

Faculti Summary

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This video is a spoken overview of a biography dedicated to Bertha Muzzy Bauer, known as BM Bauer, a prolific Western author who published 60 novels and hundreds of short stories between 1904 and 1940. The speaker has been interested in Bauer's work since the 1990s while pursuing a dissertation on women in Western American writing. They were subsequently connected with Bauer's grandson, Reed Doke, who sought to document his grandmother's life after previous attempts by her family to write a biography fell short due to personal hardships.

The speaker outlines the extensive research involved in the project, including visits with Bauer's grandson, examination of her personal materials, and analysis of her correspondence found in various archives. BM Bauer's literary contributions often reflect her personal experiences, particularly her tumultuous first marriage, which motivated her to write.

The biography presents Bauer as a passionate writer who used her authentic life experiences to create relatable characters, often satirizing the tropes prevalent in popular Westerns of her time. The speaker argues that while Bauer was an important figure in Western literature, her legacy did not endure as prominently as those of her male counterparts like Zane Gray due to publishing practices that obscured her identity as a woman.

This video emphasizes Bauer's nuanced depiction of cowboys as working individuals rather than idealized heroes and showcases how her writing contributed to the broader genre of Western literature. The speaker hopes that this biography will challenge the notion that women did not actively participate in the creation of Western literature and asserts BM Bauer's significance in this literary space. Overall, it aims to present a well-researched and compelling narrative that not only enlightens scholars but also engages casual readers curious about Western literature.