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CARTOGRA/POETRY: THE USE OF MAPS IN POETRY

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Abstract

Cartography has long been serving humanity for various purposes. In the earlier periods of map-making, maps were regarded as purely technical products representing the geographical reality just as it was. In the course of time, however, they started to be seen as the recreation of a selective reality reflecting on the economic, cultural, and ideological positions and interests of certain groups, societies, or nations. This has led maps to be employed as images, metaphors, or symbols to be used in literature, particularly in poetry. Thus, maps have become impressively alluring texts to entail more than they represent, which provides them with the power of being a source of reference as well as a work of art appealing to the imagination of poets. In this context, this essay focuses on how the map image has been used particularly in poetic texts with respect to the changing perceptions about the making and reading of maps. For this purpose, a selection of poems, written in or translated into English, will be analyzed. These poems, which will be examined under two categories, use maps as their subject matter or source of inspiration, play with their metaphorical or symbolic meanings, and refer to their dual nature as both the representation and distortion of selective reality.

Keywords: imagination, poetry, literature, maps, cartography

Öz

Hem bir bilim dalı hem de bir uygulama alanı olarak haritacılık, çeşitli amaçlar doğrultusunda insanlığa hizmet edegelmiştir. Haritacılığın erken dönemlerinde haritalar, üretimleri sırasında kullanılan bilimsel gözlem süreçleri, matematiksel hesaplamalar ve estetik becerilerin katkısıyla coğrafi gerçekliği olduğu gibi gösteren, bütünüyle teknik ve sanatsal ürünler olarak görülürdü. Ancak zamanla belirli gruplar, toplumlar ya da ulusların, ekonomik, kültürel ve ideolojik konum ve çıkarlarını yansıtan ve seçili gerçekliğe dayanan yeniden yaratımlar olarak ele alınmaya başladılar. Bu da, erken dönemlerinden bu yana haritaların, edebiyat alanında, özellikle de şiirde imge, eğretileme ya da simge olarak kullanılmasını beraberinde getirdi. Böylelikle haritalar, edebiyatla ilişkileri çerçevesinde, temsil ettiklerinden daha fazlasını, bazı durumlarda da daha azını akla getirip ima eden etkileyici metinlere dönüşüp özellikle şairlerin imgelemine hitabeden bir gönderge kaynağına ya da sanat yapıtına evrildiler. Bu makale, haritaların oluşturulması ve yorumlanması sürecindeki değişimler bağlamında, harita imgesinin şiirsel metinlerde nasıl kullanıldığı konusuna odaklanacaktır. Bu amaçla, İngilizce yazılmış ya da İngilizce'ye çevrilmiş şiirlerden oluşan bir seçki irdelenecektir. Bu şiirler haritaları konu alıp esin kaynağı olarak kullanır, simgesel anlamlarını yorumlarken, seçili gerçekliği olduğu gibi ya da bozarak temsil eden ikili niteliklerini sorgularlar. İki kategoride incelenecek şiirlerden ilk kategoriye ait olanlar, özünde haritaları, tekdüze yaşamlarından uzaklaşmak ya da yeni yerler keşfedip yeni deneyimler kazanarak yaşamlarını zenginleştirmek isteyen kişilere ses verir. İkinci kategoride yer alan şiirlerin kişileri ise, haritaların, kendi sınırlı yetenekleriyle insanların sınırsız beklentileri arasındaki çelişkidenden kaynaklanan kısıt ve yetersizliklerine odaklanır.

Anahtar sözcükler: imgelem, şiir, edebiyat, haritalar, haritabilim

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There is no Frigate like a Book
To take us Lands away
Nor any Coursers like a Page
Of prancing Poetry –
This Traverse may the poorest take
Without oppress of Toll –
How frugal is the Chariot
That bears the Human Soul –

Emily Dickinson

Introduction

Cartography, both as a science and a practice, has a long history in the service of humans who have designed, made, and used maps in a variety of ways and for a variety of purposes. It is defined as “the art and science of graphically representing a geographical area, usually on a flat surface such as a map or chart. It may involve the superimposition of political, cultural, or other nongeographical divisions onto the representation of a geographical area” (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, "cartography", 2023). The *Encyclopedia Britannica*'s definition of cartography reveals some very important details about the possibility of involvement, or in some cases, the lack of political, cultural, or other nongeographical superimpositions on maps. In this way, maps may become multi-layered texts in which each layer, while reflecting its own representation, may also have the ability to represent and inspire some further images, thoughts, and feelings through their interaction with other layers. Therefore, just like literary texts which are open to a variety of readings and interpretations and which function as both an inspired entity and as a source of inspiration, maps are functional tools created through scientific research and observation, the employment of technical skills, and the use of imagination. They are also regarded as powerful images which have extensively been used in literature, particularly in poetry, as effective sources of inspiration and reference through their power of representation of reality as well as their impact on imagination.

