

ity of young women. He provides considerable detail about the planes and the technologies used to fly them. But this is more a book for the general reader than the advanced scholar. While the details of aviation history and technology provide a fascinating backdrop to the world of girls' fiction, it's unclear if the author opens new avenues in those fields. Rather, his strength is in exploring the intersections of gendered culture and aviation, helping to illuminate the role of technology in shaping gender. It brings together many apparently disparate concerns and so provides a fascinating angle to think about young women and technology in American culture.

DEBORAH CLARKE

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Ladies and Gents: Public Toilets and Gender.

Edited by Olga Gershenson and Barbara Penner. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. Pp. xi+250. \$27.95.

It took until 1992 for the first women's bathroom to be installed on the U.S. Senate floor! Previously, female senators had to make use of the public rest rooms for the tourists, one floor downstairs. As this fact shows, toilets can reveal much about someone's position in society. They also can cause a lot of commotion and controversy. The same was true for the call for papers about the "cultural meanings, histories, and ideologies of the public toilet as a gendered space" (p. 1) that was the source for this collection. The strong and often hostile reactions to the call gave evidence that toilets touch a fundamental aspect of society. American conservatives feared that this collection was part of a (moral) decline of academics, a "promiscuous triumph of gender studies and queer theory, the rhetoric of diversity, and equal rights legislation" (p. 3). However, as the collection brilliantly reveals, public toilets serve as an interesting entry point for scholarly reflections about gender, the body, sexuality, class, race, ethnicity, religion, equal rights, social justice, and notions of dirt and elimination. At the same time, they have a material dimension that touches disciplines such as product design, architecture, and urban planning.

The volume comprises sixteen varied essays of excellent scholarship that canvass public toilets from cinematic, philosophical, psychoanalytical, etymological, sociological, architectural, and other angles. The first part, "Potty Politics: Toilets, Gender, and Identity," breaks a lance for healthy, safe, sufficient, and gender-sensitive public toilets. However, not all authors take a similar stance. While some argue for more and better toilets for women, others favor unisex or family rest rooms. Intriguing is the essay of Jami Anderson, who convincingly argues that equality implies that, although female prisoners prefer female guards, prison guards of both sexes

should be allowed to guard prisoners of both sexes, even when using the toilet. The second section, “Toilet Art: Design and Cultural Representations,” gathers, as its title suggests, contributions about toilet art, the design of public toilets, inclusive female urinals, and discussions of representations of toilets in films, Jewish popular culture, gay literature, etc.

Despite the division of the book into two parts, the essays fluently follow each other. Each brings the reader a step further into the meaning of public toilets. The focus shifts from a “front stage” to a rather “backstage” perspective. Clara Greed, an authority on gender-sensitive urbanism, opens the collection with a well-founded plea for more and better-kept public toilets, while one of the last essays sheds light on the subversive use of public toilets by gay visitors.

Notwithstanding the diverse and wide-ranging perspectives—cross-disciplinary as well as geographical—there are surprising gaps. While the United Kingdom, Australia, the United States, Asia, and Africa are represented, Scandinavian, Mediterranean, and former Eastern bloc countries are absent. It’s not clear if that blind spot is due to a lack of scholarly research in those countries or of responses to the call for papers, but the toilet practices of some of those countries certainly can contribute to a less-pessimistic vision of public toilet customs. Family toilets, for example, already exist in the Swedish chain Ikea. And Greed’s rather pessimistic view on the absence of public toilets in Britain might be compared to Croatia, for example, where Konzum supermarkets offer their clients toilet use for free.

Still, with a sound introduction mapping the key literature from several disciplines, Olga Gershenson and Barbara Penner succeed in their aim to establish the basis of a “new”—or more precisely, “formerly invisible” and scattered—field of toilet studies as a fully fledged scholarly interdiscipline.

The book is especially useful for architects, urban planners, product designers, artists, anthropologists, and cultural and social historians. Culturally oriented historians of technology will find it interesting as well.

ELS DE VOS

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Cold War on the Home Front: The Soft Power of Midcentury Design.

By Greg Castillo. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010.

Pp. xxiv+278. \$75/24.95.

One of the truly promising developments of recent years has been the shift within the literature of design from coffee-table displays and celebrity monographs to works of genuine scholarly merit. Greg Castillo’s *Cold War on the Home Front* is exemplary of this trend.

The book opens with an account of the famous “Kitchen Debate” be-