

delineators of that philosophy have been Western books (especially pulps and paperbacks) and movies. These media have been especially powerful when joined together. Rollins and O'Connor, as I have said, are especially effective in describing and analyzing the joining of the two. This volume is introduced by the usual wide-ranging and incisive essays which places the Western movie in its various stages of advancement. The selection is divided into four parts: "Early Sound Era Westerns, 1931–1939," "The Post-World War II Western, 1945–1956," "The Cold War Western, 1950–1981," and "The Postmodernist Western, 1980–2000," and includes a bibliography and an indispensable filmography. The thirteen chapters have been arranged, in the words of the editors, to "relate both to the then-current development of film art and production as well as to the social, political, and cultural concerns prevailing at the time—and therefore, likely to be reflected in the works discussed." As usual, this volume, definitive in its own right, is intended to spur further research. It will succeed in this larger purpose because "issues of the frontier, the West, justice, and violence are interconnected inextricably in the American mind," for "study of the evolution of the Western is not a detached, academic endeavor; it is a chance to look at the potentials of our nation as they have been explored by some of our best literary and visual artists."

The American individual as well as psychology from the beginning accepted the advice to go West and to stay there. Although the hyphenated location of American West as the heart and soul of America has been separated, it has not been wiped away. America is still the West to the remainder of the world, and the Western locale still has a grip on the American psyche. This volume of powerful essays outlines and explains many of the reasons.

—Ray B. Browne

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## **Imagining the African-American West**

Blake Allmendinger. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005.

America has always been the land of two dreams, the dream of America, the total land and concept, and the dream within a dream, that of the faraway and enchanting West. To most of us through the years, the West has remained pretty much the land of enchantment, of monumental vistas, blue skies, movies, and literature. Yet, except for the often falsifying movie versions, the West has remained underdeveloped and we uninformed, especially about the roles of minorities and especially blacks there. This concise volume is a ride in the right direction to inform us about how blacks throughout the years have devoted their literature to picturing their real role in the "enchanted land." Quite properly the author begins with pioneering adventures of such a person as Oscar Micheaux, goes next to slavery and the post-Civil War periods, and on through what he calls "Hip Hopalong Cassidy: Cowboys and Rappers," and so on through present-day presentations. One of the major strengths of the book is its presentation of all aspects of black representations of the West, including crime fiction and black noir. To the author there is no distinction between so-called "literature" and popular literature. So we get a full picture of all aspects of the literature of the West by African Americans. Although the presentations are brief, they are comprehensive. This, then, is a fine introductory chapter to more books that need to be written on the subject.

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