

LITERARY GEOGRAPHIES

Poetic Space: Mapping Out How Poetry *Takes Place*

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Abstract:

How does poetry map its own space? How is place constructed in and through poetic language? While there is an abundance of research on topographical poetry, most of it focuses on (maps of) real-world referents. I would like to propose an approach that, rather than dealing with the concrete place and its geographical mapping, looks inward and schematises how language and form are used to create the spatial imaginary in which a poem takes place.

Drawing on examples from Jo Shapcott's collection *Of Mutability* (2010) and Jackie Kay's *Bantam* (2017), I will investigate which strategies poems use to build a poetic space (somewhat analogous to a narrative setting) in which its actions or emotions can unfold. I will focus on tracing movements as well as deictic elements, since both create spatial relationships and are archetypal to the genre of loco-specific poetry.

Both strategies (movement and deixis) can be abstracted and easily visualised to create sketch maps of poetic space that help us understand how the text constructs its own spatiality. Although the spatial turn in literary studies has sparked similar investigations in narratology, the ways in which prose texts map space seem to be quite different from the way poetic space functions. I therefore believe that a more schematic approach to poetic space can provide fruitful abstractions and aid us in better understanding the complex interplay of mappings, space and poetry.

Keywords: mapping; poetry; sketch maps; space; deixis; topographical poetry.

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Introduction: Gherkin space

walk the spiral
 up out of the pavement
 into your own reflection, into
 transparency, into the space

(Shapcott 2011: 19)

With these words, Jo Shapcott opens ‘Gherkin Music’, a brief poem about ‘London’s most instantly recognisable tower’ (thegherkinlondon.com), a commercial skyscraper less commonly known as ‘30 St Mary Axe’ and a landmark presence in the heart of the capital’s primary financial district: the City of London. Initially published in her collection *Of Mutability* (2011), Shapcott’s poem later became accessible to millions of readers commuting on the London tube as art of the ‘Poems on the Underground’ project. Being displayed on the walls of the trains forming some of the capital’s most important infrastructural lifelines, weaves Shapcott’s lines even more tightly into the urban fabric of London. In *Of Mutability*, the poem, on the one hand, sits between intensely physical observations about bodies being consumed and rendered frail by illness. On the other hand, the collection also comes sprinkled with several other London poems that highlight the ethereal beauty of the urban experience with its glass and air skyscrapers. Space and the bodies moving through it appear to be made from the same fragile materials in Shapcott’s haptic verse.

Take as an example the quotation above: the spiral forms the unique staircase leading up into The Gherkin but it is also constituted by the bodily movement that roots it into the pavement of the city. The physical action of walking up these spiralling stairs, as well as the shape of the building itself, are reflected in the tiered, step-like indentations of the *mise en page*. The reader is invited (or instructed, by the imperative ‘walk’) to enter an airy, translucent space that is only accessible by the undulating motion of the spiral moving upwards, by the lines receding from the left-hand margin.

How do these four lines achieve this? How do they construct a setting through which the speaker can move and with which the reader is invited to interact? The association with the physical building at St Mary Axe is an easy answer, but one that only accounts for readers who are in some way familiar with the place. I happen to be one of those readers. As a person who has seen the soaring tower in the glass-and-steel flesh, I can trace its shape in these lines. For me, they conjure up memories and images from a long walk through sunny London many years ago. What I find much more intriguing, however, is that the shapes and spaces clearly emerge out of the writing itself and would do so even if the Gherkin was not explicitly referred to or if I had never heard of the building in the first place. In addition to the shape created by the *mise en page*, the movement that initiates the poem (‘walk the spiral’) is deictically projected forward (‘up out’) and extends to open up the space in which the poem will *take place*. The spiral dynamically describes both the building and the movement of the speaker as they move upwards and almost merge in

translucency. The setting is not a passive backdrop but the spark that brings the poem to life – with or without the real-world referent.

In this paper then, I make an effort to consciously ‘unsee’ the building and focus solely on the textual clues to poetic space. As my sketch maps in the next section will show, I am not always successful in this effort. Trying out different ways of mapping and marking deictic elements and movements of the speaker, however, is a very effective tool in separating geographic associations from poetic space.

What, then, *is* poetic space? Yi-Fu Tuan’s (1990) dichotomy between space and place has been widely used, discussed and adapted in spatial narratology and literary geography, but I am unsure whether it can be of use to the same degree in the analysis of poetry. In his monograph on *Place and Experience* (1999), J. E. Malpas discusses multiple notions of space, place, chora, topos, locus and several other spatial terms and distinctions. Which of these categories apply to which kind of spatial configuration within the poesis would be an intriguing question for another article. Malpas also reminds us that ‘concepts of place are often not distinguished at all from notions of simple physical location, while sometimes discussions that seem implicitly to call upon notions of place refer explicitly only to a narrower concept of space’ (Malpas 1999: 19). Place, and especially a sense of place, is not something that one can point to on an official street map but it might be conjured up by the reading of a spatially oriented poem and, hopefully, reveal itself via a close observation of the poetic space and the means by which it is constructed.

