

Mark My Words: Native Women Mapping Our Nations. Mishuana Goeman. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013. ISBN: 9780816677900

Mishuana Goeman's *Mark My Words: Native Women Mapping Our Nations* challenges readers to think about how indigenous North American women's writing creates maps and spaces that complement and counter colonial, patriarchal, conventionally-considered maps of Mexico, the United States and Canada. Goeman asks that her readers explore how poetry and novels serve to (re)map the nation by juxtaposing peoples' cultural histories and movement with governing maps that enact violence and controlling strategies on multiple scales, from individual bodies to swaths of landscape. Convincingly argued by Goeman, meanings constructed by "[the] surveying of Native lands, cartography as realist depictions, regional descriptions that make absent Native histories and colonial violence, statistics that elide sources of capitalist wealth, education that promotes the ideals of freedom and democracy while obscuring the coercive force, and constructions of alterities that confine bodies in spaces," are complicated and countered through the simultaneously existing, alternative geographies written by Native women (159). By engaging native women's epistemologies over time, she argues that we can understand a variety of relationships of native women (and peoples) to changing landscapes. Goeman sets out theoretically from feminist geographer Doreen Massey's spatial potentials and Katherine McKittrick's multiscalar spatial discourses, creating room for the texts she engages (E. Pauline Johnson's short stories, "A Red Girl's Reasoning" and "As it was in the Beginning;" Esther Belin's poetry, *From the Belly of My Beauty*; Joy Harjo's *How We Became Human*; and Leslie Marmon Silko's *Almanac of the Dead*) to reimagine space as "a meeting up of histories," existing along a continuum (5-6). In order to analyze the fluctuation of race, gender, class, and sexuality in the texts, Goeman relies on Crenshaw's intersectionality as a method.

Each of the four chapters feature a different native writer in four literary forms: short story, poetry, poetry/performance, and novel, and sets the writing in historical context with important legislation related to North American geographies (e.g. Indian Act, HR 108 Termination legislation, NAFTA). Chapter 1, “Remember what you are,” examines two “tragic love stories” by nineteenth-century writer E. Pauline Johnson. Historically situated during the formation and revisions of the Canadian Confederation’s Indian Act, Johnson’s works engage three major themes: love, marriage, and uneasy belongings in both settler and native spaces as they develop over the nineteenth century. Within these texts, Goeman introduces how the literature embodied spaces and how spaces governed by different philosophies and cultural norms imposed limits or convened rights on the female body. Through the intimacy of marriage in native and colonial spaces, Johnson’s texts explored what Canadian space could be, “remind[ing] readers of Native History, land, and rights and how acknowledgment of these would make a stronger nation” (84).

Goeman addresses Esther Belin’s poetry to uproot settler spaces by looking at relocation in chapter 2. Focusing on the period from 1952-60 (the termination and relocation era in the US), she writes about Belin’s “From the Belly of My Beauty,” mediating between urban and remembered spaces. The chapter is at its strongest when Goeman analyzes “Directional Memory,” within which Belin situates her contemporary, Californian life in Diné epistemologies, remapping and layering the multiple geographies lived and navigated by native people. At the very end, she begins to discuss Belin’s poetry as activism, and she could have pushed this idea further from the beginning of the chapter. Framing Belin in this way would have connected strongly to the activist/active nature in which she discusses Joy Harjo’s work in chapter 3, “From the Stomp Grounds on up.” Goeman turns to Harjo’s poems like “Letter From the End of the

Twentieth Century” and “The Path to the Milky Way Leads through Los Angeles” to examine how native geographical interpretations apply to both local and global spaces where people from different backgrounds meet and engage one another, rather than as limited to their specific localities.

The author rounds out her application of (re)mapping in chapter 4 through examining Leslie Marmon Silko’s *Almanac of the Dead*. Taking over the cartographer’s tools, which Goeman begins to discuss in Harjo’s work, is fleshed out most thoroughly in her discuss of Silko’s *500 Year Map* and the novel as she works through how Silko utilizes different forms of mapped writing like almanacs, travel diaries, and frontier/exploration writing to collapse and connect chronologies and spaces marked by violence. In rewriting maps and spatial narratives, Silko, like the other authors Goeman examines throughout the book, reconceive master (often national) geographical narratives. In Goeman’s (re)mapping, marginalized voices produce spatial knowledge, acknowledging the continuum along which national and political geographies put into place in the nineteenth century have an impact on people in the twenty-first, violently disrupting native spaces in a variety of ways (tied particularly to NAFTA in this final chapter). *Mark My Words* effectively mines short stories, poetry, performance, and novel literary forms to inform new ways of understanding how women navigate historical and contemporary spaces. Carefully examining native women’s writing to mark the violence in traditionally understood geographies, Goeman facilitates readers in thinking about how space is restructured on a continuum. The book complements studies in fields outside of cultural geography and comparative literature. If there is one frustration for the reader, it is the necessity of having the original poems aside the analyses in order to visualize the way that words are put to page. That

said, the difficulty in securing the rights to reproduce texts and images are formidable, and thus, the reader just has to source the original material.

The theories and examples easily complement a variety of scholarly endeavors. Visual art and museum studies on American women artists like Jaune Quick-to-See Smith and Navajo weavers (as in Tisdale's *Spider Woman's Gift*, 2011), where contemporary artists likewise blend the contemporary and historical into the lived experience, would benefit from applying Goeman's theories on (re)mapping landscapes. Academic readers will find her deft weaving of cultural geography, political, and comparative literature analyses useful in comparative work, but teachers will find her individual chapters especially useful in the classroom. Her case studies provide insightful points of entry for both undergraduate and graduate students interested in how women's texts can be read to glean insights on how communities flexibly operate, change, and incorporate new spaces and ideas, a welcome and timely addition to the corpus on women's literatures and arts, equally at "home" in the Americas and in global contexts. Another interesting point is how Goeman engages Africa and its colonialisms, placing her study of mapping, control, and contestations of the Americas within a broader context of Atlantic imperialism and colonialism. African studies and Diaspora scholars will find rich comparisons in this text that encourages dialogue and collapses artificial geographic barriers in what are generally relegated to "area studies." Ultimately, (re)mapping native spaces allows for more flexible thinking, writing, and discussion about what it means to belong to landscapes and communities.

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