. Ashworth, 'Holocaust Tourism: The Experience of Kraków-Kazimierz', *International Research in Geographical and Environmental Education*, 11:4 (2002), 363-367 (p.366).
[14] Kitchin and Dodge, p.335.

moments, cartography is used to depict both past and present events and spaces, for a variety of purposes and, indeed, are presented in such a way as to position them in the role of *interlocutor*. In this, there is a strong echo of Hillary Chute's notion of the dialogic nature of comics – the 'productive, dialogical process' that attends the assemblage of word and image tracks, and the incorporation into a single narrative of multiple (fragmented) subjectivities.[15] Here, in some cases, the map takes its place as a discrete subjective presence, too. At these moments, there is often an aspect of cross-cultural and intergenerational dialogue. Much like Katin and Kurzweil's use of maps, in all three cases the focus is less on geographical specificity but rather on highlighting particular (often highly personal or idiosyncratic) aspects of spatial information that are relevant to the narrative.

6.1. Mapping the brothers' route

To begin with the first of these uses, then, we see – at a number of points – a use of maps as an apparently-straightforward means of orienting the reader in space. Take, for example, the brothers' tour of the Warsaw Ghetto (led by local Jewish filmmaker and activist, Jan Spiewak): at a number of points, as we see the tour progress through the narrative images, text, and dialogue, Dres compliments the movements of the group with small cartographical inserts (typically around two inches wide and an inch high). These small map-boxes are simple representations, and generally include the outline of roads, a small dotted line to indicate the route taken by the tour, and small numbered markers reminiscent of the 'pins' used to indicate specific points on the map in digital cartographies. The first example of such a map, for instance (depicted in figure 6.1), occurs at the moment the brothers arrive at 'one of the last pieces of the wall' that ran around the Ghetto, now located in 'the courtyard of an apartment building' – here, as the characters stand in this courtyard (incidentally, gazing at a map that sits on a wall plaque titled 'Plan Getta'), the scene is complimented by a small, largely featureless cartographic insert that indicates their current position, and the route they have taken to get there from

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15 Chute, 'Shadow...', p.202.

their starting position at another point along the former Ghetto wall.[16] Besides the route and the markers indicating starting and finishing positions, there are only two other pieces of geographical information included here: an annotation indicating the 'Ghetto wall' from which they began the tour, and the word 'Sienna' near their finishing position, which is not clarified or contextualised any further, but we are left to assume either indicates a road name, or perhaps the apartment building in which the courtyard sits. Dres repeats this device at two later points on their tour: first, when they reach '[t]he famous Ulica Prozna, the last actual trace of former Jewish life,' which they reach by (according to the map) doubling back on themselves, and crossing the roundabout in the opposite direction to which they arrived at 'Sienna' (figure 6.2);[17] second, we see the group reach the 'Nożyk synagogue,' which is situated on Grzybowski place, close to Ulica Prozna, and behind a building labelled by Dres with the acronym 'TSKŻ'[18] (figure 6.3) – we know from an earlier meeting that TSKŻ is a Jewish 'socio-cultural organisation.[19] In each instance, the tour stops are again indicated with numbered markers; in the case of the synagogue, the building itself is also highlighted by a small star of David.

Figure 6.1 - At the ghetto wall. Dres, *We Won't See Auschwitz*, p.49.

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[16] Dres, p.49

[17] *Ibid*, p.50

[18] *Ibid*, p.53.

[19] *Ibid*, p.28.

Figure 6.2 – The tour reaches Ulica Prozna. Dres, *We Won't See Auschwitz*, p.50.
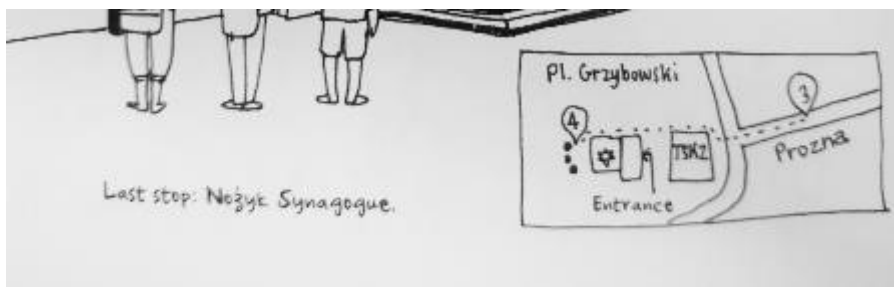
Figure 6.3 - Arriving at the synagogue. Dres, *We Won't See Auschwitz*, p.53.

Superficially, then, it may seem that Dres is employing these small map-inserts as a means of situating the reader spatially, within the wider context of the urban landscape of Warsaw, particularly given the presence of significant markers such as 'the famous Ulica Prozna' and Grzybowski place, which is mentioned to the protagonist earlier in the narrative as a site of significance ('the [Jewish] community is there').[20] When we consider the distinct *lack* of information included in these maps, however, it becomes clear that these small illustrations cannot function properly in this way; they are too tightly delimited to be of any use for this purpose. Their small scale and framing of a heavily circumscribed set of locations means that they are really only of use for tracking the movement of the group through a specific, small set of locations, and for indicating how these particular sites relate to one another spatially, rather than situating them within the wider context of the city, or even of the historic boundaries of the Warsaw Ghetto. Moreover, even the scant pieces of specific geographical information that are actually included by Dres are at times unhelpful in this regard too, given that they range from the vague ('Sienna') to the obscure ('TSKŻ'). Instead, it is the presence of location markers in the style of digital cartographies such as Google Maps that perhaps

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[20] *Ibid*, p.25.

gives some clue as to how to read these inserts; Clancy Wilmott, in an article on 'mobile maps' and movement, suggests that 'mobile mapping offers a hybridized perspective between the static topdown view of the map and the ground-level vantage point adopted by de Certeau's...walkers as they weave their way through the city.'[21] This appears to be the case with Dres's inserts, too; they offer the 'topdown view' that is typical of cartography, while including a number of markers and pathways that indicate the specific route taken by the protagonists – they provide the reader with a 'hybridized' view of the wider space in which the group finds itself, in conjunction with the *movements* undertaken by them between the various points of their tour. They can thus be read as an attempt to subtly inject a sense of motion into an otherwise static sequence of images of buildings and other landmarks; these narrative images, meanwhile, complete the 'hybridized' nature of the maps by offering us a parallel street-level view of the tour. The maps remain ineffective, however, as a means of situating the reader in space more broadly, because any reader without prior knowledge of the geography of Warsaw would not be able to use these illustrations to contextualise their location within the wider urban area.

The nature of the map-inserts seen in figures 6.1, 6.2, and 6.3 as a relatively ineffectual means of situating the *reader* in the space of contemporary Warsaw, however, raises the prospect that these small maps may, in fact, be more fruitfully considered as a set of mnemonic markers that function in a manner similar to that of the touristic photograph – to state clearly that 'I was there.' In this regard, we might interpret Dres's use of maps in this instance as an uncritical application of the notion of cartography as a 'form of power-knowledge,' in the manner described by J.B. Harley; the author relies on the apparent objective authority of the map as a means by which to certify his presence at these sites of memory, notwithstanding the paucity of information included within them.[22] In this regard, it is striking that this device is introduced at precisely the moment at which the brothers visit the Warsaw Ghetto – this tour constitutes their only explicit engagement with a specific, notable site of Holocaust memory during the course of their journey.

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[21] Wilmott, p.323.
[22] Harley, p.286.

Figure 6.4 - Arriving in Żelechów. Dres, *We Won't See Auschwitz*, p.122.
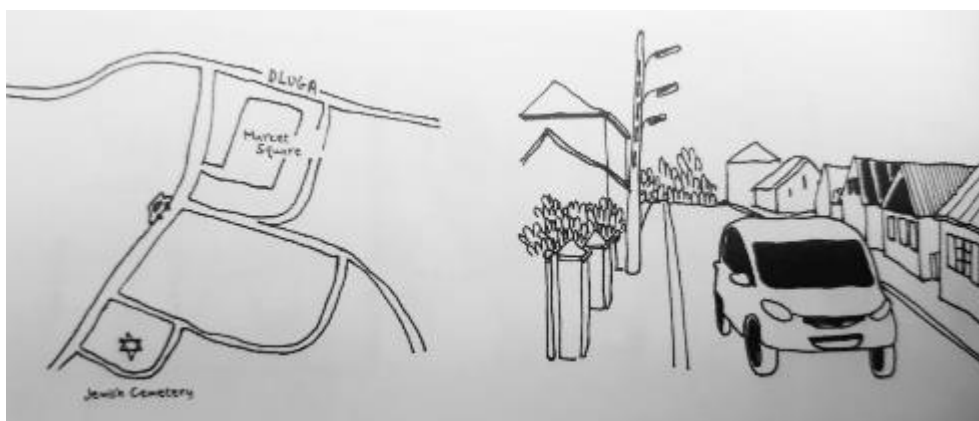
Figure 6.5 - Searching for the Żelechów Jewish cemetery. Dres, We *Won't See Auschwitz*, p.128.

Much the same effect is achieved at a number of points later in the narrative, too. We see, for instance, a small map-insert at the moment the brothers arrive in Żelechów to search for the former home of their grandfather and his family.[23] At this point, Dres includes another small map, this time including a number of nameless streets, a small car to signify the brothers' location, one street name ('Ul. Dluga'), and an arrow indicating their direction of travel (see figure 6.4). A few pages later – the pair having by this point located the Jewish cemetery of Żelechów – Dres includes another insert that shows their new direction of travel, away from 'Dluga' (here marked without 'Ul.,' or 'Ulica,' the Polish for 'street') and toward the now-dilapidated cemetery (figure 6.5); Jérémie and Martin are again signified by a small

[23] Dres, p.122.

illustration of a car.[24] Here, as with the above examples detailing the brothers' route around the Warsaw Ghetto, these maps are of little use for a broader contextualisation of their location within a wider geography – there is, after all, only one street name included across these two maps; they are instead further examples of the 'hybridized perspective' discussed by Wilmott, in that they supplement the narrative images and text with a sense of movement that is otherwise lacking. In Żelechów, as in Warsaw, much of the narrative is composed of images of the brothers wandering sites of significance, looking at buildings, reading signs and so on – these map-inserts are once again crucial in providing the reader with a sense of a *journey*, rather than a sequence of static images. In this way, it is the *journey*, rather than any specific locations, that are the subject of the maps discussed so far. Like the Ghetto tour, we might similarly view this sequence of small maps as a kind of touristic memento of the brothers' presence in a particular space, at a particular point during their trip.

A further example of such a use of cartography occurs when the brothers arrive in Kraków. Here, Dres presents the reader with a much larger map (taking up around half a page) that includes three roads (only one of which is named), three sites of significance (here drawn atop the map-space in a three-dimensional style), and the Vistula river (figure 6.6).[25] Despite this sparseness, the map actually depicts a sizeable section of central Kraków, taking in the area from the central station in the north to the Kazimierz district toward the south. Once again, the brothers' route – their specific *journey* – is of much greater significance than any specific geographical information; here it is once again signified by a dotted line, as with the examples above, and their one waypoint en route to Kazimierz ('[a] brief stop at the hotel to drop our bags') is highlighted by a location marker in the style of various digital cartographies.[26] Despite the significantly larger size of the area covered by this map (in comparison with the examples discussed above), the distinct *lack* of geographical information (both visually and textually) suggests that we are, once again, not meant to accurately situate the brothers *in space* – rather, this

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[24] *Ibid*, p.128.
[25] *Ibid*, p.143.
[26] *Ibid*.

map (like those discussed above) acts as a shorthand device for signalling movement *through space.* Rather than spending several panels illustrating the journey from the station to Kazimierz, Dres has economically conveyed a sense of the route undertaken via the form of the map. In this way, the comics form provides a vessel through which Dres can (re-)mediate (in Dagmar Brunow's sense of the term)[27] his memory of the trip, and condense it in a shorthand, readily-comprehensible manner; it is, to use Astrid Erll's terms, an example of the *movement* of memory through media.[28]

In each of these moments, what at first appear to be relatively conventional examples of situating the reader in space turn out to signify the exercising of significant authorial control over the spatial information that is presented in the text. We might view these maps as an example of Tania Rossetto's characterisation of cartographies (in accordance with recent developments in map theory) as 'not ontologically secure representations but as contingent, fleeting, fluid and relational entities.'[29] She continues:

> The map has been considered the typical object to direct
> the tourist gaze: a static, frozen and predetermined
> image-text detached from the space to be analysed in its
> symbolic and ideological content, often hidden behind
> an appearance of self-evidence.[30]

Clearly, in the case of the examples discussed here, the map is not a static, predetermined image; rather, Dres has cropped, framed, and redrawn the existing ('real') cartography in a manner that conforms to his own experience. In the Kraków example, for instance, the complex maze of streets that makes up the centre of the city has been reduced to a spare diagram consisting of just a river, three roads, three landmarks, and indicators of the route taken by Jérémie and Martin. As Rossetto notes, '[m]aps are performed, experienced and manipulated in their meanings, as well as in their concrete material consistency,' and this would certainly seem to be the case in the context of *We*

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[27] Brunow, p.9.
[28] Erll, 'Travelling Memory', pp.12-13.
[29] Tania Rossetto, 'Embodying the map: Tourism practices in Berlin', *Tourist Studies*, 12:1 (2012), 28-51, (p.29).
[30] *Ibid*, p.32.

Won't See Auschwitz; it is *experience* – the experience of actual movement through space – that dictates the cartographic representation of space in these instances, and not the other way around.[31] Nonetheless, in each of these examples, Dres has employed mapping as a means by which to signal his presence in each of these places, as if relying on the objective authority of the map to affirm that *Jérémie was here*. In this vein, Giada Peterle notes that 'comics like maps could be understood through an "ontogenetic (emergent)" approach which mostly concerns *the active engagement of the author first and of the reader afterward in the construction of the narrative space and sense*'; here, the construction of narrative space directly involves the employment of maps, however circumscribed they may be, to indicate a sense of presence at certain sites, often of mnemonic significance.[32]
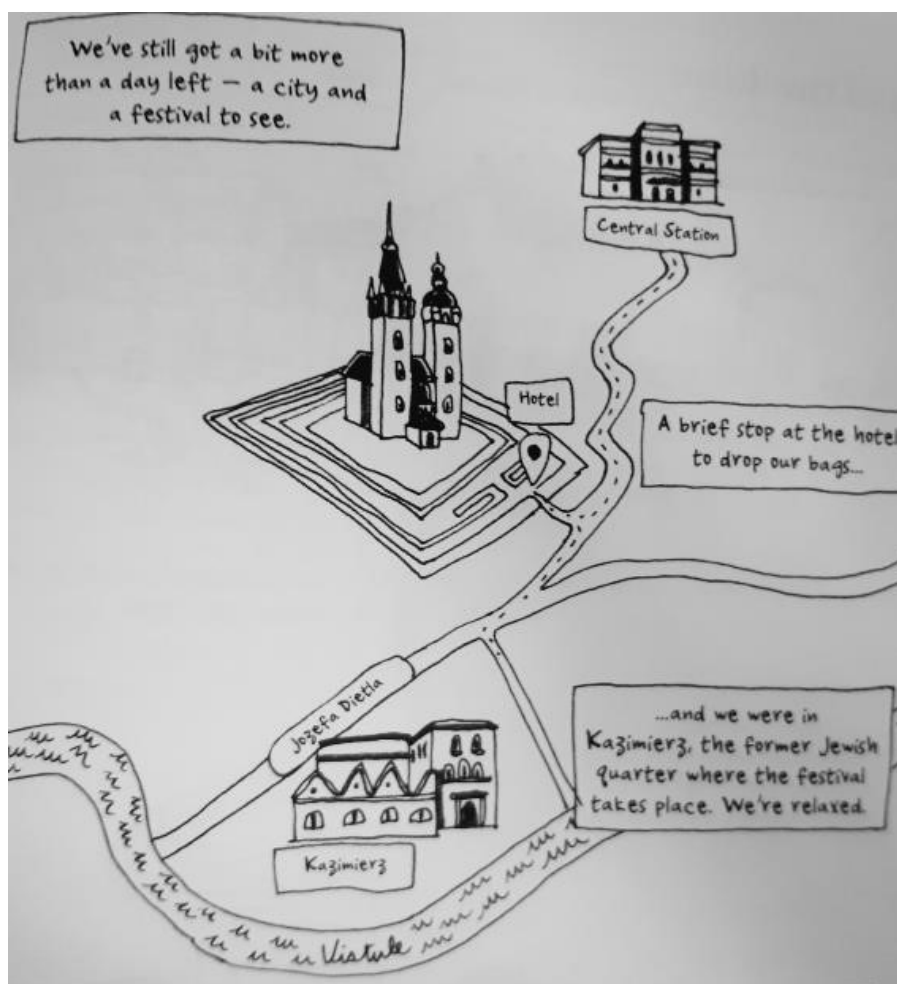
Figure 6.6 - The brothers arrive in Kraków. Dres, *We Won't See Auschwitz*, p.143.

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[31] *Ibid.*

[32] Peterle, p.60, emphasis added.

6.2. Interpreting the Map, Embodying the Map

With respect to the *reader*, then, maps are – at least in some instances – used as a means of conveying movement, and are predicated on the physical, embodied experience of Jérémie and Martin in Poland. By contrast, when it comes to the protagonists themselves (and running somewhat counter to Rossetto's observation, above) maps *are* crucial at a number of moments for determining the route they will take around the country. The degree of success with which this happens is largely determined by whether or not they engage with maps with the assistance of locals, or whether they attempt to navigate their route entirely on their own initiative.

Figure 6.7 - Jérémie struggles to navigate Warsaw. Dres, *We Won't See Auschwitz*, p.1.

This is the historic Old Town. Her apartment is in one of these streets.

Following the Nazis' destruction of the city, the historic district was restored to its original form in 1949.

As a tribute to the determination of Warsaw's people to preserve their history, UNESCO classified the Old T___
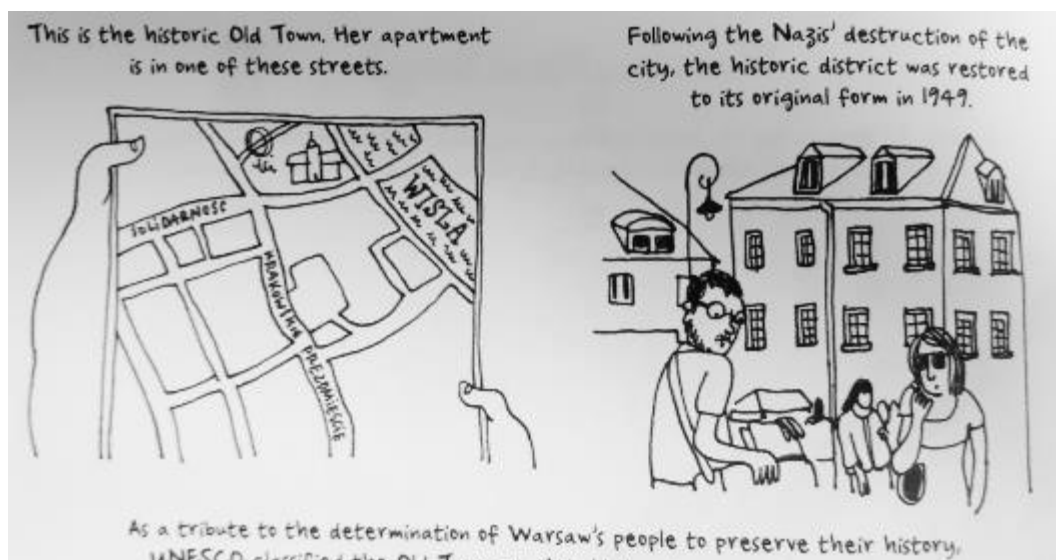
Figure 6.8 - A protagonist's-eye view of the map. Dres, *We Won't See Auschwitz*, p.2.

In *We Won't See Auschwitz*, it is often the case that Jérémie and Martin have a great deal of difficulty using maps to navigate around the towns and cities in which they find themselves. In the text's opening pages, for instance, we see a bemused Jérémie wandering the streets of Warsaw, engaged in a fruitless search for the house where his grandmother lived; the first page of the narrative offers a full-page drawing of the protagonist engrossed in map-reading in the midst of Warsaw's Old Town, bodily swamped by a fold-out tourist map that is at least half as long as he is tall (figure 6.7).[33] The map itself further adds to the sense of being overwhelmed, in that the creases on its reverse side appear to match the enormous paving slabs beneath Jérémie's feet, and contribute to the impression that he is being swallowed up by the Polish city – as he himself notes, 'I've been wandering the streets of the capital for two hours now,' the notion of 'wandering' here suggesting a degree of aimlessness that is not being alleviated by the cartography.[34] We learn that these hours have been spent searching for his grandmother's old apartment; immediately after we see Jérémie struggling with an outsized map, Dres provides readers with a protagonist's-eye-view of the reverse (figure 6.8), revealing a cartography that is strikingly similar to the simplified map-inserts which were discussed above.[35] Here, two road names, the river, and one point

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[33] Dres, p.1.
[34] *Ibid.*
[35] *Ibid*, p.2.

of interest are the only items of geographical information included on a map that nonetheless depicts the warren of streets that comprise Warsaw's Old Town; we also see an illegible scrawl, presumably added by the protagonist to locate his grandmother's pre-war apartment. This small annotation seems to challenge the traditional notion of the map (highlighted by Rossetto) as the 'typical object to direct the tourist gaze'; here, rather than focusing on the nearby points of touristic interest indicated within the cartography, Jérémie has amended the object according to information relating to familial memory. Conforming to the notion that '[m]aps are performed, experienced and manipulated in their meanings as well as in their material consistency,' an attempt is made, on the part of the protagonist, to chart his own course through the Polish capital, albeit an attempt that appears (based on the content of the text's first two pages) to be faltering somewhat.[36]

At this moment, the sense of aimlessness and confusion experienced by Jérémie can partly be attributed to his surroundings; he comments on the restoration of Warsaw's historic centre in 1949, after its levelling during the war, its subsequent UNESCO World Heritage Site status, and the fact that he finds 'this exceptional historical initiative discomfiting' – he goes on to note that this reconstruction 'results from a selective remembering,' a statement which accounts for his unease, and is accompanied by an image of a statue holding a crucifix, thereby indirectly highlighting the absence of Jewish history and memory from the space (a situation commented upon explicitly later in the text).[37] Moreover, when he does eventually find his grandmother's former apartment building, nearby at '27 Ulica Freta,' it is – predictably, given the above – no longer there;[38] instead, he finds a three-storey building with a pharmacy at its base, rather than the six-storey apartment block from his grandmother's memories.[39] In this sequence, then, the map is again revealed to be not an 'ontologically secure [representation]' but, rather, a 'contingent, fleeting, fluid and relational [entity],' as per the observation of Rossetto;[40] Jérémie's tourist map may have led him to the correct physical location, but it

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[36] Rossetto, 'Embodying...', p.32.
[37] Dres, p.2.
[38] *Ibid*, p.3.
[39] *Ibid*, p.7.
[40] Rossetto, 'Embodying...', p.29.

cannot account for the disparity between the contemporary (reconstructed) spatiality of Warsaw and the urban fabric of the grandmother's historic, remembered (and no longer extant) Warsaw, recalled through many decades of 'diasporic [displacement].'[41] The information the protagonist received prior to his trip does not match with the current material reality of the streets of the city. Shortly after this, when Jérémie first meets with Jan Spiewak (who later leads the Ghetto tour), the fact of the original building's destruction is confirmed, as is the notion that 'nothing related to Jewish memory seems to have been rebuilt.'[42] It is, in other words, with the assistance of local understanding that Jérémie gains a fuller appreciation of the current spatial realities of Warsaw, and how these relate to the wartime spaces of the Polish capital; this is a notion that I will return to shortly.

A similar situation occurs when Jérémie – still awaiting Martin's arrival – searches for the offices of TSKŻ (see figure 6.9), the 'socio-cultural organisation' which was 'the only Jewish association in Poland for a long time,' and was mentioned earlier.[43] In this case, however, rather than deriving from pre-obtained information, the disparity between map, reality, and Jérémie's expectation appears to be based on the protagonist's misconceived notion of what to expect of TSKŻ. In this case Dres portrays his protagonist-self in the midst of a nondescript block of apartment and commercial buildings; we follow him through unremarkable surroundings until he finds himself at the door of TSKŻ, which appears to be located above a restaurant.[44] He eventually finds the offices – behind a wholly-ordinary door and indicated only by a small, simple plaque – after climbing several flights of stairs.[45] Inevitably, the map of the area which we see in the first panel of this sequence – here drawn in the same spare style as those discussed above – betrays none of these characteristics; the ordinariness (perhaps even dilapidation) of the area in which the TSKŻ office is located is not suggested by the cartography. This casts doubt in the mind of the protagonist, who 'wonder[s] if [he] got the address

[41] Gil and Duarte, p.3.
[42] Dres, p.16.
[43] *Ibid*, p.28.
[44] *Ibid*, pp.28-29.
[45] *Ibid*, p.29.

right. TSKŻ in a place like this?'[46] This statement, along with his (perhaps-tongue-in-cheek) observations that '[t]his meeting'll help me put things in perspective' and that his forthcoming interview with TSKŻ's Edward Odoner will '…go over 60 years of Judaeo-Polish relations' suggest that Jérémie holds very high expectations of the encounter – expectations that are not initially met by the reality of the surroundings in which he finds himself, and therefore lead him to doubt the map (or at the very least, his map-reading ability).[47]

In this case, then, it is a preconceived notion of what Jérémie's (largely self-directed) search for memory in Poland will entail that guides his expectation, rather than any concrete information obtained beforehand; we can infer from his commentary that he expects grander surroundings than those to which the map has led him, more befitting of an organisation that was 'for a long time' Poland's only Jewish association.[48] A similar situation is dramatized earlier in the narrative, during the search for his grandmother's apartment; Dres depicts an imagined scenario in which his protagonist-self knocks on the door of an apartment and comes across a man who was a childhood friend of his grandmother – in reality, he simply walks into the adjacent courtyard and stares at the building from the outside.[49] The map, in both instances, is a mere blank vessel; the sparse tourist cartography that guides the protagonist cannot possibly contain anything of the *reality* of the areas in which Jérémie finds himself, nor the historical developments that led to their present character. Rather, in demonstrating how he filled in this blankness with his own expectations and pre-obtained knowledge, Dres reveals the map to be 'not…ontologically secure,' but instead 'contingent, fleeting, fluid and relational,' in the sense that his lived, embodied experience of the trip occasions a reappraisal of his expectations and foreknowledge.[50] We may again recall Rossetto's observation that the map has typically been considered 'a static, frozen and predetermined image-text…often hidden behind an appearance of self-evidence'; in the case of these maps, we cannot consider the information contained within to be static or self-evident – rather,

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[46] *Ibid*, p.28.
[47] *Ibid*.
[48] *Ibid*.
[49] *Ibid*, p.6.
[50] Rossetto, 'Embodying…', p.29.

through their form, they allow space for the flourishing of expectation, which is in turn modified by an embodied experience of place.[51] In Kitchin and Dodge's terms we see, at these points in the narrative, that '[m]aps are of-the-moment, brought into being through practices (embodied, social, technical), always remade every time they are engaged with.'[52] In both of these cases, this reappraisal carries a sense of (at least initial) disappointment on the part of the protagonist.

Figure 6.9 - Looking for TSKŻ in the suburbs. Dres, *We Won't See Auschwitz*, p.28.

A later moment, in which the two brothers take to the Polish motorways in search of the town of Żelechów, reveals another difficulty that emerges in their use of maps, in conjunction with the clash of expectation and reality: that of language. Particularly, it is the complexity of the Polish language (at least, from an outsider's perspective) that creates a degree of navigational difficulty in this moment, which spills over into an ill-natured exchange between the two protagonists. As Jérémie and Martin make their way in a rental car through 'the Polish countryside, site of so many fears and fantasies,' the two bicker over directions – Jérémie is here cast in the role of map-reader, while Martin is driving.[53] Here, the map is rendered near-useless as a wayfinding tool due to the particularly difficult combination of Polish place names and a moving vehicle, prompting an irritated Martin to ask whether his brother has 'ever

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[51] *Ibid*, p.32.
[52] Kitchin and Dodge, p.335.
[53] Dres, p.119.

read a map in [his] life…'; '[t]hese names are complicated. Gorozka, Bronisława… it's not easy!' comes the exasperated response.[54] Such linguistic difficulty may signal an implicit limit to the scope of the brothers' transnational, transcultural (and perhaps, multidirectional) search for family memory; the Polish language here presents a barrier to the brothers' access to the spaces of their family's past. In fact, this moment may be viewed as a riposte to Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider's notion of a 'cosmopolitan' memory; here, the Dres brothers' effort to engage with an unfamiliar *local* context thwarts their *global* (i.e. transnational) mnemonic search; the interaction between the global and local here is one of hindrance and difficulty predicated on the brothers' *otherness*, as signified by the difficulty of the Polish language.[55]

Moreover – and much like the preceding examples – the irritability with which the brothers engage with each other at this moment is perhaps equally occasioned by a degree of (here, negative) expectation, owing to the repeated warnings they have received to 'watch out' for and 'be careful' of locals, particularly outside of Poland's major cities; as Dres notes in his extra-diegetic narration, '[i]t must be said that, up till now no one had been very reassuring' – he makes this observation in relation to the fact that '[t]he dybbuk,' – his shorthand for Martin's irritability – 'was reaching unprecedented levels of restlessness in Martin's mouth.'[56] Dres represents, then, a sense of nervous energy that seems to pervade the car as the two make their way across Poland.

At this moment, the experience of Jérémie and Martin as conventional 'tourists' is disrupted wholesale. As Rossetto notes, '[t]he visual experience of a body that approaches, perceives, and moves across a tourist site is often mediated by material objects. This is unequivocally the case of [*sic*] the tourism map, an irrefutable element of the tourist's basic equipment.'[57] Here, language, map, movement, and (uneasy) expectation collide into confusion, as the brothers step firmly off the tourist trail and make their way into provincial Poland. The difficulty they have in navigating according to Polish place names signals the fact that their cartographic guide is no longer functioning simply as

[54] *Ibid*, p.119.
[55] Levy and Sznaider, p.3.
[56] Dres, p.119.
[57] Rossetto, 'Embodying…', p.31.

a straightforward tourist map – rather, the pair are exploring a version of Poland that would more usually be experienced by native Poles as opposed to visitors. The map, in this instance, once again represents the agency that the two brothers are able to exercise in determining their own route through the country in search of their family history, but it also signifies (through language) their *otherness* – as French Jews – within the space in which they find themselves; this fact manifests itself in the reappearance of a latent anxiety (here expressed as a kind of mutual irritability) that emerges at other points throughout the text. Rather than the blankness of the map allowing for a simple flourishing of expectation (though there is an element of this here, too), in this case, the linguistic difficulty of their surroundings reveal the map to be a stumbling block – if not an outright barrier – to the successful execution of their planned journey.

Figure 6.10 - Lunch with a side-dish of cartography. Dres, *We Won't See Auschwitz*, p.86.

By contrast, when maps are used by the brothers in conjunction with local knowledge, the results are much more fruitful and illuminating. As we have already seen, for instance, Jan Spiewak's explanation of the reconstruction of Warsaw's Old Town (and the concomitant decision *not* to recreate other (i.e. Jewish) areas of the city centre in a similar fashion) had the

effect of significantly augmenting the protagonist's understanding of the city, and particularly of the nature of post-war rebuilding in Warsaw and, indeed, how such decisions have subsequently come to impact upon his own contemporary mnemonic journey. While this instance does not involve the explicit consultation of a map with the assistance of a local, it nonetheless represents a retrospective re-evaluation of an earlier attempt at map-reading with the benefit of local, inside knowledge.

By contrast, we later see a moment of explicit cartographic collaboration, which occurs during the brothers' lunch with the 'TSKŻ crew' (figure 6.10).[58] As the meal draws to a close, Dres notes how 'Edward, in his great kindness, gave our journey new direction.'[59] On the map, he points out 'two places in Warsaw' where he '[knows] people,' and where they might be able to 'find traces of [their] family' – the Jewish cemetery, and 'the Genealogy Learning Centre at the Jewish Historical Institute.'[60] It is Edward's hand that we see pictured in figure 6.10, too, pointing toward these specific locations. A sense of collaboration is clear at this moment: the exchange takes place in the context of a convivial meal, and is surrounded by its effects; Dres conveys a clear sense of gratitude in his commentary when he refers to Edward's 'great kindness,' and the fact that it has given their journey 'new direction'; Edward's observation, too, that he is pointing out two places where he 'know[s] people' suggests a wider network of (local) connection that may enable the brothers to advance their quest for memory, possibly through association with TSKŻ. Perhaps most significantly, Dres has chosen to have *the map itself* speak Edward's words, in the form of two speech bubbles, each of which indicates one of the two locations pointed out by the TSKŻ director and contains his explanation as regards the particular relevance of each site. This device clearly signals the 'contingent, fleeting, fluid and relational' nature of the map as a tool; the material object itself channels the words of a local interlocutor, thereby demonstrating how it can be enriched through collaboration in ways that the brothers may have struggled to achieve of their own initiative – two

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[58] Dres, p.86.
[59] *Ibid.*
[60] *Ibid.*

locations that may otherwise have been missed have here been imbued with mnemonic significance.[61]

In this moment, we see the fundamentally dialogic nature of comics working in tandem with a version of the Assmann's communicative memory; Edward is passing on sites of mnemonic interest via precisely the 'informal everyday' communication that characterises this notion.[62] Here, however, it is the *map itself* which becomes an interlocutor, thereby signalling the spatialized nature of Edward's intervention – he is directing Jérémie and Martin to particular *sites* of interest in relation to their search for memory. As we will see in the final section of this chapter, having the map itself *speak* – and thereby discourse upon the question of Jewish memory in Poland – is a device that takes on a particularly acute significance when Polish-Jewish history is being explained to the brothers.