Reading and analysing a larger corpus of British spatial poetry (from which I have selected only two texts for this article), I was able to identify what I consider to be the most central means to create space in poetry: movement and deixis, enumeration and accumulation (of spatial elements or coordinates), zooming in and out, the point of perception, and, lastly, the outer form of the text. I have already briefly touched on the outer form of the text when I mentioned the *mise en page* of ‘Gherkin Music’. My main focus in what follows will be on movement and deixis: on movement from one point to another and on pointing to something in space, creating coordinates in the process.

Understanding these basic elements of a poem that create a spatial setting, independent of geographic locations alluded to in the text, is my main aim in this article. Especially compared to narrative settings, poetic space remains understudied when it is detached from typical notions of loco-specific topographical poetry. Referring to Heather Yeung’s distinction in *Spatial Engagement with Poetry* (2015), I focus on poetry *as* space rather than poetry *of* space. The maps I have created for this purpose are therefore not geographical maps but visualisations and sketch maps that help us take a more systematic approach to poetic space and understand how it is created within the text and how it emerges from each line in the reading process.

How to map a poem: sketch maps and spatial relationships

This then is the space which I would like to map in the following pages: the one chiselled out *within* the poesis. While there is an abundance of research on spatial motifs (on Wordsworth’s landscape poetry, Spenser’s river poetry, Baudelaire’s city poetry, Ben Jonson’s country house poem, or Vita Sackville-West’s garden poetry, to name but a few

examples) and a great variety of fascinating projects tying poetry to geographical maps, the more basic question of how lines of poetry build spatial imaginaries tends to play a less important role or not feature at all.¹ Nonetheless, the scholarship on landscape and landskip in paintings and poems (Fitter 1995), on visual perception and geography (Cosgrove 2012), on the parallels in cognitive responses to poetry and to architecture (Bachelard 1957) or even on different ways of visually perceiving space (Falci 2009) all touch on the complex relationship of space, place and poetry outside of geographically mapped loco-descriptive verse. I find Alexander and Cooper's (2013) contrasting of reflective engagement versus enchantment with space a helpful starting point in identifying what constitutes spatial markers in a poem. Although the point of observation will not be central to my analysis, I would also like to point to research such as Widger's (2017), that puts a feminist spin on De Certeau's (1984) dichotomy of street-level and bird's eye perspective by comparing an imperialist to a domestic and an active to a passive point of view.

The relative dearth in studies of poetic (non-geographic) space is contrasted by an abundance of research on settings in prose narratives, which – in the wake of the spatial turn – has become an important arena for the spatial humanities, and for spatially oriented narratology in particular (cf. for example Ryan 1992; Massey 2005; Piatti 2008). Since novels and short stories, however, create settings by means that do not always translate into poetry, I would like to explore the particular ways in which lyrical language in verse sketches out its space. In order to do this, I will abstract several strategies of creating space within the poesis and visualise them with simple sketches. These sketches and my readings will then create a simplified 'map' of the poetic space: a sketch map.

The term sketch map here means that my maps are preliminary, processual and hand-drawn. Sketch maps are an interesting tool in empirical research but since I am producing the maps in my role as researcher, I align my sketch maps with related but distinct types of sketch mappings: In an article on artistic mapping practices in the 20th century, Denis Cosgrove describes sketch maps in newspapers as using arrows, as well as textual annotations, to emphasise their narrative elements, which loosely relates them to storyboards but also to military maps (cf. 2005: 46). Cosgrove associates sketch maps with speed – both in their creation and in the, at times moving, scenery that is depicted (cf. 50). In addition to this, sketch maps rely on an individual perspective that, typically, has been physically experienced by the map maker. Although Cosgrove also describes sketch map techniques in which the artists use base maps, their personal perspective or take on these maps is posited as essential, making sketch mapping an individual and self-consciously positioned activity (cf. 50). Kitchin and Dodge, employing the example of a fictional *Jane* trying to locate herself on a map, use the term sketch map to refer to maps that combine embodied experience of space and place with official maps: for example, in the form of a path drawn on a regular street map. Such sketch maps are produced by individuals to 'solve the problem of the moment. Rather than rely solely on the "frozen" cartographic representations from a "professionally" published source, such route mapping empowers individuals to describe their place in the world to others.' (Kitchin and Dodge 2007: 340). My use of the term sketch map picks up on elements of both of these related types of sketch maps but locates the embodied experience of space and place not in the mapmaker

(me) but in the positionality of the speaker of the poem. In order to describe this individual positionality as closely as possible, I do not use any other maps as base maps or layers but sketch simple lines, arrows and annotations on a blank page.

