



A Metic and a Former Slave: Rhetoric of Public and Private Space in Aspasia and Sojourner Truth

Bir Metik ve Eski bir Köle: Aspasia ve Sojourner Truth'ta Kamusal ve Özel Alan Retoriği

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ABSTRACT

Drawing on feminist rhetoric and critical imagination as theoretical frameworks, this qualitative study examines the revolutionary rhetorical politics of two women who defied their eras' gender constraints: Aspasia, a disenfranchised metic in ancient Greece, and Sojourner Truth, an emancipated slave in nineteenth-century America. Both women strategically reclaimed and transformed public rhetorical spaces traditionally controlled by men, creating profound shifts in gender politics across vastly different historical contexts. It analyzes Aspasia's unprecedented penetration of Athenian intellectual life—where women were systematically excluded from public discourse—and Truth's commanding presence in abolitionist and suffragist spaces where Black women's voices were marginalized by intersecting oppressions of race and gender. Using Aristotle's rhetorical typologies with Lefebvre's spatial theory and critical feminist analysis, this research examines the complex dialectic between space and power. It reveals how these pioneering women not only navigated hostile rhetorical environments but fundamentally reimagined and reconstructed them, establishing vital precedents for women's participation in public discourse. Their achievements, separated by over two millennia yet linked by parallel struggles, illuminate historical continuities in women's rhetorical resistance to spatial confinement and their persistent efforts to occupy and transform rhetorical territories previously denied to them.

ÖZ

Feminist retorik ve eleştirel hayal gücünü kuramsal çerçeve olarak kullanan bu nitel çalışma, dönemlerinin toplumsal cinsiyet kısıtlamalarına meydan okuyan iki kadının devrimci retorik politikasını inceler: antik Yunanistan'da hakları elinden alınmış bir metik olan Aspasia ve on dokuzuncu yüzyıl Amerika'sında özgürleşmiş bir köle olan Sojourner Truth. Her iki kadın da geleneksel olarak erkekler tarafından kontrol edilen kamusal retorik alanları stratejik olarak geri kazandı ve dönüştürdü, böylece son derece farklı tarihsel bağlamlarda toplumsal cinsiyet politikalarında derin değişimler yarattı. Çalışma, Aspasia'nın kadınların sistematik olarak kamusal söylemden dışlandığı Atina entelektüel yaşamına benzeri görülmemiş nüfuzunu ve Truth'un, Siyah kadınların seslerinin ırk ve toplumsal cinsiyetin kesişen baskılarıyla marjinalleştirildiği kölelik karşıtı ve kadın hakları alanlarındaki güçlü varlığını analiz eder. Aristoteles'in retorik tipolojilerini Lefebvre'in mekansal teorisi ve eleştirel feminist analizle birleştiren bu araştırma, mekan ve güç arasındaki karmaşık diyalektiği inceler. Bu öncü kadınların düşmanca retorik ortamlarda yalnızca yol bulmakla kalmayıp bunları temelden yeniden hayal ettiklerini ve yeniden yapılandırdıklarını, kadınların kamusal söyleme katılımı için hayati emsaller oluşturduklarını ortaya koyar. İki bin yılı aşkın bir süreyle ayrılmış ancak benzer mücadelelerle bağlantılı başarıları, kadınların mekansal kısıtlamalara karşı retorik direnişindeki tarihsel sürekliliği ve daha önce kendilerine yasaklanan retorik alanları işgal etme ve dönüştürme çabalarını aydınlatır.

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1. Introduction

Space is socially constructed and shaped by politics, ideology, and history (Lefebvre, 1991) because space is filled with ideologies and cultures that emphasize the struggles of marginalized and oppressed people. Playing an operational and instrumental role, space presents opportunities to those secluded and isolated to rebel and reject suppressive power that denies their intellectual capacity and agency. Space and the function of space is generated by dynamic and dialogic processes. As a metaphorical and constructed term, space—private and public—is a physical place where people exchange or listen to ideas, opinions, arguments and counterarguments presented through the appealing aspect of language. Plato, using the voice of Socrates, began creating a new system of rhetoric with its emphasis on analysis, abstraction, and conceptualization, thereby advocating the separation of intellect from its former mythic matrix and demolishing the mythos in favor of logos. In this new order, the *polis* and the *agora* as *topoi* became a particular monopolization of space—the nexus of power in a geography of exclusion that relegated women and marginalized groups to less accessible places. The polis and agora represent the highest form of social space because in this public space, rhetors find audiences to present their policies which provides visibility and recognition not only to people but ideas as well. In other words, space as a conduit of political ideas and arguments itself becomes a political tool. It is my contention that both Aspasia and Truth used space as a political tool to deliver their arguments and influence the audience to act towards the desired good. To better understand how they utilized the social and metaphorical power of space we need to consider Aristotle’s classification of space.

Aristotle introduced the concept of *topoi*, which means ‘place’ or ‘turn’ in Greek, as a metaphor to signify places where rhetors presented their arguments. *Topoi* acted as a strategy of invention and delivery. In his work *Rhetoric*, Aristotle explains *topoi* as a conceptual framework to generate arguments. For Aristotle, “a *topos* is a kind of ‘seat’ or ‘source’ of arguments” (Topics I.2, 100a18). He classifies *topoi* as *koinoi topoi* (public space) and *idiai topoi* (private space). In his translation of Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*, George A. Kennedy (1994) emphasizes that “*Topoi* are akin to templates for logical discovery; they guide the rhetor in structuring persuasive arguments” (p. 50). From a rhetorical perspective, *topoi* can be analyzed as “strategies for gaining the upper hand and producing successful speeches” (Rubinelli, 2006, p. 254). We see *koinoi topoi* and *idiai topoi* as an “exercise in both deconstruction and reconstruction” (Soja, 1989, p. 12). *Koinoi* and *idiai* in Aspasia and Sojourner Truth deconstruct exclusive and oppressive ideologies, which prevent women from accessing public spaces and target audience, and reconstruct the intellectual, cultural, and philosophical status of women. Women in ancient Greece were excluded from political and public spaces, which worsened the situation for Aspasia, as she was metic and not a citizen devoid of any rights; similarly, Black women, as Deborah King’s term multiple jeopardy summarizes, were excluded from life itself and denied womanhood and identity due to the deleterious impact of slavery and racism in America.

