

Fellows



Ludmilla Konstantinova Kostova
IFK_Senior Fellow

Duration of fellowship
01. October 2006 bis 31. January 2007

Ludmilla Konstantinova Kostova

PROJECT TITLE

South Eastern Europe and the Victorian female gaze: Travel and (un)desirable intimacies

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project is a critically informed account of select representations of South Eastern Europe in writing produced by nineteenth-century British women travellers to the region. Despite the fact that South Eastern Europe was marginal to Britain's political and economic interests, it came to play a significant role in the British cultural imaginary. The project examines that role and dwells on the various ideological 'uses' to which the region was put in travel narratives by Victorian women. As an area thematizing and problematizing cultural difference and otherness and as a meeting point of varying discourses of gender, race/ethnicity, class, power, domination and counter-domination, travel writing has attracted considerable critical attention over the last fifteen years or so. However, most critical texts on the subject tend to analyze the travelling subject's gaze, which is intent upon the construction of the relatively stationary object(s) of his/her observation. By persistently privileging that analysis commentators ignore and even erase other aspects of the complex processes of mediation and negotiation in which travellers and 'travelees' are involved.

This project explores discursive spaces defined by recorded Victorian travel to South Eastern Europe by supplementing the analysis of the gaze with a reading of experiences involving travellers' direct contact and/or intimacy with native 'travelees' such as social visits, meals, 'rites of hygiene', accommodation arrangements, and sexual relations. By linking the gaze and its varied productions to areas of direct contact and intimacy the project attempts a definition of the material conditions in which looking takes place.

CV

Associate Professor for British literature and cultural studies at the University of Veliko Turnovo, Bulgaria

Publications

U. a.: *Tales of the Periphery: the Balkans in Nineteenth-Century British Writing*, Veliko Turnovo 1997; *Liberating the Poetic Genius: William Blake and Mid- and Late-Eighteenth-Century Literary History*, Veliko Turnovo 1999; together with Corinne Fowler (eds), *Journeys: The International Journal of Travel and Travel Writing* 4.1, Special Issue: Travel and Ethics, London 2003.