To determine which lines and arrows to draw, I take a relational approach to poetic space in my sketch maps, first of all, to avoid the often problematic false correlative between geographical map and literary space (cf. Bushell 2020: 298), but also because the unique space of a poem, in combination with the cognitive adjusting the reader performs in the reading process, requires a dynamic but also somewhat abstract mapping. My thinking here is somewhat analogous to Bushell's reflections on Gadamer and Iser's horizons of expectation that are created and continuously readjusted in the reading process (cf. 278 in particular). I also agree with Bushell's suggestion that different types of maps (Bushell favours a dual approach combining base and route map) interact and overlay each other in the cognitive mapping processes of literary space. This is why I would like to stress that the type of mapping I use in this article is only one of a multitude of mapping possibilities. The abstract spatiality I map here is neither absolute nor objective but constituted by spatial relationships. Movement from one point to another, for example, will be visualised as a thin arrow, constituting the spatial relationship between two points. Deictic pointing will, in contrast, be marked by a thick arrow. In sketching out the movements between points and the pointing to (or pointing out) of spatial demarcations, a space emerges that contains these coordinates and the movements between them in a nonetheless malleable, cognitive construct.

Although I map other spatial relationships as well, here I focus on movement and deixis because of their centrality to spatial poetry. Stephen Burt, writing more specifically about scenic and topographical poetry, reminds us of the importance of tracing the genealogy of a mode of writing. From the earliest manifestations of topographical poetry (meaning far earlier than the most frequently referenced Romantic examples), deixis and movement have been at the centre of this type of verse:

Not simply a name for a subject, topographical poetry remains (once we look for it) legible as a mode because it comes with a set of formal signals: the name of the place, often in the title, sometimes with a preposition – 'At,' 'Above'; deictics ('here,' 'there,' 'now'); present tense (we stand, walk, ride along with the poet, right now); and a structure involving movement or perspective, following the eye or the body as it moves across or through the site. (Burt 2011: 602)

Note that all of these formal signals are present in the four lines I quoted from Shapcott at the very beginning of this article: the place name in the title, the deictics, the verb of movement in present tense ('walk'), and even the reading mind's pursuit of the moving body through poetic space. I therefore want to highlight these two categories or formal elements – deixis and movement – as archetypal for the mode of spatial poetry as well as for reading and mapping space in poetry. Since they are so commonly used, they also lend themselves to the kind of simple sketch map visualisation I have in mind.

Sketching the deictic spirals of ‘Gherkin Music’

My first attempt at drawing a sketch map of the movements and deictic references creating spatial relationships in ‘Gherkin Music’ was done by hand, with pen on paper, to focus on the embodied, tactile nature of map use and map production (cf. Rossetto 2019). As pointed out earlier, in exclusively mapping spatial relationships, my sketch maps operate without any kind of base map. This type of ‘blank space’ sketch mapping is a tool historically used by geographers and sociologists to understand and trace geographical and spatial knowledge, mental navigation and cognitive organisation of space but also to evaluate place attachment.² More recently, studies on how mental maps can be produced from texts have forged interesting research alliances between various disciplines including geography and literary studies, a prominent example here being Ryan, Foote and Azaryahu’s *Narrating Space/Spatializing Narrative* (2016). As Jen Jack Giesecking (2013), among others, points out, the methodology of drawing and evaluating sketch maps has, despite its popularity, not been developed much since Lynch’s highly influential work on mental maps in the 1960s – a state that Giesecking seeks to rectify with a comprehensive catalogue detailing 57 analytic components of sketch maps. For my own means, and since unlike the aforementioned scholars I *create* sketch maps rather than analysing how others sketch out mental maps, I do not find it necessary to develop such a thorough methodology but I believe it is noteworthy that even in the study of sketch maps, a focus on movement (or paths) and deixis (roughly corresponding to landmarks) is apparent. My first sketch therefore *moves* and *points* up through the spiral of ‘Gherkin Music’ (Figure 1).