Drawing on feminist rhetoric and using critical imagination as an analytic tool, this paper attempts to analyze *koinoi topoi* and *idiai topoi*—public and private space—and knowledge production in epideictic and deliberative rhetoric discussing how space and rhetoric deconstruct existing hegemonies and encourages the reader toward operationalizing the epistemic and ontological meaning of space. Another significant theoretical framework is critical imagination, which serves to develop a critical stance to engage intellectual inquiry and analysis of the role of space in the rhetoric of women rhetors. In *Traces of a Stream* (2000), Jacqueline Jones Royster states that “imagination [is]... a critical skill, that is, the ability to see the possibility of certain experiences even if we cannot know the specificity of them” (p. 83). Critical imagination as a heuristic approach “helps to bring clarity and substance in rhetorical studies to evolving qualities of excellence and constitutes, as well, a usable pedagogical approach” (Kirsch and Royster, 2010, p. 649). Feminist rhetorical practices that focused on historical recovery and rereading women rhetors (Glenn, 1994; Jarratt and Ong, 1996; Enoch, 2013), heuristically employed critical imagination as an analytical tool to discuss the role of women rhetors in building a critical field.

Within this context, the proposed research aims to answer the following questions: How does space, as an element of action, location and identity, restrict or enable women deliberating? What are the communicative and persuasive functions of private and public spaces? How did the role of space transform forms of rhetoric from Aspasia to Sojourner Truth? How does Aspasia and Truth challenge dialectic theory of gendered space?

2. Space in Rhetoric

In *The Production of Space* (1991), Henri Lefebvre discusses space as physical (Nature, the Cosmos), mental (logical and formal abstractions), and social. He is interested in logico-epistemological space (p. 11). Place is a rhetorical artifact, and since place is imbued with meaning, it can be analyzed as a rhetorical performance; space has inherent power that adds rhetorical effect to social movements. As Dickinson (2019) argues it is not possible to “engage rhetorical criticism of space and place without thinking carefully about bodies and movement” (p. 7). Using space as a heuristic for studying Aspasia’s and Sojourner Truth’s rhetoric within the framework of Feminist rhetoric and critical imagination, this essay recognizes the role of space in deconstructing metanarratives, the role of women in a given society and reconstructing the social and reformative power of marginalized women.

To articulate space as a heuristic for understanding social movements and identity politics, I analyze the role of space and how it is transformed from limited or restricted physical space to mental and social space that transcends its role as an epistemic and ontological rhetorical artifact. Space as a medium becomes a rhetorical artifact and component of social, political, and intellectual power in its materiality and symbolism. As Shome (2003) notes, space is a “product of relations that are themselves active and constantly changing material practices through which it comes into being” (p. 41). Doreen Massey (2013) considers space as a “multiplicity of narratives” (p.5). For her, space is always open, always contested, and always changing (p.106).

In *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1962), Jürgen Habermas explains the structural transformation of public space in the early modern period. His model posited an idealized bourgeois public sphere emerging in 18th-century Europe, characterized by rational-critical debate among private citizens discussing matters of public concern. For Habermas (1962), “[t]he bourgeois public sphere may be conceived above all as the sphere of private people come together as a public” (p. 27). Since this definition intertwines public and private, we can argue that this public/private dichotomy is inseparable. Both in Aspasia and Truth we can see how private spaces merge into public space where matters of public concern were discussed. Andreas Gestrich (2006) explains the role of public sphere in Habermas as follows:

His aim is the exploration of the prerequisites for democracy, which for him is linked to the implementation of reason, truth, morals and justice in political life. In true enlightenment fashion Habermas finds the main support for such a democratic political culture in public political reasoning in an environment in which the individual can speak freely and arguments are not distorted by fear or political or social power (p. 414).

Habermas’ proposal of public space as a democratic cite in which rhetors, Aspasia and Truth in our case, can implement strategies to discuss philosophical and political matters in search of truth, justice, and equality. To do so, blurring boundaries, they unite private and public space. Simon Susen (2011) explains this relation as follows: “the public and the private seem to represent two necessary conditions of the social: to the extent that every private person is represented by the foreground performativity of a public persona, every public persona is embedded in the background subjectivity of a private person” (43). Aspasia and Sojourner Truth speak freely and their arguments and transformation of the role of the space and existing political ideologies that excluded women from political and public discourse are not distorted by fear or political or social power.

Scholars such as Nancy Fraser and Joan Landes offer complementary but distinct feminist critiques of Habermas’ public sphere theory, both focusing on how gender exclusions were constitutive rather than incidental to the bourgeois public sphere’s formation. In her seminal essay, “Rethinking the Public Sphere,” Nancy Fraser (1990) fundamentally challenges four key assumptions in Habermas’ model. Most relevant to gender exclusion is her critique of the assumption that a single, comprehensive public sphere is preferable to multiple competing publics. Fraser shows how the public/private distinction itself was gendered. The bourgeois public sphere defined itself against the private domestic realm, positioning “private” concerns like childcare, domestic labor, and family relationships as irrelevant to public political discourse. This meant that issues central to women’s lives were systematically excluded from legitimate political debate, rendering women’s subordination invisible as a political problem. Hannah Arendt, in her book *The Human Condition* (1958), assigns central significance to the relationship between public and private spheres and their ongoing dialectical interaction. By examining the foundational meanings of these concepts, she reveals the specific conditions and processes through which each domain comes to dominate human experience and political life, which can be clearly seen in Aspasia and Truth as discussed below. Since public space referred to visibility and freedom as

opposed to private and domestic space which stands for concealment, lexis—speech— in the form of rhetoric becomes a vehicle to blur the boundaries and set the subjects free. As Arendt (1958) points out, the dividing line between private and public is “entirely blurred, because we see the body of peoples and political communities in the image of a family whose everyday affairs have to be taken care of by a gigantic, nationwide administration of housekeeping” (p. 28). To better grasp the role of private and public space, we rhetorically analyze the role of space as a tool of empowerment through which suppressed women can access to the realms of epistemic production and ontological struggle.

Studies of space in rhetorical field aims to “explore the relationship between place and persuasion, location and identity, and /or spatial dimensions of communication and communicative functions of spaces” (McAlister, 2019, p. 1). Researchers of rhetoric have analyzed the meaning of space in different venues and approaches. While some rhetoricians, who studied space as a public memory, mostly focused on museums (Atwater, 2003; Dickinson, 2010) and memorials such as the Vietnam Veterans Memorial (Blair et al. 1991), place of protest (Endres and Senda-Cook, 2011), US landscape (Deluca and Demo, 2000), some others focused on the relationship between space and identity (Cisneros, 2011; Shome, 2003; Charland, 1987; Greene, 1998). Danielle Endres and Samantha Senda-Cook (2011) studied the concept of place in protest building from the notion that “place is rhetorical to specifically show how the rhetorical performances of a place in protest are a rich intersection of bodies, material aspects, past meanings, present performance, and future possibilities” (p. 261). They argue that the place itself is rhetorical. Similarly, in *Space, Place, and Gendered Identity*, Bebee et al. (2015) note that cultural geography emphasized the relationship between space, place, and the construction of identity led to a so-called “spatial turn” across humanities and social sciences (p. 524).

