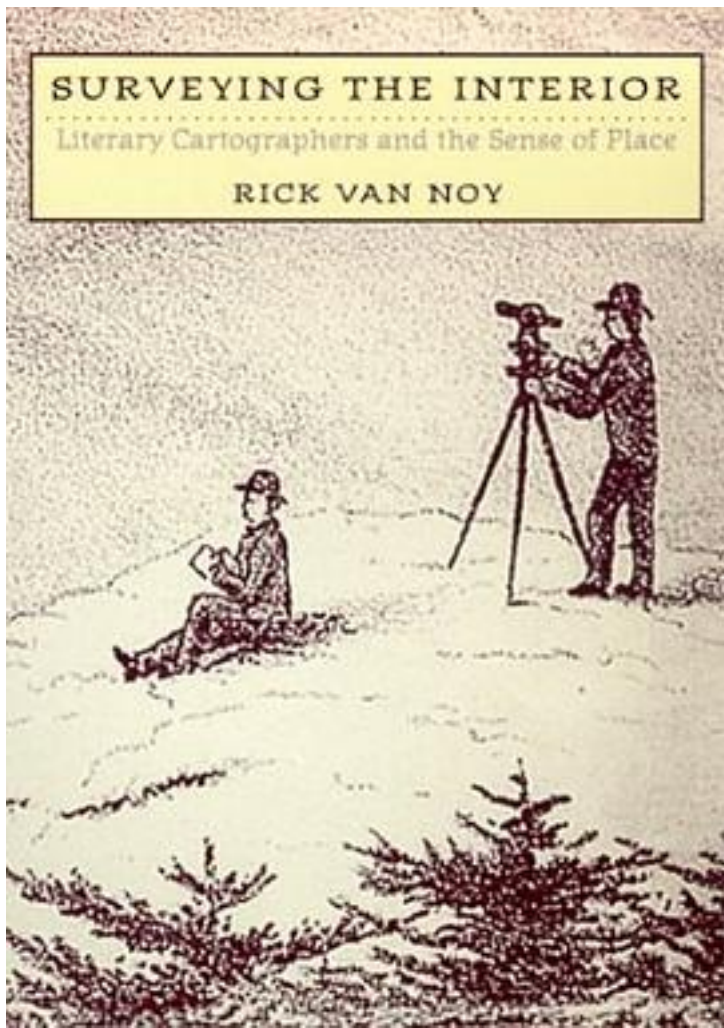


Surveying the Interior



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From the very beginning, American literature was closely inter-twined with surveying.

In "Surveying the Interior, Rick Van Noy explores the ways that four American literary cartographers--Henry David Thoreau, Clarence King, John Wesley Powell, and Wallace Stegner--concerned themselves with what it means to map or survey a place and what it means to write about it. In the process, he helps to define the ways by which space enters the human psyche as definable place, as well as the ways by which physical landscape is transmuted--through the vagaries of human perception, representative processes, and emotion--into a sense of place as an intimate, personal manifestation of both physical and existential realities. To these writers, landscape occupied an intersection between geography and imagination. Thoreau tried to look through the physical landscape to find higher truths in the interior landscape of the mind. King struggled to describe landscapes as he perceived them, whereas Powell used scientific representation to achieve an understanding of the sublime. Stegner's nonfiction writings about geographical perception strove to define the ethical obligations generated by writing about place. To all these writers, and to many others, the creation of cartographic and verbal representations of the American landscape involved intertwined intellectual and emotional responses--the development of a sense of the sublime, the role of fantasy, the traditions of Native Americans, personal and national ambitions. "Surveying the Interior is a remarkable analysis of the development of the American sense of place. Cartography in America aimed to order or control the landscape, but it led to the creation of a rich interior landscape that remains a fundamental part of the American imagination and literary tradition.

作者介绍:

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