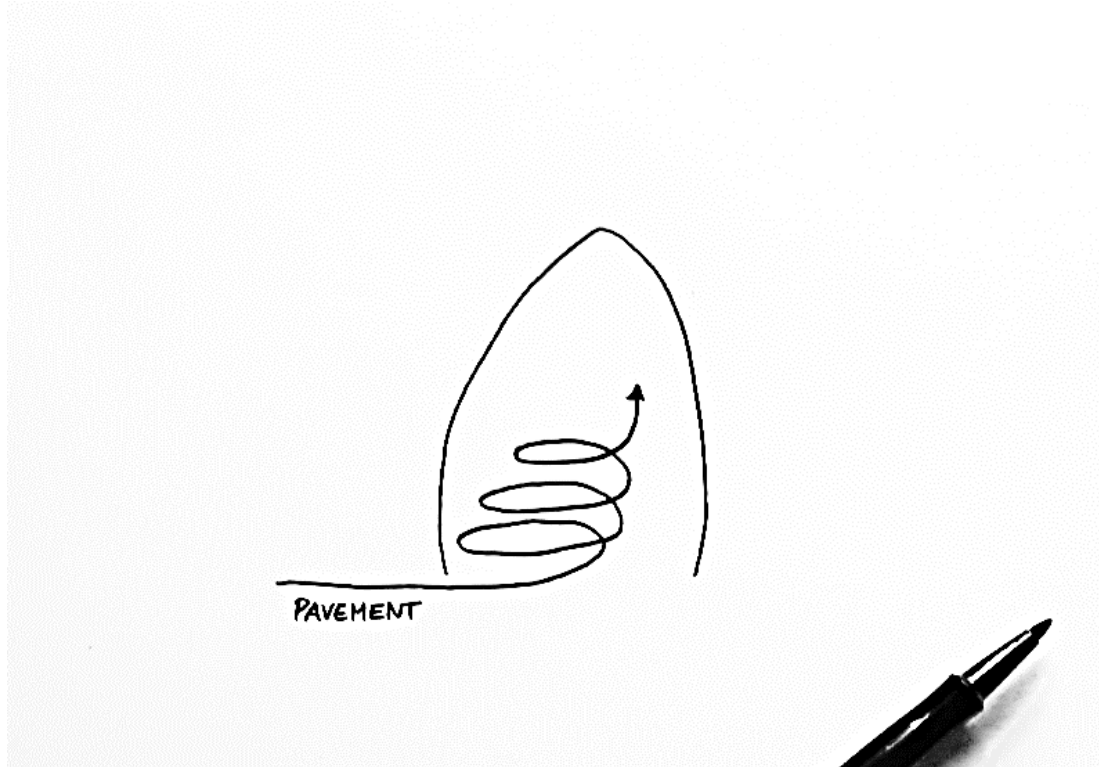


Figure 1. Sketch map of ‘Gherkin Music’ with the shape of the building.

This sketch map also considers the mise-en-page of ‘Gherkin Music’ by shaping the spiral into receding steps. I did however quickly realise that this sketch already combines a number of separate movements and blends them with the image and shape of the tower that is part of my personal reading.

The aim for my second attempt was therefore to identify the smallest units of spatial meaning. Reading the lines again, word by word, I was able to separate the different indicators for movements and deictic references and mark each deictic spatial reference with a fat arrow, each reference to movement in space with a thin arrow, then adding the spiral movement that recurs on all levels of the poem. The resulting sketch looks as follows (Figure 2):

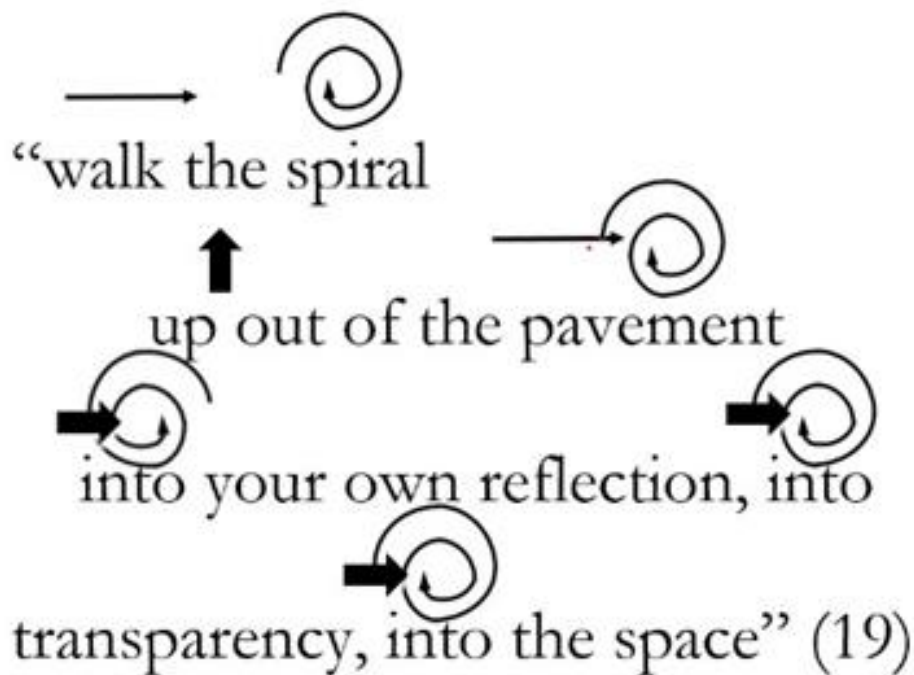


Figure 2. Marking three types of spatial references in ‘Gherkin Music’.

