


1974 was a pivotal year not only for the recognition that there was a need for more author bibliographies of Canadian authors but also for the inception of a press that would be capable of publishing such necessary research tools. The concept of author compilations is scarcely a new consideration even within the relatively youthful context of Canadian bibliography. The same basic motivation is at the roots of such general compendiums as R.E. Watters' A Checklist of Canadian Literature and Background Materials, 1628-1950 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1959),
second edition revised to 1960 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972) and its predecessors such as H.J. Morgan’s *Bibliotheca Canadensis, or, a Manual of Canadian Literature* (Ottawa: Desbarats, 1867), C.C. James’ *Bibliography of Canadian Poetry (English)* (Toronto: Victoria University Library, 1899), and L.E. Horning and L.J. Burpee’s *A Bibliography of Canadian Fiction (English)* (Toronto: Victoria University Library, 1904). These are but a few of the multiple author bibliographies which have retained their value, in the absence of a fully comprehensive replacement, for researchers, scholars, students, and collectors of English Canadian literature.

Individual author bibliographies have a much more recent history. No single work of enduring merit can be said to have been compiled for a Canadian literary figure in either the nineteenth century or in the first half of this century. It is true that a number of author checklists were compiled and published as appendices to biographical and critical studies – Frederic F. Sherman and R.H. Hathaway’s ‘A Check List of First Editions of the Works of Bliss Carman’ [in Odell Shepard’s *Bliss Carman* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1923)] and Victor Chittick’s bibliography of the works of Thomas C. Haliburton [in his *Thomas Chandler Haliburton [Sam Slick’]: A Study in Provincial Toryism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1924)] exemplify two bibliographies from this period which are still, faute de mieux, consulted today. The bibliographical standards exhibited, particularly in the case of Chittick, are so perfunctory that they would not be considered adequate for a modern-day grade school essay.

A higher – though still enumerative – level of bibliographical analysis and record can be seen in the Makers of Canadian Literature series edited by Lorne Pierce and Victor Morin and published by the Ryerson Press in the 1920s. Each volume in the series included a biographical statement, selections from the author’s works, an ‘appreciation,’ and a bibliography of works by and about the writer concerned. The subjects of the series included such well-known literary figures as Isabella Valancy Crawford, Louis Fréchette, William Kirby, and Major John Richardson. The Kirby bibliography was later expanded and greatly improved upon by Lorne Pierce as an appendix to his *William Kirby: The Portrait of a Tory Loyalist* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1929). Pierce’s work is perhaps one of the first serious attempts to come to grips with descriptive bibliography in this country. Certainly Pierce’s interest and concern for Canadian bibliography was very real, and would lead him nearly two decades later to found the Bibliographical Society of Canada with E.C. Kyte, Victor Morin, and Marie Tremaine.

In 1930 a brave attempt was made to return to the multiple author bibliography. In that year the Ottawa based firm of Graphic Publishers Limited published Vernon Blair Rhodenizer’s *A Handbook of Canadian Literature*. This work, with its classified approach and its bibliographical essay style, is a precursor to both Watters’ *Checklist* and to the *Literary History of Canada: Canadian Literature in English* [edited by Carl F. Klinck (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965)]. The fact that the Graphic firm disappeared within two years of publishing Rhodenizer’s work undoubtedly prevented its wider circulation. The author worked for many years on an expanded version of the *Handbook* which ultimately appeared under the title
Canadian Literature in English [Montreal: Author, Printed by Quality Press Limited, 1965]. Coming after Watters’ first edition of his Checklist (1959) and in the same year as the Literary History of Canada, Rhodenizer’s work was not well received despite its obvious merits. The fact that the work was self-published and was not indexed did not assist to make either the work or its contents generally accessible to the public.

In the late 1930s and, indeed, until the 1960s the library schools, particularly the Ecole de bibliothéconomie of the Université de Montréal, exhibited a concern for the compilation of bio-bibliographies. Those produced at the Université de Montréal were eventually made available in microform. Despite many flaws these bibliographies did possess the merit that, in many cases, the subjects of study were living authors so that the range of material was generally more comprehensive (to the date at which the compilation was issued) than other author bibliographies hitherto published in Canada. Fewer bio-bibliographies seem to have been produced in the English language library schools although this may be, simply, the case that fewer have survived.

If the publication of Pierce’s bibliography of the works of William Kirby in 1929 seemed to mark a new stage in Canadian author bibliography, the impact was dissembled by its appearance at the end of a lengthy biographical study. Indeed, it was not until the 1950s that a proper model appeared to set the stage for future Canadian author bibliographies. Gerhard Lomer’s Stephen Leacock: A Checklist and Index of His Writings (Ottawa: National Library of Canada, 1954) not only established a new standard in terms of bibliographical analysis and description, but it also had the distinction of being the most exhaustive separately published work devoted solely to the bibliography of a Canadian author. While discrepancies and addenda have been published in the intervening thirty years, Lomer’s study remains irreplaceable and a definite watershed for Canadian bibliography.

