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0521458803 - *Implicit Understandings: Observing, Reporting, and Reflecting on the Encounters Between Europeans and Other Peoples in the Early Modern Era*

Edited by Stuart B. Schwartz

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This book brings together the work of twenty historians, anthropologists, and literary scholars who have examined the nature of the encounter between Europeans and the other peoples of the world from about 1450 to 1800 – the Early Modern Era. The European vision of others is examined in Part I, with special emphasis on Spain and the Columbian voyages. The seemingly obvious but too often neglected need to recognize that the cross-cultural encounters always had at least two sides forms the central theme of Part II. It shows how other peoples viewed Europeans, with case studies on Persia, the Aztecs, the Kongo, Japan, and South and Southeast Asia. Part III examines the ways in which peoples tried to bridge cultural contacts and challenges. Part IV examines the nature of eighteenth-century encounters in the Pacific, Australia, and America. Here, noted scholars grapple with the questions of how we observe and what cultural observation tells us about ourselves as well as others.

Implicit Understandings is worldwide in scope, but is unified by the central underlying theme that implicit understandings influence every culture's ideas about itself and others. These understandings, however, are changed by experience in a constantly shifting process in which both sides participate. This makes such encounters complex historical events and moments of "discovery."

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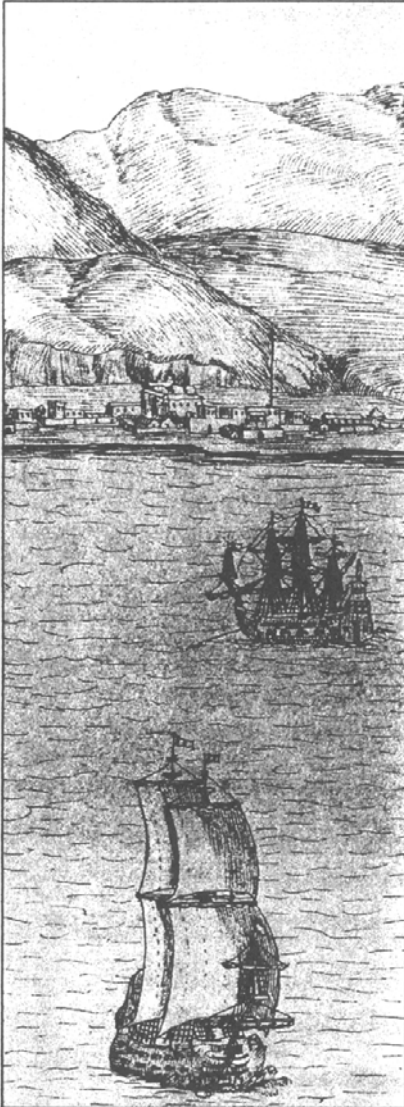
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IMPLICIT UNDERSTANDINGS

OBSERVING, REPORTING, AND REFLECTING ON THE
ENCOUNTERS BETWEEN EUROPEANS AND OTHER
PEOPLES IN THE EARLY MODERN ERA

Edited by

STUART B. SCHWARTZ
University of Minnesota



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Preface

IN the years preceding the Columbian Quincentenary the Center for Early Modern History of the University of Minnesota began to consider an appropriate way to mark that anniversary. Our general aim was to situate the Columbian moment – or “the encounter,” as it has become popular to call it – in the more general process of European expansion, and to see it not as a singular and isolated historical event but as representative of a process that had occurred many times before 1492, and increasingly thereafter. Of course, cross-cultural encounters had taken place among many peoples throughout human history, but for reasons of coherence and focus we decided to make Europeans consistently one side of the encounters that we wished to study and compare. We recognized, however, that the history of such encounters was long and varied, that different European peoples had participated, and that there may have been a cumulative effect of encounter experiences so that the attitudes and techniques carried into such meetings by Bougainville and Cook in the eighteenth century were considerably different from those of Columbus and Vasco da Gama in the fifteenth century.