While this visual analysis admittedly looks even more like a succession of doodles, it reveals the smaller elements of spatial relation. I have here added the spatial indicators directly to the text on screen, rather than drawing by hand, in an attempt to clearly group similar elements. After the initial movement forward that is grounded by the pavement, the spiral keeps repeating itself, is mirrored and is combined with both a pointing upwards and continuous deictic references inwards. If we step back again and see these movements as a whole (since a spiral is of course both a movement and a pointing inwards), we may end up again at a form that is a stripped-down version of my first sketch map (Figure 3):

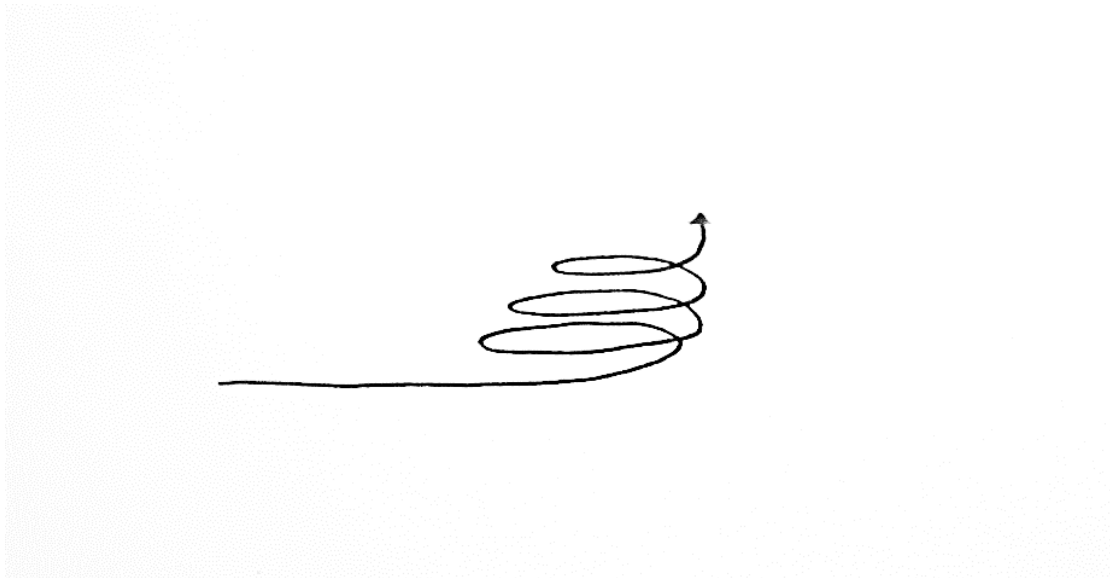


Figure 3. Very simple sketch map of ‘Gherkin Music’.

In the following stanzas of ‘Gherkin Music’, the poem builds on and emphasises this basic spatial skeleton created in the first stanza: ‘where flat planes are curves’ continues the spiralling, undulating movement, that keeps being directed upwards into cerebral spaces with the lines ‘as you go higher into a thought / of flying’. By locating thoughts, or a head, at the top of it, the building also mirrors the space of a body, adding an anthropomorphising jump in scales. In the last stanza, the top has been reached and the thoughts and spatial impressions of the poem spill over and are scattered back down to the street and the pavement mentioned at the beginning of the poem:

walk the spiral
 up out of the pavement
 into your own reflection, into
 transparency, into the space

Each of the four stanzas that make up ‘Gherkin Music’ repeats the pattern of indentation and at the end of the poem – the street overflowing with light, words and thoughts – we are invited to climb the spiral again. The basic spatial form of the sketch map in *Figure 3* therefore becomes a pattern that is drawn again and again by all spatial elements (deixis, movement, outer form, scale, loco-specific reference,...) and stanzas of the poem.

The aim of these simple maps is not so much accuracy or objectivity; their objective is to focus our attention on only one facet of the dense poetic language and construction: the spatial setting the poem constructs in and for itself, independent of geographical references. Since it is so easy to be drawn into all the other layers of meaning, expression and reference, I find a very simple visualisation surprisingly helpful in identifying which elements construct the poetic space and how they do so.

With this sense of abstraction, I follow a particular branch of literary mapping that is most notably shaped by Franco Moretti’s views on abstraction as a fruitful tool for

analysis (cf. Moretti 2005) and the movements Moretti mapped from data extracted out of corpora of novels via ‘distant reading’ (cf. Moretti 1999). My sketch maps, however, are all close-ups and thus very small in scale: they abstract from and micro-map short non-narrative poems and are used as a tool of close reading. In the future, I hope to refine the method by applying it to a number of different poems to see what patterns emerge, also, for example, when comparing loco-specific poetry such as the texts analysed in this article, to non-specific spatial poems. For now, however, let us stay on the small scale of close reading.

Mapping spaces of memory in ‘The Ardtornish Quartet’

Scottish Makar Jackie Kay’s collection *Bantam* (2017) takes us through various translocal landscapes, spaces and places.³ In a review for *The Guardian*, Kate Kellaway highlights the intricate spatialities of the collection:

When Jackie Kay closes one door, she opens another. There is a long poem, *Threshold*, about life’s doors and the collection can be considered in terms of its exits and entrances. She holds open a door into Scotland, imagines friends and refugees in a “building of pure poetry”. (Kellaway n.p.)

Note how spatial the language of the review itself becomes with its focus on the crossing of thresholds and borders, which Kay’s poetry is indubitably characterised by. Kay, however, achieves this opening of multiple spaces by continuously grounding her poetry in small, private enclaves that frequently recall her childhood and the Scottish landscape and language her spatial perception is rooted within.

