Material Culture Review
Revue de la culture matérielle

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Volume 95, numéro 1, 2023

Thematic Issue: The Social Lives of Maps, Volume 3

URI : https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1102339ar
DOI : https://doi.org/10.7202/1102339ar

Aller au sommaire du numéro

Éditeur(s)

Cape Breton University Press

ISSN

1718-1259 (imprimé)
1927-9264 (numérique)

Découvrir la revue

Citer cet article

Kotzeva, E. (2023). Counter-Mapping for Resistance and Cultivation of Counter-Memory: Contemporary Social Life of Some Historical Nagorno Karabakh Maps. *Material Culture Review / Revue de la culture matérielle*, *95*(1), 8–30. https://doi.org/10.7202/1102339ar

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"Gradually [Richard] realized that the Tube map was a handy fiction that made life easier, but bore no resemblance to the reality of the city above, like belonging to a political party..."

—Neil Gaiman, *Neverwhere*

"One way of seeing 'places' is as on the surface of maps … But to escape from an imagination of space as a surface is to abandon also that view of place. If space is rather a simultaneity of stories-so-far, then places are collections of those stories, articulations within the wider power-geometries of space."

—Doreen Massey, *For Space*

On September 27, 2020, fighting broke out between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the territory of the de facto independent state of Nagorno Karabakh, a mountainous area landlocked between the two former Soviet republics. When the 1988-94 war for the same region ended, the conflict was often dubbed "frozen[i]" for the following twenty-six years in media and public discourse. In 2008, gradual hostilities and flare-ups resumed to escalate into the Four-Day April War in 2016. The most recent military conflict, the 45-day War, or the 2020 Autumn War dramatically redrew the national borders of both Azerbaijan and Armenia. Cartographic representations of Nagorno Karabakh therefore differ based on the year they are issued and on the country in which they are published and distributed. Maps of the disputed region, however, not only preserve historical moments and tell stories of the political events shaping these boundaries, but they also serve specific cultural, social, and sometimes political purposes.

Many of these cartographic artifacts advance even stronger arguments. Since they do not necessarily reflect accurately the current political borders of the disputed territory, they seem to make political claims based on the region's historical and cultural heritage relevant to one side of the conflict. These maps often serve as symbolic devices that can offer comfort and compensation in response to tragedy or loss (Wallach 2011). Outside history textbooks, however, the life of such maps bears traits of nationalistic rhetoric, and when exhibited in public places or posted in social media, they become highly provocative. In this essay, I explore the social lives of several historical maps of Nagorno Karabakh, which incorporate the region into the territory of the country that claims it. Maps of the disputed region in these cases preserve historical moments and tell stories of the particular events that shape these boundaries, but

most importantly they serve specific cultural and social purposes in relation to the material place they are depicting. They present the way the land is remembered and celebrated as an inseparable part of the respective culture and their national identity and thus prolong the life of this memory into the present.

In what follows, I look at several historical cartographic depictions of Nagorno Karabakh and the way they have enjoyed a prolonged life in public spaces and social media, specifically in relation to the 2020 war. These historical maps show the region as part of either Greater Hayk[ii]—a kingdom that existed from 321 BC to 428 AD—or of the newly-established republic of Azerbaijan in the beginning of the 20th century. The choice of maps is based on three criteria, the first being the physical access to public and media spaces that display these artifacts. For example, I explore a map displayed in public space—a central metro station in the Armenian capital city, Yerevan (figure 5)—and later investigate its revived social life via social media during the 2020 war (figure 6). The limitation of my choices is due to lack of access to public spaces in Azerbaijan. To achieve balance in my analysis, I explore maps circulated by Azerbaijani social media users or their responses to the Armenian historical map in the metro station. The social life of these maps, as a focus of my study, defines the second selection criterion. I chose maps that had an opportunity to engage with their viewers in either the physical space where they are exhibited or in social media. In the latter case, Armenian and Azerbaijani users equally prolonged the social life of these maps since both sides had access to the social platform and were able to express their views. I include three separate historical maps of Nagorno Karabakh that were electronically circulated: the map of Greater Hayk in the metro station, a wall-size map that was displayed by a French politician during an event in France designed to collect medical aid for Armenia during the war (figure 8 and 9), and a 1919 map of Nagorno Karabakh as part of Azerbaijan (figure 10). All of these historical maps enjoyed a renewed life in social media during the 2020 war, which is the third criterion for my map selection.

Because of the discussed limitations, my study claims no comprehensiveness vis-a-vis public representations of historical maps of Nagorno Karabakh. To achieve a more rounded view, further research has to be done including historical maps of the region displayed in physical public spaces in Azerbaijan. I also need to explicitly underscore that my analysis does not purport any political agenda. I do not side with, advocate for, or promote any position that advances political claims based on the territorial rhetoric of the examined maps. In fact, I try to turn the attention away from the political, if and as much as it is possible in the case of this conflict, and direct it to the philosophical. The intended shift, I hope, will broaden the audience beyond those interested in the specific regional conflict as my inquiry tackles a question important to all: how do we remember our lived past in a land through historical visual representations of the material place? I will answer this question by exploring the social life of maps which emerges at the encounter of rhetoric of cartographic representation, place, and viewers.

To contextualize the analysis of the selected maps, I first offer a brief historical review of the events that prompted Nagorno Karabakh's border changes and

defined its territorial outline in the 20th century. I then build a framework using Paul Ricoeur's reading of the Platonic *eikôn* and *phantasma* in his phenomenological study dedicated to *art memoriae* in relation to places and sites (2004). I utilize the notion and method of counter-mapping to reveal inequitable power relations in the way place is used, remembered, and communicated, in the words of rhetorical scholar April O'Brien (2020). Afterward, I discuss the way counter-mapping offers an opportunity for rhetorical invention through the interaction with the material space and suggest that the social life of these maps enacts a rhetoric of resistance. Later in the essay, I engage in the scholarly discussion in rhetoric studies on electronic circulation of images as I explore the online social life of some counter-maps of Nagorno Karabakh—one Armenian, one French, and one Azerbaijani map. I end the essay with a discussion of counter-mapping as a useful technique for cultivation of counter-memory for communities to resist dominant narratives, even political geography, in order to preserve their cultural identity.

