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simply as a practical means of finding where a line should end, but also as the "animating spirit" of good poetry; Rothenberg's desire to lift poetry beyond the written page into the realm of performed events; and Snyder's belief that the traditional Native American sense of place once rightly celebrated as an inspiration for new American poems has now become a message urgently related to the ecological survival of Peoples all over the globe.

Interpreting the Indian makes such a good case for the importance of studying how twentieth century American poets have responded to the realities and mythologies of Native Americans that it leaves me wanting more. I would have liked more quotations from the prose and poetry of the last three decades (reprint fees no doubt restrained Castro); more about the heirs of the early anthologizers (see page 32); more about the literary, historical and psychological reasons for the poetic interest in American Indians (see pages 61 and 101-102). Since in his last chapter Castro includes discussion of some trends in poetry written in English by American Indians, I would have especially liked to read more about this perspective than we find in his brief comments about several poets who perceive "anguish" and/or "restoration" in contemporary American Indian situations. I realize that, given Castro's focus and the pressure towards brevity imposed by most publishers today, it would be impossible to discuss contemporary American Indian poets in detail. In 1983 alone at least three anthologies of contemporary Native American poetry appeared: *Wounds Beneath the Flesh*, *Songs From This Earth on Turtle's Back* and *The Clouds Threw This Light*. Still, a brief examination specifically aimed at studying how a poet such as Silko, Simon J. Ortiz, or N. Scott Momaday has combined American Indian and non-Indian ideas and forms would have been a fitting ending to a significant book. These and other American Indian poets suggest how good poetry can move us even beyond the limits of the 150% American Indian and the 150% White to the 150% Human.

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James Welch. By Peter Wild. Boise, Idaho: Boise State University, 1983. Western Writers Series, No. 57. 49 pp. \$2.00 Paper.

Boise State University's Western Writers Series is a very ambitious enterprise, with almost 200 titles either in print or preparation. The list includes not only cowboy writers—Zane Grey, Bret Harte, Owen Wister—but American Indians like N. Scott Momaday, Leslie Silko and Charles Eastman. There are also urban writers from the part of California normally considered west of the West—Jack Kerouac, Hammett, Chandler—as well as poets, critics and essayists like Joseph Wood Krutch.

In short, the collection is sort of a regional Twayne series—although the fifty page monographs are shorter than the Twayne studies—and the quality of the various volumes differs substantially. Peter Wild's study of James Welch is one of the best. Wild, a poet (*The Good Fox, Fat Man Poems*) who teaches at the University of Arizona, is himself the subject of a Western Writers Series monograph.

Wild's study of Welch's poetry and prose is lucidly written, sensible and judicious. Wild praises Welch's work for the most part but is not afraid to criticize works that he finds poorly written.

Wild traces the major influences on Welch's poetry: Richard Hugo, his teacher at the University of Montana; contemporary Americans Robert Bly and James Wright; and South American surrealists Pablo Neruda and Cesar Vallejo. While acknowledging Welch's debt to these poets, Wild is careful to point out that Welch makes his own use of surrealism, which, Wild remarks, "as with most 'isms' is no one thing."

Wild has high praise for a number of Welch's poems, "The Man from Washington," "Grandma's Man" and "Arizona Highways," for example, but he finds much of Welch's surrealism "inane," and occasionally sees surrealist absurdity where it doesn't exist. He claims that ". . . the sense simply breaks down . . ." in the line from "Plea to Those Who Matter," "You don't know I pretend my dumb," when "dumb" simply means "dumbness," the grammatical solecism emphasizing the point of the line.

Wild appears a bit harsh when he selects the poems he believes are best and writes the rest off as failures, but his principle of selection is sound and the poems he praises are the right poems. Welch's best poems have an aptness of image, whether conventional or surrealist; his worst are marred by images which not only do not make conventional sense but lack vividness as surrealistic images.

Wild's analysis of Welch's novel *Winter in the Blood* is a perceptive critique of the book. Wild argues at some length that it is a mistake to see the novel as an agonized howl of anguish or bitter protest novel written by a member of an oppressed minority. Rather Wild describes it as a "wondrously humorous book . . . a skilled novel that happens to be written by a Native American who lends his special vision to the material he knows best." As Wild points out in his review of the criticism on the novel, most critics insist on treating the book as a *cri de coeur* from a maligned ethnic. This, he points out, is a reductive and ultimately condescending reading which not only refuses to take American Indians seriously but insists on treating them with the pity one feels for the helpless. Wild sees the nameless hero as an American Indian Woody Allen, and, as surprising as that comparison may seem at first blush, it is very apt.

The achievement of the novel, Wild argues, lies ". . . in the vignettes deftly captured by the novelist . . .," and, in Welch's skill as a satirist, his use of "a playful combination of understatement and hyperbole to offer readers riches from the ashheap of human existence."

Wild is more critical of Welch's second novel, *The Death of Jim Loney*, in which ". . . nuance gives way to melodrama." In many ways . . . *Jim Loney* is the mirror image of *Winter in the Blood*: Welch takes the same protagonist, a thirtyish American Indian who can't seem to find himself, puts him in the same setting, small-town Montana, but then works out his fate tragically rather than comically, substituting sentimentality for irony. Since Dickens, sentimentality has been out of favor in the novel; consequently, Wild is pretty hard on Welch, whom he says ". . . presents the ghoulish world of television soap opera." This is excessive, but Wild is right that *Loney* is a falling off from *Winter in the Blood*, and he is right also in his diagnosis of what went wrong.

All in all, Wild's monograph is a useful introduction to Welch's work. One might raise a few quibbles—Wild's discussion of N. Scott Momaday's *House Made of Dawn* misses the point of the ending and even implies that the protagonist commits suicide. But by and large the book is a first rate job of practical criticism.

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