One such private enclave is constructed in ‘Rose Cottage’, the first poem of ‘The Ardtornish Quartet’.⁴ The Ardtornish is a Highland estate situated around Loch Aline, which features prominently in Kay’s quartet and also in her life as a poet: in autumn 2012, Kay spent a month there as Ardtornish writer in residence. The quartet also clearly features childhood memories. Consider the four lines that open the first poem of the quartet, here (Figure 4) already marked with the same spatial indicators used in Figure 2.

→

“My mother carried me in a cottage

↓

Like this, sleeping on her side,

→

Her face turned to the wall.

↓

Travelling spoons hanging in the dark hall.”

Figure 4: Marking deictic references and indirect movement in the first four lines of ‘Rose Cottage’.

The private space of the bedroom in the cottage creates a small, comforting enclave by deictically pointing to itself. Movement is only present as a secondary layer of meaning, which is why the thin arrows describing movement are greyed out, as opposed to the thick black arrows marking deictics. ‘Carrying’ can imply passive movement, but here seems to rather describe holding and, as a third layer of meaning, pregnancy – an important theme not least because of the centrality of adoption to Kay’s oeuvre. The possibility of movement is anchored, or stopped, by the deictic ‘Like this’ pointing to the space of the bed the mother is sleeping on. Her face being ‘turned to the wall’ implies the past action of turning, a small movement indirectly present in the scene that is laid out. The fourth line then points to a space located a few steps away from the bed: ‘the dark hall’. The stanza therefore creates a very minimal layout of the cottage, even though no physical movement from point to point is described. The objects and points in space are however, not simply enumerated but ordered and put into spatial relationships with one another, with the mother and with the position of the speaker via the small indirect movements.

These subtle movements then sketch out a set of comforting, domestic spatial relationships that also hint at the frequently gendered nature of the home space. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, which has sadly magnified inequalities in and surrounding domestic spaces and housing, much scholarship has been devoted to the representation of domestic spaces and how they reflect class, gender and identity (see, for example, Briganti and Mezei 2012 or Cuming 2016). The attention that Kay devotes to this space therefore also makes the private public and political – a central (feminist) connection that is dominant in all of Kay’s writing, be that poetry or prose, fiction or non-fiction.

Another reason I am putting an emphasis on the private nature of the cottage space is that by combining clearly identifiable geographical space markers with the intimacies and the vagueness of the interior space, ‘Rose Cottage’ shows why relational mapping is an important tool for spatial poetry analysis. Although we could pin the ‘wriggling poem’ (Ramazani 2017: 678) to a geographical map, if that remained the only level at which we understand its spatial imaginary, we would lose the multi-faceted lived space that the speaker remembers. Building on insights into the dense but malleable nature of poetry and genre that he presents in more detail in *Poetry and its Others* (2013), Jahan Ramazani, in an article entitled ‘The Local Poem in a Global Age’, explores the relationship of geographic and lyrical and on local and global space. In this article, Ramazani not only explains why even loco-specific poems frequently resist being pinned to a single physical location; he highlights the way in which the local poem provides access to the numerous translocal connections the geographic place holds:

A poetic locus often makes legible the multiplicities enfolded within a singular geographic locus. It can do so by virtue of its metaphoric reach and formal elasticity, its compression and velocity and deep memory, its inhabiting of multiple spaces and times at once, and its proficiency at straddling discrepant sites, both real and imagined. (Ramazani 2017: 696)

Kay makes use of this productive tension between local and global, and between compression and expansion, especially when it comes to the poetic treatment of private spaces and memory. In 'Rose Cottage', the rich spaces of memory are further explored when the second and final stanza of the poem steps outside of the cottage with a now-adult speaker recalling the past space in detail because 'the years are somehow carried over' (Kay 2017: 37).

The interior space of the cottage remains in the past as a semi-hidden locus of memory – a deep connection between time and space that resonates with Doreen Massey's notion of the two being inextricably linked. Massey's productive conceptions of timespace, and also of memory and space, run through her entire scholarly oeuvre but are very poignantly summarised in a 2000 article on 'Travelling Thoughts', in which she recalls returning to London after a day outside of the city. Massey uses this memory to explain how we can never in fact return to the same place, but first have to catch up with it: no matter how large or minute the differences are, we will not return to the exact same space we left in the morning since it has been marked, shifted and changed by the passing of time. While the dense connections between memory, place and poetry have been explored by many scholars, from Cicero to Pierre Nora (cf. for example Birgit Neumann's and Pim den Boer's contributions to *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook* (2008) for more on this subject), Massey's fusion of all three as well as her focus on the lived environment resonate with the spatial configuration of 'Rose Cottage'. Although time is not marked explicitly in my sketch maps, the movement between spaces of the present and spaces of memory form another spatial relationship that shapes the private space in particular: unlike the indirect, small memory movements of the first stanza, the movement of the speaker stepping outside the cottage marks a temporal as well as a spatial threshold that is crossed, along with the doorstep of the cottage.

