Written Response

Benedict Anderson's book Imagined Communities sheds light on how particular perspectives on ethnicity, ethnicity and nationalism have been shaped and transformed by particular tools. The formation and restructuring of nationalism is not the accidental outcome of a complex intersection of historical forces, but an ideological and political sculpture consciously assembled over time.

In this book, I go beyond the conventional approach of collecting fragments of history and narrating them simultaneously, and instead present them sequentially over time, restructuring them into a timeline to show how maps and power converge in a political biography about the ownership and inheritance of territory. On the function of maps as symbols of power, authority, and national unity, refer to '**The map is the perfect symbol of the state.**' *Mark Monmonier. (1998). Maps for Political Propaganda: How to Lie with Maps. (pg.135)*

1761	John Harrison's 1761 invention of the chronometer
1828	the first feverridden Dutch settlement was made on the island of New Guinea.
1836	Although the settlement had to be abandoned in 1836, the Dutch Crown proclaimed sovereignty over that part of the island lying west of 141 degrees longitude (an invisible line which corresponded to nothing on the ground, but boxed in Conrad's diminishing white spaces), with the exception of some coastal stretches regarded as under the sovereignty of the Sultan of Tidore.
1850	In a recent, brilliant thesis the Thai historian Thongchai Winichakul has traced the complex processes by which a bordered 'Siam' came into being between 1850 and 1910. His account is instructive precisely because Siam was not colonized, though what, in the end, came to be its borders were colonially determined. In the Thai case, therefore, one can see unusually clearly the emergence of a new state-mind within a 'traditional' structure of political power.
1851	Up until the accession, in 1851, of the intelligent Rama IV (the Mongkut of The King and I), only two types of map existed in Siam, and both were hand-made: the age of mechanical reproduction had not yet there dawned. One was what could be called a 'cosmograph,' a formal, symbolic representation of the Three Worlds of traditional Buddhist cosmology.

...Thongchai points out that these guide-maps, always local, were never situated in a larger, stable geographic context, and that the bird's-eye view convention of modern maps was wholly foreign to them. |

1870 Only in the 1870s did Thai leaders begin thinking of boundaries as segments of a continuous map-line corresponding to nothing visible on the ground, but demarcating an exclusive sovereignty wedged between other sovereignties.

1874 In 1874 appeared the first geographical textbook, by the American missionary J.W. Van Dyke – an early product of the print-capitalism that was by then sweeping into Siam.

> 'Like censuses, European-style maps worked on the basis of a totalizing classification, and led their bureaucratic producers and consumers towards policies with revolutionary Consequences.'
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> ...In Southeast Asia, the second half of the nineteenth century was the golden age of military surveyors – colonial and, a little later, Thai. They were on the march to put space under the same surveillance which the census-makers were trying to impose on persons. Triangulation by triangulation, war by war, treaty by treaty, the alignment of map and power proceeded.
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> ...A map merely represents something which already exists objectively 'there.' In the history I have described, this relationship was reversed. A map anticipated spatial reality, not vice versa.(...) A map was now necessary for the new administrative mechanisms and for the troops to back up their claims. . . . The discourse of mapping was the paradigm which both administrative and military operations worked within and served. (page. 287-288)

1882 Rama V established a special mapping school in Bangkok.

1892 Minister of Education Prince Damrong Rajanuphab, inaugurating a modern-style school system for the country, made geography a compulsory subject at the junior secondary level.

> Out of these changes emerged two final avatars of the map (both instituted by the late colonial state) which directly prefigure the official nationalisms of twentieth century Southeast Asia.
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> ... the Europeans frequently attempted to legitimize the spread of their power by quasi-legal methods. Among the more popular of these was their 'inheritance' of the putative sovereignties of native rulers whom the Europeans had eliminated or subjected. Either way, the usurpers were in the business, especially vis-à-vis other Europeans, of reconstructing the property-history of their new possessions. Hence the appearance, late in the nineteenth century especially, of 'historical maps,' designed to demonstrate, in the new cartographic discourse, the antiquity of specific, tightly bounded territorial units.

