

Book Reviews

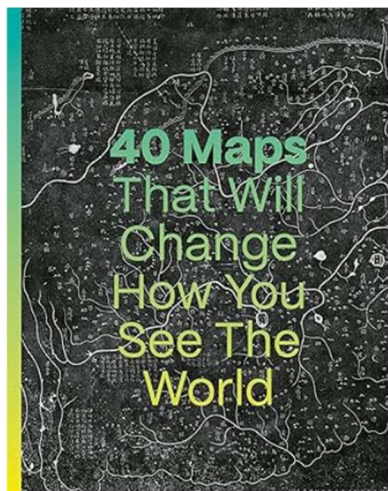
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Reviews:

40 Maps That Will Change How You See the World, By Alastair Bonnett



Bonnett, Alastair. *40 Maps That Will Change How You See the World*. London: Ivy Press, 2024. 192p. \$30 CAN. ISBN 978-0-7112-9355-7

Published in 2024, Alastair Bonnett's book, *40 Maps That Will Change How You See the World*, introduces the reader to 40 maps chosen for their ability to give Bonnett an "electric jolt" (p. 8). The author describes the selected maps as 'disruptive.' These are the kind of maps that challenge your world view, or at the very least, what the average person thinks of when they hear the word 'map'. A Professor of Social Geography at the University of Newcastle in the UK, Bonnett has written dozens of scholarly works, but also several books, like this one, that are aimed at a more general audience.

Bonnett states that this book is for "anyone with a curious mind." The broadness of the target audience means that this book serves as more of a brief overview rather than an in-depth research resource. The tone of the book is friendly, casual, and accessible for non-experts. Given that this is not an academic text, the citation of sources for the historical information is not especially specific (although references are included).

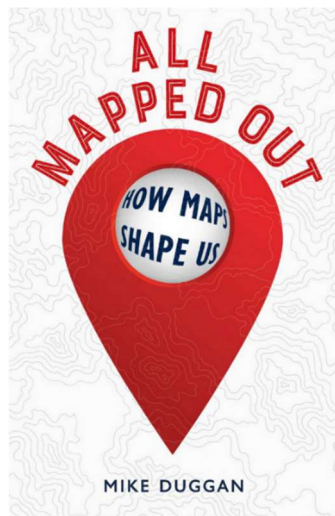
The book contains images of 40 maps with an accompanying description by Bonnett, which generally includes some background on the map, and it's historical, scientific, or social context. Bonnett also often provides an argument for why that map is insightful, interesting, or valuable. For example, Bonnett suggests that a wall painting of the neolithic settlement of Çatalhöyük (in present day Turkey) prompts us to recognize ourselves in the humans who resided there 9,000 years ago. A sailor's map, composed of sticks and stones from the Marshall Islands, speaks to a "relationship to the sea that is now gone which was as intimate as the touch of skin" (p. 43). I think it is fair to say that Bonnett really loves maps.

One small downside to the book is its diminutive size. It is 7"x 9.25." Many maps

appear in a two-page spread layout, which interrupts the image. This means that the details are not always easy to see. Although the author occasionally includes additional extracts of the map to highlight details, a reader may need to seek out another version to see all the details.

Given the casual tone of the book, it feels like a great gift for the person in your life who has mentioned a fondness for maps. Readers of the Bulletin may appreciate this book as a love letter to mapping. The maps cover everything from dancing bees to neurons in the human brain, to Aztec symbolism. Several even extend beyond the limits of our planet. Although not an academic text, this book could be a valuable starting place for those interested in cartography, data visualization, or western biases in mapping. If you want to spark discussions about what a map is, or can be, this book offers many interesting examples. For these reasons, this book could make a useful contribution to an academic library collection.

**All Mapped Out: How Maps Shape Us,
By Mike Duggan**



Duggan, Mike. *All Mapped Out: How Maps Shape Us*. London: Reaktion Books. 2024. 230p. \$29.50 CAD.

Mike Duggan's *All Mapped Out: How Maps Shape Us* offers something a little outside the usual fare for a text about maps. Rather than making an argument about the history of cartography, or a spatial argument about a place itself, this text follows a discussion about why maps are made and used, and how their use is changing or adapting over time and medium. Duggan is looking at maps not solely as a mode of data, but as a mode of culture and society.

The primary thesis of the book is that maps are deeply ingrained in all that we do in our daily lives. We, individually and societally, shape and are shaped by maps in a variety of ways. They help us in our wayfinding and are happily abandoned mid-journey for something of interest, perhaps rejoined or rejigged when the time comes. They are used to shape power and influence, from land claims to gerrymandering. They are used to show people, routes, and waypoints of culture, such as museums, shops or landmarks. And they are expanding in scope and definition, as new technologies use and create maps to their particular means, including self-driving cars, geo-visualization for urban planning, or maps intersecting with machine learning, creating further abstractions from reality. There is no moral judgment on these topics ; they are simply discussed, as they are, and have been, and may be.

This book appears to be intended as a crossover for both popular and academic audiences. The writing style is clear and engaging, and offers a healthy scope of research, while not descending into the esoteric linguistic chicanery employed by more foppishly obtuse authors. It is indeed eminently readable, and Duggan's own surveys of map users brings several points of interest to the subject. In discussing the use of maps as navigational tools, for instance,