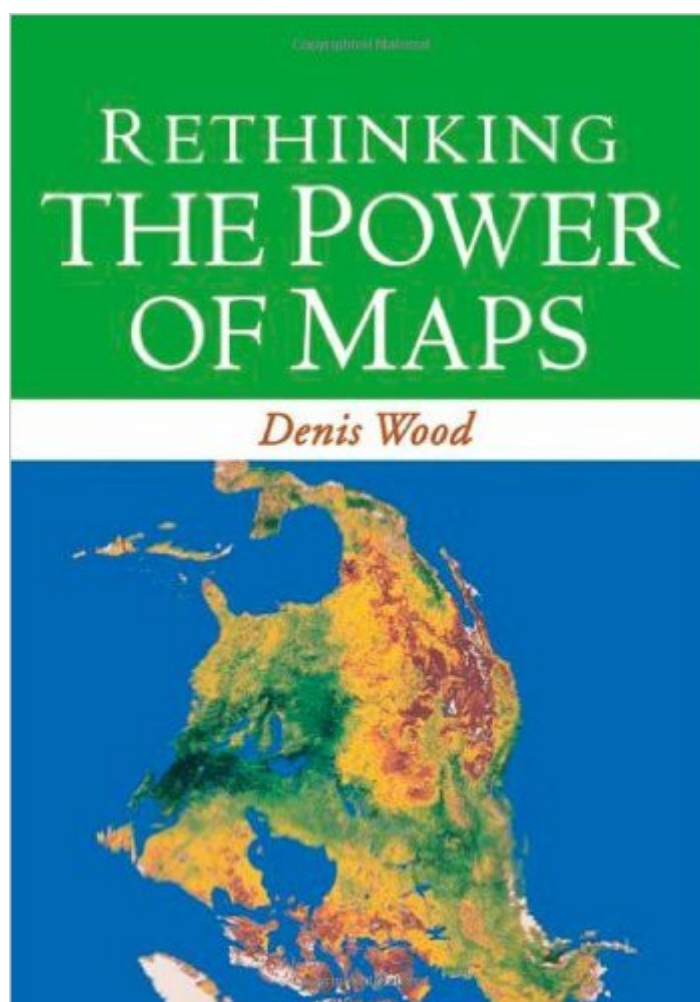


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# Rethinking The Power Of Maps



## Synopsis

A contemporary follow-up to the groundbreaking *Power of Maps*, this book takes a fresh look at what maps do, whose interests they serve, and how they can be used in surprising, creative, and radical ways. Denis Wood describes how cartography facilitated the rise of the modern state and how maps continue to embody and project the interests of their creators. He demystifies the hidden assumptions of mapmaking and explores the promises and limitations of diverse counter-mapping practices today. Thought-provoking illustrations include U.S. Geological Survey maps; electoral and transportation maps; and numerous examples of critical cartography, participatory GIS, and map art.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Today they are scribbled on the back of business cards, delivered with admonitions by our GPS, or arrive on our desktop from Mappy or Google. Most of us, if we reflect on maps at all, are likely to think of them as aids for getting from one place to another without getting lost, happy not to risk roadway suicide refolding their bed sheet-sized ancestors to fit the glove compartment! In the newspaper or on the Internet maps may also seem to be easy ways to digest data, viz., the red/blue state maps used to explain the 2008 US elections or tracking the spread of influenza. However, Denis Wood's sequel to *The Power of Maps*, takes us far, far deeper into the substratum of how we come to have and use these tools. It examines the assumptions we make about them and their import for both local and global communities. Wood subjects what we call "a map" to a strict historical scrutiny. At least in the West, maps are with few exceptions a product of the age of nation

building. To quote the author, "The things we recognize as maps gained currency only in the last 400 years or so and within this period only in relatively stable states with entrenched, centralized bureaucracies and well-established academies." In truth, far from being passive reflections of geography, maps help construct the state as we know it. How does this work? Drawing boundaries and naming places are ways of affirming the existence of a state and its reach. The resulting maps, then, both affirm and are affirmed by the authority of the state. The existence of the map offered a sense of identity to both the population within and a claim of proprietorship against those without. Maps are used to tell us that "things are," and that they are "there."

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