Records, even in bibliography, however, exist only to be broken. While Lomer’s work was, and is, a standard to which many contemporary bibliographies of Canadian authors can only pretend, it has been excelled and surpassed by the bibliographical work of William F.E. Morley. To Morley goes the honour and distinction of having compiled the first fully descriptive bibliography of a Canadian author. His study of the works of Major John Richardson was first published in the Papers of the Bibliographical Society of Canada (‘A Bibliographical Study of John Richardson’ 4 [1965]) and later greatly revised and expanded for publication as a monograph (A Bibliographical Study of Major John Richardson [Toronto: Bibliographical Society of Canada, 1973]). This work has set completely new standards of definitiveness and detail which few more recent bibliographical studies have matched.

The role of the Bibliographical Society of Canada in encouraging detailed bibliographical studies since its establishment in 1946 has not been insignificant, and the Society has continued to provide a means for the occasional publications of such studies as, for instance, the recent ‘A Bibliographical Essay on William Kirby’s The Golden Dog, 1877-1977’ compiled by Elizabeth Brady (Papers 15 [1976]). Curiously, the Society has never interested itself in the publication of bibliographies of living authors; indeed, a previous editor of the Papers felt that because the bibliography of a living author would not be complete it should not be considered by the Society for publication.
The efforts of the Bibliographical Society of Canada to encourage, promote, and publish bibliographical work have been increasingly matched in the last few decades by a number of journals – by Canadian Literature (Vancouver, 1959-), by Canadian Notes and Queries (Kingston, 1968-), by The Journal of Canadian Fiction (Guelph, 1972-) and by Essays on Canadian Writing (Downsvie, 1974-) to name only a few of the more prominent journals now opening their columns to bibliographical studies. In addition, since the 1960s the publication of bibliographies has been increasingly supported by institutions such as the National Library of Canada and the Bibliothèque nationale du Québec, and by the university presses.

Despite this gradual growth in Canadian bibliographical publication, 1974 can be considered a watershed because the need for more bibliographies of Canadian authors was, at last, clearly recognized and stated, and because of the establishment, in the same year, of a press which has subsequently done much to rectify this lamentable discrepancy.

The question of recognition is perhaps more justly viewed as a cumulative reflection of the tremendous growth of interest in Canadian literature at every conceivable level – individual and institutional – that had become apparent by the 1960s. That recognition was finally expressed in a ‘state of the art’ paper on the bibliography of English Canadian literature delivered by Richard Landon at a national conference on the state of Canadian bibliography ('Subject Bibliography – Literature in English,' National Conference on the State of Canadian Bibliography, Vancouver, Canada, May 22-24, 1974: Proceedings [Ottawa: National Library of Canada, 1977]). In this key assessment Landon noted,

There is an almost complete absence of Canadian author bibliographies, and the few extant publications devoted to one author are all systematic bibliographies. This statement is not meant to denigrate the checklist which remains the basis on which full descriptive bibliographies can be built. It may be that for some authors a systematic bibliography in one of its slightly expanded forms is all that is required, but for the major writers whose works are being or will be textually edited in a scholarly manner some kind of descriptive bibliography is necessary if the tripartite relationship between descriptive bibliography, textual criticism and literary criticism is to be maintained. (p. 173-174)

Landon’s paper provides a cogent review of the bibliographical state of English Canadian literature to 1974. The close relationship between the development of significant collections of the works of Canadian authors and the ultimate production of bibliographies of the works of these authors is emphasized and amply illustrated with specific reference to a number of major Canadian writers. The fact that such collections have come into an even partial existence underlines, in passing, the unrecognized role of the antiquarian book trade in Canada in recent years and the close collaboration that has evolved between the bookseller and the collector, whether an institution or an individual.

In the context of his suggestions that there is a need for a number of specific author bibliographies, Landon remarked that,

Traditionally authors have not been ensconced within the pages of a bibliography until after their deaths.... If bibliographical information is prepared with the
author's assistance, there is the advantage of the author's memory and record information. This advantage has its limitations, as often writers prefer not to recall their first books, regarding the solicitation of bibliographical information from them on this subject as an attempt to perform an autopsy on a still warm corpse, and, of course, inaccurate or misremembered information may lead the bibliographer along some false trails. (p. 181)

A further disadvantage of compiling bibliographies from the works of living authors is, of course, the fact that they are still productive so that the compilation cannot achieve an end in terms of the author's works. Such a limitation can be, at least, clearly and objectively defined, and the fact remains that the author's assistance may well be critical to the preparation of a definitive and comprehensive bibliography within established chronological limits.

Recognition of a problem has little merit if it is not followed by a corresponding and appropriate solution. Simultaneously – although there is no indication that this was a logical development of Landon's identification of the problem – with this recognition of the need for more Canadian author bibliographies, a new journal Essays on Canadian Writing was launched at York University by two, then, graduate students, Jack David and Robert Lecker.

