

***Mapping Gendered Routes and Spaces in the Early Modern World* edited by Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks (Routledge, 2016).**

Mapping Gendered Routes and Spaces in the Early Modern World is a figurative and literal journey through gendered spatial domains that are configured in the early modern world. Divided into four sections, this collection of essays takes the reader on a historical journey situated in the female body as it traverses the globe from the early modern world to seventeenth century England to analyse linguistic, literary and artistic representations of history. Contending in the Introduction that spaces are gendered, the essays attempt to discover the trajectory that such gendering follows as new routes are discovered and new socio-politico-economic ties are forged in the new world.

The first section of the book, titled 'Frameworks', traces how structures that define epistemologies are gendered. Terming spatialisation an 'epistemological strategy', the first essay determines the direction of the study by examining how feminist theories have defined the limits of meta-critical awareness about space. The intersection of geopolitical territory and the gendered allegories that located history in visual culture are studied by Valerie Traub as evidence of the blurring of dichotomous binaries. The emergence of 'intersectionality' that Traub points to in her essay is corroborated by Wiesner-Hanks who terms the early modern period the first 'global' era, and concludes that border-crossings in the colonial world were conceptualised by intermarriages and the third gender.

Part II, titled 'Embodied Environments', begins with the concept of the body having a language of its own. While Scholz Williams talks of how the clothed body is interpreted by the world, and how gendered boundaries result from the dialogue between body and space, Tara Pedersen analyses Shakespeare's plays to trace how women's reputations are 'mapped' by the body. In treating landscape and domestic space as an expression of the self, Sara L. French examines gender roles in Elizabethan England as reflected in the gardens of Bess of Hardwick. In the same vein, Buis, Spain-Savage and Wright analyse the visual representation of fishwives to establish the resolute relationship between the subject and her stock, the body and commerce.

The third section of the book, titled 'Communities and Networks', focuses on the position of women as members of a patriarchal network, whether religious, industrial or domestic. In her essay on women's networks and the early modern Roman convent, Montford concludes that nuns used music to form networks and exercise control in circumstances that were often marked by conflict over roles. The porous nature of the convent walls allowed for networks to be formed with the community outside, but these were often marked by issues concerning power. On the other hand, Deane, Eckerle, Dowd and Matchinske study how intellectual and spiritual kinships that were strengthened through writing gave birth to a 'spatial and discursive' community that was based on a shared set of interests, countering traditional structures of power by providing for a parallel domain of women's spaces marked by female power. The representation of female collaboration in Shakespeare's plays is analysed by Garrison, Pivetti and Rapatz, who conclude that the paranoid atmosphere pervading sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England gave rise to a new form of political action that became effective through exclusion, functioning outside the traditional political sphere in private spaces, and giving women voice and vigour without portraying them as direct, active agents of change.

Part IV, titled 'Exchanges', explores marriage and the effect of commerce on the relationship between husbands and wives as both tried to cope with the enforced absence from home of the

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travelling husband. The essay by Christensen explores the vast body of literature that acted as guides to travel which nevertheless failed to clarify marital duties when they conflicted with the call to duty, thus ignoring the social costs of enforced separation. Bernadette Andrea traces the misogyny that is inherent in texts that mark the presence of women, from fifteenth century translations of the Arabic treatise, *Mukhtar al-hikam* to sixteenth- and seventeenth-century British literary productions. Sheila T. Cavanagh's intriguing exploration of the life and death of Lady Amy Robsart, the wife of Robert Dudley, and the mythical exorcising of her ghost from Cumnor Palace, brings to the fore the undercurrents of power that marked relationships at the Elizabethan court. Robert Dudley's alleged affair with Elizabeth and his wife's subsequent death are explored as events that pointed to the dichotomy between public imagination and private selves, and the various versions of the story are explored as pointers to the credibility of historical narratives. Here, public imagination is shown to paint the personas that inhabit these spaces.

Mapping Gendered Routes and Spaces in the Early Modern World takes the reader on a journey through the constructed spatiality of the early modern world, with the aim of showing how the routes that were discovered were conceptual as well as geopolitical, engendering epistemological scholarship as well as spatial connections. In tracing how walls, borders and spaces resulted in the gendering of social realms that in turn effected the creation of new imagined and real spaces with their resultant equations of power, the book contributes substantially to both historical and feminist discourse. Beginning with an exploring of the 'global turn' in history that has fostered hybridity and the transcending of established borders, the collection itself transcends epistemological borders as it moves from the inner world of the body to the far reaches of the globe, concluding with an exploration of narratives that have shaped the personae of women in history, and the relative prominence and obscurity that history has accorded them. The collection is a cartographic blending of real and imagined spaces that women have occupied through the centuries, and the volume does justice to its claim of tracing spatialisation as a 'cognitive process and epistemological strategy', wherein the gendering of routes and landscapes reflect the questions that were evoked in the attempt to delineate the role of gender in understanding the early modern world and its figurations in history.

Lekha Roy