Like other living beings that have an ability to find their ways and directions relying on the maps they get by instinct or learn by experience, humans have developed their own ways of mapping the environment they live in. Different from the animals, however, human beings have reproduced the environment by using signs and superimpositions on a piece of paper, or globe-like material, or, recently, on the screen as representations. Therefore, cartography is essentially a representation of physical reality and like all representations, say, literature, painting, and plastic arts, it is an abstraction, a selective account of the outer world, the signifier of the signified. Combining the capabilities of scientific and aesthetic disciplines, maps can become effective tools or rather texts to connote more than they represent, which equips them with the qualities of being a source of reference as well as a work of art appealing to the imagination. In this sense, depending upon who uses them and the context and purpose of their use, maps are open to interpretation, evaluation, and criticism. Map-reading, like other types of readings, is closely connected with the reader's socio-cultural background and requires both technical skills and imaginative involvement because of the various characteristics and uses of maps. As Deleuze and Guattari say:

The map is open and connectable in all its dimensions; it is detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modification. It can be torn, reversed, adapted to any kind of

mounting, re-worked by an individual, group, or social formation. It can be drawn on the wall, conceived of as a work of art, constructed as a political action or as a meditation. (1987, p. 12)

Doubtless to say, such versatile qualities and uses of maps are directly connected with how people benefit from them for their own purposes and intentions and indicate that maps have a practical value for their users.

Perspectives on Maps

From a historical perspective, the word ‘map’, in its modern, technical meaning, has been in use in English since the beginning of the sixteenth century. With the developments in the sciences of geography, astronomy, and mathematics, cartography has found for itself a privileged place in the service of scientific studies as well as political, sociological, and intellectual purposes and ambitions. Literature, of course, has not been indifferent to maps since they have frequently been a source of inspiration for writers, particularly for poets, who have used the mysterious, attractive, and appealing characteristics of maps originating from their essentially abstract, thus, symbolic nature. For an early example what Henry S. Turner says is quite relevant:

For the Elizabethan poet, the “map” functioned as a conceit in a variety of figurative senses, all of which aligned it with the epitome, emblem, portrait, mirror, or digest: it evoked a visual image that encapsulated, in condensed form, emotional states, abstract qualities, or metaphysical ideas. (2007, p. 412)

The perceptions on the science of cartography, in parallel with the use of maps in literature as metaphorical or symbolic figures, have profoundly changed in the course of historical, political, and economic developments. It is not surprising that maps were accepted as the embodiment of scientific truth due to the combination of geographical discoveries and observation with the accuracy of mathematical calculation in the act of their production. Hence, they were seen and consulted as an unmistakable representation of the real world as it was, which gave them an unshaken authority and power to define and decide on the nature of research and geographical explorations. “The trim, precise, and clean-cut appearance that a well-drawn map presents lends it an air of scientific authenticity” (1942, p. 527) says J. K. Wright pointing out how the technical qualities and achievements map-making has had leads to its position as a source of reference. Muehrcke and Muehrcke underline a similar view in their seminal work entitled “Maps in Literature”: ““A map maker must strive for accuracy, not originality. Thus a map, even more than the printed word, impresses people as being authoritative and tends to be accepted without qualification” (1974, p. 326) Since the successful usability of maps in practice depended upon the accuracy of the representation of geography, their long-lived reputation of being an objective instrument was not a misconception.

The acceptance of maps as a scientific representation of reality, however, has long been challenged by both cartographical and literary critics, particularly as the objectivity of historical narratives started to be questioned in the 20th century. Map-making has been under scrutiny for the purpose of understanding the essence and processes of cartography and many scholars have remarked on the changing approaches to the field. Jeremy W. Crampton, for instance, ponders on the idea that maps are social constructions by designating some developments in cartography:

Two developments in cartography mark an epistemic break with the assumption that maps are unproblematic communication devices. These are 1) investigations of maps as practices of power-knowledge; and 2) geographic visualization' (GVIs) which uses the map's power to explore, analyze and visualize spatial datasets to understand patterns better. (2001, p. 235)

Rather than being taken as purely scientific and technical representation of the outer environment, maps started to be seen as a combination of objective realities with subjective perceptions and intentions with respect to the intricate relationship between power and knowledge. Graham Huggan, on the other hand, underlines the conflicting characteristic of cartographic discourse possibly originating from the intrinsically dual nature of map making:

... cartographic discourse ... is characterized by the discrepancy between its authoritative status and its approximative function, a discrepancy which marks out the "recognizable totality" of the map as a manifestation of the desire for control rather than as an authenticating seal of coherence." (2008, p. 117)

