

Mapping Memories of Exile

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Abstract

Mapping memories is useful for revealing and understanding the relationships that individuals and communities have with places, but extremely challenging given the complex and fluid nature of memories. To address these challenges, we developed a series of cartographic approaches to map the memories of exiles. In the first approach, we converted ten video recordings of life story interviews into conventional cartographic representations to identify structures and potential patterns in and between these stories. In the second, we invited those who told these stories to comment and provide feedback on the maps, triggering additional memories, untold in the original life story. In the third approach, exiles worked with artists and cartographers to develop their own spatial representations of their life stories. In this chapter, we argue that this mobilization of complementary cartographic approaches is key to mapping memories in a way that both respects the complexity of personal memories of exiles and contributes to a better understanding of individual and collective geographies.

Introduction

Memories do not land particularly well on maps. Indeed, while memories are spatial, they are also fluid, evanescent and ever-changing, and their geographies fluctuate along with the individual that bears them as well as with the context and form in which they are expressed such as oral life stories, memoirs, or diaries. On top of being difficult to characterize qualitatively or quantitatively, they are challenging to circumscribe spatially. In other words, the elusive geographies of memories don't easily overlap with the rigid Euclidean structure of the conventional map. Thus, to map memories would inevitably require that memories be distorted in a way that fits a rigid cartographic structure, or to distort this structure in a way that would accommodate memories. In this chapter, we propose to explore these two modes of distortion by mapping the life stories of exiles¹.

The transformation and visualization of memories using conventional cartographic frameworks has been carried out in several ways. Geographers Kwan and Ding (2008) developed an approach using GIS tools to represent memories of daily life, collected through interviews, to study how the events of 9/11 affected the use of urban space by Muslim women in the USA. Historian Vincent Brown developed an interactive map to study the 1760-61 Slave Revolt in Jamaica based on "diaries, letters, military correspondence, and newspapers" (137), which enabled him "to observe the tactical dynamics of slave insurrection and counter revolt" (Brown 2015, 136). According to Historian Tim Cole and Geographer Alberto Giordano (2014), historical GIS can "provide a crucial context for rereading and better contextualizing one of the key sets of sources in Holocaust Studies: diaries, memoirs, and oral testimony." (p. 151) Digital

¹ The term "exile" is used to refer to individuals who have experienced forced migrations. As explained by Karen E. Bishop (2016, 2), based on Edward Said's work, "exile includes, yes, those few who are still formally banished from their homes, but also the internal exile, the refugee, the asylum-seeker, the diasporic subject, etc."

mapping technologies have also been used by communities in Spain to locate and represent mass graves and “abandoned places of memory” related to the Spanish Civil War of 1936–39 (Ferrándiz 2014). The lives of Spanish Republicans who left Spain after fighting Franco have also been mapped to study the types of emotions these exiles developed with places over time (Dominguès et al. 2017). Based on these examples, it is clear that conventional maps present a real potential to represent and study different aspects of memories especially when they relate to exile.

Although, beyond its potential, the previously-mentioned authors are all fully aware of the limits of this approach, as noted by the loss of the many collective and intimate experiences of exile and migration when plotted on conventional maps such as “state-centric maps (Campos-Delgado 2018). Alternative forms of mapping have been developed to propose representations which more appropriately fit the geographies of these personal experiences and memories associated to exile: places of departure and destination, mobility and immobility, hope and despair, violence and relief. Artists and academics have worked with asylum seekers and refugees to facilitate the creation of their own maps of personal experiences of exile (Miller et al. 2011; Mekdjian et al. 2014), while historians have embraced inductive visualization² as an alternative cartographic approach to mapping survivor accounts of the holocaust based on the content and meaning that is unique to each testimony (Knowles et al. 2015). Meanwhile, cognitive mapping has been used as a way “to challenge the invisibility of irregular migrants’ stories” (Campos-Delgado 2018, 3). Conventional cartographic symbols have also been revisited by cartographers who were invited to transform memories of border crossings by Syrian migrants who had fled war into graphic symbols that captured the diversity of these human experiences (Kelly 2016). These alternative approaches to mapping illustrate the impulse and need for developing spatial representations that are better aligned with the experiences and memories of exiles, potentially at the expense of a precise alignment with absolute, Euclidean space.

In this chapter, we propose to further explore the potential that each of these two broadly-identified approaches have for mapping the memories of exiles through a three-phase project. The first phase focused on methodological aspects of the transformation of memories – narrated as life stories – into conventional cartographic data structures and symbologies. In the second phase, these digital maps were put into conversation with the original authors (i.e. “storytellers”) of those memories: first as a means of validation, but also as a way of triggering further storytelling. The final phase consisted of a series of alternative mapping workshops in which exiles were invited to work in close collaboration with artists and cartographers to co-create their own life story map. We conclude by discussing the process and results of these three consecutive exercises and interpreting the observed experiences of storytellers and how they relate to broader, more collective spatial narratives about exile.