The rhetoric of space addresses the issue of belonging as opposed to exclusion and isolation. Aspasia’s rhetorical achievement secured a space to her in Greek culture and in the history of rhetoric and feminist oratory although she was a metic, “a resident alien” (Henry, 1995, p.11), a foreigner/woman and had no status or rights in ancient Greece. Similarly, Black women’s exclusion from suffragist movement because of race transformed the rhetorical function of space for women rhetors. I consider space to be a constructive power. The Universalist Old Stone Church in Akron, OH, where Sojourner Truth delivered her speech during the Women’s Rights Convention in 1851, serves as a unique heuristic for rhetorical analysis of space because “bodies, words, and places interact in rhetoric” (Enders & Senda-Cook, 2011, p. 258). Private and public spaces of Aspasia and Sojourner Truth, as material artifacts and social constructs, show us that material rhetoric is ephemeral, fluid and embodied. Through the power of rhetoric, Aspasia obtains power, and she intellectually impacts the “inhabitants and spectators by forcing them to change both their behavior and their view themselves” (Mountford, 2001, p. 50). We witness a similar impact in the material and cultural aspects of rhetorical space in Truth’s deliberative speech, as she encourages not only the audience but the public and invites them to act against injustices practiced by patriarchy. In her deliberative rhetoric, she uses religion and gender equality as rhetorical situations which have spatial dimensions, and rhetorical agency includes the production of and maintenance of social space (Ackerman, 2003, p. 85).

In rhetorical theory, space includes both political, social, and cultural places and actual settings that influence the way text, speech, speaker and the message are understood. In classical rhetoric, Aristotle’s categorization of rhetoric into three types—forensic, epideictic, and deliberative—has spatial and contextual implications (Aristotle Book I, chapter 3). In forensic rhetoric, since it is related to the court and legal issues, physical space is a courtroom, and functional or contextual space is resolving disputes. Forensic rhetoric in this sense refers to past events. Epideictic rhetoric is delivered in funerals or ceremonies in honoring or blaming someone. The space in epideictic rhetoric is performative and symbolic in which values and cultural narratives are reinforced or implicitly reconstructed through referentiality (Aristotle Book I, chapter 9). Thus, a rhetor dwells on a cultural space, the meaning of which is culturally defined. Deliberative rhetoric, as opposed to epideictic, is oriented toward the future implications. In *Rhetoric*, Aristotle notes that “the aim of one who advises in the assembly is utility, for he who exhorts advises about future things; and counsel is taken about things to come, not about things past or present” (Rhetoric I.3, 1358b). Deliberative rhetoric is presented in public spaces, such as agora. The spatial dimension in deliberative rhetoric is important because the speech given in agora or any other public space focuses on decision-making because the physical space the rhetor occupies facilitates open dialogue and debate that would impact future movements and actions. The space in deliberative rhetoric is conceptual and assigns authority, privilege, and power to the rhetor to influence the future. In other words,

deliberative rhetoric leverages the political and social function of a space to motivate and shape the reactions of the audience.

Contemporary studies show how “particularities of location, venues, and resources available to rhetors” (McAlister, 2019, p. 2) play significant role in meaning-making. The physical, metaphorical, domestic or public spaces in which deliberative rhetoric takes place have a crucial impact on “knowledge and activity exchange,” to borrow from Fairclough. Public places as natural spaces, the topos and agoras in ancient Greece, for example, facilitate discussion, interaction, and production. The physical space shapes and intensifies the discourse while stimulating discussion and decision making. The public spaces, like the Universalist Old Stone Church in Truth’s case, have mental and social associations, symbolic and metaphorical meanings. Space has a discursive function conveying the gravity of the topic at hand and the formality of the proceedings to the audience because they are both mental and social.

The function of space in rhetoric underlines how context is crucial in determining the impact of rhetorical discourse. The context and content can be evaluated through Lefebvre’s classification: physical, mental, and social. By focusing on the symbolic and physical aspects of space, a rhetor effectively communicates with the audience through mental constructions because as Greg Dickinson (2019) explains “audience members are also constitutive parts of the spatial texture” and they “materially, symbolically, and culturally are part of” the space (p. 10). Space embodies social power because it represents culture and social aspects of being. As Shome notes, “space constitutes a site of medium for the enactment of cultural power” (p. 40). Private and public spaces of Aspasia and Truth become a potent instrument that directs the transmission and reception of rhetorical signals. Space, in my reading, plays both an epistemic and ontological role as both Aspasia and Truth as marginal women exist and effectively communicate through the domestic and public spaces they occupy. They map universes of knowledge, practice, and power to emancipate women. Aspasia’s domestic space in ancient Greek and Truth’s public space with their physical, mental and social qualities operationalize political, social, and cultural significance for women because topoi enhance their ability to speak and display their constructive potential.

3. Methodology

This qualitative research uses Feminist Rhetorical and Critical Imagination methodology to analyze the role of Aspasia and Sojourner Truth in developing female rhetoric and occupying a public space from which female orators and philosophers were historically excluded.

3.1. Aim of the Study

The study aims to form a connection between two different times and two different women, converging their political and social agendas to improve women’s epistemic and ontological struggle in a patriarchal world. The research also aims to discuss how women historically negotiated and transformed spatial contexts to challenge patriarchal structures and articulate liberational discourses.

3.2. Scope and Limitation of the Study

One of the limitations of the study is the lack of textual sources by Aspasia. Since there is no surviving written text from Aspasia, scholarship on Aspasia and her role in women studies depends on ancient texts written by her male contemporaries as stated in this study. Several feminist researchers, including Glenn and Jarratt & Ong are among the significant modern resources on Aspasia. For Sojourner Truth, though we have abundance of material, this study focuses on her “Aint I a Women?” speech that gives us enough data to analyze the role of space and feminist rhetoric.