1900 In 1900, or thereabouts, was published Phumisat Sayam [Geography of Siam] by W.G. Johnson, the model for all printed geographies of the country from that time onwards. Thongchai notes that the vectoral convergence of print-capitalism with the new conception of spatial reality presented by these maps had an immediate impact on the vocabulary of Thai politics.

1900 Between 1900 and 1915, the traditional words krung and muang largely disappeared, because they imaged dominion in terms of sacred capitals and visible,

> **1901** Only in 1901 did The Hague buy out the Sultan, and incorporate West New Guinea into the Netherlands Indies – justnin time for logoization.

1915 discontinuous population centres. In their place came prathet, 'country,' which imaged it in the invisible terms of bounded territorial space.

1945 When, in the aftermath of the bitter anticolonial wars of 1945–49, the Dutch were forced to cede sovereignty of the archipelago to a United States of Indonesia, they attempted (for reasons that need not detain us here) to separate West New Guinea once again, keep it temporarily under colonial rule, and prepare it for independent nationhood.

1949

1950 especially after 1950, Dutch missionaries and Dutch officials for the first time made serious efforts to 'unify' them by taking censuses, expanding communications networks, establishing schools, and erecting supra-'tribal' governmental structures. This effort was launched by a colonial state which, as we noted earlier, was unique in that it had governed the Indies, not primarily via a European language, but through 'administrative Malay.'

1960 It made no difference at all that, aside from the few hundred internees, no nationalists ever saw New Guinea with their own eyes until the 1960s. But Dutch colonial logo-maps sped across in the colony, showing a West New Guinea with nothing to its East, unconsciously reinforced the developing imagined ties.

1963   as a result of heavy American diplomatic pressure and Indonesian military raids. Only then did President Sukarno visit for the first time, at the age of sixty-two, a region about which he had tirelessly orated for four decades. The subsequent painful relations between the populations of West New Guinea and the emissaries of the independent Indonesian state can be attributed to the fact that Indonesians more or less sincerely regard these populations as 'brothers and sisters,' while the populations themselves, for the most part, see things very differently.

...When the Dutch left the region in 1963 they estimated that within the 700,000 population there existed well over 200 mostly mutually unintelligible languages. Many of the remoter 'tribal' groups were not even aware of one another's existence.

...But what brought the often quarrelling young West Papuan nationalists together, especially after 1963, was the map. Though the Indonesian state changed the region's name from West Nieuw Guinea, first to Irian Barat (West Irian) and then to Irian Jaya, it read its local reality from the colonial-era bird's-eye atlas.

1984   At the time when its most prominent and attractive spokesman, Arnold Ap, was murdered by the state in 1984, he was curator of a state-built museum devoted to 'Irianese' (provincial) culture.

By linking the texts of the book in a series, I was able to connect the flow of the story, and as a designer I thought about how the methodology of information transfer can affect the communication and understanding of the content. I considered the difference between describing a cause-and-effect process in a simultaneous manner and in a serialised manner, and the effectiveness of communication accordingly.

All data has a source. And there is time in the process of perceiving and understanding it. Based on these considerations, the decision whether information should be processed in parallel or in a continuous flow is relevant to how it is narrated and designed.

In this way, categorisation and systematisation have the power to shape people's ideas and ideologies beyond the formation of nations.

The nation-state is constantly deconstructing itself, so there has always been a history that cannot be lived without the categories of 'race', 'ethnicity' and 'people', and the challenge is not to deny or forget this 'history', but to discover it within the very mechanism of the construction of the 'nation-state', and to find ways of responding to it without appealing to the 'nation-state'. *Sakai Naoki. (1996). The deconstruction of nationality: Nationality and the politics of the language. (pg.47).*

Sakai Naoki, (1996), The deconstruction of nationality: Nationality and the politics of the language
Mark Monmonier, (1998), Maps for Political Propaganda: How to Lie with Maps
Benedict Anderson, 'Census, Map, Museum', imagined Communities, 2006