

Seeing Like a State

YALE AGRARIAN STUDIES

The Institution for Social and Policy Studies at Yale University

The Yale ISPS Series

Seeing Like a State

*How Certain Schemes to
Improve the Human
Condition Have Failed*

James C. Scott

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For Louise, again, always

OWEN: What is happening?

YOLLAND: I'm not sure. But I'm concerned about my part in it. It's an eviction of sorts.

OWEN: We're making a six-inch map of the country. Is there something sinister in that?

YOLLAND: Not in . . .

OWEN: And we're taking place names that are riddled with confusion and . . .

YOLLAND: Who's confused? Are the people confused?

OWEN: And we're standardising those names as accurately and as sensitively as we can.

YOLLAND: Something is being eroded.

—Brian Friel, *Translations* 2.1