Historical Events, Territorial Claims, and National Identity

My analysis of Nagorno Karabakh maps requires at least a brief description of the complex historical events that have led to the contemporary cartographic representations of the region. A few political maps from the end of the 19th century and the beginning and late 20th century tell the story of how this land was viewed as central to the history, to the lived past, and to the development of national identity for both Armenians and Azerbaijanis. Following the Bolshevik Revolution in the years 1917-1920, Azerbaijan and Armenia both laid claims to the region of Nagorno Karabakh. After the two republics gained independence in 1918, the Azerbaijani government announced their intention to delimit its borders and demanded that the Armenians living in the region recognize the sovereignty of Azerbaijan with Nagorno Karabakh within its territory (Saparov 2014, 91). The Armenians of Nagorno Karabakh rejected the request. In 1918, Nagorno Karabakh established its first democratic government, the Council of Commissioners, which in the period 1918-1920 organized nine congresses. All of them rejected the inclusion of Nagorno Karabakh into Azerbaijan, except for the seventh, which decided to temporarily place Artsakh, the Armenian name of the region, into Azerbaijan until the final decision was made at the 1919 Paris Peace Conference (Hakobyan 2011, 357). The Azerbaijani map presented at the conference incorporated the territory of Nagorno Karabakh into the boundaries of Azerbaijan (figure 1). The Armenian delegation in turn prepared their map with the purpose to show the borders of the First Republic of Armenia (1918-1920) where the majority of the population was ethnically Armenian (Galichian 2014, 220). The map included the territory of Nagorno Karabakh into the borders of the Republic of Armenia (figure 2).

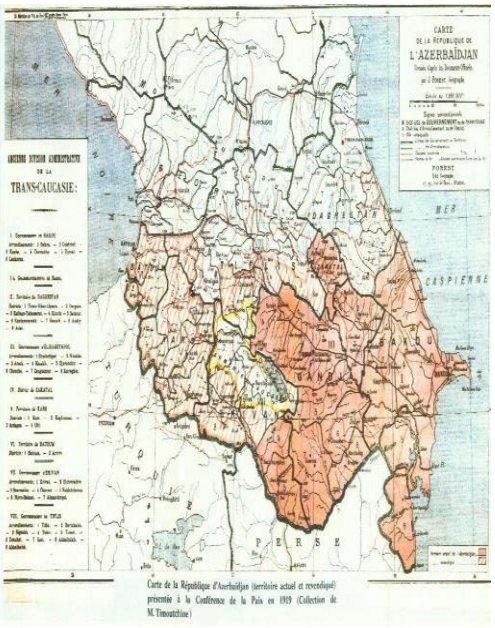

Figure 1
Map of Azerbaijan presented at the Paris Peace Conference, 1919. Published in *Foreign Policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 1918-1920: The Difficult Road to Western Integration.* (Hasanli 2015, 424).

Figure 2
Map prepared for the negotiations and finalization of the territorial question of Armenia at the Paris Peace Conference, 1919. Published in *Historic Maps of Armenia: The Cartographic Heritage.* (Galichian 2014, 220).

After the established Soviet rule over the territory of Azerbaijan in April 1920, the Red Army occupied Karabakh and declared it disputed territory. Later in 1920, the government of Soviet Azerbaijan issued a statement announcing that the territorial disputes with Armenia were abrogated, and as a result, Nagorno Karabakh, Zangezur, and Nakhichevan were recognized as integral parts of Soviet Armenia (Krüger 2010, 15). On June 3rd, 1921, the Caucasus Bureau of the Russian Communist Party unanimously adopted a decision that Nagorno Karabakh belongs to Armenia, following up with a decree to grant legal status to the territory as part of Soviet Armenia. However, on July 5th, 1921, Stalin gave the disputed region to Soviet Azerbaijan (NKAO; Krüger 2010, 16).

In the early 1920s, there were very few maps showing Karabakh's borders, and whenever the region appeared on Soviet maps, the boundaries seemed to differ significantly (Saparov 2014). In 1923, Nagorno Karabakh was proclaimed as an autonomous region within Soviet Azerbaijan and yet its boundaries were still not delimited. The first border project was proposed in late 1923 based on tsarist military and administrative maps while the first official map of the region appeared in a supplement of *Bakinskii Rabochi* on November 26th, 1924 with detailed description of its administrative composition and an outline of its territory (*Pravitel'stvennyi Vestnik*). That map was changed again in 1925 to include some 223 more villages and the town of Shoushi into the territory of the region (figure 3).

Figure 3
Map of Nagorno Karabakh presenting the tsarist administrative divisions and Soviet boundary projects. Published in *From Conflict to Autonomy in the Caucasus: The Soviet Union and the Making of Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Nagorno Karabakh.* (Saparov 2014, 119).

Davies and Kent, authors of *The Red Atlas: How the Soviets Mapped the World* (2017), explain that most of the Soviet maps present very detailed accounts of the landscape but were highly classified, and ordinary people did not have access to accurate cartographic documents. Moreover, the ones for public consumption were intentionally distorted by the government. Davies and Kent assert that Soviet maps show that the meaning of maps is never constant, and that there are always new ways that a map can change the world (2017, 29). So do the Soviet maps of Nagorno Karabakh—they change the world with every map created for the political project of the respective republic fighting over the disputed region. In 1928, in the first *Atlas of the USSR*, the maps of the Armenian SSR and the Azerbaijani SSR show different borders of Nagorno Karabakh (Enukidze 1928, 89;93). Saparov, for instance, writes about the absence of Bolshevik blueprints not only of Nagorno Karabakh but also of the other two disputed South Caucasian regions, South Ossetia and Abkhazia (2014). The lack of proper border delimitation by the Soviets could be attributed to what Western writers like Davies and Kent describe as a secret global topographic enterprise meant to be used as a Cold War military inventory. This view fits well the myth propelled by non-Soviet scholars that the Soviets retained control over the population by depriving it of information and limiting its access to specific knowledge. Russian historian Alexey Golubev dispels these ideas by showing that, opposite to popular belief, the Soviets engaged in massive educational initiatives that reached every corner of the union (2021). The limited access to maps of the disputed regions defies Davies and Kents' argument and does not qualify as a good explanation for the lack of formal delimitation of the territories in question. Saparov explains the phenomenon mostly with political and ethnographic reasons. Certain places entered the autonomous region of Nagorno Karabakh because of prevailing political considerations—an example is the town of Shoushi and the surrounding Turkic populated villages. But for the most part, Saparov argues, the boundaries of Nagorno Karabakh were drawn based on an ethnographic principle—the border was meant to separate the two ethnic groups (2014, 118; 132).

