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Review of *Writing the Range: Race, Class, and Culture in the Women's West* Edited with introduction by Elizabeth Jameson and Susan Armitage

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Writing the Range: Race, Class, and Culture in the Women's West. Edited with introduction by Elizabeth Jameson and Susan Armitage. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997. Photographs, maps, notes, selected bibliographies, index. xiii + 656 pp. \$45.00 cloth, \$21.95 paper.

This collection of twenty-nine essays, some previously published, aspires to assemble some of the most important new work on women in the multicultural West and to challenge a monocultural national narrative. The focus on the West assumes that *region* is a meaningful analytical category. In addition, the editors argue that the dynamic of waves of migration to contested territory could stand as a process common to the nation's entire history. Because of the nature of an essay collection, the latter aspiration is difficult to sustain as a coherent argument. Nonetheless, the collection succeeds as a fairly comprehensive introduction to the recent scholarship on women's history in the multicultural West.

The essays, divided into seven thematic and roughly chronological parts, begin with the colonial period and end in the 1980s. Each section opens with a short introduction explaining different approaches to studying Western women's ethnic, racial, class, and gender experiences. These are gems, with clear, richly-informed explanations of often complex theoretical issues. This structure does create several odd juxtapositions and uneven coverage, however. Only in the section on recent history do any essays address the urban West. African American women are discussed in the section titled "Seeking Empowerment" but not

in the one focusing on "Newcomers." To some extent this reflects the historiography of various fields. For example, Western urban history in general tends to focus on the twentieth century; historians rarely treat African Americans as "migrants," except as slaves or participants in the early twentieth-century's Great Migration. The division into parts based on theoretical approaches seems less useful than a straightforward chronological arrangement.

With a collection this large and a review space this limited, one cannot possibly do justice to the individual essays' complexity. In general, the volume works extremely well. Its editors' introduction provides clear theoretical definitions of its main terms (such as "West" and "multicultural"), observing as well that within its diversity of topics are several themes whose commonalities grow out of the collection's overall focus on women: "work, intimate relationships, sexuality, reproduction, and access to power." Six excellent bibliographies divide entries by ethnic subject and are sure to be invaluable teaching and research tools.

Writing the Range would make an excellent text for courses in Western women's history, the West, or women and multiculturalism.

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