Threshold Modernism reveals how changing ideas about gender and race in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Britain shaped — and were shaped by — London and its literature. Chapters address key sites, especially department stores, women’s clubs, and city streets, that coevolved with controversial types of modern women. Interweaving literary studies, cultural history, narrative theory, and spatial analysis, Threshold Modernism considers canonical figures such as George Gissing, Henry James, Dorothy Richardson, H. G. Wells, and Virginia Woolf alongside understudied British and colonial writers including Amy Levy, B. M. Malabari, A. B. C. Merriman-Labor, Duse Mohamed Ali, and Una Marson. Evans argues that these diverse authors employed the “new public women” and their associated spaces to grapple with widespread cultural change and reflect on the struggle to describe new subjects, experiences, and ways of seeing in appropriately novel ways. For colonial writers of color, those women and spaces provided a means through which to claim their own places in imperial London.

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THRESHOLD MODERNISM

New Public Women and the Literary Spaces of Imperial London

ELIZABETH F. EVANS
University of Notre Dame, Indiana
For my parents, Jim and Sharon,
and for Matthew
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