² Inductive visualization is an intuitive method which aims to collect and represent spatial and phenomenological data. It is a “creative, experiential exploration of the structure, content, and meaning of the source material” (Knowles et al. 2015, 244)

1. From Memories to Maps: Charting the Life Stories of Exiles

The *Mapping the Life Stories of Exiles* project began in 2013 with a collaboration between the Centre for Oral History and Digital Storytelling (COHDS) and the Geomedia Lab at Concordia University. In the context of an earlier project called the *Montreal Life Stories Project*, the COHDS collected over 500 video recordings of life story interviews from exiles living in Canada (High 2014). Ten interviews were selected to be mapped by the Geomedia Lab using conventional cartographic approaches: five from Montreal residents of Rwandan and Haitian origin respectively.

These interviews were not originally designed to be mapped in that explicit questions about places were not central nor were explicit spatial indices prioritized, but the ten selected stories were particularly rich spatially, with clear locations associated to specific events and detailed descriptions of geographical movement. To map these stories, we first developed a methodology that guided the transformation of narratives into geographical data. Two “analysts” carried out a listening of each story to identify and characterize “story units”, or what Gérard Genette (1972) called “narrative segments”, interpreted here as sections of the interview that were spatiotemporally discrete. Each unit corresponded to an entry in a database with associated attributes such as a descriptive summary of the story unit’s qualitative content, the geographic location to which it had been associated, the characters involved, a historical time period, as well as other binary indicators such as whether the unit involved violence, forced migration or was explicitly positive or negative.

Faced with how complex and ambiguous spatial and temporal references tend to be in narratives, it took nearly two years to develop a methodology that could consistently retrieve relevant information from more than a single story. Since each storyteller had different expressive styles, it was challenging to define the place and time of story units in a way that was consistent both within and between stories. For example, it was easy to associate a place and time to Alexandra Philoctète’s traumatic memory of two prisoners dying in front of the library in her hometown of Jérémie. On the other hand, it was impossible to locate the segment in which Gisimba talked extensively about grandparents’ personalities as well as their views on religion, kinship, and social class. Narrative segments of expression like this one were recorded in our database but not associated to any location and were therefore not mapped.

Geovisualizing these data was done using Atlascine, an online mapping application developed by the Geomedia Lab at Concordia University in collaboration with the Geomatic and Cartographic Research Center at Carleton University using the open source software *Nunaliit* (see Caquard and Fiset 2014). This application allowed us to transform the story units into proportional symbols whose sizes reflected the overall importance of different places within a story and whose colours and opacity levels could represent any associated attributes. We produced at least four different maps per story, in addition to a series that combined stories to explore collective themes such as forced displacement and violence (Figure 1). Maps which aggregated memories from multiple stories enabled the identification of junctions between storytellers. For example, places known to be associated with violence by the respective diasporic communities emerged, such as Gikongoro in Rwanda and the Casernes Dessalines in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. There were

also locations of intersecting positive memories, such as the Côte-des-Neiges neighbourhood in Montreal.