Returning to their journey, later even the problem of language is (at least partway) overcome in a similar fashion to the above, too. Here, however, it is not through direct, explicit collaboration with a local *person*, but rather through the integration into their journey of local *knowledge* in a narrower sense – specifically, a germinal knowledge of the Polish language – which allows the brothers to add a surprising and enriching (if somewhat disheartening) addendum to their visit to Żelechów. Finding themselves at something of a loss, ('[s]eriously, what are we doing here?' asks Martin at one point), the brothers stumble across an old map in Polish, on a signboard near the town centre.[63] Following on from Jérémie's earlier (somewhat doubtful) speculation that '[m]aybe there's a little Jewish cemetery...'[64] Martin picks up on the word 'Cmentarz' on the town map (perhaps as a result of their earlier visit to the Jewish cemetery in Warsaw): 'Hey! Cmentarz is cemetery right?'[65] He goes on to notice that there are two different cemeteries – 'Powazki' and 'Zydowski,' the latter being located 'further out'; with Jérémie having failed to look up *Zydowski* on his smartphone (owing to a lack of signal), Martin resorts to their guidebook: 'Hey, look! It's in the guidebook. "Zydowski" means

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[61] Rossetto, 'Embodying...', p.29.
[62] Assmann, p.127.
[63] Dres, p.127.
[64] *Ibid*, p.126.
[65] *Ibid*, p.127.

Jewish.'[66] At this moment, then, the map is the vessel for an engagement with the Polish language that contrasts starkly with their earlier encounters in the car; here, rather than confusing, fleeting engagements with an array of Polish place names on roadside signs, and attempting to pin these locations to the form of the local topography as depicted on the map, the brothers instead experience a specifically *local* map that forces them (particularly Martin) into a more sustained engagement with the local tongue – one which ultimately proves fruitful. At this moment, we are again reminded of Kitchin and Dodge's description of the ontogenetic nature of maps as 'of-the-moment, brought into being through practices (embodied, social, technical), always remade every time they are engaged with; mapping is a process of constant reterritorialization.'[67] Clearly, the map of Żelechów has been 'remade' here, owing to Martin's growing confidence in tackling the Polish language; earlier experience – the *embodied* practice of travel – has altered the brothers' understanding of the space of the Polish country town, and has allowed them to continue their quest for family memory in a manner quite different to their earlier experience of trying to navigate the road network. Sadly, however, the brothers find the Jewish cemetery in a state of horrendous disrepair – it is almost entirely hidden from view beneath a copious overgrowth of vegetation; nonetheless, this poignant encounter with the town's (and their own family's) Jewish past vastly enriches the trip to Żelechów, which would otherwise have been a failure, owing to their subsequent difficulties at the records office.[68]

In the above examples, then, we see clear evidence for the 'fluid and relational' nature of the map, here in a touristic context.[69] The difficulties that the brothers encounter appear to stem (typically) from the nature of their trip; their search for memory takes them away from the well-known tourist areas of Warsaw and Kraków, and into more mundane – sometimes residential –

[66] *Ibid.*
[67] Kitchin and Dodge, p.335, original emphasis.
[68] Dres, pp.128-131; when the brothers visit the records office, they pretend to be searching for information on their own family under the guise of family *friends* (thereby disavowing their own Jewish heritage), owing to their unease relating to locals' attitudes toward Jewish visitors returning to their ancestral hometowns. This tactic backfires significantly when they learn that information relating to individuals listed in the town records can only be passed on to family members, prompting Jérémie to note, on their return to the car: 'Dude... we fucked up.' (pp.133-138).
[69] Rossetto, 'Embodying...', p.29.

districts, as well as into the Polish countryside in search of Żelechów. It is perhaps predictable that – in the context of such surroundings, and in conjunction with the difficulty of the Polish language – the usefulness of the map as a tool for navigation fairly quickly reaches its limits. By contrast, in collaboration with local information, and with the application of newly-acquired local knowledge, the maps used by the brothers become enriched with new, fruitful information, thereby engendering new directions of travel. This in part reflects the idea – expressed here by Rossetto – that '[p]resent theoretical perspectives within tourism studies tend to emphasise an understanding of tourism as a lived experience, a situated practice, a corporeal encounter mediated less by representations and discourses than by action and sensory engagement.'[70] This is true of *We Won't See Auschwitz* in the sense that *without* the embodied experience of engaging with Polish-Jewish memory culture 'on the ground,' the brothers would not have had the face-to-face encounters, conversations, and twists of fate that ultimately came to constitute their experience of the country.

Rossetto continues, however, noting that:

> Tourism literature...avoids a resolute and simplistic opposition to representational thought. Considering the relevance of the corporeal and the sensuous does not mean totally rejecting the importance of images and meanings, socio-cultural and political frames, and ideology and knowledge, inescapably affecting the tourism experience.[71]

This is certainly the case here, too. While the brothers' embodied experience leads them (sometimes by chance) to some of the encounters listed above, it is *knowledge* and, in some cases, the 'socio-cultural...frames' gleaned through their encounters that prove useful in suggesting new directions of travel for the pair. Equally, we cannot simply dismiss the importance of the map-images themselves in this association. Though they may occasionally benefit from augmentation from insider knowledge, they nonetheless provide a spatial

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[70] *Ibid.*

[71] *Ibid.*

framework through which the brothers engage, on a number of occasions, with unfamiliar surroundings; they may at times doubt the map (or, more usually, their own map-reading ability), but the spatial information included in the maps themselves is not at fault in these instances – rather, their expectations often do not match up to the lived reality of the trip. Nonetheless, the notion of the map as a 'fluid and relational [entity]' is amply illustrated in the richer understanding of their Polish surroundings that the Dres brothers glean from collaboration with locals, and the application of even a little local knowledge.[72]

Of Jewish tourism to Poland (or, the reluctance of some members of Jewish communities worldwide to engage in such), Podoshen and Hunt observe:

> Our data [from 'netnographic' research – online ethnography] show that many Jewish tourists placed a significant amount of blame directly on the Polish people and have carried this blame over to current Polish society (citizens who lived during the Holocaust and those from more recent generations), and this retaliatory mindset provided their basis for rethinking the tourism decision. In this regard, our findings demonstrate that animosity related to tourism behavior resonates beyond the generation of tourists that were victimized by the harm doing agent. In our specific context, we found people in their twenties, far removed from the Holocaust by space and time, who steadfastly refused to travel to Germany and Poland.[73]

This situation mirrors the (decidedly xenophobic) warnings of the brothers' family members prior to their undertaking the trip: 'Hello Jérémie. If you're going to Poland, above all, watch out for Polacks. Hugs, Dad' reads an email from their father;[74] in a phone call with his cousin, Dres hears: 'You're going to Poland? I would've loved to come with you! I mean, not to see those dirty

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[72] *Ibid.*

[73] Podoshen and Hunt, p.1336.

[74] Dres, p.8.

Polacks!'[75] Dres himself, meanwhile, refuses to see Auschwitz, and therefore at least partially fits into the group of twenty-somethings described by Podoshen and Hunt.[76] Nonetheless, he and Martin do make the trip to Poland, and engage wholeheartedly in a search for memory; that they achieve this through collaboration with locals – albeit often (if not always) local Jews – complicates the picture unearthed by Podoshen and Hunt in their searches through online Jewish community message boards (as, indeed, does the very presence of contemporary Polish Jewry itself, to some extent).

6.3. The map speaks
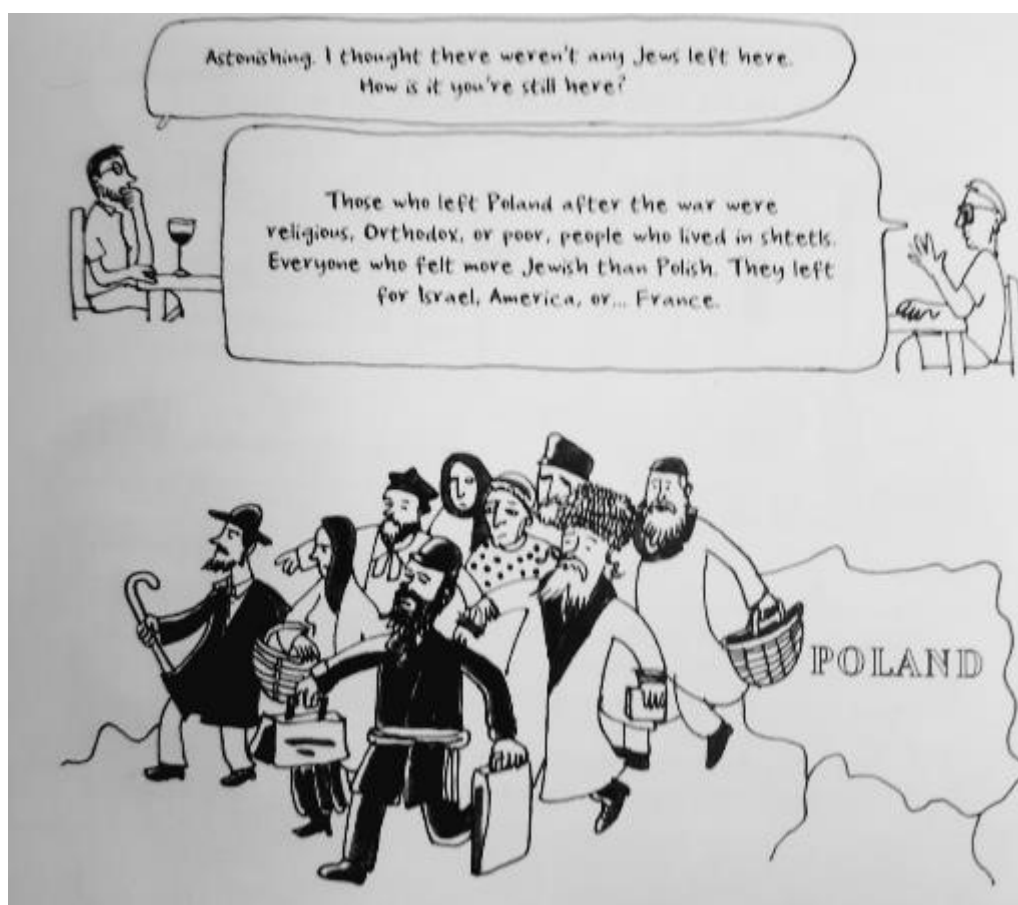
Figure 6.11 - Mapping Jewish exile. Dres, *We Won't See Auschwitz*, p.18.

It is in a closely-related sense that we arrive at the last category of the uses of maps in *We Won't See Auschwitz*. In these final instances, however, we can observe how maps act *in conversation* (almost literally) with the brothers'

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[75] *Ibid*, p.10.
[76] This is a fact that is evidently complicated by their willingness to visit the remains of the Warsaw Ghetto.

interlocutors at various points throughout the narrative, and in the same way offer Dres an economical device through which to compress the content of the often-expansive dialogues of some of the figures the pair meet during their trip. In essence, these examples are the product of an intersection of (re-)mediated and multidirectional (or transcultural) iterations of memory, while sitting on the border between 'communicative' and 'cultural' memory in the Assmann's sense: they emerge from direct conversation, as per the notion of 'ordinary everyday' communications forming the basis of communicative memory, and they conform to the approximate eighty-year reach of such memory, too, yet they are not thematically unstable, disorganised, or non-specialist conversations either, and hence simultaneously incorporate certain dimensions of 'cultural' memory;[77] they amalgamate a range of interconnected topics, including Poland's communist history, the Second World War and the Holocaust, and questions of Jewish diaspora and exile (and later Jewish 'revival') and, hence, they run counter to the notion of a 'zero sum' iteration of competitive memory, in the manner of Rothberg's multidirectional memory;[78] and, finally, they are multiply mediated, arising as they do from original (recorded) conversations, from which point they are transformed into both maps and graphic narrative.

The first example occurs early in the text, during Jérémie's discussion with Jan Spiewak. As Jan explains the nature of post-war emigration from Poland, Dres accompanies his words with an illustration that contains the cartographic outlines of a number of Central and Eastern European countries, the only one of which is named being Poland (figure 6.11). The group of nine people in traditional dress, seemingly fleeing across the border with items of luggage, accord with the explanation offered by Jan that '[t]hose who left Poland after the war were religious, Orthodox, or poor, people who lived in the shtetls. Everyone who felt more Jewish than Polish. They left for Israel, America, or…France.'[79] He goes on to explain that the people who stayed were 'highly assimilated,' and were usually 'quite attached to communist ideology,' and finishes by noting that, today, 'Polish Jews are highly visible in public life,'

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[77] Assmann, pp.126-127.
[78] Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, p.3.
[79] Dres, p.18.

a situation that applies in the context of his own family.[80] Evidently, this is Jan Spiewak's own subjective (perhaps reductive) rendering of the situation, which is strongly marked by familial experience; nonetheless, the map here serves as a shorthand for the situation he describes, and allows for ready comprehensibility – Dres employs a simplified cartography, along with easily-recognisable (if somewhat stereotypical) depictions of traditional Polish(-Jewish) and Orthodox Jewish dress. In effect, the map is here used to illustrate in compressed form a complex situation whereby Polish Jewry moved from a position of (often) clear visibility (particularly in rural communities) to a position of near-total post-war assimilation. Visually, Dres lays the page out in such a way that the map sits right at the centre, and is surrounded by images of Jan Spiewak giving his account of exile and assimilation, thereby positioning it firmly as *part of* – or *representative of* – the dialogue between the two characters. The veracity of Jan's interpretation is not questioned by Dres in the text – he is, after all, speaking from experience, and Jérémie is the outsider; rather, he allows Jan's words, augmented by his own map-illustration, to speak for themselves. In this instance, the map constitutes only the barest spatial and geographical information – specifically, the movement of a particular group of people *away* from Poland, beyond its borders; it is instead employed as a useful device by which Dres is able to condense a complex socio-historical development (here, one inherently related to questions of spatiality in the form of the movement of large numbers of people) into a straightforward, immediately-comprehensible form for the reader.

We see a similar example later, during Jérémie's meeting with Edward and his colleague Janek at the TSKŻ offices; here, the map is once again used as a means of augmenting the conversation between the protagonist and his local guides, but this time it occupies a more significant role, and even appears to *speak* to the reader to convey the spatial information relevant to the conversation (figure 6.12). Edward and Janek are here discussing the disparity of post-war survival rates between Jews in what were Nazi- and Soviet-occupied Poland. In order to illustrate this particular aspect of their long conversation (which has hitherto typically been illustrated with a narrative-

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[80] *Ibid*, pp.18-19.

image progression typical of comics, in the form of panels (albeit panels without outlines)), Dres has chosen to incorporate a somewhat abstracted, full-page illustration; the seated figures of Edward and Janek hover above a map of Poland, Germany, and the USSR and an accompanying illustration of gulag forced labour[81] – surrounding all of this are speech bubbles detailing the content of the conversation.[82] Each of these four aspects of the illustration appears to blend into at least one other, in a kind of collage or bricolage fashion, thereby incorporating text (here as a reproduction of speech), images (of both the past and the narrative present), and cartography into a relatively seamless whole.

Crucially, when it comes to the spatial information offered by Janek, it is *the map itself* which appears to speak his words – he opens with the question, '[y]ou know how many Jews were left after the war?' and the answer to this same question – '300,000 out of three and a half million.'[83] Initially, his words are attributed to him in conventional fashion, with speech bubbles emerging from his mouth. His observations continue *into* the accompanying image of the map: 'Between 40,000 and 50,000 on the Nazi side [of the Molotov-Ribbentrop line]' and '250,000 on the Soviet side.'[84] In each case, speech bubbles, now appear to emanate from the relevant side of the map, as if it is the cartography itself which is talking (thereby highlighting the inherently *spatial* nature of these survival rates). This map is, once again, decidedly short on geographical information; here, only 'Germany' and the 'USSR' are labelled, and within the boundaries of Poland Dres has depicted the Molotov-Ribbentrop line partitioning the country toward the east. Once again, a simplified cartography has been employed as a means of conveying complex socio-historical information to the reader in an easily-grasped form. Perhaps more significantly, the fact that the map itself *speaks* conveys the impression of the centrality of spatial information to this aspect of the conversation – as

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[81] This choice of illustration is probably owing to Dres's studied avoidance of the topic of the Holocaust, despite Janek's relatively sympathetic (in relation to the Nazis, at least) assessment of the USSR, and of Russians more broadly. He notes (trailing off somewhat vaguely): 'The Russians treated their people very poorly. Many Jews were sent to the gulag. But if you compare the two…' (p.39).

[82] Dres, p.39.

[83] *Ibid.*

[84] *Ibid.*

Janek puts it, '[i]f you look at the figures, it was heaven and hell. Few survived on the Nazi side, many more under Soviet occupation'; Dres's foregrounding of the map in this moment (it sits right at the centre of the page, as if bordered by the two TSKŻ men) clearly highlights the life and death importance of geography for Polish Jews after 1939. In this moment, the map is not merely *part* of the conversation, but rather the very *heart* of the conversation. The information it conveys, however, remains extremely simple – an economical compression of complex historical developments.

Figure 6.12- The map speaks statistics. Dres, *We Won't See Auschwitz*, p.39.

Finally, during the brothers' later conversation with Rabbi Burt Schuman of the Beit Warszawa progressive movement, Dres depicts a sequence of three maps that perhaps integrate themselves into the

conversation more comprehensively than either of the two above examples (see figures 6.13, 6.14, and 6.15). In the first instance, an outline of Poland, plays host to four illustrations of sites of mnemonic significance mentioned by Rabbi Schuman, each of which has been restored, as well as three small images of the Rabbi himself, who appears on the map as if offering a guided tour around the country. At each stopping point, a speech bubble emerges from his mouth to offer comment on the process of restoring Jewish heritage sites.[85] Beneath the map sits a small illustration of Jérémie and the Rabbi in conversation, the content of which carries on directly from that included in the cartography. In the second instance, Dres presents the reader with an outline of 'Central Warsaw,' within which are again included illustrations of points of interest related to the 'Jewish revival' in Poland.[86] On this occasion, however, there is no miniature version of the Rabbi, but his words are instead attributed to each of the individual sites illustrated within the map-outline via speech bubbles, in the same manner as those of Janek and Edward from TSKŻ. The narrative is once again brought back to the conversation itself through the inclusion of a small image of Rabbi Schuman underneath; the content of his speech once more follows on directly from that included in the map. In the final example from this sequence, we see a map of Europe, North America, the Middle East, and North Africa upon which are placed a range of figures representing Rabbi Schuman and members of his family; across this map, the miniature rabbis explain the movements of the Schuman family throughout history, and an approximate story of how the Rabbi came to be working in Poland.[87] Once again, the map is integrated into the embodied, face-to-face encounter of the brothers and the Rabbi through the inclusion – beneath the cartographical drawing – of a small illustration of the conversation.

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[85] *Ibid*, p.80.
[86] *Ibid*, p.81.
[87] *Ibid*, p.82.
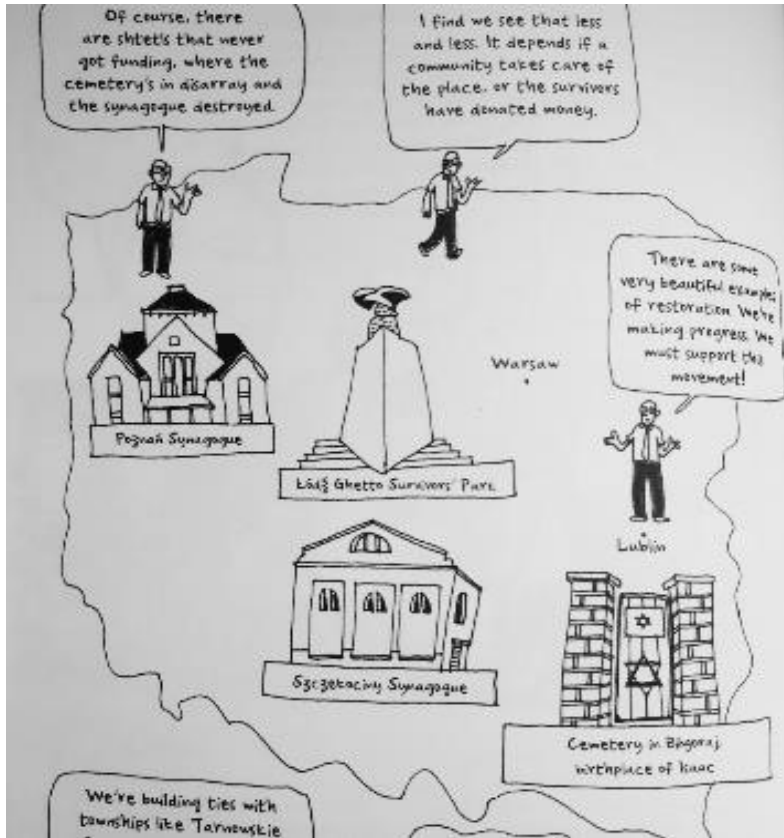
Figure 6.13 - Rabbi Schuman leads an armchair tour of Poland, with the help of Dres's map. Dres, *We Won't See Auschwitz*, p.80.
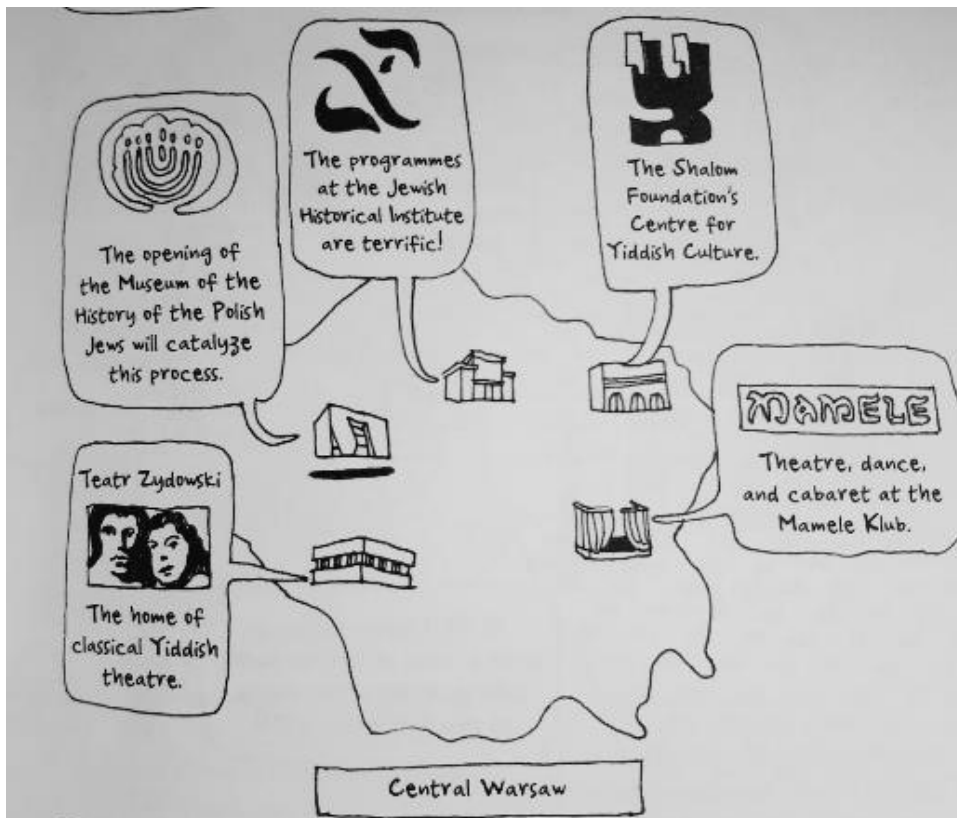
Figure 6.14 - The map of Warsaw speaks of Jewish revival. Dres, *We Won't See Auschwitz*, p.81.
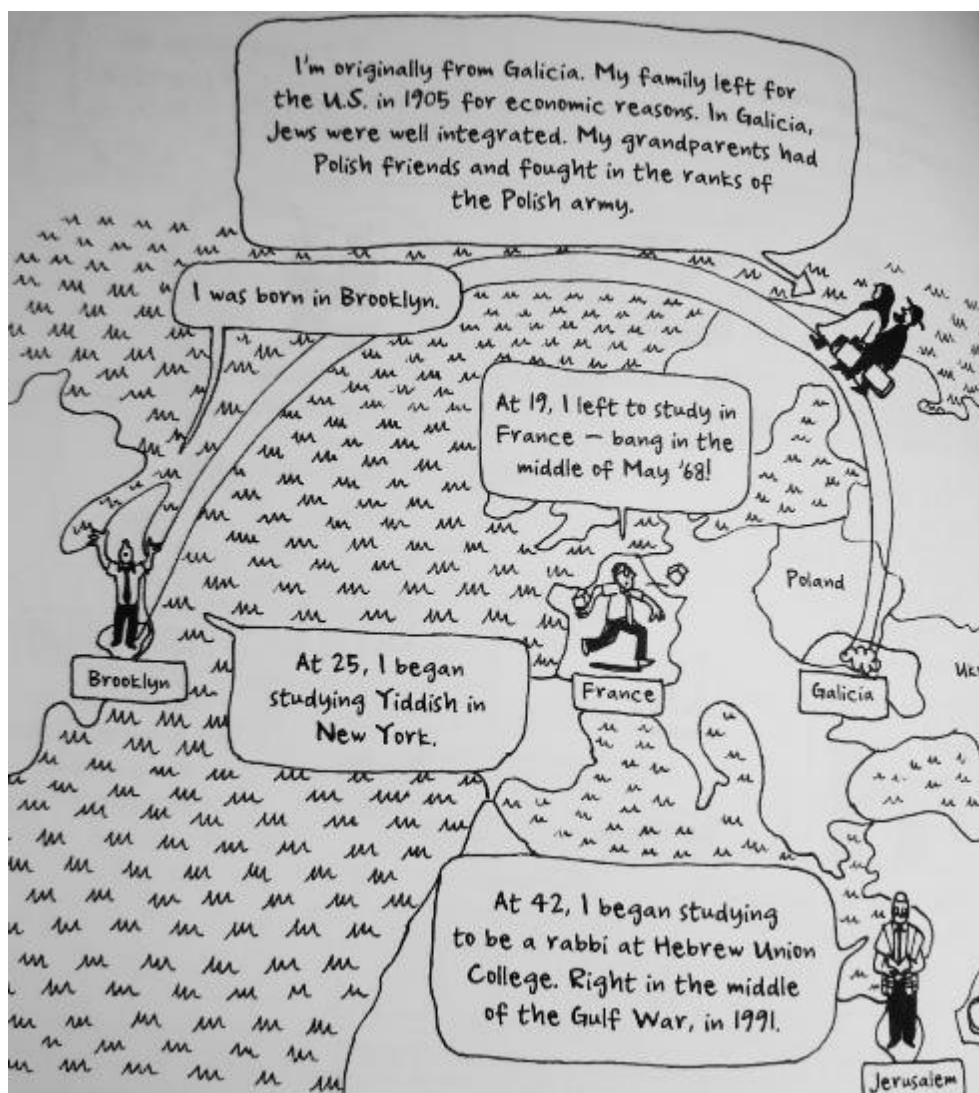
Figure 6.15 - The travels of Rabbi Schumann. Dres, *We Won't See Auschwitz*, p.82.

In all three instances, the integration of the map into the conversation is clear; indeed, in each case, the conversation is in fact *played out upon the surface of the map.* In the first and last instance, we see miniature figures of the Rabbi moving across the depicted cartography, while in the second example the map once again *speaks*, here ventriloquising Rabbi Schuman's detailed descriptions of the sites of Warsaw's Jewish revival. Once again, as with the examples discussed above, these maps offer Dres the opportunity to compress a great deal of information into a contained space – rather than separately illustrating all four of the sites indicated on the map of Poland, or all five from the map of Warsaw, readers are instead offered a concise summary of the content of the conversation that nevertheless conveys the

spatial extent of efforts to revive Jewish memory and culture within the country.

In each of the above examples – the brothers' meeting with Rabbi Schuman, Jérémie's discussion with Jan Spiewak, and the history lesson at TSKŻ – the map becomes (by way of Dres's illustration) an interlocutor in its own right, directly engaging in the conversation which it is intended to illustrate. This is in part owing to the 'productive, dialogical process' that Chute describes as being at the core of graphic narrative; here the map is used as a device by which to compress a great deal of (historical or mnemonic) information, and the means by which it 'speaks' is the comics speech bubble – this is in itself a further, practical means of compacting more information into a small illustration, and also of varying the reader's experience of the text by having the inanimate space of the map speaking the words of the human interlocutors.[88]

Nonetheless, that it is *cartography* which adopts this role is suggestive of the significance of spatiality to questions of Jewish-Polish memory. In this regard, we see clearly at these moments the intersection of a number of interrelated topics, in a manner reminiscent of Rothberg's multidirectional memory – in the case of Spiewak, for example, the Second World War and the communist era are connected via a history of exile, which speaks to a kind of transitional phase between two epochs of Polish history, rather than an abrupt break. Likewise, while Janek is keen to draw a sharp distinction between the respective fates of Jews on the Soviet- and Nazi-occupied halves of Poland (in a manner perhaps suggestive of Rothberg's 'zero-sum' or 'competitive' notion of memory), the gulag and the camps are nonetheless *both* held up together as examples of the terror inflicted on Polish Jews during the twentieth century; running somewhat counter to Janek's observations, Dres's illustration settles upon the gulag, rather than the camps (as per the title of the text) as an icon for this horror, thereby counterbalancing somewhat the content of the conversation. Finally – and perhaps most notably – the travels of Rabbi Schuman and his descriptions of Poland's Jewish revival speak powerfully, if implicitly, to the interconnection of the Holocaust and the communist era in

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[88] Chute, 'Shadow…', p.202.

relation to the suppression of the memory of Poland's Jewish past. Between the destruction and mass murder of the Holocaust and the officially-sanctioned silences and persecutions of the communist era, it is only since the fall of the Iron Curtain that Jewish memory has begun to be widely expressed in the country, and the relatively recent arrival of figures such as Rabbi Schuman is a consequence of this. That it is the maps themselves which often 'explain' (verbally, as well as visually) such information is strongly suggestive of the significance of spatiality to such questions as these.

All of these details – and hence the cartographies themselves – arise from direct conversation that is on the borderline between 'communicative' and 'cultural' memory, in a manner somewhat different to the maps discussed earlier in this chapter. Here, as elsewhere, maps are used to augment 'ordinary everyday' conversation and interaction (albeit of a *somewhat* structured variety, in the form of arranged meetings), and we see clearly the expression of a 'limited temporal horizon' of no more than eighty to one-hundred years, as per the notion of 'communicative memory.'[89] Similarly, in the case of Spiewak, he (and the accompanying map) speak from a position of familial experience, which suggests the verbal transfer of family remembrances of the post-war era. At the same time, however (and perhaps owing to the semi-structured interview-style of the conversations), we see exchanges that are *not* 'characterized by a high degree of non-specialization...thematic instability, and disorganization'; rather, we see specialists who are directly involved in the perpetuation of Jewish memory in Poland expounding upon topics that have led to the current state of play within the country.[90] That Dres re-mediates these conversations – from recordings and (presumably) his own memory, into both graphic narrative and cartography – demonstrates a decisive move into the realm of *cultural* memory; these conversations are codified for posterity in a manner strongly evocative of Ann Rigney and Astrid Erll's suggestion that literature can be viewed 'as a medium for observing the production of cultural memory,' and indeed can be considered part of that production process itself.[91] In these examples, Dres captures – often in an

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[89] Assmann, pp.126-127.
[90] *Ibid*, p.126.
[91] Erll and Rigney, p.112.

emblematic, cartographic form – the manner in which individuals' understandings of the past come to shape their understandings of the present.

Throughout *We Won't See Auschwitz*, maps play a significant role in allowing Jérémie and Martin to dictate their own journey of mnemonic discovery in the country of their grandmother's birth. Whether signalling to the reader the brothers' movements through Polish space, their attempts to navigate towns and cities, or their interactions with their local guides, the ontogenetic nature of the map is clear in all three of the categories outlined above. The notion that '[m]aps are of-the-moment, brought into being through practices (embodied, social, technical), always remade every time they are engaged with,' is abundantly clear throughout the text, as the brothers' understandings of the maps they use (and, hence, the spaces in which they find themselves) shift and change throughout, particularly when reappraised in collaboration with local Poles.[92] Rossetto's notion of the spatiality of maps as 'the cartographic surface through which our bodies move, as the space we navigate while using maps and as the spatial context in which we encounter maps' is similarly evident in *We Won't See Auschwitz*.[93] It is through movement and the reshaping of the map that the brothers reshape their trip; in turn, this trip alters significantly their experience and understanding of the country, which has the effect of illuminating their own family history. In essence, in Dres's work, we see a situation whereby the experiential, embodied remaking of the map necessarily entails the reshaping of memory.

