

Preface

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It is a particularly great pleasure for me to write a few words of introduction that will serve to launch this special issue of *Hagar* devoted to the complex relations of spaces and their gendered articulation. As senior editor of *Hagar*, I seldom take an active role in the content or process of formation of the essays presented by our guest editors. But as a feminist scholar who has always been keen on the analysis of social spaces, I made an exception here and traveled from my remote desert abode to Jerusalem to attend the conference where the papers that appear in this issue were originally presented. The conference setting was unique. Lectures were held in rooms shaded by thick stone walls, and discussions between sessions were carried out in the midst of the manicured flowerbeds and lavish gardens of the Sisters of Zion monastery tucked in the picturesque Jerusalem neighborhood of Ein Karem.

I attended a full day of lectures and learned what we all know: that feminist knowledge and feminist research cross disciplinary boundaries. Gender and space, identities and migration are the topics that are as central to feminist geographers as they are to anthropologists, sociologists and historians.

The volume produced out of the conference, as you can see, is a celebration of analytical sophistication and geographical diversity of its case studies. Studies presented here are located in New Zealand and Lebanon, Japan and Spain, Jerusalem and the regions of northern rural Netherlands. The topics covered range from a discussion of feminist reflexive methodologies in Milan, Italy, to food and information technologies, from analysis of home spaces to studying gendered public urban spaces, from exploring the world of work and civil engagements to a depiction of rural–urban flight and gendered identities. While most essays deal with contemporary realities and processes, there is also one that brings in historical data. In brief, this is a celebration of excellent, vibrant and diverse scholarship. I hope you will enjoy it as much as I have.