I Map Therefore I Am Modern

*Cartography and global modernity in the visual arts*

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Part I
Maps and Modern World-Making
Figure 1.1. Solomon Nikritin, *The Old and the New. A Group Portrait*, oil on canvas, 178.5 x 216 cm, 1935. Courtesy of Nukus Museum, Uzbekistan.
1. The Shock of the Whole: Phenomenologies of Global Mapping in Solomon Nikritin’s *The Old and the New*

A painting made in the Soviet Union between the wars offers an intriguing vision of global cartography at work in the social world (figure 1.1). Four figures people a wilderness enshrouded by roving mists, which obscure and diffuse the sunlight behind. Two characters at the little group’s flanks personify social ills like allegorical figures in a medieval morality play: idolatry, an impassive statue of Venus, and poverty, a maimed and emaciated beggar, who tips an empty tin towards the viewer’s charity. By contrast with this outer pair, the central figures embody health and modernity. Unmistakably they belong to the iconography of twentieth-century Communism: each a model for their gender-type, the two strike purposive gestures with muscled bodies clad in clean, practical overalls. Her feet stood wide, the female worker’s pointing posture recalls similarly posed statues of Vladimir Lenin, or even Christopher Columbus, but here aiming to collectivise the east, not colonise the west. She towers above her comrade, whom for sake of ease I shall call “the Bolshevik”. He is absorbed in contemplating a pale globe, which he holds, conspicuously, immediately before the female worker’s groin. The rock-blue sphere seems undifferentiated at this distance from the picture plane; unmarked by landmass, it could be construed as a blank world to be reimagined, or as exemplifying the obscurity of geographical science in these seemingly primordial surroundings.

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17 A version of this chapter has been published as a journal article in *GeoHumanities: Space, Place and the Humanities*. See Ferdinand 2016c.

18 My colleague Irene Villaescusa drew my attention to the worker’s similarity to statues presenting Columbus pointing.
The image has the title *The Old and the New. A Group Portrait*, and was finished early in 1935 by a Ukrainian artist working in Moscow named Solomon Borisovich Nikritin (1898-1965). At six by seven feet, *The Old and the New* is Nikritin’s largest composition, in which he combines and sums up his three longstanding themes of landscape, social contradiction and global geography. Given the backdrop of Soviet modernisation against which Nikritin undertook the work, which was completed in year two of the second Five-Year Plan, its title might be taken to imply a progressive transition from tradition to modernity, with the beggar and Venus belonging to a declining past, and the two communists to a coming condition of classless plenty. But any apparent progressivism is immediately dispelled by the shroud of ominous fog and claustrophobic proximity of such uncommunicative figures. It is unsurprising, then, that the picture, which Nikritin presented mere months after the strictures of Socialist Realism were promulgated in August 1934, proved too politically enigmatic for exhibition in the Soviet Union. In April 1935 a committee of artists and critics barred *The Old and the New* from public display. A transcript of their deliberation survives: “After looking at such a work”, critic Osip Beskin concluded, “one finds it dreadful to be alive for a month, in spite of all the gaiety of our life” (transcribed in London 2004 [1937], 382). This animus was provoked by the supposed eroticism conjured by the globe’s intimate position and curvaceous worker, as well as the picture’s more general idiosyncrasy and ambiguity of intent. These issues were debated in political terms, with the committee linking the artwork’s “individualist” and “erotic” tendencies to work by “Italian Fascists” (382). Gloomy, eclectic and laden with enigmatic symbolism, the painting stood at odds with the emerging political culture defined by uplifting, wholesome and ideologically transparent Socialist Realism, its censorship indicating Nikritin’s growing marginalisation as a “formalist” artist through the 1930s (Smirnov 2013, 127). *The Old and the New* remained in the Nikritins’ possession until 1976, when it was acquired by the independent Nukus Museum of Art in Uzbekistan, where it hangs today (Bowlt 2013, 157).

Having gone largely unmentioned in histories of Soviet art, the picture came to my attention thanks to an essay by John E. Bowlt (2013), which provides an illuminating account of Nikritin’s painting in the context of Soviet aesthetic and political culture in the 1930s. Although my discussion of *The Old and the New* will return to the shifting politics of Soviet space during that period, this chapter largely draws back from the historical contexts in which Nikritin worked to

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19 For further discussion of the picture’s censure, see Bowlt 2013, 160-165.
explore the picture as an artistic meditation, manifested in painting, on what I term “phenomenologies of global mapping”. By this, I mean to grasp the ways that global mapping shapes modern conceptions of space and modes of inhabiting it.\textsuperscript{20} What follows is therefore an analysis of the different spatialities produced by global cartography in Nikritin’s painting, which I will argue provides a concentrated image of the mutually constitutive connections between maps, modernity and globalism. Now, it might be cautioned that this construal invests too much in the painted globe, which is so reduced and schematic that were it not for the stand on which the sphere is mounted it might scarcely register as a globe at all. But it is precisely because the globe is depicted modestly that The Old and the New sheds light on the phenomenological dimensions of global maps. As a scenic painting depicting a globe as one element embedded and experienced among others within an encompassing context, the picture places global mapping, foregrounding the relational work performed by globes on surrounding subjects and their intuitions of space.

To grasp the spatialities unfolded through the globe in the picture, the chapter begins by invoking Peter Sloterdijk’s conception of terrestrial globes, which he interprets from a Nietzschean perspective as manifesting a post-theological spatiality and arch-symbol of modernity. Being bound up so closely with the modern condition, terrestrial globalism for Sloterdijk renders humanity insignificant, relative but also self-sufficient, even empowered; articulating a space without divine plan or natural essence, the modern globe compels people and polities to recognise themselves as the only source of meaning, order and value. Following a prolegomenon elucidating this account of the modernity of global mapping, the central discussion establishes a close reading of the picture in conjunction with Sloterdijk’s theory. Circling the depicted figures to unpack their existential attitudes towards the central globe, my argument demonstrates how the global spatialities depicted in the picture are riven by two countervailing yet indissociable tendencies - one estranging modern subjects from place and meaning, the other empowering them to establish new spatial orders. Regarding the first, I stress global cartography’s role in the disenchantment of the world, arguing that Nikritin’s globe inculcates a distanced stance towards locality, while replacing the closed meaningful worlds of traditional cultures with the meaningless facticity of the modern earth. As I move into the second half of the chapter, my focus turns to how these estrangements precondition

\textsuperscript{20} A distinction obtains between “pure” phenomenology, which studies how the world is apprehended by a transhistorical subject, undiluted by context, and a historicising “existential” phenomenology, for which existence is disclosed to human consciousness in radically different ways in different cultures and moments of history. For a discussion of this distinction, see Cerbone 2014, 37.
more creative and affirmative possibilities. The pair stood centrally in the painting are read as modernists who, recognising themselves as occupants of an earth lacking inner essence or metaphysical plan, stand poised to project their own social visions onto the otherwise formless globe.

Viewed in the round, neither nostalgic estrangement nor modernist empowerment emerges as dominant in the picture. Enlightenment and disenchantment are held tensely in balance. This does not imply that *The Old and the New* is contrary or undecidable as a painting; the dialectic it stages between estrangement and affirmation is rather inherent in modern globality itself. The chapter’s final section takes up this dialectic in a historical register. Posing the picture alongside revolutionary global images representing socialist internationalism, as well as the planetary icons through which globalisation is articulated today, I show how Nikritin’s vision of modern subjects inscribing meaning into a fortuitous globe has played out concretely in two historical contexts. My closing suggestion, however, is that the picture’s blank painted globe returns us to the meaningless facticity of a disenchanted earth, onto which (and in reaction to which) these global rhetorics are projected.

To build this account of the *The Old and the New*, I begin by unpacking Sloterdijk’s key statement on the modernity of terrestrial globalism, through which I approach the global fulcrum of Nikritin’s painting as a disenchanted earth, held up before unsettled but newly affirmed modern subjects.

**“The orb is dead”**: The Modernity of Terrestrial Globalism

Halfway through *Globes* (2014), the second book in *Spheres*, Peter Sloterdijk’s three-volume exploration of “manifold universes of existential spatiality” (2012, 40), there is an excursus treating the meaning of modern terrestrial globes. Here Sloterdijk restages the famous parable of the madman in Nietzsche’s *The Gay Science* in an altered form (see Nietzsche [1882] 2001, 119-120). Again the lunatic charges into the marketplace, again he delivers a fraught obituary for divinity, and again the consequences fall on deaf ears. Sloterdijk’s retelling differs from Nietzsche’s original, however, where the passed godhead is referred to, strangely, as a kind of space. In place of the famous pronouncement on God’s death, the madman proclaims: “The Orb is Dead”. By “the Orb”, Sloterdijk is referring specifically to Christian-Aristotelian cosmography, which conceived earth at the centre of a firmament of interlocking crystalline spheres. Although a culmination of Christian and Hellenistic thought, this Orb has a larger resonance for Sloterdijk as a synecdoche for religious and metaphysical conceptions of space generally.
In speaking this “unspoken statement”, which reimagines the madman’s “God” as the “Orb”, Sloterdijk is inviting readers to consider probably the best known statement on the character and consequences of modernity in spatial terms. For Nietzsche, modernity was the condition that followed the dissolution of social values thought to derive from a transcendent, that is, super-human and super-sensible, rationality. Transcendent imperatives having waned, modernity involves peoples and polities coming to recognise themselves as the origin of the values they esteem. Modern subjects must consciously formulate the ideals and ends that guide their practice without recourse to metaphysical legislation. Redirecting this basic Nietzschean narrative towards questions of spatiality, Sloterdijk insists that the modern crisis of theological and metaphysical regimes implicates received modes of inhabiting space. “God is dead”, he writes: “what this actually means is that the Orb is dead, the containing circle has burst, the immune magic of classical ontotheology has lost effect, and our faith in God on high ... has become powerless, groundless and hopeless” (2014: 559). The quotation indicates that for Sloterdijk premodern societies conceived of space ontotheologically (manifesting a theological design or order). For a vivid example, see the thirteenth-century Ebstorf mappamundi, in which earth is subtended by the body of Christ, whose head, hands and feet protrude from the world’s extremes. Ontotheological apprehensions of space such as these were imbued with meaning in that beings were conceived as arranged in a created order, in terms of which the world could be known and related to. Their inhabitants lived in what Clarence J. Glacken (1976, 176) has called “the earth as a planned abode for man [sic]”.

By contrast with the meaning and closure of premodern spatialities, modern subjects undergo the world as an “indifferent machine of becoming that, inaccessible to allocations of meaning, continuously turns within itself” (Sloterdijk 2014, 630). To focus on the existential security lost with ontotheological spatialities, however, is to repeat Nietzsche’s madman’s fixation with the negative dimensions of modernity, which can be countered by asking instead what emerges from the waning of premodern space. In the loss of ontotheological Orbs, Sloterdijk’s madman experiences the “birth trauma of the exposed planet” (558), an uneven spheroid moving within a boundless, planless and indifferent cosmic extension:

[A]fter the destruction of heaven, it was the earth itself that had to take over its function as the last large-scale curvature. This physically real earth, as an irregularly vaulted, unpredictably uneven and grooved body, now had to be circumnavigated and recorded as a
whole. Thus the new image of the earth, the terrestrial globe, rose to become the central icon of the modern worldview. Beginning with the Behaim Globe of Nuremberg, made in 1492 - the oldest surviving specimen of its kind - and continuing up until NASA’s photograms of the earth, the cosmological process of modernity is characterized by the changes of shape and refinements in the earth’s image in its diverse technical media. (773-4)

Hence, the death of holy Orbs is also simultaneously the birth of the terrestrial globe, which can be considered modern, firstly, in the historical sense that global maps, although constructed on the basis of ancient precedence, were developed in the early modern period and have prevailed since. Beyond chronological correlation, the global earth has intrinsic connections with modernity: having been established by cartographic projection and survey, not religious transmission, terrestrial globes for Sloterdijk figure forth post-ontotheological space. They manifest an enlightened and disenchanted apprehension of the earth, with a twofold significance. On one level, globes amount, in Nietzsche’s words, to a “self-belittlement of humankind”, which becomes “arbitrary, loitering and dispensable” when human cultures are conceived in their finitude as the transient occupants of an insignificant cosmic body (2014, 342). On another, globes affirm modern subjects, for in a world without transcendent order humans must become their own source of meaning.

Now, Sloterdijk’s Globes represents but one work in an extensive body of scholarship concerned with the cultural import of global imaginations, from Denis Cosgrove’s (2003) compendious genealogy of terrestrial imagery to Ursula K. Heise’s (2008) critical elaboration of globality to counter the received localism of much environmental discourse. Though I invoke various insights from this literature, this chapter foregrounds Sloterdijk’s excursus because his Nietzschean insistence on an interplay between nostalgic estrangement and modernist empowerment in global spatiality grasps what I see as the core of Nikritin’s vision. Before exploring The Old and the New in light of Sloterdijk’s account, however, I want to qualify my summary of the latter in view of an important counter-claim. Global maps, as Sloterdijk’s “macrospherology” amply attests, have long served religious institutions and purposes: clear historical grounds on which to refute terrestrial globalism’s connection with disenchantment. But for Sloterdijk modern globalism’s emergence also was (and is) a fraught historical process, drawn out over centuries and continually provoking countervailing movements of re-enchantment as it unfolded. Faced with the shocking fortuity of the
emergent spatial paradigm there arose retrogressive and reparative reactions against modern spatiality: attempts to deny it (Cesare Cremonini refusing to look through Galileo’s telescope); to make poetic and intellectual accommodations with it (the lingering conceit of a “music of the spheres”); or to re-enchant the desacralised world (the world map sometimes used by Daesh [Islamic State of Iraq and Syria] in their media imagery). Pointing to instances of religious globality ultimately makes little argument with Sloterdijk’s understanding of terrestrial globalism as post-ontotheological, then, for he would understand them as attempts to delay or embellish the facticity of modern space - an impulse to exorcise or “garnish the immeasurable with a colorful array of worlds” (2014, 558).

If Sloterdijk’s excursus establishes the far-reaching existential consequences of global mapping, which replaced closed worlds of meaning with a disenchanted earth, Nikritin’s *The Old and the New* depicts how this spatiality plays out in a specific social scene. My reading of the picture examines the figures’ existential attitudes towards the central globe, which, following Sloterdijk, I take as an articulation of modernity. At once revered and denied, the globe emerges as simultaneously unsettling and affirming: a frightening meaning-deficient earth, mapped as a grasping globe over which modern subjects might exert agency.

**Phenomenologies of Global Mapping**

I begin with the only figure in Nikritin’s picture to examine the globe: the Bolshevik, whose absorption in the viewing is complete (figure 1.2). Spherical cartographies are especially elusive and enticing, since much of their surface extends over the invisible far side of their curvature. The Bolshevik submits to this visual appeal. Gripping the stand with his right hand and revolving the sphere with his left, his gaze falls along its turning equator. Viewed through the negative moment in Sloterdijk’s theory, which holds global maps to have dissipated the secure existential horizons of traditional societies, the Bolshevik exemplifies the estrangements attendant upon modern globalism. In a much-cited essay probing how global figurations frame human relationships with the environment, Tim Ingold (2008, 463) has argued that “the world imagined as a globe, far from coming into being in and through a life process ... figures as an entity that is, as it were, presented to or confronted by life. The global environment is not a lifeworld, it is a world apart from life”. The global image appears only from afar as “an object of contemplation” (462), not through lived entanglements with the earth. This “global ontology of detachment” is for Ingold connected with
modern technology, which requires that the world be “presented as a spectacle” to be ordered from a disengaged managerial perspective (468). Thus globes reinforce a correspondingly distanced form of practice, in which people and places are engaged with cartographic terms as homogenised and manipulable points set out in a mapped array.

The figure of the Bolshevik personifies on two levels the distanced attitude towards lived space inculcated by global maps. Firstly, he is ulterior to the representation, which he can survey and even reimagine, but not enter and immerse himself in as a part of its whole. Secondly, he appears uninterested in, even unaware of his immediate environment. No longer an inhabitant bound into an

Figure 1.2. The Bolshevik. Detail of Solomon Nikritin, The Old and the New.
encompassing world, the Bolshevik has internalised the global view, and relates to his surroundings as they appear through global mapping: insignificant, relative and distant. He has become what Ingold (2011, 112) calls an “exhabitant” of the earth, for whom the world is not a surrounding context in which to dwell but a surface to survey.

The obverse of the Bolshevik’s fixation with the spherical cartography before him, then, is his phenomenological and ethical disengagement from the surrounding scene. This lack of social commitment is all the more striking given that Nikritin modelled the figure on a komsomolets -- a member of the Communist Party’s youth wing, the Komsomol, in whose programme the youth is hailed as “the vanguard of the proletarian revolution”, and as “giv[ing] thousands of brave warriors for a better future” (quoted in Tirado 1994, 236). As one such warrior, it seems strange that the Bolshevik should allow starvation and tradition to persist around him while attending instead to the globe. Perhaps his preoccupation with geography is only momentary, after which time he will fulfil his vanguardist commitments by filling the beggar’s bowl, following his comrade’s gesturing hand or toppling the idolatrous statue back into the swamp. But ultimately the globe is more than a passing curiosity for its enrapt beholder, who chooses not to pursue these outstanding commitments:

Figure 1.3. Solomon Nikritin, The Resurrection of the Registration Clerk 2, pastel on paper, 9.5 x 13.4 cm, 1924, State Museum of Contemporary Art, Thessaloniki. Courtesy of the Costakis collection.
The Shock of the Whole
the globe alone commands his attention and informs his behaviour. The Bolshevik’s strangely weightless lean compounds the idea that global mappings divorce viewers from their social and spatial context. It makes his alienation literal, as if the globe has induced the Bolshevik to escape the existential scene altogether - a Soviet Apollo transcending gravitation and locality, globe in hand.

This motif is developed more baldly in a watercolour Nikritin made eleven years earlier, with an ironic title, *The Resurrection of the Registration Clerk* 2, suggesting a caricature of Soviet bureaucracy ([figure 1.3](#)). The picture employs a simultaneously Christian and Apollonian imagery of transcendence and light (see Cosgrove 2003, 1 and 57) to depict the eponymous functionary as an androgynous nude equipped with globe and abacus, levitating cross-legged in a sunlit sky. This image recalls a broader cast of flying figures in Soviet modernism, from *Over the Town* (1918), Marc Chagall’s self-portrait airborne over Vitebsk ([figure 1.4](#)), to Vasily Kamensky’s poetic biography of his spiritual alter-ego, whose “searching Spirit missed ... the flight of the body under the clouds, the swift discharge into the skies” (1918, 109; quoted and translated in Vujosevic 2015, 85). These fliers cut a sharp contrast with the Bolshevik, who neither enjoys Chagall’s expansive aerial views, shines like Nikritin’s bureaucrat, nor pursues Kamensky’s dream of Futurist free flight. Shadowy, unbalanced and withdrawn into his globe, the Bolshevik’s floating precariousness registers less as Apollonian transcendence than as mere alienation - detachment from place.

![Figure 1.4.](image-url) Marc Chagall. 1918. *Over the Town*, oil on canvas, 45 x 56 cm, Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.
Recall that for Sloterdijk this unsettled mode of habitation results from a far-reaching historical transition, in which the terrestrial globe displaced closed premodern spatialities. In Nikritin’s picture, the globe’s historical significance is brought into relief by the statue of Venus, which derives from Hellenistic cultures that attributed spherical form to the cosmos and experienced the globe from within (figure 1.5). Indeed, Sloterdijk (2005, 223) contrasts the reified spatiality of modern globalisation with the ancient Greek’s, who had “the privilege of inhabiting a real cosmos ... a closed and comforting world”. The Venus originated from existential spaces oriented towards cosmic order: according to Aristotle (2005, 5), the pre-Socratic thinker Anaxagoras even claimed that life was worth living if only to “apprehend the heavens and the whole order of the

Figure 1.5. Venus. Detail of Solomon Nikritin, *The Old and the New*. Figure 1.6. The Beggar. Detail of Solomon Nikritin, *The Old and the New*. 
universe”\(^{1}\). Belonging to this older worldview, which conceived of the inhabited world as embedded within a sublime and meaningful universe, the Venus most approximates Sloterdijk’s Christian madman. But unlike the madman, who panics at the withdrawal of metaphysical space, the statue seems undaunted by the modern globe. Possessed of a calm solidity, it looks disdainfully past the mapped earth, as if recalling the better (enclosed and meaningful) cosmographies to which she is anachronistically hidebound. If statues could think, she would scorn moderns who manage space cartographically from without; if they could experience, she would have undergone the loss of existentially secure worldviews in what Max Weber, following Friedrich Schiller, called the “disenchantment of the world”\(^{2}\). For Weber (1963, 270), premodern societies experienced space as “a great enchanted garden”, infused with received stories and figures. In the scene of modernisation suggested by The Old and the New, such gardens have been overtaken by dense fog, which obscures the meanings once immanent to the Hellenistic and Christian worlds through which the Venus has passed. A lost garden is hinted at pithily by a single yellowed leaf lying dead in the foreground.

Dismayed by cartographically induced distance and disenchantment, one might search out locality in the picture to counteract the adverse effects of global mapping. Place-based existence continued amid globalism is represented here by the beggar at the composition’s right flank (figure 1.6). Of the four figures it is he, who neither examines the globe nor laments lost Orbs, who dwells in place most completely. One might try to construe this occupation romantically as establishing a refuge of authenticity, but there is little in The Old and the New to affirm locality. Having lost his lower legs, perhaps in war (see Bowlt 2013, 160), the beggar covers his remaining thighs with a board: far from celebrating place, he is condemned to it. This becomes clearer if we compare the figure with a painting Nikritin made in the mid-1920s named Journey Around the World (reproduced in Bowlt 2013, 156 and Adaskina et al. 2004, 270). In it, two travellers use a globe as a tool with which to navigate a desert, disregarding centuries in which globes were essentially symbolic objects. Unlike the Bolshevik, who is absorbed in his globe, these figures view theirs in interaction with the landscape. Holding the globe to the sun whilst riding a miniature automobile, the pair journey around a borderless post-revolutionary world, symbolised by a little red flag flying from the globe. By contrast with the emancipated global movement of these travellers, the beggar’s place-based world has little to recommend it. Emaciated and yellow with malnutrition, he is unsheltered and grimly immobile. Even if the beggar dwelt in place wilfully, his surroundings are poor

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1. Map Therefore I Am Modern

2. Weber (1963)
compensation for the experiential immediacy foregone by the Bolshevik and the metaphysical meanings mourned by the Venus. He might concur with Sloterdijk’s madman’s nostalgia for the Christian Orb, for its inhabitants upheld the principle of charity.

The picture does not affirm place against globality, then, despite recognising distance and disenchantment in global mapping. None of the figures truly inhabits their place: clad for urban labour, the worker and Bolshevik seem misplaced in the wilderness; the beggar’s naked torso is unprepared for exposure; while the statue, normally guarded in curated interiors, has been abandoned to the elements. Nor are they responsive to one other; no two gazes meet, not even the young communists’. In fact, it can be argued that the depicted locality, far from countering globality, actually embodies the estrangement and disenchantment produced by globes. This is suggested by one of the many preparatory drawings for *The Old and the New*, which shows the scene boxed into a frame crossed by intersecting ellipsoids and circles (figure 1.7). Although this

![Figure 1.7. Solomon Nikritin, Preparatory Study for The Old and the New, early 1930s, pencil and ink on paper, 20 x 15cm, State Museum of Contemporary Art, Thessaloniki. Courtesy of the Costakis collection.](image)
may have been used as a compositional schema through which Nikritin organised the painting, the unnecessarily repetitive global lines, some of which do not even enter the frame, indicate a further significance, especially given the importance accorded globes and discs in Nikritin’s theories (see Bowlt 2013, 166). The drawing shows existential space not simply containing a globe, but itself caught within the graticular constructions of which globes are made. Place, here, has been circumscribed and pervaded by globality in advance. Following this sketch, it becomes possible to see the locality depicted in *The Old and the New* as but another expression of the modern (global) spatiality mapped at its centre: the watery fog obscures the meanings once immanent to premodern Orbs, the discordant congregation enacts the estranged sociality induced by the global perspective, while the individual figures take their place within a rigidly rationalised graticular space.

