



LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

I hope that you will find this long-delayed issue of *CP* to have been worth the wait.

Mapmakers of all stripes, academic or practical, have probably at some point had to try to explain what cartography is to a non-map person in their lives. However, while this task has become considerably easier now that most people carry a map in their pocket, not all maps look like the ubiquitous navigation map. What “counts” as a map varies when you look across time, place, and context. Accordingly, those who study maps have sought to define and describe what a map *is*, and to understand the practices involved in the construction of maps. Philosophical inquiries into the nature of maps have, over time, been shaped by different epistemologies and led to different theories of what maps are (or what they are not). This journal has previously published articles ([Wood 2003](#); [Wood 2006](#); [Denil 2006](#); [Wood 2007](#)) that have contributed to this conversation about the nature of maps, and in this issue, we present another installment.

In *CP 98*, you will find three PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLES. In the first, Mark Denil advocates that conceptual art can be used as model for developing a conceptual theory of cartography. He suggests that such a theory can be used to identify the fundamental characteristics that make maps “maps” and not “not maps.” In the second, Matthew Edney rejects Denil’s argument, suggesting that while his aim (to make what is implicit explicit) may have utility, his approach to achieving this aim is flawed. In developing his critique, Edney makes explicit some arguments that were perhaps only implicit in his recent monograph (2019; also reviewed in this issue), which devotes significant attention to the concept of cartography. I invite you to read both contributions and consider which argument you find more persuasive. The third article, by Giovanni Spissu, presents a mapping approach inspired by the narrative tactics used by the author W. G. Sebald. Reading it may challenge your own notions of “map” versus “not map.”

In VISUAL FIELDS, Heather Gabriel Smith explores her practice of making maps by hand, through the media of pencil, embroidery, woodblock print, and pen and ink. She discusses the affordances of mapping by hand and the deliberation that accompanies each graphical mark.

CP 98 includes four REVIEWS. In the first, Jack Swab provides an overview of the main ideas presented in Matthew Edney’s *Cartography: The Ideal and its History*. His review identifies some additional aspects of Edney’s argument that might be made more explicit. The other

three reviews discuss volumes that explore North American maps and geographies from different time periods. Jörn Seeman reviews *Mapping an Atlantic World, Circa 1500*, a history of mapping during the Renaissance, and how it helped to produce particular Eurocentric worldviews that were projected onto the Atlantic Ocean. Daniel Cole reviews Candace Fujikame's *Mapping Abundance for a Planetary Future: Kanaka Maoli and Critical Settler Cartographies in Hawai'i*. This monograph provides some examples of how indigenous groups are deploying their own mapping practices to challenge colonial, Eurocentric worldviews. Finally, John Hudson reviews a recent textbook on the regional geography of North America, *Across this Land: A Regional Geography of the United States and Canada, Second Edition*. In it, he notes the author's ability to capture the sense of place in different North American regions.

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