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[92] Kitchin and Dodge, p.335.
[93] Rossetto, 'Skin of the map', p.95.

7. Introduction:

Fluid Cartographies and 'Solitary Travellers':
W.G. Sebald's *Austerlitz* and *The Rings of Saturn*

All of us, even when we think we have noted every tiny detail, resort to set pieces which have already been staged often enough by others. We try to reproduce the reality, but the harder we try, the more we find the pictures that make up the stock-in-trade of the spectacle of history forcing themselves upon us.

-W. G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*

Early on in W. G. Sebald's novel *The Rings of Saturn*, the unnamed narrator-protagonist finds himself at the edge of a cliff, standing on 'perforated ground' that he feels might '[give] way at any moment.'[1] At this point in the narrative, this anxious unease has a very specific, natural cause; the narrator notices a proliferation of nesting holes below him, burrowed into the cliff-face by sand martins. More broadly, however, the notion of 'perforated ground...which might...[give] way at any moment' could be read as a succinct metaphorical summary of the wider Sebaldian literary project.[2] 'The moral backbone of literature,' notes Sebald, in an interview just prior to his untimely death in 2001, 'is about that whole question of memory,' and it is indeed (and perhaps above all else) questions of memory that form the fabric of the moral and aesthetic enquiries that permeate his entire oeuvre.[3] Particularly, Sebald often appears to situate himself at the intersection of memory, history, and certain

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[1] W.G. Sebald, *The Rings of Saturn*, trans. by Michael Hulse (London: Vintage, 2002), p.68.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] Maya Jaggi, 'The Last Word,' *Guardian* [online], 21 December 2001 <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2001/dec/21/artsandhumanities.highereducation.> [accessed 26 August 2020], para.11.

spaces, and it is these concerns that are constitutive of what Naomi Stead refers to as 'Sebald's larger attempt to represent and memorialise the lasting trauma of the Holocaust in an oblique and understated rather than literal way.'[4] That the Holocaust figures as an obfuscated centre-point to his works is a notion that seems to be confirmed by Sebald himself. On the topic of writing the Nazi genocide of the Jews, he notes in an interview with *The Guardian*'s Maya Jaggi:

> I knew that writing about the subject, particularly for people of German origin, is fraught with dangers and difficulties. Tactless lapses, moral and aesthetic, can easily be committed. It was also clear you could not write directly about the horror of persecution in its ultimate forms, because no one could bear to look at these things without losing their sanity. So you would have to approach it from an angle, and *by intimating to the reader that these subjects are constant company; their presence shades every inflection of every sentence one writes*. If one can make that credible, then one can begin to defend writing about these subjects at all.[5]

Likewise, in this vein, John Banville notes in his review of Sebald's essay collection, *On the Natural History of Destruction*, that all of the author's major works engage with the catastrophes of the twentieth century – particularly the Holocaust and the Second World War – but they 'do so in the most delicate, anti-dramatic and moving fashion. Where others shout, Sebald murmurs.'[6] Much like the narrator on the cliff in *The Rings of Saturn*, Sebald's readers occupy an unstable space that is woven from a diffuse and somewhat disparate mnemohistory, one which gestures obliquely toward past tragedies; Sebald constructs massive-yet-fragile narratives that at times feel liable to

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[4] Naomi Stead, 'Architecture and memory in W.G. Sebald's *Austerlitz*', *arq*, 19:1 (2015), 41-48 (p.41).
[5] Jaggi, para.13, emphasis added.
[6] John Banville, 'Lest we forget', *Guardian* [online], 22 February 2003 <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2003/feb/22/highereducation.history> [accessed 26 August 2020], para. 2.

collapse under their own weight, or perhaps from the holes with which they are riddled.

Here, as I introduce the following two chapters, my primary intention is to demonstrate the fundamentally map-like quality of Sebald's works. Notably, Sebald's methods of representation are often discussed by scholars in ways that enmesh space, memory, and history. Silke Arnold-de Simine, for instance, notes that 'museums, collections and archives' – spaces with an explicit *mnemonic* function – 'feature prominently in all of Sebald's texts,' and suggests that: '[h]is texts are repositories...Sebald's writing is based on a poetics of collecting.'[7] She suggests, further, that 'W.G. Sebald claimed that he envisioned his prose text *Austerlitz*...as an alternative Holocaust museum.'[8] Indeed, the article by de Simine that I refer to here is predicated on an explicit reading of *Austerlitz* as a 'museum-text,' in which she compares the novel directly to Daniel Libeskind's extension to the Jewish Museum in Berlin. Laura García-Moreno, similarly, notes that '[o]ne could say that [Sebald] spatializes time and temporalizes space,'[9] and goes on to posit that the '*excavation* of the past' is a key narratological feature of *Austerlitz.*[10] Cultural geographer Daniel Weston, meanwhile, offers a Derridean reading of *The Rings of Saturn*, in which he contends that 'Sebald's texts describe a "situated perspective" which reads the traces of various tropes of history and memory in the landscapes that they traverse, and thus interrogate the variant fortunes of personal and general historical narratives,' and that 'In Sebald's texts, "memory", constructed in a complex of spatial and temporal location, provides the grounds upon which a critique of the erasing of the individual in traditional historiography is undertaken.'[11] Stead, meanwhile, reads *Austerlitz* through the lens of its relationship to architecture. In the world-view crafted within the novel, she notes, we see 'architecture as premonition of disaster, as monument to

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[7] Silke Arnold-de Simine, 'Memory Museum and Museum Text Intermediality in Daniel Libeskind's Jewish Museum and W.G. Sebald's *Austerlitz*', *Theory, Culture, and Society*, 29:1 (2012), 14-35 (p.27).

[8] *Ibid*, p.19.

[9] Laura García-Moreno, 'Strange Edifices, Counter-Monuments: Rethinking Time and Space in W. G. Sebald's Austerlitz', *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction*, 54:4 (2013), 360-379 (p.360).

[10] *Ibid*, p.365, emphasis added.

[11] Daniel Weston, 'The spatial supplement: landscape and perspective in W.G. Sebald's *The Rings of Saturn*', *cultural geographies*, 18:2 (2011), 171-168 (p.173).

barbarism, and as instrument of oppression,' and, not least, we are privy to 'Austerlitz's overriding aversion to architectural giganticism.'[12] All of these architectural features, notes Stead, are situated within 'the overriding theme in Austerlitz,' which she interprets as 'memory: individual and collective, forgotten and retrieved, the fragility of human memory in the face of the crushing forces of history.'[13] The following chapters will be no different, in the sense that I aim to present readings of The Rings of Saturn and Austerlitz in terms of memory, history, and space. My intention, however, is to introduce the hitherto seldom-considered perspective of cartography, and specifically, the notions of *fluid* cartography and countermapping discussed in the introduction and literature review with which this thesis opened.

I contend that it is possible to view Sebald's texts as *map-like* in character.[14] As such, I will begin my analysis here by justifying this view with reference to both The Rings of Saturn and Austerlitz. This justification will be crucial in order to open my reading on firm ground, before I attempt to unsettle the stability of this vantage point in the following chapters. I will go on to argue that, rather than tracing a relatively conventional route along the points of a map (as per a travelogue, perhaps – a designation that is sometimes hesitatingly attached by scholars to The Rings of Saturn), Sebald instead offers a 'fluid cartography' to his readers in both texts. In each of these novels, Sebald presents his readers with a transnational, trans*temporal* journey (oftentimes, *mental* journey) that takes meandering detours around – and skirts the edges of – the central topic of the Holocaust. These meditations emerge (apparently) organically from wanderings, chance meetings and (crucially) specific, concrete places, or *anchoring points on the map*. We may recall, from the literature review, Isabel Capeloa Gil and João Ferreira Duarte's conception of 'fluid cartography' as 'deeply relational, [aiming] at *understanding instead of controlling*'; cartographies which:

> [address] the fluid disengagement of the modern world,
> the *diasporic displacements* and the complex changes

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[13] *Ibid.*
[14] Here, I refer specifically to The Rings of Saturn and Austerlitz, but I believe that this character applies – in varying degrees – to all his prose works.

that mark the transitive and transitional reality of modernity...A fluid cartography, moreover, traces *connections in contact zones* and perceives the limits that mark territory not as borders but rather...*borderlands*...A fluid cartography, then, perceives the territory as an emerging surface where *charting is equated with inscribing and translating, where different identities, times and locations come together.*[15]

Ultimately, it is my aim to demonstrate the level of precision with which the concept of 'fluid cartography' can be applied to Sebald's works; in my view, the characteristics described by Gil and Duarte closely mirror those of the overarching Sebaldian literary project. In the terms of these authors, however, we might ask: what exactly is the 'territory' depicted in *The Rings of Saturn* and *Austerlitz*?

Memory, history, and space are central to the 'territory' charted by these works, and it is precisely within the 'borderlands' of such concepts that Sebald's characters tend to roam. Nonetheless, it is the notion of an 'emerging surface' that is central here. The narratives of *Austerlitz* and *The Rings of Saturn* present the reader with a 'surface' that appears to cyclically emerge from – and become re-submerged within – the oblivion of forgetting; 'different identities, times and locations' do indeed coexist, interact, overlap, and occasionally collide within these texts, and it is here that the shifting nature of Sebald's depiction of memory comes to the fore, and which will form my concern in these chapters.[16] It is here, too, that the Holocaust emerges – albeit circuitously – as a central concern. The mnemonic meditations of the texts are stretched, warped, and twisted – at times beyond recognition – but the (geographical) points from which they originate still maintain an essential relationality. This is despite Sebald's protagonists being pushed to breaking point by their wanderings, as suggested by the mental collapse of both the eponymous protagonist of *Austerlitz* – Jacques Austerlitz – and the unnamed

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[15] Gil and Duarte, p.3, emphases added.
[16] *Ibid.*

narrator of *The Rings of Saturn*; both characters succumb to deep depression and mental exhaustion. As Anna K. Schaffner notes of the narrator of *The Rings of Saturn*: 'Human existence appears to him as nothing but a grand theater of cruelty and absurdity, and, fittingly, his body expresses his philosophical misgivings by succumbing to complete paralysis at the end of his journey into the heart of saturnine darkness.'[17]

In addition, it is my contention that in *Austerlitz* – Sebald's last novel, published shortly before his tragic death in a car crash[18] – the 'fluid cartography' of his narrative method reaches its apotheosis; the features listed above are perhaps more pronounced, and undergo greater distortions and transformations here than in any of the author's other works. Moreover, I will illustrate how *Austerlitz* – rather than offering a fluid cartography alone – also offers a 'countermapping' (of sorts), in the sense that it works vigorously against the strictures of linear, grandiose conceptions of history. While such a relation to history is evident in *The Rings of Saturn*, too, it is somewhat less pronounced. I will demonstrate how, in the face of monumentality, linear history, and (in a tangentially-related sense) bureaucracy, *Austerlitz* constructs a narrative that comprises a nebulous, meandering, and deeply affective relationship to (personal) history, and can thus be read as a *countermapping*, sketched out upon the territory of historiography. In direct comparison with *The Rings of Saturn*, in *Austerlitz* we see these features manifest themselves in additional layers of narrative fragmentation and disintegration, and they serve to disconnect the narrative trajectory more comprehensively from the journeys of its protagonists, thereby creating a more radically-disjointed fluid cartography of memory that weaves multiple speakers, times, and spaces into labyrinthine sentences. *Austerlitz*, ultimately, represents a more violent reaction to the orderliness of monumental memory and history, and the bureaucracy of the archive. As García-Moreno notes of the protagonist's aversion to 'grid-like patterns':

> From Austerlitz's perspective, grid-like patterns are
> indicative of a compulsion to control and regulation that

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[17] Anna K. Schaffner, *Exhaustion: A History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), p.67. ProQuest e-book.

[18] Jaggi, para.1.

he, as well as Sebald, view with profound suspicion. In stark contrast to the impulse to itemize, classify, parcel out, to the "balance sheets, registers of the dead, lists of every imaginable kind, and endless rows of numbers and figures" (Sebald [*Austerlitz*] 279–80) that Austerlitz observes in the Ghetto Museum in Terezín (an observation that recalls Adorno's and Horkheimer's view of the dark side of the emphasis on reason since the Enlightenment), possible non–grid-like connections between people, places, times, and objects proliferate in *Austerlitz*. Paths are constantly crossing over and overlapping in such a way that the spheres of the private and the public, the domestic and the official appear to be inextricably linked.[19]

Such narrative structuring is evident, too, in *The Rings of Saturn*, but I will argue here that it is in *Austerlitz* that we see the '[proliferation]' of 'non-grid-like connections' reach its apex. Tellingly, it is in *Austerlitz*, also, that Sebald most directly (albeit still via digressions and meanderings) tackles the topic of the Holocaust; the 'approach' to the subject 'from an angle' is here at its most direct.[20]

With respect to the works of Astrid Erll, Max Silverman, and the other theorists of memory and culture that were introduced in the opening pages of this thesis, it is my broad contention that in Sebald's works Erll's 'carriers of memory' attempt to navigate spaces that are unsettled, shifting and subject to ongoing distortions.[21] We will see how this process operates in a slightly different fashion in each of the two novels. His works, moreover, amply illustrate Silverman's notion that

artistic works may be more suited than historical or sociological method to making visible the complex interaction of times and sites at play in memory, as a

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[19] García-Moreno, p.367.
[20] Jaggi, para.13.
[21] Erll, 'Travelling Memory', p.12.

fundamental feature of imaginative (poetic) works is to overlay meaning in intertextual space and blur the frontiers between the conscious and the unconscious, the present and the past, and the personal and the collective.[22]

Much like the notion of fluid cartography discussed above, this excerpt captures perfectly the techniques at play in Sebald's novels. As we will see, meaning is frequently and repeatedly overlain 'in intertextual space,' while the interaction of times and sites on display in both *Austerlitz* and *The Rings of Saturn* is complex, vastly extensive, and (in most cases) highly visible. These works capture amply the notion of 'the productive interaction of different inscriptions and the spatialization of time [that are] central to the work of memory.'[23] Finally, Michael Rothberg's notion of multidirectional memory comes to the fore here, too, given the frequent interaction-through-juxtaposition of a variety of distinct times, sites, and events in both novels; Sebald is concerned with kaleidoscopic interconnection rather than 'zero-sum' games. He avoids replicating, at all times, the 'zero-sum struggle for preeminence' amongst cultural-historical memories that Rothberg is keen to disavow.[24]

Later in *The Rings of Saturn*, some time after the narrator describes his unsettling cliff-top encounter with the sand martin burrows, we find ourselves in Belgium, at Waterloo. Here, in a Benjaminian fashion, the narrator takes to task the enormous monument erected to the battle, and the panorama housed nearby: 'This then, I thought, as I looked round about me, is the representation of history. It requires a falsification of perspective. We, the survivors, see everything from above, see everything at once, and still we do not know how it was.'[25] Despite the enormous solidity of the monument and the apparently-privileged perspective afforded by the panorama, the narrator reveals the stability of such constructions to be little more than deceptive *trompe l'œil*.

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[22] Silverman p.29.
[23] *Ibid*, p.4.
[24] Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, p.3.
[25] Sebald, *Rings*, p.125

This vantage point is scarcely more secure than the crumbling cliff-top, riddled with holes.

7.1. Charting a course: the map-text

'Suffolk,' 'Norwich,' 'Portersfield Road,' 'Charlottenstraße,' 'Valais,' 'Lake Geneva,' 'the Jura,' 'the Cévennes,' 'Oxford,' 'the African continent,' 'the Iberian peninsula,' 'the Mediterranean,' 'the Tuileries gardens,' 'Rouen,' 'Normandy,' 'the Atlas mountains,' 'the Norfolk & Norwich Hospital,' 'the parish church of St. Peter Mancroft in Norwich' – across the first ten pages of *The Rings of Saturn* alone, Sebald introduces eighteen real-world, *mappable* locations.[26] On just the first page of *Austerlitz*, meanwhile, Sebald makes mention of 'England,' 'Belgium,' 'the city of Antwerp,' and, particularly, the narrator's route around the centre of that city: 'I remember the uncertainty of my footsteps as I walked all round the inner city, down Jeruzalemstraat, Nachtegaalstraat, Pelikanstraat, Paradijsstraat, Immerseelstraat and many other streets and alleyways,'[27] shortly after which he finally comes to rest (on the second page of the novel) at 'Astridplein, next to the Centraal Station.'[28] A cursory internet search reveals that these six streets do indeed sit within central Antwerp, and that the narrator's route is a viable (if somewhat wandering and circuitous) one. Across the twelve pages of Sebald's prose that I have referred to here, I have listed a total of twenty-eight real-world locations, and this dense proliferation of specific geographic markers is a technique that persists across both novels (and indeed, the rest of Sebald's oeuvre). The pages of both *Austerlitz* and *The Rings of Saturn* are comprehensively saturated with such markers from start to finish; some convey the 'mental departures' taken by the novels' protagonists, while others (crucially) describe their physical wanderings – in both texts, however, the two types of journeys are invariably linked.[29]

Weston suggests that all four of Sebald's novels 'are characterized by spatial motifs of voyaging,' and it is through such journeys that his characters

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[26] Sebald, *Rings*, pp.1-10.
[27] W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*, trans. by Anthea Bell (London: Penguin, 2002), p.1.
[28] *Ibid*, p.2.
[29] Weston, p.178.

depart upon their extended meditations on memory and history.[30] Indeed, as Weston also notes, 'the walks that [*The Rings of Saturn*] reports upon provide the underpinning foundations for the construction of a narrative of mental departures. The common themes that these departures converge upon are drawn from characteristics read in the spaces that the text traverses.'[31] I would contend that *Austerlitz*, too, shares this narrative characteristic, albeit with a slightly different character and emphasis: *individual memory* (or the lack thereof) shares equal prominence with cultural memory and history in this text, while in *The Rings of Saturn* meditations on history, nature, and civilisation tend to predominate. In each of these novels, Sebald presents his readers with a physical journey that traces a particular route through specific, real-world locations.

In *The Rings of Saturn*, the narrator recounts his extended walking tour of the Suffolk coast, a journey that he undertakes in order to '[dispel] the emptiness that takes hold of [him] whenever [he has] completed a long stint of work.'[32] Weston suggests that '[t]he interplay between notions of emptiness and the process of re-filling that Sebald's *bricolage* of cultural memory engages in is crucial to the meanings established in his text,' and that it is precisely the emptiness of, and 'lack of distinguishing features' upon, the Suffolk coastline that allows for the 'possibility of relation to other times and spaces' (in this sense, in fact, one might read *The Rings of Saturn* as a kind of narratological filling-in of a blank map).[33] In *Austerlitz,* meanwhile, the journeys undertaken are manifold and varied in their nature, but they typically revolve around Jacques Austerlitz's search for his lost past and identity; we are told that he escaped the horrors of the Holocaust on a *kindertransport*, and lived out his childhood and the majority of his adult life with no knowledge of his true origins, barring his original name, which is revealed by a schoolmaster. As a result, we are often privy to Austerlitz's recollections of his journeys on the continent, attempting to uncover information relating to his true identity, along with his night-time wanderings across London around the time of his mental collapse (which lead him to the unearthing of certain

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[30] *Ibid*, p.173.
[31] *Ibid*, p.178.
[32] Sebald, *Rings*, p.3.
[33] Weston, pp.178-179, original emphasis.

fragments of memory that direct him toward his past), and, crucially, his numerous chance meetings with the unnamed narrator, which lead to journeys on foot around London, Paris, and Brussels, and at which moments the narrative of Austerlitz's life unfolds. The crucial point here is that both texts encompass a journey (or in the case of Austerlitz, *journeys*) that traces a route between multiple (real) geographical locations. It is from these real-world anchor-points that the novels' extended metaphysical contemplations unfold. The level of mimetic cartographic detail provided by Sebald in both texts suggests that it would be possible to comprehensively map the routes taken by Sebald's characters (and the mnemonic and historical connections they draw at various points along them) if we so chose.

Indeed, Barbara Hui undertook just such a project as part of her comparative literature PhD at the University of California, Los Angeles.[34] Her work included a geotagged digital map that charts a vast array of geographical references from *The Rings of Saturn*. On her map, the walking route followed by the narrator around East Anglia is highlighted by a red circuit, while his meditations on different times and spaces are connected to the various points of his journey in white and orange (figure 7.1).[35] Hui's project, then, amply illustrates the 'potential for connection to other times and spaces' that Weston reads into the Suffolk landscape in *The Rings of Saturn*.[36] The same could likewise be achieved with *Austerlitz*, although the task would undoubtedly be more complex – this latter novel would require multiple (sometimes overlapping) red routes, from which separate (and again, occasionally overlapping) networks would emerge. Hui's project, nonetheless, demonstrates clearly the inherently mappable nature of Sebald's *The Rings of Saturn*, the possibility for which lies in the proliferation of specific spatial markers that exist within the text; this is a feature that is shared with *Austerlitz*, along with the author's other works. That such comprehensive geospatial information exists within these texts and can be successfully

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[34] Barbara Hui, 'About Litmap', *Barbara Hui* [online] <http://barbarahui.net/about-litmap.html> [accessed 26 August 2020].

[35] Barbara Hui, 'Litmap', *Barbara Hui* [online] <http://barbarahui.net/litmap/> [accessed 26 August 2020].

[36] Weston, p.179.

transferred onto the surface of a map suggests that a reading of the novels as 'map-like' is an apt characterisation.
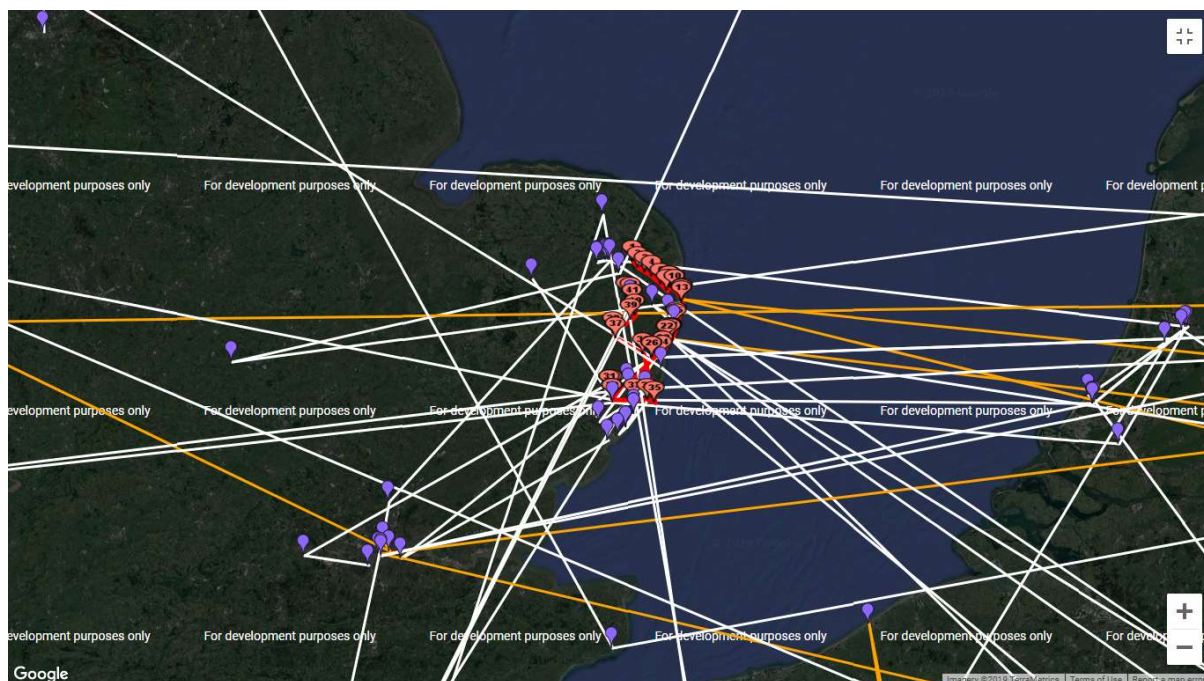
Figure 7.1 - Barbara Hui's 'LitMap'

In addition to the above, there exist further features of Sebald's narrative technique in both texts that suggest the possibility of reading each as 'map-like.' In both *Austerlitz* and *The Rings of Saturn*, a multitude of heightened vantage points and bird's-eye views give the reader the impression of frequently looking down upon the unfolding narrative as if from a great height. This vertiginous perspective can be clearly seen, for instance, when Sebald's narrator is recovering in the Norwich and Norfolk hospital,[37] early in the pages of *The Rings of Saturn*:

> I dragged myself, despite the pain, up to the window sill.
> In the tortured position of a creature that has raised itself
> erect for the first time I stood leaning against the glass. I
> could not help thinking of the scene in which poor
> Gregor Samsa, his little legs trembling, climbs the

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[37] In his novel, Sebald describes the old premises of the Norfolk and Norwich hospital. At this time, the hospital was a tall multi-storey building in the centre of the city; it was closed in January 2003 and demolished that same year to make way for flats and houses. See: BBC News online, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/norfolk/3249070.stm> [accessed 26 August 2020].

armchair and looks out of his room, no longer remembering (so Kafka's narrative goes) the sense of liberation that gazing out of the window had formerly given him. And just as Gregor's dimmed eyes fail to recognize the quiet street where he and his family had lived for years, taking Charlottenstraße for a grey wasteland, so I too found the familiar city, extending from the hospital courtyards to the far horizon, an utterly alien place. I could not believe that anything might still be alive in that maze of buildings down there; rather, it was as if I were looking down from a cliff upon a sea of stone or a field of rubble, from which the tenebrous masses of multi-storey carparks rose up like immense boulders.[38]

At this moment, the narrator is recuperating from a kind of mental exhaustion, manifesting in a 'state of almost total immobility' that takes hold of him 'a year to the day after [he] began [his] tour' of the Suffolk coast.[39] I will return shortly to the question of a sense of *alienation* from the particular vantage point expressed above, here signified by the narrator's identification with Kafka's Gregor Samsa, but for now, the question of height is most pertinent. The narrator notes that his room is located on the hospital's eighth floor, yet the vantage point expressed in the passage above gives the impression that he is peering down upon the city of Norwich from a much greater height.[40] To interpret the buildings below as a 'maze' for instance (itself a near-cartographical description of city streets), would almost require an aerial vantage point – a bird's eye view – while the notion of looking down as if 'from a cliff upon a sea of stone' conveys a similar sense of acute verticality; coupled with the disorientating sense of alienation the narrator feels at this moment, the impression is decidedly one of dizzying vertigo.[41] Given the persistent focus on history and memory within the novel, and the fact that the narrator is

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[38] Sebald, *Rings,* p.5.
[39] *Ibid*, P.3
[40] *Ibid*, P.4
[41] *Vertigo* also being the title of another of Sebald's prose works.

recuperating after a mental collapse precipitated by his walking tour, this perspective (at this particular moment) would seem to accord with the somewhat stomach-churning sense – expressed by Sebald himself in *On the Natural History of Destruction* – of time as a 'dark…abysm' which, 'when you look down' upon it, makes you 'feel dizzy and afraid.'[42] The overall picture across the two novels, however, is somewhat more complex.

Often, Sebald provides the reader, too, with just such a heightened vantage point, albeit not frequently one so extremely vertiginous as the one described above. This is crucial, I contend, in viewing the texts under discussion here as map-like, rather than as works which merely reel off a succession of geographical locations that are more or less relevant to the plot; Sebald frequently creates a sense of looking at things from above (sometimes, *directly* above), and of observing from a height the topology of the places and situations he describes. A little later in *The Rings of Saturn*, for example, the narrator notes how '[u]nder the wonderful influence of the painkillers coursing through me, I felt, in my iron-framed bed, like a balloonist floating weightless amidst the mountainous clouds towering on every side' – whilst not an actual viewpoint within the reality of the novel, the notion of weightless floating (here induced by the mind-altering effects of painkillers) is an apt characterisation of the perspective often offered to the reader.[43] We have already seen, too, the narrator's description of the towering monument at Waterloo, and the overhead perspective afforded by the panorama of the battle housed there, along with his view from the cliff-top, riddled with the holes of sand martins. Later, during the early stages of the narrator's journey, he strikes up a conversation with a gardener at Somerleyton Hall. The man describes to him how he watched RAF bombers taking off for raids in Germany as a teenager, noting – in decidedly aerial terms, as if from the cockpit of one of the RAF planes – that 'I pictured in my mind's eye the German cities going up in flames, the firestorms setting the heavens alight'[44] This perspective, notes the author's interlocutor, was strengthened by the man's employer, Lord Somerleyton, who 'brought [him] a big relief map of Germany,' from which he could begin to

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[42] W.G. Sebald, *On the Natural History of Destruction*, trans. by Anthea Bell (London: Penguin, 2004), p.74.
[43] Sebald, *Rings*, p.17.
[44] Ibid, p.38.

comprehend in more concrete terms the location of the 'place names [he] had heard on the news' – he goes on to describe how poring over this map becomes something of an obsession.[45] Later, while describing the Mauritshuis museum in the Hague, the narrator explains how he must spend time recovering from the affliction inspired by viewing Rembrandt's *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp*, 'in front of Jacob van Ruisdael's *View of Haarlem with Bleaching Fields*.'[46] At this point, the narrator describes the latter painting thus:

> The flatland stretching out towards Haarlem is seen from above, from a vantage point generally identified as the dunes, though the sense of a bird's-eye view is so strong that the dunes would have to be veritable hills or even modest mountains. The truth is of course that Ruisdael did not take up a position on the dunes in order to paint; his vantage point was an imaginary position some distance above the earth. Only in this way could he see it all together: the vast cloudscape that occupies two thirds of the picture; the town, which is little more than a fraying of the horizon except for St. Bavo's cathedral…; the dark bosks and bushes; the farm in the foreground; and the bright field where the sheets of white linen have been laid out to bleach and where, by my count, seven or eight people no taller than a quarter of an inch, are going about their work[47]

After the claustrophobic, ground-level closeness of the encounter with the famous Rembrandt piece (oft-discussed by scholars), it seems that the narrator must retreat to the comforting illusion of an 'imaginary' bird's-eye view offered by Jacob van Ruisdael, one that recalls the painkiller-induced illusion of floating described at the moment of the narrator's stay in the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital. That this is precisely the kind of 'falsification

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[45] *Ibid*, pp.38-39
[46] *Ibid*, p.83
[47] *Ibid*.

of perspective' offered by the panorama at Waterloo is obvious – this is a point to which I will return – but the painting's totalising, near-aerial perspective, as described by the narrator, is one that frequently creeps into the narratives of both texts.

Further examples abound in *Austerlitz,* in much the same manner as they do in *The Rings of Saturn.* To briefly name but a few, Austerlitz describes how, as a child, he pictured the world as 'an ideal landscape' – a single peninsula of the world in miniature, which he describes as a 'single panorama';[48] he notes how, at school, his history teacher captivatingly described the Napoleonic wars in a manner akin to 'surveying the entire landscape of those years from above with an eagle eye';[49] he recalls happy times spent at the home of a childhood friend in dream-like terms, including the notion that, from the window of his bedroom at that house, he 'looked down from above on the treetops';[50] at Greenwich, with the narrator, Austerlitz takes photographs of the 'panorama of the city to the north and north-west on the far side of the park,'[51] while the narrator later describes similar scenes painted by various artists;[52] Austerlitz describes the sense of freedom engendered by his school-friend Gerald's love of flying, noting that 'he had been able to fly over the whole wretched place [their school and its surrounding area] in a Chipmunk and get right away from it once a week. The further you can rise above the earth, the better, he [Gerald] said,'[53] and the narrator later describes a memorable flight taken with this same friend, noting how 'the Thames emerged as if out of nothing, a dragon's tail, black as cart-grease';[54] finally, to provide one additional example, Austerlitz later describes the area around Liverpool Street Station, with particular reference to the 'engineers' plans [which] looked like muscles and sinews in an anatomical atlas,' an observation bolstered by a reproduction of these plans, included without comment.[55] Such overhead, or aerial, viewpoints, then, form a key

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[48] Sebald, *Austerlitz,* p.85.
[49] *Ibid,* p.98
[50] *Ibid,* p.134
[51] *Ibid,* p.141
[52] *Ibid,* p.145
[53] *Ibid,* 157
[54] *Ibid,* p.162
[55] *Ibid,* pp.186-187.

feature of the narratives of both works, and are often expressed in terms of their dream-like or unreal quality.

