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**Review of *Wanted Dead or Alive: The American West in Popular Culture* Edited by Richard Aquila**

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*Wanted Dead or Alive: The American West in Popular Culture*. Edited by Richard Aquila. Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1996. Suggestions for further reading, index. x + 313 pp. \$29.95.

In most people's perceptions there have always been many Wests. One is geographical, a land encompassing the Great Plains, the Rockies, the Southwest, and perhaps the Pacific coast. But the West has also resided in the imaginations of Americans and people around the world as a mythic place where dreams and aspirations could be realized. The two Wests did not always coincide, but popular culture in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries actively promoted written or visual representations of the imagined West. Whether the Western frontier closed in 1890 is problematical. But we can be certain that the purveyors of popular culture in the succeeding one hundred years constructed another West—a West of the imagination. Among the pioneers in this field were individuals working in literature, live entertainment, moving pictures, television, music, art, and advertising.

This book of essays, whose contributors analyze topics in their areas of expertise, provides an excellent introduction to depictions of the West in popular culture. Christine Bold writes perceptively about the dime novel tradition, while William Bloodworth focuses on novelists and the American West. Thomas Altherr concentrates on Wild West shows and rodeos.

John Lenihan, an authority on Western films, delves into that genre, while Ray White confines himself to B Westerns and Gary Yoggi covers Westerns on television. Richard Aquila writes about the mythic West in popular and rock music; Kenneth Bindas does the same with country music. Joni Kinsey crosses familiar ground in Western art, while Elliot West provides an imaginative account of Western images in advertising. Each of the essays is supported by footnotes and a brief list of books for further reading. Most contributions are interesting, well written, and informative. Although many books have been written about the popular culture of the West, most deal with a specific sphere. The advantage of this volume is its broad range and inclusiveness. Anyone seeking to delve into this dimension of Western history will find *Wanted Dead or Alive* a useful guide.

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