Huggan, by particularly referring to the power relations in the contexts of map-making and map-using, goes on saying that "... the 'reality' represented mimetically by the map not only conforms to a particular version of the world but to a version which is specifically designed to empower its makers" (2008, p. 118). Once again, the relationship between knowledge and power and how it dominates the process of map-making is clearly underlined. Similarly, J. Brian Harley, who is known with his extensive and influential work on the theory and practice of map-making, elaborates on the connections between knowledge, power, and cartography as follows:

Maps are never value-free images; except in the narrowest Euclidian sense they are not in themselves either true or false. Both in the selectivity of their content and in their signs and styles of representation maps are a way of conceiving, articulating, and structuring the human world which is biased towards, promoted by, and exerts influence upon particular sets of social relations. (1988, p. 53)

More directly, Harley refers to the role of politics and ideology in the context of cartography: "Through both their content and their modes of representation, the making and using of maps has been pervaded by ideology" (1988, p. 79). As a result, he proposes that "we should begin to deconstruct the map by challenging its assumed autonomy as a mode of representation" (1988, p. 79). One of the most fruitful fields in which maps can be deconstructed is, of course, literature in general and poetry in particular because maps, with their rich connotations and figurative use, appeal to the imagination of creative writers. There is a solid historical and cultural background in which it is possible to explore the relationship between literature and cartography, as well as to trace how these two disciplines have been interacting with each other. Although maps have already been used for a variety of purposes in the context of history, their use by literary critics, especially in the last three or four decades, may provide new opportunities to explore the way they juxtapose physical reality and individual or social perceptions or expectations. There are many significant examples of literary works, in the genres of poetry, fiction, and drama, in which maps are used as the subject matter, or a source of reference, or a central figure of speech or an image around which that particular work develops.

Since maps are abstract representations of geographical reality, they can be considered as

metaphorical expressions of the physical world. They cannot cover all the features of the territories in detail pertaining to historical, cultural, or economic phenomena, nor are they designed to do so. On the other hand, because maps have been accepted as the reflection of human genius that is able to recreate the reality for the purposes of crucial actions, experiences, and practices, they are expected to offer more than they can do. Therefore, the incongruity between what a map stands for in the totality of human experience and what it actually provides constitutes its appeal to the imagination, particularly to the imagination of poets. It is also important to point out the role of readers in interpreting and evaluating the use of maps in literary texts. Tania Rossetto, in her “Theorizing maps with literature” focuses on the variable functions of maps by saying “From a post-representational perspective, maps are viewed and researched as contingent, relational, embodied, fluid entities that are performed and manipulated by users in their meanings, as well as in their concrete material consistency” (2014, p. 514). So, many poets, as both users of maps and atlases and creators of imaginary maps, have benefited from the map image in their work.

In the context of this article, I want to dwell on how the map image has been used particularly in poetic texts, which I call cartogra/poetry, with respect to the changing perceptions about the making and reading of maps. For this purpose, I intend to analyze a selection of poems, under two categories, written in or translated into English, which take cartography or maps as their subject matter or source of inspiration, play with their metaphorical or symbolic meanings, and reveal their dual nature as both the representation and distortion of selective reality. In the first category, there are poems in which maps are essentially referred to as effective sources of inspiration for the speakers who aspire to run away from the monotony of life or to see new places for new experiences to enrich their lives. In the second category, the speakers of the poems focus on the insufficiencies and limitations of maps possibly stemming from the conflict between their constrained capabilities and the boundless expectations of humans. In doing so, I hope to contribute to research that engages itself with the complex but interesting and promising relationship between cartography and literature.

Maps and Poetry

To start with, contemporary English poet Emily Hasler’s “Cartography for Beginners”, published in the book entitled *The Built Environment* (2018), portrays map-making as an artful, aesthetic, and pleasurable practice through the light-hearted and playful voice of a first-person speaker addressing an imaginary listener or reader. The speaker instructs the addressee, who is supposed to draw her own version of the map of East Anglia, that she should choose correct tones and shades of colors to represent the real geographical elements; particularly the watery ones like seas, lakes, and rivers. Without them, according to the speaker, who seems to be fond of water, it is not worth bothering to draw a map: “First of all, you will need to choose the correct blue / to indicate water. This should not be too watery. / You must remember: people do not like wet feet” (2018, l. 1-3). She also tells her listener to choose a symbol for religious temples such as churches, mosques, and synagogues and a symbol for pubs, the former standing for the god of “Precision” (2018, l. 9) while the latter for the god of “Wild Abandon” (2018, l. 10). These twin but warring gods possibly refer to how complex and intricate the web of existence we, as human beings, have developed for the sake of civilization. On the one hand, we do not like to be lost, we need to know where we are or going to, so we should “Buy Mandelbrot’s 1967 paper on the coastline paradox” (2018, l. 11-12) for the sake of

precision but “put it on the highest shelf” (2018, l. 12) for the sake of peace of mind because it is too demanding to understand. On the other hand, we are in love with change and new experiences,

so we can take a fresh breath in a pub and “Take a little licence with rivers” (2018, l. 13) or add “an oxbow lake if at all possible” (2018, l. 15).