In the military conflict of 1988-1994, the borders of Nagorno Karabakh were again redrawn. The war that was fueled additionally by the disintegration of the Soviet

Union ended with a ceasefire and Armenian military control over the region, including the adjacent seven provinces. In September 1991, the Republic of Nagorno Karabakh was declared. By the end of the war, its territory expanded three times and until 2020 it comprised of 12,500 km^2.

No country, including Armenia, has recognized the de facto state, although several US states and one Australian state have recognized its independence (Ter-Matevosyan and Ghazaryan 2019, 1). Similarly, an area to the North of the de facto Republic of Artsakh, Shahumyan, which declared independence together with Nagorno Karabakh, remained under Azerbaijani control.

The renewed military engagements over the region in the early 2000s and the 45-day war in 2020 clearly show that the political interventions and formal delimitations of the disputed region do not suffice. Armenia lost the 2020 war, and as a result, a big portion of Nagorno Karabakh was conquered by Azerbaijan (figure 4). The question of delimitation, however, persists. There are places along the border where Azerbaijan has made military advances and annexed the sovereign Armenian territory. According to the PM of Armenia, Azerbaijan controls 41 km^2 of Armenia's territory (Pashinyan 2021). A formal delimitation and demarcation process was allegedly initiated on November 26th, 2021, with a tripartite declaration between Armenia, Azerbaijan, and the Russian Federation, more than a year after the trilateral ceasefire agreement was signed to end the war on November 9th, 2020.

Figure 4
Map of current territorial control in Nagorno Karabakh. By Evan Centanni and Djordje Djukic. Published in *Political Geography Now*. December 1, 2020.

The brief historical overview covering some of the major events of the 20th and 21st century shaping the boundaries of Nagorno Karabakh reveals the immense significance of cartographic representation of the land to the people who feel connected to it through history and their lived experience. In terms of visualization of the territory of Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh, Broers and Toal have used the notion "cartographic exhibitionism" to explain the desire within the Armenian geopolitical culture to project and display enlarged national territorial images (2013, 17). The Armenian geopolitical culture, they remind us, is a "product of the geopolitical condition of the lands claimed as homelands by Armenians and the experiences of Armenian communities there and elsewhere" (Broers and Toal 2013, 18). Cartography, then, becomes a powerful tool to express the link between territory and identity, an "iconographical solution" to seeing the country united and whole again (Marutyan 2009, 17). Broers and Toal give several examples of counter-maps as forms of cartographic exhibitionism. Some of them, like the maps selected for my analysis, are displayed in

public places. Two examples stand out as an expression of "individualistic cartography" which reflect Armenian geopolitical sensibilities that are far from standardized (Broers and Toal 2013, 29). A large three-dimensional map displayed on the school wall in Vank, Nagorno Karabakh, depicts Armenia as a large geographic space defined by terrain and not by political and administrative boundaries. Another map graces the facade of the Armenia sanatorium in Jermuk and shows the boundaries of Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh omitting political borders of the surrounding countries. Most recently, in the beginning of 2022 a series of billboards emerged in Yerevan with a picture of Woodrow Wilson standing in front of a map and pointing to the historical territory of Western Armenia, currently in Turkey, with a running title "These lands belong to Armenia." While the image refers to a historical event, the Treaty of Sèvres in 1920, the proposed boundaries of Armenia were never implemented since the treaty was only signed but not ratified. This map, too, remains in the realm of cartographic exhibitionism. A form of individualistic cartography, as Broers and Toal call the phenomenon, the listed examples did not get public attention during the 2020 war, unlike the maps that I have selected to explore in this paper. The prolonged public life of the analyzed maps is a product of memory of the lived past through the cartographic representations of the land. I dedicate the rest of this article to the question of memory and the record of remembered past and view it as central to the development of contemporary understanding of national identity and belonging to a place.

Maps and the Rhetorical Art of Memory

Plato's most important dialogue on epistemology *Theaetetus* makes a strong case for the phenomenological nature of knowledge and its relation to the record of memory. Since in this essay I am concerned with the prolonged life of maps as records of specific moments in history, Plato's dialogue provides a useful framework for our analysis of maps. The presented debate on how we record knowledge can help us conceptualize maps as vehicles of perceptions and memories that present a perceived version of the reality strictly for rhetorical purposes. Socrates begins the dialogue by asking his interlocutor "What is knowledge?" (Plato 2015, 145d) and first navigates Theaetetus to the Protagoras' argument that man is the measure of all things, therefore "knowledge is simply perception" (Plato 2015, 151d-e). Throughout the rest of the dialogue, the interlocutors consider two other possible definitions to reach in the end an *impasse* typical for Plato's aporetic dialogues: we do not know what knowledge is.

The epistemological inquiry of *Theaetetus* meanders through the paradox of recollection of past knowledge, all the while we do not have a definition on the nature of knowledge. The memory of what we do not know is problematic unless we have a record of it. A record of memory of the past—my working definition of maps in this essay—makes remembering less ephemeral as it gives maps a social life in the present. In the dialogue, Socrates asks Theaetetus, "Can a man who has learned something not know when he is remembering it?" (Plato 2015, 163d). Paul Ricoeur articulates the essence of this phenomenological problem: it is "the

presence of the absent, an enigma common to imagination and memory" (2004, 8). Socrates proposes a solution to the paradox by offering the metaphor of the block of wax—each person has in her soul a block of wax with different consistency which, he suggests, is similar to the way memory works.

