

elsewhere cost him his job in Uganda in the late sixties. Until shortly before his death in 1982 he was a dispossessed wanderer—at Nariobi, Ife, Texas, and Iowa. He did not bend to government censure but he suffered deeply from it and from the persecution of his people. He felt literature must expose current evils: “The terrible things: the murders by governments, the destruction of systems of freedom of speech, the political detentions, the coups . . . Why are we not talking about these things?” Although *Song of Lawino* and *Song of Ocol* are delightful, satiric poems with wide appeal, they are not superficial. Okot’s wit, pithy statement, and humor make their message all the more forceful.

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Bernd Peyer, ed. *The Elders Wrote: An Anthology of Early Prose by North American Indians 1768 - 1931*. (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 1982) 196 pp., DM 48 paper.

Bernd Peyer has collected a number of documents which, although available elsewhere, are not easily accessible. The twenty-three selections are arranged chronologically and are complemented by several photographs of the writers. A bibliography of materials written by American Indians between 1772 and 1938 provides additional resources for the scholar interested in reading the complete works from which many of these selections are taken. By collecting what was written during this early period by American Indians about their conditions, Peyer challenges readers to revise many stereotypes of the “savages.” Most summaries and anthologies of American Indian literature ignore the writers who are included here except for some twentieth-century writers such as Charles Eastman or Chief Luther Standing Bear. Although scholars are doing more research on early writers such as Samson Occom, William Apes, and George Copway, there are others included here who remain generally unknown—Joseph Johnson, Hendrick Upaumut, Elias Boudinot, Maungwudaus, and others.

Peyer points out that these writers, by virtue of their education and religious training, were not necessarily representative of the majority of American Indians. They represent, however, a point of view from Indian people themselves which is seldom discussed in historical studies of the period. In spite of their often-voiced desires for assimilation and education, these writers make clear that their allegiance is still to their people. Most of them have reached their conclusions by observing the upheaval in Indian lives caused by the intrusion of government agencies and the

federal bureaucracy. Education was seen as the way for Indians to take control of their own lives. For their times, these writers were activists for the Indian cause, many of them members of the Society of American Indians, a reform organization run by Indians rather than whites. Many (Bonnin, Eastman, LaFlesche, Montezuma, Oskison, and Parker) were also contributors to the publications of the Society.

What may be most surprising to some readers is the educational level achieved by these writers. Many, who had been trained by missionaries, became ministers or priests. Other, such as Eastman and Montezuma, were physicians; Francis LaFlesche received a law degree in 1893; and Gertrude Bonnin was a contributor to the *Atlantic Monthly* early in this century. Luther Standing Bear and Sarah Winnemucca were authors of novels or autobiographical works which reflected their concern for their people.

These are voices which need to be heard, voices which should have been heard in earlier times, although it is impossible to ascertain how much influence these writers may have had during their lifetimes. By providing this collection, Peyer has given us the opportunity to at least speculate on what the responses of their own people and the government to these statements of belief might have been.

In 1939, Luther Standing Bear wrote, "It is this loss of faith that has left a void in Indian life — a void that civilization cannot fill." In spite of the accumulated years of education in the ways of "civilization," most of these writers did not lose touch with the ways of their "elders."

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Henry N. Pontell. *A Capacity to Punish: The Ecology of Crime and Punishment*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984) xx, 140 pp., \$17.50 paper.

Given the extraordinary costs of prisons, the current political climate which pushes for less government and lowered public spending, and the incapacity of the legal system to carry the entire burden of social control, Pontell argues for reexamination of the criminal justice system from a sociological perspective. Drawing upon data from the 1966-1974 period, Pontell's doctoral study, the basis for the book, searched for ecological relationships among crime rates, expenditures, conviction rates, and demographic features in the California counties under review. Positive