



Imagining the World: Mythical Belief versus Reality in Global Encounters

O. R. Dathorne

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This is a study of the manner in which certain mythical notions of the world become accepted as fact. Dathorne shows how particular European concepts such as El Dorado, the Fountain of Youth, a race of Amazons, and monster (including cannibal) images were first associated with the Orient. After the New World encounter they were repositioned to North and South America. The book examines the way in which Arabs and Africans are conscripted into the view of the world and takes an unusual, non-Eurocentric viewpoint of how Africans journeyed to the New World and Europe, participating in, what may be considered, an early stage of world exploration and discovery. The study concludes by looking at European travel literature from the early journeys of St. Brendan, through the Viking voyages and up to Marco Polo and Sir John Mandeville. In all these instances, the encounters seem to justify mythical belief. Dathorne's interest in the subject is both intellectual and passionate since, coming from Guyana, he was very much part of this malformed Weltschmerz.

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