A blank globe stranded in a wasteland among starving beggars, forgotten statues and estranged moderns: it is little wonder that Bowlt (2013, 168) describes the scene as an “apocalyptic limbo”. But reactions to the disenchanted earth need not be despairing or nostalgic. Approaching *The Old and the New* through Sloterdijk’s Nietzschean moment, we see how the terrestrial globe, whilst profoundly daunting, might ultimately empower the surrounding subjects, challenging them to assert themselves against the blankness of modern space. This entails taking a self-affirmed attitude to the disenchanted earth, originating modes of inhabiting a desacralised planet that neither bemoan

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**Figure 1.8.** The worker. Detail of Solomon Nikritin, *The Old and the New*. 
alienation nor long for past cosmic orders, but pursue instead the creative possibilities open to modern subjects.

I begin my discussion of empowered modern meaning-making in Nikritin’s painting with Marshall Berman’s (1982, 5) definition of modernism: the “attempt by modern men and women to become subjects as well as objects of modernization, to get a grip on the modern world and make themselves at home in it”. Only one such attempt is discernible, immediately, in *The Old and the New*. Whereas the globe still overawes the Bolshevik, his worker comrade seems to have accepted its disenchanted spatiality and risen to engage her surroundings anew (*figure 1.8*). She rests her right hand assuredly on her hip and extends her left arm outwards in a purposive gesture which seems determined to influence the space in which she stands. In confronting the globe’s implications and facing her environment thus, the worker meets the challenge, forfeited to her wilful design by the passing of metaphysical spatialities, of consciously forging a habitation on a disenchanted earth, presenting a positive counter to the estrangements all around. Construed through her, the globe presents a newly factual and malleable earth as it appears to empowered moderns, ready to revalue and remake the desolate landscape. Unencumbered by metaphysical constructs, such partisans of modernity recognise themselves as givers of meaning to earthly space, asserting their will over imagined deities or essentialised natures as the origin of existential order hereafter.

The pointing worker can thus be read as embodying the modernist self-assertion resulting from the disintegration of premodern Orbs. In having the globe coincide with her lower abdomen, however, Nikritin’s picture indicates a sexual dimension to globalism that went unremarked upon in Sloterdijk’s excursus. The coincidence equates globality with gestation and female sexuality, and global viewing with masculine wants. Yaakov Garb (1990, 269) has written about earth imagery from an ecofeminist perspective, which similarly proposes “structural resonances between men’s violence toward nature and toward women”, emphasising how the earth’s experiential realities have been fixed by an objectifying visual apparatus and its resources bared before human (male) demands (but see Nash 1996 and Rose 1995, which uncover complexities and alternative tendencies in the patriarchal cartographic gaze). Nikritin’s crossing of globe and groin confirms the impulse to sexual dominance behind the Bolshevik’s will to power over the earth. He also considered reversing this gendering: one preparatory sketch has a languid Bolshevik rest the stand on his groin - the earth
as a phallic projection.\footnote{The drawing can be viewed on the Costakis Collection website: \url{http://www.greekstatemuseum.com/kmst/collections/db/search.html?primary_control_0=TI&secondary_control_0=C&tertiary_control_text_0=%CE%A4%CF%82%20%CE%91%CE%81%CE%BB%CE%B1%CE%B9%CF%84%CE%BF%20%CE%9D%CE%AD%CE%BF&start=5&show=1} Although Nikritin decided against this alternative, the final equation of globe with female abdomen can also be construed positively. Philosopher Hans Blumenberg has argued that distanced global imaginations, though disquieting, ultimately heighten humanity’s attachment to the earth, which seems precious against the aridity of space - a “cosmic oasis ... this miracle of an exception, our own blue planet in the midst of the disappointing celestial desert” (1987, 685; following Lazier 2010, 619). Through this lens, Nikritin’s feminised globe becomes an invaluable womb, while the female worker’s expansive gesture seems to acknowledge an earth for which humans are impossibly fortunate. If the Bolshevik seems fated to exemplify a spatial variant of modern alienation through his absorption in the global view, reading the globe through the worker counteracts this “Copernican trauma” by substituting the estranged globe with an earth conceived as humanity’s womb and only viable environment (Blumenberg, 678).

Thus the worker enacts a spatiality apparently purged of not only the ontotheological imaginings declared dead by Sloterdijk, but also the “Copernican” disquiet that followed their withdrawal. But even as the worker gestures resolutely over a pliant mapped earth, this ever equivocal painting casts doubt on her modernist attitude. Might she consolidate the Bolshevik’s distanced perspective by acting it out in social practice? Might her commanding point figure an insignificant, even hubristic gesture, destined to disappear into the swirling mists behind? The worker’s very modernity seems dubious: her features and complexion resemble those of the Venus personifying tradition to her right, suggesting that “the new” is merely “the old” in modern overalls. And if the worker is distinguished only superficially from tradition, then the globe too might be little different from the premodern cosmographies it superseded, and might share their pathologies and fate.

Mapping Meaning onto the Globe

Notwithstanding these intimations of hubris, for me the worker figure embodies the idea that the unsettling blankness or facticity of global spatiality is, in fact, a precondition of modernist self-assertion. The point is reinforced if we return to the painting’s central vignette, depicting the Bolshevik’s steely confrontation with the globe. His purposive gaze falls across a nebulous global surface almost inviting the imposition of form. Indeed, it requires no leap of imagination to
envisage a pencil in the Bolshevik’s left hand, with which he bestows significance on a meaning-deficient world. Building on these moments of empowered, modernist meaning-making in the painting, this final section poses different global imaginations that have prevailed historically alongside *The Old and the New*. First global images belonging to the contemporary iconography of globalisation, then the imagery of socialist internationalism is discussed. Exploring the picture’s resonances with these very different globalisms, I argue that Nikritin’s work focuses a perpetual, constitutively modern impulse to map meaning and order onto a fortuitous world. I take the blank central globe as my point of departure: an empty space and signifier through which I now engage some of the mappings that have enwrapped the disenchanted globe in constructed significance.

To begin, consider the global rhetorics pervading current visual culture. Unlike Nikritin’s three-dimensional globe, today global maps are largely experienced as digital composites which can be instanced and interacted with on screens in countless quotidian settings, or as logos discarding all but the symbolic dimensions of global geography to create instantly consumable icons of corporate identity. Whether branding TNCs, focusing ecological anxieties, or finding a figure for the Internet, globe icons tend to elicit cosmopolitan identifications and concerns. Although Nikritin’s characters would scarcely recognise these concerns, still less identify with them, *The Old and the New* prefigures the mode of reception in which current global maps and imagery are consumed. My impression is that they are experienced in the backgrounds of lived practice (a browser tab icon, for example, or a clip introducing a newsroom broadcast), and that their efficacy derives from their being both pervasive and inconspicuous. This is confirmed by sociologists Bronislaw Szerzynski and John Urry (2002, 466-68), who, updating Michael Billig’s (1995) notion of “banal nationalism”, refer to an emergent condition of “banal globalism”, in which cosmopolitan consumer-citizens are constructed through daily exposure to media motifs of global belonging. Although such global motifs are rarely submitted to the kind of cerebral scrutiny applied by the Bolshevik, the state of distraction in which contemporary subjects experience them is exemplified by the beggar’s spare stare, the Venus’s turning away and the metro-worker’s attention elsewhere. These figures ignore the central globe, but it stands centrally among them, shaping how they conceive and inhabit space all the more effectively for going unnoticed and unremarked. Thus the picture envisions a cultural situation subtly mediated by global mappings, prefiguring the phenomenological conditions through which globalism is constructed today.
Engaging banal globalism through *The Old and the New* also uncovers disquieting aspects of contemporary globality of which prevailing maps and media-motifs give little suggestion. Vittoria Di Palma (2009, 264) argues that the mapping application Google Earth “creates the fantasy of an intimate globe”, overcoming physical geography to condition an unprecedented accessibility of views and mutual looking across the planet. Posing contemporary global maps and images alongside Nikritin’s existentially-laden group portrait deflates these fantasies of intimacy. The Bolshevik’s intimacy with the globe has its corollary in local distance and disengagement, while mapped visions of world closeness, mutuality and holism, when set against Nikritin’s wilderness, become blindly optimistic rhetorics forcing significance onto a shifting blankness.

It is striking that an interwar Soviet painting should reflect current globalism, since much social theory has presented contemporary globalisation as a negation of Eastern Bloc communism, implicitly positioning the latter outside of globalist discourse. Nevertheless, the globe was one of the most prominent motifs in socialist visual culture. Figured in banners and prints, carried in parades as three-dimensional properties, or reworked by artists as different as the English romantic Walter Crane and the Latvian constructivist Gustav Klutsis, socialist globe imagery provided a concise visual symbol of global solidarity between workers. It emerged in the nineteenth century as part of the larger discourse of socialist internationalism, which sought, in the words of Leon Trotsky ([1918] n.d.), “to put forward and defend the overall interests of the whole proletariat in its totality independent of nationality”. These associations are clear in a political poster designed in 1919 by Alexandr Petrovich Apsit entitled *First of May. The Workers of the World Have Nothing to Lose but their Chains, but they Have the Whole World to Gain* (figure 1.9). A crowd depicted as representing all world cultures and every trade, though comprised exclusively of men, holds a nighttime revolutionary assembly. The political vision espoused by the central, smock-clad speaker is conjured in the sky: a stark white earth whose nations are steadily merging into the global red of socialism. A scarlet banner declaring “Workers of the World, Unite!” billows around the vision, having been planted, significantly, in Moscow. Imagining Apsit’s globe in the blank space of Nikritin’s mandates a reinterpretation of *The Old and the New*. The two youths become advocates of globalising revolutionary gains in a border-crossing project indicated by the worker’s expansionist gesture, while the Venus and beggar figure symptoms of residual tradition and

22 I chose this example following Baron (2013, 2).
The Shock of the Whole

morbidity, soon to disappear together with the boundaries that once divided the now united globe. But before long it becomes apparent that *The Old and the New* undermines the positivity of socialist globalism. In the Apsit, the congregation is a community; though we might query the emergent hierarchy between the speaking individual and the listening crowd, this is a dialogic situation from which a common, indeed universal, project will emerge. The globe reveals a captivating social ideal, towering over a nocturnal scene in which darkness implies not danger but impending daybreak - the coming of a new society. In Nikritin’s painting, by contrast, the proximity of the mute figures enacts a claustrophobic isolation, while the globe, far from unfolding a visionary future, belongs to the fallen present fully as much as the dead leaf, dirt ground or beggar’s bowl. Gloom swallows the distinction between night and day.

This mood of doubt and defeat befits the fortunes of socialist globalism in the Soviet Union. Whereas Apsit’s poster helped revive revolutionary internationalism after the Great War, by the time Nikritin painted *The Old and the New* the expansionist programme of the revolutionary organisation known as the Third International or “Comintern” (1919-1943) had begun to wane. E. H. Carr (2013,
9) has written that in this period the notion of global revolution “no longer occupied a central place in [the Comintern’s] agenda. World revolution continued to figure in the perorations of Comintern pronouncements on every solemn occasion; it was no longer thought of as the primary condition of the survival of the Soviet regime”. In the 1930s, then, revolutionary internationalism was being gradually hollowed out by a Stalinist drive towards state-formation and an accompanying rhetoric of “socialism in one country”. This had ramifications for geographical practice: the geodetical geometry in which global cartography is grounded came under criticism for its supposed formalism, and the energies of Soviet cartographers were redirected towards topographical mappings of the Union as a closed territory (see Baron 2013). Viewed against the backdrop of this ossification of socialist globalism in the USSR, Nikritin’s picture takes on the appearance of a pained retrospective restaging of how aspirations towards a globe united under Communism played out and came to grief in revolutionary practice. The Bolshevik looks, the worker points, both are in thrall to the global vision, and yet poverty and tradition persist. If Nikritin’s is a socialist globe, it was held back from fulfilling its ambitions by the Stalinist assertion of statism, remaining stranded in a landscape it failed to transform and society it failed to unite.

But taking the central sphere in this way as an empty placeholder onto which I have projected different globalisms downplays the fact that, unlike the meaning-saturated global images invoked above, Nikritin’s globe offers nothing by way of geographical vision (figure 1.10). Resolutely non-discursive, it presents a nebulous blank, no less vapourous and uncertain than the mists churning on its peripheries. Remember the extraordinary size of the canvas, confronting spectators with this starkly blank painted globe, larger than many cartographic equivalents, at just eye level. Although it should be said that, viewed up close, the globe does display slight suggestions of form, this only incites viewers to will the existence of a more developed geographical vision that the picture ultimately withholds.

Beyond offering a mute space through which to explore ulterior global discourses, then, Nikritin’s globe has its own, specific import. To close, I want to suggest that this bare, rock-blue sphere embodies the meaningless facticity onto which (and in reaction to which) modern discourses of meaning are projected. Its formal blankness denotes existential blankness, encapsulating the post-ontotheological spatiality of Sloterdijk’s excursus in that it offers neither transcendent meanings nor inherent orders, and certainly no spaces predesignated for human habitation. My reading of The Old and the New has also encountered modernist figures who affirm themselves against this blankness
by actively originating their own social schemas. The worker stands ready to build upon the tabula rasa of the wasteland; the Bolshevik is poised to inscribe self-made meanings onto a meaningless world. But the bare globe suspended between these two figures subtly undermines their gestures of empowered creativity. Unsettlingly blank, Nikritin’s globe sets forth the frightening facticity of the disenchanted earth - a facticity which, though continually papered over with confected significance, haunts the maps made to keep it at bay.

This chapter has explored the spatialities produced through global mapping in Solomon Nikritin’s The Old and the New. Drawing on Peter Sloterdijk’s Nietzschean excursus on terrestrial globes, I have shown how the picture presents globalism as a constitutively modern apprehension of space, riven by two contrary yet inextricable tendencies. On one side, the mapped globe represents a
culminating motif in the disenchantment of the world. Clustered around a bare sphere in a murky wasteland, the depicted figures enact an estranged, post-theological spatiality in which humans live upon a globe, not immersively in a world, still less as part of a meaningfully constructed cosmos. On the other, the disenchanted earth preconditions empowered attitudes to terrestrial space, spurring its inhabitants to generate new spatial orders of their own, reflexive design. Engaging this theme, I have construed the central figures as modernists ready to inscribe new visions of society and space onto a malleable globe, while also connecting Nikritin’s picture to global imaginations circulating in Soviet and contemporary culture. In offering a poignant image of socialist internationalism thwarted and in mirroring the phenomenological conditions of banal globalism, the painting brings into focus how modern cultures have enwrapped an unnervingly blank terrestrial globe in constructed significance.

It is eight decades since Nikritin painted *The Old and the New*. In that time the painting has been censored, stored away in the artist’s studio, rediscovered by a collector and taken to Uzbekistan for eventual exhibition. Meanwhile global imageries and rhetorics have proliferated in cultural discourse, attaining such importance that today the term “globalisation” represents perhaps the leading concept through which contemporary society understands itself. What Nikritin’s painting returns us to, I have argued, is the meaningless facticity across which these global rhetorics play out. At the Uzbek fringe of a vanished Soviet Union, *The Old and the New* depicts a modern condition in which people and polities consciously project their own meanings onto the fortuitous earth disclosed in their midst. The three remaining case studies in Part I address some of the confected orders that have been mapped onto the times and spaces of the disenchanted modern globe depicted in Nikritin’s painting. The following chapter begins by examining a series of map artworks that highlight, and critically reimagine, the global temporality constructed and inculcated by modern mapping.
Figure 2.1. Alison Hildreth, *World Fort*, graphite, etching, 23 x 30.5 cm, 2007. Courtesy of the artist.
2. Combined and Uneven Cartography: Maps and Time in Alison Hildreth’s *Forthrights and Meanders*

Cartography and time. The conjuncture has something counter-intuitive about it, as if maps were properly at home only in two, occasionally three, spatial dimensions whilst being excused from any temporal equivalents. Yet despite being routinely identified first and foremost with space, maps impose temporal as well as spatial orders onto the geographical contingency figured forth in Nikritin’s *The Old and the New*. Consider the global maps and icons I discussed in the previous chapter under the rubric of banal globalism. The mapped image of the globe is enrolled in the service of many, often competing actors and interests, from transnational corporations to religions and protest movements. Across this diversity of interests, though, contemporary global images participate in the construction of a common temporality, in which the earth is conceived as forming one simultaneous totality. Different regions certainly have different times in this prevailing imagination of globality, but only according to the carefully calculated time zones belonging to a single, globally coordinated temporality.

To explore shifting cartographic constructions of time, this chapter addresses a series of map artworks by a contemporary American artist working in Portland, Maine named Alison Hildreth (b. 1939). Hildreth’s mappings stand as an alternative to the uniform temporality that modern mapping cultures have conventionally projected onto the planet. This is intimated by a small etching produced in 2007 entitled *World Fort* (figure 2.1). Scattered with incongruous ruins, geometries and geomorphologies, onto which the lineaments of an upturned globe are imprinted, this obscure world geography, like Hildreth’s wider body of mappings, contains multiple temporal orders, which

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23 On the historical variety of images of the global earth, see Cosgrove (2001).
clash, overlap and interweave in unpredictable ways. The thirty-seven cartographies that make up the series *Forthrights and Meanders*, in particular, are models of temporal multiplicity and overlap. I approach the series in conjunction with the Marxist theory of combined and uneven development, which stresses how capitalist globalisation, far from producing a uniformly developed global dispensation, “survives through uneven geographical development”, indeed “is uneven geographical development” (Harvey 2005, 88). In this light, maps and images of a perfectly simultaneous globe must be seen more as embodying the dream of a fully achieved capitalist globalisation than as reflecting its reality (see Smith 1997, 11-14). Released into a visual culture pervaded by synchronous globes, Hildreth’s geographies foreground instead the temporal gaps, differences and disjunctions - in a word, the unevennesses - with which the modern world is riven.

Centrally at stake in my analysis of Hildreth’s mappings, then, is the theme of maps and time. Definitions of maps prioritise space without reference to time: J.B. Harley and David Woodward’s widely adopted definition, for example, posits maps as “graphic representations that facilitate a spatial understanding of things, conceptions, conditions, processes, or events in the human world” (1987, xvi). Yet the absence of the temporality in both cartographic theory and everyday understandings of mapping serves only to underline the originality of Hildreth’s obscure mappings, which consistently foreground time while geography progressively crumbles and falls away. My argument stresses how Hildreth’s map art contravenes cartography’s conventional relation to time, giving rise to an experimental form of “polychronous” mapping practice that is especially well constituted to grapple with the temporalities of uneven capitalist development and encroaching environmental disaster.

**Monochronous Mapmaking**

Maps might be identified first and foremost with space, but it does not follow that time is missing from maps, that maps cannot signify temporally or that the act of perceiving a map does not take time. Indeed, Denis Wood insists that “the map does encode time, and to the same degree that it encodes space”, with the qualification that on maps “time has been collapsed into space” (2010, 95). He imagines mapping as a walk around the block (95-96). The walker’s tempo accelerates as the incline drops and slows as obstacles are encountered. Yet when the walk is traced on a map, such temporal variance is flattened out into a line. Its rhythms, lulls, tensions and revisions become
a synchronic shape, and can be apprehended instantaneously. The walk’s temporality is present on
the map, Wood maintains, but collapsed into its representation as a spatially inscribed line.

Wood’s example illustrates how time pervades cartography in the spatiality of its graphics. Since
the temporality of maps has received little attention in the cartographic literature, this section briefly
appraises some of the ways that mapmakers have perceived and managed time. Although the
temporalities of mapping have varied considerably across history and in different cultural contexts,
I stress how the differentiation of maps in modernity gave rise to what I shall call “monochrony” in
mapmaking. Viewing Hildreth’s mappings against the backdrop of monochronous cartography, I
shall gauge the import of their experimental deviations from the received temporality of maps.

Maps have tenses. They might suggest that “this is, was or will be there”, or more ludic temporal
propositions: “this could or should have been there”. Tenses are, of course, relative and variable,
and maps migrate across different tenses as they and their contexts age and change. Consider, for
instance, the declaration appended to John Norden’s 1653 map of London, “by the helpe of wich
plot they [“cuntrey men”] shall be able to know how farr it is to any street”. And yet, for all its
proud utility, Norden’s “plot” was suddenly rendered less instructive in September 1666, as fire
ravaged its sometime referent, transforming the map into a record of London past.

Cartographic tenses are liable to rapid change, then, but they are almost always given as singular
and discrete. That is to say that the majority of maps are presented and perceived as being
“monochronous”: having one temporality only. They aspire to level all temporal diversity, and
thereby to achieve a state in which every part of the geography they set forth is seamlessly
simultaneous with every other. However, maps can only pretend to such blanket simultaneity, which
remains an impossible but largely unforgoable ideal. Impossible because the information given in
maps is gathered and organised over periods of time, however small; unforgoable because temporal
disparity in mapping often diminishes its use-value, at least with regard to the navigational purposes
with which maps are primarily associated today. This double-bind is borne out in the digital
mapping application Google Earth. Though users tend to perceive and use this application as though
it figured a simultaneous snapshot of the earth at one integral instance, it is actually composed of
many thousands of images taken at many thousands of different times. Behind a presentation of
monochrony, its virtual globe stitches together colossal temporal diversity into a whole whose
seams are rarely smoothed over neatly (see figure 2.2).
Despite the normativity of monochrony in mapmaking, some contemporary forms of mapping do accommodate temporal variation. These maps represent processual variables within a given spatial dispensation, usually in one of three ways. Some maps present monochronous geographies successively (the consecutive climatic maps of a weather bulletin); others present processes in their successiveness against a constant geography (incremental territorial gain or loss on a military campaign map); still other, “choropleth” maps represent temporal change in a given variable by area, distinguished by shading or colouration (“between 2009 and 2012”, this sort of map might propose, “unemployment dropped by 7% in this region - shaded red - but rose by 4% in that - shaded green”). Yet although these mapping practices explicitly represent change, they do so only through carefully managed procedures that do not let different times interpenetrate one another, thus preserving the principle of monochrony.

The current preeminence of monochrony in mapmaking, which extends even to specialist maps of changing variables, should not obscure the fact that monochrony has not always been normative in cartography. The temporality of mapping has a history; here I refer to three historical examples to indicate how space became monochronous only in modernity, as mapmaking was differentiated as a
Combined and Uneven Cartography

tool of state organisation and capitalist globalisation. First consider two geographies that predate cartographic monochrony. *Mappamundi*, medieval Christian worldviews that are often included in histories of cartography, are infused with cosmological and historical narratives: in these world-encompassing geographies, as Daniel K. Connolly has argued, places “were thought to resonate with their own stories or historical significance, and together would, as cumulative effect, tell the history of creation” (2009, 93). The diversity of temporal orders and multiple historical moments can readily be enumerated using the example of the famous *mappamundi* kept in Hereford Cathedral, which was made in the early fourteenth century. Depicted within this single world geography are Alexander the Great’s encampment; the saved rising up on the day of judgement while the damned sink into hell; the Minoan labyrinth; Christ both at his crucifixion outside Jerusalem and astride the cosmos after his ascension; Emperor Augustus decreeing that the earth be surveyed; Adam and Eve’s ejection from Eden; Apollo’s oracle at Delphi; Noah in his arc; and Saint Augustine in his cathedral at Hippo. Here the grand stratum of cosmic or holy time flows in, through and around diverse mythic and human histories.

Temporal disparity and unevenness are hardly specific to the premodern geographies of Christian Europe, though. Jerry Brotton shows how a stone Chinese map named *Yu Ji Tu* (“Map of the Tracks of Yu” or “Footsteps of Yu”, 1136), made under the declining Song dynasty, similarly “conflates mystical geography with contemporary place” (2012, 134). Brotton argues that although the map is strikingly modern in that it is fixed into an implacably regular grid, the contemporary geography it sets forth is shot through with a mythic past - “marked by references to the foundational text of the ‘Yu Gong’ [a chapter from the *Book of Documents*] and its description of a mythical, unified China defined by rivers and mountains” (134). In this map, temporal unevenness is enrolled by the Song authorities in an attempt, as Brotton suggests, to ground its ailing dominion in the authority of a deep, mythic time whose grandeur might be resurrected in the present.