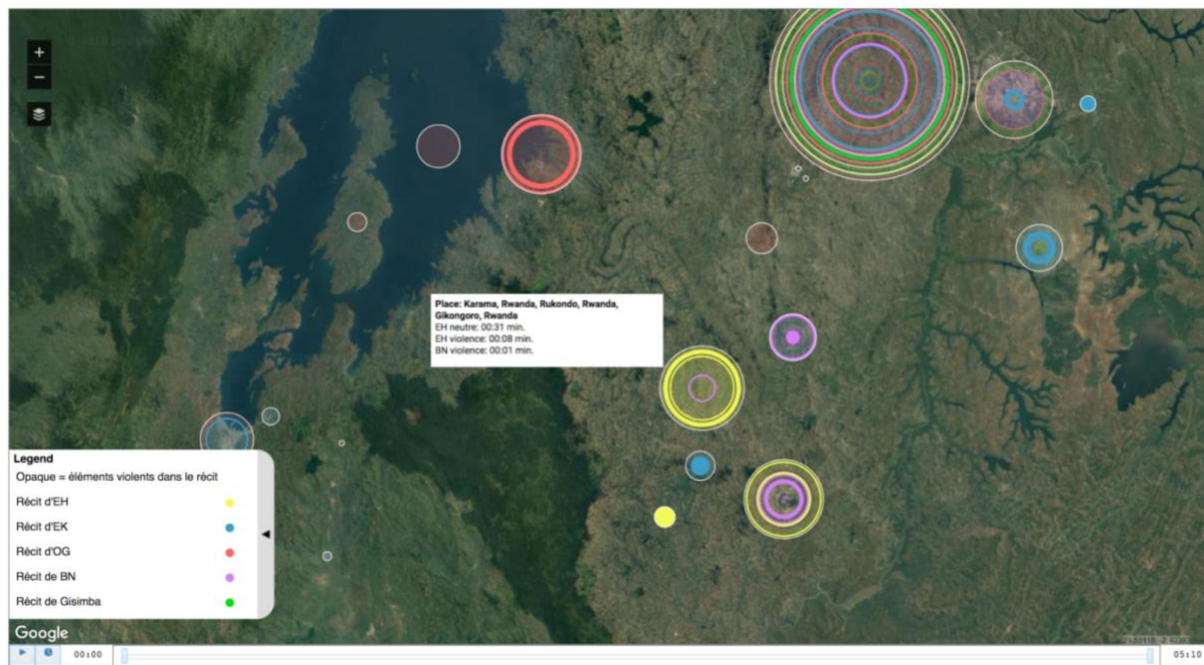


Figure 1. A screenshot of a map designed with Atlascine that combines the five Rwandan stories (each with its own color) and differentiating places that were associated with violence (opaque) from places that were not (translucent) in the Lake Kivu region of East Africa.

2. From Maps to Memories: Conversing with Exiles

In the second phase of this project, our goal was to solicit feedback from the storytellers themselves on the maps produced during the first phase. Not only was this a way to validate, question, and improve our interpretations and mappings of their stories, it was also an opportunity to use maps to facilitate more affective recollections of memories which may not have been captured by the discursively smoothed, narrated recollection of past events characteristic of spoken life stories (see Martouzet et al. 2010). In other words, this was an opportunity to move away from “knowing from” storytellers to “knowing with” them (Greenspan 2014).

This phase began by presenting the Atlascine maps to members of Maison d’Haïti and Page Rwanda respectively: organizations which acted as key liaisons with the Rwandan and Haitian communities of Montreal. After incorporating feedback from these sessions, the individual storytellers were contacted for one-on-one meetings concerning the maps of their story. Four of the ten storytellers agreed to meet with us: three of Rwandan origin (Gisimba, Emmanuel Habimana and Emmanuelle Kayiganwa) and one from Haiti (Alexandra Philoctète)³. These

³ The names of some participants have been changed to respect their request for anonymity.

meetings took place at Concordia University during the winter of 2016-2017 and lasted between one and two hours each.

Overall, feedback on the maps was positive. All storytellers easily recognized the mapped spatial trajectories as their own. Emmanuel Habimana and Alexandra Philoctète were pleased by the transparent, unapologetic precision of the maps, describing them as refreshing and unromanticised compared to other media. Alexandra Philoctète pointed out that her map accurately reflected the more detailed memories she had of life in New York and Quebec City, versus the much vaguer and distant ones she had of Jérémie, in Haiti. Gisimba recognized that, as a whole, his map represented his world quite well.

However, all the participants acknowledged difficulty in understanding the maps without guidance, especially regarding the categories that the cartographers had chosen to qualify story units. Although we chose categories that emerged heuristically from each story while loosely following the themes in the interviews such as family, education, work, and experiences of violence, Gisimba thought these were crude and oversimplified, while Emmanuel Habimana was surprised to not find certain elements he thought were significant to the collective memory of the Rwandan diaspora such as religion. Furthermore, our earlier meeting with members of Maison d'Haïti had also revealed a lack of satisfaction regarding the chosen categories: they commented that such a content analysis of memories, and their cartographic symbology, required direct collaboration with members of the diaspora. This greatly emphasized the need to create a dialogue with storytellers during the mapping of their life story.

What was most noticeable about these meetings was how the storytellers' interactions with these maps triggered further reflection and recollection. These usually began with clarifications about the spatiotemporal accuracy and precision of the events mapped, as well as the filling-in of new events that were not expressed in their original life story. For example, Alexandra Philoctète provided some clarifications regarding what she then saw as the correct sequence of events in her life by correcting the dates we had attributed to specific events and by providing more geographic precision to some of those that had been associated with coarse locations. This effort to correct and improve the map led to the divulgence of more memories from her life, further adding to the temporal scope that had theoretically already been covered by the map. For example, upon noticing that Vancouver was not featured anywhere, Alexandra elaborated on the dramatic story of her brother who had lived there (unmentioned in the original interview), and his recent passing. In this way, the maps served as catalysts for imaginative wanderings, associations, memories, and words (Ryden, 1993). Alexandra had figuratively inscribed yet another narrative onto the map, a more contemporary iteration built off of her interaction with it. Another storyteller, Gisimba, was surprised to see that his story showed very little violence in Burundi. This inspired him to describe several shocking and violent incidents he had witnessed during his stay in Bujumbura whereas, in the interview, he had only talked about his experience as a student there in more general, neutral terms. In brief, the map, through its concretization of spatiotemporal memories, provoked the reiteration of untold ones, confirming the idea that maps, like photos and videos, can serve to flush out and elucidate stories and memories (Martouzet et al. 2010; Palmer 2016).

