



Fables of the East: Selected Tales 1662-1785

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Fables of the East is the first anthology to provide textual examples of representations of oriental cultures in the early modern period drawn from a variety of genres: travel writing, histories, and fiction. Organized according to genre in order to illustrate the diverse shapes the oriental tale adopted in the period, the extracts cover the popular sequence of oriental tales, the pseudo-oriental tale, travels and history, and letter fictions. Authors represented range from the familiar--Joseph Addison, Horace Walpole, Montesquieu, Oliver Goldsmith--to authors of great popularity in their own time who have since faded in reputation such as James Ridley, Alexander Dow, and Eliza Haywood.

The selection has been devised to call attention to the diversity in the ways that different oriental cultures are represented to English readers. Readers of this anthology will be able to identify a contrast between the luxury, excess, and sexuality associated with Islamic Turkey, Persia, and Mughal India and the wisdom, restraint, and authority invested in Brahmin India and Confucian China. *Fables of the East* redraws the cultural map we have inherited of the eighteenth century, demonstrating contemporary interest in gentile and "idolatrous" religions, in Confucianism and Buddhism especially, and that the construction of the Orient in the western imagination was not exclusively one of an Islamic Near and Middle East.

Ros Ballster's introduction addresses the importance of the idea of "fable" to traditions of narrative and representations of the East. Each text is accompanied by explanatory head and footnotes, also provided is a glossary of oriental terms and places that were familiar to the texts' eighteenth-century readers.

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