

The Erotic Margin: Sexuality and Spatiality in Alterist Discourse

Irvin C. Schick



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Gender and sexuality have long held an important place in western attitudes towards the people and regions of the world—from the titillating accounts of harem life in the Middle East to terrifying captivity narratives of North America. *The Erotic Margin* is a first attempt to pull together the large, disparate, and often contradictory literature, and view it as a corpus. Schick argues that such images served to construct spatial difference, and thereby helped Europe represent its own place in the world during an age of rapid geographical expansion.

Informed by the recent literature on human geography as well as feminist and postcolonial theory, *The Erotic Margin* focuses on erotica and sexual anthropology as well as travel literature in which, from the eighteenth century on, both traveler and destination were portrayed in unmistakably gendered and sexualized terms. Reviewing examples ranging from the New World to India, the Near East to black Africa, and the South sea islands to the Barbary Coast, the book reflects on why foreign women were variously portrayed as alluring or threatening, foreign men as effeminate weaklings or dangerous rapists, and foreign lands as sexual idylls or hearts of darkness.

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