
3-1-2017

Meridians 15:2

Paula J. Giddings

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.smith.edu/meridians>



Part of the [Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Giddings, Paula J., "Meridians 15:2" (2017). *Meridians: Feminism, Race, Transnationalism*. 14.
<https://scholarworks.smith.edu/meridians/14>

This Journal has been accepted for inclusion in Meridians: Feminism, Race, Transnationalism by an authorized administrator of Smith ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@smith.edu

PAULA J. GIDDINGS

From Here to There

Every time I come across a historical record about African-descended women and movement—migration, immigration, or just plain going and gone—I raise my hand in tribute.

Our pathways of water, land, and air are many. We've been bought, sold, and traded across nations, counties, and parishes, then followed North stars that reached far beyond them. Knowing that the true meaning of slavery is confinement we moved on dance floors, left homes for vaudevillian stages, mobilized imaginations that encircled the globe to find new nesting places. We traveled cross-country on trains that didn't want us and across seas that never-minded if we were wanted or not. North, South, East, West—we've run and walked—and we have theorized.

We at *Meridians* are pleased that this issue of the journal features a special section entitled "Travelin' Women: Black Feminist Migrations, Diasporas, and Cosmopolitanisms," with guest editors Jennifer Williams and Ifeoma Nwankwo.

In their introduction to the section's essays, poems, and interview, they ask: "What does it mean for a Black woman writer to be a traveling woman? How does travel affect Black women's creative and intellectual subjectivities? Alternatively, how does racialized and female gendered experience alter theories and practices of travel?" Answers are gleaned from spoken word performers; intimate writing practices shaped by contours of the Diaspora; critical readings of a memoir and a novel by the exquisite Paule Marshall; an interview with the consummate traveler and writer Andrea Lee, among other texts.

Meridians: feminism, race, transnationalism 15, no. 2 (2017): v–vi.
Copyright © 2017 Smith College. doi: 10.2979/meridians.15.2.01

It is fitting to anchor this special section with three essays from the Continent: essays that confront patriarchy head-on through different means. Anene Ejikeme's "The Women of Things Fall Apart..." examines the short story, "Headstrong Historian," by Chimamanda Adichie which, Ejikeme argues, provides a woman's perspective of the Igbo-colonialist encounter given iconic status by Chinua Achebe's classic novel.

Indeed, as Kanika Batra argues in "Polygamous Postcolonialism and Transnational Critique in Tess Onwueme's *The Reign of Wazobia*," Nigerian authors have often engaged in the intersections of post- and neo-colonialism, masculinism, and politics. In this instance, Batra, though a social science lens, examines the political and feminist implications of polygamy in Onwueme's play, which was published in 1988. The subject lends itself to analyzing corruption in the Nigerian polity, the place of myth and tradition in assessing the pre-colonial past, and gender/power relations.

All nationalisms are gendered, in the words of Ann McClintock, and the narratives accompanying the African liberation struggles of the mid-twentieth century—narratives where women's voices have been largely absent—reflect this reality. "Motherhood as Activism in the Angolan People's War (1961–1975) an essay by Selina Makana, seeks to revise this history, in part, by focusing on the role of women in that country's struggle against Portuguese colonialists. By looking at the possibilities of agency, visibility, and subjectivity of maternal bodies, Makana challenges another assumption in nationalist thought: that traditional motherhood is the highest status a woman can reach within that ideological realm.