These meetings also shed light on some aspects of the previous mapping phase. Emmanuelle Kayiganwa, who noted having difficulty reconstructing and communicating certain traumatic memories in consistent and precise terms, acknowledged that such abstracted cartographic symbols might appropriately communicate difficult and sensitive themes to audiences such as Rwandan youth or the general public, a comment which was also made during our meeting with members of Page Rwanda. While this heavily abstracting aspect of maps has been criticized for its power in facilitating dehumanized decision-making processes including militaristic planning and even genocides (Harley 1988), these remarks might suggest that such conventional mappings can also be used by individuals to communicate memories and experiences too difficult to fully express and convey through more realistic and evocative media. Yet Emmanuelle also shared a critique of this mapping method. When observing the trajectory of her journey from Kigali to Goma, she was reminded of how a friend of hers who had made the journey with her described her experience in a way that she did not remember at all, and thus Emmanuelle ended up questioning the relevance of spatial detail in her own story. For example, she could not even begin to remember the number of times she was forced to move during the crisis in Rwanda: “I really try to remember, how many times we moved: I simply cannot. I cannot. How many times we moved in ten years, before my parents were deported to Nyamata, I have not a clue. I have not a clue.” (Emmanuelle Kayiganwa, translated by authors). These remarks echo what Gisimba had also emphasized in his original life story recording about his own memories whereby he “remembers people, not places.”

These observations point to the bias of spatial reification inherent in any attempt to map life stories with conventional cartographic methods. As described in this section, the difficulty in representing the less explicitly spatial moments in stories is also foreshadowed by the extraordinary variability in memory itself. Although this phase showed us how maps can reactivate memories, refine others and trigger new ones (Martouzet et al. 2010), it also made it clear that the distance between cartographer and storyteller, which characterized the first phase’s mappings, beckoned resolve. Furthermore, these representations of memories remained constrained by the Euclidean structure of conventional maps which, while novel to some, might not be sufficient for expressing more personal and intimate relationships to places. This led to the third mapping phase focused on individualized mappings.

3. A Participatory Workshop on Memory- and Map-Making

The third phase of the project was designed to enable storytellers to actively participate in the mapping process through the design of their own life story map. Although our original goal was to develop this phase in collaboration with the storytellers from the first and second phases, only one consented to joining us for this exercise. Thus, during the spring of 2017, we solicited artists interested in working with storytellers who identify as refugees or exiles to facilitate the development of their own life story map, as well as the said storytellers. Inspired by a series of mapping workshops organized in 2013 with asylum seekers in France (see Mekdjian et al. 2014), our intention was to facilitate a collaboration between artists, mapmakers and storytellers to map life stories using the medium and method of their choice.

Participants ended up including four storytellers, three artists and four mapmakers from the Geomedia Lab. Three meetings were organized throughout May and June of 2017 to provide a space for the participants to team up and develop their collaborative works. By the end of the

first meeting, two of the four storytellers had voluntarily paired-up with two mapmakers, while the two others bonded with two of the artists. These four duos then worked together during the two following meetings and throughout the summer and fall seasons to finalize their projects. Results demonstrate four very different ways of mapping the memories of exiles⁴.

3.1. Navigating Memories with Maps

Alexandra Philoctète was the only storyteller who participated in all three mapping phases. Having appreciated the Atlascine maps of her life story interview, especially for their spatial precision, she suggested to further develop them, thereby choosing online mapping as a medium for her project. She was therefore matched with Stefanie Dimitrovas, a mapmaker from the Geomedia Lab who had participated creating her web maps.

Alexandra is a writer whose work includes co-authoring the book *D'Haiti au Québec: quelques parcours de femmes*, text was therefore an important creative medium for her. Also, during her interview in phase two, she expressed an interest in incorporating music into her life story map. Thus, with the help of a comparative analysis of online story mapping applications (see Caquard and Dimitrovas 2017), ESRI Story Maps was selected due to its capacity to combine text, music and images with an interactive map.