> We make impressions upon this of everything we wish to remember [*mnêmoneusai*] among the things we have seen or heard or thought of ourselves; we hold the wax under our perceptions and thoughts and take a stamp from them, in the way in which we take the imprints [*tupos*] of signet rings [marks, *sêmeia*]. Whatever is impressed upon the wax we remember and know so long as the image [*eikôn*] remains in the wax; whatever is obliterated or cannot be impressed, we forget [*epilelêsthai*] and do not know. (Plato 2015, 191d)

The image, *eikôn*, therefore is associated with the imprint, *tupos*, through the metaphor of the slab of wax. Ricoeur suggests that "error is [already] assimilated [in this image] either to an erasing of marks, *sêmeia*, or to a mistake akin to that of someone placing his feet in the wrong footprints" (2004, 8). If we look at a map as an image, *eikôn*, a product of an imprint, *tupos*, we can assume that there could be an error associated with forgetting, erasure of traces or interference into the process of printing. Ricoeur concludes by stating that memory and imagination share the same fate in the Platonic dialogues. In fact, a major argument of Ricoeur's work supports the view of both empirical philosophers and Cartesian disciples—memory is the province of the imagination. Maps then, which represent images of imprints from the past, records of knowledge from the past, are inevitably products of both memory and imagination.

In one of the most central subway stations of the Armenian capital city Yerevan, bearing the name of the adjacent Republic Square, travelers pass underneath a map of Greater Hayk (321 BC to 428 AD) both as they enter and leave the underground (figure 5). One can see the region of Nagorno Karabakh in bright yellow among the fifteen regions of the kingdom all painted in different colors. Enwrapped by other Armenian regions, Artsakh, as the Armenians prefer to call Nagorno Karabakh in reference to its historical name, is in the heart of the historical past of Armenia. Artsakh marries history to land, myth to reality and takes precedence in the formation of Armenian national identity. Although the current borders of the Republic of Armenia encompass only a very small portion of the map of Greater Hayk, and Artsakh has been claimed many a time since the day of the kingdom, the map in metro station "Republic Square" (figure 5) continues to live a celebrated life in the underground of the city. The walk of the citizen underneath the map is a symbolical passage—when one goes underneath it and sees it, the image (*eikôn*) of an imprint (both *tupos* and *sêmeia*, mark) from the distant past unites memory and imagination to seal it in the everyday life of the citizen.

Michel de Certeau observes that the urban walker actualizes some of the possibilities of the spatial order of the city (2002, 93-103). The city thus allows the walker to build her agency. Rhetorical scholar R. J. Topinka takes de Certeau's idea further to suggest that the walker as

a rhetorical figure "spatializes the city"—the city does not simply contain walkers but is being produced by walking (2012, 80). The walker writes and rewrites the city; her embodied location in a material space allows for agency and invention, writes Topinka (2012, 68). The walker's embodied contact with the material space is guided by her choices of movement (Solnit 2014, 26-7). With these choices, she has an opportunity for a rhetorical invention. Topinka sees the walker's agency in that she also has possibilities for resisting, altering, and extending the rhetorical choices of her embodied interaction with the material space (2012, 67). Walking, therefore, can be rhetorical because it can resist the power structures, and in the case of map-viewing, can question the politically endorsed cartographic representation.

The map gives agency to the passerby, regardless of their status, to remember the past through the specific territorial depiction and to imagine their land as it once was. As such, the map creates and builds the world as imagined, uncovers previously unseen realities, and projects a "mental image into the spatial imagination," as James Corner observes in his study on the agency of maps (2011, 90). It also empowers the viewer to endorse the map's suggested representation of reality. The function of the map, in Corner's words, "is not to depict but to enable, to precipitate a set of effects in time" (2011, 93). In the case of subway passengers at station "Republic Square," every time they walk underneath the map of Greater Hayk with Artsakh into its borders, they agree to the version of reality presented by it, actualize it, and perpetuate its existence in the present. Viewing the map tacitly signifies their acceptance of it. Walkers actualize the possibility of both agreeing to the map as they pass under it and reproducing it as they view it. The multiplicity of walking under/viewing the map proliferates the agreements and, in Judith Butler's social constructivist language, performs the bond between memory and imagination for the whole community of metro passengers. The metro passengers collectively make a rhetorical choice to view an alternative map of Armenia when they walk under it, and it is a type of collective resistance to a politically and internationally authorized cartography. The map thus enjoys a life of a political spectacle.

In his detailed analysis of the social life of maps in early American history, Martin Brückner dubs wall maps "public giants" predicating the name on their function to become "multimedia spectacles" in the lived environment in which they are strategically placed (2017, 126). Brückner associates the publicly displayed map with the materiality and performance of the spectacle which he deems responsible for injecting "cartographic sensibility into American notions of publicity and interiority, social decorum and personal memory" (123-4). In the early American context, he traces the way large maps configure the public sphere as a social space in which the cartographic representation both serve ritual needs and at the same time invite, dictate, and support the rhetorical expression of their viewers. Brückner gives as an early example of public giant a map ordered by Benjamin Franklin to decorate the Old State House, today's Independence Hall in Philadelphia. Henry Popple's *Map of the British Empire in America* (1733) was one of the biggest maps (consisting of twenty sheets and needing a wooden frame suspended by a pulley system for display) printed in

18th-century England, and when it was ordered, its content was already repudiated by the Board of Trade for misrepresenting British territorial claims. Nevertheless, the map decorated the space in Boston's State House and up to this day enjoys a social life.

Similar to Popple's public giant, the map of Greater Hayk looms large above the passerby as it is situated strategically in the high traffic area of the metro station's entrance. It performs a political spectacle as it configures the social space of "Republic Square" underground and proposes an argument that counters the officially approved territory of the Republic of Armenia. Another similarity between the two maps, even more important in relation to the potential political nature of the argument, is that both Franklin's map order and that of Greater Hayk in the subway are paid by the taxpayer and that also happens to be the common viewer.

Figure 5
Map of the Kingdom of Greater Hayk (321 BC to 428 AD) at the entrance of Yerevan metro station "Republic Square" [iii]

The Greater Hayk map, ordered and displayed by the government, offers a critical performance meant to counter the dominant narrative. The map and its communal acceptance through the embodied rhetorical engagement of the subway passengers allows for practices of resistance because it does not simply celebrate the historical past. It advances a different argument, allegedly of political nature. Like the Platonic phenomenological inquiry into memory and knowledge, the map claims validity today because a major cartographic element is missing: there are no dates on it to indicate that it represents an image (*eikôn*) of an imprint (*tupos*) from the past. Therefore, Greater Hayk as presented on the wall of metro station "Republic Square," with Artsakh within its borders, is the imprint (*tupos*) preserved on the slab of wax for walkers/viewers today. Or, some speculate, the map argues that Nagorno Karabakh belongs to Armenia.