4. Physical, Mental, and Social Space in Aspasia

In *Domestic Space in Classical Antiquity*, Lisa C. Nevett (2010) states that “research on Greek and Roman households has tended to concentrate on their organization, functioning and internal social dynamics...in Classical Greece debate has centered on the extent to which women were segregated from men in domestic contexts” (p. 5). Discussing the oppositional relationship between domestic and public space, Nevett states that “redefining the domestic and public spheres to make them applicable to Greek and Roman societies is not a

straightforward task; rather than being static, their definitions may have been contested and subject to shifts through time” (p. 6) Aspasia’s colonization of male-dominated rhetoric space and philosophy, analyzed from the rhetorical space domain, redefines the content and functionality of physical space. Aspasia’s rhetorical and philosophical prowess presents alternative ways of conceptualizing and analyzing domestic space and the role the space accrues to the dwellers of space. While the public space knows equality and bestows freedom, household or domestic space is the center of strict inequality. Aspasia by turning her house into a philosophical ground obtains the power to leave the role of a restricted space and enters the political realm and obtains equality, which is the essence of freedom. By doing so, Aspasia unites praxis, lexis, and logos and presents “the virtue of courage as one of the most elemental political attitudes” (Arendt, 1958, p. 35).

Literary sources from ancient Greece provide some information about the social roles and spaces associated with those roles while “underlying some cultural attitudes toward the use of space” (Nevett, 2010, p. 19). Pericles’s house, his social status and his achievements are important markers that help to define the domestic space that Aspasia occupies because as Nevett puts it “the period, geographical location and social and economic status of the household under examination” is important in evaluating the shift in the role of space (p. 20). We do not have much information about the physicality, decorations, and archaeological structure of Aspasia’s domestic space and how it is separated from other parts of the dwelling. However, reading literary texts heuristically from a critical imagination framework gives us some data to analyze and interpret Aspasia’s oratory and eloquence, through which she achieves the shifting of domestic space.

Born in Miletus, Ionia, where women had a chance to access to education, Aspasia (c. 470–400 BCE) is “likely to have been trained in the arts of speech” (Bizzell et al., 2020, p. 53). In Athens, she lived with the political leader Pericles. Though we do not have any records of her speeches or written remains, she was reported as a teacher of rhetoric who had a profound impact on Athenian intellectual life (Jarratt and Ong, 1996, p. 9). In her book *Prisoner of History: Aspasia of Miletus and Her Biographical Tradition*, Madeleine M. Henry (1995) states that ancient sources, writings of Plato, Plutarch, and Xenophon, credit Aspasia with teaching Pericles how to structure his famous speeches. According to Plato, in his dialogue *Menexenus*, Socrates credits Aspasia as a teacher of rhetoric and even attributes a funeral oration to her (*Menexenus* 236b–249c). Charles K. Han (1994) writes that “the rest of the dialogue consists of three different kinds of examples introduced by Socrates in defense and explanation of his claim that Aspasia is the best teacher of aretē (virtue), and all three sets involve the power of love... Aspasia as a teacher of political excellence: Pericles, Lysicles [and] Aspasia as a teacher of moral excellence: Xenophon and his wife” (p.97). Most of the information we have about Aspasia comes from male sources and Attic comedy, which is, according to Madeleine M. Henry (1995), “a genre full of commentary about politics, provides the only known contemporary evidence for Aspasia’s life” (p. 19). Old Comedy,¹ in this sense, “is paramount to Aspasia’s biographical tradition” (p.19). Socratic dialogues by Plato in his *Menexenus* suggest that she may have taught rhetoric and possibly influenced Pericles’ famous “Funeral Oration,” one of the most famous examples of public speaking in ancient Greece. As Henry (1995) notes, “When *Menexenus* doubts that anyone could compose such a speech on short notice, Socrates remarks that Aspasia has recently recited to him just such a speech (235c6- 236cl)” (p. 33). Through her rhetoric and philosophy, Aspasia operated outside the restrictions of the oikos (household) and created a mental space for herself in which she transformed her domestic space into a polis and agora (public space) where politics and rhetoric thrived. Interestingly, her mental space of polis and agora is not a male-dominated but woman-dominated space. The epideictic rhetoric positioned her into public space changing the mental and social role of her domestic space. She did not only transform the meaning and the role of oikos but also gender roles because she demonstrated that oikos could be a domain of political and intellectual activity.

Ancient Athenian society was largely patriarchal, with women confined to the domestic sphere and rarely participating in public life. Since space is a culturally constructed social product, it profoundly impacts and defines our perceptions and expectations about the role and status of women. Even at feasts, the public spaces where gender inequality was least evident, women sometimes could not find a place for themselves. The refreshments offered to the women who were invited were of lower quality than those of the men (Türk, 2018).

¹ See Madeliene Henry’s chapter two “The Story Told by Comedy,” which analyzes comedies by Cratinus, Eupolis, Hermippus and Aristophanes who depicted Aspasia’s bio in their works, which are significant historical sources to understand Aspasia’s role and space in ancient Athens.

In ancient Greek, *polis* required praxis (action) and lexis (speech) to be a part of the realm of human affairs. However, in the experience of *polis*, action and speech were separated and speech became more powerful with the intention of persuasion, which is defined as rhetoric. According to Aristotle, as Hannah Arendt (1958) writes, “everybody outside the polis—slaves and barbarians—was *aneu logou*, deprived not of the faculty of speech but of the way of life in which speech and only speech made sense and where the central concerns of all citizens was to talk with each other” (p. 27). This created boundaries and confined slaves and barbarism to silence. As Ruth Westgate (2015) discusses, “in less complex societies and in small communities it is possible to mark social distinctions and keep people apart by means of symbolic boundaries enforced by rules or conventions;” however, in communities such as the highly complex Greek culture in which metics transgress symbolic boundaries we cannot clearly mark the boundaries (p. 50). Through her epideictic rhetoric, Aspasia “traverses the boundaries between the living and the dead and between insider and outsider;” and between the domestic and public spaces and blurring the boundaries, “she takes her audience with her into ‘no place’” (Henry, 1995, p. 37). The traditional view of the metic positioned them as economically useful but politically marginal figures. Aspasia's prominence challenged this by demonstrating that a metic could become central to Athenian intellectual and political life. Her influence on Pericles' policies and her role as an intellectual mentor to figures like Socrates showed that a metic could contribute significantly to Athenian culture beyond mere economic functions.