Throughout the process, text became the primary medium of the project; Alexandra ended up producing a book entitled *Rencontre avec l'autre : l'histoire de vie d'Alexandra Philoctète*, completed in February 2017 which chronicled events in her life from the time she left Haiti in 1956 to 2016. It also became clear that the multimedia web mapping application was no longer appropriate as the primary medium. As a result, the project evolved in two directions. The first consisted of the said book, with images and musical references in the form of footnotes and with all the places where Alexandra had either visited or lived in marked in colour. These demarcated place names linked to the second part: the ESRI Story Map which became secondary. Conceived as an abridged version of the book, each of the six chapters was represented by colour-coded points showing the geography of different eras in her life. These were associated with quotes from the text summarizing the memories associated to each place (Figure 2).

⁴ These projects and their interactive media can be viewed online at geomedia.org/artist_workshop.html.

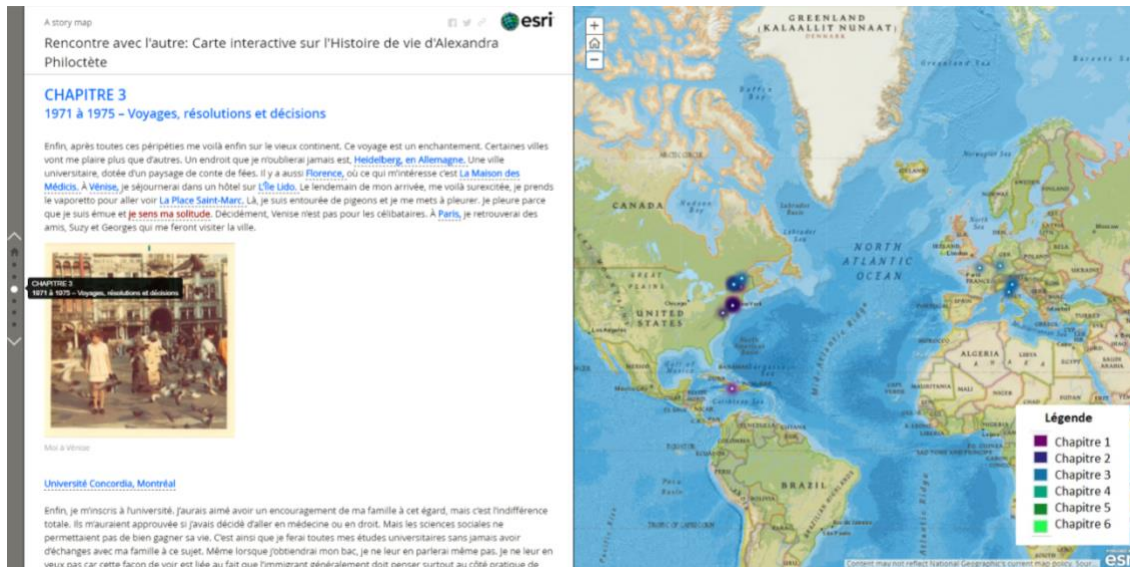
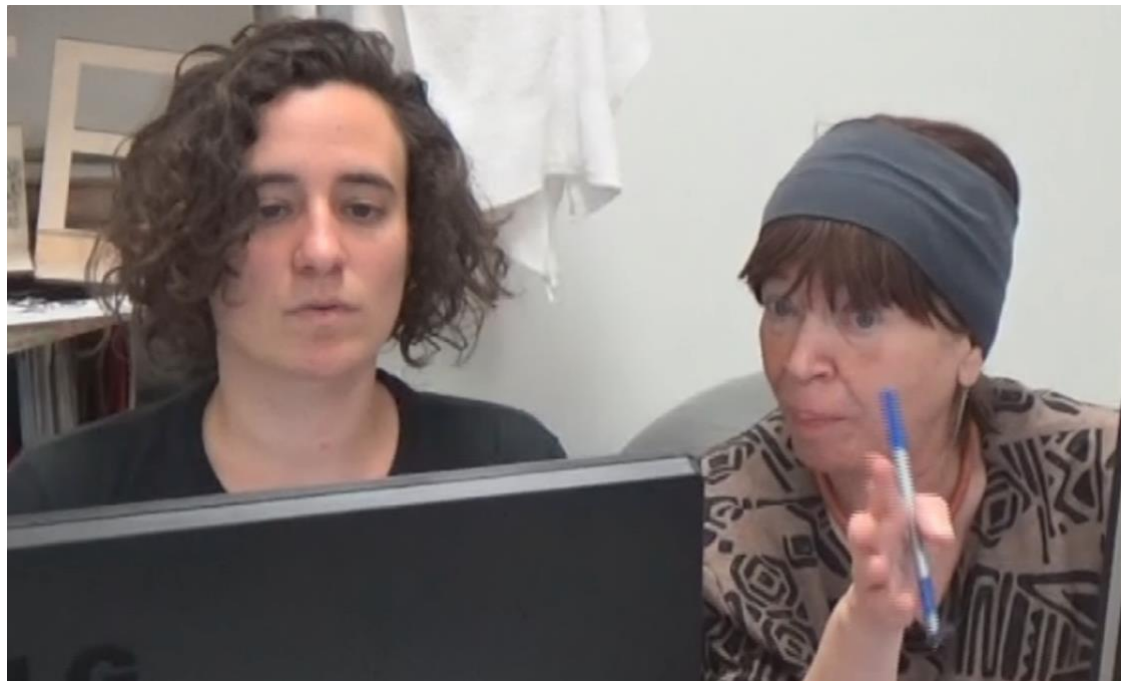