Social media users have changed the public life of the map at the Yerevan metro station (figure 5) to give voice to others who claim Nagorno Karabakh as part of their historical past. Azerbaijanis on social media have interpreted the presence of this map without date in the city life as the Armenian justification for their claim over Nagorno Karabakh in line with Broers and Toal's argument about Armenian cartographic exhibitionism (figure 6). To Azerbaijanis, the historical map celebrates the bond between memory and imagination in the contemporary daily lives of citizens and advances the argument that Armenians have the right to the land today because of their history. Contemporary politics deems such argumentative strategy unacceptable.

Figure 6
Social Media Reaction to the photo of Greater Hayk map during the 2020 Nagorno Karabakh War. 6b provides a close-up of the text.

Azerbaijani-born political scientist Aytan Gahramanova writes that political mythology in the South Caucasus is made up of various historical fables, which are seen not so much as the past but as a way to shape the future (2010, 137). She substantiates her argument by pointing to the USSR-born tactics of complicating the interpretation of the past whereas history becomes an instrument for advancing political claims, thus legitimizing them as "historical justice" (Gahramanova 2010, 137). Social media interpretations of the metro station map of Greater Hayk therefore fall into a category that Gahramanova calls "transformation of history into political mythology" (2010, 137).

The map in the subway, however, does not make any political arguments. When studying the social life of American wall maps, Brückner emphasizes the importance of public space in relation to the intended viewers and visitors in the places where the maps were displayed (2017). Since Azerbaijanis are not common visitors in Armenia, the metro map does not have an audience outside of the subway passengers and cannot be considered to evoke in its audience a territorial claim or rhetorically advance political mythology. The map in question is simply a representation of mythology born out of the same bond that creates its own imprint—the marriage between memory and imagination.

The Yerevan metro network in a way forges a narrative of national mythology uniting folklore and history, imagination, and memory. One subway station is named after the national epic hero David of Sassoun (Սասունցի Դավիթ), the protagonist in one of the most important works of Armenian folklore, *Daredevils of Sassoun*. Another metro station boasts the name of General Hovhannes Baghramyan, who was the second non-Slavic officer to become a front commander during World War II and is much celebrated national hero in Armenia (Jukes 2001, 25). Greater Hayk map at "Republic Square" simply joins a series of tropes that curate the pantheon of Armenian na-

tional identity. Residing in the underground of the city, they only speak to the locals, the citizens of Yerevan and occasional visitors; they do not have any political rhetorical purpose. Among these tropes, only the map is an imprint (*tupos*) preserved on a slab of wax—a memory of an image—as Socrates notes in *Theaetetus*, and therefore is an imitation of reality.

Ricoeur's analysis of the Platonic metaphor brings him to the conclusion that the sophist is principally an imitator of being and of truth, "someone who manufactures 'imitations' (*mimêmata*) and 'homonyms' (*homônuma*) of beings" (2004, 11) (Plato 2015, 234b). At this point, the philosopher argues the metaphor has extended from the graphic arts to language arts where imitation and magic are indistinguishable. Within this framework, Plato practices his method of *division*—on one side we have *tekhnê eikastikê*—"the art of likeliness-making" (2015, 235d-e), and on the other side we have the appearance—*phantasma.* The map of Greater Hayk belongs to the *tekhnê eikastikê* when it is first recorded but when reproduced later in time it becomes a *phantasma. Eikôn* is thus opposed to *phantasma*—copying and likeliness-making is opposed to making of appearances. The first relates to the more primitive imprint (*tupos*): "suppose for the sake of the argument that we have in our souls a block of wax" (Plato 2015, 191c); *phantasma* already enacts a more sophisticated art—that of mimesis, crafting of appearances (Ricoeur 2004, 11).

While at first *tupos* is seen as rudimentary, the imprint is later treated as a signifying mark (*sêmeion*), and more importantly it resides in the soul, which is the seal on that "block of wax." The signifying mark as first imprinted on the map is lodged deep into the soul of those who reproduce it or who accept its validity even simply by viewing it. The division between *tupos* and *sêmeion* is important when we think about the map as a product of the art of likeliness-making and the signifying mark having resulted in *phantasma*, making of an appearance in the soul. The distinction describes the way the Armenians see the territorial representation in cartography versus the *phantasma* that lives within their imagination, or rather is deeply marked into their souls. Artsakh is integral part of their national identity as memory and imagination get sealed into the mimetic art of crafting of appearances. Similarly, for the Azerbaijanis, the map of Azerbaijan presented at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 (figure 1; figure 10) still lives in the bond between their memory and imagination[iv]. The resulting *phantasmas* outlive the maps that give birth to them, but they also live in the soul of the respective people. Greater Hayk map at one of Yerevan's metro stations, too, reflects a *phantasma* that resides in the Armenian soul.

***Chora*, Affect, and Resistance: Rhetorical Invention and Counter-Mapping Practices**

Maps can live in public both in real life and in the electronic space of the web. April O'Brien proposes a "method-methodology" of spatialized invention to resist controlling space/place narratives and refigures the connection between place and public memory (2020). She calls the method *chora/graphy*, an extension of Gregory Ulmer's choragraphy, which focuses on invention in spaces and places (1994). O'Brien uses *chora/graphy* to argue for alternative explorations of place and public memory in relation to race. She ap-

plies her method to reveal dominant cultural narratives and replace them with community stories that have been marginalized (2020).

O'Brien's *chora/graphy* is born at the intersection and derived from scholarship in cultural and Black feminist geography and therefore is predominantly concerned with the relationship between race, place, and public memory. In the case of the Nagorno Karabakh maps that record a memory of the region as part of a particular nation, public memory of a place intersects with cultural mythology of a national ethnic group. But central to the creation of Platonic *phantasma* is affect. The *chora/graphy* method of O'Brien can contribute to the analysis of Nagorno-Karabakh maps when we consider the affective and inventive capacities of the *chora,* or the place. In relation to these capacities, rhetorical scholar Sarah Arroyo reminds us of the most important translation of the Greek word *chora* as opposed to *topos* — *chora* being holy or sacred space while *topos* referencing merely the location of the place (2013, 62). She sees *chora* as a "generative space where inventions appear and disappear, leaving only traces, without becoming grounded" (Arroyo 2013, 62).

