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Encounters of the Spirit: Native Americans and European Colonial Religion. By Richard W. Pointer.

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does make it appealing to a general audience, it would be an improvement to present even more cultural background on the Comanches, perhaps with an expanded introduction. Although Hamalainen does devote chapter six to the structure of Comanche society, it seems that there could be even more information on this aspect of the culture in order to allow the reader to understand these concepts from an internal perspective better. This discussion perhaps could be better placed toward the beginning of the work. One weakness of this work might lie in the very use of the word *empire*. Hamalainen argues for the existence of an empire ignored by historians while at the same time explaining how this Comanche empire had characteristics that defy many of the typical meanings of the term. It would be enlightening to have a discussion of the nuances that relevant terms have in the Comanche language. This is a minor absence, however, in a work that is well researched and eminently readable.

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**Encounters of the Spirit: Native Americans and European Colonial Religion.**

By Richard W. Pointer. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007. 312 pages. \$39.99 cloth.

Starting with the now accepted premise that the culture shock brought about by colonialism affected the colonizers as well as the colonized, Pointer sets out to demonstrate how Native Americans influenced the Christianity of Catholic and Protestant settlers. This was true, he proposes, whether colonists sought to convert the Indians or to destroy them. In the former case, they had to develop strategies to appeal to potential converts; in the latter, they had to justify the carnage. In exploring these two conflicting approaches, Pointer examines six different case studies of the missionary-Indian encounter. His well-tailored prose, free of the excessive jargon that blemishes so many works in the social sciences and literary criticism today, is as lucid as his thesis. What is sometimes not so readily apprehensible, however, is how the examples he chooses support or even relate to his basic assertion.

This is especially true of the first case study, called "The Sounds of Worship," which concerns the use of Native singers, musicians, and instruments in Mexican church services from the 1550s to the 1580s. This short-lived collaboration, Pointer avers, led Catholic missionaries to use music as a form of evangelism, not only in the Americas but also throughout the world. He asserts, "the lives of natives and Europeans alike, including their religious lives, were simply different because of it" (17). On the part of the missionaries, however, this seems a tactical adjustment rather than an authentic strategic change. It appears in no way to have altered basic practices and the fundamental theology of the Catholic Church. What is true, and what may be said to have altered Catholic and Protestant beliefs, were the needed alterations in ways of thinking to account for the presence of peoples and lands

not mentioned in the Bible and, beyond that, to explain why, until 1492, the saving grace of Christ's sacrifice was denied these peoples. Pointer deals with these issues. Ironically, in doing so, the lesser importance of the particular occurrence he has chosen is highlighted. It would seem that the use of Native singers, musicians, and instruments, and whatever alteration they may have produced in church music and recruitment practices (indigenous Mexican peoples were often anxious to join church choirs and orchestras because this exempted them from taxes imposed by the Spanish), is not unlike the use of Native artisans in building and decorating Mexican colonial churches. These artisans, employing indigenous artistic styles, did make modifications of European designs—particularly in the realm of church ornamentation—but one would hardly claim that constituted a significant change in Roman Catholic doctrine or practice.

His most persuasive case, the concluding chapter, "Encountering Death," explains quite cogently how Quaker pacifism actually developed and was defined through interactions with the Indians and non-Quaker fellow colonists. As Pointer puts it, "Quaker pacifism was not a fixed doctrine but instead a set of principles in the process of being defined in practice by individuals in specific circumstances" (169). This discussion of the Quaker "holy experiment" is forcefully contrasted with the belief of Puritans and others that the death of Indians by European-introduced diseases, as well as by enslavement and warfare, manifested the will of God and the favor he displayed toward Christian Europeans.

Between these two extremes of persuasiveness—the use of Native singers and orchestras in Mexico and the evolution of Quaker pacifism in New England, New Jersey, and, especially, Pennsylvania—are four more interesting case studies that vary in their ability to convince the reader of Pointer's overarching thesis. These chapters deal with such varied topics as the influence of Indian oratory on the preaching style of missionaries or the death of Jesuit priests and converts intensifying a preexisting Jesuit tendency to view martyrdom as the ultimate form of Christian devotion. In addition to varying degrees of relevance, another problem is pervasive in these studies. Most of the time Pointer seems to be analyzing the work done by missionaries, while on other occasions he seems to be discussing the laity's actions and attitudes. These two points of view may reinforce one another. One would be misled in conflating the two as well as by assuming that they are exactly the same.

In the course of his investigations, Pointer has come across numerous incidents and personages that contributed to forming the type of society that America was to become, the kind of religion that was to be practiced here, and the course of relations between the American Indians and the Euro-Americans. One development described by Pointer that is of particular importance for subsequent events in US history is the alliance between church and state in dealing with the Indians during the earliest years of the republic, along with the willingness of American Christians to accept such an association while seeking an amendment to the Constitution that would legally separate church and state. Relatively unknown even to those interested in US government-Indian relations, this early church-state connection set a

precedent for such subsequent policies as the conferral of control over Indian reservations to various Christian denominations or, later, the separation of Indian children from their families in order to place them in church-run boarding schools. One wishes that Pointer had touched upon this disastrous legacy of the early collaboration he describes.

If Pointer's arguments are sometimes hypothetical or suppositious (if A had done this, and B had done that, then C might have done something else), often debatable, and not always completely germane to his major thesis, he has, nevertheless produced an engaging work. *Encounters of the Spirit* is an interesting, intriguing read. It does not always deliver quite what it proposes at the outset, but it does provide an excellent starting point for anyone interested in topics related to colonial missionary activities in particular and questions of culture contact and exchange in general. This is thanks to the obviously extensive research done by Pointer in preparing the book. His investigations extend not only to the work of fellow historians, but also, for example, to that of anthropologists, colonial chroniclers and diary writers, and to the writings of various Christian missionaries. Owing to this foundation of wide-ranging scholarship, including primary and secondary sources, and to the excellent notes and extensive bibliography, *Encounters of the Spirit* furnishes an entry into a dimension of New World history that warrants further attention and beckons to future scholars. In this respect it occupies a niche that so far it seems to have to itself, there being no other work quite like it. It is, in short, a valuable addition to the realms of colonial studies, "Religion in North America" (the name of the series to which it belongs), the American past, and New World history in general.

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**Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony: The Recovery of Tradition*.** By Robert M. Nelson. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2008. 197 pages. \$32.95 paper.

Because of its length and its workman-like quality, Robert M. Nelson's contribution to the critical discussion of Leslie Marmon Silko's first (and some say most important) novel *Ceremony* may seem relatively modest. He maps the embedded texts in the novel—fragments of stories, short poems, and elements of myths and legends—in an attempt to understand their relationship to the core text. But because these embedded pieces are so central to Silko's storyline and to the overall structure of the novel, Nelson's discussion not only gives us a much clearer reading of the novel's overall design and purpose, but also opens a window on the larger controversial issue of American Indian authors using traditional stories in their fiction.

Nelson's book, after a brief introduction, first describes—or maps—the nine series or individual segments of embedded texts in the novel. Then he points out that although Silko may well have heard these stories and poems as a child growing up at Laguna Pueblo, there are also important ethnographic