Full monochrony seems to have set in increasingly as mapmaking was differentiated from other, unequivocally *temporal* functions (such as cosmogony, eschatology, the narration of national provenance and destiny, history and royal genealogy), which, as I suggested in the Introduction, formerly cohered within single premodern artefacts. This differentiation was especially strong where maps formed part of the administrative organisation and functioning of bureaucratic modern...

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24 On this worldview more generally, see P.D.A. Harvey 1996. On the organisation of time in the Hereford *mappamundi*, see McKenzie 2006.
states. An early example, to continue with Chinese mapping, is *Yudi Tu* ("Map with Postscript", 1526: a print reproduction of a silk original made fourteen years previously), a map made by Yang Ziqi under the Ming empire (reproduced in Beisha, Fuke and Guoqing et al. 1998, 96-97). The *Yudi Tu* standardises imperial geography. Repeated pictograms depict communities ranged right across the empire with unprecedented uniformity; towns lying thousands of miles apart are named in one language; all provinces and prefectures are listed together. In bringing together spectacularly far-flung and various regions in one imperial map, the *Yudi Tu* also encompasses all China under a uniform time. Here the empire is no longer encumbered by the coexistence of figures and geomorphologies belonging to ulterior mythical, historical or cosmic times in the manner observed in the Hereford *mappamundi* and *Yu Ji Tu*. Ziqi’s vision of empire is free from temporal multiplicity and fissure, frozen in the seamlessly monochronous present of 1526.

The transition from polychronous to monochronous mapmaking, though, should not be seen as a formal mutation internal to the history of cartography. Rather, it must be set in relation to broad early modern contexts. Fredric Jameson has observed that "each system - better still, each "mode of production" - produces a temporality that is specific to it" (1994, 16). The projection of monochronous time onto the globe is the historical temporality specific to modernity, and it emerged against the backdrop of market globalisation, state formation and colonialism in the early modern period (Berger 2010, following Fensterstock 2011, n.p.). Conducting operations, coordinating markets and administering communities at a global scale required not just a unified view of world space, but a synchronised apprehension of time globally. Faced with these tasks, the temporal multiplicity characteristic of earlier worldviews is recast as the epitome of disordered, indeed unworkable disparity. Existing modes of undergoing time were levelled or rendered subordinate to monochrony as diverse cultures were colonised, capitalised or otherwise imbricated in the modern world system (on the globalisation of modern “TimeSpace”, see Wallerstein 1988).

Walter Benjamin gave an influential account of the monochronous modern temporality as "homogeneous, empty time" (1999: 252). For Benjamin, modern cultures represent time as a progressive series of modular, fungible moments following after one another discretely in regular procession. Its units are equal, linear and do not overlap - "like the beads of a rosary" in his Catholic metaphor (1999: 255). The calculability and manageability of this temporality is paramount: as E.P. Thompson famously argued, standardised “clock time” was instituted at ever wider scales to better register, coordinate and discipline labouring subjects’ behaviour (Thompson
1967; on “the calculative understanding of time”, see Elden 2002, 151). As monochronous figurations, maps have been significant in manifesting and reinforcing this conception of time, allowing users to deduce times around the world, to centrally coordinate operations and to establish modern trading and military empires. Indeed, the culminating moment in the globalisation of modern temporality was an act of mapping. In 1884, an international committee established Greenwich as the site of the prime meridian - the line running between north and south poles in relation to which distance and time have been determined globally throughout modernity. I shall return to discuss this meridian (and an artistic subversion of the orientation it provides) at length in Chapter Five of this study. My point here is that maps promulgated London, then commercial and colonial capital of the modern world system, as the universal point of reference for measuring space and time.

This section has emphasised how the reigning assumption that maps should appear and aspire to be monochronous, and that any departure from that normative state must be managed through complicated conventions, is not universal. Far from it: the uniform temporality that enfolds the contemporary earth is specific to modernity and modern cartography. Having established the concept and historicity of monochronous mapping, the next section turns to Hildreth’s experimental maps, which I argue tilt against the monochrony globalised through mapping.

Alison Hildreth and Polychronous Mapping

Hildreth’s artworks figure forth what I term “polychronous” geographies, in that different times coexist within them. Elements hailing from multiple historical moments are juxtaposed and coalesce in the common graphic context of these heterogeneous mappings, which thus exist in a state of acute temporal tension, often outright contradiction, with themselves. Hildreth’s maps, I argue, are polychronous not just at the level of the geographical subjects they represent, but also in the forms and techniques they enrol to do so. The theoretical provenance and implications of the notion of polychrony are greater than my immediate deployment of it as a formal descriptor would suggest. As I go on to explain, the term “polychrony” represents my modification of Ernst Bloch’s concept of “simultaneous non-simultaneity”, which in turn derives from the Marxist theory of “combined and uneven development” issuing from Leon Trotsky. Before exploring Hildreth’s mappings’ special capacity for probing the uneven temporality of capitalist modernity, I mean to establish the manifest fact and character of polychrony in her artworks.
Hildreth has been practicing as artist in Portland, Maine since the 1970s, predominantly as a maker of drypoint, intaglio, lithograph and woodcut prints (on Hildreth’s printmaking, see Ferdinand 2016b). Some motifs that recur throughout her output are flying beings, whether insects, bats or planes; darkness and creatures that inhabit dark places; stark juxtapositions and admixtures of organic and mechanical forms; and, most importantly here, a consuming engagement with cartography. This chapter focuses on *Forthrights and Meanders*, a series of dense and mysterious geographies first exhibited at the June Fitzpatrick Gallery in Portland in 2009, in which all of these motifs come together.

The maps that compose *Forthrights and Meanders* are thoroughly heterogeneous, combining features derived from multiple historical moments, social worlds and visualities, or rather “scopic regimes” (Jay 1988). Though this diversity might be demonstrated by almost any work in the series, I shall take a detail from *Forthrights and Meanders* 23 (figure 2.3) as my point of departure, since it includes several important elements for my analysis in this chapter: the characteristic star of a

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**Figure 2.3.** Detail of Alison Hildreth, *Forthrights and Meanders* #23.
Trace Italienne (an angular brand of early modern fortification to which I will return later) in the top right corner, protecting and confining the ashen web of a settlement; the warm orange network of paths that meander vertically down the central body of the frame; the adjoining yellow line, which traces an inverted and much simplified continental outline of western Europe; the charcoal edge of what, when viewed in the context of the larger picture, purports to be a river running by on the far left; and a faded pattern of floor or street plans imprinted discreetly at vertical intervals behind paths down the centre of the figure. These last traces, whose detail lies almost imperceptibly behind paths and other residues, convey what I see as Forthrights and Meanders’ basic aesthetic: namely, layered historical difference.

Consider the sheer strangeness of the juxtapositions presented here. Why should a shrunken outline of the European shore lie inverted and strewn between a seventeenth century fortification and an unknown river? Such incongruities prompt viewers to imaginatively connect disparate elements in the manner of modernist collage. Hildreth’s incongruities are distinguished, though, by their unusually temporal character, and by the way they juxtapose elements through layering. Indeed, although Hildreth sometimes sidles contrary objects up parallel to one another (see how the fort abuts the continental outline), more often she presents surprising combinations of substrates over, under and on top of each other. The aesthetic bears upon time in several senses. Visually, layering elements against an earthen background (Forthrights and Meanders often presents brown and grey ink washes over fibrous rice paper) produces a strikingly archeological aesthetic. Hildreth’s layering practice mirrors the process of historical sedimentation itself, having been inspired directly by actual historical ruins, as the artist’s reflections on a residency she took up in La Napoule in 2009 bear out:

I was and continue to be interested in the layers of civilizations that have occupied the country around La Napoule. I was able to visit Roman ruins in Nice and the archeology museum. One is aware of the many peoples that have inhabited this country for millennia. The bones of these ruins appear as fragments in the work I have done since the residency. (Quoted by Hildreth’s assistant Alina Gallo, personal communication 25/10/2012)

Beyond the maps’ visual resemblance to archaeological excavation, though, is the actual polychrony between the elements assembled in Forthrights and Meanders. Quite which historical
moment or strata a particular cluster of lines, grounding smear, bundle of pterosaur bones, or ghost of a settlement or fort supposedly belongs to can be difficult to pin down. Opacity might plausibly indicate solid grounding in the present; translucency residual, imagined, remembered or even desired entities mid-passage into ruin, daydream or realisation proper.

One element in **figure 2.3**, though, can be historicised immediately. *Forthrights and Meanders* is littered by a form of defensive architecture known as the *Trace Italienne* (henceforth *Trace*) - aptly named in this context of maps patterned with traces. The visual symmetry of these angular, supremely rational structures - which, viewed in plan, from above or even obliquely, cannot but evoke a star - is aesthetically unique in the history of fortification. They tend to dominate any map or landscape in which they are situated, even where only the moat remains. Despite their evident formal fascination, the historicity of the *Trace* is centrally important in determining their significance in *Forthrights and Meanders*. The *Trace* was first developed in Italy in the early sixteenth century in response to the introduction of gunpowder into siege warfare (Duffy 1979). Its “angle bastion”, a low firing platform whose sharp points cast the widest possible field of defensive fire while leaving no blind spots for besiegers to exploit, is widely held to have had a transformative impact on warfare in early modern Europe. Large historical claims have been made for the *Trace*, notably by Geoffrey Parker, who has argued that its emergence precipitated a wider “military revolution”, which in turn entailed the rise of absolutist states in western Europe and ultimately conditioned their expansion into colonial empires encompassing much of the globe (1988).
The historical specificity and import of the *Trace* plays out complexly in Hildreth’s art. *Elective Affinities (Blue)* (figure 2.4), for example, juxtaposes the *Trace*’s starlike ground plan with outlines for older defensive structures: turreted keeps that it displaced. *Forthrights and Meanders* goes further, forcing the early modern *Trace* to inhabit common frames with subsequent, mechanical technologies. Planes and helicopters (see figures 2.5 and 2.6) course over the star forts, which aerial warfare consigned to redundancy in the twentieth century. But the anachronous motifs which populate *Forthrights and Meanders* are not drawn from military or even human history exclusively. Hildreth is interested in forms belonging to what was traditionally understood as “natural history”. These include bleached dinosaur bones, like those figured in *Forthrights and Meanders 16* (figure 2.7), which incongruously appear alongside either early modern fortifications and twentieth century aircraft, or continental outlines. Even these basic tectonic templates (visible in figures 2.3 and 2.8), which might seem relatively unchanging by contrast with the tumultuous human histories unfolding across them, only contribute to the series’s polychrony. Throughout her mappings, Hildreth recapitulates representations of continental shapes that derive from a period after the *Trace* fortifications; for example, the Kamchatka Peninsula (see the top right corner of figure 2.8) was not mapped in detail until after the “Great Northern Expedition” under the Russian Empress Anna in the
middle of the eighteenth century. Add when the prehistoric creatures whose remains are scattered through the series breathed and predated, the continents did not exist in this form to be represented at all.

Adducing these discontinuities surrounding the motif of the Trace demonstrates how the geographies set forth in Hildreth’s maps exist in an acute condition of polychrony. Layering up diverse architectures, animal and mechanical forms, and spatial representations, all of which derive from wildly different temporal strata, Forthrights and Meanders holds contrary elements together in unities fraught with temporal tension. Hildreth’s commitment to polychrony is borne out by what she (2010) posits as a prime influence on the series: W.G. Sebald’s well-known novel Austerlitz (2001). The book narrates European journeys of a Czech-born intellectual named Jacques Austerlitz, who strives to reconstruct his early life before its disruption by Nazism. Its influence is most apparent in the salience of Trace in Hildreth’s art, for these fortifications appear prominently in Austerlitz’s itinerary. Yet Sebald’s presence in Forthrights and Meanders runs deeper. The temporality of Austerlitz’s often melancholic reflections, and indeed of the novel as a whole, is characterised by loss, remembrance and an acute consciousness of the transience of even seemingly stable social worlds. Take the pivotal scene in which Austerlitz suddenly retrieves repressed memories on a lonely platform in Liverpool Street Station, London. Here Sebald imbues architectural space with temporality. First he raises the scene’s momentum, dissolving and fragmenting the station’s immobility and substance by transforming it into a theatre of roving light:

Figure 2.8. Detail of Alison Hildreth, Forthrights and Meanders #9, graphite, encaustic and ink wash on paper, 32 x 140 cm, 2008. Courtesy of the artist.

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25 I acknowledge, though, that bare and basic maps of Kamchatka were made by Semen Remezov in the mid seventeenth century (Kivelson 2006).
beams of light followed curious trajectories which violated the laws of physics, departing from the rectilinear and twisting in spirals and eddies before being swallowed up by the wavering shadows. From time to time, and just for a split second, I saw huge halls open up, with rows of pillars and colonnades leading far into the distance, with vaults and brickwork arches bearing on them many-storeyed structures, with flights of stone steps, wooden stairways and ladders, all leading the eye on and on. (2002, 192-193)

Sebald progressively grafts time onto this extraordinarily dynamic rendition of architecture, such that it becomes a proxy for the non-linear temporalities of remembrance. In the flash of halls and flickering vaults a multitude of times become palpable and mobile, laid out like a great chessboard before the protagonist’s eyes:

Memories like this came ... to me in the disused Ladies’ Waiting-Room of Liverpool Street station, memories behind and within which many things much further back in the past seemed to lie, all interlocking like the labyrinthine vaults I saw in the dusty grey light, and which seemed to go on and on for ever. In fact I felt, said Austerlitz, that the waiting-room where I stood as if dazzled contained all the hours of my past life, all the suppressed and extinguished fears and wishes I had ever entertained, as if the black and white diamond pattern of the stone slabs beneath my feet were the board on which the endgame would be played, and it covered the entire plane of time. (2002, 193)

Here Austerlitz is able to see across time just as his vision is led into space. Finally he steps into a past hitherto barred to his psyche, and beholds his younger self:

I recognized him by that rucksack of his, and for the first time in as far back as I can remember I recollected myself as a small child, at the moment when I realized that it must have been to this same waiting-room I had come on my arrival in England over half a century ago. (2002, 193)

The overall impression of the scene is of alternating temporal disjuncture and identification staged spatially; a lightning storm of time in which polychronous moments interpenetrate and blast apart.
Combined and Uneven Cartography

The temporally-charged apprehension of space narrated here, I suggest, approximates *Forthrights and Meanders* closely. Beyond cutting against the monochrony assumed in most mapmaking, though, the significance of having different times coexist in single geographies, as is common to Hildreth’s projects, remains obscure. To develop the theoretical implications of the polychronous mode of mapping practiced by Hildreth, the following section develops the conceptual implications of polychrony for a reading of *Forthrights and Meanders*.

**Simultaneous Non-Simultaneity**

My concept of polychrony is inspired by the theory of combined and uneven development, a Marxist tradition of thought associated with Leon Trotsky. More specifically, it is inspired by the disjointed, uneven temporalities that this theory ascribes to situations of modernity. For the theory of combined and uneven development, modern geographies are host to built forms, political structures, modes of subsistence and systems of thought that belong to radically different historical orders. This is because, as I suggested in the Introduction, it casts modernity as “one and unequal”, recognising capitalist modernity’s expansive tendency towards a global scale while simultaneously stressing how this tendency plays out in radically differently ways in diverse geographical and social settings. Thus Trotsky (2008, 5; following WReC, 6) points to the “amalgam of archaic with more contemporary forms” attendant on modernisation: pre-capitalist subsistence economies persisting alongside industrial production, for example, or the depletion of some regions while their wealth and labour is invested in developing others. Such contrary coexistences are the visible manifestation of how capitalist modernisation compels different modes of production (and their corresponding cultures and lifeworlds) to confront, overlap and co-opt one another: how they must develop and recede in, through and around a variety of other social formations.

The Marxist philosopher Ernst Bloch restates the theory of combined and uneven development in explicitly temporal terms. The geography of uneven modernisation, for Bloch, is marked by the “gleichzeitigkeit des ungleichzeitigen” (simultaneity of the non-simultaneous). “Not all people exist in the same Now”, he contends. “They do so only externally, by virtue of the fact that they may all be seen today. But that does not mean that are living at the same time with others” (1977, 22). Bloch’s analysis is developed in relation to the rise of national socialism in interwar Germany, arguing that the movement exploited the German masses’ urge to escape the “unbearable Now” of industrial modernity by constructing an idealised past, into which those “out of step with the barren
Now retreat” (22). Such rhetorics of anachronism, he argues, intermingle with remainders of traditional lifeways, and exist in the same social frame as both the liberal-capitalist present and emergent political futures to produce a landscape riven by simultaneous non-simultaneity. Bloch’s analysis might be specific to Germany in the 1930s, but his notion of “simultaneous non-simultaneity” has been brought to bear upon the temporalities of modernity more generally. Indeed, for Fredric Jameson simultaneous non-simultaneity is the defining feature of modernity as such. The “coexistence of distinct moments of history” (1991, 307), he argues, is the hallmark not only of modern social conditions, but of cultural modernism too, that is, of artistic production and practice that arises from, represents and responds to modern conditions. In the “Secondary Elaborations” appended to his famous essay on postmodernism (1991, 297-417, following Lazarus 2011, 109), Jameson addresses the salience of simultaneous non-simultaneity in modernist culture, including “Apollinaire’s Paris”, which simultaneously contains “both grimy medieval monuments and cramped Renaissance tenements, and motorcars and airplanes, telephones, electricity, and the latest fashions in clothing and culture” (311). Polychrony in cultural practice, Jameson contends, is a response to the social realities of uneven development. Modernism, he suggests, grasps a “peculiar overlap of future and past”: “the resistance of archaic feudal structures to irresistible modernizing tendencies - of tendential organization and the residual survival of the not yet ‘modern’” (309).

Here, I am not especially concerned with Jameson’s wider argument that whereas simultaneous non-simultaneity is characteristic of modernist culture, postmodernism levels temporal difference (on which, see Lazarus 2011, 109-111). The idea I want to take up instead is how, as an artistic strategy, simultaneous non-simultaneity (for which I use the more concise term polychrony) represents a fertile means of grappling imaginatively with combined and uneven development. In juxtaposing elements belonging to different temporal strata within single cartographies, Hildreth’s mappings not only break with cartography’s received monochrony, then: they represent, and reflect on, the contrary temporalities of combined and uneven development that marks modernity.

Building on the idea of a simultaneous non-simultaneous modernity described by Trotsky, Bloch and Jameson, the following two sections explore the underlying vision of or attitude towards modern temporality advanced through polychrony in Forthrights and Meanders. My approach is to identify and unpack the various forms Hildreth sets in polychronous tension, and to examine the meanings that arise from the relationships between them. The meaning of each individual form or unified cluster of forms alters upon entering these cartographic fields of temporal tension. Jostling
amongst, communing with or simply contradicting other elements with different historical origins, each becomes a “being towards” this or that ulterior moment. My argument is that these polychronous relationships build a vision of modernity with two main strands. The first is backward looking: a geographical instance of Romanticism in which the remains of “lost magic kingdoms” contrast sharply with a bellicose modernity. The second unites past and future in a specifically ecological form of the apocalyptic, for which modernity represents a hubristic departure from a natural order that now returns to consume the modern.

Throughout, my analysis signals the potential dangers of these polychronous mappings of modernity. I caution against Hildreth’s tendency to slip into either a politically disabling contemporary mode of the *memento mori* tradition, which passively asserts the transience of existing formations, or an eschatological framing of ecology, which would substitute the complexities of a combined and uneven modern ecology with the image of sudden, unavoidable apocalypse.

**Lost Magic Kingdoms**

Although many of the forms presented in *Forthrights and Meanders* are directly intelligible, they are often decontextualised, distorted or otherwise rendered obscure. Something of this vacillation between clarity and confusion is suggested by the series’ title, a quotation lifted from Act III, Scene III of William Shakespeare’s 1611 play *The Tempest*. Stranded on the island inhabited by the sorcerer Prospero, the Milanese King Alonso and his courtiers find themselves simultaneously bewildered and beguiled by its unusual topography. Tired, the royal advisor Gonzalo complains: “My old bones ache: here’s a maze trod indeed / Through forth-rights, and meanders!” (1968, 110). *Forthrights and Meanders* similarly alternates between the forthright postulation of palpable forms and the meandering obscurity and formal free play that so often overtakes them. I have already indicated several recognisable features, objects and beings in these geographies; many cartographic conventions, both topographical and projective, are similarly identifiable. Yet everywhere these familiar motifs are rendered opaque or uncanny, whether by being placed in ambiguous or incongruous relationships, or by being blotched, fragmented and reconfigured in new assemblages. And many of Hildreth’s cartographies contain no intelligible referents for either geographical or historical orientation at all. *Forthrights and Meanders II* (see figure 2.9), to give one example, seems to figure the final trace and record of some ancient and otherwise forgotten turmoil,
belonging to a time and place absolutely foreign to any plausible lifeworld obtaining today.

This unintelligibility and mysteriousness must be accounted for, not explained away, since it has been actively produced by the absence of toponymy; the lack or aestheticisation of cartographic figures (such as compasses, arrows, meridians and triangulative structures) that would usually assure geographical orientation and meaning; and the prevalence of ancient and prehistorical motifs in the absence of almost any contemporary equivalents. If at key junctures Forthrights and Meanders fails to approximate the forms of mapmaking that have been developed, deployed and globalised by modern bureaucracies, states and capital, this is because Hildreth’s dark obscure geographies are articulated in opposition to modernity and the maps that made it: because the temporality of Forthrights and Meanders is wilfully anachronistic, programmatically untimely. In contrast with many of the map artworks examined in this study, which probe the quintessentially modern drive to planned transformation and the geometrical ontology undergirding cartography, Hildreth’s mappings unfold landscapes that evoke, borrowing Eduardo Paolozzi’s phrase, “lost magic kingdoms” (1985). By this, Paolozzi means (imagined) realms of premodern enchantment, unity and vitality. Forthrights and Meanders, I argue, enacts a kind of melancholic exoticism - a vertigo and fascination that spurns modernity by gazing across the debris of centuries into tempus incognitus.

The inverse of this imagination of “lost magic kingdoms” is Hildreth’s sparse and unfavourable representation of industrial modernity. This chapter foregrounds three examples of the unequivocally modern phenomena depicted in the series. I have already discussed the Trace fortifications. The following section will broach the cartographic geometries interspersed through Hildreth’s geographies. In this section I address the frequent depictions of aircraft (often in battle with, or transforming into, insects) and, specifically, the scene of aerial
bombardment presented in *Forthrights and Meanders* 26 (figure 2.10). In the latter scene, the picture plane towers high above what might be concretised as a road network uniting a city, or - considering the work’s martial elements - a trench system. In any case, the geography is racked by explosions and now reels under a pall of ash or miasma. Coursing through the altitude separating the viewer from the earth below are several flying machines, apparently dispensing bombs. The fact that images of flight and aviation recur throughout Hildreth’s wider corpus, combined with the scene’s resemblance to the photograph of airborne conflict taken from the Canadian national archives that I pose against it here (figure 2.11), confirms my suggestion that in *Forthrights and Meanders* 26 Hildreth is representing modernity through a scene of aerial warfare.

My point here is not just that modernity, for Hildreth, is threatened by the possibility of bombing and mechanical warfare more generally. Note how the collections of geometric forms that compose these aircraft are at several points continuous with the grounded lines that surround them. These
“flying machines”, if they are fully that, are only just differentiated by brown colouration. If one goes by their lineation alone, the forms come to merge into the divided topography behind. This is exemplified by the figure in the picture’s bottom right corner (**figure 2.12**), which seems to blend the surrounding warplanes’ industrial form with a tangled intersection of several roads such as might exist in the geography below them. Here the ambiguity of such forms, their apparent slippage between mechanical and topographical status, registers as a compaction of the territory and its assailants. As we shall see in the case of helicopters and insects, not to mention spider’s webs, cities and triangular lines, Hildreth frequently forces forms belonging to opposed material, historical and conceptual orders to coalesce into single figures. In keeping with this *Forthrights and Meanders* 26 shows the bombers emerging out of, or indivisibly bound with, the bombed terrain. The effect is to suggest that modern geographies, in sharp contrast to the lost magic kingdoms imagined in the wider series, somehow imply, perhaps even invite, destructive struggle - that modernity and barbarism, as Josef Früchtl has written, represent “no contradiction in terms. Quite the contrary, in fact: they seem to fit together very well” (2007, 6).

