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Author
Berner, Robert L.

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contemporary Zuni society so that the past and present are constantly related, just as "Zunis are constantly aware of the presentness of the past" (p. 153). Young also stresses how rock art location within the natural environment can have a great impact on its meaning to contemporary Zuni interpreters.

Religion is a part of everyday Zuni experience. The author emphasizes the fact that, because it is difficult to separate Zuni religious and secular life, there is much fluidity and ambiguity in the perceptions and interpretations of rock art. Such fluidity and ambiguity do not present problems; they simply reflect the range of individual and group perceptions of rock art in contemporary Zuni society. Influences on Zuni perceptions are also discussed, with a directness often missing from many anthropological works. The reinterpretation of rock art by some Zunis, in an Anglo framework for an Anglo audience (pp. 219–30), is often a topic of discussion at anthropological dinner parties rather than in the black and white of print. This is certainly something long recognized but often ignored by anthropologists who wish to state with certainty what they have learned from their Zuni informants. To read about Anglos being told what the Zuni think the Anglos want to hear is a refreshing dose of reality.

The book is well illustrated with a wealth of photographs and drawings, giving the reader a grasp of the range of rock art in the Zuni area. For those interested in rock art and, in particular, those interested in more holistic rock art interpretations linking a contemporary Indian perspective with Western scholarship, I highly recommend this book.

Roger Anyon
Zuni Archaeology Program, New Mexico

Points of Contact. By Norman Simms. New York: Pace University Press, 1991. 219 pages. $43.25 cloth.

Norman Simms, an American who has taught in a New Zealand university for over twenty years, is in an advantageous position for understanding the complexities of the encounter between European culture and the traditions of colonial peoples who have emerged to nationhood in the South and Southwest Pacific. *Points of Contact* develops ideas that he first expressed in *Invisibility and Silence* (1986).

Assuming a reader's willingness to pierce Simms's sometimes dense prose and to translate a certain amount of jargon—his own and that derived from his reading of the usual, unavoidable French theorists—*Points of Contact* can be of use to students of American Indian literature. In any case, the notions of Derrida, Foucault, Lacan, and others that he uses to augment his argument are not essential to it; more important are the ideas he introduces from less familiar figures, such as the Romanian Alexandru Dutu and a historian of the Spanish conquest of Peru whose work deserves to be widely known—Nathan Wachtel.

Points of Contact proves an essential truth: that we too often assume that what we ourselves believe to be "human universals" are true about the beliefs of all people everywhere. It also demonstrates what Whitehead meant when he said that "it requires a very unusual mind to undertake the analysis of the obvious," for Simms's book is an extensive amplification of a single idea: that "points of contact"—encounters of European culture with the "primitive" cultures of colonial societies—transform not only the latter but the former. Simms cites, as a pattern for understanding this process, Wachtel's study of the way the Spanish defeat of the Incas transformed the civilization not only of Peru but of Spain; this transformation may well serve as a model for understanding both the Spanish/Inca mutual conquest and the interpenetration of Euro-American and Indian elements that, in part, explains the origins of our own distinctly American culture.

The Third World writers in the emerging island nations of the Pacific are marginal figures, standing on the often vague and always shifting boundary between the oral literary traditions of their people and the textual traditions of the colonialists. This conflict of orality and textuality and the political predicament of these writers—using the literary methods of colonial masters to define their own nationalism—can be related to the concerns of American Indian writers, at least those who write out of a strong tribal identity.

Furthermore, the book's discussion of the interrelationship of the culture of European (and particularly British) conquerors and that of conquered native peoples is worth examining for the light it casts on the way we should regard the works of American Indian writers within the corpus of American literature. The truth of the matter is that among these writers—as we see in their statements in interviews and autobiographical essays in books such as Joseph Bruchac's *Survival This Way* and Brian Swann and Arnold Krupat's

I Tell You Now—there are wide variations not only in racial background (from "full-blood" to those with very little Indian ancestry) but, more important, in tribal identity—from those who derive from and have always been involved in tribal life (Simon Ortiz, for example) to those who apparently know little or nothing about it (Diane Glancy, Jim Barnes) or have studied it only from the outside (Wendy Rose). What we must be honest enough to admit is that the identity of some writers who are included under the heading of "American Indian" is nothing but racial and that, because the merely racial identification of a writer degrades both writer and reader and is only accidental anyway, we ought to find more meaningful ways to understand the place of Indian writing in our literary culture as a whole.

Simms proceeds from other assumptions than those of race—or even culture. His premise is that a civilization ought to be defined not by its written texts, its monumental architecture, its science, or its technology but by its "mentality." His book is, among other things, an exercise in the relatively new field of the history of "mentalities." What concerns him in his examination of the interaction of European and Third World elements in the creation of a textual literature in the new Pacific nations is the way two mentalities encounter and affect each other to produce a new mentality. The European encounter with new mentalities in America was the final phase of a long process that began with Spain's centuries of warfare with the Moors. The terms of this struggle were used to define the Spanish—and eventually the European—encounter with America, an encounter that transformed America but also must be understood as having transformed Europe by the transformation of America. As Simms says, following Wachtel, "In the very process of destructuring Inca society, the Spaniards destructured their own. The confrontation brought the conqueror face-to-face with aspects of his own Christian civilization he had held as silent and invisible before" (p. 42).

This simultaneous transformation of Europe and America destroyed a variety of societies in the New World at the same time that it destroyed the civilization of medieval Europe. *Points of Contact*, therefore, as Simms says in his introduction, "is about how all of us . . . share in the trauma of modernity . . . " (p. xiii). That trauma defines the painful process by which American Indian writers—however we choose to define them—address the question of who they are, how they relate to their tribal origins, how the traditional oral literature of their tribes relates to the textual

literature they produce, and how they define their writing in relation to American literature as a whole. Simms claims that the best of the texts produced in the new Pacific nations reveal "a self-conscious mentality that at once advances the traditional and the European cultures it emerges from, and . . . , by gaining a disturbing awareness of the fantasies of both, [opens] a whole new range of mentality" (p. 69). This is a fair definition of what the best work of American Indian writers accomplished, and if, when we read *Points of Contact,* we substitute *America* for *Europe* and *Indian* for *Third World,* we will discover many insights into how the place of American Indian literature may be defined.

Simms makes the essential point that when a Pacific writer experiences the encounter of a traditional culture with that of Europe, the limitations of European literary models become apparent and a new culture emerges from the encounter, melded from traditional and European materials which themselves have been modified by several centuries of Europe's colonial experience. These modifications include the cultural relativism with which eighteenth-century European intellectuals responded to reports of exotic civilizations in America and the Pacific; the Rousseauist image of the noble savage and its subsequent redefinition of human nature; and, in this century, the European myth of "the decline of the West." The civilization of Europe and the Euro-American civilization of which it was one cause are the products of the modification of Europe's medieval traditions by the modernism that emerged from the encounter with Indian America. At the same time, American civilization is the product not only of its European origins but of the Indian's constant presence in the American consciousness.

Points of Context repays careful study, not only because it documents its own hypotheses but because it provides a methodology for understanding the situation of American Indian writers and their relation to the traditional oral materials that inspire many of them, while suggesting a stance for those of us who wish to read both oral and textual literatures fairly. Its moral is, in Simms's words, "that it is easier to become civilized when you are in repeated contact with alternative modes of thought . . ." (p. 55).

Robert L. Berner
Oshkosh, Wisconsin