In this light, however, Weston suggests that there is a tendency to portray the 'elevated, panoptic (and for the Ruisdael painting, fictional) perspective' in decidedly 'negative terms,' as we have similarly observed in the case of the panorama at Waterloo.[56] This is, suggests Weston, owing to the fact that 'the situation of perspective is emphasized as crucially important in the formation of meaning, and...of a historical narrative.'[57] In the case of the Ruisdael painting, for instance, this piece offers the narrator respite from the horror he encounters when viewing the Rembrandt painting shortly beforehand, but the comfort it offers is illusory owing to the impossible vantage point it describes. Weston is referring specifically to *The Rings of Saturn* in his observation, and while I agree that this novel (and indeed, *Austerlitz*) does emphasise the importance of questions of perspective in the formation of meaning (after the manner of Walter Benjamin), it is in the notion of a '*falsification* of perspective,' as expressed by the narrator at Waterloo, that is crucial here; I do not accept that overhead or bird's-eye views in Sebald's texts are treated, as a rule, with suspicion or contempt (although this is doubtless the case in some instances). *Genuine* (rather than falsified) overhead views appear to offer clarity, in some cases. In *Austerlitz*, for example, as we have seen from some of the moments listed above, flight and panoramas sometimes offer a sense of relief and freedom and, as in the case of Liverpool Street Station, they can greatly aid the reader's comprehension of what his characters describe (in this case, the sinuous structure of the railway lines around Bishopsgate). Indeed, as the narrator notes of the viewpoint afforded by Ruisdael's view of Haarlem, '[only] in this way could he see it all together.'[58] It is rather, as Weston rightly suggests, the question of perspective that is crucial, yet he does not seem to differentiate between varying types of overhead (or heightened) vantage points. Weston, in his article, appears to posit that a specific type of (ground-level) viewpoint is valorised by Sebald in *The Rings of Saturn*, but often, the altitudinal vantage points put forth by

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[56] Weston, p.180.
[57] *Ibid*.
[58] Sebald, *Rings*, p.83.

Sebald differ significantly from that proposed by the panorama at Waterloo, and of which his narrator is so sceptical; rather, Sebald's aerial viewpoints sometimes function in a manner that is scarcely different to his narrative method elsewhere, drawing in all manner of associations, and mutating and changing as we, the readers, gaze at them.

I would like to emphasise this particular point via one final, further collection of examples from *Austerlitz*, in which a recurring discussion of fortifications – particularly star-shaped fortifications – arises (clearly foreshadowing the star-like fortress of Terezín/Theresienstadt,[59] a point to which I will return later), occasionally accompanied by illustrations of the ground-plans devised for such structures. An early instance of this discussion occurs when Austerlitz describes to the narrator the 'fundamentally wrong-headed' nature of such designs.[60] He goes on to note how, by the late seventeenth century, 'the star-shaped dodecagon behind trenches had finally crystallized, out of the various available systems, as the preferred ground-plan,' at which point Sebald supplements his protagonists' discussion with an illustration – a map of the French fortress-town of Saarlouis from 1680, now located in the German Saarland region, adjacent to the French border.[61] Austerlitz's musings on the nature of such a design are supported here – through both text and image – by a bird's-eye view. It is only from this vantage point that one can fully appreciate the star-like shape of such constructions; from ground level, such a building would resemble a fortress or castle like any other (and the narrator does, in fact, experience the Breendonk fortress in Belgium as distressing and overwhelmingly oppressive at ground-level).[62] Explicit description of the construction from precisely this vantage point ('star-shaped') is quickly followed by an illustration of one such plan, in order to fix the image firmly in the mind of the reader for the pages to come. This is

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[59] I have chosen to follow the naming convention outlined by Lisa Peschel, in the introduction to the edited collection *Performing Captivity, Performing Escape: Cabarets and Plays from the Terezín/Theresienstadt Ghetto*. Peschel notes that, 'when the Nazis chose [the] fortress town as the site of the ghetto, both names had been in use for over 150 years.' While not necessarily of central concern in this context, the 'dual form Terezín/Theresienstadt' nonetheless captures the bilingualism of the surrounding region, and of the prisoners (2014, 1).

[60] Sebald, *Austerlitz,* p.17.

[61] *Ibid*, p.18.

[62] *Ibid*, pp. 25-34.

crucial, given that Austerlitz goes on to explain why the nature of such structures is so 'fundamentally wrong-headed': he notes that 'it had been forgotten that the largest fortifications will naturally attract the largest enemy forces,' and that 'a tendency towards paranoid elaboration was that you drew attention to your weakest point.'[63] This is a prime example of '*Austerlitz*'s overriding aversion to architectural giganticism,' as noted by Stead, and a sense that re-emerges at multiple points later in the text, such as when Austerlitz discusses the fortress of Breendonk, near Brussels, and Terezín/Theresienstadt, near Prague, among others.[64] In each of these cases, this crucial thematic facet of the novel is expressed to the reader through both text and (in some cases) image, via an overhead, cartographical (or near-cartographical) vantage point – shortly after the more general discussion of such fortifications, for instance, the narrator goes on to describe the fortress of Breendonk as 'crab-like,'[65] and notes the 'symmetrical ground-plan, with its outgrowths of limbs and claws, with the semi-circular bastions standing out from the front of the main building like eyes and the stumpy projection at the back of its body.'[66] This description, too, is accompanied by an uncaptioned illustration. A recurring discussion such as this represents one example of Sebald's melding of different spaces and temporalities, here coalescing around the theme of fortifications;[67] his characters' discussions of the topic are greatly enhanced by the overhead perspectives from which they are presented, which allow for a greater appreciation of the 'tendency toward paranoid elaboration' noted by the protagonist. While the bird's-eye view or raised panorama may, at times, offer the falsely-secure, historicised vantage point of the victor (a position of which Sebald and his characters are deeply sceptical), the same perspective, at other times, allows the reader and the novels' protagonists to escape the complex morass of history at ground-level.

In all, the multitude of specific, real-world locations that form one of the fundamental building blocks of both texts, in tandem with frequent forays

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[63] *Ibid*, pp.19-20.
[64] Stead, p.42.
[65] Sebald, *Austerlitz,* p.30.
[66] *Ibid*, p.27.
[67] We are told how Breendonk and Terezín/Theresienstadt, for instance, were both later repurposed for use by the occupying Nazi forces, particularly the SS.

into overhead vantage points, allow for a reading of both *The Rings of Saturn* and *Austerlitz* as map-like in character. In this particular, *specific* combination of features we might read this cartographic quality as being somewhat distinct from more general descriptions of space and setting; as will become clear as the following two chapters progress, the network-like connection between the spaces referred to also serves to heighten this impression. This simple combination of factors, however, does not afford the reader the (apparently) secure vantage point provided by conventional cartography; the novels do not merely recount countryside ambles, roving from place to place between the towns and villages signposted on an Ordnance Survey map. Rather, the fluidity of Sebald's mnemonic journeys in both novels fundamentally destabilises any straightforward reading of the texts as simply cartographic, as I will demonstrate over the following chapters.

8.

Fluid Cartography in W.G. Sebald's *The Rings of Saturn*: A Centrifugal Walking Tour

In *The Rings of Saturn*, at the moment in which Sebald's narrator[1] finds himself experiencing a strange and profound affinity with Kafka's Gregor Samsa (as discussed in the introduction to this section), we are privy, as readers, to a moment of total alienation. Here, even the intimately familiar landscapes of Charlottenstraße (for Samsa) and Norwich (for the narrator) become 'grey wasteland' and an 'utterly alien place' respectively.[2] With reference to moments of estrangement and incomprehension such as these within the text, Bianca Theisen notes that 'Sebald finds a precedent in Kafka for the ill-fated course of a *natural history of destruction* leaving only little hope for escape that will come to characterize his own project, particularly in *The Rings of Saturn*.'[3] With regard to this notion of a 'natural history of

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[1] It is worth pointing out here an oft-repeated observation to be found in much scholarship on Sebald's writings; namely, that the author and narrator of his works are generally, if not one and the same person, so closely related as to be virtually indistinguishable (barring the obvious fact that one exists within the pages of the text). The same holds true for *Austerlitz*, as well as the author's other prose works. Naomi Stead describes Sebald's narrator in the following terms: 'a self-effacing figure present in each of Sebald's books, one who shares many characteristics with the author, but who reveals very little of himself, instead taking the role of bearing witness: faithfully recounting the stories "told" to him by the book's characters.' (Stead, p.42).

[2] Sebald, *Rings*, p.5

[3] Bianca, Theisen, 'A Natural History of Destruction: W.G. Sebald's *The Rings of Saturn*', *MLA*, 121:3 (2006), 563-581 (p.574), emphasis added; It should be noted, too, that Theisen is borrowing this phrase from the title of the English translation of an essay collection written by Sebald, mentioned elsewhere here – *On the Natural History of Destruction* – which concerns the memory of, and (non-)response to, Allied bombing campaigns in Germany. Banville, in his *Guardian* review of the English edition (referenced elsewhere in this section), describes the work as a 'quietly spoken but fierce protest at the mendacity and moral evasiveness of our time' (Banville, para.2).

destruction,' Theisen proposes that Sebald portrays a 'spherical system of association and encyclopedic links,'[4] and characterises the author's method in the following manner:

> In his attempt to likewise eclipse the bleak light that rationalism has cast on reality, dissecting the anatomy of a world reduced to the schema and the grid, and to tone down the narrative of progress embraced by those who believed they left the age of darkness for enlightened analysis, Sebald reexamines the baroque awareness of human infirmity and transience in a world changing according to unknown designs and rediscovers allegorical indirection as perhaps the more appropriate, if also more fantastic and more fallible approach to the labyrinthine truths of reality.[5]

In short, according to Theisen, '[l]ike Walter Benjamin, Sebald traces history as a process of decay.'[6] Indeed, as we have seen, Sebald himself, in *On the Natural History of Destruction*, writes of the 'dark...abysm of time,' in which '[e]verything lies all jumbled up' and which makes those who gaze into it 'dizzy and afraid.'[7] Theisen's portrayal of the text (and Sebald's wider project) as a 'natural history of destruction' is highly fitting, and this is a characteristic of the novel that is entwined with its recording of a specific journey; it is precisely this 'natural history' that Sebald's narrator maps out as he meanders through the vast, stark landscapes of the Suffolk coastline. As he walks, he ponders a number of place-specific histories of this nature: the natural history of the herring (and its over-fishing off the Suffolk coast), the often-inexorable decline of country estates, the gradual collapse of the once-great port town of Dunwich into the North Sea, and the ruin brought to particular fishing towns in Suffolk after shifts in the migratory routes of herring shoals are all examples (among many others) of waypoints that signify a *localised* 'natural history of destruction' that permeates the narrator's journey. Whilst temporally removed

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[4] Theisen, p.569.
[5] Ibid, p.563.
[6] Ibid, p.578.
[7] Sebald, *Destruction*, p.74.

from the excursion taken in the novel, these histories of place are nonetheless geographically immediate. Here, I would refer back to Barbara Hui's 'LitMap,' which traces precisely this journey and the connections Sebald's narrator draws along its course, thereby illustrating the cartographic quality of Sebald's prose. Such spatial markers, however, provide the starting points for a number of other – sometimes more abstracted – natural histories of destruction, some of which include reference to the Holocaust, and which will form my concern over the next few pages; in this regard, it is worth pointing out that my primary purpose within this chapter is to trace the *fluid cartography* inherent to *The Rings of Saturn*, and not to outline the kinds of (cartographic) features described in the introduction to this section – nonetheless, it is important to keep in mind that such features are in evidence throughout the text. Indeed, in most cases, Sebald begins with a close spatially- and temporally-anchored starting point, from which the narrative spins centrifugally outwards, increasing its temporal or spatial distance (or both) from the narrative present. But how would one begin to define such a landscape, and the journey Sebald's narrator takes through it?

In his preface to *The Order of Things*, Michel Foucault introduces his notion of the heterotopia in the following terms:

> Heterotopias are disturbing, probably because they secretly undermine language, because they make it impossible to name this *and* that, *because they shatter or tangle common names, because they destroy 'syntax' in advance, and not only the syntax with which we construct sentences but also that less apparent syntax that causes words and things...to 'hold together'*...Heterotopias (such as those so often to be found in Borges) desiccate speech, contest the very possibility of grammar at its source; *they dissolve our myths and sterilise the lyricism of our sentences*.[8]

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[8] Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Pantheon, 1970), p.xviii, emphases added; It is worth noting, too, that Borges features as an important intertext in *The Rings of Saturn*, particularly in the form of his short story, *Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius* (1940) which is a work heavily

Elsewhere, in an article titled 'Of Other Spaces,' he outlines this notion (and its relationship to utopian space) in more minute detail, describing how a heterotopia is a space that is simultaneously real and unreal; heterotopias are connected to the outside world within which they sit in a multitude of ways, yet they act as 'counter-sites' that are 'outside of all places.'[9] They are a 'kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted.'[10] Foucault provides a number of examples, including prisons, colonies, brothels, psychiatric hospitals, and cemeteries, but it is his description of heterotopias as 'most often linked to slices of time' that is perhaps of most relevance to the works of Sebald.[11] He notes that museums and libraries are such spaces in which 'time never stops building up and topping its own summit,'[12] and I would suggest that this description is apt for *The Rings of Saturn* and *Austerlitz*, too – we might recall here Silke Arnold-de Simine's assertion that *Austerlitz* represents a kind of 'museum text,' and that Sebald himself conceived of the work as an 'alternative Holocaust museum.'[13]

Beyond the material novels themselves, the specific spaces portrayed within both works, too – Suffolk, in the case of *The Rings of Saturn* – might also be interpreted as heterotopic, on the basis of Sebald's depiction of them; they deliberately destabilise the established (un)relationality of particular times and spaces, they represent (and contest, and invert) a multitude of real sites, and, collectively, they appear to dispel myths regarding (particularly) a linear conception of history. Indeed, Foucault begins 'Of Other Spaces' with the observation that '[t]he great obsession of the nineteenth century was, as we know, history: with its themes of development and of suspension, of crisis

concerned with subjective idealism – broadly, the notion that only minds and mental contents exist.

[9] Michel Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces', trans. by Jay Miskowiec, *Diacritics,* 16:1 (1986), 22-27 (p.24).

[10] *Ibid*; Here, Foucault defines utopias as 'sites with no real place. They are sites that have a general relation of direct or inverted analogy with the real space of Society. They present society itself in a perfected form, or else society turned upside down, but in any case these utopias are fundamentally unreal spaces' (p.24)

[11] *Ibid*, p.26.

[12] *Ibid*.

[13] Simine, p.19.

and cycle, themes of the ever-accumulating past,' and goes on to suggest that '[t]he present epoch will perhaps be above all the epoch of space' – an era of networks, of the 'side-by-side,' the 'dispersed,' and of juxtaposition.[14] A multitude of spaces, networks and juxtapositions form the narrative fabric of Sebald's works, as we will see. Naturally, journeying through this extended heterotopic landscape demands tools of navigation that can accommodate the uncanny strangeness with which it relates to the 'real.'

In *The Rings of Saturn*, straightforward cartography is insufficient to the task of wayfinding, and topography is incapable of effectively charting the lie of the land. As such, in conjunction with the cartographical features of Sebald's prose described in the introduction to this section, in this novel we are presented with a fluid cartography that appears to guide the narrator's journey, and charts the intersection of different times and spaces, displacements and connections at permeable boundaries.[15] In ranging across such spaces, the text accords closely to Astrid Erll's argument for an engagement with '*les voyages* or *les mouvements de mémoire*,' in contradistinction to the comparatively fixed and stable '*lieux de memoire*' identified by Pierre Nora; memory here appears changeable and ever-shifting.[16] Likewise, such a landscape offers an ideal backdrop for 'the productive interaction of different inscriptions and the spatialization of time [that are] central to the work of memory,'[17] and allows Sebald to 'overlay meaning in intertextual space and blur the frontiers between the conscious and the unconscious, the present and the past, and the personal and the collective,' in the manner described by Max Silverman; we are privy to a kaleidoscopic image of history that weaves together a multitude of diverse times, sites, and events, and which mutates into novel configurations before our eyes.[18] Across the following pages, I will outline the manner in which the Holocaust comes to figure in multiple ways within this shifting landscape.

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[14] Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces', p.22.
[15] Gil and Duarte, p.3.
[16] Erll, 'Travelling Memory', p.11.
[17] Silverman, p.4
[18] *Ibid*, p.29

8.1. Herring

In the third chapter of *The Rings of Saturn*, Sebald's narrator arrives at a location 'three or four miles south of Lowestoft.'[19] Here, he explains how, on many trips to this area, he has found a group of fishermen on the beach – the 'last stragglers of some nomadic people' who have been dispersed to 'the outermost limit of the earth.'[20] He goes on to explain the solitary nature of these individuals, who seldom communicate with one another in this strange, isolated space, from which point his attention turns to the sea itself:

> Every year the rivers bear thousands of tons of mercury, cadmium and lead, and mountains of fertilizer and pesticides, out into the North Sea. A substantial proportion of the heavy metals and other toxic substances sink into the waters of the Dogger Bank, where a third of the fish are now born with strange deformities and excrescences.[21]

While we remain anchored to the beach just south of Lowestoft, it is, finally, from the specific, submerged location of 'Dogger Bank' that the narrator embarks upon a lengthy meditation on the history of herring fishing in the maritime area to the east of East Anglia; thus begins a fluid network of connection between a multitude of specific geographical locations, which collectively form a kind of fluid cartography of the herring fisheries of the North Sea alongside a multitude of other historical events and phenomena. It is, as such, a typical example of Weston's observation that 'the walks [*The Rings of Saturn*] reports upon provide the underpinning foundations for the construction of a narrative of mental departures. The common themes that these departures converge upon are drawn from characteristics read in the spaces that the text traverses.'[22] Embedded within this particular description is – in my view – a coded account of the Holocaust; it is worth repeating, at this juncture, Sebald's belief that, to write the Holocaust, one must 'approach

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[19] Sebald, *Rings*, p.51.
[20] *Ibid*, pp.51-52.
[21] *Ibid*, p.53.
[22] Weston, p.178

it from an angle, and…*[intimate] to the reader that these subjects are constant company*; *their presence shades every inflection of every sentence one writes.*'[23] As such – and as fragile as such a reading may initially seem – it is firmly my belief that an interpretation of the narrator's musings as Holocaust-inflected does not necessarily entail an example of 'paranoid reading' after the manner described by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick; rather, in seeking out faint echoes of the Holocaust in passages such as the one described over the following paragraphs, it is possible to trace the intent signalled by Sebald himself in the interview quoted above.[24] Moreover, some of the subsequent (more explicitly Holocaust-focused) discussion, and particularly the images included by the author within the text, likewise appear to support such a reading. As Sebald's narrator describes the history of herring fishing in the North Sea, it is possible to discern – in the midst of descriptions of fishing methods and the peculiar luminosity of the herring – echoes of racial stereotypes and racist propaganda, images of piles of corpses, and even the haunting presence of medical experiments performed on victims of the Holocaust. His descriptions create 'the territory as an emerging surface where charting is equated with inscribing and translating, where different identities, times and locations come together' – the spaces and times mapped out at this moment in the text remain *fluid* in their relations to one another.[25] It is important to briefly note here, too, that the possible intimations toward Holocaust history discussed below have been forced into sharp relief for the purpose of analysis; in the text itself, they are not so blunt in their attempt to suggest a history of genocide – this is a point to which I will return shortly.

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[23] Jaggi, para.13, emphasis added.
[24] See: Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (Durham N.C.: Duke University Press, 2003), pp.123-151.
[25] Gil and Duarte, p.3.

Figure 8.1 - Herring at Lowestoft. Sebald, The Rings of Saturn, p.54.

It will be necessary to sketch out in some detail here the various allusions as, individually, they would likely each appear relatively innocuous. Close to the beginning of the account, for instance, the herring are described as 'restless wanderer[s] of the seas,' which undergo a process of transportation upon being caught: '[t]he railway goods wagons take in this restless wanderer of the seas and transport it to those places where its fate on this earth will at last be fulfilled.'[26] Here, the notion of a 'restless wanderer' brings to mind the mythical anti-Semitic figure of the wandering Jew, while the notion of 'goods wagons' transporting the mass of fish to locations where 'its fate...will at last be fulfilled' suggests the transportation of victims of the Holocaust to camps, particularly given the barbaric use of cattle cars for this purpose; here it is 'goods wagons' that naturally fill the role of the utilitarian transport vessel. This description is accompanied by an uncaptioned black and white photograph of an enormous pile of dead herring, surrounded by onlookers, and marked as being located in 'Lowestoft' (see figure 8.1) – this is a point to which I will return shortly, but for now it will suffice to highlight the visual echo of post-liberation images and films taken within concentration camps, given the silver-toned, high-contrast image of this pile of expired piscine bodies.[27] A few paragraphs later, Sebald's narrator describes the mating

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[26] Sebald, *Rings*, p.54.
[27] *Ibid*.

process of herring, noting how the fish rise from the 'lightless depths' to 'lie on top of one another in layers' – here, a similar echo to that associated with the photograph can be detected.[28]

The narrator also makes explicit mention of a 'natural history of the North Sea published in Vienna in 1857,' from which springs the above recollection of the 'untold millions of herring' that 'rise from the lightless depths' to mate.[29] It would perhaps be a stretch to suggest that this specific marker of place bears any particular significance in the context of either the herring fishing industry – Vienna is, after all, landlocked – or the history of the Holocaust in this specific instance, were it not for the following observation derived from this same text:

> [A] statement ending with an exclamation mark informs us that each female herring lays seventy thousand eggs, which, according to Buffon's calculation, would shortly produce a volume of fish twenty times the size of the earth, if they were all to develop unhindered. Indeed, the records note years in which the entire herring fisheries threatened to go under, beneath a truly catastrophic glut of herring.[30]

Here, the exclamation mark added by the author of the North Sea history indicates a sense of alarm,[31] which operates in tandem with an ostensibly scientific description that carries unsettling echoes of racist ideology; the notion of being overwhelmed by an apparently undesirable *other* (and an implicit signalling of the need to prevent such a course of events through the destruction of this other) is quite clear in the passage above. In this light, it is difficult not to read further, too, into the place of the book's publication – Vienna – the history of anti-Semitism associated with that city in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, and the fact that Adolf Hitler was,

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[28] *Ibid*, p.55.
[29] *Ibid.*
[30] *Ibid.*
[31] A sense that is pointedly not reproduced by Sebald, it should be noted, given his matter-of-fact description of the text: '[A] statement ending with an exclamation mark.'

famously, briefly resident there (as well as, of course, an Austrian himself). Shortly after this, the narrator returns to the notion of herring death, rather than new herring life, when he describes the abundance of rotting corpses caused by this surfeit of fish.[32] He likewise describes how 'those who go in pursuit of herring have always relied on their traditional knowledge, which draws upon legend,' once again recalling, we might infer, a certain affinity with racist ideologies, which tend to be based less on fact than on myth and perception.[33] Within this traditional maritime knowledge, the narrator notes, '[o]ne dependable sign that herring are present is said to be myriads of scales floating on the surface of the water,' which at dusk '[resemble] *ashes* or snow'; the connection of *ashes* to the Holocaust is readily apparent.[34] Further, we are told of the activities of one Noel de Marinière, the 'inspector of the Rouen fish market,' who was so fascinated by the 'fishes' capacity to survive,' that he decided to investigate the phenomenon in more detail, chiefly by 'cutting off their fins and mutilating them in other ways.'[35] Once again, it might be a significant stretch to attempt to link this observation to the Holocaust, were it not for a further comment from the narrator: '[t]his process, inspired by our thirst for knowledge, might be described as the most extreme of the sufferings undergone by a species always threatened by disaster.'[36] Here, the notion of mutilations – or cruel experimentations, in other words – undertaken in a spirit of scientific endeavour recalls the grotesque experiments performed by Josef Mengele and others upon camp inmates; if we are to accept this line of reasoning, Marinière and Mengele appear, peculiarly, almost as kindred spirits here. The description of a 'species always threatened by disaster,' too, may carry echoes of the notion of centuries of Jewish suffering. Finally, toward the close of his description, Sebald's narrator notes that, by 1770, 'the number of herring caught annually is estimated to have been *sixty billion*.'[37] Given the preceding (albeit, in their individual appearances in the passage, barely-discernible) shadows of Holocaust history, it is difficult not to read the figure

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[32] Sebald, *Rings*, p.55.
[33] *Ibid.*
[34] *Ibid*, p.56, emphasis added.
[35] *Ibid*, p.57.
[36] *Ibid.*
[37] *Ibid*, emphasis added.

of *six million* within the sixty billion described. In light of this enormous figure, the narrator notes how natural historians 'sought consolation in the idea that humanity was responsible for only a fraction of the endless destruction wrought in the cycle of life,' and the notion that 'the peculiar physiology of the fish left them free of the pains that rack the bodies and souls of higher animals in their death throes.'[38] Here, questions of responsibility and wrangling over figures recall debates around the historicisation of the Holocaust, while explicit reference to the death of 'higher animals' might well subtly bring to mind human deaths at this late stage in the narrator's description. '[T]he truth is,' notes Sebald's narrator, 'that we do not know what the herring feels,' just as we cannot now, looking back, know with any certainty the reality of what it meant to experience the Holocaust.[39]
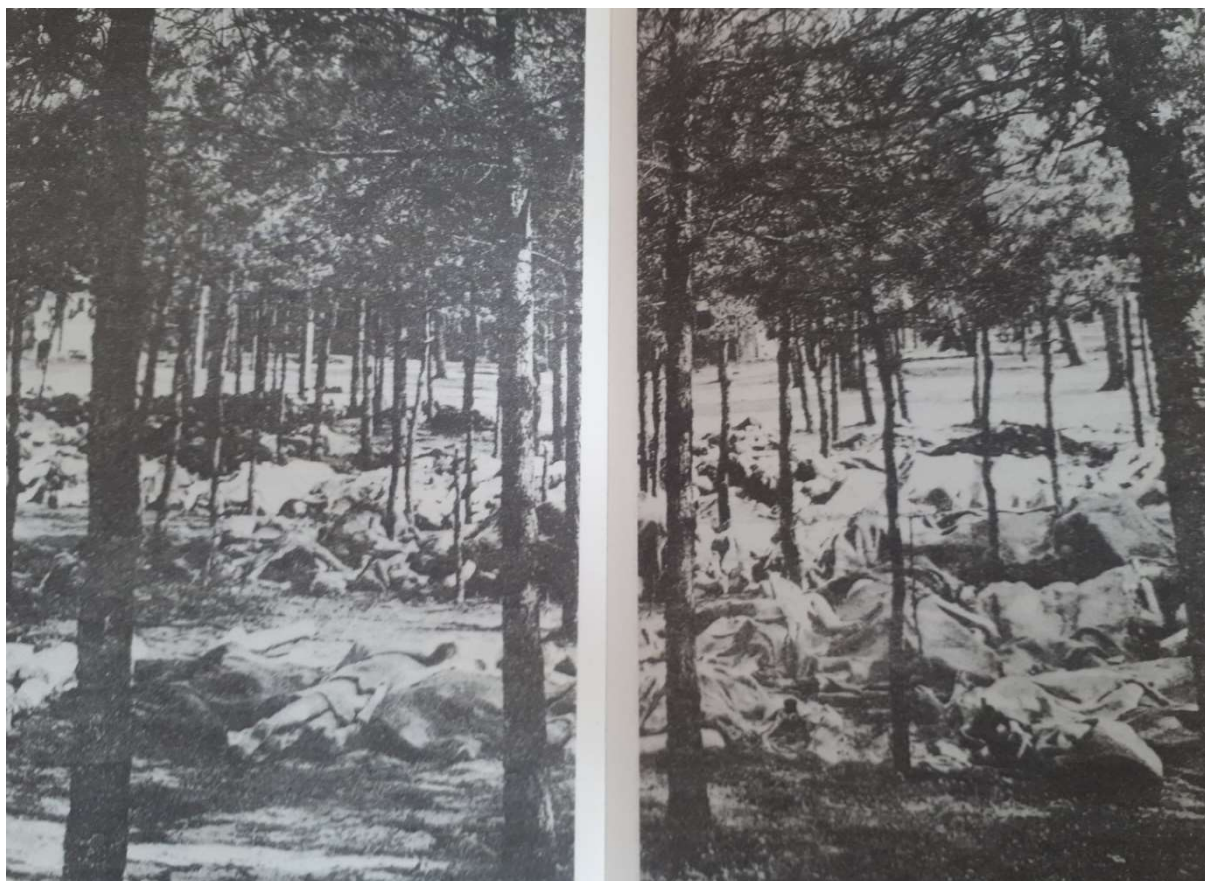
Figure 8.2 - Post-liberation at Bergen Belsen. Sebald, *The Rings of Saturn*, pp.60-61.

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[38] *Ibid.*
[39] *Ibid.*

All of the above has been woven from a vantage point upon the sands of a beach 'three or four miles south of Lowestoft.'[40] But what is the purpose of this highly oblique (and perhaps deeply controversial) connection (if indeed it exists), and what does it have to do with the route around Suffolk mapped throughout the novel? The connection appears quickly, yet the purpose remains veiled. After this extended mental journey, the narrator resumes his walk, leaving the fishermen on the beach behind him and reaching 'Benacre Broad, a lake of brackish water beyond a bank of shingle halfway between Lowestoft and Southwold.'[41] Here, the narrator rests, pointedly noting (given the focus upon history within the novel) that 'as I sat on the tranquil shore, it was possible to believe that one was gazing into eternity.'[42] It is here that he recalls 'an article...clipped from the *Eastern Daily Press* several months before,' which concerns one 'Major George Wyndham Le Strange, whose great stone manor house in Henstead stood beyond the lake.'[43] So far, so local; the specific spatial markers in evidence here once more situate both reader and narrator firmly in the immediate surrounds of the Suffolk coastland, in a kind of grounding move after the preceding mental departure that took great swoops over the North Sea and beyond. We are quickly removed from this relatively stable, comfortable point of rest, however, when the narrator describes how Major Le Strange 'served in the anti-tank regiment that liberated the camp at Bergen Belsen on the 14th of April 1945.'[44] In the English translation of the work, the word '1945' is the last on the page; upon turning, we are confronted by a full, double-page image of masses of corpses, piled up in woodland, which is left uncaptioned and unremarked upon in typical Sebaldian fashion (figure 8.2).[45] The flow of the narrative – here, specifically, the narrator's train of thought concerning the article on Major Le Strange – suffers significant disruption by the intrusion of this outsized piece of photographic evidence, which is substantially larger than any of the other images introduced by Sebald throughout the text. Given the preceding

[40] *Ibid*, p.51.
[41] *Ibid*, p.59.
[42] *Ibid*.
[43] *Ibid*.
[44] *Ibid*.
[45] *Ibid*, pp.60-61.

comment on the war-work of Major Le Strange, we are left to assume that this image is of a concentration camp – possibly Bergen Belsen – post-liberation (and this is, in fact, the case – the image is one of a series taken by George Rodger at Belsen upon its liberation).[46]

Here, the inclusion of the black and white image contains pictoral echoes of the photograph of the dead herring we saw shortly beforehand (or vice versa); the silvery, spectral presence of death, the lack of total clarity, the trees which stand amidst the piles of corpses, framing the scene in much the same manner as the onlookers in the Lowestoft photograph – each suggests a kind of visual accord between the two images. Thus at this point we have, as readers, once more been lifted by both text and image beyond the immediate surrounds in which the narrator finds himself, and transported through time and space – in this instance, to the liberation of Bergen Belsen. This is a mental departure that is cut short as quickly as it is introduced, however; following the double-page image the narrator immediately resumes his musings on Le Strange, which predominantly concern the increasing eccentricity of the man over time, and his relationship with his housekeeper. The narratological reference to Bergen Belsen is introduced in the manner of an off-hand comment – it is the photograph that provides the most clear, radical disruption to the text.