As a series of maps crowded with exotic ruins left by mysterious, now vanished peoples, in which the modern world is represented almost solely by destruction beheld and administered from the air *Forthrights and Meanders*, I argue, presents a characteristically Romantic engagement with cartography, despite its having been produced long after the nineteenth-century terminus traditionally ascribed to Romanticism. Indeed, *Forthrights and Meanders’* polychronous vision, in which projected worlds of premodern vitality exist alongside a destructive modernity, is entirely consonant with the revised and historicised concept of Romanticism elaborated by Michael Löwy and Robert Sayre in their book *Romanticism Against the Tide of Modernity* (2001):

> Romanticism represents a critique of modernity, that is, of modern capitalist civilization, in the name of values and ideals drawn from the past (the precapitalist, premodern past). ... [This critique is] characterized by the painful and melancholic conviction that in modern reality **Figure 2.12.** Detail of Alison Hildreth, *Forthrights and Meanders* #26.
something precious has been lost, at the level of individuals and humanity at large. (2001, 17 and 21)

This definition of Romanticism serves well to establish Forthrights and Meanders’ connection to contemporary mass culture, with which its coarse and yellowed aesthetic is so at odds. Löwy and Sayre stress how Romanticism is not a premodern refutation of the modern, but rather a specifically “modern critique of modernity”:

That means that, even as the Romantics rebel against modernity, they cannot fail to be profoundly shaped by their time. Thus by reacting emotionally, by reflecting, by writing against modernity, they are reacting, reflecting and writing in modern terms. Far from conveying an outsiders’ view, far from being a critique rooted in some elsewhere, the Romantic view constitutes modernity’s self-criticism. (21)

The point, here, is that nothing is so thoroughly modern, so deeply marked by capitalist, industrial or statist modernity and conditioned by the experience of living through it, as the conscious wish to leave modernity behind. Thus attempts to recuperate “traditional” premodern worlds, like Hildreth’s lost magic kingdoms, are profoundly modern.

This second point opens up critical perspectives on Forthrights and Meanders. If Romantic artists value traditional worlds (and in this case traditional geographies) on account of their temporal, spatial and qualitative distance from the banality or maleficence perceived in modernity, the specificity of these premodern worlds is of secondary importance. Consequently, Romantic artists not only tend to collapse differences between diverse premodern cultures, overlooking their mutual tensions as insignificant relative to their current capacity to signify as “enchanted” foils to modern facticity or to disenchantment of the sort figured in Nikritin’s The Old and the New. Thus Hildreth’s

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26 The periodisation of Romanticism that follows from this conceptualisation is especially challenging; the Romantic “worldview”, Löwy and Sayre argue, is “coextensive with capitalism itself”, a basic reaction to the modern world system that migrates and develops along with and against it. As such, Romanticism “has not yet disappeared” (2001, 17) and “the romantic fire is still burning” (Löwy and Sayre, 1990, 90).

27 The Retort Collective makes a similar conceptual move, though in a rather different context, in suggesting that revolutionary Islam, in pursuing what they call its “will-to-go-back” (its will, that is, to restitute a premodern social order), is “a modern phenomenon - even, especially, in its wish not to be” (2005, 184).
mappings mix elements drawn from Christian ecclesiastical architecture with pre-Columbian structures, or Renaissance cosmography with forest forms whose roots sprawl out over the maps. A related critique is how Romantic artists often overlook the presence of alienation or social domination in the premodern worlds they admire. Accordingly, viewers would do well to remember that if *Forthrights and Meanders* presents modernity through the dark prism of mechanised aerial warfare, the “lost magic kingdoms” need not be valorised as pure enchanted counters to modernity. Far from it: the religious architectures depicted throughout the series might just as plausibly indicate the ubiquity of mass deception; the bones of different dinosaurs lying scattered beside one another might signify less bygone worlds of creaturely vitality than the transhistoricality of violence (in this, Hildreth’s dinosaurs link up with those in Telligator’s book cover described in my opening to this study). Stressing that the prehistoric and premodern elements in Hildreth’s polychronous mappings might actually be continuous with her construction of a violent and deadened modernity serves to undermine the rhetorics of temporal difference on which Romantic nostalgia depends.

Romanticism, stress Löwy and Sayre, is a modern rejection of modernity. The more astringent and relentlessly pursued the will-to-escape modern conditions, the more determined and pervasive the presence of modernity - only negatively so. This Romantic procedure of compensating for the modern present by inverting it is observable in Hildreth’s artworks. Her modern rejection of modernity is perhaps clearest not in its explicit themes and motifs, but rather at the level of its medium. Despite the availability of contemporary papers in elaborate gradations of gloss and grammage, and in all conceivable colours, Hildreth’s maps are made using a rice paper that is visibly little different to that used fourteen centuries ago. It is similar, to pick one historical equivalent, to the paper of the Dunhuang manuscripts, important Buddhist documents dating from fifth century discovered in a set of grottoes in northwestern China. Yet despite being commensurate with these manuscripts in its texture and materiality, the rice paper medium enrolled in *Forthrights and Meanders* has a very different significance. Whereas the Dunhuang manuscripts’ paper substrate, which was ready-to-hand at the time of their inscription, belonged to the wider material culture of Tang China, Hildreth can only employ an identical paper in twenty-first-century modernity by positioning herself in retrograde opposition to dominant media, values and norms. These values and norms still inhabit and determine the significance of the work, but negatively so, in that Hildreth’s Romantic mappings derive their force and significance in rejecting, displacing or transfiguring modernity.
This repudiation of modernity has wider interpretative consequences for my account of Hildreth’s polychronous cartographies. In figuring forth “lost magic kingdoms”, the maps of Forthrights and Meanders seem shrouded in mystery. Viewed in Löwy and Sayre’s terms as Romantic inversions of a dismal modernity, though, one could argue that the secret driving Hildreth’s mappings of enchanted premodern worlds is, in fact, nothing other than disenchantment in the present. The obscure, stained auratic geographies figured forth in Forthrights and Meanders, I would suggest, can be understood as reversals of the reified, uniform geometry of contemporary GIS. The adventitious imperfections (even the crudity and figurative limitations) of the woodcut impression and drypoint relief through which Hildreth’s maps are manifested are significant in that they stand deliberately apart from the seamless and instant mass reproducibility achieved in digital visual cultures. The arcane architectures, fragmented perspectives and multiple semiotic codes unfolded in her maps attempt to counter the properly matched coordinates and uniform scale, systematic projection and standardised codes that characterise digital mapping applications. The polychrony of Hildreth’s Forthrights and Meanders, then, reacts against a dull and destructive modernity by counterposing enchanted premodern geographies or “lost magic kingdoms” alongside them. This move is encapsulated in the two epigraphs that introduce her work on the June Fitzpatrick Gallery’s website, which declare: “The path the ancients cleared has closed” (Octavio Paz) and “soft, dark languages are being silenced” (Margaret Atwood). “The language that is eating the others”, Hildreth glosses, “is now our new digital voice”.28

Before turning in the next section to how Forthrights and Meanders imagines modernity’s ecological predicament, I want to raise a politically disabling tendency in Hildreth’s Romantic geographies, in which past and future combine. I am referring, here, to how images of once proud realms that have long since lapsed into obscurity come to stand as so many bellwethers of what awaits the modern cultures mapped alongside them. In this, Forthrights and Meanders recapitulates the vanitas or memento mori traditions in Christian culture, which deploy the spectre of past demise to issue moral warnings about the future. Take the medieval tale (and painterly subject) of The Three Living and the Three Dead, in which three princes, having gotten lost whilst hunting, are confronted by three risen cadavers. In Baudouin de Condé’s narration of the scene, the dead remind their living counterparts that they too “will be as we are/Behold yourselves betimes in us/Power,

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28 These quotations are drawn from a short artist statement on the June Fitzpatrick Gallery’s website, which I accessed on 11/02/13. Since then, the gallery has closed and the website is no longer available.
honor, riches are nothing/At the hour of death/Only good works count” (quoted in Cohen, 34). Significantly, this consciousness of the transience of all things - the idea that “nothing endures” - also permeates Sebald’s work (2002, 23). In a secularised *memento mori* mode, Sebald often takes the demise of past projects, people and polities as a prompt to reflect on the ephemerality of those present. Overlooking the debris of an abandoned military installation at Orfordness, Sebald’s protagonist in *The Rings of Saturn* (2002) tells how he

imagined myself amidst the remains of our own civilization after its extinction in some future catastrophe. To me too as for some latter-day stranger ignorant of the nature of our society wandering about among heaps of scrap metal and defunct machinery, the beings who had once lived and worked here were an enigma. (247)

Both Sebald’s and Hildreth’s works can be read in relation to a longer tradition of imagining the present in ruins. Consider, for example, works by the eighteenth-century painter Hubert Robert, who often depicted the same layered ruins surrounding Nîmes that inspired Hildreth during her residency. Robert did not only depict the ruins of *past* historical stages, though, but also “future ruins”, imagining contemporaneous societies after their desolation and abandonment (see, for example, *figure 2.13*).

My suggestion in closing this section is that the “lost magic kingdoms” featured in *Forthrights and Meanders* perform the same function for the modern cultures mapped beside them as the three dead for the three living, the remains of Orfordness for modern civilisation in Seabed’s itinerant

*Figure 2.13.* Hubert Robert, *Ruins of the Temples in Nîmes, Orange and Saint-Rémy-de-Provence*, oil on canvas, 117 x 174 cm, 1789, Gemäldegalerie. Wikipedia commons.
reflections, or the ruins around Nîmes for contemporary architecture in Robert’s painterly imagination. The remains of lost premodern worlds lingering on in Hildreth’s geographies provide templates, extracted from ancient and perhaps mythic history, for the fate that modern society can expect to befall it. Despite the imaginative temporality constructed in *Forthrights and Meanders*, I find this aspect of the series politically disabling. Allowing images of past ruin to overemphasise the transience of prevailing social formations and to anticipate their future demise suggests the futility of all attempts to act in the present. On the *vanitas* view, all human efforts to direct (or redirect) the dominant order of things are of little wisdom and less significance, for they end, inexorably, in common ruination. As harbingers of disaster to come, the ruins of lost cultures dispersed across *Forthrights and Meanders* also anticipate the theme of ecological crisis and apocalypse discussed in the following section. Yet in implying the transience and futility of all earthly projects, these pessimistic cartographies undermine the value of constructive attempts to imagine (and practice) modern ecology otherwise. Effectively they naturalise ruin and valorise apathy in the face of unfolding ecological disaster.

**Combined and Uneven Ecologies**

Moving beyond the nostalgia and retrograde orientation of *Forthrights and Meanders*, this final section shows how Hildreth’s polychronous mapping practice also encompasses the overlapping of present and future moments. Whereas the Romantic strand in the series functions by setting a grim modernity in opposition to alluring past worlds, *Forthrights and Meanders* also performs what Roxanne Panchasi has called “cultural anticipation”. Inverting the recent scholarly emphasis on the politics of cultural remembrance, Panchasi argues that “the future anticipated at a particular historical moment can tell us a great deal about the cultural assumptions and political perspectives of the present doing the anticipating” (2009, 4, emphasis in text). Accordingly, I focus here on the particular strand of polychrony in Hildreth’s cartographies in which features and figures belonging to emergent futures, or projected ideas about those futures, exist within and come to shape geographies in the present. The specific future anticipated through the uneven overlap of established and emergent elements in *Forthrights and Meanders*, I argue, is that of modernity’s ecological ruin following the triumphant resurgence of an avenging natural order. This vision of ruin and resurgence bears directly upon maps. Hildreth presents cartography as laden with hubris,
while being confronted, in polychronous fashion, with the catastrophic ecological changes brought on by the modern worlds built through mapping.

I shall begin, then, with the cartographic motifs enrolled in *Forthrights and Meanders*, which are by and large “topographical”, meaning they are concerned with observable landforms and structures in the depicted geographies. Consider here the ruined towns and fortifications, many roads, several rivers, ice floes and standing waters that make up the series’ obscure imagined topography. Amongst these, though, are clusters of forms that, representing no observable landscape or “place world”, belong instead to cartography’s opposite methodological pole, namely projective geometry.
and geodesy. The geodetical tradition, which is very ancient (see Aujac, Harley and Woodward 1987), established positions and distances between terrestrial locations through calculations based initially on astronomical and later terrestrial measurements. An important seventeenth-century innovation in this tradition, which prevailed well into the twentieth century, was the geometrical triangulation of points in the landscape. By observing and recording the degrees separating two points in a triangle from the vantage point of a third, and then repeating the procedure from one of the other points, one can calculate the distances between all three sites. Although practices of triangulation existed in ancient Greece and Wei China, under the aegis of the Académie des Sciences in seventeenth-century France it became core to cartographic procedure. The astronomer Jean Picard, an important member of the Academy, asserted the value of triangulation thus:

[F]or the obtaining of the knowledge of a considerable distance, though less than that of a Degree, 'tis necessary to have recourse to Geometry, to make use of a Chain or succession of Triangles united together, the sides of which are as so many great measures, which passing over the inequalities of the surface of the Earth, give us the measure of a Distance, which it would be impossible to measure otherwise. (1671, 3)

Vast chains and successions of triangles united together, just as Picard described them, extend across the world of Forthrights and Meanders. The visual correspondence between Hildreth’s representations and illustrations in Picard’s book is striking (see figures 2.14 and 2.15). Triangulative mappings constitute one pole in a polychronous relationship. They are historically significant, in that triangulation was not only central to constructing the society as the measured object of state administration at a time of newly centralised and absolute monarchical power in Europe; it also established, or else redefined, the shape of modern statehood, and was used to measure the extent of numerous modern states beyond France. Thus lines of triangulation, in Forthrights and Meanders, stand as synecdoches of a modern epistemological, administrative and political order.

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29 On the notion of place-world, see Edward S. Casey 1993, iv-xv.

30 On maps in the seventeenth-century French absolutist state, see Christine Marie Petto 2007, especially 57-98; on the history of absolutism more generally, see Perry Anderson 1974.
Yet while the first temporal term in the polychronous relationship under discussion here is grounded firmly in the ascendance of modernity, the second initially seems to span and overflow any periodisation I might try to impose. Most obviously, the set of motifs I am referring to here belongs to another material order: the organic, that is, represented in *Forthrights and Meanders* by an army of arthropods that cluster and bustle over and around the diverse landforms before finally overtaking them (*figures 2.16* and *2.17*). Fleets of flies and squadrons of beetles and wasps are shown swarming in an attack upon the human world, sweeping in and over its triangulative forms, and contaminating the windless abstraction of Picard’s carefully plotted graphics with their brute quality and substance. Indeed, although these structures are usually taken to exist on a mathematical plane of existence populated by abstract, not to say Platonic ideal forms, Hildreth pictures them as fully physical entities that are liable to rot, smudge and splinter. In this vision, a renascent organic order contends with and wrecks havoc upon modern civilisation, symbolised by its stern geometrics.
Through this spectacle, I claim, Hildreth imagines modernity’s encroaching ecological crisis: the fact that “global dependency on the essentially unlimited extraction of natural resources and intensification of pollution due to world-wide commodity production pose ecological threats of heretofore unimaginable magnitude” (Jorgenson and Kick 2006, 3). Hildreth’s rendition of ecological disaster imagines the return of, or collapse back into, a state of organic indeterminacy that modernity has striven to rise above, set to rational order and exploit for ulterior purposes. *Forthrights and Meanders* anticipates a future in which catastrophe unites the stretch of time preceding the upstart modern world with the age that follows it, consigning modernity to a historical cul-de-sac.

Modern cartography’s relation to insects and organic forms in these works, then, is temporal: past and future converge in the ecological conflagration of the modern present. Here however polychrony does not occur merely *between* two terms. The relationship is invasive, migrating into, occupying and transforming the entities doing the relating. Consider a typically melancholic sentence from one of Hildreth’s main cultural references, Sebald’s *The Rings of Saturn*: “On every new thing there lies already the shadow of annihilation” (2002, 23). Here, anticipation of a thing’s

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*Figure 2.18.* Detail of Alison Hildreth, *Forthrights and Meanders #20*, graphite, encaustic and ink wash on paper, 32 x 141 cm, 2008. *Figure 2.19.* Detail of Alison Hildreth, *Forthrights and Meanders #16*, graphite, encaustic and ink wash on paper, 38 x 137 cm, 2008. Both courtesy of the artist.
future demise passes onto the thing itself. In *Forthrights and Meanders* this process is visible in how modern geometry is not presented as faultlessly linear and immaterial. Rather, it appears in the light of its fate: shattered, weighed down by matter, traversed by insects and cluttered by clinging organic matter. In *Forthrights and Meanders* 20 a tower of geometric lines splinters and begins to scatter as the resistance of helicopters and warplanes against the resurgent insects concludes with the machines blending into their arthropod foes (figure 2.18). In *Forthrights and Meanders* 16 a fortified city no longer stands as a defiant demarcation wresting an ordered habitation from natural disorder. Now, the city wall provides the outer frame for an elaborate web, fulfilling Alexandre Kojève’s prediction that “after the end of History, men [sic] would construct their edifices and works of art as birds build their nests and spiders spin their webs” (1968, 159-160) (figure 2.19).

Lastly, in *Forthrights and Meanders* 5 and 8 mathematical and organic forms are no longer discriminable at all: geometries droop and yellow as the coming organic order darkens their present purity and abstraction (figures 2.20 and 2.21). As synecdoches of the modern world they brought into being, the cartographic and more generally geometrical forms arrayed through *Forthrights and Meanders* have future ecological demise teleologically latent within them, and beginning to show through.

Through these sullied geometries Hildreth imagines the hubris of modernity and sees cartography as containing, immanently, the seeds of future ruination, from its triangulative revolution onwards. The deeply ingrained failing that dooms cartography, it is clear, concerns its fundamental relation to nature. The grim, teeming arthropods that clutter the maps have no place in the rhetorical field of the French Enlightenment under which the Picard-Cassini project of triangulative mapping developed. The choice of insects as emblems in the series is significant: associated with dirt, darkness and distant evolutionary stages, they are the least recognised sufferers of modernity. The loss of insects following the use of mass insecticides in agriculture, for example, or as an effect of transformed countrysides, not only goes largely unremarked but increases, while modernity’s human victims are recorded, however unevenly, in rituals of memorialisation.31 My point here is that if Hildreth’s depictions of triangulative cartography register as synecdoches of modern rationalisation, the insects represent its unsung victims, whose ascendance in *Forthrights and Meanders* signals the return of a natural order that modernity has schematised, manipulated and

dominated. The two sets of forms are therefore avatars of a more general clash between modernity and nature. The capitulation of the former, which strikes viewers as a prospective catastrophe, represents a triumph for the organic - the dénouement concluding the drama of ecological exploitation, in which a renascent nature takes its revenge upon the modern mapping cultures that have vied, in the words of Horkheimer and Adorno, to “hold sway over a disenchanted nature” (2002, 4).

In closing, however, I want to caution that *Forthrights and Meanders* fails to fully grasp the ecological crisis of modernity insofar as it unfolds an eschatological vision in which an organic future suddenly overtakes established modernity. Hildreth imagines ecological disaster as the punctual return of a revenging “nature”, conceived as a sentient totality. This narrative structure often frames contemporary cultural imaginations of climate change. Consider Frank Schätzing’s
bestselling novel Der Schwarm (The Swarm, 2004), in which the “yrr” - a ubiquitous but previously undetected species of deep-sea microorganism - begins dismantling modern civilisation by threatening it habitats, or M. Night Shyamalan’s film The Happening (2008), in which plants and trees respond to the same threat, suddenly and in unison, by emitting a toxin that causes humans to commit suicide. In positing an avenging natural order, this narrative structure confabulates and imposes a unity that approximates a sentient personality onto the discontinuous beings and processes commonly totalised as “nature”. Furthermore, modernity’s ecological predicament only sporadically takes the form of punctual emergencies or “natural disasters” that suddenly suspend and overturn prevailing orders.

Evan Calder Williams powerfully critiques essentialising and eschatological anticipations of ecological disaster in a book titled Combined and Uneven Apocalypse:

The world is already apocalyptic. Just not all at the same time. … To be overcome: the notion of apocalypse as evental, the ground-clearing revelatory trauma that immediately founds a new nomos of the earth. In its place: combined and uneven apocalypse. (2010, 149)

For Williams, a realistic thinking of apocalypse would not fixate on punctual catastrophes, but chart multiple forces and effects as they unfold unevenly through modern ecologies. Now, I would suggest that in pitting modern mapping cultures against a coming organic order, represented as an organised mass of vengeful insects, and showing modernity pass evenly into dereliction, Hildreth’s geographies reinforce the distortive (if seductively dramatic) eschatological imagination of contemporary ecology. And yet, the polychronous form of mapping through which she does so is hardly bound to this narrative structure. To the contrary, polychronous cartography is uniquely placed to represent what Calder calls “combined and uneven apocalypse”. That is, to grasp global ecology not as a simultaneous totality, whether stricken or stable, but as a whole fraught with unfolding difference. Forthrights and Meanders gestures beyond eschatological thought even as it submits to the spectre of apocalypse, then, in holding out the image of modern geographies riven, unevenly, by unfolding difference.

32 For a critical account of the concept of “nature” in relation to political ecology, see Kate Soper 1995, especially 149-179, and Slavoj Žižek, 349-352.
To conclude, I have shown how Hildreth’s cartographies contravene the monochronous temporality that modern cartography has projected onto the earth. Whereas established cartography aspires to produce static simultaneous snapshots of geography, the polychronous mapping practice developed through *Forthrights and Meanders* unfolds fields of temporal tension in which residual, prevailing and emergent temporal orders coexist, clash and interweave. If this chapter has explored cartographic constructions of time, the next foregrounds modern attempts to render urban space transparent and malleable through mapping. Just as *Forthrights and Meanders* both throws the established temporality of mapping into relief and develops a polychronous alternative, the map artworks I turn to now both probe deeply into the cartographic casting of modern space and gesture beyond it through artistic experiment. Gert Jan Kocken’s *Depictions* stress the transformative intent, expose the calculative ontology and accentuate the repressed contradictions of some of the most extreme mapping and planning projects of twentieth century modernity.
Figure 3.1. Gert Jan Kocken, *Depictions of Munich 1933–1945*, digital print, 420-300 cm, 2014. Courtesy of the artist.
3. Drawing Like a State: Maps, Modernity and Warfare in Gert Jan Kocken’s Depictions

For all their aesthetic fascination, maps are instruments. They figure ulterior realities to facilitate work in and on them. Much of this work has been the moulding of the world by modern states, according to projected visions of what an inspired or rational society should look like. That is the message articulated in a series of map-based artworks by the Dutch artist Gert Jan Kocken (b.1971). Produced between 2011 and the present, the works are titled Depictions of Amsterdam 1940-45, Berlin 1933-45, Rome 1922-45, Rotterdam 1940-45, Munich 1933–1945 and Battle of Berlin 1945. Depictions of London, Łódź, Stalingrad, Vienna and Warsaw are in construction. For the sake of expediency, I refer to them collectively as the Depictions. Each work is comprised of between twenty-three and one hundred and twenty-four found maps, as well as plans and aerial photographs, which were produced or instrumentalised by belligerent states during the Second World War (though Depictions of Munich, Berlin and Rome treat the longer periods of National Socialism in Germany and fascism in Italy). Having been sourced in various archives, this mass of found material has been scanned and painstakingly collaged together in hundreds of digital layers using Photoshop to form six composite wholes. These were then printed for exhibition on walls or mounts stood apart in gallery spaces. Depictions of Munich gives an impression of the wider series (figures 3.1 and 3.2). Although all the maps assembled in a particular work figure the same city, they do so from different perspectives, at different times and for different purposes. There are maps derived

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33 A version of this chapter has been published as a journal article in Environment and Planning D: Society and Space. See Ferdinand 2016a.

34 For more images of the Depictions than are reproduced here, see Kocken’s website (http://www.gertjankocken.nl/). He also has a book forthcoming with Roma Publications.
from both Axis- and Allied-identified states; maps annotated by statespeople and foot-soldiers; maps that project imagined futures and others meant only to figure existing situations. There are maps used to plan cities and others to commit acts of urbicide; maps that preceded hostilities and others that outline prospective peace. The documents of which the *Depictions* are comprised are thus disparate, indeed often overtly opposed to one another. All are nonetheless united in presenting the city as an object of state practice, often war.

