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Why is Europe at the top half of maps and Africa at the bottom? Although we are accustomed to that convention, it is, in fact, a politically motivated, almost entirely subjective way of depicting a ball spinning in space. As *The Power of Projections* teaches us, maps do not portray reality, only interpretations of it. To begin with, they are two-dimensional projections of a three-dimensional, spherical Earth. Add to that the fact that every map is made for a purpose and its design tends to reflect that purpose. Finally, a map is often a psychological projection of the historical, political, and cultural values of the cartographer\_or of the nation, person or organization for which the map was created.

In this fascinating book, Klinghoffer examines the world perceptions of various civilizations and the ways in which maps have been formulated to serve the agendas of cartographers and their patrons. He analyzes the recent decline of sovereignty, the spread of globalization, the reassertion of ethnic identity, and how these trends affect contemporary mapmaking.