ABSTRACT

OF OTHER ‘OTHERS’-

WOMEN CONSTRUCTING WOMEN: THROUGH THE FRONT DOOR

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Despite the vast volume of scholarly work on Mediterranean and the Near East the region, issues of marginalisation, discrimination, racism, and ethnic-gender groups as well as the implications of these within the context of various wider forces and structures are only lately receiving any attention at all and this paper is part of an effort to explore and expose them. The aim of this paper is to explore this otherwise forgotten area through the example of Cypriot women and their interpretations of internal ‘Others’ in Cyprus. It is thus an attempt to analyze the discourses and images adopted by women in Cyprus surrounding ‘Otherhood’.

Ultimately, the paper represents an effort to use ethnographic fieldwork and empirical data in order to explore and raise questions about women’s experiences and attitudes in Cyprus since the ‘phallonarcissistic’ vision and the androcentric cosmology common to Mediterranean societies[1] has been largely ignored. One of the ways in which women in my sample were able to create spaces for themselves was through the construction of ‘others’ amongst women whom they excluded from the in-groups they formed. The question then lies within who the ‘other’ becomes – this other can be anyone over whom women have power upon- but most importantly the process leading to the formation of this other and how these women acquire a sense of identity through that process: who this ‘opposite’ other is becomes a form of self or group [gender] identity.