This chapter explores connections among cartography, modern states and warfare as they are articulated in Kocken’s artistic assemblages of maps. Unlike the many art practices that engage cartography’s rhetorical power to enact notions of nationality and statehood, Kocken positions mapping primarily as a practical instrumentation of the state. My argument takes as its point of departure Zygmunt Bauman’s metaphorical conception of the modern state as the “gardener” of society: a diagnostician and designer that surveys received conditions and replaces them with planned alternatives. Unpacking Kocken’s artworks alongside this theory shows how the *Depictions* present cartography as both an instrument and record of state struggles to consummate confected designs in social reality. Attending closely to the juxtaposition of state plans and maps in the artworks, the chapter advances several critical understandings of cartography. First, I argue that maps serve prospective social visions even where they appear narrowly representational. Positioning future plans beside maps in situations of radical transformation, Kocken brings into focus the interventionism implicit in state cartography. Then, drawing from Stuart Elden’s work on
the calculability of modern space, I show how maps have ontological agency in the artworks, stressing that it is only through mapmaking that these cities emerge as “plannable” at all.

If the Depictions crystallise the entwinement of maps with the modern worlds fought for by states, it follows that Kocken’s artworks assemble a reflection on modernity through maps, deepening the wider exploration of maps and global modernity built through this study. My analysis of Nikritin’s painting The Old and the New stressed how maps disclose disenchanted modern geographies which, lacking inherent meaning and order, stand available to inscription and remoulding through transformative acts of mapping. Hildreth’s Forthrights and Meanders shows how this performative power applies as much to the times as the spaces of the disenchanted world, whether in reinforcing the global monochrony that has prevailed in modernity or in imagining a polychronous alternative that is better able to grapple with the realities of uneven development and ecologies. Cartography’s capacity not just to project constructed orders onto contingent modern geographies, but to help realise them through rendering the world calculable (and thus more controllable) is still more pronounced in the Depictions, which address some of the most extreme modern attempts to remake social space. Accordingly, I unpack how Kocken presents the various functions that constitute transformative state projects. My discussion focuses on his interrelation of different artefacts, drawing on their material histories to show how some rendered existing conditions legible, others projected alternatives, while still others helped realise them. In exploring the latter, I emphasise Kocken’s treatment of annotated military maps, suggesting that in the Depictions warfare represents a heightened and unfettered mode in which states attempt to realise their designs. By foregrounding extreme moments of war, the Depictions articulate inner tendencies of state gardening that are often diluted or restrained in other, non-military contexts, and thus more difficult to perceive and assess.

The artworks figure condensed images of states reshaping human reality in conditions of extremity. Alongside that broad gesture, however, I emphasise that the Depictions are constructed through specific, highly differentiated documents. Invoking Michel de Certeau’s affirmation of the unruliness of urban practice, I show how the artworks deepen Bauman’s theory by exposing frictions and complexity in systematic spatial ordering. Kocken’s graphics were reworked for multitudinous purposes by different actors, with the consequence that the Depictions foreground unevennesses and dialogic complexities that are lost in the totalising sweep of Bauman’s metaphors. This nuances the critical understanding of maps and modern world making built up through my analysis of The Old and the New, which emphasises the facticity of the mapped earth,
and *Forthrights and Meanders*, which shows how maps project constructed (temporal) orders onto its contingency. The *Depictions* stress how such cartographic orderings of malleable geographies are diffused and diffracted through practice, even in extreme contexts of totalitarianism and total warfare.

The chapter concludes with a brief consideration of how these images, which both monumentalise and complicate state struggles towards modernity, stand in relation to the social present. I argue against the urge to position Kocken’s vision in the past as another document of the Second World War. My final suggestion is that the artworks actively defamiliarise the modern condition of reflexive social/spatial gardening, producing a stark image of modern ordering able to resonate not just historically, but also today. Before the *Depictions*’ world of warring states and hubristic modern visions, viewers might still experience the vertigo of self-recognition.

**Gert Jan Kocken, Map Art and the State as Gardener of Society**

Kocken has been practicing in Amsterdam since the millennium, largely specialising in photography and readymade objects. His work revisits cultural artefacts in which socio-political conflicts were crystallised. A clear example is the series *Defacement* (2005-09), for which he photographed carvings, paintings and missals that were damaged by iconoclastic violence during the Reformation. Another is a photograph named *Madonna of Nagasaki, Defacement 9 August 1945* (2007), showing a bust of the Virgin Mary bleached by atomic fire in Nagasaki’s Catholic Urakami Cathedral. These presentations of found material exemplify a central thrust of Kocken’s practice, which figures forth historical entwinements of political violence and visual culture.

Given the persistent use of politically loaded visual materials in Kocken’s practice, it is all but inevitable that one of its major strands should explore cartography. In some works maps are present but peripheral. A magazine issue which Kocken edited (2012) is interspersed with maps lifted from Edward Quin’s notoriously ethnocentric *Historical Atlas* (1830).\(^{35}\) The atlas opens with most of the world enshrouded in palls of dark cloud, which progressively disperse upon contact with the radiance of Judeo-Christian civilisation. Unlike the magazine, *Ypres 1914-1918* (2007) focuses solely on cartography (figure 3.3). This stark photograph shows just one of the thirty-five million maps the British Military produced during the First World War (Black 1998, 154). Intensive usage

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\(^{35}\) The magazine series *The World According To* asks artists to become editors, assembling visual materials that reference the concerns and worldview that informs their work.
has blackened the map’s surface around the city of Ypres, as if the map’s degeneration were talismanically linked to the desolation of the terrain.

Building on these earlier engagements, the Depictions represent Kocken’s most sustained exploration of cartography and his main contribution to map art. Discussing the Depictions in depth alongside Bauman’s theory of state “gardening”, I show how in Kocken’s works maps serve as a practical instrumentation of the modern state. Yet unlike the theories I put in dialogue with the Depictions, which engage state practice through conceptual analysis, the artworks are themselves built of maps and plans that were internal to state projects. Using this found material allows Kocken to both present the transformative sweep of state gardening projects and manifest their complexities and uneven effects materiality, in the Depictions’ presence and form. Before exploring these effects, though, I want to discuss Bauman’s conceptual metaphor of state gardening.
In the 1987 book *Legislators and Interpreters: On Modernity, Post-Modernity and Intellectuals*, sociologist Zygmunt Bauman first elaborated a metaphorical conception of modernity premised on the power of states to intervene in and ultimately reshape societies. In the book’s fourth chapter, “Gamekeepers Turned Gardeners”, Bauman (1987, 51-53) introduces a distinction between “wild” and “garden” cultures. Pre- and non-modern cultures are wild (or rather “re-evaluated” as wild by modern cultures) because they reproduce themselves of their own accord, without programmatic design and maintenance. The feudal elite that presided over the “wild” culture of premodern Europe, to give Bauman’s example, left the diversity of human groups and settlements ranged around them largely to their own devices. Time-tried habits were left untouched. Of course the seigniorial class interacted with society at large and made exacting demands. But it did not dictate a model for how communities should be constituted or life lived. For the pre-modern mindset, to which the received social order appeared natural and absolute, it was inconceivable that one might.

Against pre-modern “wilderness”, Bauman casts modernity in the resemblance of a garden. Like gardens, modern societies are consciously planned and moulded by human endeavour, and must be perpetually tended lest they lapse from the chosen schema. Programmatically redesigning social conditions implies an awareness of their contingency and malleability. For Bauman, this consciousness of contingency fundamentally distinguishes modern societies from premodern communities, which, possessing no knowledge of their own malleability, undertake no self-moulding. Modern societies, by contrast, are aware of the “human origin of the human world” (52) and must rise to the task of self-generation. Not having been imagined before modernity, the project of purposefully shaping societies exceeded the capacities of pre-modern political powers. “A new, more powerful social agent was needed to perform the task”, writes Bauman (52). “That new agent was the state” (52).

In what follows, “state ordering” refers to practices by which state agents instil and maintain a designed social order. Extrapolating from *Legislators and Interpreters*, I propose that state ordering entails the interrelation of three basic functions, each registered in Kocken’s artworks: first, the description of received situations, to diagnose their flaws and plot their transformation; second, the articulation of a blueprint to which received situations should ideally correspond; and third, the variously productive or repressive realisation practices through which plans are achieved in social reality. Now, numerous theories of state power might be invoked to offer perspectives on the *Depictions*, not least Michel Foucault’s work on discipline and territorial and population control.
Drawing Like a State

(2009), which has rather overshadowed Bauman’s conception of state practice in social theory (to situate Bauman’s work in relation to Foucault, see Beilharz 2004). Although I will invoke insights from various theorists of state territory, this chapter foregrounds Bauman’s modern “gardening” because, in establishing a clear metaphorical shorthand for both the conscious artificiality and intense spatial focus of state ordering, it grasps what I see as core to the Depictions’ imaginary. My analysis of Kocken’s artworks is therefore grounded in Bauman’s theory, through which I stress how modern states fight to impose confected spatial orders on populous cities.

The Depictions’ cartographic medium makes them especially well placed to grapple with state ordering. It is telling that Legislators and Interpreters contains references to draftsmanship and blueprints. Assembling modern societies “demanded a bold, but carefully sketched design”, while a “legislator or design-drawing despot were the only frames within which the problem of social order could be envisaged” (28 and 54). Though these graphic allusions are not always literal, their importance to state gardening is confirmed by a considerable body of research affirming the indispensability of maps to the formation and reproduction of centralised states. Collaging diverse cartographies, Kocken’s Depictions manifest a potent reflection on how description, design and realisation dovetail in radical instances of modern states casting the world in the mould of human designs.

An initial point to make about the Depictions in connection with state ordering is that several of the graphics they contain are not properly maps at all, but rather large urban proposals made to shape the future of the cities they address. This section argues that Kocken’s inclusion in his works of both maps and plans - graphic manifestations of description and design - presents mapping and planning as mutually entailing functions in the larger continuum of state ordering. Admitting map and plan alike, so that modest empirical surveys are printed over, above and flank to flank with transformative programmes, the artworks foreground the interventionist core of state mapping.

Although maps and plans share a language of schematic spatial elevations, I assume a functional distinction between them: maps are generally used to advance descriptive arguments about what is, plans to design what might be. Two antagonistic plans assembled in Depictions of Berlin exemplify Kocken’s presentation of the latter category. First is the plan for Berlin prepared by Allied

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36 Denis Wood (2010, 27-35) gives a remarkable discussion of this literature, arguing that maps fulfilled the “needs of the nascent state to take on form and organize its many interests” (38).
politicians and commanders at the Yalta conference in January 1945. These proposals were grafted onto the city in an overprinted map included in Depictions of Berlin (figure 3.4), which can be recognised by three possessive adjectives dividing the topography: “BRITISH” hanging capitalised between Spandau and Charlottenburg, “RUSSIAN” over Treptow, and “AMERICAN” above Steglitz (figure 3.5). These denote three initially proposed zones of occupation, which were later expanded to include a fourth administered by the French government. Kocken sets this plan for Allied occupation alongside the political vision it displaced: the “Neuplanung Berlin, Nach den Ideen des Führers Ausgearbeitet von A. Speer” (Berlin Replanned According to the Ideas of the Führer as Detailed by A. Speer) (figure 3.6). Produced by the office of Albert Speer in 1939-40 at the large scale of 1:4000, the scheme occupies the artwork’s centre with a spread two-and-a-half meters tall by one meter wide, standing out pale against the jostling colours of surrounding maps. It envisions Berlin’s prospective transformation into the “World Capital of Germania” following a Nazi conquest of Eurasia. The centrepiece is a parade boulevard named the Prachtallee (Avenue of Splendors), which was projected to run for five miles from the vast domed Volkshalle (People’s Hall) initially sketched by Hitler himself, to a similarly colossal triumphal arch (see Speer 1970).
Demographic elements that diverged from this imaginary were forcibly displaced. Indeed, *Depictions of Berlin* also presents three ancillary maps to the “Neuplanung Berlin”, positioned at intervals south of the Tiergarten. These define Judenreine or “Jew cleansed” areas: the culmination of policies aimed at the compulsory eviction of Jews (figure 3.7). In his celebrated work on the modernity of the Holocaust, Bauman (1989) argued that, for their executioners, Jewish populations represented weeds infringing on the Nazi garden - blots tainting the desired plan. *Depictions of Berlin* confirms this language of social design and deviation, showing the persecution unfold through urban planning.

These urban designs are surrounded and subtended by documents performing descriptive functions, focused largely on effects of the air war. Some are German, including “Gebäudeschäden im Gebiet der Stadt Berlin” (Building Damage to the Territory of the City of Berlin) of 1945, with interlocking blocks of red, blue and green grading the condition of buildings made uninhabitable by Allied bombing with a view to reconstruction (figure 3.8). Provocatively, it is presented alongside a “Bomb Damage Plot” used by British Bomber Command to assess and direct their campaign of bombardment. Though these charts describe the creep of urban ruin from two irreconcilable
Figure 3.6. “Berlin Replanned According to the Ideas of the Führer as Detailed by A. Speer.” Detail of Gert Jan Kocken, Depictions of Berlin 1933–1945. Figure 3.7. One of the “Jew cleansed” areas. Detail of Gert Jan Kocken, Depictions of Berlin 1933–1945.
perspectives, both were used as empirical attempts to render existing conditions intelligible. These are therefore maps, and can be differentiated from the plans collaged among them, which projected designed *alternatives* to existing conditions.

Looking at the maps and plans gathered within Kocken’s artworks, we are provoked to consider what mandates their combination, and its significance. I connect the combinatory gesture to the “work” performed by cartography on social reality. Positioning maps centrally amid radical attempts to remould societies through urban design, military strategy and social engineering, the *Depictions* bear directly on the defining theme of critical writing on cartography: the social agency of mapping. Following J.B. Harley’s (1988) formative Foucauldian analyses of “power/knowledge” in mapping, the burgeoning scholarship of critical cartography refutes rhetorics affirming the disinterestedness and representational transparency of maps by foregrounding how they “make reality as much as they represent it” (Crampton 2010, 18; see also Harley 1988; Wood 2010). The
next section parses two forms of “reality making” work conducted through cartography that might otherwise be conflated under Bauman’s encompassing rubric of gardening: the instrumentality of maps in facilitating transformative planning, and cartography’s ontological performativity, which reveals the world as potentially “orderable” in the first place.

The Instrumentality of Mapping to State Planning

The Depictions position maps beside plans in contexts of aggressive state action, suggesting we think of mapping and planning as mutually supportive players in the common scene of state ordering. Theories of how the functions of describing and designing society interrelate in the operation of modern states help develop this idea. James C. Scott’s classic study Seeing Like a State positions “descriptions” of existing societies as the condition of implementing state “prescriptions” for how they should be (1998, 91). Once the structuration of a given situation has been made transparent to state actors, he argues, its shortcomings can be diagnosed and interventions applied. Here Scott appraises the prospects facing state endeavours undertaken without an adequate descriptive apparatus:

If we imagine a state that has no reliable means of enumerating and locating its population, gauging its wealth, and mapping its land, resources, and settlements, we are imagining a state whose interventions in that society are necessarily crude. ... An illegible society, then, is a hindrance to any effective intervention by the state, whether the purpose of that intervention is plunder or public welfare. (77)

The rationale behind descriptive practices is that of making society more amenable to management in accordance with a chosen model. Hence, in our cartographic context, Scott and Bauman would insist that state plans require adequate mappings if they are to be realised effectively, and, conversely, that state cartography’s raison d’être is to expedite the implementation of designed alternatives.

If mapping and planning entail one another in the operational unity of the state, as these theorists suggest, the interpretative consequence for our encounter with the Depictions is that though only few of the documents assembled in the artworks present fully fledged future designs, all serve transformative visions - even the apparently empirical maps. This can be brought into relief by
identifying Kocken’s plans with utopianism, another of Bauman’s signal categories. For Bauman, utopianism is inseparable from the gardening mentality: imagining communities that are ideal in relation to received social formations entails a conception of society as relative, mutable and potentially malleable. Coupled with state power, utopianism might assume “an active historical role”, projecting social models and maintaining a climate of transformative potential (1976, 11).

Addressing a significant city in twentieth-century modernity, Depictions of Berlin fixes a moment when several utopias “entered the historical stage as important members of the cast”, depicting fascist, communist and liberal-capitalist visions of modernity vying for hegemony (18). The “Neuplanung Berlin” plainly figures a utopian scheme, its scale and neoclassical iconography concentrating the racial-historical mythology of National Socialism in architectural form. The Yalta plan’s utopianism, by contrast, is not clear-cut. Its proposals seem a practical response to a situation forced upon the Allies, not a positive proposal. Though the plan is itself no utopian scheme, it nonetheless exhibits the pull of utopianism on interstate politics, for the central gesture of polarising Berlin into distinct spheres of influence stems from the differing social ideals promoted by the deciding states. The projection of utopian social ideals is present here, but at a remove.

Unpacking the sometimes latent, sometimes manifest utopianism of these plans underlines how the surrounding maps, though in themselves descriptive of preexisting conditions, facilitate projects aimed at remaking extant social reality in utopian fashion. A context of social design inheres in the artworks even where maps have been presented without the corollary presence of plans. This is confirmed by Depictions of Amsterdam, which includes a map Scott uses to demonstrate what cartography makes possible for state power. Viewers will recognise the sheet from amongst the larger collage by the dense mass of black dots that curve east then south from Amsterdam’s central canal belt. The occupiers requested that the Amsterdam Municipal Bureau of Statistics make this document in 1941. Entitled “Verspreiding van de Joden over de Gemeente” (The Distribution of Jews in the Municipality), each dot on its surface figures ten people of that category (figure 3.9). The work was completed in nine days, without protest from the functionaries, after which it was used to deport sixty-five thousand people (Scott 1998, 78). Scott uses this example to highlight the role played by state descriptions within transformative projects. The occupiers “supplied the murderous purpose”, but it was the social legibility encoded in administrative mapmaking that facilitated “its efficient implementation” (1998, 78). Despite the narrowly descriptive content of
“The Distribution of Jews in the Municipality”, it was continuous with an Aryanist vision of a Europe stratified and purged by race.

Thus Depictions of Amsterdam exhibits the latent influence of a particular social design. That latency would be recognizable in “The Distribution of Jews in the Municipality” irrespective of its inclusion in Kocken’s artwork. Making the observation here, however, reinforces one of the series’ principal suggestions, which is especially explicit where both maps and plans are present: namely, that maps are instruments of social intervention - they figure to facilitate. Much of what they have facilitated, moreover, amounts to “gardening”, the ordering of social spaces by states according to confected visions of modernity.

A further ramification of Kocken’s presentation of maps and plans within the universe of state gardening warrants address here. If the foregoing discussion posits mapping and planning as discrete functions in the continuum of state practice, their juxtaposition in the _Depictions_ could equally be construed as a conflation. Taking Kocken’s collages as a refutation or deconstruction of the distinction between descriptive maps and creative plans, I argue, reveals two essential aspects of modern gardening.

The first is implicit in Bauman’s theory. It is in the logic of state ordering that plans, in attaining social reality, must cease being prospective or utopian, and thus switch categories to become maps. The point is evident in the Yalta demarcation. Produced in early 1945, when the politics concentrated in the “Neuplanung Berlin” still refused to rescind its claims over Europe, the Allied plan’s political hold was initially insecure. After the eventual German surrender in May, however, its delineations accumulated descriptive value as the victorious scheme was imposed on Berlin. Furthermore, the Yalta proposals exceeded the political reality first intended for them, providing the cartographic basis for the Cold War’s web of geopolitical tension and proxy conflict. What had been a prospective plan became a map with descriptive purchase for another half-century. The “Neuplanung Berlin”, by contrast, did not sediment into being. Although its imminent reality must have seemed assured at the height of Nazi power, when assessed retrospectively from the world prepared for at Yalta, or from today, the plan seems a _merely_ utopian scheme, having lost its hold on reality during the war. Presenting differently fated plans together before viewers’ inevitably comparative gazes, _Depictions of Berlin_ shows how not only the success, but also the very definition of a document depends on the fortunes of the state promoting it.

In the _Depictions_, then, a plan is a map of a prospective social reality that stands as-yet unrealised, or that lost the chance of realisation as events turned another way. And the artworks also present the other, crucial possibility that prospective designs might finally become present descriptions. _Plans might become maps_. The modern condition of “gardening” states struggling to consummate their confected visions is predicated on - indeed fundamentally _is_ - that possibility.

Understanding the _Depictions_ as an artistic conflation of maps and plans illuminates an ontological dimension of modern gardening, unmentioned by Bauman but preconditioning the ordering processes he describes. Querying the divide between cartography and planning draws out performative and productive functions that go largely unrecognised (and are thus all the more effective) in seemingly representational maps. This is worth emphasising, for the foregoing analysis
of mapping’s instrumentality conjures state ordering as something that *uses* but ultimately lies outside cartography, leaving intact conventional assumptions that maps are “truth documents” describing geography “as it really is” (Kitchen, Perkins and Dodge 2009, 4). In light of critical cartography’s insistence on the creative influence mapping exerts over social reality, I want to show how maps in the *Depictions* are not only instrumental to authority but powerful agents in themselves, “creating and building the world as much as measuring and describing it” (Corner 1999, 213).

Crucially, I see the artworks as extending this grasp of cartographic agency to an ontological level. Beyond shaping this spatial practice, or that political identification, Kocken’s maps enact a prior, more fundamental ontological disclosure of the world that preconditions each particular instance of cartographic instrumentality. By ontology I mean the underlying “understanding of being” that conditions possibilities for action and thought within a given historical horizon (see Dreyfus 2005). Alongside other technologies, cartography produces a distinctly modern understanding of being without which reflexive socio-spatial ordering would be not just impractical, but inconceivable. To give terms and substance to this, consider how Stuart Elden (2005, 14) posits the development of “a rejuvenated cartography” from the seventeenth century onwards as a leading edge in a wider ontological determination under modernity, premised centrally on the world’s “calculability”. Calculable space is typified by Cartesian extension, grasped as “measurable, mappable, strictly demarcated, and thereby controllable” (Elden 2013, 291). Maps focus the calculability, and consequent availability to intervention, of space so determined. Unfolding geographies through gridded visualisations - quantitatively measured, tabulated, divided between classified qualities - the cartographic disclosure of being makes modern ordering possible. For urban plans to be detailed, cities must first be grasped as measurable and malleable fields; for deviance to be isolated, society must be apprehended as classifiable populations; for influence to be apportioned, space must be conceived in divisible, internally coordinated planes. Through cartographic acts of ontological disclosure, modern society becomes susceptible to reflexive ordering - “the object of its own practice” (Bauman 1987, 67).

Kocken’s method of collaging found maps reveals how this cartographically constructed ontology of calculability underlies otherwise intractably opposed political formations. Beneath the apparently irreconcilable ideologies juxtaposed through the *Depictions* looms a common articulation of a potentially orderable world, conditioning all subsequent orderings. Though these cartographies
were put to conflicting political purposes, in presuming the world’s basic measurability they concord entirely; though these plans advanced antithetical utopias, in their commitment to the perfectibility of a calculable society they parallel exactly. This has complex implications. While the contrary modernities fighting the war all rest, in Elden’s (2006b, 764) words, “on the same view of the world as something orderable, measurable, controllable and ultimately destroyable”, this effaces neither the moral nor political differences separating them; for Elden it is not simply that the world is calculable that matters, but how its calculability is acted upon (763). This is reflected in my distinction between cartography’s instrumentality and ontological performativity in the Depictions: the artworks present maps as both instruments offering legibility to specific political designs, and performative graphics which, in disclosing an ontology of calculable extension, precondition the possibility of otherwise very different orderings.

In this analysis, then, the artworks make salient an underlying ontological paradigm in which modern ordering arises. But if state gardening depends on this measurable and malleable ontology, it also requires realisation through specific practices. The following section explores the military ordering practices through which the Depictions articulates an especially radical vision of modern gardening.

**Realisation Registered in Military Map Annotations**

With a phrase published in 1832 that has since been presented exhaustively as the paradigmatic statement on modern conflict, the Prussian militarist Carl von Clausewitz defined warfare as “a continuation of political intercourse, carried on with other means” (Clausewitz 2007, 28). Clausewitz’s position is more nuanced than this now tired soundbite would suggest; the energy and constraints particular to warfare, he explains, also dialectically shapes the politics it serves. This qualification accepted, the “by other means” formula defines warfare as a political instrumentation of the state, an example of the third dimension of state ordering extrapolated from Bauman above: namely realisation practices, the variously constructive and destructive means by which states achieve their designs.