As the poem beautifully reveals the paradox between the assuring sense of belonging to a familiar place and the alluring sense of escaping from a familiar setting for a new experience, it employs the map image for a delicately didactic yet colorfully motivating and promising poetic expression. Map-making benefits from both technical and aesthetic characteristics of scientific and artistic disciplines and the pseudo-didactic, ironic, and cheerful tones of the speaker in the poem appropriately exploit both qualities for an imaginary but convincing process. Tom Conley, in “Early Modern Literature and Cartography: An Overview” suggests that “... maps inspire literary creation. Concomitantly, because the boundaries between maps and writing are fluid, a map sometimes even qualifies as a work of literature” (2007, p. 401). Hasler’s poem, in this sense, successfully draws on the intimate and organic relationship between cartography and poetry.

Like Emily Hasler’s “Cartography for Beginners”, Elizabeth Bishop’s “The Map”, from her collection *Poems* (2011), alludes to a map, questions and speculates on the geographical elements and their interrelations, and employs a mixture of imagery and personification to reveal the aesthetic beauty and promise of maps in terms of their inspiration-evoking nature. The inter-mingling of land and water in beautifully corresponding colors, the personification of the land with respect to its delicate flirtation with the sea, the lying of “the shadow of Newfoundland ... flat and still” (1955, l. 9) all reflect how the static representation of the physical shapes of the world turns into a dynamic one through imagination and interaction. “The names of seashore towns run out to sea, / the names of cities cross the neighboring mountains” (1955, l. 14-15) indicating that the combination of letters with the signs and symbols of map-making may lead the printer to experience “the same excitement/ as when emotion too far exceeds its cause” (1955, l. 16-17). When mapped, waters are quieter than the land because they lend them their waves yet the speaker cannot help asking an important question to clarify, perhaps, the role of imagination versus observation in map-making. “Are they assigned, or can the countries pick their colors?” (1955, l. 24) The answer she gives is quite ironic and thought-provoking: “More delicate than the historians’ are the map-makers’ colors” (1955, l. 27). It is probably because map-makers use colors in the service of aesthetics, and perhaps, to a certain extent, of truth or technical requirements, but historians’ colors metaphorically reflect all the problems, crimes, destructions, and traumas humans inflict upon the land, environment, and each other. That is why the speaker finds the map-makers’ colors more delicate but less truthful implying that although maps cannot represent the reality to its full extent, they perfectly appeal to the imagination of the map-reader to recreate a more aesthetic and attractive picture. While doing this, the speaker also underlines the significance of the map-readers’ perceptions, cultural background, and power of imagination in the act of reading and interpreting maps. Bishop’s “The Map” opens a broad window through which the reader, using his imagination, can move to a larger world where he can start questioning history and re-evaluating the functions of cartography. In this sense, there are both similarities, concerning the aesthetic and inspiring qualities of maps, and differences pertaining to the functions and modes of representations between Hasler’s “Cartography for Beginners” and

Bishop's "The Map".

Denise Levertov's speaker, inspired by an old map, gives an account of her childhood and youth in a conversational tone particularly at the beginning, in "A Map of the Western Part of the County of Essex in England" in *Poetry* (1960), and informs readers about her ancestors and her birthplace. As the poem unfolds, the excited, adventurous, and nostalgic tones of the speaker enable her to express how the old map is capable of moving and reanimating feelings and of making her filled with desire to recall and explore the places, once upon a time she was living in, when she was a kid or a teenager. By wandering through the pages of the atlas, she remembers her hometown with all the vivid details about the people, the scenes, sounds, and colors of the places and memories. In almost two-thirds of the poem the speaker takes the reader to her childhood settings in which she had unforgettable memories with rivers, lakes, parks and trees, double-decker buses, the place her marriage was recorded and similar experiences. The poem particularly emphasizes the magical power of the images which are brought to the surface with the help of the atlas that functions as a catalyst to bridge images with words:

*"...now I know how it was with you, an old map
made long before I was born shows ancient
rights of way where I walked when I was ten burning with desire for
the world's great splendors, a child who traced voyages
indelibly all over the atlas,"* (1960, l. 34-38)