The sacred meaning which the notion of *chora* dons on a place (*topos,* a mere location*)* explains and justifies the affective nature of the phenomenon of map-creation as represented by making of appearances, *phantasma*. This process involves affective invention that comes along with "what the body knows intuitively into awareness" (Arroyo 2013, 65). Therefore, practice within the *chora* works "in the order of making, of generating" (Ulmer qtd. in Arroyo 2013, 65). Ultimately, the order of making or generating is connected to the affective and inventive capacities of bodies as they engage with material space. In the case of the subway map of Greater Hayk, the invention happens with passengers walking underneath it, passengers viewing it multiple times a day. The social life of the map is evoked and enacted in the interaction between the map on the wall and the walkers who, as rhetorical scholar Topinka puts it, have agency to write and rewrite the city. The rhetorical opportunity for invention is accompanied by the affect of *chora* and allows for the development of rhetoric of resistance. *Phantasma,* the making of appearances, with its recurrent engagement with an embodied audience in a *chora* becomes resistance.

The social life of the Greater Hayk map in the metro station enacts a rhetoric of resistance to the politically authorized cartographic representation of the disputed region. Resisting the dominant narratives through counter-mapping is a well-known practice in marginalized communities in the West. Indigenous North American people, like the Zuni for example, have created ways to connect memory and cultural history to land representations. In the case of the Zuni people, the map also reflects the way their culture views the structure of the world. It bears mythological qualities: home is in the middle where the community lives, the map has no borders. "Zuni world is not limited by any kind of boundaries. Not on a piece of paper, and not in our minds," explains Jim Enote, a traditional Zuni farmer (Steinauer-Scudder 2018).

Counter-cartography can help communities resist neo-colonial discourses and protect their cultural memory, but it can also facilitate land claims for indigenous people as shown, for example, by the

Canlubang counter-mapping project in the Philippines (Ortega et al.). Moreover, counter-maps can provide us with a glimpse of non-Western experiences in the past as demonstrated by Lauren Beck's recent exploration of the visual material culture in the sixteenth and seventeenth century Spanish Americas (2019b). The sixteenth century maps, for instance, Beck explains, not only re-centered on Europe and the Atlantic Ocean but also detailed the newest knowledge about the rest of the world, which resulted in creating new past and "generated an entire industry around the enterprise of constructing a new worldview in an era of European imperialism (2019a, 3). From a more practical perspective, counter-cartography could be utilized as a technique to protect the rights of indigenous communities. *Projeto Nova Cartografia Social da Amazônia*, for example, has employed social mapping techniques to help the emergence and strengthen local collective identities for the purposes of promoting the groups' territorial and cultural rights (Almeida et. al. 2018). Finally, counter-maps do not need to be recorded (printed on paper) to work against dominant narratives. *WalkingLab*, a Canadian-funded international research-creation project offers walking as a counter-mapping practice to reveal and contest dominant power structures, to "question the assumptions produced by conventional maps," and "recognize… different knowledge systems" (Conroy). The material experience of the walkers in Conroy's experiment resembles in a sense the rhetorical performance of the passengers at Yerevan's subway station with the map of Greater Hayk. The *WalkingLab* participants, however, are conscious of the counter-mapping goals of their experience—to remap the city and reimagine the integration of disenfranchised populations. In the case of their particular project, *To the Landless, The Red Line Archive and Labyrinth*, the participants of the walk "question… North American narratives of progress and capitalism" and reclaim spaces within the red line for the community of Black people, communities of color, and working-class populations (Conroy). The remapping walk places them in the center rather than in the margins of society.

Counter-cartography helps communities reimagine empire and in a historical perspective facilitates the emergence of *phantasma,* the making of appearances, promoting the bond between memory and imagination. One of the most revered and celebrated Armenian artists, film director Sergei Parajanov (1924-1990), still lives in the contemporary cultural scene of Armenia with and through the art collection at his house-museum. In addition to his iconic movies, Parajanov created numerous drawings and collages, many of which carry a strong political message (one of the reasons why he was not favored by the Soviets and spent many years in prison). A Parajanov collage on display in his house-museum represents a map of the Soviet Union—an empire whose influence is far-reaching. To show the imperial impact on Europe from a Soviet perspective, Parajanov flipped a geographic map of the USSR and Europe upside down—North appears on the bottom and South on the top. Then he populated it with pictures of Soviet dancers in red and Russian church domes (figure 7). Major European cities are represented by big red dots. The artist named his work "Invasion"—a work from the late 1980 strangely reminiscent and foreboding the political world order in 2022/23. Parajanov's map sees the world from

above, from up North, organized around Moscow as its center (although the Soviet capital is technically in the middle and on the left).

Figure 7
Sergey Parajanov's collage "Invasion" (1988). Author's photograph at Parajanov's House-Museum, 2021.

The imperial invasion has a cultural and ideological character—the dancers act as metonymy of Russian art, and the church domes of religion, or rather of communist ideology. The reversed directions of the conventional map invite the viewer to rethink their geopolitical perspective. Ultimately, the map presents counter-mapping as a mechanism to evoke critical thinking. Parajanov's message to his contemporaries is clear: the empire has overturned our understanding of directions, or what is left and what is right, what is wrong and what is right. It has also imposed a center beseeching the whole Europe to metaphorically dance to the rhythm and pray to the ideological principles of the Soviet Union. The reversed order of directions asks the viewer to ponder the nature of truthful geographical representation of a place and question the standardized rules in cartography as representational of world order. Parajanov's map is an appeal to decolonization and a call for rights of the colonized, in this case the European nations. The counter-mapping collage attempts to prick the consciousness of the viewers and evoke critical thinking on the way empire operates. But in the end, we need to mind what Phil Cohen and Mike Duggan remind us—no matter how inclusive of knowledge systems maps are, they are already and always situated in wider power-knowledge assemblages that dictate how, and if at all, they are used and seen as legitimate objects of representation (2021, xxvii). With that in mind, it is important to remember that Parajanov spent several years in a Soviet prison, and his films were banned for a certain period of time. Cohen and Duggan conclude their recent review of counter-mapping scholarship and practices by alerting us to the fact that counter-cartography on its own cannot be a successful decolonial practice unless it is part of true decolonization, which requires more than "acts of representational resistance" (2021, xxviii).