Figure 2. Top: Alexandra Philoctète (left) and Stefanie Dimitrovass (right) designing Alexandra's life story map. Bottom: Screenshot of the ESRI Story Map associated to her life story. The map can be viewed at arcg.is/OS1HP1.

This collaboration revealed two key limitations with web-mapping life stories. For one, it became clear over time that Alexandra was motivated to reproduce her life story in a way that went beyond a spatial perspective, relegating the map to a supportive role. Second, while she expressed her enthusiasm for the project and its outcomes on several occasions, Alexandra's frustration with how the artifact created with ESRI Story Maps was only available online and could not be archived locally (except as a pdf file, which implied losing the application's

interactivity and most of its media) revealed how leaving a legacy to her friends and family was an important motivation for recording her memories.

3.2. Mapping to Share Memories

Another partnership took shape as a result of the workshop between C.K., a Montrealer of Rwandan origin who immigrated to Canada in 2008, and Emory Shaw, a student in the Geomedia Lab. C.K. came in with a very clear vision: he wanted his story digitized, made tangible and public, and he wanted to produce a map similar to the ones designed during the first phase of the project using Atlascine. Though several other cartographic methods and tools were proposed to him, he had already taken a liking to Atlascine's minimalistic symbology and capacity for abstraction. Since he never recorded his life story, the first part of this collaboration consisted of this recording. Beyond his clear intention to share his story via maps, the process was also constructive for him personally: having mentioned that he wanted to write down his story at some point, this exercise started off the process.

Since C.K. told his story in order to create a map, it contained more spatial and temporal precision than the life story interviews from the Montreal Life Stories Project mapped previously. He navigated his memories in a careful, brief and structured way, scaling from the joys of stable, daily life spanning months and years, to the very crucial minutes, hours and days when in times of danger, deception and dread. All the story units therefore comprised of locations, which were almost universally at the city-level, unless during key moments of movement when the story became most spatiotemporally precise. The mapping process also differed from the first phase since it was created collaboratively with the storyteller. After converting the content of two storytelling sessions into a story unit database, C.K. and Emory met again to review the database and attribute a generalized emotion to each story unit as well as colors to represent these qualities. In addition, while the result was a digital map that visually resembled the maps designed during the first phase (Figure 3), the final product combined the map with the story's audio recordings to produce a video featuring the narrative accompanying the temporal unfolding of the map. In this collaboration, the conventional map was perceived as a powerful way of sharing and conveying individual memories that are part of a collective memoryscape.



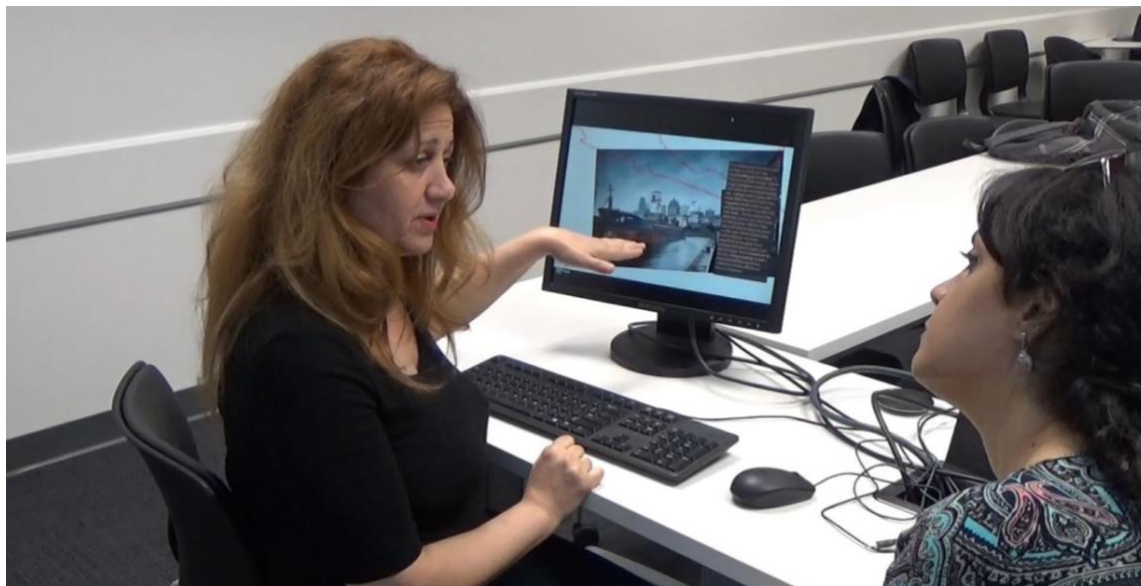
Figure 3. Top: C.K. (left) and Emory Shaw (right) designing C.K.’s story map. Bottom: A screenshot of the final map at the global scale. A video recording of the map as it evolves over time with the recorded interview can be viewed online at vimeo.com/246040198.