While talking about her past experiences with such vivid imagery and intense figurative language, Levertov's speaker prefers to use the word 'map' in the title of the poem, which clearly indicates how the map image helps her to express her thoughts and feelings appropriately and how maps are regarded as convenient tools to represent solid physical realities as well as what they may connote depending upon personal experiences. Similar to Levertov, Thom Gunn, in "A Map of the City" (1993), gives voice to a speaker who imagines a city observed from a height and distance just like a map that represents the actual landscape and /or city in a proportion which depends on a scale. His perspective provides him with thrilling freedom, in a sense, to peep at the drunk sailors, transients, and grey shapes with their energy and potential and in this way he feels that he is able to possess and control the city with its complex flow of energy. That is why this map serves as a ground for his delight since, when he gets back to the crowded streets, he will feel safe, but at the same time, excited to "recognize his love of chance" (1993, l. 16) and the city's "crowded, broken, and unfinished" and "endless potentiality" (1993, l. 18-19). Gunn's poem utilizes an imaginary map to capture the wholeness of the city as well as the cross-sections from the lives of its residents just like real maps allow the observer, through selective abstraction, to take control of the territory with its full potential. Thus, the graphic representation of the city like a map throughout the lines of the poem affirms the interactive and efficient relationship between cartography and literature.

Another poem to be considered within the first category of examination is the English poet Henry Reed's title poem "A Map of Verona", in his 1942 collection in which the speaker, while talking about his past, clearly displays how the practice of map-reading appeals to his imagination and creative faculty for a rich texture of experience and its reflection in the poem. By apostrophizing and personifying the cities of Naples and Verona, he goes back to his youth experiences and memories with particular references to music, Juliet's tomb, long-forgotten visions, strong feelings of tenderness and lust, attractive places, and sudden parting, possibly, from his lover. In spite of the thought and emotion-provoking nature of maps, however, the speaker is aware of the fact that maps are limited in the sense that they "... are of place, not time, nor can they say / The surprising height and colour of a building, / Nor where the groups of people bar the way" (1942, l. 22-24). These lines can be taken as good examples of what Muehrcke and Muehrcke suggest:

No map, of course, can be completely true.' It must always sacrifice truth in one dimension to show truth in another. Yet writers still find an irresistible force of truth in maps. Perhaps this is because maps possess a spatial fidelity that no words can capture. (1974, p. 329)

The full context of the poem, however, hints that once the map-reader uses his imagination and gets into an active interaction with a map, he can overcome these limitations to recreate the images from his past experiences in his mind with all colors and feelings and even becomes able to compose his art.

Contemporary New Zealand poet Michael Walker's "On the Map" (2015) presents a first person speaker who uses 'a new atlas' in order to be able to change his direction, possibly momentarily, which may refer to a mental, physical, emotional, or practical change. He also wants to revisit places on the map he had been before as well as those he may never see, which, on the one hand indicates how strongly he feels nostalgic for his previous experiences, and on the other hand, how he relies on maps to enrich and enlarge his experiences in his imagination. By simply looking at the pages of the atlas, he remembers the places he visited in New Zealand, hears people's engaging accents in Edinburgh, recreates the vision of the youth hostel he stayed in Keswick to be able to see "the Lake District as Wordsworth saw it," (2015, l. 7-8) and recalls his conversation with people while they were taking a walk together. In addition to all these, by turning the other pages of the atlas, he recollects his plans that were never put into practice in the past, but somehow can imaginarily be made real at present. Again, the atlas plays the role of a mentor quenching the persona's feelings of nostalgia about the good, old days and inspiring him for the new ones. In this sense, Walker's poem is a suitable example to show how inspirational maps can be for poets.

Another poem that falls into the first category is Anne Seite's "The Way I Read Your Map" (2016) which shows some characteristics differing from those of other poems in this selection. Rather than referring to a physical map and mentioning its characteristics, the first person speaker addresses a second person referred to as 'you' and employs the map image as an analogy to depict and describe the life of this anonymous person in relation to her own. The speaker displays the characteristics of an explorer and feels free to get into all the "bridle-paths," "valleys," "glens," and "plains" (2016, l. 2-5) of the addressee. There are both familiar and unfamiliar tracks, ups and downs, successes and failures, satisfaction and disappointment, pleasure and sorrow in this person's life and they are expressed through the geographical shapes

of a map. The use of map as a metaphor, in this way, helps the reader to vividly recreate in his mind all the possible experiences a life may have.