Keeping in mind Cohen and Duggan's warning, we can still look at counter-cartography as a powerful act of representational resistance and as a tool to prick the consciousness on colonial matters in the digital age through the use of social media. During the 2020 war over Nagorno Karabakh, a French politician used a map of what looks like Greater Hayk at one of his campaigns (figure 8). The image went viral and was seen as "provocation" by non-Armenian viewers (*Daily Sabah*).

Figure 8
A map showing parts of Eastern Turkey and Artsakh as Armenian territory on a wall behind boxes of medical supplies at an event in the Auvergne-Rhone-Alpes region of France, in a photo shared Oct. 6, 2020. (Photo from Twitter @laurentwauquiez).

Rhetorical scholar Laurie Gries observes that in the Internet age images "circulate and acquire power to co-constitute collective life as they enter into divergent associations, undergo change, and spark a wide range of consequences" (2015, 85-6). The map used for the campaign by Laurent Wauquiez acquires the power to incite collective public reproach by those nations whose territories the map claims to be Armenian. Lester Olson reminds us that even before the Internet, seemingly stable surface imagery can change its effectiveness based on the composition's migration across place, time, and medium —a phenomenon he calls "re-circulation" (2009, 1-3). Re-circulation of images, like the example of the map at the French political campaign when republished by the Turkish newspaper (*Daily Sabah*), becomes rhetorical because it both responds to an earlier circulation of the map and it is "reshaped for another audience" (Olson 2009, 2). In the Internet age characterized by "algorithmic culture"—a term coined by Striphas to explain how computers replace the traditional work of culture to organize populations and ideas—the travel of an image across the Internet finds much faster the audience for which it has been reshaped (qtd. in Gries and Gifford Brooke 2018, 11-12). To use Gries and Brooke's language, these images, maps in this case, become persuasive as they "move through the world and enter into various associations" (2018, 12). As we are discussing specifically counter-maps, the various associations in which these images get re-circulated and change their initial rhetorical purpose are online audiences assembled and produced by the algorithmic culture as a result of the dominant narratives. Thus, the counter-map posted on social media by the French politician finds a response in groups who are opposed to this *phantasma*.

The networked society of the Internet operates using communication practices new in the way in which they use the technological infrastructure to safeguard online communities. Dale M. Smith and James J. Brown Jr. argue that in a highly networked society content is not circulated via centralized or decentralized networks (2018, 215). Instead, "it is *distributed*… through networks in which each node is both sender and receiver" (2018, 215). The suggested model differs dra-

matically from the civil society communication practices outside the digital space. Becoming simultaneously an author and a receiver of an argument that has been distributed, redistributed, or reshaped from its original context is both advantageous and dangerous, especially when we discuss practices related to counter-cartography. Counter-cartography, as we reviewed earlier, reflects on the social position of audiences of marginalized groups as it questions the existing power structures. Therefore, when such maps in the digital space get distributed (recirculated) to audiences who reside in the center of the power structure, the response can only be one: rejection of the counter narrative, rejection of the *phantasma,* and potential condemnation of the original sender/receiver. In the screenshot of the social media recirculation of Laurent Wauquiez' Twitter counter-map post in figure 9a, one can see how the author of the newspaper article chooses to focus on the response by the French government as represented by the French ambassador to Georgia, Armenia's Northern neighbor (figure 9b). The counter-map narrative questioning the power structure and resisting the dominant narratives has been normalized by the center, thus condemning the attempts to reimagine the politically recognized borders. Because of the significant influence of the Armenian diaspora and its huge outcry to the 2020 Artsakh war, this counter-map narrative was seen as particularly dangerous, especially given that France was one of the three chairs of the OSCE Minsk group designed to oversee security issues in the South Caucasus.

Figure 9 a & b
Screenshot of a Twitter post published in an online article on Agenda.ge, an English-language news platform focusing on Georgia.

Similarly, the Greater Hayk map at one of Yerevan's metro stations is interpreted and distributed as a political argument for territorial claims on the side of the Armenian government (figure 6) when circulated in social media. Its social life in the underground of the capital city does not explicitly question the dominant narrative, that is politically recognized borders of contemporary Armenia, and therefore does not get corrected. In a recent conversation with Armenian academics about the map, I was surprised to hear that none of them supported its display at the metro station and wondered about the reasons it has not been taken down.

Phantasma as Cultivation of Counter-Memory

Counter-mapping practices work to create critical cartographical representations for the sake of protecting the rights of communities to their own memory of homeland in the past. Preserving public memory of a place often means keeping a *phantasma* alive. Ricoeur's reading of *Theaetetus* guides us to see the important division in Plato in terms of memory, that is the difference between the *tupos* and *sêmeion,* or the moment the imprint of the past is created and the moment when it becomes a signifying mark, which makes an appearance in the soul as Socrates explains in *Theaetetus*. The art of copy-making, the rudimentary stage of remembering, can also be viewed as the production of simulacrum. In Baudrillard's work on simulacra and simulation, he makes an important distinction between the two: while simulacrum offers a false representation of reality, the question regarding simulation "no longer [concerns] a false representation of reality… but … concealing [of] the fact the real is no longer real" (1994, 13). In Plato, *tekhnê eikastikê* is "the craft of copy-making," while on the other side of the division we have *phantasma,* the art of appearance-making, or simulation (2015, 235b; 236c). The division in Plato, writes Foucault in "Theatrum Philosophicum," is between essence and appearance where the authentic and false is not represented by the binary true-false since truth is not opposed to error but rather to false appearances (Foucault 1977b, 167). He observes that "[t]he actual semblance of the simulacrum will support the falseness of false appearances"—that is, often ideologically prompted and perpetuated representation of reality, a phantasm of sorts (1977b, 168). As we saw by the responses to Greater Hayk map in the two cases discussed earlier, a counter-map can be seen as falseness of false appearances, in the words of Foucault. Therefore, counter-cartography does not represent a version of reality but rather of false representation of reality. A simulation.