A sketch map that takes into account the prominence of private, remembered space within the cottage but also adds the very brief glimpses of the landscape surrounding the cottage, which are given in the second stanza, might look something like this (Figure 5):

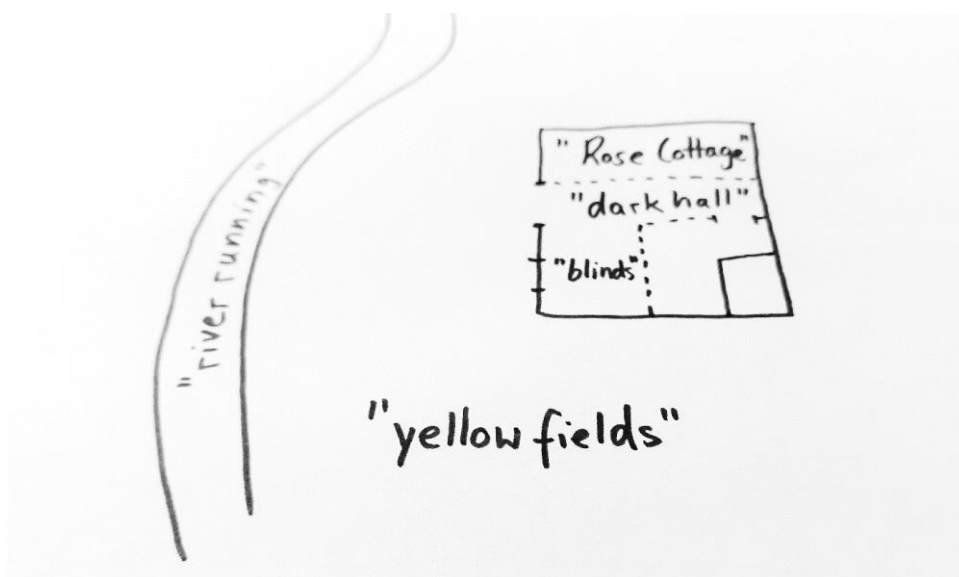


Figure 5. Sketch map of 'Rose Cottage'.

The movement of the speaker leaving the cottage to walk down to the river, and opening the blinds to see the yellow fields are not marked by arrows here. Instead, these movements loosely constitute the sketched-out relationship between these spatial elements. Drawing this sketch map revealed to me the dominance of memory in spatial perception (over physical geography), since much detail is provided when it comes to the various interior spaces of the cottage, while the theoretically more mappable topography surrounding it remains vague and somewhat generic. This changes in the rest of the quartet, which describes the memories, personal connections and insider knowledge that constitute the local landscape surrounding the private space of the cottage. In the sketch map below, I have therefore added the titles of all four poems in 'The Ardtornish Quartet' and marked them out with numbers, as they are given in the collection. While a more or less direct spatial relationship is created between the first three poems that mention and position themselves around Loch Aline, the fourth poem, "Croft Near Croig", moves further away from the private space that opens the quartet (Figure 6):