Throughout our planning discussions we emphasized the bilateral nature of the first contacts and the need to understand both sides of the cultural equation. The voices and attitudes of the indigenous peoples of Asia, Africa, Australia, and the Americas needed to be recorded, understood, and appreciated, but also subjected to the same kind of nuanced analysis now increasingly accorded to European sources. The cultural contexts of both Europeans and non-Europeans were not unitary, and called for attention to the differences in perceptions and actions based on class, status, gender, age, and other categories.

In order to define an important set of theoretical and methodological issues and to identify scholars at work on these problems, the Center for Early Modern History invited a number of specialists to join with our faculty and graduate students in the Twin Cities in February 1988. In addition to having the presence of Peter Hulme, J. S. Phillips, and Greg Denning, whose essays appear in this book, we also

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benefited from the participation of Victoria Bricker (Tulane University) and James Fernandez (University of Chicago) at this stage in our deliberations. A second planning meeting in October, 1988 further defined the central themes to be explored and selected the scholars invited to participate.

In October 1990 the Center for Early Modern History brought together twenty scholars from various disciplines and geographical areas of study who shared a common interest in the problem of intercultural contacts. In addition, approximately 100 other students and scholars also attended the sessions. Papers were circulated in advance and most of the meeting was devoted to discussion and debate of the written presentations in meetings chaired by members of the Center for Early Modern History. These discussions were recorded and transcripts later provided to the authors to help in their revisions. The revised papers, with the addition of the essays by Mary Helms and Wyatt MacGaffey, comprise the book now in your hands.

Some particular debts are owed to individuals. Lucy Simler, as Associate Director of the Center, worked tirelessly on all the arrangements for the meeting and provided the kind of hospitality that made the conference more than an intellectual experience. She collaborated on all stages of the project. Luis González, Allyson Poska, Timothy Coates, Donna Lazarus, and Paula Jorge took on the task of translating papers submitted in languages other than English for distribution to participants. Prof. Antonio Stevens-Arroyo (Brooklyn College) did a similar translation service at the meeting.

University of Minnesota graduate students Jennifer Downs, Abby Sue Fisher, Katherine French, Mary Hedberg, Elisabeth Irving, Edmund Kern, Diane Shaw, Jeffrey Stewart, Linda Wimmer, Paul Wojtalewicz, and Robert Wolff served as session recorders and aided with local arrangements. Todd Macmanus and Allyson Poska were especially helpful in the preparation of the manuscripts for distribution and serving as general coordinators of logistics. Robert Wolff, Kris Lane, and Carlos Aguirre assisted in the preparation of the manuscripts for publication.

Special recognition and thanks are due to Professor Richard Price, who, while Visiting Professor at the University of Minnesota, participated in the planning stages of the conference, provided excellent commentaries at the meeting as an invited participant, and later served as an editorial advisor.

A multi-authored volume whose subject matter spans the globe and whose authors represent a number of disciplines presents more than the usual number of editorial challenges. The reader will note certain

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inconsistencies in usage and terminology between chapters. For example, one author prefers “Iran,” another “Persia.” While I have standardized spellings and common usages and a single footnote style has been used throughout, I have consciously not sought to eliminate individual authors’ preferences. My goal has been consistency within chapters, not necessarily between them. The reader will also note that the essays are not of consistent length. This too is intentional. Authors were encouraged to take the space they felt necessary, and I hoped to provide in this book a few longer essays that exceeded the bounds usually set in academic journals. Ronald Cohen, who carefully copy-edited the manuscript, was particularly helpful with these editorial problems. My thanks also to John Jenson, who prepared the index.

A number of institutions provided financial support to the conference and to the publication of this book. The National Endowment for the Humanities (Grant #RX 21100-89) provided a major proportion of the funding. In addition, support was provided by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (Portugal) and the Commission for the History of the Discoveries (Portugal), The Program for Cultural Cooperation (Spain), the U.S.-Spanish Joint Committee, and the Lilly Foundation. At the University of Minnesota, the Graduate School, the College of Liberal Arts, the Department of History and the James Ford Bell Library all provided support.

The Center for Early Modern History wishes to express its thanks to all of the individuals and institutions mentioned here for making the original conference and this book possible.

Finally, I would like to personally thank all those involved in this project, and especially the authors of the essays in this book, for their collaboration, patience, and goodwill throughout the editorial process. I hope that this book does justice to their contributions.