Taken together, the brief reference to, and image of, Bergen Belsen appear to tie the preceding history of the herring fisheries to the topic of the Holocaust, via their connection to the revenants of the Third Reich that seem to haunt the passages of seafaring discussion. In this, we see a situation in which two distinct histories and a multitude of times and spaces coalesce into a kaleidoscopic multi-temporal and multi-spatial construction; this accords strongly with the notion of fluid cartography expressed by Gil and Duarte. The narrator weaves outward from the anchoring point of the beach at Lowestoft and the shore of Benacre Broad to encompass a vast swathe of (particularly European) history. As such, the typical demarcations that are placed between such histories and spaces dissolve; we are able to read 'the limits that mark

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46 Lily Rothman, 'How Germany Got a Holocaust Memorial Day', *Time Magazine* [online], January 27 2016, < https://time.com/4186765/holocaust-remembrance-day/>(image 3 in embedded slideshow: see caption), [accessed 26 August 2020].

territory' – and here, too, temporality – 'not as borders but as borderlands,' taking as our starting points the beach, the shore of the broad, and the submerged site of Dogger Bank.[47] Particularly, a new hybrid mnemonic *surface* emerges – we may recall Gil and Duarte's observation that '[a] fluid cartography...perceives the territory as an emerging surface where charting is equated with inscribing and translating, where different identities, times and locations come together.'[48] Here, Sebald – via the figure of his narrator – obliquely *charts* a series of new connections, drawing attention to the destructive tendencies of humankind in the juxtaposition of seemingly disparate events. Moreover, allusions to the Holocaust become *inscribed* upon (or perhaps, *translated into*) the little-known history of herring fishing in the North Sea, allowing Sebald to simultaneously rescue that relatively obscure history from the oblivion of forgetting while at the same time allowing him to 'approach...from an angle' the subject of the Nazi genocide of the Jews – a fact that appears to be particularly confirmed in the visual symmetry between the images of Lowestoft and Belsen that quietly disrupt the flow of the narrative and seem to hint at an affinity of some kind between the two histories.[49]

The notion of inscribing these histories upon one another (or perhaps translating one *into* the other) clearly recalls Silverman's notion of 'palimpsestic memory.' Silverman's metaphorical use of the palimpsest, he notes, 'captures most completely...the productive interaction of different inscriptions and the spatialization of time [that are] central to the work of memory.'[50] Yet, in this instance, to (seemingly) equate the history of a species of fish to the history of the Holocaust might be interpreted, on first reckoning, to be a grossly offensive gesture – precisely the kind of '[t]actless [lapse]' that Sebald insists that he is keen to avoid.[51] As I have noted, however, time and space become permeable boundaries within *The Rings of Saturn*; it is because of this that Sebald is able to portray – in heterotopic fashion – a juxtaposition of these disparate histories. The fluid cartography of the novel allows for the interweaving of such peculiar bedfellows, which, in turn, allows for a reading

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[47] Gil and Duarte, p.3.
[48] *Ibid.*
[49] Jaggi, para.14.
[50] Silverman, p.4
[51] Jaggi, para.14.

of the text as a 'natural history of destruction,' such as that described by Theisen.[52] Throughout *The Rings of Saturn* (and indeed, most other works by Sebald) both the author and his narrator are concerned with demonstrating (at a range of scales, from the personal to the global) the capacity of humans to destroy their environment, other species, other people, and themselves, while situating such meditations, too, within the broader context of inexorable destruction perpetrated by nature (take, for instance, the narrator's description of the town of Dunwich, which collapses into the sea over time owing to coastal erosion).[53] The multiple reappearances of the Holocaust within the text (and indeed, the fact that it remains 'constant company;…shading every inflection of every sentence,' according to the author)[54] would seem to suggest that, within such a 'natural history of destruction,' the Nazi genocide of the Jews holds a particularly significant place, yet it cannot be considered in isolation. Owing to the novel's fluid mapping of time and space and its construction of this multifaceted 'natural history,' Sebald is able to demonstrate how – in the words of Gillian Rose – the Holocaust remains 'human, all too human,' thereby avoiding the '[mystification of] *something we dare not understand*' by way of its juxtaposition.[55] Further, as we move forward with the narrator along the route of his journey, finding ourselves at yet another specific location within the Suffolk countryside (Benacre Broad), we are confronted with a reference and an image that, in their symmetry with much of what precedes them, would seem to invite us to look back over the account of the herring again with a more suspicious eye, thereby encouraging an active, critical attitude on the part of the reader. This mirrors Theisen's assertion that the text is concerned not with linear history and progress, but rather shadowy 'unknown designs' and 'allegorical indirection,' offering a potentially 'more appropriate, if also more fantastic and more fallible approach to the labyrinthine truths of reality.'[56] Sebald is not inviting a direct comparison between dead Jews and dead

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[52] Theisen, p.574.
[53] Sebald, *Rings*, p.155.
[54] Jaggi, para.14.
[55] Gillian Rose, *Mourning Becomes the Law: Philosophy and Representation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p.43, original emphasis.
[56] Theisen, p.563.

herring; rather, it is a certain capacity for destruction that is revealed by the intermingling of these two histories, a tendency which pervades the text more broadly and which reveals the Holocaust to be inseparable from – and indeed crucial to – such a natural history of destruction, rather than hermetically sealed-off from the greater mass of history by virtue of its apparent uniqueness. That being said, it remains important to emphasise that this is a troubling, uncomfortable comparison upon which to draw, and I do not think that it is possible to wholly avoid the dehumanising effects it carries. It should again be noted, too, that the description of the herring fisheries is significantly subtler in its original form; placing the potential moments of Holocaust-inflected description side-by-side here is necessary for the purpose of illumination, but has the unfortunate side effect of making Sebald's writing seem somewhat crass and bludgeoning in its directness. This is not the case in the text itself; it is important to reemphasise that the narrator's account of the North Sea fisheries offers a quiet, *hidden* history, one that is easily missed when moving forward through the novel. As such, even the structural backbone of the narrative – the headlong march of the narrator's route through the Suffolk countryside – is not immune to distortion and reversal. Here, the map-like features of Sebald's prose, as described in the introduction to this section, converge with a more fluid cartographic expression of memory, which incorporates unconnected histories within a malleable, fluid depiction of space.

To conclude this discussion of Sebald's herring, I would also like to point out (particularly in relation to the immediately preceding paragraphs) that, shortly following the description of both the fishing industry and the biography of Major Le Strange, a sense of pronounced unease begins to creep its way into the text. The narrator finds himself '[a] quarter of an hour's walk south of Benacre Broad, where the beach narrows and a stretch of sheer coastline begins,' close to the 'Covehithe Cliffs' and 'Covehithe Church.'[57] After encountering a group of pigs in a nearby field, the narrator rests on the clifftop, and finds himself contemplating the biblical story of the Gadarenes, in which Jesus drives 'unclean spirits' from the body of a madman (Legion), and into a

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[57] Sebald, *Rings*, pp.64-66.

herd of swine.[58] On the topic of Sebald's inclusion of this tale from the pages of the New Testament, Martin Blumenthal-Barby notes (as does Sebald) that it is preceded by the more familiar narrative of the storm on the Sea of Galilee. He describes the inclusion of these biblical tales within *The Rings of Saturn*, and the juxtaposition between them, thus:

> According to the Gospel of Mark, the demons cast out by Jesus reside both in man himself (Legion) and in nature (the lake and the wind). The implication of this juxtaposition seems to be one according to which Jesus finds *destructive forces not only in man (the maniac Legion) but also in nature (the Sea of Galilee).* And *it is this contiguity that constitutes the tacit epicentre of The Rings of Saturn.* "[T]he history of every individual, of every social order, indeed of the whole world, does not describe an ever-widening, more and more wonderful arc, but rather follows a course which, once the meridian is reached, leads without fail down into the dark"...What emerges in this and the many corresponding passages is a notion of history that already figures in Sebald's early prose poem *After Nature* and indeed imbues his oeuvre.[59]

Clearly, Blumenthal-Barby subscribes to Theisen's notion that, '[l]ike Walter Benjamin, Sebald traces history as a process of decay.'[60] This perspective, then, is the basis of the narrator's contemplation at the top of the Covehithe cliffs; in the all-pervasive nature of the destruction that he perceives, he is here focusing on the *human* dimension of this biblical juxtaposition – the tale of the Gadarenes. This follows neatly from his discussion of the herring, and, tacitly, from the embedded fragments of the Holocaust within that description, thereby recalling Theisen's notion of the text as a 'system of association and

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[58] *Ibid*, p.67.
[59] Martin Blumenthal-Barby, 'Holocaust and Herring: The Resuscitation of the Silenced in W.G. Sebald's *The Rings of Saturn*', *Monatshefte*, 103:4 (2011) 537-558 (p.550), emphases added.
[60] Theisen, p.578.

encyclopedic links' – her 'natural history of destruction,' in which rationality, progress, and schema are called into question through allusion and indirection.[61]

Tellingly, it is atop the Covehithe cliffs, too, that the narrator spots the sand martins with which this section of the thesis began, anxiously noting that he is perched upon 'perforated ground.'[62] After dizzying himself by 'laying [his] head back as far as [he] could,' the narrator is seized by 'a sudden panic' upon spotting a couple on the beach below; lying one on top of the other, to him they appear grotesquely as a 'great mollusc,' a 'single being,' a 'great many-headed monster.'[63] It is at this point that the narrator leaves the clifftop, which 'seemed fearsome to [him] now,' and resumes his journey, noting that he 'could no longer have said whether [he] had really seen the pale sea monster at the foot of the Covehithe cliffs or whether [he] had imagined it.'[64] This sequence describes the final actions and movements of the narrator within the novel's third chapter – the remaining few paragraphs are devoted to a discussion of *uncertainty* that centres on Borges's allegorical tale *Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius.*[65] This is also the first moment in *The Rings of Saturn* in which the narrator is overcome with a certain acute panic, or 'paralysing horror'[66] – as we know from the novel's opening, the outcome of the walk is, ultimately (a year later), his hospitalisation owing to 'almost total immobility.'[67] Is it mere coincidence that the first such moment of sharp dread occurs shortly after the text's first reference to the events of the Holocaust, and the apparent encoding of this event within an unrelated history? Moreover, when we look back over the history of the herring are we not, as readers, left feeling rather like the narrator, attempting to recall the sea monster at the bottom of the cliff – have we merely imagined the possible fragments of genocidal history embedded within? We might recall at this point John Banville's assertion that, when it comes to the tragedies of the twentieth century, '[w]here others shout, Sebald

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[61] *Ibid*, p.569.
[62] Sebald, *Rings,* p.68.
[63] *Ibid.*
[64] *Ibid*, pp.68-69.
[65] *Ibid*, pp.69-71.
[66] *Ibid*, p.3.
[67] *Ibid.*

murmurs.'[68] Despite the tangible, *mappable* solidity of the novel's geographical references, the permeable, shifting boundaries of the text's fluid cartography leave us exposed to the horrors of a natural history of destruction. We stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the narrator atop the hollowed-out Covehithe Cliffs.

8.2. Ustaše, UN, universe – the travels of Kurt Waldheim

'For some time I had been feeling a sense of eternal peace when, leafing through the *Independent on Sunday*, I came across an article that was related to the Balkan pictures I had seen in the Reading Room the previous evening.'[69] The fracturing of this 'sense of eternal peace' occurs in the Crown Hotel, situated in the town of Southwold, where the narrator finds himself two days after his contemplations on the beach at Lowestoft and the shore of Benacre Broad.[70] In the quiet of this homely bar-restaurant, the narrator confronts the reader with *The Rings of Saturn*'s only *direct* scrutiny of the actual events of the Holocaust (barring the photograph of Bergen-Belsen). Overlooked by a 'grandfather clock' – here, usefully reminding us of the inexorable onward march of time, even as we feel that time may well be standing still – the narrator describes the article in question, which looks back over 'the so-called cleansing operations carried out fifty years ago in Bosnia, by the Croats together with the Austrians and the Germans,' and which begins with a description of two images:

> ...a photograph taken as a souvenir by men of the Croatian Ustasha [*sic*], in which fellow militiamen in the best of spirits, some of them making heroic poses, are sawing off the head of a Serb named Branco Jungic. A second snap shows the severed head with a cigarette between lips still parted in a last cry of pain. This happened at Jasenovac camp on the Sava. Seven hundred thousand men, women and children were killed

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[68] Banville, para.2.
[69] Sebald, *Rings*, p.96.
[70] *Ibid*.

there alone in ways that made even the hair of the Reich's
experts stand on end, as some of them are said to have
admitted when they were amongst themselves.[71]

It is natural that the narrator's 'sense of peace' should be shattered by such an extraordinarily gruesome article. In the matter of mere sentences, and with the intensity of a traumatic flashback, we have been dragged from the Crown Hotel in Southwold, with its 'rattle of crockery' and 'grandfather clock,' into the absolute horror of the atrocities committed on the banks of the Sava, courtesy of a chance reading of a newspaper article. But how did we get here? Clearly, the article in the *Independent on Sunday* is the source of this description, but the narrator has already signalled a contiguity with his wanderings of the previous day; how has the narrative once more embarked upon a discussion of the Holocaust, which is here substantially less oblique? To find the answer, we must turn once more to the route traced through the Suffolk coastlands.

The 'reading room' referred to by the narrator is in fact the 'Sailor's Reading Room,' elsewhere in the town of Southwold, which 'nowadays, sailors being a dying breed, serves principally as a kind of maritime museum.'[72] As is typical of the narrative, this – like the Crown Hotel – is yet another *real*, geographically-specific location within the Suffolk landscape. Indeed, the website for the Reading Room – in poetic, somewhat Sebaldian fashion – characterises the building as being 'one part stillness, two parts time,'[73] and describes to its visitors a recent 'W. G. Sebald Writing Workshop' that was hosted on-site to mark what would have been Sebald's 75th birthday, courtesy of the University of East Anglia, the author's former employer.[74] From here, much like his meditations on herring fishing, the narrator spins a web of connections outward, beginning from a specific vantage point; he commences with a discussion of the sailors who frequent the room, moving on to contemplate the 'log of the Southwold, a patrol ship that was anchored off the

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[71] *Ibid*, pp.96-97.
[72] *Ibid*, p.92.
[73] Southwold Sailor's Reading Room, 'Homepage', *Southwold Sailor's Reading Room* [online] <https://southwoldsailorsreadingroom.co.uk/> [accessed 26 August 2020].
[74] Tom Bright, 'W.G. Sebald Writing Workshop', *Southwold Sailor's Reading Room* [online], July 29 2019 <https://southwoldsailorsreadingroom.co.uk/2019/07/29/w-g-sebald-writing-workshop/> [accessed 26 August 2020].

pier from the autumn of 1914,' before moving on further to discuss the sinking of a multitude of ships during the first world war, the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo, and the fate of the Archduke's assassin, Gavrilo Princip, a Serb who was eventually imprisoned in the 'casemates' of Terezín/Theresienstadt as a consequence of '[lighting] the Fuse [*sic*]' on the First World War.[75] It is at this point that we suddenly find ourselves transported to the 'following day,' in the 'bar restaurant of the Crown Hotel,' where the narrator has spent his time – which appears here to readers as a kind of lost day – '[sitting] alone till tea time.'[76]

This abrupt disjunction of time – from one day to the next – heightens the interlinkage of the events contemplated by the narrator across the two locations. The temporal distance between these moments has been excised from the narrative, while their geographical distinction has likewise been erased; the narrator has gone – as if instantaneously – from sitting alone in one quiet room (the reading room), to sitting alone in another quiet room a little further away (the hotel). Barring a small buffer-zone of silence – the narrator's soon-to-be-shattered sense of 'eternal peace' – it is as if his contemplations between these two locations blur into a long, virtually uninterrupted chain of thought. Within this erasure we can see the fluid cartography of the novel at play once again: here, unlike the narrator's discussion of the herring, temporality is rendered as *multiply* fluid, both in terms of the examples ranged across by the text (the First World War and events leading up to it, the Second World War and, later, further examples that enter the post-war period, as we will see shortly), but also in relation to the narrator's journey itself. In this moment, the 'emerging surface' of the territory mapped by the novel does not just amalgamate a range of different historical moments (although it certainly does this, too), but it also melds together two discrete moments in the travels of the narrator as if they were one and the same, as per the notion of fluid cartography outlined by Gil and Duarte.[77] Once more, we are privy to a 'borderland' between multiple times and spaces, yet here there is a clearer sense of a contingent fragmentation with respect to the

[75] Sebald, *Rings*, pp.92-96.
[76] *Ibid*, p.96.
[77] Gil and Duarte, p.3.

journey at the novel's core, too – we are left to wonder at what may have happened in the intervening lost hours between the reading room and the hotel bar.[78] Likewise, in spatial terms the narrative similarly introduces the enmeshing of multiple 'contact zones,' creating a further 'borderland' (or *borderlands*), between the multiple times and places described (Southwold, Sarajevo, and Jasenovac, among others) and the discrete locations occupied by the narrator.[79] Here, Foucauldian 'slices of time' (and space) appear to merge and overlap, once more offering the reader a patchwork of juxtaposed historical moments while establishing a contiguity of – and therein destabilising the distinction between – specific locations on the route taken by the narrator.[80]

As with the discussion of herring fisheries, such juxtaposition maps out an abstracted natural history of destruction, such as that described by Theisen, in which the Holocaust once more appears to occupy a particularly crucial space. As an example of an 'awareness of human transience and infirmity,' the marriage of these interconnected events – in their relentless focus on death and devastation – constitutes a paradigmatic example of the text as a 'natural history' of this kind; destruction reigns supreme once more.[81] Here, the examples provided by the narrator – including the two world wars and post-war institutions such as the UN – are less distant from one another in time, space, and (in some regards) socio-historical character than, say, herring fisheries and murders at Auschwitz; they are, in a sense, events that carry a kind of familial similarity, in that they are concerned with war, the twentieth century, and a (relatively contained) geographical area. It is perhaps for this reason that there is far less reluctance to interlink them more clearly in a kind of chain of connection. The First World War, after all, is widely recognised as a kind of precursor (in some senses) to the Second, and there is a clear spatial continuity between examples here too, as the narrator makes explicit in noting the association between the *Independent on Sunday* article on Bosnia and 'the Balkan pictures [he] had seen in the reading room the previous evening.'[82] As

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[78] *Ibid.*
[79] *Ibid.*
[80] Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces', p.26.
[81] Theisen, p.563.
[82] Sebald, *Rings*, p.96.

a result of this, the 'natural history of destruction' described by the text's fluid cartography at this moment appears to take on a peculiar, mirroring aspect, as both the narrator's journey and the examples he provides appear to take similar skips forward in time. Both are (relatively speaking) short leaps – a day in the case of the narrator's journey, and some thirty or so years in the case of the Balkan examples – and both lead us to somewhat similar scenes; in the narrator's case, we find him reading alone in two separate spaces, while his descriptions of Gavrilo Princip's fate and Jasenovac end and begin respectively with images of prison camps in wartime.[83] Here, the compression of the time of the narrator's journey, in tandem with the descriptions he provides at the two condensed waypoints, suggests an allusive affinity (in this case, particularly in spatial terms, with their focus on the Balkans) between these events. Sebald here quietly draws our attention to the (arguable) longer-term, indirect consequences of the actions of Gavrilo Princip (as synecdoche for the First World War), one brutal high-water-mark of which he chooses to emblematically represent in this instance as the shocking murders committed at Jasenovac.

The relative 'closeness' of these events may account, likewise, for the willingness of Sebald, through his narrator, to expound at much greater length upon the horror and brutality of the Jasenovac camp network. Unlike the brief reference to the liberation of Bergen Belsen earlier in the text, the narrator here explains in some detail the various methods of execution at the camp, for instance, preferred of which were:

> ...saws and sabres, axes and hammers, and leather cuff-
> bands with fixed blades that were fastened on the lower
> arm and were made especially in Solingen for the
> purpose of cutting throats, as well as a rudimentary
> cross-bar gallows on which Serbs, Jews and Bosnians,
> once rounded up, were hanged in rows like crows or
> magpies.[84]

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[83] I do not mean to suggest, of course, that these specific events are *directly* comparable; instead I am highlighting the potential, exploited here by Sebald, for drawing connections between them by virtue of a certain continuity of *place.*

[84] Sebald, *Rings*, p.97.

Intruding abruptly into the midst of the above paragraph, too, is another piece of uncaptioned photographic evidence, this time (we are left to assume) of the 'cross-bar gallows' mentioned above (figure 8.3). The narrator goes on to note, also, the nearby sequence of satellite camps, in which 'the Croatian militia, its hand strengthened by the Wehrmacht and its spirit by the Catholic church, performed one day's work after another in similar manner.'[85] This is, unusually for Sebald, a *direct* confrontation with the violence of the Nazi era, albeit with reference to Nazi proxies in the Balkans.
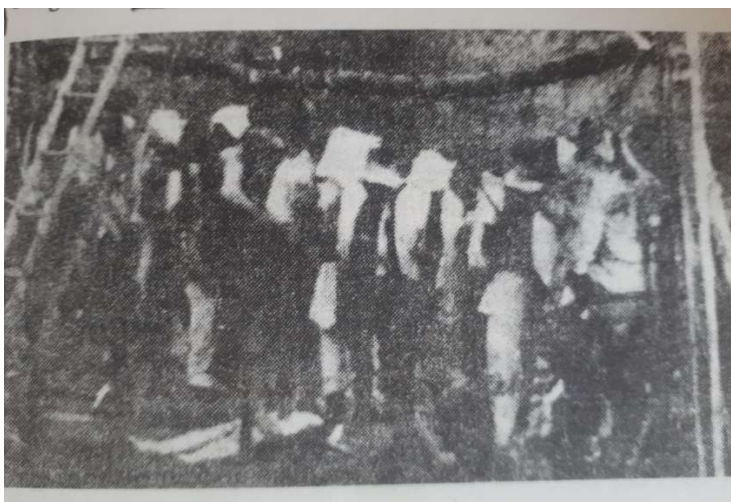
Figure 8.3 - Atrocities in the Jasenovac camp network. Sebald, *The Rings of Saturn*, p.97.

Beyond the above descriptions of violence, however, we see the author in this instance begin to push the liquid cartographical reach of the text as far as it is possible to go – namely, beyond the earth's atmosphere. The launch-pad for this particular departure is, in this case, precisely the geographically-specific network of sites of violence referred to above: Jasenovac, and its satellite camps Prijedor, Stara Gradiska, and Banja Luko.[86] The narrator highlights the volume of recorded material relating to the described atrocities – some 'fifty thousand documents abandoned by the Germans and the Croats in 1945' – which are housed today in an archive situated in 'what was once an Austro-Hungarian barracks,' a building which '[served] in 1942 as the headquarters of the Heeresgruppe E intelligence division.'[87] The narrator

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[85] *Ibid.*
[86] *Ibid.*
[87] *Ibid*, pp.97-98.

notes that, '[w]ithout a doubt those who were stationed there knew what was going on in the Ustasha [*sic*] camps,' and he proceeds to describe a range of other atrocities perpetrated by the Croatian allies of the Third Reich.[88] From here, he singles out one particular figure, noting that 'one of the Heeresgruppe E intelligence officers at that time was a young Viennese lawyer whose chief task was to draw up memoranda relating to…resettlements, described as imperative for humanitarian reasons.'[89] This figure would later be awarded 'the silver medal of the crown of King Zvonomir' by the Croatian state for his 'commendable paperwork,' and would later still '[occupy] various high offices, among them that of Secretary General of the United Nations.'[90] The narrator continues:

> And reportedly it was in this last capacity that he spoke
> on tape, for the benefit of any extra-terrestrials that may
> happen to share our universe, words of greeting that are
> now, together with other memorabilia of mankind,
> approaching the outer limits of our solar system aboard
> the space probe Voyager II.[91]

So ends the novel's fourth chapter. This unnamed administrator is, of course, Kurt Waldheim; a *New York Times* obituary following his death in 2007 identifies him as the 'former United Nations secretary general and president of Austria' with 'hidden ties to war crimes,' specifically in the Balkans as a 'lieutenant in army intelligence attached to German military units that executed thousands of Yugoslav partisans and civilians and deported thousands of Greek Jews to death camps between 1942 and 1944.' [92]

Paradigmatic of Sebald's method in the chain of events outlined above is the spatial figure of the 'Austro-Hungarian barracks' that was used as the

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[88] *Ibid*, p.98
[89] *Ibid*, pp.98-99
[90] *Ibid*, p.99.
[91] *Ibid.*
[92] Jonathan Kandell, 'Kurt Waldheim, Former U.N. Chief, Is Dead at 88', *New York Times* [Online], June 15, 2007
<https://www.nytimes.com/2007/06/15/world/europe/15waldheim.html?rref=coll ection%2Ftimestopic%2FWaldheim%2C%20Kurt&action=click&contentCollection= timestopics&region=stream&module=stream_unit&version=latest&contentPlaceme nt=4&pgtype=collection> [accessed 26 August 2020].

headquarters of Heerengruppe E during the Second World War.[93] This specific space acts as a kind of malleable borderland between each of the different times described by Sebald's narrator across the novel's fourth chapter; indeed, it anchors the multiplicity of times and spaces described (including the Sailor's Reading Room) and becomes the point around which the description of these spaces revolves – it melds together a range of spatial images that recall the cartographic narrative method described in the introduction to this section. Its direct connection to the Austro-Hungarian Empire clearly recalls the preceding discussion of the First World War and Gavrilo Princip; its role in the Second World War is abundantly clear; its post-war function as the 'Bosanske Kranjine Archive in Banja Luka' (the site of a Jasenovac satellite camp), propels us forward toward the controversies around the post-war roles of Kurt Waldheim. It is worth mentioning, at this juncture, that this collection of histories – particularly through the figure of the barracks – comes perhaps closest to the letter of Silverman's notion of palimpsestic memory; the barracks itself is here a kind of palimpsestic space within the text, inside the walls of which the interaction of multiple times becomes evident. Here, 'the present is shown to be shadowed or haunted by the past,' and 'different temporal traces…constitute a sort of composite structure, like a palimpsest.'[94] I would contend that this layering extends further, however, than the histories described by the narrator.

It is at the moment that the narrator mentions the archive at Banja Luka that we are reminded of the fact that he himself is recounting what he is reading in a newspaper – it is 'according to the author of the 1992 article' that the fifty thousand abandoned Nazi and Ustaše documents can be found at the Bosanske Kranjine Archive.[95] We are, briefly, abruptly returned to the immediate surroundings of the Crown Hotel at Southwold, and by extension the previous day spent at the Sailor's Reading Room. Here, space appears as a shifting surface once more, as the intimate surroundings of the reading room and the quiet solitude of the hotel are brought into contact with the (similarly quiet, studious) environment of the archive at Banja Luka, which is itself an

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[93] Sebald, *Rings*, p.98.
[94] Silverman, p.3.
[95] Sebald, *Rings*, p.98.

emblematic compression of the historical route traced by the narrator over the course of this chapter. Despite the mirroring of these small-scale, quiet spaces, Sebald is quick to remind us of the all-pervasive nature of the natural history of destruction that permeates *The Rings of Saturn*, as he ends the chapter by taking the reader on an expedition to the 'outer limits of our solar system' with the spectral voice of Kurt Waldheim, preserved aboard Voyager II.[96] Certainly, this is one item of 'memorabilia of mankind' that is burdened with a troubled, destructive history.[97] In Michael Rothberg's terms, this multitude of times and events would appear to accord with the notion of historical memories as 'subject to ongoing negotiation, cross-referencing, and borrowing; as productive and not privative'; Sebald here offers the reader a collage of somewhat-related historical moments without comment, avoiding the replication of a 'zero-sum struggle for preeminence,' and allowing the reader to draw their own conclusions (if any) from the juxtaposition of these varied fragments of history.[98]

In addition, the patchwork of connections woven here – specifically, the UN, the time period of the narrator's journey (the early 1990s), the Balkans, and the topic of genocide – might intimate to the reader the possibility of an additional connection that they may themselves add to Sebald's natural history of destruction. What events, for instance, have led to an article on Second World War atrocities in Bosnia being published in the *Independent on Sunday* in 1992? Although it is not directly referred to in the text, for many a reader it is quite probable that the Balkans conflict(s) of the 1990s will quite naturally come to attach itself to the chain of events described. In particular, the role of the UN is of a pointed significance here, given the widely-acknowledged catastrophic failures of the organisation in the events leading up to the Srebrenica massacre; this event occurred in July of 1995, after the events described in the novel (the summer of 1992) but around the same time as the novel's original publication in German (1995). Within the novel itself, we might read the description of the unhappy history of the Balkans as a kind of foreshadowing of the events of Srebrenica; though I have been unable to

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[96] *Ibid*, p.99.
[97] *Ibid*.
[98] Rothberg, p.3.

ascertain the precise day and month, it is possible that the original German publication of the novel took place *after* Srebrenica (i.e. in the latter half of 1995), in which case Sebald would certainly have been aware of these events. Regardless of whether this is in fact the case, the conflict(s) in the Balkans would have certainly been well underway at the author's time of writing, if we assume this to be, say, at least a year or two prior to the novel's original publication. As such, it is not necessarily a stretch to imagine that Sebald himself may have likewise had this contemporary conflict in mind. In the terms of Silverman's palimpsest, we might view this discussion as an invitation to the reader to add their own layer of contemplation, and thus to engage with the natural history of destruction Sebald describes. From the archive at Banja Luka, to the Sailor's Reading Room and Crown Hotel in Southwold, the fluid cartography of the novel may well extend, in this instance, to the reader, too; as they trace the lines of Sebald's prose, the events they may add to the chain of 'natural destruction' described by the author might in turn allow for the incorporation into the novel's orbit of the very room within which they are sitting.

8.3. Threads of silk

Across the narrator's discussions of herring fisheries, Bergen Belsen, the First World War, and the actions of the Nazis and their Ustaše allies in Croatia, Sebald has stitched together a tapestry that reveals a network of (more or less) interconnected events in which destruction and decay figure heavily. Whether allusive and indirect (herring) or apparently networked across time and space (the Balkans), the events outlined here correspond to Theisen's notion of a 'spherical system of association and encyclopedic links,'[99] wherein history is portrayed as a 'process of decay.'[100] In order to accommodate this constellation of seemingly unconnected (or at least, tangentially-connected) historical moments, Sebald creates a malleable, shifting fluid cartography. Typically, specific geographical markers in the countryside around the Suffolk coastline act as real-world anchors, from which the narrator spins centrifugally outward

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[99] Theisen, p.569.
[100] *Ibid*, p.578.

in both time and space, crafting complex patchworks of connection and juxtaposition.

To conclude this chapter, I would like to provide one final, brief example of Sebald's method, within which we may once more discern quiet echoes of the Nazi genocide of the Jews. Shortly before the novel's close, the narrator describes a film which he 'happened upon' while searching for an educational video on herring fisheries remembered from his childhood.[101] The film in question describes German silk cultivation, and was produced at the time of the Third Reich; the film's accompanying booklet identifies the piece as being aligned with 'the Fuhrer's announcement, at the 1936 party rally, that Germany must become self-sufficient within four years in all the materials it lay in the nation's power to produce itself.'[102] Sebald's narrator describes the 'film on sericulture' as one of 'a truly dazzling brightness':

> Men and women in white coats, in whitewashed rooms flooded with light, were busy at snow white spinning frames, snow-white sheets of paper, snow-white protective gauze, snow-white cocoons, and snow-white canvas mailing sacks. The whole film promised the best and cleanest of all possible worlds.[103]

The narrator quickly (yet subtly) reveals, however, that this sanitised world is in fact rather darker than the film might suggest. He notes how 'Professor Lange, the author of educational pamphlet F213/1939' (1939 being the date of publication) suggests that the overriding import of localised sericulture lay not only in alleviating the pressure on German imports, but also 'in the importance silk would have in the dawning era of aerial warfare and hence in the formation of a self-sufficient economy of national defence,' therein highlighting the all-pervasive consequences of war upon the nation.[104] This concern accounts for the existence of the educational film and pamphlet, as Professor Lange views it to be 'desirable that schools should interest the youth of Germany in silk

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[101] Sebald, *Rings*, p.292.
[102] *Ibid.*
[103] *Ibid.*
[104] *Ibid*, p.293.

cultivation.'[105] Besides this particular application, the narrator goes on to note the pedagogical usefulness of silkworms as an 'ideal object lesson for the classroom'; aside from the ease with which they can be kept, he notes (paraphrasing Professor Lange) that they can be used to illustrate 'insect anatomy,' 'insect domestication,' 'retrogressive mutations,' and, crucially, 'the essential measures which are taken by breeders to monitor productivity and selection, including *extermination to preempt racial degeneration*.'[106] Thus, the narrator quietly reveals how even the encouragement of sericulture in German schools was not free of the racial ideologies of the Nazi regime, given this particular pedagogical application.

He illustrates this process explicitly as he returns to a discussion of the 'best and cleanest of all possible worlds' depicted in the film:

> In the film, we see a silk-worker receiving eggs despatched by the Central Reich Institute of Sericulture in Celle, and depositing them in sterile trays. We see the hatching, the feeding of the ravenous caterpillars, the cleaning out of the frames, the spinning of the silken thread, and finally the killing, accomplished in this case not by putting the cocoons out in the sun or in a *hot oven*, as was often the practice in the past, but by suspending them over a boiling cauldron. The cocoons, spread out on shallow baskets, have to be kept in the *rising steam* for upwards of three hours, and when a batch is done, it is the next one's turn, *and so on until the entire killing business is completed*.[107]

Given that the reference to 'extermination to preempt racial degeneration' that immediately precedes this description exists in tandem with the Nazi-era context of the objects under discussion, it is difficult not to read the above passage as a kind of veiled facsimile of the mechanised killing processes undertaken in the extermination camps. The 'hot oven,' 'the rising steam' (here

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[105] *Ibid.*
[106] *Ibid*, p.294, emphasis added.
[107] *Ibid*, emphasis added.

recalling the famous image of smoke from crematoria chimneys), the notion of a (Nazi) mechanisation or standardisation of a killing process, the idea of killings *en masse*, in 'batches' – each of these factors lends themselves to such a reading. Yet, just as with the examples discussed above, we must once more ask – how did we get here? What sequence of events and places has led the narrator to this piece of (again) relatively obscure history?