Czech poet Miroslav Holub's famous poem "Brief Reflection on Maps", from *Before and After* (2007) is based on a story told by Albert Szent-Gyorgi and yields highly interesting thoughts on some functions of maps. A military unit is sent on a duty of exploration by their lieutenant in the Alps. Then it begins to snow and they do not get any message from the unit for two days. The lieutenant feels great sorrow because he thinks that he has sent his men to death. On the third day, however, the unit comes back and one of the soldiers tells them that they have lost their way, waited for their end, but when one of them finds a map in his pocket, they have felt relieved, organized themselves, set a camp and after the snowstorm, they have found their bearings with the help of the map and come back to join the main camp. Surprisingly, however, it is revealed that it is not a map of the Alps, but of the Pyrenees, yet its presence as a human-made instrument that is expected to help them find their way calms them down as a first reaction and assures them that they can use it for their salvation. Although the map the military unit finds is not the right one to help them escape from the hard conditions, it somehow works and saves them. It is not the technical data or directions that lead them through the landscape for their target, but the mental strength that comes through the belief that maps will certainly tell the truth. Of course, the unit does not directly follow the signs on the map; instead, they get inspired by the map that boosts their morale and leads them to use their collective memory and imagination, and with the help of the hope and assurance provided by the map, they manage to find their way back. What Muehrcke and Muehrcke point out about the nature of maps and their use in literature is quite relevant here:

"A map is both more and less than itself, depending on who reads it, in the sense that one can use the symbols to look beyond the map, or one can interpret the symbols in a rigid, limited way and not extract their full potential" (1974, p. 320).

The map they have, therefore, functions for these men as a reliable authority to truth and without any hesitation and questioning they consult it not for its technical features but for its symbolic power for mental strength.

As for the second category, poems elaborating on the conflicting and constrained nature of maps will be taken into consideration and analyzed. From the mouth of a map-maker, Indian poet Keki Daruwalla questions, in "Map-Maker" from *The Map-maker* (2002), the functions of maps by comparing what we see, get involved with, and experience in real life with what we read on maps. The map-maker, representing the colonial perspective, creates his map in the service of so-called exploration, but in reality, of exploitation of seas, lands, and peoples. In this way, this poem exemplifies the impact of power-knowledge relationship on cartography discussed earlier in this paper. Although he is the master of maps, through a series of interactions with the sea and elements of the landscape, and through a dialogue with an imaginary voyager, he deepens in his questioning against the use of maps: "Does the world need maps, where sign and symbol, / Standing as proxies, get worked into scrolls?" (2002, l. 15-16) Why, he asks himself, do the "mountain chains," "glaciers," "deserts," "scrubs," "pastures" (2002, l. 17-19) need shading. If the onlooker has the eye to apprehend, all these shapes are there, ready for his perception. All these questions make him frustrated and ashamed, and under the effect of these feelings, he decides to paint something else, a ship for example, instead of drawing a map. He goes on instilling himself: "Forget markings, forget landfall and sea. / Go easy Man, I tell myself; breathe" (2002, l. 29-30). Rather than lifeless lines on a piece of paper, he thinks he can get help from the gulls for the exact places of estuaries and from the

bubbles for the swamps. He tells himself that he should turn his attention to “the wrinkles on the ageing skin of love,” (2002, l. 33) to “a poem that hasn’t broken forth,” (2002, l. 37) to “the undefined,” (2002, l. 37) to “the swamp within,” (2002, l. 38) to “the hedge between love and hate” (2002, l. 38). He is after the feelings of lust and desire which are unmappable entities and through “a season of love and love’s eternal season,” (2002, l. 50) he avoids latitudes, gives up form and turns his eye to the real places and people: “Forget maps and voyaging, study instead / the parched earth horoscope of a brown people” (2002, l. 55-56). In short, Daruwalla’s “Map-Maker” draws on the idea that even though maps are capable of giving inspiration, they may turn into obstacles preventing people from exploring and experiencing the real as opposed to the imaginary. Maps are not politically and ideologically immune or isolated tools. On the contrary, they may become powerful instruments in the hands of interest groups to shape and recreate reality with respect to their desires and benefits.

Another poem that may fall into the second category is the American poet Howard McCord’s “Listening to Maps” in *Maps: Poems Toward an Iconography of the West* (1971) which presents a speaker who does not look at but listens to old maps like “old men / ...listen to the oak” (1971, l. 5-6). It is, perhaps, because “the page is a mind’s track” (1971, l. 12) which possibly suggests that the traces of human experiences can be captured on the pages of maps. Thus, when a map-reader starts looking at a map, he recalls the sounds and visions of past experiences like a person who listens to a record that helps him relive his experiences and remember his memories. In this sense, maps, when approached imaginatively, are valuable and indispensable sources of inspiration capable of creating and recreating vivid and rich images for their readers. They, however, have their insufficiencies and limitations since they tend to freeze the time and place, nor can they cover the historical or cultural characteristics or spirit of the experiences belonging to their users. Maps in this poem are treated as rigid and inflexible authorities that are unable to reflect personal or societal changes, yet they are always there to declare their domination over users. That is why the speaker of the poem says: “What the maps don’t tell me / I discover from my wife” (1971, l. 20-21). As the speaker suggests, the insufficiency of a map is compensated by what his wife tells him. Moreover,

*There is no way to satirize a map.
It keeps telling you where you are.
And if you’re not there,
you’re lost.*

...