Aspasia challenges the socially constructed “situated practice of (domestic) space” (Shome, 2003, p. 43) as an area of exclusion for women or an area that defines and limits the productivity, intellectual, and social inquiry of women. Her domestic space is a “practiced place,” that reflects everyday life (Cresswell, 1996, p. 29). Women in classical Greece were secluded to domestic space and lived under Foucault's panopticon. Because of the structure of the architecture, they always felt the male gaze and control over them. Men in their houses had special rooms and saloons for socializing and exclude women from any social gathering. Plato's Symposium is a good example for this exclusion. The physical and social segregation of women “reinforced women's lack of power, by making it easier to exclude them not only symbolically, from the privileged group of male diners, but also practically, from potentially influential social networks and important information” (Westgate, 2015, p. 82). Although the women had no chance to communicate their emotions and feelings about this social out casting, we do have some male-based literary sources that give us data to interpret the case using heuristic critical imagination, such as a female character in Aristophanes' Thesmophoriazousae, who criticizes male gaze as they “watch over us and shut us up in the women's quarters with seals and bolts” (Nevett, 2010, p. 414).

We do not hear Aspasia's criticism or concerns about the role of space, but our critical inquiry suggests that she was more focused on changing the role and content of space rather than accepting the limiting power of domestic space women were confined to. Her ethos and deliberation occupy public space in funerals by Pericles's mouth. Thus, she symbolically transcends the physical boundaries and political, cultural, and social norms that exclude women from social life and rights. The ethos of rhetoric, in this way, acts as a ‘legitimizing force’ as once Isocrates stated, and bestows women dignity, freedom, and respect. Thus, the meaning and function of space is contested and reproduced. As Lefebvre (1991) notes, “every society—hence every mode of production—produces a space, its own space” (p. 31). To do so, Aspasia changed her domestic space into an academy not as a physical space but as a mental space that soon became a “popular saloon for the most influential men of the day: Socrates, Plato, Anaxagoras, Sophocles, Phidias, and Pericles” (Glenn, 1994, p. 184). On Aspasia's revolutionary role and position in Greek society, Prudence Allen in her book *The Concept of Woman* (1985) points out that “[Aspasia] founded institutional educational structures for women because she believed that women who were going to be hetaeras of the great men of Athens ought to have training in arts and sciences as well as in etiquette; she was, therefore, the first philosopher after Pythagoras to give serious attention to the philosophical education of women” (p. 29). The scholarly debate about whether Aspasia was a hetaera reflects the complexity of her social position. A hetaera, or courtesan, offered comprehensive companionship that included intellectual discourse, meaningful conversation, and emotional intimacy alongside physical relationships. She taught the art of rhetoric to many, including Socrates, and may have invented the so-called Socratic method (Jarratt and Ong, 1996, p. 13), transforming this domestic space into “a site of intellectual activity within a specific epistemic field and sociocultural moment,” where philosophical, political, and rhetorical discussions altered the role and meaning of physical space attributing cognitive and

social meaning to the space (p. 10). In other words, through her domestic and private space, “Aspasia made speakers of *many men*” (Henry, 1995, p. 35, emphasis in original). Aspasia’s transformation of the structure of the space embodies the fact that “just as the existence of each individual cannot be dissociated from the existence of society, the existence of the private sphere is inconceivable without the existence of the public sphere” (Susen, 2011, p. 44). Thus, Aspasia’s private space, when read from Habermas point of view, shows that “its very existence depends on its capacity to promote civic engagement in communicative processes of opinion and will formation” (p.44).

Aspasia’s mental space can be read through Aristotle’s *De Anima* (the soul) in which he explores the relation between the soul and cognition when he states, “The soul never thinks without a mental image” (De Anima III.7, 431a16). Aspasia’s transformation of her domestic space (we can call *idiai topoi* since *idiai* refers to private) into a public space (*koinoi topoi*) is achieved through the cognitive transformation of space. In her book *Rhetoric Retold: Regendering the Tradition from Antiquity Through the Renaissance*, Cheryl Glenn (1994) places Aspasia at the heart of a feminist reimagining of the history of rhetoric. Glenn contends that this was revolutionary in a society where women’s voices were largely absent from public discourse. Through intellectual interaction and discussions, Aspasia’s domestic space became a productive public space of influence, and she “colonize[d] the patriarchal territory” (Glenn, 1994, p. 193). Rhetorical and philosophical discussions and speeches created a hybrid space that bridged Aspasia’s unconventional domestic space and public spaces. Aspasia’s perceived physical space (domestic) shifts from representation of space into a representational space. In other words, into a living space in which social discourse is produced. Through this shift, we talk about the discourse of space rather than a discourse on space, As Jarratt and Ong (1996) put the “discursive space of ‘stranger,’ ‘sojourner,’ and ‘woman’-spaces occupied simultaneously by Plato’s Aspasia”- can be seen as sites generated by, and thus possessed by, the “virtuous and noble” in order to define, privilege, and legitimate their own view of the world” (p. 22).

5. African American Rhetoric and Deliberative Rhetoric of Sojourner Truth

African American rhetoric, as a rhetoric of struggle, “clarifies the character and texture of the race struggle” (Walker, 1992, p.2). In their edited collection *African American Rhetoric(s)*, Richardson and Jackson (2004) state that African American rhetoric(s) is the “study of culturally and discursively developed knowledge-forms, communicative practices and persuasive strategies rooted in freedom struggles by people of African ancestry in America” (p. xiii). African American language and rhetoric “focus on the language and literacy practices that people of African ancestry have used to make life better for themselves, to change the worlds, and to achieve goals” (p. 160). African American storytelling and oratorical practices established a strong ground for rhetorical practices through church and spiritual discourses. In *African American Oratory*, Keith Gilyard (2018) notes that it “has been central to African American rhetorical tradition from the outset and was the primary channel by which millions of Blacks came to comprehend and speculate about the social world of which they were a part” (p. 4).

In *Talkin and Testifyin: The Language of Black America*, Geneva Smitherman (1986), as a linguist, discusses Black modes of discourse as call and response, signification, tonal semantics and narrative sequencing. In her speech, Truth manifested the Afrocentric model of deliberative rhetoric intertwined with space rhetoric. Her rhetorical speech centers around some important characteristics of African American rhetoric, which Ronald Jackson (2004) lists as “rhythm, soundin’, stylin’, improvisation, storytelling, lyrical mode, image making, and call and response” (p. 154). Kimmika Williams (2004) notes that Zora Neale Hurston and Geneva Smitherman, as the pioneers of African American vernacular language, facilitated the emergence of African American rhetoric: “Hurston’s and Smitherman’s work provided the foundation for the developing study on African American rhetoric” (p. 85). Williams argues that both Smitherman and Hurston identified African American language speakers’ use of an active language style as an element of persuasion (89). In *Aspects of African American Rhetoric as a Field*, Keith Gilyard (2004) defines the existence of African American vernacular rhetoric stating that it “inscribes a significant rhetorical situation, and the prevailing functional character of African American artistic expression renders problematic any move to divorce its production and any criticism thereof from the realm of rhetorical inquiry” (p. 1). This emphasizes the fact that Sojourner Truth’s deliberative rhetorical virtuosity is a natural product of her Afrocentric culture. Combined with the empowering effect of rhetorical space, she achieves a significant status in African American rhetorical tradition.