Regarding the significance of the silkworm in *The Rings of Saturn*, Theisen notes:

> [t]he silkworm here signifies serfdom and bondage without recompense, a fatal self-entanglement in the service of commercial greed, and is thus a prominent emblem for the enslaved, victimized, persecuted, marginalized, and perishing. In short, it is an emblem for the identification with all those forced to live in the shadows, an identification that constitutes one of Sebald's dominant concerns.[108]

Though it represents a motif that emerges earlier in the text (particularly, at the point at which Sebald's narrator discusses the tumultuous reign of Chinese Empress Tz'u-hsi), in the novel's final chapter the silkworm, and the related human practice of sericulture, are central to the patchwork of connection and juxtaposition described. In this instance, the narrator's musings begin not with a specific place, but rather with a specific text, or set of texts – the miscellany of items discussed in 'the...papers left by Sir Thomas Browne,' the author of the somewhat esoteric and eccentric seventeenth-century work *Urn Burial*, which is a crucial intertextual reference that recurs throughout *The Rings of Saturn*.[109] The narrator embarks upon a discussion of these papers, noting that they cover a vast array of 'diverse subjects,' including 'practical and ornamental horticulture,' 'urns found at Brampton in Norfolk,' 'the making of artificial hills and burrows,' and, amongst many other miscellaneous items, 'a catalogue of remarkable books,' which the narrator supposes are 'likely

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[108] Theisen, p.572.
[109] Sebald, *Rings*, p.271.

products of his [Browne's] imagination, the inventory of a treasure house that existed purely in his head.'[110] This catalogue (the list of contents of which I will not reproduce here owing to constraints of space) leads the author – via twenty-seven specific geographical references across the space of two pages – to the topic of sericulture.[111] Here, he diverges from the topic of Browne's imaginary catalogue, as he traces the spread of the practice into Europe, beginning with 'two Persian friars' who smuggled the 'first eggs of the silkworm over the [Chinese] Empire's borders into the Western world.'[112] From here, he describes how the practice spread across Europe over time, beginning in the Aegean islands before reaching Southern Italy, from which point the silkworm spreads northward, through (among other places) Lombardy and Piedmont and onto France, and finally to Norwich.[113] At each interval (particularly France, Norwich, and later Germany) the narrator gives a brief account of the local development of the practice. Finally, he describes the eighteenth-century travels of the Huguenot-produced Norwich silk to trade fairs across northern and central Europe – including Copenhagen, Zurich, and Leipzig – from which point they found their way to the 'warehouses of wholesalers and retailers.'[114] This, then, is how we finally come to the history of German sericulture, as Sebald's narrator pointedly speculates that, from these warehouses, 'some half-silk wedding shawl might even reach Isny, Weingarten, or Wangen in the pannier on a Jewish pedlar's back.'[115] In this extended tracing of the roots of European sericulture, Theisen's idea of the silkworm as 'an emblem for the identification with all those forced to live in the shadows' is extended to a vast swathe of the continent and beyond.

It could be said that the spread of the practice mirrors – in the sense of its proliferation across specific places – the 'rationalism,' 'narrative[s] of progress' and 'enlightened analysis' that Theisen and others insist that Sebald is sceptical of.[116] Once the silkworm has arrived in Europe, its movement from

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[110] Ibid.
[111] *Ibid*, pp.272-273.
[112] *Ibid*, pp.273-274.
[113] *Ibid*, pp.277-286.
[114] *Ibid*, p.286.
[115] *Ibid*; each of these towns is either in, or near, the province of Allgäu, Sebald's birthplace (see Sebald, *On the Natural History of Destruction*, p.viii).
[116] Theisen, p.563.

Greece to Italy may recall the renewed interest in classical thought that emerged during the Renaissance, for instance (particularly in the sense that it is from the regions of Lombardy, Piedmont, and Savoy – roughly, Northern Italy, in other words – that the practice of sericulture spreads outward to France and beyond); from here, the movement to the rest of Europe – particularly the movement to England (in this case, Norwich) during the *eighteenth century* – carries echoes of the transition from the Renaissance to enlightenment reason and rationality, and later the beginnings of the Industrial Revolution. From here, Sebald traces the development of silkworm husbandry in Germany through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which ultimately leads us up to the attempts to revive the practice under the Third Reich and its concomitant entanglement with the pedagogy of racist ideology (and, likewise, the veiled reference to the crematoria that may be discerned in the excerpt discussed above).

Given the situation of this discussion at the novel's close, subsequent to the walking tour through the Suffolk coastlands, we might view the narrator's contemplation of sericulture as an encapsulation of the route mapped throughout, though it is never explicitly signposted as such. Rather than beginning from a specific location (given that the walk has already come to an end by this point), the chapter instead opens with reference to one of *The Rings of Saturn*'s key intertexts, in the form of the works of Thomas Browne; given the repeated references to Browne's work throughout the narrator's travels, we might regard this intertextual reference as a judicious, concise means of tying together the sites covered in the preceding journey. Moreover, this inclusion emblematically summarises the method employed by Sebald himself throughout; the narrator emphasises repeatedly the breadth of topics covered by Browne, highlighting that his work is typically after the manner of a miscellany, or a kind of idiosyncratic compendium, full of connections and allusion – a precursor, perhaps, to Sebald's own work that traces 'human infirmity and transience in a world changing according to unknown designs,' and which 'rediscovers allegorical indirection as perhaps the more appropriate if also more fantastic and more fallible approach to the labyrinthine truths of

reality.'[117] The introduction of the silkworm, meanwhile, could be viewed as a succinct, somewhat *veiled* summation of the novel's central concerns: through a system of associations it maps out a network from a multitude of times and sites that spans a vast geographical and temporal distance (from ancient China to Germany under the Third Reich); the history of sericulture recalls, in some respects, a history of *destruction* and decay, particularly in the sense that the process inherently involves the death of the silkworm, though the narrator also notes (for instance) the 'decline of the Norwich manufactories toward the end of the eighteenth century,' and its failure to take hold in nineteenth century Germany, not to mention its imbrication with racist ideology at the time of the Third Reich;[118] moreover, in the inclusion of the silkworm we see, as Theisen notes, a reiteration (albeit an archetypally veiled one) of Sebald's concern 'with all those forced to live in the shadows,' a subject that persists throughout the author's work.[119] If through the herring we might discern echoes of the Holocaust, it is in the figure of the silkworm that we can discern Sebald's natural history of destruction on a much broader scale; the Nazi genocide of the Jews remains, however, a crucial facet of this history, as we have seen.

Throughout *The Rings of Saturn*, we see a fluid cartography at play in Sebald's literary mapping of Suffolk towns, countryside, and coastland. From the variety of physical waypoints passed on the journey, the narrator spins a transnational, trans*temporal* tapestry that incorporates a vast array of times, events, and geographical locations, some of which I have outlined above. The narrator's route combines a multitude of sites that act as *borderlands*, staging posts for mental departures that '[perceive] the territory as an emerging surface where charting is equated with inscribing and translating, where different identities, times and locations come together'; from the flat marshlands of Suffolk emerge Chinese dynasties, multiple biographies of figures of note, the First and Second World Wars, great historical naval battles, the Irish republican movement in the early twentieth century, and the Temple of Jerusalem, among many other topics.[120] The Holocaust is part of this fabric, too, but in its multiple reappearances we might view it as a particularly

[117] *Ibid.*
[118] Sebald, *Rings*, p.286.
[119] Theisen, p.572.
[120] Gil and Duarte, p.3.

significant thread that is woven throughout, most notably in the set of examples discussed here.

In collaging such disparate histories and charting an apparent natural history of destruction, it is possible that Sebald has left himself open to accusations of levelling the difference between discrete, often unrelated events – a particularly inappropriate move, in the eyes of many, when one is tackling the topic of the Holocaust. I do not believe this to be the case in Sebald's work, however. In placing moments such as those discussed here under the spotlight, condensing them for the purpose of comparison and analysis, the faint traces of the Holocaust that may be discerned within them are artificially forced into sharp relief; it is important to remember, as Banville notes, that when it comes to the catastrophes of the twentieth century, '[w]here others shout, Sebald murmurs.'[121] At no point does he invite, for instance, a direct comparison between the Holocaust and the processes of herring fishery or sericulture; rather, it is through allusion and 'allegorical indirection' that Sebald invites the reader to draw their own conclusions on the possible affinities (if any) between the events, objects, places, and people he describes.[122] This is the method of his 'spherical system of association and encyclopedic links,' which forms the backbone to the natural history of destruction traced in the novel.[123] *The Rings of Saturn* is, ultimately, a multifaceted meditation on transience, decay, and destruction of all kinds; to omit the Holocaust – perhaps the twentieth century's most potent and poignant illustration of the potential for human destructiveness and cruelty – would be remiss. This, too, is where Sebald's fluid cartography shares its closest affinity with the works of Silverman and Rothberg; rather than treating the Holocaust in isolation, Sebald – particularly through his frequent inclusion of documents, photographs, and other intertextual items – performs an '[overlaying of] meaning in intertextual space and [blurring of] the frontiers between…the present and the past, and the personal and collective.'[124] In so doing, the conditions are set for the emergence of illuminating connections, even if it is left to the reader to undertake the task of joining the dots, thereby discerning what lies beneath

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[121] Banville, para.2.
[122] Theisen, p.563.
[123] *Ibid*, p.569.
[124] Silverman, p.29.

the surface of the idiosyncratic descriptions housed within the novel. 'Our history,' writes the narrator, as the novel comes to a close, 'is but a long account of calamities.'[125]

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[125] Sebald, *Rings*, p.295.

9.

Charting a Lost Past in W.G. Sebald's *Austerlitz*

'Has there ever been,' asks John Banville, 'a more devastating and yet wholly undemonstrative account of the mid-20th century European horrors as *Austerlitz*, Sebald's final novel; his masterpiece, and one of the supreme works of art of our time?'[1] It is my feeling that this quality of being 'undemonstrative' can be best understood as originating from the void that is at the novel's core – namely, a void of memory, from which the protagonist struggles throughout to emerge. It is owing to this mnemonic black hole that the text, once again, relies on the 'allegorical indirection'[2] and 'spherical system of association and encyclopedic links' described by Bianca Theisen – the 'natural history of destruction' that is so central to *The Rings of Saturn*.[3] In *Austerlitz*, however, such a method of representation does not arise solely as the consequence of the mental wanderings of the narrator (although such departures exist here, too); association and 'allegorical indirection' here take on the additional aspect of a kind of surrogate, or stand-in, for individual memory where there is no genuine recollection to be had. The text is predominantly concerned with recounting the searches of the eponymous protagonist for his lost past, particularly in the form of his family history and his own personal memories; the life of Jacques Austerlitz is explained to the narrator at a series of (apparently) chance meetings, at moments in which the paths of the two men intersect at various locations across the European continent. As such, the next few pages will be concerned with demonstrating the somewhat different character that colours the 'fluid cartography' that is to be found in the pages of *Austerlitz*, when compared with *The Rings of Saturn*. Once again, it should be

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[1] Banville, para.2.
[2] Theisen, p.563.
[3] *Ibid*, p.569.

noted that the map-like quality of the text, as described in the introduction to this section, is an ever-present feature of the work alongside the more abstracted, *fluid* cartography discussed here.

Beyond the lost past of its eponymous protagonist, Sebald's final novel is particularly concerned, too, with architecture – or as Naomi Stead would have it, '*Austerlitz*'s overriding aversion to architectural giganticism' – as well as artefacts and material memory, monuments, and museums.[4] As a consequence of such concerns it is perhaps unsurprising that, within the pages of the text (and to a greater degree than in *The Rings of Saturn*), we find – in addition to photographs, paintings, and so forth – a collection of reproduced maps, diagrams, and textual artefacts included as supplements to the map-like construction of the journeys described. Across the pages of this chapter, I will demonstrate how this concern with a kind of *materiality of memory* is expressed in the structure of the novel, which represents a development of the narrative construction expressed in *The Rings of Saturn*. In *Austerlitz*, we see a text that does *not* simply recount a (more or less) linear journey across a readily-mappable space, spinning off centrifugally from its waypoints in meditations on cultural memory and history; while this method may constitute the basic building blocks of storytelling in this later text, too, in *Austerlitz* Sebald also interweaves complex temporal layers that entangle multiple strands of the narrative proper in addition to meditations of the kind discussed above in relation to *The Rings of Saturn*. Stead notes that:

> dream-like conversations…composed of long monologues from Austerlitz retold by a self-effacing and unnamed narrator…take place in a series of carefully evoked real locations: a bar at Liverpool Street Station in London, the Le Havane café at number 70 on the Boulevard Auguste Blanqui in Paris, where they meet on three occasions, and various places in the city of Antwerp.[5]

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[4] Stead, p.42.
[5] *Ibid*, p.41.

So, in addition to the specific wanderings of the unnamed narrator, the fragmentary story of Austerlitz is recounted to the reader, too, via the intermediary listening (and writing) figure of the narrator – indeed, this story comes to form the bulk of the text; by contrast, in *The Rings of Saturn*, it is the journey undertaken by the narrator himself that is recounted within. Toward the end of *Austerlitz*, the eponymous protagonist himself makes the following observation: 'I feel more and more as if time did not exist at all, only various spaces interlocking according to the rules of a higher form of stereometry, between which the living and the dead can move back and forth as they like.'[6] This description of his own experience of time represents something close to the narrative structure of the novel itself, particularly in the notion of 'various spaces interlocking' – we might recall here Foucault's notion of heterotopias as comprising 'slices of time.'[7] Further, and in a similar vein, I will also demonstrate here how the text appears, in some respects, *circular* in character. While this is also a characteristic of *The Rings of Saturn* (think, for instance, of the recurring motif of the silkworm), this cyclical nature is pervasive throughout *Austerlitz*, and is pronounced to a greater degree than in the earlier work. As we will see, images and spectral associations recur throughout.

Both this cyclicality and the novel's patchwork approach to narrative temporality are apposite to – or perhaps precede – the slightly altered character of the fluid cartography on display in *Austerlitz*. While typical Sebaldian features such as those already discussed – bird's eye views and heightened vantage points, mimetic representation of space, a multitude of specific markers of place, wandering, walking, transhistorical musings, and so on – are once again in abundance, the relationship of such features to the narrative of the text is profoundly altered here; the uncertainty at the novel's core, predicated on the disintegrated childhood memories of its protagonist, along with the intrusion of trauma founded on a concordantly fragmented sense of self, serve to destabilise the narrative and its attendant fluid cartography. I will demonstrate how, consequently – and despite its

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[6] Sebald, *Austerlitz*, p.261; 'stereometry' refers to the mathematical field of solid (i.e. three-dimensional) geometry.

[7] Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces', p.26.

substantial length, the dense complexity of its sentences, its patchwork temporality, and the cascade of cultural and historical information it presents – *Austerlitz* feels like a monumental construction that is barely capable of sustaining its own weight. Stead suggests that:

> [the] ambiguity of Sebald's work has often been noted – his blurring of fact and fiction, his elusive use of uncaptioned photographs, and so on…[but] amidst all Sebald's ambiguities, it is architecture in its massive and solid materiality which acts as an anchor tying the fictional narrative to the material world.[8]

The reading I will offer here, however, differs somewhat from this view. Rather than actually *functioning* as an 'anchor,' I contend that the 'massive and solid materiality' of architecture, along with the text's engagements with material culture in the form of artefacts, documents, and monuments instead represent an *attempt* to 'anchor' the narrative in the manner described by Stead as a means of overcoming the unstable, somewhat rootless identity of its protagonist; this attempt is ultimately unsuccessful. I will demonstrate how we might read *Austerlitz* as a narrative that remains appropriately unmoored, fragmented, and free-floating, in contrast with *The Rings of Saturn* which, despite its complexity, is profoundly grounded throughout in the physical act of walking the Suffolk coast.

In all of the characteristics listed above, the sense of a reaction to linear or monumental conceptions of history and memory can be discerned, and *Austerlitz* does indeed represent a response to such means of structuring human experience. With respect to the specific material concerns of the text we might recall, for instance, Stead's threefold conception of the significance of architecture within *Austerlitz*: 'architecture as premonition of disaster, as monument to barbarism, and as instrument of oppression.'[9] In analysing the author's description of the imposing *Palais de Justice* of Brussels in relation to her notion of architecture as 'monument to barbarism,' Stead observes that,

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[8] Stead, p.41.
[9] *Ibid*, p.42.

within this vast structure 'the fine symbolism of justice and civic life is transformed into its obverse – a blind labyrinth signifying only state power and its inscrutable bureaucratic processes'; she continues: 'In this case...Austerlitz identifies that the rational procedures of Enlightenment thought hold within them the very seed of inhuman domination.'[10] In a related sense, we might likewise recall Laura García-Moreno's observation that,

> [from] Austerlitz's perspective, grid-like patterns are indicative of a compulsion to control and regulation that he, as well as Sebald, view with profound suspicion. In stark contrast to the impulse to itemize...possible non–grid-like connections between people, places, times, and objects proliferate in *Austerlitz*. Paths are constantly crossing over and overlapping in such a way that the spheres of the private and the public, the domestic and the official appear to be inextricably linked.[11]

Parenthetically, García-Moreno notes that this aversion to the strictures of the grid-like 'recalls Adorno's and Horkheimer's view of the dark side of the emphasis on reason since the Enlightenment.'[12] For my specific purposes, monumentality, classification, itemisation, control, Enlightenment reason, and regulation recall – in some regards – a strictly linear conception of history and grand historical narratives (and, indeed, the notion of the map as a 'form of power-knowledge,' or tool for (imperial) control).[13] In this sense, García-Moreno's characterisation begins to capture the particular narrative method of *Austerlitz* that I began to outline above. Broadly, the work represents a continuation of the notion – expressed by Theisen in her conception of the Sebaldian 'natural history of destruction' – that Sebald's writing 'rediscovers allegorical indirection as perhaps the more appropriate...approach to the labyrinthine truths of reality,' while seeking to temper the 'narrative of progress embraced by those who believed they left the age of darkness for

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[10] *Ibid*, p.43.
[11] García-Moreno, p.367.
[12] *Ibid*.
[13] Harley, p.286.

enlightened analysis.'[14] In this specific case, we see an exploration of individual identity (or the lack thereof) in the face of the overwhelming machinations of history or, as Stead would have it, 'the fragility of human memory in the face of the crushing forces of history.'[15] The 'excavation of the past' is here stymied by the fact that the individual searching subject is continually haunted by absence and loss.[16] As such – and as I mentioned in the introduction to this chapter – if we are to take the view that *Austerlitz* represents a reaction to such structures and processes as linear history, we are justified in investigating what the nature of this reaction *is*. A fluid cartography in the manner described by Gil and Duarte is apposite to a more fluid, relational rendering of history, but it is at this juncture that I would like to briefly reintroduce, too, the concept of 'countermapping,' which has previously been discussed in the literature review and elsewhere.

It is possible to contend that the individual journeys taken by the protagonists of *Austerlitz* – and, as such, the fluid cartographies that emerge from these travels – represent acts of countermapping against linear or monumental constructions of history and memory. Joshua P. Ewalt's specific characterisation of the practice of 'countermapping' as comprising 'certain [recent] maps [that] have been used to organize geographies around themes of injustice, oppression, or political resistance' holds true, though it requires some adjustment in this context.[17] Particularly, the spatial configuration of Ewalt's formulation is a central point here – namely, his notion of an organisation of specific 'geographies.' In *Austerlitz*, as I have mentioned, there exists a narrative that – like *The Rings of Saturn* – represents the construction of a fluid cartography. The topics of the text, meanwhile, are (broadly) history and memory. Space, history, and memory are inseparable within Sebald's last novel; as García-Moreno notes, '[o]ne could say that [Sebald] spatializes time and temporalizes space.'[18] Consequently, we might view the construction of a 'specific [geography]' within its pages as of one organised around themes of history and memory, and particularly as a reaction to their expression in

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[14] Theisen, p.563.
[15] Stead, p.42.
[16] García-Moreno, p.365.
[17] Ewalt, p.333.
[18] García-Moreno, p.360.

monumental or linear form; as a result, the novel's structure recalls the notion of a ghostly 'stereometry,' expressed by Austerlitz within the text and referred to above, in the sense that Foucauldian 'slices of time' are 'interlocked' in a collage of associative connection, in contradistinction to a linear conception of historical (or indeed, personal) development. As this chapter progresses, I will return to the arguments put forth by Ewalt in more detail. In effect, however, I will argue that with regard to the text's narrative method it can be read – like *The Rings of Saturn* – as a work of fluid cartography; in its specific concerns, however, it can be read as being more akin to a work of countermapping, in that the journey it describes '[maps] back,' in a sense, against a particular understanding of history and memory.[19]

In essence, all of the above emerges clearly as a response to the disjunction and trauma caused by the Holocaust, and particularly its effect on individual memory – the 'fragility of human memory in the face of the crushing forces of history.'[20] Despite the centrality of the Nazi genocide of the Jews to the novel's narrative progression, the topic is treated here – as with all of Sebald's works – quietly and gently; the author evokes this history with a 'murmur,' rather than a shout, in the manner described by Banville.[21] Broadly, I will argue that *Austerlitz* takes the narrative method we have seen already in *The Rings of Saturn* – centrifugal meditations upon a natural history of destruction – and amplifies and complicates this method. This is, I will argue, a direct consequence of its subject matter; particularly, this is owing to the fact that absences and voids come to figure heavily within the novel in a manner in which they do not in the earlier text. The memories of Jacques Austerlitz – and thus the history they represent – are a memory of nothingness, or in the words of Henri Raczymow, *'la mémoire trouée'* – a *broken* memory, 'shot through with holes.'[22] As such, the map-like text itself, and the journeys it describes, are themselves similarly perforated.

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[19] Sparke, p.344.
[20] Stead, p.42.
[21] Banville, para.2.
[22] See: Henri Raczymow, 'Memory Shot Through with Holes', trans. by Alan Astro. *Yale French Studies*, 85 (1994), 98–105.

9.1. Slices of time, or, a stereometry of memory

> When I finally went over to Austerlitz with a question about his obvious interest in the waiting room, he was not at all surprised by my direct approach but answered me at once, without the slightest hesitation, as I have variously found since that solitary travellers, who so often pass days on end in uninterrupted silence, are glad to be spoken to.[23]

The above passage describes the moment of the narrator's first encounter with the novel's eponymous protagonist. It is around these two 'solitary travellers' that the narrative at large revolves – particularly around Austerlitz himself; Stead describes the novel as one of 'dream-like conversations,' which are 'composed of long monologues from Austerlitz [and] retold by a self-effacing and unnamed narrator,' and which 'take place in a series of carefully evoked real locations.'[24] In the chance meetings between narrator and character that make up the narrative, we can see an example of the Foucauldian 'slices of time' discussed earlier in this chapter, and which here make up the basic building blocks of what I am choosing to describe as a 'stereometry of memory,' after Sebald's protagonist, who characterises his experience of time as one of 'various spaces interlocking according to the rules of a higher form of stereometry.'[25] The chance meetings between the narrator and protagonist – evoked as they are in a multitude of specific, real locations (again, recalling in part the map-like character of the text) – provide perhaps the clearest example of the 'interlocking' spaces described by Austerlitz; they appear to slot in alongside one another regardless of how much time has elapsed between them – a fact remarked upon by the narrator on more than one occasion, such as in the above quotation – and they become the platform upon which the novel's labyrinthine, 'dream-like conversations' on topics of memory and history unfold. Moreover, with respect to the fluid cartography of the novel, the interlocking spaces within which the conversations take place stage the

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[23] Sebald, *Austerlitz*, p.7.
[24] Stead, p.41.
[25] Sebald, *Austerlitz*, p.261.

blurring of a number of boundaries – between past and present, between different places evoked by Sebald's characters, and even between different characters, particularly in the form of the narrator and Austerlitz themselves. Indeed, with respect to this latter point, it is worth expanding upon Stead's description of the narrator, which I quoted in the previous chapter:

> a self-effacing figure present in each of Sebald's books, one who shares many characteristics with the author, but who reveals very little of himself, instead taking the role of bearing witness: faithfully recounting the stories "told" to him by the book's characters. In *Austerlitz* this leads to a double structure, where the ostensible plot belongs to this shadowy "narrator-witness-listener"…but this is built around the more substantive story told by Austerlitz, the book's protagonist[26]

The boundary between the two figures, in other words, becomes somewhat blurred within the text, as we shall see shortly; to use Gil and Duarte's terms, we see that rather than a definitive 'border' between the characters there exists, rather, a sort of 'borderland,' in which the narrator's self-effacing nature allows him to become, in some regards, a conduit for the story told to him by Austerlitz.[27] This all occurs alongside the tracing of a tale (or multiple tales) which maps out a vast amount of real geographical information.

Nowhere is this boundary-blurring better exemplified than in the monumental sentences with which the narrative of *Austerlitz* is constructed. Often, Sebald produces a syntactic arrangement that follows a sort of 'said x, said y, said z' construction, with the narratives of a multitude of characters nested within one another like a set of Russian dolls. In every case, the reported speech is filtered through the narrator in the first instance, but

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[26] Stead, p.42.

[27] This is a sense heightened, in fact, by the apparent ghostly otherworldliness of Austerlitz. We are told, early in the text, for instance, that Austerlitz takes a number of photographs of mirrors at the train station in Antwerp; the narrator describes how he later finds that these particular images – rare photographs of the protagonist himself – have vanished from amidst the hundreds of pictures taken by Austerlitz and handed over to the narrator for safekeeping (*Austerlitz*, p.7).

typically also through Austerlitz himself, so that the reader is usually receiving the retold narratives at a minimum of a double remove. We see this in the following example, for instance, which derives from Austerlitz's retelling of his return to Prague, in search of some element of his history, at which point he is reunited with Vera, a Gentile friend of his parents:

> I believe, Vera told me, said Austerlitz, that even the last remaining German sceptics were overcome by a kind of euphoria, such as one feels at high altitude, in these years when victory followed upon victory, while we, the oppressed, lived below sea level, as it were, and had to watch as the SS pervaded the economy of the entire country, and one business firm after another was handed over to German trustees.[28]

García-Moreno suggests that '[t]he frequently overlapping temporalities and different interpretive frames' that are characteristic of *Austerlitz*'s sentences have the effect (in tandem with the irruption of photographic images and other documents within the text) of 'slow[ing] down the reading process and disrupt[ing] the flow characteristic of narrative, creating the sense of a complex, expanded, almost *spatialized* duration.'[29] This is true, but I would contend that such sentence construction – particularly in tandem with the lack of demarcating punctuation marks between speakers – also entails the boundary-blurring effect described above; at times, it is easy to confuse precisely *who* is recounting a particular incident and, particularly, to remember that the *entire* narrative is being relayed to the reader by the narrator.

This is in part a consequence of the 'self-effacing' nature of this figure – the story, after all, largely belongs to the eponymous Austerlitz. At moments such as the above, however, the nature of the novel's dialogue serves to blur the boundaries between the various characters concerned and, particularly, the *times and spaces* within which they find themselves. Take, for instance,

[28] Sebald, *Austerlitz*, pp.248-249.
[29] García-Moreno, p.361, emphasis added.

Vera's recollection of an exclamation made by Agáta (Austerlitz's mother), on the topic of a Nazi proclamation: 'The Jew concerned in the transaction! Agáta had cried, adding: Really, the way these people write! It's enough to make your head swim.'[30] Here, we are hearing Agáta's words at a threefold remove (Vera, Austerlitz, narrator), yet her exclamations ring out clearly as if they are an example of direct speech, rather than reported speech – it is as if we, along with the narrator, are in her living room in Prague, listening to her speak directly. Similarly, as Vera recalls the poignant moment of her parting from Agáta – the moment of the latter's deportation – we see a similar effect:

> Agáta soon asked me to leave her. When we parted she embraced me and said: Stromovka Park is over there, would you walk there for me sometimes? I have loved that beautiful place so much. If you look into the dark water of the pools, perhaps one of these days you will see my face. Well, said Vera, so then I went home. It took me over two hours to walk back to the Šporkova. I tried to think where Agáta might be now, whether she was still waiting at the entrance or was already inside the Trade Fair precinct.[31]

Following this, she goes on to describe how she later learned, from a survivor, what conditions were like in the Trade Fair precinct, providing us with an account that is at yet another, different remove from the reader and narrator; from this version of events, Vera provides Austerlitz with a minutely detailed account of the horrors of deportation from Prague. In all of the above, the boundaries between times, spaces, and individuals become blurred; we are variously (and simultaneously) privy, for instance, to the space within which Austerlitz and the narrator are conversing (here, unusually, it is Austerlitz's own house),[32] Vera's living room, and the spaces and places of the wartime Prague of Vera's young adulthood. 'Stromovka Park is *over there*,' for instance, suggests a spatial and temporal immediacy that would be lost in a construction

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[30] Sebald, *Austerlitz*, p.249.
[31] *Ibid*, p.253.
[32] *Ibid*, p.234.

such as 'she gestured towards Stromovka Park,' or similar. Likewise, Vera notes that she 'tried to think where Agáta might be *now*,' thereby lending the recollection a similar sense of immediacy and further confusing the boundaries between past and present. The sense, expressed by Austerlitz himself, of 'spaces interlocking according to…a higher form of stereometry' is pronounced here; the 'higher stereometry,' in this instance could be said to be the narrative itself, and its labyrinthine construction.[33]

This sense of blurred boundaries and interlocking spaces is particularly heightened by the relationship between Austerlitz and the narrator. As Stead notes, the narrative of *Austerlitz* is predicated on a 'double structure, where the ostensible plot belongs to this shadowy "narrator-witness-listener"…but this is built around the more substantive story told by Austerlitz.'[34] The narrator comments that, strangely, in all his meetings with Austerlitz following their first, 'we simply went on with our conversation, wasting no time in commenting on the improbability of our meeting again in a place like this, which no sensible person would have sought out.'[35] This improbable relationship – which even appears to negate a separation of the two characters for a period of some decades, while Austerlitz seeks traces of his past life – suggests that time and space are, in some ways, irrelevant to the narrative; the two characters seem to move freely between Austerlitz's 'interlocking' slices of time and space, rather than being bound to a more conventional linear narrative progression. Moreover, the spaces in which the characters find themselves seem to eschew any particular symbolic significance bar their relationship to time, or perhaps more accurately, their reluctance to accept the onward march of time; they are typically spaces in which time seems to *stand still*. We find them conversing in waiting rooms, gloomy cafés, Austerlitz's own peculiarly austere house, and (somewhat pointedly) the Royal Observatory at Greenwich which, naturally, carries significance as a kind of originary site for our contemporary understanding of time. A similar effect, too, is seen when Austerlitz first re-encounters Vera in Prague; after requiring an English-speaking member of staff on the previous day to assist him in his struggle

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[33] *Ibid*, p.261.
[34] Stead, p.42
[35] Stead, *Austerlitz*, p.37.

against the bureaucracy of the State Archives,[36] Austerlitz finds that, inexplicably, after some time with Vera he is able to speak Czech – the language of his early childhood – once more:

> In the middle of her account Vera herself, quite involuntarily, had changed from one language [French] to the other [Czech], and I, who had not for a moment thought that Czech could mean anything to me, not at the airport or in the state archives... now understood almost everything Vera said, like a deaf man whose hearing has been miraculously restored, so that all I wanted to do was close my eyes and listen for ever to her polysyllabic flood of words.[37]

Once more, Austerlitz's experience of time and space as an interlocking stereometry is pronounced in this moment – it is as if he has stepped directly into his early childhood, seemingly untouched by the trauma and 'diasporic displacements' of the intervening years.[38] As he himself notes: 'I found myself back among the scenes of my early childhood, every trace of which had been expunged from my memory for as long as I could recollect.'[39] And yet, despite this void of memory, the protagonist finds (in a Proustian fashion) that: 'when I felt the uneven paving of the Šporkova underfoot as step by step I climbed uphill, it was as if I had already been this way before and memories were revealing themselves to me not by means of any mental effort but through my senses.'[40] It is, significantly, the spaces of home (the street Šporkova) and domestic spaces (Vera's apartment) that spark some form of recollection in the

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[36] Indeed, this sequence is expressed in a style very reminiscent of Kafka's *The Trial*, and befitting of the term 'Kafkaesque': at the State Archives, Austerlitz finds himself overwhelmed by the environment, and suffers a panic attack (p.208); his interlocutor is a seemingly ghostly 'woman of almost transparent appearance' (p.206); finally, the trip to the archive also inspires 'fearful dreams' in which he finds himself '[climbing] up and down flights of steps, ringing hundreds of doorbells in vain' (p.210). In all of this, we might well recall García-Moreno's assertion that *Austerlitz* details a certain aversion to the orderliness of the archive, and 'grid-like' control and regulation.

[37] Sebald, *Austerlitz*, p.219.

[38] Gil and Duarte, p.3.

[39] Sebald, *Austerlitz*, p.212.