3.3. Mapping as Memory-Catching

The third collaboration was carried out by the visual artist Lilia Bitar and Italian-born illustrator Nasim Abaeian. Nasim, whose father is Iranian and mother Italian, reflected on her identity as follows: “I am not a refugee, but I have immigrated so much in my life that I don’t really know where [home is] for me anymore.” Similarly, Lilia, who identifies as Russian-Syrian, has migrated multiple times throughout her life: from her childhood in Algeria, to other locales in the Middle-East such as Abu-Dhabi, to Montreal in 2001. The hybrid identities and displacements that characterized their lives, as well as their artistic sensibilities, gave them common ground for

collaboration, enabling them to develop their map in metaphorical terms. As described by Lilia: “The map is an emotional map. It’s a map of memories. It took the shape of a living map, like a parabola or a dreamcatcher, so it works as a trigger. We [made] the map as our dreamcatcher or memory catcher, and we gave time [for] the memories to come.”

Nasim and Lilia conceived the map as a tree, with each branch representing one chapter and place of Nasim’s life: Genoa, Tehran, Dubai, Savannah and Montreal, each of which was illustrated by artifacts that were sentimental to Nasim. A key feature of this tree map was its easily editable and dynamic capacity: Lilia and Nasim produced a representation that provided space for, and could be adapted to, the changing nature of memories, serving as a creative and inspiring answer to a key challenge encountered in previous phases of the project. By approaching the mapping of memories through the metaphor of a living entity such as a tree, they addressed the issue of designing maps that can evolve with the memory of the storyteller. In doing so, Lilia and Nasim also illustrated one of the main challenges to such a process: that being the long-term commitment required to update and maintain a living memory map. Indeed, shortly after the end of the workshop, Nasim moved to Toronto, implying the eventual growth of yet another branch on her tree map.



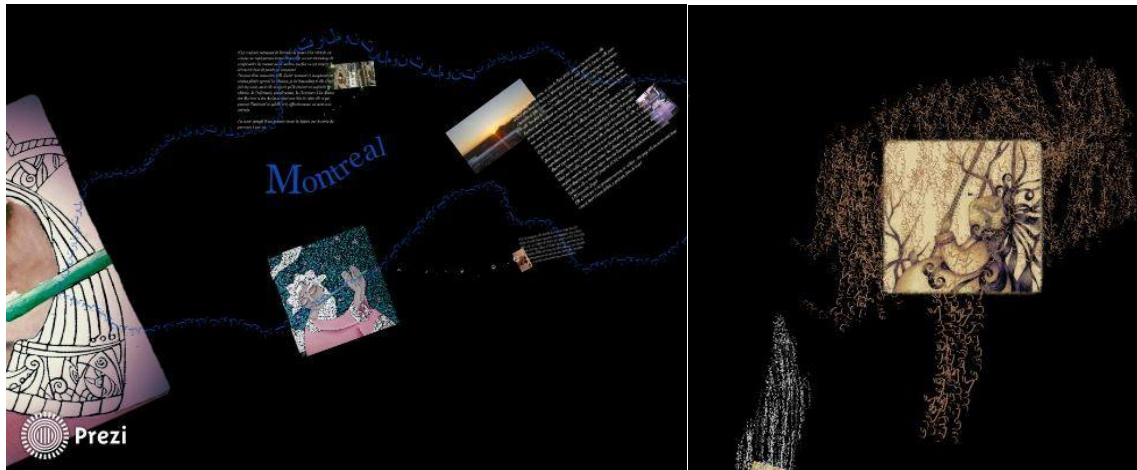


Figure 4. Top. Lilia Bitar (left) and Nasim Abaeian (right) working on their Tree map. Bottom: Three screenshots of the “Tree Map” viewable online at prezi.com/0pg3auer9jwc.

