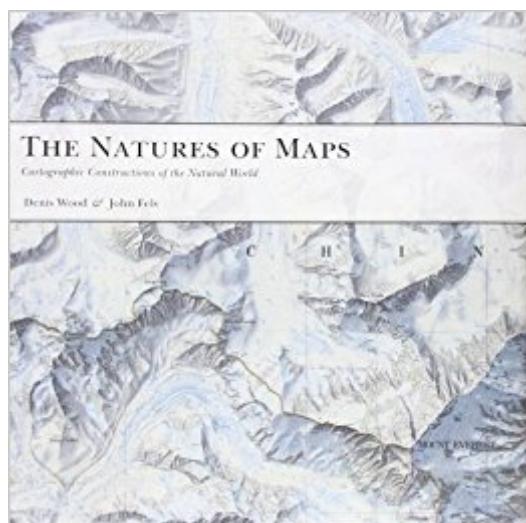


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The Natures Of Maps: Cartographic Constructions Of The Natural World



Synopsis

Cartographers have known for decades that maps are far from objective representations of the world; rather, every map reflects the agendas and intentions of its creators. Yet that understanding has had almost no effect on the way maps are viewed and used by the general public. In *The Natures of Maps*, cartographers Denis Wood and John Fels present a compelling exploration of a wide range of maps to answer the question of, as they put it, why maps have “gotten away with it.” To answer that question, the authors turn to a category of maps with a particularly strong reputation for objectivity: maps of nature. From depictions of species habitats and bird migrations to portrayals of the wilds of the Grand Canyon and the reaches of the Milky Way, such maps are usually presumed even by users who should know better to be strictly scientific. Yet by drawing our attention to every aspect of these maps—self-presentation, from place names to titles and legends, the authors reveal the way that each piece of information collaborates in a disguised effort to mount an argument about reality. Without our realizing it, those arguments can then come to define our very relationship to the natural world—determining whether we see ourselves as humble hikers or rampaging despoilers, participants or observers, consumers or stewards. Richly illustrated, and crafted in vivid and witty prose, *The Natures of Maps* will enlighten and entertain map aficionados, scholars, and armchair navigators alike. You’ll never be able to look at Google Maps quite the same way again.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"[The authors] offer up some appealing ideas. Afterwards, even a road map of Kent starts to seem more interesting." (Olivia Edward BBC Focus)"Nothing like this has been attempted in cartography before. . . . The book is intelligent and drop-dead gorgeous; turning the project into an art book as well as a theoretical study of maps and nature. . . . It may be a strength of this [book] that the ramifications are lightly sketched and the theoretical deftly articulated but not hammered in on every page. Wood and Fels let the maps make their argument, creating the reality they propose. It's a beautiful book and one whose propositions will be the source of ideas, articles, and books for years to come." (Tom Koch Cartographic Perspectives)

Denis Wood is the author of several books, including *The Power of Maps*. John Fels is Adjunct Associate Professor in the Graduate GIS Program of the College of Natural Resources at North Carolina State University.

Excellent copy of an excellent book. Fast shipping, well packaged. I am thoroughly pleased.

I love maps. I read cartography blogs for fun. I've read dozens of books on mapmaking, and I was eagerly awaiting this book. I have to say that it is the worst book on maps I've ever read. Upon first glance, the book looks great: big, thick, high quality paper - I was quite excited! This is exactly how a great map book should be presented. The graphic design of the book, though, and the maps that the book chose to highlight were though, frankly, ugly. I kept flipping further into the book, waiting for the "good stuff". Sadly, the book was probably the ugliest cartography book I've ever opened. And then I started reading the words. Ugh. This book is not for map lovers - its for people who want to love to hate maps. It's absolutely true - maps can lie. Check out the enjoyable "How to Lie With Maps" by Mark Monmonier. I was looking forward to this book dissecting maps and showing their hidden biases. However, the content of the book is cloaked in pseudo intellectual humanities twaddle (I think that my despair reached its height about 20 pages in, when I came across the term "Foucaltian"). The authors come up with an elaborate theory of communication, whereby a map represents concepts (shown in their ugly and idiosyncratic personal notation as one big circle for the map and two nested circles for the concepts) and then the map propagates these concepts into the reader (more circles for the reader's head and for the cloned concepts), and then solid lines are thrown in to show the mapping of concept in the map to concept in the reader's head, and dashed lines are used to show the correspondence of the map to the reader's head. The inane notation is a

perfect example of something that is NOT well expressed with a map. However, it gets worse. Soon we're treated to multi-level diagrams, like something that a mentally ill person off his medicine might sketch on a subway station wall with a found, half melted candy bar: HERE is the MAP, and HERE is the first CONCEPT, which gives rise to the second CONCEPT, which emits a variety of DASHED LINES, which ...Ugh. While I think that great maps can be made by people who do not put graphic design first, the fact that the authors go out of their way to bash graphic designers involvement in map making serves to confirm that this is a book written by people who may practice in the field of cartography (or, at least, teach there), but who do not, fundamentally, love maps. Again: this is THE. WORST. BOOK. on maps that I've ever read. Save your money.

This is not a book about maps! This is a book about the philosophy of communications and how maps are used to influence our view of the world stage. "Maps are not pictures, they are arguments". When read this way, I would rate this presentation in the highest category along with "Laws of Form", "Chaos", and "Godel, Escher, Bach".

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