Remembering false representations of reality through the use of counter-maps produces a historical narrative different from that approved by the dominant ideology, both national and colonial. Foucault calls for this type of remembering because he sees the need to dismantle systematically "the traditional devices for constructing a comprehensive view of history and for retracting the past as a patient and continuous development" (1977a, 153). He dubs the potential result "'effective' history" which differs from traditional history in "being without constants" and in introducing "discontinuity in our very being" (Foucault 1977a, 153; 154). Foucault's definition of effective history includes two important traits to our discussion of memory—it affirms knowledge as perspective, and it is affective (1977a, 155-6). The recognition that remembering the past is driven by affect and experience brings it closer to the phenomenon of the *phantasma*—the art of making appearances as they are imprinted in the soul. Foucault's effective history is his proposal for counter-memory practices to confirm the aporetic nature of Plato's dialogue: in the end we cannot reach a definition of knowledge. What is more: "knowledge is not made for understanding, it is made for cutting," declares Foucault (1977a, 154). By "cutting" he refers to the Platonic notion of division to explain that it is not meant to cut off, separate, and divide, but rather to designate

and acknowledge the existence of difference (1977a; see also *The Archeology of Knowledge,* 130-131).

Counter-memory practices allow for the different perspectives on history to coexist. Yet, the contemporary networked society presents unlimited opportunities to condemn the difference and sabotage the Platonic idea of division as theorized by Foucault. The algorithmic culture organizes audiences in online communities with firm epistemological beliefs and claims grounded in their own counter-memory practices. In the case of maps, counter-memory can work to reconstruct how cartographic representations looked at a particular moment in the past, but it can also be seen as speculative. For example, a speculative rhetorical use of counter-memory is presenting historical maps to be valid today (similar to the case of social media Azerbaijani misinterpretation of the subway map of Greater Hayk). To allow for their *phantasma* to live longer, online communities speculate about the endorsement of such cartographic images by major political players and therefore argue that they belong to dominant narratives. A great example is a map that circulated the Internet space during the 2020 Nagorno Karabakh war (figure 10), shared and redistributed by Azerbaijani social media users. It is a historical map of the People's Republic of Azerbaijan presented at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 and discussed earlier in this article (figure 1). The map incorporates the territory of Nagorno Karabakh into Azerbaijani borders, and its title boasts that France has approved of this agreement. The social media post by an Azerbaijani user in figure 10 speculates that the French government's approval of the nation's territory in 1919 justifies Azerbaijan's claim to the region today and affirms their rights to it. In Gahramanova's words, the phenomenon can be described as transformation of history into political mythology.

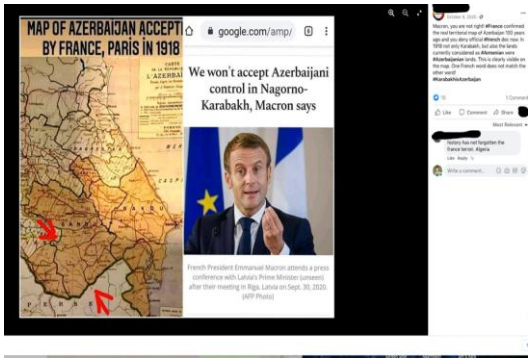

Figure 10
Screenshot of a Facebook post showing that France agreed to the territory of Azerbaijan in 1919 when the region of Nagorno Karabakh was within its borders (red arrows point to the region) with a picture of Emmanuel Macron, current President of France with a statement that he does not approve of this territorial division in 2020.

Counter-memory practices often result in public arguments that are actively interfering with the current power structures on a local and global level, like in the case of advanced political mythology in the social media post in figure 10. The Internet space provides an opportunity for counter-memory arguments to turn into a speculation—that is, to use the *phantasma* of counter-mapping to appeal to change the current political map claiming lands which historically belonged to a nation. Counter-memory cultivation is functional and effective to help bolster cultural identity and incite political activism but not to advance political arguments and agendas.

(Counter) Conclusion

Counter-mapping is one way to enact what Foucault calls effective history, that is remembering the past without constants and not retracting it as a patient and continuous development. Counter-cartography practices embrace and reconcile different perspectives and experiences of the past and simultaneously acknowledge the affective nature of the process. Yet this type of history remains in the realm of the Platonic *phantasma*—a bond between memory and imagination—and as such can live in the present only as an appearance of a false representation of reality, a simulation. The art of appearance-making when applied to cartographic presentations of the homeland, however, is important to the development of cultural identity for the respective community because it often uses counter-memory practices to privilege the community's own experience of the past and to also question dominant narratives and power structures.

In the case of the analyzed maps of Nagorno Karabakh, counter-mapping creates an opportunity for collective remembering of the community's lived experiences and perception of identity through the land over time. These counter-memories can co-exist no matter how disparate they seem to be in relation to contemporary political cartographies. Ultimately, as Plato's metaphor in his dialogue on epistemology *Theaetetus* suggests, these memories are imprinted on the soul, and therefore their enactment in the present—through counter-mapping and counter-memory—can generate a rhetoric of resistance. Practices that promote the notion of effective history help preserve the cultural identity of communities, no matter how politically and geographically controversial their *phantasmas* appear to be.

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[i] Laurence Broers explains in detail the inadequacy of the notion "frozen conflict" that has been popularized through media, policy makers, and even some scholars in relation to the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict in Nagorno Karabakh. He suggests instead the term "enduring rivalry" which describes better a conflict of this kind known for its longevity and stability. See Broers' "From 'frozen conflict' to enduring rivalry: reassessing the Nagorny Karabakh conflict," 2015.

[ii] The name used for the state which emerged at the turn of the second century BC was actually Մեծ Հայք, *Mets Hayk* (Greater Hayk) in opposition to another region called Փոքր Հայք, Pokhr Hayk (Lesser *Hayk*). The literal translation Greater Armenia therefore is inadequate because it compromises the original toponymic intention to name a region in relation to another. To avoid confusion within the contemporary toponymic system, I refer to the kingdom as Greater Hayk in my text.

[iii] Picture-taking in the Armenian subway is prohibited. Police often approach tourists to notify them of the rules. The restriction has to do with the fact that the Armenian subway system serves also as a bomb shelter. The picture-taking ban bolsters my argument that Yerevan's metro network represents a narrative of national mythology, merging folklore and history to produce another *phantasma*. The state safeguards this sacred social space as it makes sure that all sacrilegious acts, like taking photos, are prohibited.

[iv] The social media reproduction of the map on figure 10 features a wrong year, 1919.