

nature and the fascinating story of Hachula Lake? In our era, rampant post-political claims render this critique as “old news” and a useless exercise. But I would like to suggest that the importance of this book is exactly in insisting on voicing this critique in a more militant and conflictive manner than before. Gorney boldly turns away from consensual terrains and posits conflicting narratives and agonistic notions, fixating the discussion about nature (as well as about women, natives, progress and the like) as inherently political.

Reference

Levins, R. and Lewontin, R. (1985). *The Dialectical Biologist*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Efrat Eizenberg
The Technion

Teresa Gómez Reus and Aránzazu Usandizaga (eds.), *Inside Out: Women Negotiating, Subverting, Appropriating Public and Private Space* (Rodopi, Amsterdam/New York: 2008), 364 pp.

There is great importance in understanding the various ways in which women negotiate, subvert and appropriate public and private spheres. Grasping these ways from a historical perspective can bring new insights and evaluations on how women experience different spaces in current times. The purpose of the book under review is to challenge the dichotomy between public and private spaces and to shed light on how women, especially women writers, negotiated the boundaries that separated domestic and public spaces in the nineteenth century and up to the middle of the twentieth century.

Drawing from the pioneering work of Janet Wolff's (1985) *The Invisible Flâneuse: Women and the Literature of Modernity* and from Griselda Pollock's (1988) work on impressionist women painters, *Modernity and the Space of Femininity*, this collection of essays attempts to further explore dominant definitions of modernity and gendered spaces and widen the scope of discussion on them. These explorations are crucial for understanding the exclusion of women artists from the canon of modern art, as well as for bringing them to the center of inquiry and examining the unique paths by which they tread public and private spaces. Ironically, the lack of canonical feminine art becomes an advantage when

seeking to uncover various texts written by women without being framed by patriarchal and traditional thinking. Thus, the articles move between a variety of forms of discourse that include letters, diaries, journalism, poetry, fiction and essays. The scholars read these women writers and try to analyze the function of their social agency, as reflected in the writers' interpretation of the new spaces.

In that sense, the journey through the various essays in the volume takes us from the inside out, into various spaces that have not been accessible to women in the past. At the same time, there is movement from the outside in, when we read the different ways in which women interpret and negotiate the new spaces that they conquer, from their personal points of view and within their limitations as women living in patriarchy.

The book is divided into six sections organized under "six loosely defined headings." However, various connections exist between the essays that go beyond the structure of the volume, providing an opportunity to make different journeys through the volume on axes of time, space and genre, generating diverse frames of discourse. The volume thus provides different possible ways to make a reading-*flânerie* through it, from intimate domestic sites to public spaces and back, from the city to wild nature and back, from civilian sites to war zones and back, and from periphery to center and back.

The first section, "Early Escapes into Public Spaces," provides unique readings of three forbidden territories for women in the nineteenth century, all of which are spaces between private and public, allowing the women relative power in their limited position. In "Falling Over the Banister: Harriet Martineau and the Uneasy Escape from the Private," Lucy Bending analyzes a unique space called the sick room and shows how Martineau writes about it as a complex space which creates a paradoxical experience. The writer is a prisoner of the room, yet her struggle for freedom allows her to dominate it as she sets its rule and boundaries. Thus, she discovers power within her weakness. The notion of discovering one's power within limited circumstances appears in several essays throughout the book and designates women as agents in their own world even when they enter forbidden spaces. In "Private Rituals and Public Selves: The Turkish Bath in Women's Travel Writing," Efterpi Mitsi explores how European women travelers enjoy relative freedom of movement and esthetic expression when they go beyond their boundaries traveling to the Orient and write about their experiences of the Turkish bath (*hammam*). In showing how the *hammam* suspends the separation between private and public, Mitsi provides a unique analysis of gender and ethnicity through women's experience, which enriches post-colonialist perspective.

The notion of relative power is also revealed in Cathleen J. Hamann's "Ladies on the Tramp: The Philanthropic *Flâneuse* and Appropriations of Victorian London's

Impoverished Domesticity.” The author sheds light on class issues when she characterizes the ways in which upper-middle class women negotiated the sites of philanthropic work in houses of poor people in the East End of Victorian London. These women first relied on their class and gender to make the sites accessible to them, and then got the authority to speak about them in social discussions and thus gained visibility in the public sphere. The relations between women and poor people changed the discourse and enabled new instances of social mobility in the metropolis. These issues of solidarity between disadvantaged groups and its power to create change are still relevant today.

The second section, “Women on Display,” deals with the ways women interpret their vulnerability when they walk outside of the domestic borders into public spaces. In “‘The Abuse of Visibility’: Domestic Publicity in Late Victorian Fiction,” Anna Despotopoulou analyzes the domestic space of the late Victorian drawing room as a site of visibility and ultimately publicity for female characters of two novels by George Eliot and Henry James. Drawing from Habermas’ analysis of the vague line between private and public spheres, Despotopoulou argues that it was in Victorian times that the private domain became to be ruled by the marketplace. The thin line between the private and public is also revealed in “Public Space and Spectacle: Female Bodies and Consumerism in Edith Wharton’s *The House of Mirth*,” in which Ann-Marie Evans examines how Wharton’s heroine, Lily Bart, uses her body as a performative site in satisfying the expectations of fashionable New York.