Many years before Hurston, Sojourner Truth in her speech used active vernacular language, parallelism, repetition, and call and response as the characteristics of her rhetoric. The theatricality of oral expression embodies the call-and-response pattern in African American vernacular and oral tradition. Truth uses this dynamic in her speech, creating a heteroglossic context with this example: “Then they talk about this thing in the head; what's this they call it? [member of audience whispers, “intellect”] That's it, honey.” Her deliberative rhetoric reflects the poetical flow of language. Repetition of the singular sound or set of sounds to provide the rhythm, under beat, or bass so that the speech event incorporates musicality (Gilyard, 2004, p. 98). Sojourner Truth uses repetition both as a characteristic of Black church rhetoric and African American rhetoric, “I have ploughed and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me!” Through repeating the actions and verbs, Truth highlights not only her resilience and physical power, but the spiritual power that strengthens her. She reclaims these traits as evidence of her strength and dignity, not a disqualification from womanhood.

Carol Tomlin (1999) explains that “repetition has a long-standing tradition in African American rhetorical practice, since its use is far more prevalent in societies in which prime importance is attached to the spoken word” (p. 148). In Western rhetorical theory the practice of cultivating repetition dates back to Gorgias. In classical rhetoric anaphora, antithesis, chiasmus, and parallelism were used effectively as rhetorical strategies to use the power of language. Bizzell et al. (2020) explain that “Gorgias’ style has often been characterized as overly antithetical and symmetrical in structure and overly alliterative and assonant in sound” (p.47). Truth’s use of repetition reflects this historical connection not only as women’s rhetoric but also as her advocacy for social justice, equality and social change. The ethos of Truth’s rhetoric emphasizes the way she uses rhetoric to transform space and time into “dwelling places, where people can deliberate about ‘know together’ some matter of interest” (Atwater, 2009, p. 2). Truth’s deliberative rhetoric occupied and colonized public space focused on public policy. She became a travelling preacher and changed her name from a slave-born Isabella Van Wagener to Sojourner Truth and had a reputation of public speaker. Her public speeches became a deliberative discourse “that sought to inspire human action on the issues of slavery and women’s rights” (Lipscomb, 1995, p. 231). Truth’s speech carries some of the classical Aristotelian forms of deliberative rhetoric—enthymeme and syllogism. Lipscomb notes that Truth in her speech uses the enthymeme “in refutation as a constructive means of proof” (p.236). In *Rhetoric*, Aristotle calls “the enthymeme as a rhetorical syllogism, and the example of rhetorical induction” and states that “everyone who effects persuasion through proof does in fact use either enthymemes or examples” (Book I, Chapter II p. 3).

Space plays an important role in defining the content of deliberations and transforming the role and meaning of physical structures that eventually deconstruct existing suppressive practices. Sara Rubinelli (2006) explains that by “using topoi, speakers engage in a series of argumentative moves for constructing and refuting arguments” (p. 43). Truth’s embodiment of space rhetoric in her historical speech “Ain't I a Woman?,” delivered at the Universalist Old Stone Church, provides space associated images and arguments to practice her deliberative rhetoric. She uses Aristotelian syllogism as space defines the content and context of her deliberative rhetoric. Space enables her to use rhetorical induction and rhetorical deduction using enthymeme and syllogism. When Truth challenges the idea that women do not suffer anything under the existing political system, she states: “That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud-puddles, or gives me any best place! And ain't I a woman?” The patriarchal rhetoric presented women as respected, protected and served because they deserve such attention. Giving her speech in a church, Truth frequently invoked the Bible to support her arguments. Her rhetoric often framed issues of slavery and women’s rights as moral imperatives grounded in Christian doctrine. It would not be wrong to say that the church is used as a deliberative forum. By speaking within the church and using its rhetoric, Truth associated the fight for justice to a divine mandate, urging her audience to act as God’s agents on Earth.

Habermas conceptualized the public sphere as a domain of social life wherein private persons assemble to engage in rational-critical debate concerning matters of common interest, with the normative goal of generating legitimate public opinion through reasoned deliberation. Nevertheless, his foundational theorization presupposed a participant constituency comprised of white, male, property-owning citizens—a configuration that rendered his ostensibly “universal” space of democratic discourse structurally exclusionary toward women, racial minorities, and the economically disenfranchised. Truth’s 1851 address delivered at the Women's Convention in Akron, Ohio, exemplifies how subaltern voices can dialectically challenge and reconstitute the

parameters of public discourse. Her discursive intervention illuminates several critical theoretical dimensions. Truth physically occupied the speaking platform despite being a Black woman in a predominantly white women's rights gathering. By taking the floor, she asserted her right to participate in public debate, directly challenging the exclusions built into the bourgeois public sphere. Her famous refrain "Ain't I a woman?" exposed the limitations of both feminist and abolitionist discourse. She revealed how the public sphere's "universal" categories –woman, citizen, human—actually excluded her experiences as a Black woman, forcing a recognition of intersecting oppressions.

From the very beginning of her speech, when she approached the pulpit and asked, "May I say a few words?" reflecting the etiquette of the space which requires respect and interactive recognition. The two dominant themes, race and gender, are presented in a way that aligns with the function and rhetoric of space: a church! Rhetoric of space defines the examples to be presented to support the argument on racial and gender equality while calling participants and the whole community into action. In religious rhetoric man and women are created equally. There is no superiority of one gender to the other. "I tink dat 'twixt de niggers of the Souf and de womin at the Norf, all talkin' 'bout rights, the white man wil be in a fix pretty soon" aims to refute and response to the abusive male power creating a connection between slavery and suffragist movement. On the purpose of deliberative rhetoric, Aristotle writes that "it is not the function of the political speaker to exhort to the greatest good in the abstract, but to the greatest good attainable under the circumstances" (Rhetoric I.6, 1363a5).