A map may lie, but it never jokes. (1971, l. 32-37)

It is obvious that, while listening to maps, McCord is highly affected by their substantive authority to dictate the physical reality, but at the same time, is conscious of the limits they have in relation to personal or social expectations from them. Although Irish poet Eavan Boland’s poem, “That the Science of Cartography is Limited” from *New Selected Poems* (2013) seems to be, at first sight, a criticism directed to the science of cartography due to its limitations and insufficiencies in terms of recording and reflecting historical and cultural phenomena of the territories it depicts, it can also be read as a text implicitly concerning itself with the inevitable incongruity between the signifier and the signified, the map and the landscape it represents.

The first person speaker starts the poem by mentioning her wish to prove that the science of cartography is limited because maps, despite the images and colors they use to show geographical signs, are unable to display, say, “the fragrance of balsam” of the forest or “the

gloom of cypresses” (2013, l. 2-3). She goes on telling a memory in which she and her lover visit Connacht in Ireland where her lover shows her a famine road in the woods. He further tells her how the building of these roads was forced upon the starving Irish peasants by the Relief Committees during the famine in 1847 and how poor people died as they worked to be able to get food from the English in return for their effort of building the roads which would be going to nowhere and ending when the builders died. Then the speaker refers to the “masterful” and “ingenious” (2013, l. 20-22) qualities and design of maps and praises the science of cartography for its “rendering of the spherical as flat,” or persuading “a curve into a plane” (2013, l. 20-23). Such an abrupt juxtaposition of the capabilities of maps with their limitations seems to be confusing. In spite of their technical superiority and apparently unquestionable authority, the map the speaker holds in her hand does not say anything about the Irish problem nor does it imply the catastrophe and unbearable agony stemming from the famine.

Of course, the inadequacy of the map that is unable to reveal historical phenomena can also be interpreted from different perspectives. Without any doubt, maps are designed to meet certain requirements and to serve specific purposes. They cannot be counted upon to satisfy all the historical, cultural, and technical expectations. In this sense, it seems to be unjust to criticize and put the blame on the science of cartography. Yet, in the course of long and detailed interdisciplinary studies on map-making it has been accepted that cartography is not exempt from ideological, cultural, and historical perspectives, perceptions, prejudices, and conditioning. As a result, in the course of its historical development, cartography has lost its purely technical and scientific image and started to be questioned about its functions and objectives as a form of representation. Thus, Eavan Boland’s poem questions and criticizes the map not because she is not aware of the limitations of cartography and indulges in empty expectations, but because she wants to emphasize the discrepancy between the reality and one of its representations in the form of a map. The poem, which appears to be directly criticizing the science of cartography for its inadequacies, does actually use the map image to reveal and underline historical truth in an impressive way.

In a similar way, “I like maps, because they lie” (2015, l. 30) says the persona in Polish poet Wisława Szymborska’s poem entitled “Map” in *Map: Collected and Last Poems* (2015). The poem starts with the speaker’s depiction of a map placed on a table like the picture of a still life. This frozen quality of the map appeals to the speaker because “Its plains, valleys are always green, / uplands, mountains are yellow and brown, / while seas, oceans remain a kindly blue / beside the tattered shores” (2015, l. 9-12). It offers almost a utopian world where everything is reachable and under control. Not only children but people in general have always been allured by miniature-sized replicas of real objects, places, lives, and worlds. This, perhaps, gives them a weird but understandable sense of belonging, power of control, and opportunity of domination which may not be achieved in real-life situations. Such settings may, at the same time, instigate a spirit of light heartedness, fun, and playfulness. That is why when the speaker is able to press volcanoes with her fingertip, stroke the poles without thick mittens, encompass every desert with the river lying just beside it and knows that she cannot lose her way among the trees that stand for ancient forests, the aforementioned feelings are evoked in readers as well. There is, however, the other side of the coin which indicates that one cannot find “mass graves” and “sudden ruins” (2015, l. 26) on maps because they “are out of the picture” (2015, l. 27) due to the selective quality of maps as the representation of the outer environment. The abrupt shift of tone underlines the illusory nature of maps and declares that maps “give no access to the vicious truth.” (2015, l. 31) Yes, maps spread before us a world “great-heartedly, good-naturedly” (2015, l. 32) but this is not the real world. Szymborska’s “Map” beautifully reveals

the double-nature of maps which can both be inspiring and betraying, disclosing and hiding the truth.

