

The Vietnam War in Literature: An Annotated Bibliography of Criticism, by Philip K Jason. Pasadena: Salem, 1992. Pp. 175. \$40.00

To begin, the reviewer must declare an interest. Jason says nice things about my own Vietnam War bibliography work. A favorable review does not necessarily follow, but Jason's new book is, in fact, an original, competent, accurate, well-written, and useful bibliography. Persons familiar with the study of Vietnam War literature will see at once the logic of the author's approach and the scholarly quality of his product. Those new to the field can use the book effectively after reading its excellent introduction.

Jason defines Vietnam War literature to include some nonfiction material and he discusses the often elusive difference between personal narratives and novels. He wisely avoids motion pictures and correctly says that their criticism needs a separate bibliography. True to its subtitle, the book cites and annotates monographs, articles, interviews, some reviews, and other works that describe Vietnam War literature in critical and scholarly ways. Major sections are special collections, general studies, general criticism, criticism by genre (nonfiction, novels, poetry, etc.) and authors and their works. There is an author index.

Annotations average about seventy words. They are models of their type—descriptive, evaluative, accurate, and literate. They reveal the depth of Jason's knowledge of his subject and the quality of his thinking about it. This is one of those few reference books that can be read painlessly.

It is possible to find fault with any book. A title index would have been helpful, and some may object that Jason cites only one edition of each book. The only other choice would have been to identify every edition. That would have been an awesome and probably unnecessary task. Most, if not all, serious

students of the literature certainly have access to the lists and databases that cite different editions.

As it stands, this is a fine bibliography. Every institution and individual with an interest in Vietnam War literature should have it.

—*John Newman*
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