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Summer 1984

Review of *A Bibliographical Guide to the Study of Western American Literature* By Richard W. Etulain

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A Bibliographical Guide to the Study of Western American Literature. By Richard W. Etulain. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982. Index. xvii + 317 pp. \$22.50.

As Richard Etulain states in his preface, this is a comprehensive but not exhaustive bibliography of books, dissertations, and articles about western American literature. The bulk of the volume lists materials on more than 350 major western authors, including some major historians and nonfiction writers, but perhaps the most significant part of the book is the section

dealing with seven important aspects of the field that suggest ways of arranging research to go beyond individual works and authors to overviews and generalizations.

Etulain's categories are: (1) local color and regionalism, (2) popular western literature—dime novels and the Western, (3) western films as literature, (4) Indian literature and Indians in western literature, (5) Mexican-American literature and Chicanos in western literature, (6) the Beats, and (7) Canadian Western literature. One might have added women's literature and women in western literature, although these topics are so well represented among the individual listings that a special section might seem redundant. Canadian literature, on the other hand, is almost absent among the individual listings, and thus underrepresented in the volume. Plains authors, especially Cather, are well served by a careful selection of the best criticism.

The *Bibliographical Guide* is an extremely useful research tool. It is also a piece of historiographical evidence of the growth and health of the field of western American literary criticism. The division between a table of contents, listing subjects, and an index, listing authors of critical works, adds to the book's value as a guide to active scholars in the field. Printed on durable paper, the *Guide* deserves a long shelf life and much handling.

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