This section explores Kocken’s presentation of warfare in relation to state ordering. In the Depictions warfare is a directly coercive political practice aimed at realising state visions. The artworks’ grasp of state action is therefore particularly accentuated, articulating the latent potential of state ordering through bellicose practices that in peacetime would be diluted and restrained by
social institutions. Military realisation practices are registered in the Depictions, not in the printed documents, but in marks subsequently made upon them. Kocken has gathered diverse cartographies that abound in military annotations, which serve several functions. Often these annotations augment cartographic legibility in response to the “fog” of war - a hurried situational subset of state description. Here however I focus on marks made on maps by soldiers and military planners formulating prospective strategies and actions, for these directly advanced realisation processes. Battle of Berlin 1945 is comprised of twenty-three Red Army maps, which figure ground movements planned and executed in the last large battle of the European theatre. It brims with speculative marks made by military personnel in sketching out and concretising plans, weighing up strategies cartographically to imagine their ramifications (figure 3.10).

Green pincers stab into Berlin’s southern edge, marking an offensive by the Third Guards Tank Army. Elsewhere pencil

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37 For an image, see Kocken’s website (2013): http://goo.gl/TmzwF2.
fronts progress along river banks and down streets, raids weave between firing positions stubbed onto the map surface, whilst arrows of various colours and widths course across urban space - graphic avatars of agreed itineraries or lines of attack.

Seventy years on, it is largely impossible to separate annotations that project impending actions from others that figure existing situations. It seems sensible to imagine that the annotations are sometimes descriptive, marking fluctuating fronts and firing positions, and sometimes anticipatory, unfolding and assessing possible assaults, retreats and other manoeuvres. Concerning their maker’s phenomenology, the latter annotations involve moving imaginatively beyond the present situation into the image-space of the map, where imminent scenarios can be worked through in advance. It is not anticipatory map annotations in themselves that are at stake here, however, but the significance generated by their assemblage within the Depictions. The most striking formal fact of Battle of Berlin is aggregation (figure 3.11). A profusion of local sketches and mappings, strewn with idiosyncratic marks made by individual actors faced with specific situations, have been grafted onto

Figure 3.11. Gert Jan Kocken, Battle of Berlin 1945.
one another such that a larger picture looms into sight above the confusion of warfare cartographies. Innumerable efforts have accumulated and taken shape across figurations of what was once the existing terrain, and their ultimate purpose takes shape. Thus we see the Yalta proposals for a defeated and occupied Berlin being steadily realised in and through the splintered Red Army annotations gathered in this work.

The Depictions are able to set forth the inner tendencies of state ordering because of the extremity of the martial realisation practices assembled in them. Military action is extreme because it fundamentally involves physical violence and death. Through direct coercion it imposes political designs with exceptional thoroughness and speed, and neutralises impediments to ordering. Scott identifies three factors that have served to restrain states’ transformative potential: “a private sphere of activity in which the state and its agencies may not legitimately interfere”; “liberal political economy”, the complexity of which puts much social activity beyond administration; and “working, representative institutions through which a resistant society could make its influence felt” (1998, 101-2). Each factor comes under heavy strain during wartime; in the contexts of total warfare addressed by Kocken, they were almost entirely nullified as belligerent societies mobilised at every level. Under such conditions, which Bauman calls “situations of interregnum and instability”, state ordering projects unfold with their potential unimpeded by limiting internal pressures (1989, 111).

The Depictions therefore embody a moment of radically unfettered state gardening. Though it is important that the bellicosity of these state ordering projects not blind us to totalising “gardening” in civil contexts (such as the Soviet five-year plans, Point Four Program or reconstruction of postwar Japan), in the Depictions militarism serves to radicalise and distill state ordering to its essential features. Here, total war provided the extreme circumstances through which the basic ordering procedures of description, design and realisation were pursued with a force and fervour that is usually diluted or restrained (though still present) in non-military circumstances. Seldom has the confection of ideal social situations been pursued with the thoroughness with which Albert Speer reconceived his capital; rarely has the plotting of urban space carried such mortal weight as for Red Army soldiers fighting their way across Berlin; scarcely have methods of enforcing prescriptions exceeded the deployment of fleets of bombers over cities. Amid the upheavals arrayed through the Depictions, the latent tendencies of state ordering are released and played out in

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38 I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer for Environment and Planning D: Society and Space who offered the Point Four Program and the reconstruction of Japan as instances of non-military state ordering.
perhaps the strongest conceivable form. Had Kocken presented ordering processes with documents pertaining to a more benign field of state activity, he would not have plumbed such depths of transformative potential.

**Unruly Cities**

Given the transformative intent behind the graphics collaged into the *Depictions*, not to mention the drastic means enrolled to enforce them, one might expect the city in Kocken’s presentation to epitomise deliberately “gardened” environments. So much would be consonant with Bauman’s theory, which invokes visions of “the perfect city” in writings by Étienne-Gabriel Morelly and Le Corbusier as the ultimate goal modern ordering strives after (2012, 35-45). But even a cursory viewing makes clear that Kocken’s works present cities in a starkly different light. If bureaucratic states envision perfectly uniform urban spaces, those proffered in the *Depictions* are characterised by heterogeneity, contradiction and spiralling disorder. Far from carefully cultivated gardens, Kocken’s geographies amplify moments of unevenness and uncertainty in the historical material, constructing the city as an inscrutable and unruly object of state attention.

As such, the *Depictions* trigger numerous resonances with critical strands in urban theory, some of which I draw upon now in exploring tensions and lacunae immanent to the systematic “gardening” of cities theorised by Bauman. I begin with Michel de Certeau’s affirmation of the inventiveness and unruliness of quotidian urban practice, which is widely invoked in accounts of modern cities to counterbalance instances of surveillance and control (as noted in Pinder 2011, 678). From the first volume of *L’Invention du Quotidian* (translated as *The Practice of Everyday Life* 1984, v) I take up the well-known argument showing how orders imposed on cities come to be practiced by “ordinary users” in tactical ways that diffract, frustrate, subtly alter or even subvert them, surreptitiously, from below. This perspective is salutary in relation to the *Depictions* inasmuch as it prompts reflection on the limits encountered and complexities accrued by apparently total state ordering programmes as they played out beyond planner’s drawing boards. In Kocken’s works, emphasis shifts from dominant organisations of space to de Certeau’s “second moment of analysis”, concerned with how diversions and difference are introduced into these structures through their being realised in practice (116).

39 On cities in contemporary “liquid modernity”, see Bauman 2003, 15-27.
Admittedly, significant points of divergence must be borne in mind when considering the *Depictions* alongside de Certeau’s theory. The latter privileges ephemeral walking performed by “ordinary” people, whereas Kocken’s artworks engage military operations mapped by combatants unlikely to have belonged to more subaltern ranks. Furthermore, de Certeau takes maps to reify dominant spatial orders, denigrating traced movements as petrified “relics” causing “a way of being in the world to be forgotten” (1984, 97). Subsequent theory, however, no longer thinks of maps as static representations, set apart from lived reality. Emphasis falls instead on diverse reiterations of map artefacts (see del Casino and Hanna 2005), which, as Kitchin and Dodge express it:

> are of-the-moment, brought into being through practices (embodied, social, technical), *always* remade every time they are engaged with ... maps are transitory and fleeting, being contingent, relational and context-dependent. *Maps are practices* - they are always *mappings*; spatial practices enacted to solve relational problems. (2007, 335, emphases in text)

Combining this recasting of fixed cartographies as contextual mappings with de Certeau’s theory of unruly urban practice opens another perspective on state ordering in the artworks. In this light, the *Depictions* assemble traces of moments at which even apparently absolute state orderings were diverted and diffracted, altered and appropriated as they ran up against the contingencies of use in varied urban settings. Kocken’s method of manipulating historical documents highlights dissonances introduced through usage, for the chosen materials are never only legislative fantasies of unsullied order, but rather *practiced* artefacts, actively involved in historical struggles against received conditions. Amended, augmented, even scarred, Kocken’s maps and plans figure material traces of state gardening programmes being compelled to negotiate and unfurl in relation to complicating frictions, despite their protestations of power.

This perspective can be sustained through numerous instances in the artworks. First come failed realisations - planned actions gone awry with unplanned consequences. In *Depictions of Amsterdam*, there is the labelling on a 1942 USAF damage assessment photograph, which highlights the distance (around eight kilometres) between the “AIMING POINT” of a bombing sortie on a Fokker aircraft factory and two areas it actually damaged, unintentionally killing almost two hundred Dutch civilians (Klinkert 2009, 572). Besides referencing such outright failures of state strategies, the *Depictions* also evidence their subtle adoption apropos de Certeau. Indeed, what
the diverse annotations spread though the artworks perform, above all, is the diffraction of purportedly uniform spatial orderings into an agitated multitude of local practices and disparate voices, speaking in a surprisingly dialogical space. This is signalled in hundreds of notational codes and handwriting styles inscribed through Kocken’s cities, which offer an affecting visual demonstration of how diverse combatants compelled to enact state gardening subtly put their own stamp on the process, through mappings. Consider the casual red loops and sky blue blocks with which an RAF damage assessor divided Munich (figure 3.12); the scarlet heading “схема” (plan), stencilled between carefully measured lines on a map of Berlin by some fastidious Soviet official; or the “GESCHUTSOPSTELLING” (gun emplacements) just west of Amsterdam, labelled by the Dutch resistance in watery blue capitals which subsequently bled.

Mindful of other writers’ cautions against overstating the political significance of de Certeau’s theory (Tonkiss 2005, 132; Pinder 2011, 678), I want to make clear that these traces do not indicate elements of progressive resistance in otherwise oppressive cartographies. Kocken’s collages do however accentuate the sheer heterogeneity of actors and interests internal to seemingly monolithic state orderings. Layering together heterogeneous postulations of space, the Depictions fragment the
apparent cohesiveness of state territory and unitarily planned cities. Complex tangles of informal practices and local actors replace the monochronous blocks through which political cartography has traditionally delineated states. Kocken’s recovery of difference within state orderings pertains especially to Berlin, the vital political culture of which the Nazi administration notoriously quelled with the monolithic “Neuplanung Berlin”.

**Antinomies of Order and Chaos**

I therefore qualify my previous suggestion that the enormous potential of state ordering finds paradigmatic expression in the *Depictions* with a recognition that its failures, unevennesses and dialogic complexities are also apparent - all the more starkly given the extremity of the historical moment Kocken addresses. In fact, in addition to indicating complexities downplayed in Bauman’s metaphorics, Kocken’s unruly cities enact a further dialectic, or rather antinomy, between state ordering and the forms of urban disorder it attempts to regulate and resolve.

Whether in reference to practices of “urban informality” that meet the shortcomings, and occasionally inform the logic, of top-down planning (AlSayyad and Roy 2004), or the manifold uncertainties that arise from even closely ordered cities (Zeiderman, Kaker, Silver and Wood 2015), numerous urban theorists have sought to conceptualise how activities of “state-sponsored planning ... produce the very disorder they were seeking to overcome” (Mooney 2005, 65). Following this reversal, it seems crucial that the complexity, even chaos, manifest in Kocken’s cities is not simply ulterior to gardened order. Their unruliness is no holdover of Bauman’s “wilderness” - the unplanned cultures that precede and surround modern gardening’s “enclaves of order” (Bauman and May 2014, 124). Rather, the moments of complexity, uncertainty and disarray Kocken assembles all represent components or consequences of ordering itself. From swathes of bombed and burned out buildings to diverse spatial practices or from one state’s truculent counter-reaction against another’s project to the ever less legible cartographies, straining to figure the shifting variables in play, in these artworks state ordering inadvertently incurs fresh forms of disorder and conditions new ambiguities that must in turn be resolved or succumbed to. Indeed, modern ordering can be said to found the very categories of disorder, uncertainty and chaos inasmuch as these emerge, through a function of *différance*, as antonyms against which formulations of planning, certainty and order are articulated. Only when apprehended alongside pristine plans do long sedimented urban forms become blots inciting intervention; only in light of centralised commands...
dictating actions do heterogeneous spatial practices become disorderly deviations to be regimented into step; only against rhetorics of scientific certainty invested in cartography do spontaneous tracings of space become subjective statements requiring professional censure. Both conceptually defining and materially precipitating surrounding fields of chaos that tend against the principle of designed, transparent order, the “apparatus of planning” epitomised in Kocken’s maps and plans “produces the unplanned and unplannable” (Roy 2005, 156).

This amounts to arguing, ultimately, that in the Depictions the task of replacing pre-modern wilderness with reflexively ordered social worlds - for Bauman the defining project of modernity - has been eclipsed by a second struggle, endemic within gardening itself, in which order and chaos produce and incite each other in a mutually perpetuating spiral. Unlike ordering once “wild” societies, of which one can scarcely imagine even beleaguered remainders lingering on in Kocken’s exhaustively ordered cities, this latter struggle sustains itself without resolution. The more astringent and relentlessly pursued a vision of order, the greater the uncertainty it calls into being and the more intractable the chaotic effects it unwittingly provokes.40 Conversely, chaos created through ordering induces further ordering; the more extensive the chaos, the more obsessional must be the gardening bent on setting it to order.

The Depictions envisage a modern condition constituted between these dynamics. Order and chaos perform no dialectic, which implies an unfolding resolution, but figure instead an antinomy, that is, a self-reinforcing stasis in which spatial order and chaos instigate each other irresolvably. Far from achieving a utopian settlement, modern ordering continues to ramify and reproduce itself in ever different forms, which prompts me, in the following analysis, to consider how the Depictions connect to the social present.

Presenting State Ordering

So far I have explored how Kocken combines found materials into an artistic reflection on aggressive state ordering, which, even in apparently total incarnations, remains fraught with difference and chaos. Following theorists like Harriet Hawkins (2013), for whom geographical encounters with artworks should attend to their embeddedness within specific social/spatial

40 Though I acknowledge scholarship which nuances the binary of order and chaos through the third term of complexity (Hayles 1991), the totalising gardening mentalities treated in the Depictions require my theorising their antinomy.

113
conjunctures, this final section shifts analytic focus onto how this vision of modern gardening plays out in its current contexts of display.

In so doing, I suggest the Depictions’ commensurability with the contemporary culture that surrounds and consumes them. Encountering these artworks not only incites reflection on the Second World War, but confronts viewers with a stark, defamiliarised image of the “gardened” modern condition as such, extending to its present manifestations. First, however, I want to consider arguments made by political theorist Mary Kaldor, for these lead to the opposite conclusion that the world presented in the Depictions is incongruous, indeed anachronistic when encountered today. Kaldor (2012) contends that socially organised conflict has mutated over the last half century, drawing on globalisation theory to claim that states are ceding their capacity for organised violence, both “upward” to transnational security pacts and “downward” to private, often criminalised actors. Possible forms of conflict diversify in this diffusion, rendering the kind of warfare figured in the Depictions residual. For Kaldor, warfare as state ordering by other means is unevenly giving way to hybrid conflicts fought more to perpetuate identities than to realise social designs.

Although I will shortly repudiate this as a view of Kocken’s artworks, the experience of encountering the Depictions in galleries might initially accord with Kaldor’s argument. Kocken’s presentation of strident modern gardening can seem jarring in the spaces and places of contemporary art, which frequently possess a closed post-historical aura. Take the display of Battle of Berlin and Depictions of Berlin in 2011 at the Rijksakademie or State Academy of Fine Art in Amsterdam. In the nineteenth century the building served as a cavalry barracks. Once filled with the ephemera of munitions and messes, the smell and bustle of animals and personnel, the space passed to the academy in the 1980s. Creative labor supplanted military power. Now quiet and whitewashed, the Rijksakademie typifies a historical break with the modern paradigm of warfare involving states and standing armies. Looking at the Depictions there meant gazing on a strange world of sublimely massive state action that seemed out of place within the contemplative postmodern atmosphere of the repurposed Rijksakademie. The works framed and mounted seemed like alienated artefacts in a colonial museum. This viewing might lead one to construe bellicose state gardening, with Kaldor, as a declining remainder of modernist history, belonging to what John Mueller has called the “remnants of war” (2004).

But finally this is not how I conceive the Depictions’ relation to their sites of encounter. Not only are there compelling critiques of Kaldor’s argument that bellicose state ordering has waned (see
Dexter 2007), but numerous other writings might be invoked to suggest current parallels for Kocken’s artworks, from Derek Gregory’s (2011) analyses of neocolonial geovisualisations to Elden’s (2005, 16) insistence that the ontology of calculability discussed above remains “the overriding geographical determination of our world”. My intention here is not to establish links between the Depictions and present reality theme by theme. What I do want to stress is how the artworks produce an estranged encounter with modern ordering. They defamiliarise viewers to the modern condition of reflexive social/spatial “gardening” - not just in the Second World War, but in its essence.

Indeed, if the Depictions appear remote or incongruous, for me this is because they have been actively defamiliarised through artistic manipulation. Estrangement was certainly the dominant impression made by Depictions of Rotterdam and Amsterdam in the Stedelijk Museum Schiedam in 2010. Each standing at six square meters on mounts positioned centrally in the space, the artworks dwarfed spectators and dominated the exhibition room (Figure 3.13). Scaling and placing the Depictions in this configuration physically confronted viewers, who had just emerged from a passageway hung with watercolours from Hitler’s juvenilia. Compare this encounter with more casual engagements with maps, which render realities that exceed embodied perception in a scale and format befitting the limitations of human users. The Depictions do not submit to this imperative. Far from offering ready-to-hand geographies on foldable paper or scrollable screens,
Kocken configures cartographies as imposing presences requiring map readers to adapt to the map’s dimensions, not the other way around. With no folding, scrolling or zooming mechanism available, one must step back to view the whole and strain on tiptoes to grasp the part. Cartography is made strange and monumental, its once familiar graphics subtracted from the flow of use and collapsed into reified blocks.

The *Depictions* are therefore unfamiliar because they have been defamiliarised, not because their vision is historically remote. Any impulse to limit their significance to the past is further undercut by Kocken’s digital reworking of the individual maps. Concerned that the documents appear less vital because they have yellowed, he has lightened their underlying paper. The removal of sixty year’s accumulated discolouration subtly weakens our sense of these graphics’ historical embeddedness, presenting state ordering in a way that might resonate beyond the defined episode of the war. These gestures prime viewers to experience not historical distance in Kocken’s image of modernity, but the vertigo of self-recognition. What we see estranged and relativised in Kocken’s assemblages are the functions of reflexive description, design and realisation that constitute the continuing (and continually faltering) fundamentals of modernity as such.

This chapter has explored the presentation of modernity and state practice through cartography in Kocken’s *Depictions*, arguing that the artworks manifest a vision of state action crystallised in Bauman’s metaphor of gardening. Drawing maps and plans from extreme situations surrounding the Second World War, the *Depictions* explore how state gardening unfolds in the heightened form of total war. But these are not therefore totalised images. Reworking a differentiated mass of historical material, the *Depictions* foreground the friction and differences with which state ordering projects are fraught in ways that elude Bauman’s conceptual metaphoric. The artworks also resonate beyond state conflicts: addressing extreme instances of warfare serves to articulate the transformative inner tendencies of state practice, which are diluted and restrained but still operative in other modern situations. Presenting the modern world as a contested garden, the *Depictions* estrange a long naturalised condition that we continue to practice and undergo.

Together, my analyses of Hildreth’s *Forthrights and Meanders* and Kocken’s *Depictions* have explored how maps project confected orders onto the times and spaces of the disenchanted world, as revealed in Nikritin’s *The Old and the New*. In doing so, I have broached the ontological basis of modern mapping’s world-shaping power: the ontology of calculability, which grasps geographical reality as an objective, measurable and malleable extension. Before I turn, in Part II of this study, to
the question of how map artists might subvert and imagine alternatives to this ontology, the following chapter thematises one last way in which cartography moulds and orders contingent geographies. Whereas the *Depictions* stress the indispensability of maps to the state gardening of social space, the map artwork I study next foregrounds the cartographic production of modern statehood itself.
Figure 4.1. Satomi Matoba, *Utopia*, digital image, dimensions variable, 1998.
4. Insular Imaginations: Statehood, Islands and Globalisation in Satomi Matoba’s *Utopia*

With the notion of “ontological performativity”, the previous chapter highlights cartography’s capacity to assert, create or perform beings that would not otherwise exist, and to unfold understandings of being that would not otherwise obtain. My analysis of the *Depictions* shows how modern mapping performs a fundamental disclosure of geographical reality as a measurable and malleable extension. Each remaining chapter returns to this quintessentially modern ontology, stressing how it undergirds and recuperates even some of the most strident artistic attempts to reclaim mapping and imagine it otherwise. I want to close Part I of this study, though, by addressing a dimension of mapping’s performativity that went unremarked upon in my analysis of Kocken’s artworks. Whether in ordering urban geographies or rendering them “orderable” in the first place, maps in the *Depictions* are a practical instrumentation of modern states - a tool through which state legislators and planners pursue variously utopian and bellicose designs. Yet other map artists foreground the cartographic production of nation-states themselves. The bodies, borders and lexical designations that constitute the mapped image of the state are subverted in works by Luciano Fabro, who strung up and skewered outlines of Italy; Michael Craig-Martin, whose map of Asia substitutes existing national toponyms for European ones; and Francis Alÿs and Alban Biaussat, both of whom walked and reinscribed the infamous “green line” demarcation drawn by an Israeli general in 1949 at the end of the Arab-Israeli War. These artworks highlight the materiality and malleability of statehood, which is seen not as a preexisting reality awaiting visual representation, but rather as the contingent product of performative acts of mapping.
To explore how cartographic constructions of statehood have been taken up, subverted and reimagined in map art, this chapter attends to Utopia (figure 4.1), a digital collage made in 1998 by the Japanese artist Satomi Matoba (b.1960). The image conflates maps of two significant sites in the Second World War - Hiroshima and Pearl Harbour - such that they cohere together in an imaginary island state. Although many works of map art foreground the production of statehood and the performativity of borderlines, Matoba’s Utopia is distinctive in how it imagines the nation-state in the historically significant form of an island. Indeed, my analysis unpacks the artwork in relation to the early modern discourse that concretised the hitherto inconceivable boundedness and internal coherence of the nascent state through recourse to the figure of the island. Especially important in this conjuncture is the historical image to which Matoba’s artwork unmistakably alludes: the island republic illustrated on the frontispiece to the Renaissance philosopher Thomas More’s famous 1516 tract On the Best Condition of a Republic and the New Island Utopia (henceforth On Utopia).\footnote{As translated from the Latin: Libellus vere aureus, nec minus salutaris quam festivus, de optimo rei publicae statu, deque nova insula Utopia. Although most scholars abbreviate the title of More’s treatise to Utopia, I distinguish this work from Matoba’s artwork of the same name by referring to it as On Utopia.} In casting the state as an island, I claim, Matoba’s Utopia not only metaphorically encapsulates the state’s bordered and integral spatiality, but reaches back to the very visual figure through which mapmakers first conceived statehood and gave it form.

But Matoba’s image does not do this to simply recapitulate early modern imaginations of the state. If at first sight the work conforms to normative mapping practice, I would suggest that this conventionalism is a deliberate veil. In a move characteristic of the larger discourse of utopian mapping, Utopia takes on the trappings of objectivity and punctilious representationalism in order to present an otherwise outlandish vision as if it were an extant reality. My argument shows how behind a veneer of humble empiricism, Matoba’s Utopia unfolds an experimental geographical vision that undermines the bordered cohesion of the nation-state in two ways. The first is utopian in the pejorative sense of naïvely wishing away the complexities of global modernity. Bringing the geopolitically significant sites of Hiroshima and Pearl Harbour together as a utopian island republic, the artwork projects a fantasy in which the nationalist enmities of the twentieth century are overcome and reconciled through globalisation. The second subversion works by accentuating the repressed transcultural hybridity that persists, unacknowledged, athwart national borders and inside national geo-bodies. Collaging together distant geographies such that they compose parts of a single
island, Matoba admits difference into the founding trope of modern statehood, undermining the bordered and homogeneous spatiality on which the nation-state was modelled historically.