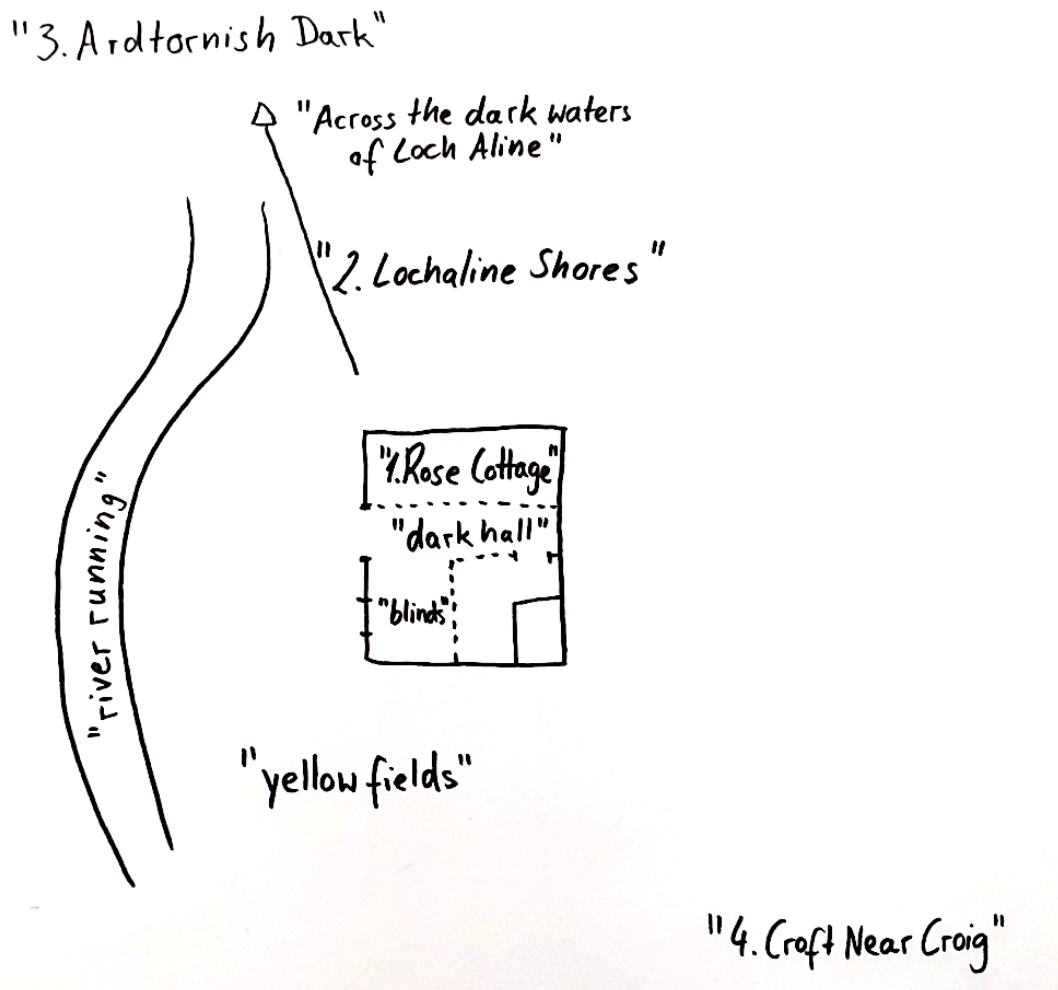


Figure 6. Sketch map of 'The Ardtornish Quartet'.

Although it was rather tempting to look up the various locations mentioned on a geographical map of the Ardtornish, I made sure to only work with the spatial information given within the poesis and through the devices of movement and deictic indication. To refer back to Sally Bushell: 'If we accept that there is no true referential ground for the mapping of literary place and space in the world, then a model that maps according to cognitive acts of mapping is at least as viable as the current one' (Bushell 2020, 300). Bushell also highlights that while geographical mapping can be productive, it is not usually appropriate for the genre of poetry. As I have tried to show with my sketch maps and visualisations, poetry has its own ways of creating space and taking place.

Conclusions

Attempting to map out loco-specific poetry without taking into account physical referents brings me a step closer to understanding the cognitive processes put into gear by textual references to spatial relationships, movement and deixis. While my sketch maps operate at a much smaller scale than, for example, the digital maps created in the context of the *Chronotopic Cartographies* project, I have found these micro-mappings to be a suitable tool for the spatial analysis of shorter non-narrative poems. Exploring sketch maps as a tool for close reading the spatial configurations of contemporary poems has proven worthwhile as an analytical tool that focuses attention on how poetic space is constructed. I look forward to seeing which patterns will emerge when I apply similar methods to a greater number of poems and take into account the other types of spatial relationships mentioned in the opening of this essay.

An additional reason to include my sketch maps in this article was that the use of hand-drawn artefacts reflects on my positionality as a researcher who writes out of a white Western tradition of mapmaking that has historically seen mapping as an objective practice and used this flawed assumption to legitimise colonial practices. The fact that my maps are visibly subjective, imperfect and limited is therefore an important element of their form that I would like to experiment with in future research on poetic space. Linda Knight's work on 'inefficient mapping' (2021) that produces, for example, ephemeral mappings of embodied movement, or Derek McCormack's diagrammatic approach that also highlights movement, performance and affect as part of a representational practice, productively highlight self-reflection (of researchers and mapmakers) as essential to critical mapping. Their focus on movement and rhythm originates in a more performance and art-oriented mapping, but also resonates with poetic space and shows what more experimental forms of mapping can do.

In addition to developing mapping practices tailored to poetic space, identifying further building blocks of space and place in poetry, in some ways similar to Giesecking's cataloguing of map elements, is another aim of my exploration of poetic space. Finally, I believe that close reading and observing small scale spatial relationships in the process (whether that be by creating sketch maps or using other tools) are the key to defining, analysing and understanding space and place in poetry.

Notes

¹ See for example <https://stanzapoetry.org/blog/poetry-map>, a mapping project created by the StAnza Festival that invites submissions for poetry about Scottish locations that can be pinned to a poetry map of Scotland. 'Places of Poetry' (<https://www.placesofpoetry.org.uk/>) does the same for England and Wales. The second project takes inspiration from Michael Drayton's epic spatial poem *Poly-Olbion* (1612, 1622).

² For an overview of theories of place attachment see Manzo and Devine-Wright (2020).

³ Spaces can become translocal when they layer, fuse or connect two or more distant local places. For more on this see Mattheis (2021), Brickell and Datta (2001), or Appadurai (2000).

⁴ Rose Cottage appears elsewhere in Kay's work as well, for example as a fleeting spatial marker in the novel *Trumpet* (1998). In *Trumpet*, Rose Cottage is mentioned when the widow of the famous trans musician Joss Moody seeks refuge from the transphobic press in a small Scottish village. The building marks a sense of home, memory, safety and intimacy, as it does in 'The Ardtornish Quartet'.

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