As a word, ‘map’, together with map-making and map-reading, is frequently used metaphorically or symbolically in literary texts, particularly in poetry. Since the sense of belonging to a place, say, to a country, a city, a district, a street, or a house physically, culturally, and emotionally is so strong and deeply rooted, almost everyone may imagine drawing a personal map of his own life relying on his experiences. The American poet John Holmes’s “Map of My Country”, the title poem of Holmes’ fourth book of verse (1943), deals with the notion of personal maps and the map image dominates almost all the lines of the poem with a very strong metaphorical touch as the essential literary figure. The first person speaker gives an account of his childhood memories following the paths on the country maps of his time. He mentions the geographical elements, the names of the rivers, capes, and cities, but his main emphasis is on what these maps lack. He cannot find the cloud shadows, the white of winters, his grandfather’s name, oak trees, maple boughs, changing colors on maps, and with a tone of disillusionment, he laments that “geography told only capitals and state lines” (1943, l. 16). The incongruity between what he expects, though unrealistically, to see on maps and what they show urges him to give up using “other men’s maps” (1943, l. 17) and to draw his own. Needless to say, the map he decides to draw will be a metaphorical map of his life, experiences, and aspirations rather than an essentially geographical one. This map will include “broad colors of life,” and “words of [his] own” (1943, l. 20), hard-working people dying for the wrong reasons, Thoreau’s pond, Huck-Finn’s island, and two towns where he has been happy. His imaginary map, on the other hand, will never show the battlefields, the courthouses, and monuments possibly because they all represent the established political-social system with their sufferings, oppressions, and ideological dominance. For such a selective and private representation of one’s life, the map metaphor, of course, is a perfect literary tool to employ due to the idea that maps show the reality partially and on a selective basis. Maps are abstractions rather than one-to-one representations.

The final poem to be analyzed is the American poet Mark Strand’s “The Map”, in *Sleeping with One Eye Open: Poems* (1964), which depicts the shapes on a map such as contours, continents, oceans, and boundaries assembling in “A pure, cloudless / Canopy of artificial calm” (1964, l. 10-11). Behind this pure and deceptive calm, however, they lack “thehaze, / The blurred edges that surround our world” (1964, l. 12-13). So, a map functions, in its own framework, self-referentially drawing “only on itself, outlines its own / Dimensions” (1964, l. 14-16). Because it is a completed entity, an object in a closed, frozen context, change can occur only when it is “replaced / By a later version of itself” (1964, l. 18-19). The inertia of the map distracts the speaker and causes him to turn his attention to the outside, to the world beyond his window “where the map’s colors / Fade into a vague / After-image and are lost / In the variable scene of shapes / Accumulating” (1964, l. 23-27). The transition from the fixed, immobile, and unchanging context of the map to the real world in its continuous fluctuations and variations brings with itself a sense of life and freshness as well as chaos, pain, and darkness. This sharp distinction between reality and its representation on the map, which is referred to as “A diagram / Of how the world might look” (1964, l. 46-47), leads the speaker to the conclusion that though we make maps for practical purposes, we now and then use them to “Maintain a lasting, / Perfect distance from” (1964, l. 48-49) the real world in an attempt to escape from it.

Conclusion

The transformation in the perspectives and perceptions of the science of cartography has led to a diversity in terms of the value and use of maps. The fact that scientific theories and practices played a major role in their production processes enabled maps, without much examination of their intended use, to be accepted as a reference source whose accuracy is indisputable. However, through the developments in map making, map reading, and literary criticism, maps started to be reconsidered and reevaluated with respect to the socio-political, economic, and cultural backgrounds on which they are shaped. In this respect, maps can be considered as metaphorical entities since they attempt to show the geographical, in particular cases, economic, social, and cultural phenomena by establishing resemblances between realities and their representations to attract the onlookers' attention. On the other hand, because they are essentially representations, maps are limited with their predetermined purposes, intentions, and targets. This paradoxical nature of maps, with their capabilities and incapacities, constitutes their fascinating attraction for both the writers and readers of literature. That is why there are many literary works which employ the map motif as images, metaphors, symbols, or as part of the subject matter. Like the books in Dickinson's poem quoted at the beginning of this essay, maps are able to take their readers to wherever they wish, to get them into whatever adventure they desire and whatever experience they want to be involved in. Everybody, rich or poor, can join the journey if they are imaginative map readers. Poetry, within this context, seems to have a unique place, among literary genres to dwell on maps. Being the imaginative readers of maps, poets are often allured by their complex and multidimensional nature concerning their power of representing the geographical truth, their aesthetic beauty depending on their visual characteristics, their metaphorical or symbolic connotations, the expectations and disappointments they may cause in relation to their promises and limitations. No matter what sort of maps are concerned, real or imaginary, they trigger the sense of wonder, arouse imagination, and invite reaction and inspiration for poets and their poetry. Doubtless to say, the interaction between cartography, map reading and literature is not confined to poetry. Other literary genres and the poetry of non-western literary cultures, too, have abounding potentialities in terms of exploring the complex and promising interactions between the map and the literary text, two sign systems to be read imaginatively.

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