Challenging the white members of the suffragist movement, Truth's deliberation aimed to attain social equality and justice. To access obtainable goods, the space with its metaphysical, mental and social functions becomes a rhetorical domain in which the audience is compelled to empathize with those who were denied their rights and humanity because of their race or gender. Space encouraged this ethical questioning and attitude because as Mountford (2001) states, "spaces have heuristic power over their inhabitants and spectators by forcing them to change their behavior" (p. 50). For that reason, it is significant to interpret the role of the church as a space of rhetorical power in the suffragist movement. The rhetorical space that Truth occupies is dynamic in which issues of gender, race, class, justice, and equality were communicated and social action is enacted.

In his book *In Place/Out of Place*, Tim Cresswell (1996) states that a church "is a place. It is neither just a particular material artifact, nor just a set of religious ideas, it is always both. Places are duplicitous in that they cannot be reduced to the concrete or the 'merely ideological'; rather they display an uneasy and fluid tension between them" (p. 13). Spirit filled dramatic preaching is a necessary component of the oral tradition. Indirect and tonal semantics in Truth's rhetorical speech can also be linked to verbal and oral strategies with roots in the traditional Black church (Williams, 2004, p. 99).

After focusing on gender equality referencing her own experience and body, Truth once again turns to space rhetoric: "den dat little man in black dar, he say women can't have as much rights as men, 'cause Christ wasn't a woman! Whar did your Christ come from? Whar did your Christ come from? From God and a woman! Man had nothing to do wid Him!" By referencing the body, Truth performs rhetorical authority creating a connection between 19th century African American oratorical skills and classical rhetorical tradition. Cicero in *Ede Oratore* and Quintilian in *Institutio Oratoria*, as skilled orators, used the body as a point of reference to enact ideas. While Truth's speech was likely not consciously modeled on classical rhetoric, her speech embodies principals of classic rhetoric including rhetorical appeals. In Truth's performance, the oratory and vernacular speech accompanied by body rhetoric disrupts "audiences' judgments, guiding their perceptions through an overlapping spectacle of bodily comportment and verbal argumentation" (Morse, 2014, p. 12). Just like Cicero, who challenged the injustices in the society, Truth challenges racism and sexism in her speech. Her vocal modulations such as tone and vernacular speech and her physical expressions captivated the audience and created critical impact in terms of delivery.

This example of her deliberative rhetoric uses space as a force to influence the audience because space has "both material and cultural dimensions" (Williams, 2004, p. 50). Truth turns materiality of the space, the natural and built structure into social dimension and mental dimension of space through her deliberative vernacular speech. Truth uses the pulpit as a sacred rhetorical space to challenge and complicate the space rhetoric. The materiality of the building is related to social and mental representations through the deliberative rhetoric of the pulpit. Truth uses the pulpit as a sacred rhetorical space to challenge and complicate the space rhetoric. In Christian history pulpit is associated with male authority and so many biblical verses were used to support this

idea. Using the pulpit to reach her audience, Truth embodies the sacred human-divine connection giving the message of before God everybody is equal, and she communicates with her audience using the space culturally assigned to man to be a messenger, a mediator between the creator and created.

Theologians have interpreted many passages as asserting men's superiority over women and as a "clear injunction against women preaching or teaching mixed groups of adults in public" (Mountford, 2001, p.51). Pulpit as a rhetorical space enables Truth to colonize the male space and address to the audience. Thus, rhetorical space becomes a crucial "aspect of rhetorical performance" (p. 61). Her occupation of the rhetorical space of the pulpit is significant in that she both challenges the masculine privilege and male interpretation of the biblical passages, which are used as a power to justify men's place and domain in the society. This privilege and power subjugated people of color and women. Pulpit as a space is endowed with meaning of authority and communicative role. Truth as a woman preacher takes the pulpit space and produces meaning by transforming it from a space rhetoric to a rhetorical space going beyond the limiting physical space and becoming more mental and social space through which ideas are presented, communicated and practiced influencing the outside world. Space embodies particular meanings as a place while it produces meaning through the deliberative speech of the person using the space.

Sojourner Truth concludes her speech with a powerful syllogism and spatial rhetoric, asserting that "if the first woman God ever made was strong enough to turn the world upside down all alone, these women together ought to be able to turn it back, and get it right side up again!" This syllogism attributes agency and transformative power to women, implicitly contrasting their strength with the perceived vulnerability of men before the fall. Truth's deliberative rhetoric is grounded in African American practical wisdom, or phronesis. Phronesis, an intellectual virtue focused on action, allows her to navigate the specific contextual demands of her rhetorical moment. The spatial metaphor in her speech—turning the world "upside down" and then "right side up"—demonstrates the rhetorical capacity to articulate what is beneficial for both individuals and the collective community.

Then they talk about this thing in the head; what's this they call it? [member of audience whispers, "intellect"] That's it, honey. What's that got to do with women's rights or negroes' rights? If my cup won't hold but a pint, and yours holds a quart, wouldn't you be mean not to let me have my little half measure full?

Truth's deliberation embodies Kairos, which can be defined as the rhetorical ability to recognize and act at the most opportune moment to achieve persuasive impact. By employing rhythm and sensory language as rhetorical figures, she creates a powerful emotional appeal that is intrinsically linked to the rhetorical space of the Old Stone Church. This space, as Rai and Druschke (2018) argue, shapes and influences the synergy, mood, and intellectual responses of participants, ultimately facilitating meaning-making and social change.

Truth's rhetorical language builds a complex conceptual and emotional interaction between her ideas and the audience, inviting active participation in the meaning-making process initiated by the social movement. Her deliberative speech reflects what Bryant (2004) describes as a confluence of "cultural wisdom, spiritual insights, and generative power" (p. 74). By establishing a Christian ethos and posing strategic rhetorical questions aligned with the speech's spatial context, Truth directly challenges the theological justifications used to maintain women's subordinate status, effectively confronting the ideological foundations of oppression.

6. Conclusion

Feminist Rhetoric and Critical Imagination frameworks open possibilities of qualitatively investigating and critically analyzing the role of women in shaping the discourse, rhetoric, and space that empower women. The critical lens of feminist rhetoric and critical imagination as praxis and analytical tools created a space to discover and recover Aspasia's and Sojourner Truth's constructive power and leading force. Aspasia transformed private space, slipping it from its physical boundaries and complicating the private/public space binaries, reconstructed the role of space as a mental and social space in which man of literacy and philosophy and secluded women, metic and wives of elite man, had access to Aspasia's domestic space where they became pupils of rhetoric and philosophy. Aspasia, teaching rhetoric and philosophy, as well as engaging discussion about rhetoric and philosophy with Socrates, Phaedrus, and Pericles, to name a few, transgressed and challenged cultural and traditional norms that confined her into domestic space. Aspasia and Truth's rhetorical

spaces create dynamic practices via interactive participation of others as primary and secondary actors. Dickinson (2019) states that people practice space contingently and explains how “these practices are performed in relation to other bodies (both human and non-human) and the practices change and produce place and ourselves” (p. 5). Rhetorical spaces in Aspasia and Truth are not static settings used for rhetorical purposes. They are dynamic, social, interactive, and productive spaces creating meaning and empowering women as McAlister explains “exert forces and generate experiences that empower the suppressed and secluded” (McAlister, 2019, p.15).