3.4. Embodied Memory Mapping

Meghri Bakarian, a Canadian of Armenian-Syrian origin, came to the workshop with a clear idea of how she wanted to express her story world: “I want to merge different materials... I have photos that I would like to merge with dance. Also, I want to use my voice... I’d like to use several languages.” During the first workshop, she discussed her project extensively with Khadija Baker, a multidisciplinary artist of Kurdish-Syrian origin. Her artistic background and personal experience of migration helped create a common language between storyteller and artist. Together, they conceived their map as a video representation of a performance melding collage and dance. Demonstrating how memory is inscribed on and within of the body of the dancer (West, 2013), and the relations “between embodied performance and the production of knowledge” (Taylor 2003, xx), Meghri hoped to depict the stories and places of her life through such performance. Khadija, who was receptive to this, saw dance as an effective way of expressing embodied memories, or what she called our ‘second map’: “the map that we have within us, what we carry in terms of culture, memory, languages, and relations within communities that becomes more complicated to reflect on in our daily life.”

Meghri’s dance was filmed and photographed by Khadija and served to illustrate important chapters of Meghri’s journey from her hometown of Aleppo, her voyage to Armenia, her life in Lebanon and finally her arrival in Montreal (Figure 5). For Meghri, the process of choosing the photographs was meaningful but difficult because of what it triggered: “It was like moving the memories all over again.” Yet she also emphasized the opportunity this exercise gave her to catch up with her past: “Living here is too quick. You never have the chance to think or reflect on yourself. During this workshop, I had the chance to reflect on my journey that had been crazy over the last four years.” A short poem⁵ lyrically framed Meghri’s performance, which was recited three times: in Armenian, in Arabic, and finally in English.

⁵ *The Swallow* is a poem by the Armenian writer Ghazaros Aghayan (1840-1911).

I'm going to say a poem that is four sentences long. The poem is about a bird who built her nest. Each time she builds her nest she builds it with joy and happiness. Each time she builds her nest she remembers the one she lost before. The whole story is about the poem. It's about moving and migration.

– Meghri Bakarian, 2017



Figure 5. Top: Khadija Baker (left) and Meghri Bakarian (right) developing their project. Bottom: Three still frames of the Meghri Bakarian's life story made in collaboration with Khadija Baker. The video can be viewed at <https://vimeo.com/244583982>.

Conclusion

Historians such as Vincent Brown (2015) and Anne Knowles (2015) have called for new ways of mapping and reading spaces of displacement and exile while emphasizing the need for combining what Karen Bishop (2016, 3) calls “formalist and non-formalist” mapping strategies. Both strategies were deployed in the project presented here, enabling us to reflect on each of their potentialities as well as their complementarity and relevant fields of application.

Process was an important element for both mapping strategies, yet these processes require fundamentally different approaches. Mapping memories of exile with conventional cartographic representations requires a rigorous and replicable methodology. Although such a methodology may not be required when the goal is to make memories more tangible, visible and accessible to others, it becomes central to taking full advantage of cartography's power in aggregation and

pattern identification: for example, that of combining multiple stories onto a single map to enable the identification of places of shared experience that are otherwise buried in individual memories. Beyond this interest in revealing geographic structures, a rigorous mapping of memories can be leveraged for place-related claims. A famous example is the 1970s Inuit Land Use and Occupancy Project (ILUOP) in Canada that relied on aggregating “map biographies” (maps that locate and explicate Indigenous land use and occupancy based on memory) to define the total area used within living memory (see Tobias 2009) and which successfully enabled the Inuit community to claim ownership of its territory (i.e. Nunavut). Similarly, memories of exiles collected and mapped with such a methodology could be aggregated to provide tangible evidence of the existence of particular events in given places and of their spatial extent. These conventional maps of combined stories could then be leveraged by communities to argue for recognition of such events. In this way, conventional maps would be mobilized to do what they do best: emerge from the territory through the reification of past events in locales and precede it through their potential instrumentalization towards place-related claims.

Yet, as argued by Karen Bishop, mapping memories of exile can be considered a personal act of leaving a visual trace of spatial experience as a way for the “exile-turned-cartographer” to gain “a certain control over the foreign environment she newly inhabits” (Bishop 2016, 9). This exercise is seen as a way of materializing the diversity of voices, identities and experiences that are erased by the standardization process characteristic of conventional maps. As illustrated in the third section of this chapter, these mappings reflect the range of intentions of each storyteller: from a very personal need to take the time to remember and reflect on events, places and feelings related to exile, to a more collective statement to make these memories as public as possible. These processes as well as the cartographic outcomes in their multiple forms can allow and support these different intentions. The mapping therefore becomes an interface between the storyteller and their memories and between these memories and the map’s audience.

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