The female body as a site of performance is also manifest in another form in Janet Stobbs’ “Tracing the Female Triptych of Space: Private, Public and Power Strongholds in Gertrude Atherton’s *Patience Sparhawk and Her Times* and F. Tennyson Jesse’s *A Pin to See the Peepshow*.” Stobbs analyzes the two novels’ heroines, who reject their submissive wife’s role and pay for it when their rejection becomes visible in the public sphere. Their movement from the domestic space into the workplace and up to their appearance in the public symbolic space of male power, the courtroom, is dangerous for them. They become objects of social show when they are unjustly convicted—without any evidence—of the murder of their husbands.

The essays in the third section, “Approaching the City,” document and analyze intuitive steps that women made as they tried to access urban spaces originally denied to them. The women managed to experience the unfamiliar territories as powerful sites where they could research their own identity and develop their own voice. This concept undermines the idea of the strong link between women and the private sphere, as Valerie Fehlbauer suggests through reading three women writers and the presence of women in large Victorian cities in “Paving

the Way for Mrs. Dalloway: The Street-walking Women of Eliza Lynn Linton, Ella Hepworth Dixon and George Paston.” Melinda Harvey analyzes urban sites that could be powerful for women like the bedsitting room and the café, which give a sense of domesticity and security, in “Dwelling, Poaching, Dreaming: Housebreaking and Homemaking in Dorothy Richardson’s *Pilgrimage*.” The city is also a provider of rich material for women writers as shown in “Colonial *Flâneurs*: The London Life-writing of Janet Frame and Doris Lessing,” in which Ma Lourdes López Roperó emphasizes the impact of the writers’ colonial background on their visions of London. As women coming from the periphery of Great Britain to London, they explore the city with tolerance and a willingness to form a connection with it.

The fourth section, “Conquering the Spaces of War,” explores women’s position in male spaces of war. Women’s writing of the war, as “others,” seems to offer a unique opportunity for a different understanding of this chaotic space. Teresa Gómez Reus and Peter Lauber study Wharton’s account of World War I. In their article, “In a Literary No Man’s Land: A Spatial Reading of Edith Wharton’s *Fighting France*,” they show how relating the story of the war through civilian sites such as hospitals, markets and kindergartens has a strong impact on the way we understand it, which is still very relevant. The emphasis on personal feelings toward spaces of war as spaces which usually exclude women enables one to examine them with a nonconformist gaze, as shown by Laurel Forster in “Women and War Zones: May Sinclair’s Personal Negotiation with the First World War.” Describing the war in a variety of voices and opinions from the front and from the home front made Vera Brittain’s autobiography one of the most meaningful war journals written by a woman, as we can see in “Expanding the Private and Public Spaces of War: Vera Brittain’s *Testament of Youth*.” Aránzazu Usandizaga shows how in Brittain’s writing of the war, it is impossible to understand the private without the public and vice versa.

The fifth section, “Transformations in Nature,” uses the perspective of ecocriticism to analyze the gendered reaction of female anxiety as reflected in female writing towards nature. Stephen E. Hunt researches the way four Romantic women writers experienced their relationship with nature, in “Friends of our Captivity: Nature, Terror and Refugia in Romantic Women’s Literature”. The writers—Mary Robinson, Charlotte Smith, Helen Maria Williams and Mary Wollstonecraft—engaged the natural world while confronting extreme situations involving physical captivity, personal trauma and depression. Their writing of nature allows them to cross mental barriers of their own personal prisons and to develop their literary imagination in order to survive. In “Public Land and Private Fears: Reclaiming Outdoor Spaces in Gretchen Legler’s *Sportswoman’s*

Notebook,” Lilace Mellin Guignard focuses on the highly relevant issue of gender-based fears, exploring the struggles women often face while negotiating wild outdoor spaces through Legler’s book about recreational activities.

The last section of the volume, “Negotiating the City,” goes back to the wildness of the urban space and brings two articles that describe current female negotiation with the public and the private in the city. In the first article, “Adrienne Rich’s City Poetry: Locating a *Flâneuse*,” Kirsten Bartholomew Ortega explores the famous feminist poet’s own *flânerie* of New York City. Rich’s gaze of the city as revealed in her poems is different from that of male poets such as Walt Whitman, T.S. Eliot or Langston Hughes. Rich’s female *flânerie* is not one of freedom and independence, but of complexity and concern about the lack of opportunities for women in the city. While Rich goes out to the city and reads it with her own eyes, Eavan Boland writes her poetry on the domestic space, as is shown in “Writing Inside and Outside: Eavan Boland’s Poetry of the Domestic Space.” Sara Sullivan examines the domestic space in Boland’s poetry as a space in which women like her can live and act. Boland turned the suburbs from an oppressive space into a political space for her poetical investigations. Thus the suburbs become a place in which the private and the public are merged and the domestic becomes familiar again.

Women negotiate, subvert and appropriate various spaces all the time, everywhere, now as in the past. As they do so, they challenge the separation between public and private and create their own experiences through space, while altering the nature of spaces, facing dangers and exclusion and finding unique sources of power in oppressive and forbidden spaces. Gendered spatial criticism is becoming one of the most productive fields in contemporary feminist theory. This book illustrates primal attempts, since the nineteenth century, of exploring these issues through gendered perspectives. However, it brings only the voices of women writers and focuses on privileged women while leaving open questions about women whose voices have not had a chance to be heard. It also leaves room for further criticism of the notion of separation of space, inherent in the social order on the axes of class, ethnicity and age, as Janet Floyd asks in her concluding remark of the book: “The blurring of boundaries, playfully or in the service of the state, begs an important question, of course. To whom, exactly, are any of these spaces penetrable and on what terms?” (p. 353). These questions, combined with issues raised in the book, are relevant and crucial for further gendered exploration of current private and public spaces.

Inbal Wilamovski
Hebrew University of Jerusalem