

## Opinion Column Reaction to Mark Denil

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Dear Editor,

**H**ere are my thoughts on Mark Denil's critique of Denis Wood's "Map Art." Use what you want, however you want to (can you believe I'm giving you this kind of latitude?!).

Two things:

First, Denil is right that Wood sets up a false dichotomy between normative maps and art maps. I don't remember if Wood defines a map. Let's use this definition: A map is a graphic representation of spatial relations (or relationships in/across/through space). If we can agree that something along the above is a true definition of a map, then anything that does so (represent graphically relationships in/across/through space)—whether recognizable as normative or not—is a map.

Second, Denil is mistaken in saying that "only use defines the map" (one of his last sentences). Use is often a good indicator of the quality of the map, but not as the defining indicator. If in what Wood calls art-maps (as in the maps that I looked at when I was discussing Maps As/In Art) the creator/artist makes things that s/he says are maps because they tell a spatial story (as Leila Daw's maps do), then they are maps. It does not matter if anyone can USE the thing as a map. If it represents those spatial relations that the creator wants it to represent, then it is a map. This view, however, also illustrates Denil's contentions that there is no normative/art-map dichotomy.

And then what's with the Pogo quote?! As it stands, it has nothing to do with anything about maps. It would mean more if it were paraphrased as: "We have met the enemy of cartography, and it is Denis Wood."