[40] *Ibid.*

void within Austerlitz's memory, rather than the space of the State Archives, which he finds immensely oppressive.[41]

In all of the above, Gil and Duarte's notion of fluid cartography as a kind of melding of 'different identities, times and locations,' is clear.[42] Indeed, such a method of spatial representation is necessary to accommodate mnemonic and historical meditations such as these. Temporally and geographically distant spaces, for instance, appear to interlock with one another to create a hybrid space from past(s) and present, here and multiple *over-theres*; at all times, however, specificity of *place* is maintained. Characters, meanwhile, seem to traverse these borderlands quite easily, and at times appear to become somewhat indistinct as separate entities, as the labyrinthine quality of Sebald's prose weaves the narratives of multiple interlocutors into an intricate and complex whole. Likewise, the narrative method employed by Sebald might be viewed as a rebuttal to the notion of a purely linear retelling of history, such as that often seen in actual historical narratives, or indeed in the narratives of historical novels; it may, in this sense – particularly given the frequently pronounced spatial and place-oriented focus of Sebald's descriptions – be viewed in terms of a *countermapping*, in Ewalt's sense of the term, as a particular response to such formulations. It can be understood, in essence, as charting an alternative path for the presentation of historical narratives and historical information, albeit in largely fictional form. Tessa Morris-Suzuki, in *The Past Within Us* – her study of the 'historical truthfulness' of cultural works that seek to represent history, which has been referred to previously – observes of traditional (i.e., typically, nineteenth-century) historical novels:

> The historical novel…creates a new form of empathic
> link between past and present, between the lives of
> readers and an imagined image of the society of the past.
> But at the same time it also frames that society spatially,
> most often in terms of the nation state. In this way, it has
> been one of the chief vehicles through which the peoples
> of modern times were encouraged to imagine the past in

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[41] Sebald, *Austerlitz*, p.208.
[42] Gil and Duarte, p.3.

national terms. Both modern history writing and the
modern novel itself are inextricably linked to processes
of nation-building.[43]

This nation-focused spatial framing is so pronounced in such works, Morris-Suzuki suggests, that it is in fact the case that '[n]ational maps play an important part in historical fiction, often appearing in the opening pages to fix the boundaries of the novel's action.'[44] Sebald's works – while nonetheless profoundly concerned with the presentation of specific places – present historical narratives in a vastly different way, offering instead a patchwork of sometimes-complementary, sometimes-juxtaposed historical moments and images that tend to span a wide array of times and spaces; even within the relatively bounded first-hand experiences of his protagonist in *Austerlitz*, as we have seen, Sebald guides his reader across multiple national boundaries, a variety of times and spaces, and even through multiple languages (French and Czech in particular, in addition to the language of the narrative itself, which I discuss here in relation to the English translation from the original German), all the while retaining, through narrative technique, a sense of the seamless interlocking of a multitude of Foucauldian 'slices of time,' or Austerlitz's own 'stereometry.' What Morris-Suzuki describes as the 'cartographical *mise en scène'* of the historical novel becomes, in Sebald's hands, a patchwork map-surface of discreet, varied, yet connected times and spaces.[45]

Equally crucial to the 'stereometry of memory' upon which the narrative of *Austerlitz* is constructed is an array of cyclically recurring – and often uncanny – visual, spatial associations. Early in the text we are told how Austerlitz (being an architectural historian by profession) wishes to create a vast, synthesised history of the 'architectural style of the capitalist era,' an endeavour which he describes in the following terms:

> Why he had embarked on such a wide field, said
> Austerlitz, he did not know; very likely he had been
> poorly advised when he first began his research work.

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[43] Morris-Suzuki, p.49.
[44] *Ibid*, p.51.
[45] *Ibid*.

But then again, it was also true that he was obeying an impulse which he himself, to this day, did not really understand, but which was somehow linked to his early fascination with the idea of a network such as that of the entire railway system.[46]

This notion of an intricate networking – a kind of rhizomatic structure through which various points become interconnected – is evident in much of the imagery of *Austerlitz*, whereby particular pictures, shapes, and ideas appear to re-emerge at multiple instances throughout, thereby linking discreet moments of the text at which very different issues are under discussion. Often, too, they seem to gesture in a ghostly fashion toward the protagonist's lost past, suggesting a fluid interrelation between the *then* of the past and the *now* of the narrative. Such cyclical associations strengthen the sense of the text as being composed of a kind of 'stereometry' of memory, in that they suggest a contiguity between discreet moments within the text which (often) deal with different themes. In this sense, much like the narrative techniques discussed above, we can similarly view these repeated images as possible signifiers of a permeable 'borderland' (to apply Gil and Duarte's notion of fluid cartography) between different moments within the text.

A particularly pointed example of such repetition can be found in the figure of Lake Vyrnwy, a reservoir near the home in Wales into which Austerlitz was adopted after arriving in Britain on a *kindertransport* train. Early in the text, we are told that the young Austerlitz, when lying in bed at night, 'often felt as if [he] too had been submerged in that dark water,' like the town which made way for the reservoir, and that 'like the poor souls of Vyrnwy must keep [his] eyes wide open to catch a faint glimmer of light far above [him].'[47] This is one of many references to bodies of water within the text; frozen rivers and lakes are particularly pronounced, such as an early description – occurring during the narrator and Austerlitz's first meeting – of Lucas van Valckenborch's sixteenth-century painting of 'the frozen [river]

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[46] Sebald, *Austerlitz*, pp.44-45.
[47] *Ibid*, p.74.

Schelde' in Antwerp;[48] later, we are offered a description of the frozen 'Lake Bala,' a neighbour to Lake Vyrnwy.[49] A number of other lakes and rivers – frozen or otherwise – are referred to throughout the narrative, but it is not until much later that the significance of this recurring image is revealed; while travelling back from Prague by rail, toward the Hook of Holland (recreating his hitherto-forgotten childhood evacuation on a *kindertransport* train), Austerlitz passes through Germany:

> And then, Austerlitz continued, somewhere beyond Frankfurt, when I entered the Rhine valley for the second time in my life, the sight of the Mäuserturm in the part of the river known as the Binger Loch revealed, with absolute certainty, why the tower in Lake Vyrnwy had always seemed to me so uncanny.[50]

An uncaptioned photograph (figure 9.1) inserted into the midst of this paragraph signals to the reader (without making it explicit) that this sense of the uncanny derives from the visual similarity of the two vistas. Austerlitz goes on to describe – in decidedly Romantic terms – the sublimity of this encounter: as he passes by, the sun breaks through the clouds and fills the valley, and he finds himself strongly and unaccountably drawn to interpret the landscape as 'prehistoric and unexplored.'[51] The apparently-revelatory nature of this encounter goes someway to explaining the proliferation of images of lakes throughout the text; the young Austerlitz's sense of being trapped beneath the surface of the water, for instance, can now be read (in a somewhat Freudian sense) as being a manifestation of lost (or perhaps, repressed) memories; the repeated images and discussions of frozen lakes, meanwhile, might now be interpreted as a symbol of frozen memory, which is suddenly thawed by the breaking of the sunlight on the Mäuserturm.[52] These interpretations are speculative, however – such decisive conclusions are not

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[48] *Ibid*, p.15.
[49] *Ibid*, p.89.
[50] *Ibid*, p.317.
[51] *Ibid*, p.318.
[52] There is too, we might observe, an assonant (if distorted) similarity in the words 'Vyrnwy' and 'Germany.'

made explicit in the text. What is clear, though, is the fact that the repetition of such images throughout the narrative suggests a larger question of symbolic connection (in my view, along the lines of *memory*, frozen and submerged) and, particularly, a strong sense of the *interconnectedness* of the places and moments described. Lucas van Valckenborch's sixteenth-century painting, post-war Wales, and Germany in the narrative present (to name but three examples) all seem to map out a symbolic network of connection that runs throughout the text, and thereby recall the 'higher form of stereometry' described by Austerlitz. The array of such images seems to marry the individual to the flow of history, in that they enmesh the protagonist's personal recollections and experiences into a much broader network of related images, many of which are associated with times and places that are far removed from the protagonist's journey. Via their wide-ranging discussions, throughout the novel Sebald's narrator and protagonist map out idiosyncratic networks of association that forego any sense of spatial or temporal linearity.
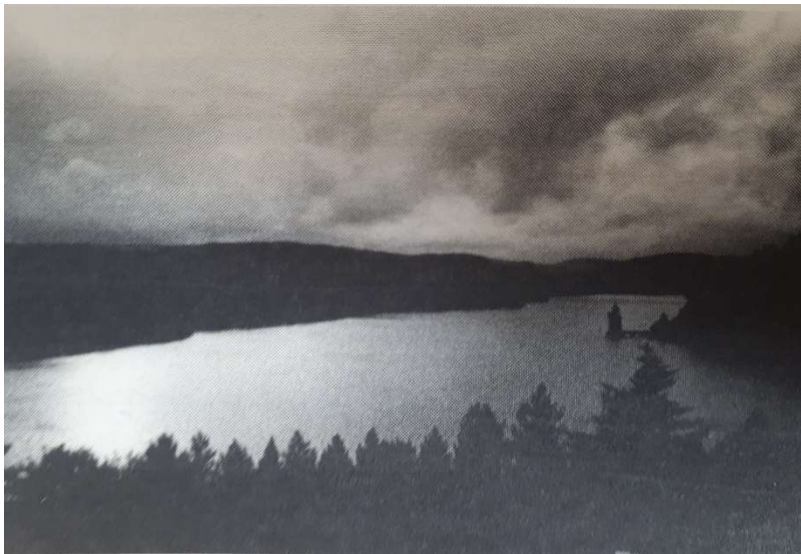
Figure 9.1 – The Binger Loch and the Mäuserturm. Sebald, *Austerlitz*, p.317.

Such networks of association recur throughout the text but, owing to constraints of space, I will not devote much more time to discussing them here, barring one final example that may be viewed as one of the most pointed in the narrative. García-Moreno notes of Sebald's works:

> Fusion and wholeness are categories that are very
> difficult to apply to Sebald's writing. Connections

between time and space, as well as between past and present, cannot be thought of in terms of continuity or unity. A traumatic past has disabled the present and irrevocably derailed its connection to the past, which, in turn, marks the present to the core without the subject being fully aware of how or why.[53]

Such a sense of connection that ultimately rests on *disjunction* and lacks an understanding of the 'how' or 'why' accounts for the uncanny nature of Austerlitz's encounter with the Mäuserturm, and can also be viewed as the source of the sense of a 'stereometry' of interlocking spaces that is experienced by the protagonist (and is, in some sense, mapped out by the narrative). A particularly telling example is to be found in the recurring discussions of fortifications and an array of other star-shaped items and structures that reappear at a number of moments throughout the text. In the introduction to this section I briefly discussed the conversation between Austerlitz and the narrator that centres on fortifications and occurs early in the novel; this represents the beginning of a chain of connection that ultimately leads Austerlitz to Terezín/Theresienstadt, which is where he suspects that his mother perished. Throughout the novel, we trace this chain of connection, which runs from the 'tendency towards paranoid elaboration'[54] attributed to the star-shaped German-French border town of Saarlouis, through the crab-like fortress of Breendonk, a feverish dream of being trapped 'at the innermost heart of a star-shaped fortress' at the moment of Austerlitz's initial unearthing of his origins,[55] to the star-shaped walls of Terezín/Theresienstadt itself,[56] interspersed throughout with a number of other star-shaped objects and diagrams. Once again, it is only upon the revelation of Austerlitz's origins and his attempt to discover some trace of his family that we can see the poignant significance of this recurring pattern of images with clarity; each example of a star-shaped fortress (or of more general star-shapes) represents one of the interlocking spaces that Austerlitz describes as composing the 'higher form of

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[53] García-Moreno, pp.361-362.
[54] Sebald, *Austerlitz*, p.19.
[55] *Ibid*, p.196.
[56] *Ibid*, p.280; pp.328-329.

stereometry' that he feels governs his life.[57] It is as if we have, as readers, gradually stepped through a variety of these spaces alongside the protagonist, as we follow him in edging closer to his origins throughout the narrative.

Once again, much like the narrative techniques discussed above, such recurring images and associations convey an impression – in Gil and Duarte's terms – of a set of permeable borderlands created between distinct times and spaces; indeed, as Austerlitz himself notes of his sense of a 'higher form of stereometry,' the 'interlocking' spaces of which it is composed act as a conduit 'between which the living and the dead can move back and forth as they like.'[58] It is as if these spaces and imagic associations pile upon top of one another in palimpsestic fashion, creating throughout the novel a series of oblique collages of repressed or lost memory. Gil and Duarte's sense of fluid cartography as a means of representing, or giving voice to, the experience of 'diasporic displacements,' too, is relevant to the narrative of Austerlitz; much of the (apparent) significance of these cyclically-recurring associations is derived from a past that was lost to the protagonist when he was removed from the world of his childhood on a *kindertransport* and transplanted, alone, into the unfamiliar environment of Wales. The novel can, as such, be read as a profoundly poignant example of just such 'diasporic [displacement].'[59]

Likewise, the recurring images that appear throughout the text can also be viewed in terms of a kind of 'countermapping' in much the same way as Sebald's narrative method, as described above. They, too, may be viewed as offering a possible alternative to more conventional, linear presentations of history and historical narratives. Here, rather than offering a temporally-linear account, Austerlitz's history is alluded to in a range of symbolic images, which coalesce into the temporally- and geographically-fluid space of the text itself; the significance of these image-chains is only later revealed (if only obliquely) when the past of the protagonist becomes clear. The protagonist's past, then, is linked by association to an array of discrete times and spaces; each of these, once again, appears to constitute one of the 'interlocking' spaces

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[57] *Ibid*, p.261.
[58] *Ibid*.
[59] Gil and Duarte, p.3.

that form the 'higher form of stereometry' described by Austerlitz, which in turn underpin the wider mapping-out of particular places within the text.

To illustrate this more clearly, it is worth returning to García-Moreno's observation relating to Austerlitz's (and Sebald's) aversion to grid-like patterns:

> From Austerlitz's perspective, grid-like patterns are indicative of a compulsion to control and regulation that he, as well as Sebald, view with profound suspicion. In stark contrast to the impulse to itemize, classify, parcel out, to the "balance sheets, registers of the dead, lists of every imaginable kind, and endless rows of numbers and figures"…in the Ghetto Museum in Terezín…possible non–grid-like connections between people, places, times, and objects proliferate in *Austerlitz*. Paths are constantly crossing over and overlapping in such a way that the spheres of the private and the public, the domestic and the official appear to be inextricably linked.[60]

It is, ultimately, the 'non-grid-like connections between people, places, times, and objects' that form the interlocking spaces of Austerlitz's sense of a guiding 'stereometry.' The visit to the Ghetto Museum, referred to here by García-Moreno, inspires relative incomprehension in Austerlitz; here, he '[studies] the maps of the Greater German Reich,' 'traces the railway lines' running through such spaces, sees evidence of the Nazi 'mania for order and purity,' and for their 'obsessive organizational zeal,' and observes 'plots of land meticulously parcelled out' in diagrammatic form, as well as the 'balance sheets, registers of the dead, lists of every imaginable kind' referred to by García-Moreno.[61] Despite the vast wealth of meticulous information on display – the 'incontrovertible proof' which opens up to him 'the history of persecution

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[60] García-Moreno, p.367.
[61] Sebald, *Austerlitz*, pp.278-279.

which [his] avoidance system had kept from [him] for so long'[62] – he notes that:

> I understood it all now, yet I did not understand it, for every detail that was revealed to me as I went through the museum from room to room and back again, ignorant as I feared I had been through my own fault, far exceeded my comprehension.[63]

This vast quantity of documentary evidence, it seems, serves only to push the protagonist somewhat further from this aspect of his own history, in the sense that it offers only a kind of horrified bewilderment. Such a reaction is of course – in some regards, at least – a wholly appropriate reaction to the magnitude of the crime of the Holocaust, but it is scarcely helpful for a man who is seeking some understanding of his own absent personal history.

Figure 9.2 - Sebald's original photograph of the Antikos Bazar in Terezín/Theresienstadt; taken by the author at the exhibition 'W.G. Sebald: Far Away, But From Where?' held at the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, University of East Anglia, May-August 2019. The image is reproduced in black and white within the text (pp.272-273).

By contrast, Austerlitz also relates to the narrator his experience of the 'A N T I K O S B A Z A R [*sic*],' an antique shop in Terezín/Theresienstadt

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[62] *Ibid*, pp.278-279.
[63] *Ibid*, p.279.

(figure 9.2).[64] He first raises the spectre of this peculiar shop in the context of a transition between dream and waking memory, whereby he recalls how, on the verge of waking one morning, he dreamt that he was looking into one of the Terezín/Theresienstadt barracks; while trying to cling onto this 'powdery grey dream image,' he notes, he found that it became 'overlaid by the memory, surfacing in [his] mind at the same, of the shining glass in the display windows of the A N T I K O S   B A Z A R.'[65] The window display of this shop – consisting of 'four still lifes obviously composed entirely at random,' made up of various items of discarded bric-a-brac – 'exerted such a power of attraction' over the protagonist, we are told, that 'it was a long time before [he] could tear himself away.'[66] Standing in front of this strange window display, Austerlitz seems to embark upon a profound search for meaning, in stark contrast with his encounter with the Ghetto Museum, which follows shortly afterwards: 'What was the meaning of the festive white lace tablecloth hanging over the back of the ottoman, and the armchair with its worn brocade cover?'; 'What secret lay behind the three brass mortars of different sizes, which had about them the suggestion of an oracular utterance...?'[67] These are but two in a sequence of seemingly endless questions, all of which leads to the recollection of the Czech word for squirrel – '*veverka*,' – which is prompted by the sight of a stuffed '*veverka*' in the midst of the display. While revealing little in the way of concrete information, this strange collection of miscellaneous artefacts inspires some sense of connection, at least, between Austerlitz and his lost past. We see a similar effect in play in the moment – often commented upon by scholars – at which Austerlitz attempts to catch a glimpse of his mother in a video of Terezín/Theresienstadt produced by the Nazis after the infamously stage-managed visit of the Red Cross.[68] Here, incomprehension and bewilderment reign once more, until Austerlitz decides to alter the temporality

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[64] *Ibid*, p.273; Sebald's capitalised, double-spaced spelling of the shop name is, I suspect, intended to mirror its expanded presentation on the shop-front, as illustrated on the same page in one of the author's typical uncaptioned images.

[65] *Ibid*, pp.272-273.

[66] *Ibid*, p.274.

[67] *Ibid*, p.275; the latter of these two questions runs – in quite typical Sebaldian fashion – to a total of eighteen lines in its full iteration, and encompasses a wide array of items from the window display.

[68] *Ibid*, p.342.

of the video by slowing it down, so that 'the men and women employed in the workshops now looked as if they were toiling in their sleep,'[69] and the 'merry polka by some Austrian operetta composer…had become a funeral march dragging along at a grotesquely sluggish pace.'[70] While offering – like the window of the antique shop – no genuine answers or understanding, this drastic alteration in tempo inspires some sense of connection in Austerlitz; indeed, at one point he even believes he might have seen his mother, when he spots a woman who 'looks…just as [he] imagined the singer Agáta from [his] faint memories.'[71]

In both of the above examples – in stark contrast to the video in its original, full-speed form and the Ghetto Museum – we can observe a fluid relationship to time that recalls the 'stereometry' of interlocking spaces of which the narrative is composed and, concordantly, the fluid cartography necessary to navigate such a construction. In Austerlitz's recollection – presumably from his childhood – of the word '*veverka*,' and his resistance to the Nazis' narrative temporality in the tightly controlled video of Terezín/Theresienstadt, a valuable (if unquantifiable and somewhat idiosyncratic) sense of connection to his lost past emerges; crucially, this is a sense that rests on fluidity, associative connection, and an impression of slowing down time, in contrast to the more rigid (if still valuable) information on display in the Ghetto Museum and the original form of the video. There is a striking sense here of a 'borderland,' to use Gil and Duarte's terms, between past and present – one which the protagonist can, it seems, freely traverse.[72] Through 'allegorical indirection'[73] and a 'spherical system of association and encyclopedic links,' Austerlitz paints a picture of his excavation of lost and buried memory across a range of spaces; in turn, this impression is conveyed to the narrator and, hence, the reader, thereby adding additional 'slices of time'

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[69] *Ibid*, p.345.
[70] *Ibid*, p.348.
[71] *Ibid*, p.351; the image of the woman is presented to the reader in the form of another uncaptioned image, in which we notice (as Austerlitz himself comments in the narrative) that her face is partially obscured by text indicating the run-time, in minutes and seconds, of the recording – her image is quite literally obscured by time.
[72] Gil and Duarte, p.3.
[73] Theisen, p.563.

to the complex structure of such spaces which make up the narrative.[74] In following the charting of this layering-process, we are left with the distinct impression that Austerlitz can move at will between the pieces of the 'higher form of stereometry' which underpin the narrative within the text.[75]

Figure 9.3 - Liverpool Street Station as it is situated in Bishopsgate. Sebald, *Austerlitz*, p.187.

I would like to begin my conclusion of this chapter – and, indeed, this section of the thesis – by introducing one final moment from the narrative of *Austerlitz*; specifically, it is one of the rare occasions upon which Sebald includes a reproduction of an actual map within the text (here in place of his typical grainy, uncaptioned photographs), and it is a moment which can be

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[74] Theisen, p.569.
[75] Sebald, *Austerlitz*, p.261.

considered a particularly neat encapsulation of the narrative method hitherto described (both here and in the preceding chapter). This is particularly true with respect to the notion that 'non–grid-like connections between people, places, times, and objects proliferate in *Austerlitz*,' and that the text functions, on some level, as a reaction to 'grid-like patterns' as a signifier of (rational) control.[76] It is perhaps fitting, however, that this particular moment can be considered paradigmatic for the text as a whole, given that it occurs at the moment the eponymous protagonist experiences a breakdown, which leads him to begin a series of 'nocturnal wanderings through London, to escape...insomnia,' which in turn lead to an encounter that reveals the true nature of his origins;[77] in typical Sebaldian fashion, these walking routes are furnished with a wealth of real-world geographical information:

> For over a year, I think, said Austerlitz, I would leave my house as darkness fell, walking on and on, down the Mile End Road and Bow Road to Stratford, right across Bethnal Green and Canonbury, through Holloway and Kentish Town and thus to Hampstead Heath, or else south over the river to Peckham and Dulwich or westward to Richmond Park.[78]

As indicated by this list of locations, Austerlitz's nocturnal routes are vast, and encapsulate much of the map of London. It is during the course of one of these nightly perambulations – upon which, the protagonist notes, he finds himself 'irresistibly drawn' to Liverpool Street Station with particular (and peculiar) frequency – that the re-emergence of suppressed memories of his past strikes him in the manner of a kind of traumatic revelation.[79]

In figure 9.3, we see the map in question, which depicts Liverpool Street Station and a significant number of the streets surrounding it; this is the setting within which the protagonist embarks upon an irrational reckoning with his own history. Arriving in the now-defunct 'Ladies Waiting-Room' at

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[76] García-Moreno, p.367.
[77] Sebald, *Austerlitz*, p.178.
[78] *Ibid*.
[79] *Ibid*, p.180.

the station, Austerlitz is assailed by a sense of shock which leaves him 'unable to move from the spot,' feeling like 'an actor who, upon making his entrance, has completely and irrevocably forgotten not only the lines he knew by heart but the very part he has so often played' – this is, a fitting description, given that he has been playing a part, in a sense, for his entire life.[80] Gradually after much more (sometimes, near-hallucinatory) confusion, Austerlitz begins to picture in his mind's eye 'not only the minister and his wife' – referring to the foster parents who had taken him in – but also 'the boy they had come to meet': himself.[81] '[F]or the first time in as far back as I can remember,' he continues, 'I recollected myself as a small child, at the moment when I realized that it must have been to this same waiting-room I had come on my arrival to England over half a century ago.'[82] Within the text, it is this moment that represents Austerlitz's first true reckoning with *memory* proper, as opposed to the 'spherical system of association' which has hitherto acted as a stand-in for explicit mnemonic engagement with his own past.[83]

Here, then, the wanderings that characterise Sebald's texts have led to memory, and to a moment of explicit revelation for one of his characters. As ever, the preceding pages are replete with an array of transhistorical musings, which accompany the narrator as he makes his nocturnal way across the streets of the capital. Particularly striking in this regard is a reference to Liverpool Street Station as being akin to 'a kind of entrance to the underworld' prior to its renovation at the end of the 1980s, given its oppressively gloomy interior (and in fact, these renovation works coincide with the arrival of Austerlitz on his nightly walks, making the station a near-literal exemplar of a symbolic *borderland* between past and present).[84] Likewise, discussion of the excavation of a nineteenth-century cemetery during these same works allows Austerlitz to describe, via the narrator, how the transformation of the station occasioned excavations which 'brought to light over four hundred skeletons underneath a taxi rank.'[85] Given what follows – the revelation of Austerlitz's

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[80] *Ibid*, p.189.
[81] *Ibid*, p.193.
[82] *Ibid*.
[83] Theisen, p.569.
[84] Sebald, *Austerlitz*, p.180.
[85] *Ibid*, p.184.

own, lost Holocaust-related past – the significance of these moments, couched as they are in language relating to the 'underworld,' 'excavation,' 'bringing to light,' 'eternal dusk,' and 'remains' is quite clear; in their (allusive) inclusion, Sebald paints the area around Liverpool Street Station as one marked by death – this is precisely the territory charted by the map in figure 9.3.

Sebald, then, transforms the area around Liverpool Street into a space of memory and death in a manner that strongly recalls Max Silverman's model of the palimpsest. Here, the 'productive interaction of different inscriptions and the *spatialization of time* [that is] central to the work of memory' are clearly in evidence; the author crafts an image of the area around Liverpool Street as being literally composed of *layers* of the past – mnemonic strata that require excavation.[86] That these layers allude indirectly to the unearthing of the protagonist's own Holocaust-related past conforms to Silverman's notion of 'the complex interaction of times and sites at play in memory' in a somewhat multidirectional sense, as here (again, in quite typical Sebaldian fashion), disparate histories are once again juxtaposed in a chain of allusive connection.[87] As Silverman notes, 'a fundamental feature of imaginative (poetic) works is to overlay meaning in intertextual space and blur the frontiers between the conscious and the unconscious, the present and the past, and the personal and the collective,' and in this case, the blurring of the boundaries between these factors is enacted within a specific *physical* space – namely, the area surrounding Liverpool Street Station, as indicated by the map.[88]

This map is in itself indicative of a particular aversion to the strictures of the grid, as highlighted by Garcia-Moreno.[89] Within Sebald's description, the depicted area of Bishopsgate is presented in terms that marry anatomy, cartography, and engineering:

> Around 1860 and 1870...poverty-stricken quarters were
> forcibly cleared and vast quantities of soil, together with
> the bones buried in them, were dug up and removed, so

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[86] Silverman, p.4, emphasis added.
[87] *Ibid*, p.29.
[88] *Ibid*.
[89] Garcia-Moreno, p.367.

> that the railway lines, which on the engineer's plans
> looked like muscles and sinews in an anatomical atlas,
> could be brought to the outskirts of the city.[90]

Recalling Stead's assertion of Sebald's interest in 'the fragility of human memory in the face of the crushing forces of history,' the station itself is here presented in biotic terms relating to strength – muscles and sinews.[91] The 'poverty-stricken quarters' it replaces, along with the bones of attendant graves, are swept away by the march of industrial progress. The 'crushing forces of history,' it would seem, are organic, just as the accretion of memory in the area around Liverpool Street is similarly naturally-occurring. On the map chosen by Sebald, then, there exists a tension between history as a process that can be contained by grid-like structures – a 'compulsion to control and regulation' – and the march of history as a kind of biological force.[92] In figure 9.3 we see a typical gesture toward mapping as a form of spatial control and regulation in the presence of the four squares of the grid, presumably included for the purpose of locating specific points on the map; at the same time, the sinewy mass of Liverpool Street Station spawls out beyond the frames of the navigational grid. There is no single point of cartographical reference that can directly refer to Liverpool Street Station in this particular piece of cartography – it spreads across all four squares of the grid, and appears to extend beyond the bounds of the section of map included by Sebald within the text. It cannot be contained, much like the memories of the Holocaust that assail the protagonist can no longer be contained as he steps into the 'Ladies Waiting-Room.'

In all of this, there are echoes of much of what has already been discussed in this and the preceding chapter, here condensed into an intense sequence that represents a significant point of departure for the narrative of *Austerlitz* – the moment of revelation, and the trigger for the protagonist's mnemonic tour of Europe in search of his origins.[93] With regard to *Austerlitz*

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[90] Sebald, *Austerlitz*, p.186.
[91] Stead, p.42.
[92] García-Moreno, p.367.
[93] As per Sebald's expansive, labyrinthine narrative style, however, this is a revelation that only occurs halfway through the text, after some 180 pages or so.

itself, this moment typifies the ghostly stereometry that characterises the text at large, providing as it does a further example of the interlocking 'slices of time' that are mapped out within. The 'territory' around Liverpool Street Station and the station itself represent 'not...borders but rather...borderlands' between past and present, as evidenced by the extensive descriptions provided by Sebald of historical events from the surrounding streets and his vivid memories of his own child-self disembarking from a kindertransport train and encountering his adoptive parents for the first time.[94] This, really, is the key threshold within the text; as Austerlitz passes into the past, stepping from one space into another, lost space, he makes the move from the 'allegorical indirection' and allusive association that have hitherto hinted toward his true origin, and into the realm of direct memory.[95] As with elsewhere in the narrative – such as the moments described above – the attendant spatial description reflects the notion of a *fluid* cartography, given that the movement traced is not merely from space to space, but from *time* to *time*, too; Liverpool Street Station becomes, perhaps, the 'contact zone' par excellence within the text, straddling as it does not only past and present spaces and past and present times, but also the threshold between memory and oblivion.[96]

Moreover, as the narrative builds to this revelation, Sebald introduces a number of hallucinatory elements to the text, which seem to conform to the notion of *Austerlitz* as a reaction to the grid-like, linear, and rational. We might initially take these elements as a consequence of the protagonist's troubled mental state: he notes, for example, how he spent time 'obsessively trying to imagine' the location of the former Bedlam 'hospital for the insane' amidst the 'ever-changing maze of walls' in the Bishopsgate area;[97] on his nocturnal walks he feels 'a constant wrenching inside [himself]' which he attributes to 'the vortex of past time';[98] he notes how, when he 'returned home from [his] nocturnal excursions,' he would experience visions of 'images from a faded world,' such as 'a horse-drawn cab in Spitalfields drawn by a man in a top

[94] Gil and Duarte, p.3.
[95] Theisen, p.563.
[96] Gil and Duarte, p.3.
[97] Sebald, *Austerlitz*, p.183.
[98] *Ibid*, p.182.

hat';[99] he sometimes believes he hears 'people behind [his] back speaking in a foreign tongue, Lithuanian, Hungarian, or something else with a very alien note to it.'[100] In all of this – akin to much of the preceding discussion in this chapter – there is a clear link to Garcia-Moreno's observation that Sebald's narrative in *Austerlitz* represents a reaction to the grid-like, to the rational, and to compulsive control; here, by contrast, Jacques Austerlitz follows an irrational, confused trail to the truth of his own origin.[101] The very nightly wanderings themselves are the result of a desire to escape insomnia, caused by a kind of mental collapse, while the hallucinatory images that pepper the text in the pages preceding Austerlitz's entry into the Ladies Waiting-Room bear the mark of a forgotten or submerged past in their content – a past that, perhaps, requires excavation; indeed, the impulse to enter the room is something which Austerlitz tells the narrator that '[t]o this day [he] cannot explain' – he simply (irrationally) chooses to follow a member of the station cleaning staff through an open door.[102]

With respect to *The Rings of Saturn* and Sebald's wider oeuvre, too, there are aspects of this sequence that are paradigmatic with regard to the author's narrative method. As we have seen, the nightly walks that led to the moment of revelation are related via *specific* (and indeed, broadly *mappable*) geographical information; from the area surrounding the station, meanwhile, the protagonist embarks upon extended (and allusive) historical musings, including the aforementioned description of the station in its pre-renovation state, and the details relating to the nineteenth-century graveyard, along with a number of other topics. This is a feature of the narrative that is shared more widely throughout *Austerlitz*, although I have tended to focus here upon the notion of a 'stereometry of memory' that constitutes the building blocks of Sebald's last novel. In all, however, Sebald's works can be considered 'map-like' in character, charting as they do an array of specific locations, be they points upon a physical route, as we saw in particular in *The Rings of Saturn*, or more abstracted spaces, such as the 'borderlands' between past and present

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[99] *Ibid*, pp.179-180.
[100] *Ibid*, p.180; Czech, perhaps? His later conversations with Vera in that language spring to mind here.
[101] García-Moreno, p.367.
[102] Sebald, *Austerlitz*, pp.188-189.

discussed in the present chapter. From these particular spaces, complex considerations of history and memory emerge, which tend to expand the spatial scope of the text to incorporate a wider web of (sometimes far-flung) places and spaces, not all of which are contemporaneous to the initial starting point. Given this fluid relation to space and time, Gil and Duarte's notion of 'fluid cartography' provides the most concise means by which to characterise the map-like quality of these texts. Central to each narrative, of course, are the 'solitary travellers'[103] who traverse Sebald's spaces, and who function as the 'carriers' of memory within each text.[104] Throughout, the spectre of the Holocaust haunts both protagonists and spaces alike; in the words of the author, 'these subjects are constant company; their presence shades every inflection of every sentence one writes.'[105]

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[103] *Ibid*, p.7.
[104] Erll, 'Travelling Memory', p.12.
[105] Jaggi, para.14.

10. Conclusion

Mapping Mirrors Memory

Before concluding this thesis, I would like to offer the following short 'coda,' on the topic of Nikolaus Gansterer's *Memory Map*. This work of art (and the context from which it originated) provide an opportunity to discuss a number of intersections between mapping and memory that I did not have the chance to investigate in the preceding chapters, given the rather tighter focus on literary and graphic-narrative representations that has been my concern here. Broadly, the key themes that emerge across the following pages relate to the notion of *maps as art*, and the intersection of digital mapping, memory, and aesthetics. Digital mapping is, naturally, a phenomenon of ever-increasing importance in the context of cartography, given the proliferation of smartphone applications and websites that allow users to navigate their world at the touch of a screen or a button, and there are a wide array of academic studies available – in a number of disciplines but particularly, as one might expect, within the field of geography – that consider the social, political, and economic consequences of digital mapping. In its intersection with questions of memory and commemoration, however, there lies a hitherto seldom-investigated topic that bears further enquiry; likewise, the particular aesthetic qualities of digital-cartographic mnemonic interventions.