Aspasia of Miletus stands as one of the most remarkable rhetoricians of history, whose intellectual prowess and pedagogical innovations fundamentally transformed both women’s roles and the conception of public discourse in classical Athens. As the partner of Pericles and a renowned teacher in her own right, Aspasia challenged the rigid boundaries between private and public spheres by establishing her home as an unprecedented intellectual salon where women could engage in philosophical dialogue and rhetorical training—activities traditionally reserved for men in the agora and gymnasium. Her influence extended far beyond gender barriers, as she reportedly taught rhetoric to some of Athens’ most prominent figures, including Socrates himself, who according to Plato’s *Menexenus* praised her oratorical skills and acknowledged learning from her instruction. By creating this hybrid domestic-public space where rigorous intellectual discourse flourished, Aspasia not only elevated the status of women as capable philosophical interlocutors but also demonstrated how private spaces could be transformed into venues of public significance, effectively expanding the boundaries of Athenian civic life and challenging the notion that meaningful political and philosophical education could only occur in traditionally male-dominated public forums.

According to Arendt’s theory, the private world includes family life, basic human needs, and personal relationships, while the public world is where political activity, debate, and the quest for lasting fame through notable actions and words take place. Athenian women faced strict limitations on moving between these areas—they were confined to the private sphere, focusing on home management and childrearing. Aspasia’s situation offers a striking counterexample that shows how these boundaries could be crossed. As both a courtesan and Pericles’ intellectual partner, she existed in an in-between position that gave her unusual entry into public life. Her gathering place, salon, functioned as a meeting ground where personal intellectual exchange merged with political conversation. In this setting, she participated in dialogues with thinkers, leaders, and politicians that would shape government decisions and public ideas.

Aspasia’s contributions to classical philosophy and rhetoric represent a profound case of historical erasure that demands urgent scholarly redress, particularly regarding her authorship of Pericles’ most celebrated orations and her systematic philosophical methodology. The famous funeral oration delivered by Pericles during the Peloponnesian War—long hailed as a masterpiece of Athenian democratic rhetoric—bears unmistakable traces of Aspasia’s intellectual fingerprints, as ancient sources including Plato suggest she was the true architect behind its eloquent praise of Athenian values and its sophisticated rhetorical structure. Her philosophical approach, which seamlessly integrated dialectical reasoning with practical political wisdom, established a unique methodological framework that influenced not only Socrates’ maieutic technique but also prefigured later developments in rhetorical theory and civic education. Yet centuries of androcentric scholarship have systematically marginalized her intellectual achievements, reducing her to a mere footnote or romantic companion rather than recognizing her as a foundational figure in Western rhetorical tradition whose pedagogical innovations and philosophical insights deserve placement alongside Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. This scholarly neglect represents more than historical oversight—it constitutes an active burial of women’s intellectual contributions that has impoverished our understanding of classical philosophy’s development and rhetorical theory’s origins. Contemporary rhetorical studies thus bears a responsibility to excavate Aspasia’s buried legacy through rigorous textual analysis, feminist historiography, and interdisciplinary research that can restore her rightful position as both a pioneering woman philosopher and a master rhetorician whose influence shaped the very foundations of Western intellectual discourse, thereby enriching our comprehension of how classical thought emerged from more diverse and inclusive intellectual communities than traditional narratives have acknowledged.

Social relations, including varying degrees of inequality and exploitation are also deeply implicated in the production of space. They challenge us to understand how these relationships work together and how they in turn affect our perception of space. Scholarly analysis of Aspasia’s domestic life and rhetorical influence

presents a complex picture of a woman who managed to navigate and transcend the constraints of her time. By transforming her home into a site of intellectual engagement, Aspasia was able to exert influence over Athenian rhetoric, despite being excluded from the formal public sphere. Contemporary scholars, particularly feminist rhetoricians, have reclaimed Aspasia as an essential figure in the history of rhetoric—one who challenges the traditional narratives that have long excluded women's voices. Aspasia's enduring historical significance resides in her deployment of rhetorical mastery and intellectual distinction to surmount the sociopolitical constraints conventionally imposed upon metic and hetaera, thereby establishing unprecedented paradigms for foreign women's integration into Hellenic intellectual discourse

Sojourner Truth in her speech complicated and challenged prevailing notions about race, gender, justice, and equality. Her speech challenged stereotypes and empowered the black women who were excluded from women's conventions. Giving examples from her physical strength, she confronted the notion that women were delicate beings who needed protection. Her rhetorical stance and biblical rhetoric as well as references to her personal experiences and impact of slavery provided irrefutable evidence of women's capabilities. Truth used religious rhetoric to complicate the subordination of women, which had been justified through religion. For that reason, physical and metaphorical spaces that Truth used were significant. The Union church where the convention was held rhetorically questioned race and religion as the audience was predominantly white. The rhetoric of space and the name of the church "Union" represents a community that unites black and white women to fight against subordination and empowering women to gain their rights. Through the space rhetoric and referencing biblical concepts, Truth leveraged the religious setting to give her words moral authority. Repeating the rhetorical question, "Ain't I a woman?", she forced open a conceptual space for Black women within the category of "womanhood" that had previously excluded them.

The oratorical influence of Aspasia and Sojourner Truth illustrates how these remarkable women utilized spatial methodologies to reshape cultural understandings of feminine roles and potential. These leaders implemented what may be conceptualized as "spatial rhetoric"—the deliberate orchestration of material, cultural, and communicative environments to contest established hierarchies and forge innovative pathways for women's engagement in civic discourse.

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Etik, Beyan ve Açıklamalar

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Bu çalışmanın yazar/yazarları, Etik Kurul İznine gerek olmadığını beyan etmektedir.

2. Bu çalışmanın yazar/yazarları, araştırma ve yayın etiği ilkelerine uyduklarını kabul etmektedir.

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