



The Faculty of Arts International Conference

The East in The Eyes of The West



The East in the Eyes of Western Women Travellers of the 18th and 19th Centuries: Solidarity and Understanding the East

Dr. Irene Kamperidou

Assistant Professor of Sociology
University of Athens, Greece

Abstract

Women travellers from Great Britain, France, Germany, Switzerland, Sweden, Austria, America and Greece explored, visited, worked and resided in regions of the East that were considered "proper and safe for dynamic men only" (Smith, 1887). The mammoth body of writings by women travellers of the 18th and 19th centuries, that claim to be eyewitness descriptions of the female microcosms, provide a rich and detailed interpretation and feminine version of the Orient. European and American women identified with the so-called "Other", expressed their solidarity and participated in Muslim women's daily domestic life, customs, female social gatherings, religious celebrations and feasts. As a result, they accused male travellers- who had written about domestic manners in the East and the position of women in Islam of misinforming and misleading their readers, stressing that their accounts were based on second or third-hand information, their unrestrained imagination and exotic fantasies.



Dr. Irene Kamperidou

Currently an Assistant Professor of Sociology and Gender Issues at National & Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece. She held several positions before that as journalist, reporter, broadcaster, commentator and foreign Language Teacher. She has a big number of research papers and monographs in the fields of culture, sport culture and technology, and she has also published a number of books; the latest was titled "Finally Free to Breathe." Women's Accounts/ Testimonies [women travellers of the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries]. Publisher Telethrio S.A., Athens, [in Greek], 2013.

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