In a similar vein, the production of unique maps as art-objects with an explicit mnemonic function has received relatively scant attention within academic discourse.[1] As such, I consider the following discussion of Gansterer's work, and the cultural-memory context within which it arose, as a tentative signpost toward further study upon the topic of maps and memory. Moreover, in the context of blending maps, memory, and history, the *Memory Map* (and the wider 'Vienna Project' of which it is part) appears to offer a kind

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[1] Or, indeed, as a vessel for the representation of memory – Grayson Perry's deeply personal, idiosyncratic series of map-artworks based on medieval *mappae mundi* spring to mind in this vein.

of 'middle way,' as it were, between an unswerving belief in the empirical force of the map on the one hand, and more abstracted or individuated responses on the other, marrying as it does a combination of (personal) documentation, artistic form, and a digitally-accurate cartography. This is a point that returns us to the introduction to this thesis, and to questions surrounding the ethics of mapping the past, and it also moves us away, somewhat, from the content of the preceding chapters, in which the texts under discussion – while perhaps 'portable monuments' in their own right – represent works intended for private consumption; the *Memory Map* is the first *public* artistic intervention into the memory of the Holocaust that has been discussed in this thesis.[2]

10.1. Re-mapping presence into the urban fabric of Vienna: Nikolaus Gansterer's *Memory Map*

The city of Vienna has a complex relationship to Holocaust commemoration. Heidemarie Uhl describes the mnemonic landscape of the Austrian capital in the post-war years as a 'resistance-centered...culture of memory,'[3] or a 'heroism-centered memorialization of resistance.'[4] During this period only sporadic, small-scale attempts to commemorate victims of Nazi mass murder – and particularly Jewish victims of the Holocaust – were made; 'It was not until the 1986 debate over the wartime past of presidential candidate Kurt Waldheim,' notes Uhl,

> that Austria was confronted with its great taboo: its complicity in the crimes of National Socialism, in particular the Holocaust, but only with the onus of so-called second guilt, namely the bracketing out of the victims of 'racial' persecution and other victim groups

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[2] Portable monuments, Rigney GET REF

[3] Heidemarie Uhl, 'From the Periphery to the Center of Memory: Holocaust Memorials in Vienna', *Dapim: Studies on the Holocaust*, 30:3 (2016), 221-242 (p.231).

[4] *Ibid*, p.225.

under the mantle and pretext of Austria as the purported
'first victim' of National Socialism.[5]

As a consequence (and, later, as a result of efforts to enter into the fold of EU nations), material Holocaust memory began to emerge in a more sustained fashion, with the installation of a memorial designed by the British sculptor Rachel Whiteread in the city's Judenplatz marking a turning point at the new millennium.[6] This monument, and others from around this period, 'were meant to express that Vienna had changed...from the city of repression of memory to [a] city of remembrance...that...could also hold its own in international urban competitions.'[7] Pirker, Kramer, and Lichtenwagner describe the development of Viennese commemorative culture as 'a general mnemonic move away from positive, mostly heroic representations of national achievements toward more self-critical engagements with wrongdoings of the past, trickling down from the international to national, regional, and local scales.'[8] These authors stress the globalised nature of this development, noting the importance of 'the political integration of Europe'[9] as a powerful driving force, while also suggesting that, with regard to material memorials and their place within the city, 'new remembrance associations generate *territorially unbound social spaces of remembrance*, which are *related both to a common sense of belonging to a specific local environment and universally to humanity*.'[10] The development of Viennese memorial culture, then, can be broadly characterised as a movement away from a nationally-centred focus on acts of resistance to a globalised (particularly, pan-European) testament to the humanity of the victims of Nazi genocide.

And yet, Pirker, Kramer, and Lichtenwagner note (writing in 2019) that 'In Vienna, there is still no place comparable to the Topography of Terror, the

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[5] *Ibid*, p.233.

[6] *Ibid* p.239; see also, Adam Mornement, 'Austrian Holocaust memorial by British sculptor Rachel Whiteread unveiled in Vienna', *Architectural Record*, 189:1 (2001), p.34.

[7] *Ibid*, p.240

[8] Peter Pirker, Johannes Kramer, and Mathias Lichtenwagner, 'Transnational Memory Spaces in the Making: World War II and Holocaust Remembrance in Vienna', *International Journal of Politics, Culture, Society,* 32 (2019), 439-458 (p.440).

[9] *Ibid.*

[10] *Ibid*, p.441, emphases added.

House of the Wannsee Conference, or the permanent exhibition at the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe in Berlin.'[11] This characterisation draws our attention to the lack of a major, physical intervention into the urban fabric of the city. This sense of *something lacking* in Vienna's culture of Holocaust memory is expressed by Karen Frostig, too, who writes: 'while the city of Vienna has erected three Holocaust memorials...as of 2013, not a single naming memorial identifying any one group or multiple groups of victims of National Socialism existed in the public domain.'[12] As a result, Frostig – inspired by familial connections to the city (her father fled Vienna following the *Anschluss*) – set about creating a memorial intervention that she christened *The Vienna Project*.[13] Frostig describes the impetus behind the project thus: '[using] performance art and installation art to manifest memory in public spaces, *The Vienna Project* is dedicated to promoting a personal relationship to the past, moving public discourse toward a cultural transformation that integrates the past with the present.'[14] The project unfolded over 2014 and 2015 as a multi-site, multi-modal sequence of (usually) *ephemeral* interventions on the streets of Vienna, which employed projections, a smartphone app, oral histories, guided tours, and various artistic installations and public events to highlight the city's under-acknowledged Holocaust history.[15] Despite its admirable motivations, Frostig describes the difficulties she encountered at various stages in the process of realising the project, noting that she

> soon discovered that attitudes about the memory of
> National Socialism in Austria were far from settled.
> Memory...remains a high-stakes enterprise, provoking a
> range of opinions regarding who is a victim, should
> victims be named in public memorials, should multiple

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[11] *Ibid*, p.440.

[12] Karen Frostig, 'Performing Memory on the Streets of Vienna', *About Performance,* 12 (2014), 45-62 (p.48)

[13] The Vienna Project, 'Project Details', *The Vienna Project* [online], 2014, <http://theviennaproject.org/project-details/> [accessed March 12 2020], para.1.

[14] Frostig, p.45.

[15] The smartphone app appears to be no longer functional; I attempted to obtain a copy via the links provided on the *Vienna Project* website with no success, and received no response to my email queries.

> victim groups be represented within a single memorial,
> and how should different victim groups be represented
> in relation to one another.[16]

Perhaps it is partly owing to this residual resistance and lack of consensus on the part of various interested parties that we might attribute the sense of lack described by the authors above.

Figure 10.1 – A section of Nikolaus Gansterer's *Memory Map*, <gansterer.org/memory-map>, 2013.

Figure 10.2 - A closer view of Gansterer's *Memory Map*, <gansterer.org/memory-map>, 2013.

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[16] Frostig, p.48.

To my mind, a *lack of memory*, or sense of absence, is a notion that is also central to one of the key pieces of *The Vienna Project* – namely, the *Memory Map* created by the Austrian artist Nikolaus Gansterer (figures 10.1 and 10.2). Alongside the wider programme of events, Gansterer produced a sculptural recreation of the city, comprising a large-scale (two metres by three metres) three-dimensional map of its centre overlain with countless strands of paper, taken from reproductions of letters sent and received by Holocaust victims and survivors. These densely-latticed strips constitute both the demarcating lines of the urban cartography and the sculptural texture of the piece; the letters were predominantly documents obtained by Frostig from Holocaust survivors living in the United States and passed on to Gansterer, who scanned and re-printed them for the purpose of the artwork (their origin is a point to which I will return).[17] The project website describes the relation of Gansterer's contribution to the wider project in the following terms:

> While the conceptual design of The Vienna Project was
> to create a temporary, ephemeral memorial experience,
> we have produced a number of enduring artifacts [*sic*] in
> the process of creating the project. The Memory Map
> containing the 38 sites and comprised of archival letters
> written by victims and survivors of the Shoah, represents
> a key component of the memorial project.[18]

Thus, as well as being a sculptural work of visual art, Gansterer's project was simultaneously intended for use as an *actual* map, guiding those who engaged with *The Vienna Project* to 38 sites of Nazi violence and dispossession identified by the project team.[19] It was conceived of as an accompaniment to the project's smartphone app, within which scans of Gansterer's artwork would be overlain atop digital maps of Vienna in order to help guide users to

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[17] Jüdisches Museum Wien, 'THE MEMORY MAP – A Topology of Remebrance', *Jüdisches Museum Wien* [online], 2020 <http://www.jmw.at/en/exhibitions/memory-map-topology-remembrance-0> [accessed March 20 2020], para. 2.

[18] The Vienna Project, 'Memory Map', *The Vienna Project* [online], 2014 <http://theviennaproject.org/memory-map/> [accessed 12 March 2020], para.1.

[19] Nikolaus Gansterer, 'Memory Map', *Nikolaus Gansterer* [online], 2013, <http://www.gansterer.org/Memory-Map/?n=15> [accessed March 14 2020], para.2.

the sites described in an interactive manner (figure 10.3). Nonetheless, 'while the ostensible purpose of the map was for the project's smartphone app,' notes the *Vienna Project* website, 'the actual map is now an object of consideration,'[20] and it can today be viewed at its permanent home in the Jewish Museum of Vienna.[21]
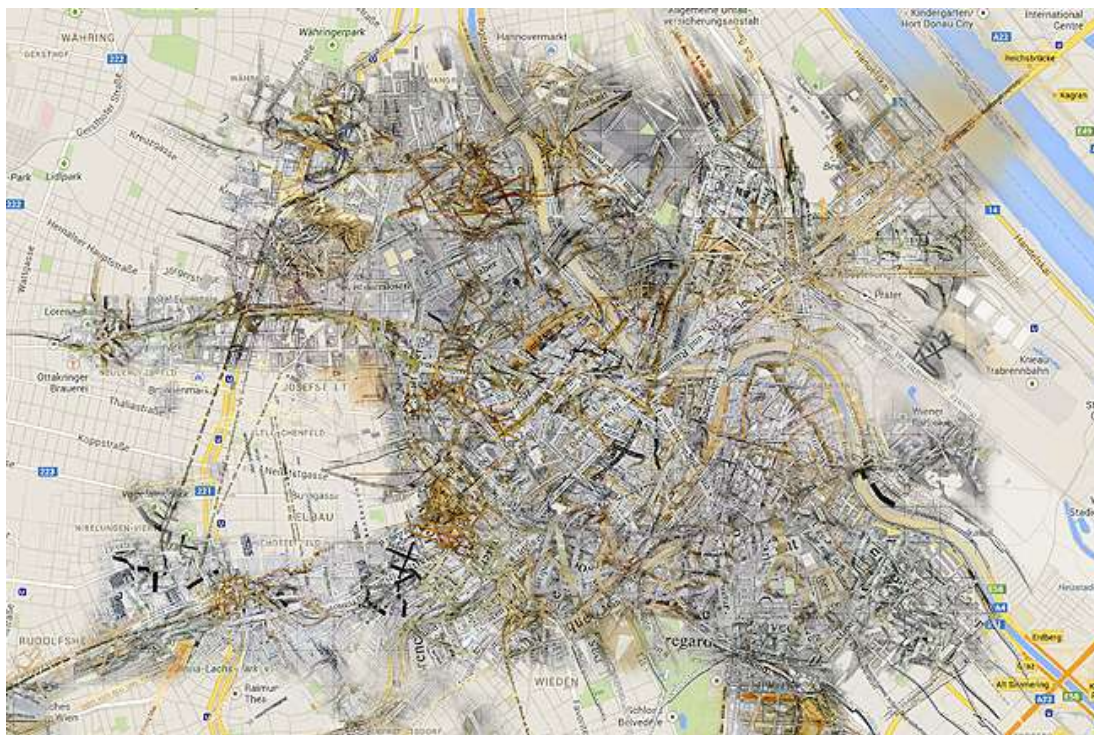

Figure 10.3 - Gansterer's *Memory Map* overlain atop the *Vienna Project* digital app. gansterer.org/memory-map, 2013.

Clearly, Gansterer's Vienna *Memory Map* offers a very different example of a cultural work to the graphic novels discussed earlier. As a piece of visual art (intended to operate in tandem with a digital map), it is inevitably viewed and experienced differently by visitors to its location in the Jewish museum, users of the smartphone app, and indeed by the artist himself in its production; likewise, the circumstances of both its material form and its production are substantively different to those of the maps discussed already in this thesis. Despite these evident differences, however, the map operates similarly as a kind of *countermap*, albeit with a predominantly *civic* focus. Accordingly, it operates at a much greater scale than the maps evident in the

[20] The Vienna Project, 'Memory Map', para.3.
[21] See: Jüdisches Museum Wien, 2020.

graphic narratives; here, the attempt to incorporate the memory of a vast number of victims is evident in the inclusion of reams of letter-extracts. Despite occasionally ranging widely, the maps included in the works of Katin, Dres, and Kurzweil tend to focus on the place of either the individual or the family within the world, while Gansterer's map – as I will demonstrate in the following paragraphs – decisively and emotively places a lost community back into the heart of Vienna. It is, in effect, much closer to the transnational, multidirectional mappings evident in the works of W.G. Sebald. In order to properly demonstrate the significance of Gansterer's re-mapping of Vienna's social history, it will be necessary to augment my earlier description of its memorial landscape with a brief consideration of the pre-war and wartime contexts of persecution within which the city's Jewish population was forced to exist.

Gerhard Botz, is forensic in his description of the development of anti-Semitic persecution in Vienna. 'A change of perspective is required,' he notes, 'from one which simply regards the Jews as victims of an imported anti-Semitic policy arising from German National Socialism to one which also looks at the identity of persecutors and the nature of their socioeconomic motives.'[22] '[Material] interests,' he continues, 'were one of antisemitism's most powerful motivating forces'; we shall see how it follows naturally that such interests should extend to the question of property, and thereby come to encompass the very fabric of the city.[23]

Botz describes how, immediately after the *Anschluss*, Vienna saw a wave of raw discontentment on the part of Austrian Nazis, Nazi-sympathisers, and others released 'with elemental force'[24] against the city's then-sizeable Jewish population (the third largest in the world at the time after Budapest and Warsaw, numbering some 167,249 individuals pre-*Anschluss*).[25] This initially manifested itself in the official policy of 'spontaneous Aryanisation' of houses and flats – the officially-sanctioned handover of Jewish property into

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[22] Gerhard Botz, The Jews of Vienna from the "Anschluß" to the Holocaust'
Historical Social Research, Supplement, 28 (2016), 316-334 (p.317)
[23] *Ibid*, p.318.
[24] *Ibid*, p.320.
[25] Uhl, p.224.

'Aryan' ownership.[26] Botz suggests, however, that the pace at which such measures developed was inadequate for the most anti-Jewish segments of Viennese society; particularly around the time of *Kristallnacht*, the release of such 'elemental force' also came to entail brutal humiliations, including assaults, robberies, forced acts of sacrilege, the use of 'scrubbing squads' of Jews who were 'forced to clean the pavements,' and the enforced defacement of Jewish places of business, often by the children of owners, who were made to daub abusive words (of which 'Jude was thought to be one') on shop fronts.[27] The vicious fervour of this anti-Semitism gradually began to cause concern among the higher echelons of the Nazi leadership in the city:

> This pogrom-like situation might at the outset have been somewhat encouraged by the new men in power as a safety valve for the uncontrolled social revolutionary tendencies among their own followers; however, the longer the state of chaotic interventions in the economic and administrative life of Vienna continued, the higher rose the anguish of the leading Nazi functionaries...Josef Bürckel, who had been appointed Reich-Commissioner in Austria...feared that the National Socialist 'Reconstruction' would be hindered by the chaos. Above all, Berlin had expressed concern that "in Austria there had occurred widespread confiscations of property" which had been impossible to control. Therefore measures were taken, even before the "plebiscite" of 10 April 1938, to rein in the pogrom. This led to a phase of seemingly legal actions whose function it was to prepare the further progress of anti-Jewish measures.[28]

Thus we see how, from the outset, forced expropriation of property and brutal, physical humiliation imbricated the very fabric of the city: Jews were forced out of their homes and places of business, while they were likewise violently

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[26] Botz, p.326.
[27] *Ibid*, p.320.
[28] *Ibid*, p.321.

degraded on the streets, with the evident intention of asserting their otherness in the eyes of their persecutors – a clear attempt to alienate Vienna's Jews from their place of residence. Ironically, the fervour of some non-Jewish Viennese in this regard only served to expedite the progress of supposedly 'legal' anti-Jewish measures, for fear that so-called 'illegal' expropriations of property might hinder the economic progress of the Nazi 'reconstruction' of the Austrian state.

Owing to constraints of space, I will not devote many more words to Botz's arguments here, other than to emphasise that such measures of expropriation, humiliation, and exclusion naturally progressed to the enactment of deportation and murder, as was similarly the case elsewhere. An illustrative case in point – particularly with respect to the materiality of the city itself, and the expropriation of Jewish property – is the description Botz provides of the expansion of the 'spontaneous Aryanisation' process, which demonstrates the intimate interconnection of physical and social exclusion from the city and the ultimate endpoint of mass murder. Botz describes how, in the wake of the abovementioned chaos, Nazi officials envisaged 'administrative procedures' which deprived Jewish tenants of basic protections as one means (among others) of tackling a 'a housing shortage of about 70,000 dwellings for the…indigenous population [and] new arrivals from the Reich.'[29] Fortuitously for these officials, 'the dwellings occupied by Jews, originally also [numbered] 70,000 and [represented] approximately 10 per cent of the total housing stock.'[30] Botz writes: 'By the end of 1938 alone, following forced emigration and "spontaneous Aryanisation," 44,000 Jewish homes had been occupied by "Aryans," but there remained more than 26,000 dwellings to be "Aryanised."' – this process was accelerated by the introduction of ghettoization.[31] The introduction of Jewish ghettoes to the Viennese cityscape compounded existing social exclusion, and 'led to a further deterioration of the already intolerable situation of the Viennese Jews.'[32] As a consequence, Botz forcefully argues, 'the National Socialist persecution policy created a multitude of Jews who corresponded to the stereotype promoted by

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[29] *Ibid*, p.327.
[30] *Ibid*.
[31] *Ibid*.
[32] *Ibid*, p.329.

Julius Streicher in *Der Stürmer*: filthy, down-and-out Jews...[the] consequence of the persecution re-enforced [*sic*] the propagandistic stereotype of the "Jews"' which had the effect of '[breaking] the remains of solidarity on the part of their "Aryan" neighbours.'[33] Botz concludes:

> For "vermin" and "parasites" nothing but extermination was appropriate, as *Völkisch* anti-Semites had already imagined several decades earlier. Only in the wake of this process of de-humanizing the Jews did it become possible to further radicalize the persecution, thus making the Holocaust itself capable of realization.[34]

While many – particularly those with a more intentionalist perspective on the development of the Holocaust – may disagree with Botz's assessment, it seems to offer a convincing account as to how the physical exclusion of Jews within the (material, economic, and social) space of the city may have helped pave the way for their eventual deportation and mass murder via dehumanisation. The negation of Jewish presence and visibility in the city and the prevention of Jewish participation in its social and economic life were central to this process.[35]

Against this specific historical backdrop – but also in the face of a former dearth of Holocaust commemoration – Gansterer's *Memory Map* attempts to redress the exclusion of Jewishness from the city of Vienna, both with respect to its Holocaust history in its use of contemporaneous Jewish correspondences, but also as an intervention into later Viennese struggles over the memory of its wartime past. The website of *The Vienna Project* describes Gansterer's map in the following terms:

> The fragile intimacy of the letters developed as a large-scale map delivers new insights about the massive scale of destruction to a city, a nation, and to a people. The letters, reading literally as pathways of remembrance, provide a direct testimony to the past, challenging

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[33] *Ibid*, pp.329-330.
[34] *Ibid*, p.330.
[35] *Ibid*.

viewers to imagine the lives of the writers who inhabited this city, abruptly expelled and deported from their homes. While the 38 sites represent the primary focus of the memorial project, it is the map itself that evokes the heart and soul of memory transported through time.[36]

It is the personal documentation that composes the sculptural texture of the map-artwork, then, which reinstates a decimated Jewish presence – the words and physical form of the letters constitute the very fabric of the city itself in Gansterer's creation, while at the same time drawing our attention to the scale of destruction via their comprehensive, dense coverage of the surface of the map. It thereby straddles two temporal moments – destruction and commemoration – in its reassertion of a one-time presence, and memorialisation of irrevocable absence. It can, thus, be considered an example of an act of 'countermapping' *against* the city's mnemonic culture of absence, in the sense that it reimagines the very cartography of (contemporary) Vienna by reinserting material evidence of its lost Jewish past into its streets.

Given the nascent culture of Holocaust commemoration that is beginning to emerge in Vienna, I would argue that Gansterer's intervention is a particularly important one, given that it manages to render Jewish victims visible in the landscape of the city *as a whole*, on an appropriately large scale, while also avoiding the reduction of victims to mere statistics through its use of personal documentation; the letters restore a sense of life and humanity to the surface of the map, while at the same time drawing our attention to the desperate circumstances of persecution within which they were written, given that they inevitably call to mind lost lives. Gansterer's *Memory Map* may thus be viewed in contrast to a similar project that was being developed in Vienna at around the same time – 'Memento Vienna,' a website that maps sites of Jewish residence at the time of the Holocaust.

Wolfgang Schellenbacher, the project lead, describes the venture as follows:

Memento Vienna is a digital tool optimized for mobile devices, presenting information and archival material

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36 The Vienna Project, 'Memory Map', para.3.

about the victims of the Nazi regime in the center of Vienna. Using a map of the city, the mobile website makes visible the last-known addresses of those murdered in the Holocaust. Additionally, the GIS-enabled online tool links and displays archival material such as documents and photographs with person-specific information to these georeferenced addresses. Based on their current location within the city, users can interact with the history of their vicinity and explore the fate of those who were persecuted and murdered as well as the history of important Holocaust-related historical places as they move through the city.[37]

The website derives its documentary sources predominantly from the 'Documentation Center of the Austrian Resistance and other archives,' a decision which Schellenbacher states was taken in order to 'reflect the aim of the project to be as comprehensive as possible in naming Holocaust victims from Vienna'; it consciously avoids, he notes, the use of 'egodocuments – such as letters or diaries.'[38] Certainly, the 'Memento Vienna' project is impressive in its scope, and Schellenbacher is absolutely correct to state that '[o]nline tools can help to address [the] problem of making archival material both available and accessible online by offering new ways of displaying archival information, such as geospatial presentation.'[39] When one interacts with the project map, the ability to visualise the vast numbers of Jewish victims that were forced into cramped districts, particularly around 'the Danube canal,' is startling, and is easily comprehended through the straightforwardly-visual form of online cartography.[40]

Nonetheless, stringent avoidance of 'egodocuments' and reliance on archival material from the Documentation Centre of the Austrian Resistance

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[37] Wolfgang Schellenbacher, '*Memento Vienna*. How an Online Tool Presenting Digitized Holocaust-related Data and Archival Material is Offering New Insights into the Holocaust in Vienna', *Quest: Issues in Contemporary Jewish History*, 13 (2018) 97-118 (p.101).
[38] *Ibid*, p.105.
[39] *Ibid*, p.99.
[40] Wolfgang Schellenbacher, 'About the Project', *Memento Vienna* [online], 2019, <https://www.memento.wien/about/> [accessed April 3 2020], para.2.

mean that the geotagged victim information often rests on the use of perpetrator documents, particularly deportation lists. While many would argue (and I am inclined to agree) that achieving the reinstatement of victims into the fabric of the city in such a comprehensive, *accessible* manner, makes the use of such documents a price worth paying, it is difficult not to view Gansterer's *Memory Map* as a welcome counterpoint, given its extensive application of just such 'egodocuments.' In the terms expressed by Ewalt in his description of countermapping, we might interpret 'Memento Vienna' as a work which successfully constructs a 'motivated subject characterized by a distanced empathy,' while Gansterer's map goes further, and encourages a more empathic engagement via its amalgamation of the landscape of Vienna with the personal correspondences of victims.[41]

In contrast with 'Memento Vienna,' then, we can see how it is the artistic form of Gansterer's work that distinguishes its mnemonic intervention, and it is in these terms that I would like to briefly return to the notion of 'fluid cartography.' The following section of Gil and Duarte's definition of the concept is again pertinent here:

> A fluid cartography...traces connections in contact zones and perceives the limits that mark territory not as borders but rather...borderlands...A fluid cartography, then, perceives the territory as an emerging surface where charting is equated with inscribing and translating, where different identities, times and locations come together.[42]

In figures 10.1, 10.2, and 10.3, above, it is clear how the epistolary texture of the map overlaps and transcends the clear demarcating lines of traditional cartography (in both paper and digital form). The strips of letter-paper seem to subsume the surface of the city and provide a near-biological texture to Vienna; see, for instance, the dense, nest-like cluster of letter fragments around the number 3 marker in figure 10.1. This sense of something unbound, which cannot be contained, might be interpreted as bringing a sense of life to

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[41] Ewalt, p.335.
[42] Gil and Duarte, p.3.

the map – symbolically restoring a lost Jewish past – or it may be interpreted as a rejuvenation or explosion of memory in the present, one which has engulfed the city. This sense is perhaps most pronounced in figure 10.3, in which the flood of sculpted documents atop the surface of the digital map is clear. In any case, Gansterer's intervention overcomes the relative sterility of a conventional map-surface in a manner that transcends boundaries, creating new 'contact zones' between past and present in the process.[43]

A sense of fluidity also exists in the nature of the documents used, and at this point we are reminded of the increasing globalisation of Vienna's memory culture. Given that the letters were predominantly obtained from American survivors and their families, we may recall the notion that 'new remembrance associations generate *territorially unbound social spaces of remembrance*, which are *related both to a common sense of belonging to a specific local environment and universally to humanity.*'[44] I would argue that Gansterer's map conforms to this description, while remaining anchored in its local context via its map-form. In this sense, we might view it as being situated within a 'cosmopolitan' framework, of the kind discussed by Levy and Sznaider in their work on Holocaust memory.[45] In this sense, I would argue, the *Memory Map* is afforded a new dimension of fluidity, in that it creates another 'borderland' between diasporic space and a specific site within the Austrian homeland, while also incorporating 'different identities, times and locations' into the same mnemonic space.[46] This is, once again, most clearly expressed in figure 10.3, in which the *return* of memory and a specific stratum of Viennese history to the centre of the city can be seen within a wider spatial context. In all, and particularly in his use of letters as a kind of sculptural material, Gansterer's *Memory Map* creates a new mnemonic fabric that hangs over his simulation of Vienna's cartography; it is, therefore, a work that countermaps against the prevailing history of the city by reintroducing the voices and spatial realities of its Jewish victims into the urban landscape.

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[43] *Ibid.*

[44] Pirker, Kramer, and Lichtenwagner, p.441, emphasis added.

[45] Levy and Sznaider, p.3.

[46] Gil and Duarte, p.3.

10.2. Fluid maps for fluid memories

The epigraph with which this thesis open contained the words of W.G. Sebald, writing in *The Rings of Saturn*:

> This then, I thought, as I looked round about me, is the representation of history. It requires a falsification of perspective. We the survivors see everything from above, see everything all at once, and still we do not know how it was.[47]

Here, his narrator is referring to the panorama of the battle of Waterloo, referred to in chapter 7, but these words offer an apt characterisation of the works discussed in the preceding chapters; not only history, but memory and cartography both occasion a falsification of perspective, too, of sorts. The same might be said of this study itself; in the necessarily-limited range of sources analysed here, the answers to any of the questions posed in the introduction must, by their very nature, be circumspect. Nonetheless, the analysis offered here allows us to begin to draw some tentative conclusions as to what it means to *map* the cultural memory of the Holocaust in a variety of senses.

Certainly, the works discussed in the previous chapters employ maps and mapping in a manner that is intimately connected to the expression of Holocaust memory within each. Most significantly, it is broadly the case that the cartographies in these texts can be viewed as both *fluid* and *ontogenetic* entities; to return once more to Kitchin and Dodge, they note,

> [m]aps are of-the-moment, brought into being through practices…always remade every time they are engaged with…As such, maps are transitory and fleeting, being contingent, relational and context-dependent. *Maps are practices* – they are always *mappings*; spatial practices enacted to solve relational problems.[48]

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[47] Sebald, *Rings*, p.125
[48] Kitchin and Dodge, p.335, original emphasis.

This is reflected in each of the cultural works analysed in this thesis, including those of Sebald and Gansterer, in relation to which such a connection was not made explicit. The maps within all of these texts are flexible in their relationship to the spatial realities of the areas depicted, they are not fixed, static constructions, and they are often remade or re-evaluated according to the experiences described. In all cases, too, the cartographies discussed '[aim] at understanding instead of controlling' – none of the authors here aspires to the fixity and apparent authority of the map as an object of domination, even if, on occasion, they appear to uncritically rely on this same authority to demonstrate the authenticity of their account (as per the typical, popular understanding of maps).[49] Moreover, these works frequently depict 'borderlands' and 'diasporic displacements' in a manner akin to the definition of fluid cartography provided by Gil and Duarte.[50] In many cases, too, these authors employ maps as a representational device within which 'different identities, times and locations' are able to 'come together.'[51]

There is an affinity, in this regard, with the nature of the Holocaust memory on display in these works. In all cases, we see memories of the genocide that are similarly 'relational,' and which operate in similar 'borderland' spaces. It is often the case that boundaries between past and present and a variety of different locations, in the manner described by theorists such as Erll, Silverman, and Rothberg, appear within the mappings employed by each work. In essence, the crucial point here is that, within these texts, *mapping mirrors memory*. In the hands of these authors, mapping offers a flexible (fluid) tool, one which is employed in order to address spatial questions relating to memories that are themselves, in some senses, fluid and changeable.

In the works of Miriam Katin, for instance, we see the application of maps that mirror the gradual relaxation of a fixed worldview – one that is inherently based on memory. In the case of Kurzweil, when it comes to Amy's personal life, the maps included are idiosyncratic, often tongue-in-cheek depictions of space, whereas the depictions of the grandmother's experiences

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[49] Gil and Duarte, p.3.
[50] *Ibid.*
[51] *Ibid.*

are accompanied by cartography that is sober in presentation, and which attempts to capture something of the subjective experience expressed in her testimony; they are adapted, in other words, to the specific situations that they are employed to depict, thereby highlighting their ontogenetic quality. In Dres's *We Won't See Auschwitz*, the maps drawn by the author mirror the brothers' trip, and their desire to seek out places of Jewish life and (pre-World War II) Jewish history; they also mirror their increasing familiarity with – and understanding of – the country of Poland as the trip progresses. In addition, they (almost literally) mirror some of the discussions held within the text, in the sense that they begin to *speak* the content of these conversations in their own right, as well as simply illustrating them, thereby highlighting the crucial significance of questions of spatiality to Jewish history in Poland. In Sebald's works, the map-like quality of the texts mirrors the complex multidirectional meditations on history and memory contained within; they are the most fluid examples of mapping discussed here, and they range widely across space and time, encompassing a vast array of information, while remaining profoundly invested in the immediate spatial realities of the protagonists. Finally, in Gansterer's work, mapping mirrors and compliments the drive toward increased recognition of Vienna's troubled Holocaust history, particularly in the sense that the *Memory Map* addresses both the history itself (by sculpturally reinstating a Jewish presence upon Vienna's streets) and the contemporary mnemonic situation (by amalgamating the contemporary cartography of the city, as well as functioning as a permanent memorial-artwork).

In each of the texts discussed here, *memory* precedes *mapping*; maps are employed as a vessel through which to chart historical information and contemporary journeys to sites of mnemonic significance, or they allow for the mapping of contemporary spaces in a manner that is heavily (subjectively) influenced by the lasting effects of Holocaust memory (such as those of Miriam Katin). Given that Holocaust memory was such a significant factor in the explosion of interest in memory in the 1980s and 1990s, it might be viewed as something of a paradigmatic event in the contemporary academic study of the phenomenon; what would the effect have been here if I had chosen to investigate cultural works concerned with (for example) the memory of

another atrocity, or straightforward individual, personal memory (such as in an autobiography, for instance)? Would maps have been employed in the same, fluid fashion? This is a question that bears further study. Similarly, given the limited corpus of texts analysed here, it would also be worth expanding such enquiries to other forms of representation, such as film, poetry, theatre, visual art, digital mapping, journalism, and perhaps even history writing and other academic endeavours, among many others.

An appreciation of the fluidity of the maps used in these works is, in my view, an important step toward a broader understanding of the non-neutrality of maps outside the academic contexts of cartographical and geographical enquiry. In this regard, we might once more return to Morris-Suzuki's distinction between historical *truth* and historical *truthfulness*; maps and memory are complementary in the above texts because, in all cases, they are flexible and relational – they do not typically contrive to *impose* a particular perspective – a particular truth – upon the reader or viewer of each of these works. This, to my mind, is a useful point to consider when applying mapping to questions of Holocaust memory – in both creative, cultural works and elsewhere. As I explained at length within the introduction to this thesis, the racial imaginary which underpinned the atrocities committed under the Third Reich was profoundly spatially-informed; it offered, too – in notions such as *Lebensraum* – a fundamentally *fixed*, authoritarian perspective on the production of space. It is entirely appropriate, then, that in responding to the legacy of this horror, authors and artists should *map back* against such ossified spatial understanding by adopting a manner of charting space that reflects the fluid complexity of both space and memory.

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