In these ways, Matoba troubles the insular geography of modern nation-states as encapsulated in the frontispiece to Thomas More’s *On Utopia*. In another respect, however, Matoba’s artwork reinforces the incipient spatiality heralded in the 1516 illustration. In presenting her alternative rendition of statehood as a measurable geography laid out before a transformative panoptic gaze, Matoba’s *Utopia* remains caught within the paradigm of calculability introduced in the previous chapter. I argue that even as it contests and counters received constructions of the modern nation-state, Matoba’s artwork repeats the underlying ontology on which states depend. In this way, *Utopia* intimates a danger that shadows not just map art, but digital mapping too: that despite rhetorics asserting discontinuities, and even paradigm shifts, unfolding through contemporary mapping, recent attempts to reimagine mapped space often inherit and reiterate cartography’s underlying grasp of the world as a measurable and malleable extension.

**Satomi Matoba and Utopian Mapping**

Born in Hiroshima, Matoba trained as an artist in London, where she lived between 1995 and 2001 before returning to practice in Japan. She gained visibility as a map artist after works from her series *Map of Utopia* (1998-2007) were included in all four incarnations of the group exhibition *The Map Is Not the Territory*, which was first held in London in 2001. There, *Map of Utopia* was hung alongside works by other significant map artists, including Susan Hiller, Micheal Druks, Grayson Perry, Kathy Prendergast and Peter Greenaway, whose cinematic mappings I discuss in Chapter Six. Matoba’s works are discussed in Denis Cosgrove’s (2005) survey of map art; figure on the cover and as the opening inspiration to Steve Pile and Nigel Thift’s experimental introduction to urban studies *City A-Z: Urban Fragments* (2000); and have featured more broadly in map art’s remarkable rise in popularity in recent decades through numerous exhibitions worldwide.

Matoba self-consciously relates *Map of Utopia* to themes of cosmopolitan identity and globalisation (2000, xvi). At the centre of the series is the idea that once fixed geographies, and discrete cultures, might fragment and coalesce in new dispensations. This idea is explored formally, through digital collage. Much like Kocken’s urban assemblages, the collages that make up *Map of Utopia* are composed of preexisting maps, which Matoba has scanned and digitally rearranged in surprising ways. Many of the geographies Matoba works with are announced in the work’s titles:
Pearl Harbor - Hiroshima (1998), Genève - Hiroshima (1998), and The Japanese British Island (2001). The series also contains Shores of a River (2000), which reworks numerous maps of urban centres and waterways from around the world, such that the world’s cities are joined together by a great circular river; Asian Archipelago (2007), which collages fifteen cartographies showing Japan’s territorial conquests in the 1930s and 1940s into the shape of Japanese islands; and Utopia itself, which I describe in depth later in this section.

In presenting unreal geographies, in which distant cities and obdurate geologies are cast in unlikely new ensembles, Matoba’s works recall and revisit a rich history of maps presenting fictive, utopian or otherwise intangible worlds. Writers interested in imaginary mappings often reference Oscar Wilde’s famous statement in The Soul of Man Under Socialism (1891) that “a map of the world which does not contain utopia in not worth glancing at” (see Tallyb 2013, 2; Tuan 2000, 19). Even a work of map art quotes Wilde: a reflective globe created by Ruth Watson has the sentence sandblasted onto its mirrored surface (reproduced in Harmon 2009, 45). Yet the distinctive allure of allegorical, fantastic and utopian maps is much better grasped, I propose, by reversing Wilde’s formulation such that it reads “a utopia which has not been mapped is not worth glancing at”.

Clearly the proposition is questionable (who would want to narrow the variety of utopian expression to visual blueprints?), but it does indicate the specific value of cartographic utopias. Denis Wood argues that maps offer views that are inaccessible to established perception: that they “give us … a reality that exceeds our reach, our vision, the span of our days, a reality we achieve in no other way” (2010, 15). This constitutive ability to render the intangible tangible and the vague precise is particularly enabling for utopian discourse, which is often dismissed as hypothetical or escapist - a juvenile flight from intransigent realities. When utopias are concretised as maps, formerly implausible social visions become tenable concrete geographies. Imagined terrains take on the reality of palpable, fully articulated social worlds, achieving a level of detail and existential plausibility that renders them potentially realisable social propositions, if they are not mistaken for actually existing terrains.

Given their special capacity for articulating fantasies with all the precision of extant geographies, maps have long been used to envision nebulous inner states, dreams, fictional lands and utopian designs. There is a longstanding discourse of allegorical mapping, which presents elusive states of consciousness or moral possibilities topographically. Though many examples might be adduced here (see those compiled in Harmon 2004, 44-59), the best-known work in this tradition is the Map
of Tenderness published in Madeleine de Scudéry’s 1654 novel Clelie (figure 4.2). Created collectively in a women’s literary salon, this map unfolds what is both a subjective geography and a geography of subjectivity, spatialising erotic affects and possibilities as a landscape of ambling paths, roadside towns and waterways. As an early experiment in cartography, emotion and selfhood, the Map of Tenderness has subsequently stimulated much alternative mapping practice (not least that of the Situationist International; see Wark 2011, 76), and has been theorised as a feminist counter to masculinist rhetorics of disinterestedness and disembodiment in cartography (Bruno 2002, 223-27). Maps of fictional territories abound in modern literature, whether in synthesising complex settings, emphasising the importance of topography to a given narrative or heightening the fiction’s sense of reality with supporting documentation. Two enduringly popular examples accompany Robert Louis Stevenson’s Treasure Island (1883) and J.R.R.Tolkien’s The Lord of the Rings (1954), the latter’s maps being animated in popular film adaptations between 2001 and 2003. Coming closer to Matoba’s Map of Utopia, a cursory survey of avowedly utopian cartography would include the engravings illustrating Bartolomeo Del Bene’s radial City of Truth (1609), Robert
Owen’s plans and painted prospects for the socialist communities he called *New Harmony* and *New Moral World* in the 1820s and 1830s, and the frontispiece to Thomas More’s 1516 *On Utopia*, my key comparison for Matoba’s *Utopia* in this chapter. Several writers on fantastic and utopian mapping suggest that in presenting consciously confabulated terrains as objective realities, utopian mapping accentuates the creativity inherent in all mapping, even - if not especially - that of ostensibly official and scientific cartographies. There is no essential difference, on this view, between maps of imagined worlds and established mapmaking; they can be distinguished only in that utopian maps acknowledge and revel in their world-making power, while normative maps conceal their performativity, and secure the reality of their constructions, through rhetorics of representationalism and objectivity.

I shall return to the topic of performativity later, when discussing the role of mapping - and especially the mapped figure of the island - in constituting the geo-body of the early modern nation-state. My purpose at this juncture is to indicate Matoba’s *Utopia’s* relation to a broader discourse of reflexively utopian and fantastic mapping, from which her formal strategies derive. Like the personal landscape set forth in de Scudéry’s *Map of Tenderness*, Matoba sets out (partly) to map an intangible subjectivity or identity: “the innerscape of a cosmopolitan” as she puts it (2000: xvi). And like the maps illustrating Tolkien’s Middle Earth and More’s *On Utopia*, she elaborates a fictional world in all the detail of an extant geography. The way in which Matoba’s *Utopia* draws on utopian mapping’s distinctive capacity to fantasise with exactitude and (apparent) empiricism is evident in its impeccably conventional formal presentation. An unbordered text placed in the upper right corner of the image introduces the map as though it showed nothing unusual. All the normal

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42 See Ricardo Padrón’s claim that “all maps are, in some sense, maps of imaginary worlds” (2007, 284).
accompaniments of professional map production are provided: scale, sources and copyright are presented beneath a title reading “Topographic Map of Utopia” (figure 4.3). On first glance, then, Matoba’s map might scarcely register as an artistic, let alone utopian object at all: its standardised symbolisation and colours, conventional selection of features and crisp visual presentation all correspond closely to topographical maps printed in government departments or commercial map houses in the late twentieth century, while the geographical space it sets forth is just as uniform and measurable as that of any other professionally produced cartography.

Yet despite the outward show of conventionalism, Utopia unfolds a cartographic vision that defies existing geography so drastically as to rend even its underlying tectonics. Collaging together two preexisting maps, the image conflates distant places. The first map shows Oahu, an island in the Hawaiian archipelago with a lagoon named Wai Momi by Hawaii’s Polynesian cultures, and Pearl Harbour by later US inhabitants. Into the island’s northern shore Matoba has incorporated a fragment from the second map. This map represents central Hiroshima, which conventionally lies on the south-eastern coast of Honshu, the largest of the Japanese islands. The size of the respective map fragments is far from equal: save for the small amount of land ceded from the northern Waialua District, the Oahu map persists almost unchanged in Utopia. The map of central Hiroshima, by contrast, is not only cut from its surrounding context in Honshu’s Ōta bay, but reoriented - swivelled around one hundred and eighty degrees so that the six fingerlike channels of Hiroshima’s delta fray out into the ocean north of Oahu. Matoba does not stress this imbalance: the suture between the two maps is papered over by the close alignment of Hiroshima’s road network with Oahu’s highways, and the roughly equivalent scaling and detail of the two maps. Only the toponyms in two different languages and writing systems, the variant colouring of urban space (bright red in the Oahuan map, grey in the Japanese), and the unlikelihood that this modestly-sized island could support a densely populated city like Hiroshima, betrays the presence of two cartographies in the image.

Matoba selected Hiroshima and Pearl Harbour for the collage on the historical grounds that both sites were strategically (and symbolically) important in the Asia-Pacific War. Pearl Harbour, which has been used by the US navy as a maritime base since 1899, was attacked by the Imperial Japanese Navy on 7 December 1941; Hiroshima was the first city to be targeted with an atomic bomb on 9 August 1945, through which the USA forced the Japanese to surrender the following month. Together, Hiroshima and Pearl Harbour evoke interstate hostility through what it has laid waste: an
island attacked by surprise, and a city of 350,000 inhabitants irradiated by an atomic explosion. Chronologically, the respective destruction of these sites bookmarked the Asia-Pacific conflict (the last major war waged by Matoba’s country of birth), inaugurated the era of fission weapons, and precipitated a rise in US military and economic power, which would dominate world geopolitics through the twentieth century.

Although the conjuncture of Hiroshima and Pearl Harbour refers specifically to the interstate struggles of the Asia-Pacific War, I read *Utopia* as a mediation on (and deconstruction of) modern statehood more generally. To explain why, the following section establishes Matoba’s artwork’s intertextual resonances with Thomas More’s *On Utopia*, and presents a short cultural history of the significance of islands in mappings of the state. In positing her utopia as an island, I argue, Matoba reworks the very geographical figure in whose image modern statehood was first envisaged and articulated.

**Utopian Allusions**

Much of *Utopia*’s interest, to me, lies in how it revisits the famous frontispiece to Thomas More’s text, which, like many other early modern literary and cartographic documents, projects the bounded form of the island as an archetype of the emergent territorial nation-state. Although the advective *utopian* is often appended to contemporary descriptions of afterlives, dreams, religious paradises and fantasies, the word *utopia* is relatively young, having been coined in 1516 in More’s *On Utopia*.43 Translated from its ancient Greek components, More’s neologism becomes “non-place”, though the initial *u* can also be related to *eu* to become “excellent-place” (Eco 2013, 305). With this title, More concretised an emergent literary genre, which narrated hypothetical or experimental communal possibilities.

*On Utopia* stages a conversation between a fictionalised version of More himself, his friend Peter Gilles and the traveller Raphael Hythlodaeus (whose name translates as “speaker of nonsense”), who describes an island society located in the New World. To summarise its history briefly, this society was formerly a peninsula named Abraxa, which was united by a conquering ruler, Utopus,

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43 Robert Tally distinguishes modern utopian discourse from classical and premodern antecedents by observing that *Plato’s Republic* and Augustine’s *City of God* presented “abstract ideals ... located outside of both space and time”, whereas modern utopianism locates its visions in geographical space, such that they might plausibly exist, however distantly (2013b, 3).
Figure 4.4. Engraver unknown, frontispiece to the first edition of Sir Thomas More’s On the Best Condition of a Republic and the New Island Utopia, woodcut engraving with ink wash, 1516.
who pacified the previously “rude and uncivilised” peoples living there (More 2008, 50). He decreed that the isthmus connecting Abraxa to the mainland be severed, ordering a channel fifteen miles long to be dug in order to bring “the sea right round about the land” and thus to create a bounded polity, Utopia. By the time Hythlodaeus visited Utopia, it was settled in fifty-four cities sharing a common design, language and legal code. Religious diversity and free speech were respected, and representative democracy prevailed, though political discussion outside mandated arenas was a capital offence. The society possessed “bondmen” - internal criminals and prisoners of war - but these were not held as private slaves: utopia was largely classless, with property held in common.

As a crisply delineated island, presented at the centre of a single sheet under the title Utopia, Matoba’s artwork specifically recalls the illustration on the frontispiece to On Utopia, which figures the island Hythlodaeus visited as a landscape drawing, arguably a map (figure 4.4). I will return to the proto-cartographic quality of the image in the final section of this chapter. On the frontispiece, Utopia has the shape of a croissant, curling around a harbour, its mouth overlooked by a fortified tower. Its settlements are arranged symmetrically, with cities represented metonymically by seven towers and other structures sited at regular intervals along a lightly indented coast. Amaurot, the capital, stands in the island’s middle, a doorless gate built into its centre. The city is separated from most of the other towns by the river Anyrus or “nowater”, which emerges from a visible source to harbour’s left and runs a circular course parallel with the coastline before flowing back into the harbour from the right.

Numerous scholars have read More’s On Utopia (and its frontispiece) against the backdrop of the onset of modernity, and specifically modern state formation, in the sixteenth century. Robert Tally, for instance, argues that

utopian theory in the early modern epoch went hand-in-hand with the development of the nation-state form and the radical transformation of social space that accompanied the emergence of market capitalism, which also occasioned a wholesale revision of how the lived and imagined spaces of the world were interpreted. (2013b, 3)

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44 Denis Wood remarks that “It’s not a quite a map, but it’s not quite not a map either” (2010, 37).
In relativising received social reality as but one possibility among many, and in projecting a new communal order in detail, *On Utopia* relates broadly to the transformative modern mindset. Most importantly for my analysis of Matoba’s *Utopia*, though, is how More’s text prefigures and imagines modern state formation. King Utopus’s deliberate separation of Abraxa from the mainland, I claim, represents a founding rupture that constitutes the modern polity, marking Utopia as a bounded, internally homogeneous social body. The need to dig a ditch also relates to the gardening mentality explored in the previous chapter, insofar as it betrays a neurotic wish to defend a carefully arranged social order against contaminating influences outside. Here however I follow Phillip Wegner in focusing on how the ditch performs and constitutes the space of nation-statehood:

> what we see suddenly exploding forth in More’s work is a radically new and deeply spatialized kind of political, social, and cultural formation - that of the modern nation-state. ... By digging the trench that creates the insular space ... Utopus marks a border where there has previously existed only an indistinct frontier between “neighbouring peoples,” a disjunctive act of territorial inclusion as well as exclusion [that represents] a crucial dimension of the subsequent spatial practices of the modern nation-state. (2007, 120)

For Wegner, then, the island societies conjured in early utopian discourse were bound up with a wider transformation of how political space was conceived and practiced in early modernity. Benedict Anderson characterises this shift by contrasting an “older imagining” in which “states were defined as centres, borders were porous and indistinct, and sovereignties faded imperceptibly into one another” with “the modern conception”, for which “state sovereignty is fully, flatly, and evenly operative over each square centimetre of a legally demarcated territory” (2006, 19; on mapping’s role in effecting this transition, see Biggs 1999). As received premodern spatialities of overlapping realms, fealty obligations and dynastic affinities waned, English utopian writers began to imagine new forms of community and political space. More’s *Utopia* (1516), Bacon’s *New Atlantis* (1627), Gabriel Platt’s *Macaria* (1641) and Henry Neville’s *Isle of Pines* (1668) each take the geographical figure of the island as the model for a sharply enclosed political space, without internal divisions. Inscribing newly unified polities and collective identities through fictions of insularity, utopian discourse pioneered a modern political geography composed of discrete and homogenous nation-states.
The link between these utopian islands and the onset of modern state formation is reinforced by the cultural history of islands in the early modern imagination. Even beyond utopian discourse, as Angus Cameron has demonstrated, the enclosed form of the island provided a “powerful metaphorical figure” through which the radical new spatiality of “the bounded, inward-looking territorial state” was imagined and given substance (2012, 743 and 742; see also Balasopoulos; Beer). Especially revealing, in this connection, is Philip E. Steinberg’s research, which traces the “association of ‘islandness’ with territorial unity” in Mediterranean portolan charts (early maritime maps) as far back as the fourteenth century (2005, 261). Steinberg argues not only that “the modern, or Westphalian, ideal of the state as territorially bounded, unambiguously governed by a sole authority and culturally homogeneous is a profoundly insular vision”, but further that cultural representations of islands “inadvertently established a grammar for the imagining and mapping of the territorial state that was to emerge in later years” (2005, 255 and 258, emphasis in text). Telling in this regard are portolan charts on which different realms, like Scotland and England, were depicted as separate islands even where they were known to occupy a continuous landmass (261) (for an example, see figure 4.5). Depicting even contiguous nation-states as islands in this manner not only served to naturalise thoroughly conventional demarcations of national territory by giving them the appearance of physical geography (comparable instances exist of mapmakers plotting imaginary mountain ranges along borderlines). It also offered a model through which the then startlingly novel, perhaps even inconceivable form of the modern nation-state could be grasped and disseminated. Imaginations of islands, as Wegner puts it, provide the “conceptual framework or representation of space of “nationness” within which the particularity of each individual nation can then be represented” (55).

My analysis of Matoba’s map art takes forward the idea that, historically, insular form did not simply resonate with statehood, nor was it used to represent preexisting states. Rather, the mapped form of the islands participated performatively in a far-reaching reconfiguration of political space, providing the template in whose image the emergent modern state was conceived and constructed. But before examining how Matoba reworks the image of the island state, I want to specify the political implications of insular statehood more fully, for it is the politics implied by insular form that Utopia contests most centrally.

The forms of political community conditioned by the image of the island come to the fore when considering two mutually-entailed formal characteristics of insular mapping: borders and bodies.
Mapping’s performative capacity to define the shape of statehood is nowhere more evident than in the delineation of national borders. The cartographic drawing of lines, writes John Pickles, represents a performative “spatial and geographical act” in which cultural conceptions of identity and difference are “literally written onto the surface of the earth and coded by layer upon layer of lines drawn on paper” (2004, 3 and 5). Borderlines figure “a spatial ‘not’ - a differentiation and/or negation of all that lies beyond it” (Cameron 2011, 418). This is especially true of national boundary lines, which designate cohesive interior spaces within which local differences are erased or else eclipsed by exterior distinctions with other homogeneous nation-states. Now, in light of Steinberg’s claim that mapped islands held out the model for nascent statehood, coastlines can be

Figure 4.5. Detail of Battista Agnese, *Atlas de Battista Agnese*, ink and bound parchment sheets, 1544. Screenshot from Library of Congress website. Note how Agnese separates Scotland and England into two separate islands, corresponding to the two kingdoms.
retrospectively recast as the prototype of modern national borderlines. The function of mapped
coastlines, which signify little but a spatial “not” that differentiates land from water, applies more
widely, and has been extrapolated to delineate other, more obscure qualities like national cultures.

But performative acts of separation also confer identity onto what they separate. In the case of
insular statehood, borderlines produce what Thongchai Winichakul has termed the “geo-body”, that
is, the extension of the mapped nation-state (for Winichakul’s discussion of the concept, see 1994,
16-18 and 129-131). In its ideal form, Winichakul suggests, the national geo-body is discrete and
integral. Most obviously, this pertains to questions of sovereignty, which, in the Westphalian
paradigm, is exercised by states exclusively within their own territorial jurisdictions and not beyond
them. The insularity of geo-bodies also serves to ground otherwise diffuse conceptions of
nationhood. To cartographically endow a nation with defined spatial extension or “body” is to
perform an act of inclusion and exclusion that conjures a collective identity in space, even where
that identity actually exists only in fragments or not at all. Such mappings both enclose once
heterogeneous local cultures within the overarching homogeneity of the state, and posit a
surrounding foreignness in contrast to which the integral identity of the national self is secured.

The external difference and interior unity projected by insular imaginations is clearer still in the
physiological connotation of the term “geo-body”. Analogical discourses of the body politic, which
“conceived of social structure and process through the prism of the human body”, prevail in two
major cultural points of reference for Matoba’s work: More’s England and Showa Japan (Harris
1998, 1). This physiological casting of the state prompts the idea that mapped borders figure a kind
of skin, assuring the national organism’s immunity. The integral spatiality produced by these
analogies of geographical insularity and bodily immunity can be summed up by way of reference to
a postcard map, which, returning briefly to the historical context discussed in the previous chapter,
displays a Nazi representation of the state (figure 4.6). Hitler’s photo-collaged portrait is presented
as the sovereign head of a national body. But unlike the best known image of the body politic,
Abraham Bosse’s frontispiece to Hobbes’ Leviathan, here the ruler’s neck does not connect to an
anthropomorphic social body. It has been pasted onto a national geo-body: a map of the German
state, which is imagined as an island. The cliffs, which contrary to empirical induction demarcate
the state on all sides, enforce its discrete and unitary spatiality, which is further underlined by the
accompanying caption: “ONE PEOPLE/ONE REALM/ONE LEADER”.

132
Selecting this exaggerated fascist example, I realise, suggests a too completely pessimistic view of nation-states as oppressive, homogenising and unaccepting of difference, and must be qualified by a recognition of the need to parse different incarnations of nationalism and nation-states, some imperialist and repressive, certainly, but others providing cohesion to anti-imperialist struggle and incubating progressive social projects (on these distinctions, see Lazarus 1999, 68-143). I invoke the postcard in closing this section, though, because in combining insular and physiological images of statehood it accentuates the unifying and exclusionary political logic that these models imply and precipitate. For nation-statehood conceived strictly through insular imaginations, any socio-cultural formations disposed across the unscalable cliff (or hermetic skin) that defines the geo-body must be repressed, downplayed or even eliminated. This hermetic logic is ever vulnerable to counter tendencies, however, for were affinities to be established without the insular geo-body, or
differences exposed within it, then the nation-state’s integrity and insularity would be compromised, and might even disintegrate. The next section attends to these possibilities in Matoba’s *Utopia*. I explore how the artwork, in revisiting the insular imaginations at the root of modern statehood, deconstructs the received spatiality of the nation-state.

**Subverting the National Geo-Body**

In *Utopia*, Matoba revisits More’s proleptic imagination of insular statehood, which I claim she redirects in support of her own cosmopolitan sympathies. Having historically provided the model for “coherent territorial states each inhabited by a separate ethnically and linguistically homogenous population”, insular form in *Utopia* is riven by heterogeneity (Hobsbawm 2012, 133). Indeed, despite its isolation and closure, Matoba’s island state manifests a space of adjoining differences, even interculturality, in that the people and places associated with the three distinct cultures of Japan, the USA and Polynesian Hawaii coexist within it. Collaging difference into the insular state, *Utopia* fragments the integrity and boundedness projected in received imaginations of statehood. This subversion, I suggest, can be construed in two ways: first as naively celebrating the integrative effects of globalisation, and second as indicating forms of hybridity and difference that, though repressed, have inhabited insular statehood all along.

I begin with the first interpretation, in which Matoba’s work projects a vision of how globalisation fragments the cohesion and blurs the boundedness of insular statehood. On this view, Matoba conjoins distant geographical referents to represent globalisation’s supposed softening of territorial distinctions, intermingling of cultures and, most importantly in *Utopia*, mollification of international aggressions. Hiroshima and Oahu may be presented without any visual reference to the damage they sustained historically, but the selection of geographies here clearly derives from their significance in the Pacific War. In the absence of the kinds of cartographic figures associated with warfare seen in Kocken’s *Depictions* (frontlines or arrows of manoeuvre), their meeting here suggests a peaceful state of reconciliation and cultural encounter following the Second World War. Indeed, viewed as part of Matoba’s larger body of map art, Hiroshima and Pearl Harbour’s newfound geographical proximity comes to symbolise how the nationalist enmities between their polities have similarly diminished, owing to a broad reconfiguration of cultural space through globalisation.
It is necessary, then, to set *Utopia* in relation to Matoba’s wider imagination of a globalised world geography, in which national distinctions give way to cosmopolitan connections. Although I subsequently critique the way Matoba projects a rather naïve image of global cultural communion, which overlooks globalisation’s inequalities and violent undersides, I shall now reconstruct this imagination of globalisation through reference to the most ambitious work in the series, *Map of Utopia: Shores of a River* (2000). Another digital map collage of variable dimensions, *Shores of a River* reimagines world geography as a vast plain (figure 4.7). The expanse is broken by a river,
which, defying existing examples and definitions of rivers, runs back around on itself to form a great circle in a manner comparable with the river Anyrus or “nowater” in More’s *On Utopia*, which is almost circular. An improbably dense selection of world cities clusters along its banks, including Yokohama, Brazzaville, Kinshasa, La Havana, Kyoto, Al-Qahirah, Jersey City, Saigon, Budapest, Rome, Shanghai, Niagara, Caracas, Tehrān, Johannesburg, Djakarta, Calcutta and Beijing: here Matoba gathers a globally representative sample of urban geographies, cutting across constructed geopolitical divisions between East and West, North and South, or First, Second and Third Worlds.

**Figure 4.8.** Satomi Matoba, *Shores of a River*. I have indicated the course of the eponymous river with a black line.
The river is pasted together out of numerous existing waterways (I have highlighted its course in figure 4.8). Its length relative to the surrounding cities is difficult to judge, for the river swerves frequently between orientations and suddenly opens out into improbable lakes. The body of water to the upper left of the image is Tokyo Bay, in the midst of which rests Manhattan Island’s distinctive outline. London visually dominates what the image’s orientation suggests is the river’s most southerly segment. To the west, it flows through Vienna and Seoul, bypassing Delhi, which, confounding easy equation of globalisation with cites, is presented along with a wider context of smaller rural towns and villages. To the east, it breaks around a complex of islets and islands (one of which hosts the city of Montreal) before coursing north through Al-Qahirah (Cairo), towards Calcutta. As the Seine it curls through Paris; as the Neva it flows into a lake-centred subsystem, whose banks display a remarkable amalgam of cultural difference: Soviet Leningrad, Congolese Brazzaville and Kinshasa, and Cuban la Havana, with Pulau Ujong, Singapore’s main island, lying in the lake’s middle.

Matoba’s presentation of cities from around the planet in a uniform space, language and graphic style, all without reference to regional histories and culture, might be taken to illustrate globalisation, as it is often conceived, as “the worldwide Americanization or standardization of culture, the destruction of local differences, the massification of all the peoples on the planet” (Jameson 1998: 57). But this impression of homogenisation, I would suggest, is only the formal byproduct of a more hopeful vision of globalisation articulated in Shores of a River, which, in imagining the intermingling of once nationally divided cultures, provides one way to interpret Matoba’s reworking of the state in Utopia. The world-encircling river, on my reading, stands as a metaphor for how globalisation connects and blurs cultures, providing a figure through which to envisage a cosmopolitan political geography. River imagery is certainly rich with metaphorical associations with globalisation. Most obviously, Matoba’s river literalises Manuel Castells’ influential claim that today’s society “is constructed around flows: flows of capital, flows of information, flows of technology, flows of organizational interaction, flows of images, sounds, and symbols” (1996, 411). The river, then, can be taken to stand for the sublime magnitude of data flows composing the Internet: insignificant daily transfers and online interactions feeding into a massive cumulative totality, like the brooks streaming into Matoba’s great river. Standing for economic flows, the river as a fertilising force, which threatens to periodically dry up or chance course, reflects contemporary desires and fears surrounding the mobility of finance capital, which
city legislators compete to court and retain. Add to this how the artwork reorganises once remote cities such that they now lie improbably close to one another, flouting existing terrestrial space. Indeed, *Shores of a River* takes seriously what Frances Carincross calls the “death of distance” under the pressure of a new round of transport and telecommunications technologies, which supposedly “loosens the grip of geography”, eventually “killing location” as a significant factor in social practice (2001, 2 and 5). Unfolding the world as a great plain on which formerly distant cities are rendered proximate or otherwise interconnected through a circling river, *Shores of a River* envisions a supremely developed, globalised world in which former intuitions of distance no longer obtain.45

Beyond these technical and economic resonances, though, it is *Shores of a River*’s lack of geopolitical borderlines, even among such diverse cultures and distant geographies, that indicates the series’ politics. *Map of Utopia*, Matoba writes, “is a metaphorical landscape of the postmodern global world of pluralism, or the innerscape of a cosmopolitan” (2000, xvi). Although the content of this cosmopolitanism remains unspecific (perhaps Matoba means it to be suggestively vague), its underlying hope seems to be that the interconnectedness of cultures across global geography, as has come to the fore through recent globalisation discourse, diminishes nationalist hostility and the exclusionary principle of place-bound identities. “When we think of our own brutality which enables us to do anything against people with whom we have nothing in common”, Matoba writes, “we find the importance of interdependence and mutual reliance” (xvi). She relates this idea specifically to *Utopia* by asking: “if these two places had been closely located, could such brutal crimes [as these sites endured in the Pacific War] have been committed?” (xv).

Hence, the geography Matoba sets out in *Shores of a River*, and indeed *Map of Utopia* at large, is meant as a cosmopolitan counter to parochial identities and nationalist aggression. It posits an interconnected world geography, marked not by international partitions and fixed distances but rather by plural encounters and transcultural flows, which the artist imagines as heralding a similarly inclusive and plural politics. But if *Shores of a River* indicates Matoba’s politics in *Utopia*, this should not obscure key differences in how that politics is realised in the two works. In *Shores of

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45 Building on the “death of distance” thesis, Jeremy Brotton develops a counterintuitive account of the spatialities of globalisation. Brotton stresses the significance of “real-time” digital telecommunication technologies, which he takes to compress the terrestrial distances figured forth in global mapping so radically as to render them redundant. On this basis, Brotton argues that at the very moment in which “globalism becomes central to contemporary cultural politics, its geographical referent, the image of the terrestrial globe, becomes a residual signifier” (1999, 71).
Insular Imaginations

*a River* the global river replaces national borderlines as the organising figure of political geography, substituting partitioned nation-states with an undifferentiated space of flows. Unlike *Shores of a River*, *Utopia* does not simply purge geography of nation-states; the insular form of modern statehood persists, as do the national differences evident in Pearl Harbour’s and Hiroshima’s local toponyms and profiles. *Utopia* might be anti-nationalist then, but does not postulate a nationless and stateless geography. Whereas *Shores of Rivers* fractures open the exclusivity of insular statehood by imagining external connections and reciprocal flows among cultures globally, *Utopia* undermines the homogeneity of the national geo-body from within.

Collaging plural cultural referents into the supposedly sealed and integral insular state, *Utopia* cuts against what Paul Gilroy describes as the “unthinking assumption that cultures always flow into patterns congruent with the borders of essentially homogeneous nation states” (1993, 5). Here, the once geopolitically opposed cultures of Japan and the USA coexist within the state-as-island, whose coastal border thus no longer serves to secure the unity, and thus exclusivity, of the cultural formation within. Thus *Utopia* formally articulates Matoba’s wish that global connections might “make the distinction between insider and outsider invalid” (xvi). *Utopia* imagines the “inside” space of the island - archetype of contained self-identity - inhabited, rendered multiple, but not shattered, by the “outside” represented by remote cultural spaces against which it was once sharply delineated.

It must be noted, however, that Matoba’s insistence on transcultural peace and cultural conviviality through globalisation, while entirely appropriate to an overtly utopian set of map artworks, has an ideological dimension. For in extrapolating the utopian promise of a cosmopolitan world order from the realities of globalisation, it overlooks the complexities of globalising processes, papering over the exploitation, forced migration and violence that they often entail. If globalisation jettisons some subjects into the excitement of global mobility and encounter, it pins others to the factory floor; it establishes transcultural peace and toleration on one continent only to unleash new rounds of “primitive accumulation” and sectarian divisions elsewhere; and it develops extraordinary new urban infrastructures at nodes in the global economy, while stripping minerals and labour from its peripheries (Retort Collective 2005, 186). Yet it would be remiss, in making this critique, to pass over the one dimension of *Utopia* and *Shores of a River* that taints Matoba’s otherwise idealised view of globalisation, which stems from the incongruity of river and island imagery with contemporary imaginations of globalisation. Posed in connection with the new
technologies, economic structures and consumer cultures associated with globalisation, earthen banks, lapping tides, flood plains and water fauna seem rustic, even retrograde. This choice of metaphor is revealing: one strand in the globalisation literature draws attention to how the frenetic speeds and encompassing reach with which spatial interactions occur in advanced modernity can produce existential anxiety, overexposure and insecurity in the subjects that undergo them (see Beck 1992; Virilio 1991; Bauman 2013). Digital media streams images of distant disasters into the lifeworld; individual lives are determined by economic forces exceeding not only political control through representative states but perhaps even cognition itself (Jameson 1991, 54); the temporality of labour and sociality not only accelerates but loses predictable routine or rhythmicity (Bauman 2005, 116-128). Against this backdrop, Matoba’s choice to depict a circular river and self-contained island seems symptomatic. These closed spaces betray an impulse to establish worlds of existential closure, immunity, orientation and security amid the disorienting data flows and overbearing infrastructures endemic to liquid modernity: to reduce these unsurveyable totalities to contained, safely mappable terrains and still instantaneous global reciprocities to the pastoral pace of a streaming river or lapping tide.

The very geographical figures with which Matoba ostensibly celebrates postwar globalisation as utopian, in other words, also suggest a will to closure and comfort where the vicissitudes of global flux can be withstood, or perhaps at last enjoyed. But one does not have to overemphasise this to construe Utopia without idealising globalisation. On my first interpretation, directed by Matoba’s explicit statements and wider imagination of world geography in Shores of a River, Utopia sets forth a condition that comes after the geopolitical divisions and strife of twentieth-century modernity, which the work imagines transcended by the transcultural flows of globalisation. Yet the utopianism of this vision implies that nation-states were once stable constructs. Another perspective on the image, then, suggests that Utopia does not imagine a condition following the age of exclusive national cultures, but rather foregrounds the plurality that has always existed within nation-states, long repressed by prevailing discourses asserting the insularity and integrity of national cultures within state borders. Admittedly this interpretation has to ignore the artists’s own stress on postwar globalisation, not to mention the reference to the Second World War conjured by Hiroshima and Pearl Harbour. It has the value, though, of not sanitising the politics of globalisation, and of undermining insular constructions of statehood in a deeper, uncanny way.
If conventionally political mapping reinforces imaginations of ethnic cohesion and stability within exactly drawn borders, as though national cultures were autochthonous outgrowths of the regions they inhabit, this second reading of *Utopia* enjoins that national cultures are actually reifications of diverse peoples and mobile practices, which, issuing from no fixed point of origin, are always already unmoored and traversal.\(^{46}\) This perspective is recommended by the work of James Clifford, who argued for the reorientation of anthropological study such that researchers, rather than attempting to excavate the foundational “roots” of cultural formations, would attend instead to the contingent “routes” through which cultural forms are sedimented. Critiquing conceptions of national cultures as insular blocks (that might later be blurred through globalisation), Clifford stresses how “discrete regions and territories, do not exist prior to [transregional] contacts, but are sustained through them, appropriating and disciplining the restless movements of people and things” (1997, 3). Viewed from this vantage point, the disparate cultural formations that coexist on Matoba’s vision of Oahu need not be conceived as part of the deterritorialising sweep of postwar transnationalism. They might just as well be taken to signify those manifold pre- and sub-national mobilities that, under conditions of modern state formation, have been subsequently frozen as supposedly integral national cultures. Oahu is the point of confluence for at least three population movements. Polynesian Hawaiians, though often naturalised as “native” in the discourse of subsequent colonisers, crossed much of the Pacific Ocean to settle the island. The Hawaiian Islands were annexed to the USA in 1893, only attaining federated statehood in 1959, violently facilitating colonial settlement from the east. This demographic diversity, and the several global migrations it implies, is only accentuated by the artist’s collaging in of a Japanese cultural presence in the form of Hiroshima. To those unfamiliar with Hawaiian history, this insertion may seem forced. But it makes sense in light of the sustained Japanese migration to the islands before the Asian Exclusion Act of 1924, with Japanese migrants and their descendants composing a full forty six percent of Hawaii’s population in 1930 (Okihio 1991, 185).

I take the inclusion of this East Asian referent, combined with the Polynesian and US migrations implied in the image, to signal the manifold cultural currents that, following Clifford, precede, transgress and move within the bordered spaces staked out by states. Oahu, here, is crossed by disparate cultural trajectories, some colonising, others migratory. In hosting these nomadic cultural

\(^{46}\) For a discussion of ancient myths of autochthony (“the idea that men [sic] sprung up fully formed, born of the earth”), see Stuart Elden 2013, 22-26.
flows, *Utopia* offers a peculiarly haunted revision of the island state as depicted in frontispiece to More’s *On Utopia*. I have discussed how early modern states, by adopting the bounded and integral form beheld previously only in geographical islands, sought to carve overarching national territories away from the forcefield of local and cross-cultural attachments; so much is imagined in the symmetrical uniform cities and insular closure depicted on the frontispiece. Yet in Matoba’s reworking of the image, the coastline delineating the shape, and thus constituting the identity, of the nation-state comes to be shadowed by unregimented forms of difference and hybridity that do not align with its profile. Unlike in *Shores of a River*, this groundswell of transcultural multiplicity has not overcome and transcended insular statehood under the banner of globalisation. The image offered in *Utopia*, rather, is of cultural hybridity and mobility persisting, forgotten, unacknowledged or disavowed, athwart and within the insular templates imposed by modern states.

In this way, *Utopia* renders the founding model of modern statehood profoundly uncanny. Whereas conventional political mapping posits state borders and geo-bodies as secure, evident and exclusive, in Matoba’s artwork the imagination of enclosed self-identity they enact is seen as a mirage or rhetorical construct, projected onto a field of restless cultural interchange that states can never fully fence in, homogenise or otherwise discipline.

**The Continuity of Calculable Space**

Many writers have argued that globalisation erodes or else reconfigures nation-states, and many have emphasised the repressed mobility and difference at play beneath and behind sharply delineated national cultures. Matoba’s *Utopia*, however, articulates these challenges to the nation-state’s coherence in and through the founding archetype of modern statehood: the bounded geographical island. Reading Matoba’s image alongside the frontispiece to *On Utopia*, my analysis has stressed how *Utopia* diverges from received imaginations of insular statehood. Whether in appropriating insular form for a cosmopolitan political vision or showing how state borderlines are haunted by a groundswell of mobile hybridity, I have argued that *Utopia* reworks and undermines its early modern referent.

In closing, however, I want to indicate how, in reaching back to how Thomas More and his illustrator imagined the emergent spatial paradigm of modern statehood, Matoba’s *Utopia* inadvertently foregrounds basic continuities in how modern space is conceived and practiced - continuities that persist beneath the proliferation of global flows and porous borders that Matoba
hails as utopian. Although it undermines the aggressive geopolitics of state geo-bodies, *Utopia*, like the other works in its series, is conspicuously conventional in that it reproduces a synoptic, calculating and potentially controlling stance towards the represented terrain. Indeed, *Map of Utopia* might project peace between human polities, but it only confirms the cartographer’s mastery over its geographical objects, which, just as in normative mapmaking, have been set within grids and reduced to expertly codified semiotics.

The continuities between *On Utopia* and *Utopia* can be brought into focus by relating Matoba’s artwork to the “ontology of calculability”, which I discussed in reference to the work of Stuart Elden in the previous chapter. On the basis of his analysis of the cartographic disclosure of the world as a measurable and malleable extension, Elden intervenes in debates over the status of *territory* under conditions of globalisation. If a territory is understood as the bounded dominion of a particular power, we might take *Utopia*, which exposes difference inside the geo-body, or *Shores of a River*, which does away with national geo-bodies altogether, to have transcended the territorial condition. Yet for Elden territory does not equate with bordered space, as epitomised by insular statehood. Instead, he argues that borders are a “secondary aspect” of territory, building on the prior, more basic ontology of calculability, which, as I have already discussed in both the Introduction and my analysis of Kocken’s *Depictions*, “sees beings as calculable, as quantitatively measurable, as extended” (2005, 11 and 15). Rather than territory being constituted through bordering practices, then, it is the cartographic apprehension of territory as a measurable and divisible field that makes modern borders possible. Elden picks out the treaties of Tordesillas, Westphalia and the Pyrenees as important examples of political demarcation that each depended on the prior grasp of geography as calculable extension. Territory, in Elden’s presentation, is therefore “a rendering of the emergent [modern] concept of ‘space’ as a political category: owned, distributed, mapped, calculated, bordered, and controlled” (2006a, 578).

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47 Modern borders, for Elden, entail “more than a simple line staked out on the ground” (2013, 325). Indeed, he asserts more generally that “territory in the modern sense requires a level of cartographic ability that was simply lacking in earlier periods” (2005, 15).

48 The Treaty of Tordesillas (1494) divided the globe “from pole to pole” between Spanish and Portuguese claims to colonial possession (2013, 243); the agreements conflated as the treaties of Westphalia (1648) affirmed the authority of subsidiary rulers in the Holy Roman Empire within their territories (309-314); and the Treaty of the Pyrenees (1659) delineated exactly the border between France and Spain (325).
Having established territory’s basis in the calculable ontology of modernity, Elden writes against ruptural theories of globalisation claiming that the contemporary moment is characterised by deterritorialisation, understood as a progressive diminution of the importance of geography in social affairs. Although Elden agrees that the existing configuration of sovereign states is undergoing a complex contestation and renegotiation (see 2009), these changes are not seen as affecting the underlying ontology for which space is something legible, calculable and quantitatively known, and thus susceptible to political apportion and intervention. This ontology made possible state bordering and geo-bodies, certainly, but “this is not to say that territory is inherently tied to the state” (2005, 8). Hence, the sub-, non- and trans-state spaces ascribed to globalising processes, far from altering the underlying grasp of modern calculable space, represent “a continuation of Cartesian thought by other means” (2005, 16):

Rather than initiating a radical break, capitalism extends the mathematical, calculative understanding of territory to the entire globe, instead of merely a single state. The flows of information, the digital “revolution,” the Internet, global capital, and international deregulation are little more than the old ideas writ large [in that they each depend on that calculative apprehension of space]. (2002, 151)

The emergence of new digital mapping applications that I described in the Introduction, with Google Earth as their apogee, illustrates the continuity, not to say expansion, of calculable space under the auspices of contemporary globalisation. Matoba’s Utopia is fully able to depict unfolding fissures in the received dispensation of insular statehood, then, while simultaneously indicating the continuity of calculable space as “the overriding geographical determination of our world” (Elden 2005, 16).

With respect to the ontology of calculability theorised by Elden, Utopia is essentially a repetition of its early modern template. This point can be substantiated by returning, briefly, to the comparison between Matoba’s utopian island and the geographical illustration of More’s On Utopia. Whereas my earlier discussion of the frontispiece stressed how the island’s artificial separation from the

49 Specifically, Elden cites Paul Virilio’s work on the overcoming of space under conditions of globalisation. Deleuze and Guattari’s casting of the concept, Elden recognises, is more complex than this (2005, 9); for a discussion of theories of contemporary deterritorialisation, see Heise 2008, 51-58.
mainland performatively constituted modern statehood, Elden’s account of the calculability of modern space brings other aspects to the fore. The woodcut is remarkable, at least to a modern eye trained in pictures with a single organising viewpoint, in that two differing perspectives coexist within it. Utopia is envisioned vertically, as on a schematic map, allowing its regular design to be surveyed and its inhabitants to be surveilled, while, inland, the landscape and towns from which it was severed are pictured horizontally. Spires, forests and hills appear from a grounded perspective (figure 4.9), as do the ships patrolling the foreground. Assessed in conjunction with the notion of calculable space, this can be taken to suggest that the two societies inhabit qualitatively different ways of seeing and being in space. Presented, in More’s text, as traditional, indeed taken-for-granted organic constructs, the settlements onshore are depicted as they appear in lived experience, without the need arising to map, measure or plan their inner order. The utopian polity, by contrast, presents a quintessentially modern spatial field in that it has been deliberately “gardened”, and so is offered up as a semi-schematic object before a calculating and interventionist proto-cartographic gaze. Although admittedly the woodcut does not contain the now recognisable apparatus of cartographic measurability (scale, tabulated grid and coordinates), one should note that, as published in 1516, it predates the explosion of early modern mapmaking that I described in the Introduction, adopting the perspective of an emergent mode of synoptic rationality and social planning before many graphic technologies of calculability developed. “It’s early”, as Denis Wood writes of this woodcut specifically, “but clearly moving toward the map” (2010, 37).
In Matoba’s reworking of the image to reflect the concerns and circumstances of latter-day
globalisation, this transition “toward the map” has long been achieved. *Utopia*, like the wider series,
meets the formal expectations of conventional topographic maps made by dedicated institutions in
the mid-to-late twentieth century. The frontispiece was cut as mapmaking was beginning to emerge
as a differentiated practice, and so contains elements (the far landscape profile and proximate
galleys) that belong more to lineages of painting than to cartography. No traces of alternative genre
linger in Matoba’s *Utopia*, by contrast. It establishes a quantified space that dispels ambivalence
and is measurable in every dimension, purportedly on the basis of empirically surveyed data,
organised around a mathematically constructed scalar projection.

*Utopia* and the frontispiece therefore sit at opposite chronological ends of the same conception of
space as mappable, measurable and malleable. Respecting this fundamental ontological disclosure
of modern geography, the relation of the two images is one of continuity or repetition. True, the
repetition introduces numerous differences. In the woodcut, the regularity of settlements is inexact,
differing forms of land use are indicated only vaguely and the toponyms are very partial; Matoba’s
*Utopia*, on the other hand, is highly consistent, sharply delineating agricultural, residential, forested,
rocky and watery space, and comprehensively labelling the island’s places. But from the perspective
provided by Elden we understand that these differences occur within the same continuum or
paradigm of calculable modern territory, such that Matoba’s *Utopia* stands as a mature realisation of
the kind of mapped and measurable space that is pioneered in the frontispiece’s tentative
imagination of a synoptic space of social design. The commensurability of Matoba’s series *Map of
Utopia* with the ontology of calculability under construction in More’s time is clearer still in *Shores
of a River*, which, notwithstanding Matoba’s comprehensive reconfiguration of world geography, is
divided up by a linear grid imposed over an otherwise turbulent space of flows. Intersecting at
entirely regular points across the represented territory, the thin blue lines of this grid indicate how,
despite the map’s seismic rearrangement of global spaces and places, the underlying ontology of
calculation and control prevails just as completely as ever.

Directed by the utopianism announced in Matoba’s titles, this chapter has emphasised the ways in
which *Utopia*, and more briefly *Shores of a River*, reimagines political space beyond insular
(exclusive and homogenous) constructions of statehood. My analysis has warned against Matoba’s
overly optimistic view that globalisation is an unambiguously utopian force, reconciling nationalist
enmities and incubating cosmopolitanism around the world. However, I also interpret *Utopia* as
showing how restless cultural hybridity and difference have always subtended and beset insular nation-states - haunting and relativising the bounded partitions of modern political geography.

By appraising Matoba’s détournements of insular statehood in relation to the ontology of calculability introduced in the previous chapter, my analysis of *Utopia* anticipates the problematic addressed centrally in Part II of this study. *Utopia* and *Shores of a River* undermine the long-dominant national paradigm, certainly, and conjure a newly multiple, flowing and interconnected world. But by articulating a utopian politics through maps that remain conventional at the level of their form, Matoba prompts the rejoinder that her transformations of political space, though ostensibly extensive, depend on and reinforce the underlying ontology of calculability and control. This reversal applies far more widely than *Map of Utopia*; in the following chapter I argue that both digital mapping applications and many other works of map art, while seeming to reimagine political geography or to reclaim mapping from institutional control, often repeat and further expand its inherited ontology. Following my closing insistence that *Utopia’s* subversion of modern statehood remains caught with the paradigm of calculability, the remainder of this study asks whether map art might trouble the received casting of the world as a measurable and malleable extension, or even enact geographical ontologies as yet unknown.