The establishment of Essays on Canadian Writing and its subsequent development, with expanded objectives, into ECW Press have been traced by Joyce Wayne in an interview with Jack David ('ECW: Scholarly Publishing's Young Turk,' Quill and Quire 47, no. 10 [October 1981]: 26). Unlike their small press predecessors of the 1940s and 1950s neither David nor Lecker considered himself a creative writer. Each editor saw himself and, by corollary, the principal function of Essays on Canadian Writing as being, according to Wayne, 'simply in the business of producing literary criticism, bibliographies, and other people's fiction because they perceived a huge gap in this domain.' Certainly the first consideration was to produce a journal which would publish critical appraisals of young Canadian writers. The more precise focus of criticism and bibliography may well have been defined at a later date, following the first issue of the journal which included a critical article by David on bpNichol, to which he added a bibliography of Nichol's works. This combination flourished and subsequent issues included bibliographies of living authors and contemporary small presses (such as Mavis Gallant, Hugh Hood, Robert Kroetsch, John Newlove, Miriam Waddington, and Weed/Flower Press) and, in addition, bibliographies of a number of deceased writers (William Wilfred Campbell, Raymond Knister, and Archibald Lampman).

By the end of the decade, the ready response to Essays on Canadian Writing's combination of criticism, bibliography, and the publication of new Canadian fiction prompted the editors to expand their operation into ECW Press. Building on its strengths, ECW Press' natural mode of expansion was in the publication of critical monographs – whole issues of Essays on Canadian Writing were already being devoted to single authors and themes – and of single works and collections of fiction.

At the same time the editors' perception of the importance of the bibliographical component of ECW Press activities led to the consideration of a major bibliographical project, The Annotated Bibliography of Canada's Major Authors (ABCMA). The
initial plans for ABCMA envisaged a series of volumes containing bibliographies for twenty major authors, to be compiled by a like number of researchers and edited by David and Lecker. In the fall of 1978, David approached Peter Martin Associates who expressed interest in publishing the series. However, by the time the text was ready to go to press the publisher had reconsidered and withdrew from the project. After considering a number of alternatives, including the University of Toronto Press, David and Lecker revised their plans and determined to publish ABCMA themselves under the ECW Press imprint. In the process the project was expanded to a total of ten volumes which, at a planned five authors a volume, would include bibliographies by and about fifty major Canadian authors. This plan has been followed to the letter until the appearance of Vol. 4 which only contains bibliographies for four Canadian authors.

Funding for ABCMA has been assured by a complex arrangement of assisting grants from the Association for Canadian and Quebec Literatures [Vol. 1], the Association of Canadian Community Colleges [Vols. 1, 2, & 3], the Canada Council [Vols. 2, 3, & 4], the Canadian Federation for the Humanities, using funds provided by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada [Vols. 1, 3, & 4], and the Ontario Arts Council [Vols. 1 & 4]. In addition, a contract with G.K. Hall assures the sale of 5000 copies of each volume for distribution outside of Canada.

As of 1981 ECW Press' publication programme anticipated the appearance of two volumes a year and the completion of the full series in 1986. On the basis of the publication dates of the first four volumes it would appear that this programme may have been somewhat optimistic. Although the ABCMA editors have achieved an impressive record in assuring that the contributors' copy is ready to go to press, they have only been able to publish a single volume annually. It may well be 1991 before this massive project is completed at the present rate of publication. In terms of the proposed schedule, a recent flyer from the Press announces that Vols. 5 and 6 are 'in progress' and the former is expected to be 'available in 1984.' There is a further time consideration for the scheduling of each volume; since the majority of the authors included in the series are still alive and productive, a cut off date for inclusion has been established for each volume [Dec. 31 1978 for Vol. 1; Dec. 31 1979 for Vol. 2; Dec. 31 1980 for Vol. 3; and Dec. 31 1981 for Vol. 4]. The editors plan to issue periodical updates for primary and secondary material published after the closing date for each volume. No indication has been given as to when or in what form these updates will appear.

The arrangement of each individual author bibliography was standardized from the beginning, each includes the following components:

Table of contents
Introduction (embracing a chronological survey of existing criticism and a summary of the bibliographical problems or limitations encountered by the compiler. Vol. 4 marks a departure in this instance since none of the bibliographies includes such an introduction)
Part I – Works by the author
A – Books and manuscripts (books are arranged chronologically by date of publication for each genre, if more than one; manuscripts are arranged by repository,
private or institutional, in order of collection extent, the most extensive collec-
tions being listed first)
B – Book and periodical contributions (contributions are listed chronologically
within each genre, where applicable, including poems, short stories, articles,
reviews, letters, audiovisual materials, miscellaneous works, and reprinted
anthology contributions)

Part II – Works about the author
C – Books, articles, and sections of books, theses and dissertations, interviews,
audiovisual material, and awards and honours (arranged chronologically in
separate sub-sections by genre as applicable; all entries are annotated to indi-
cate the critical viewpoints expressed)
D – Selected book reviews, and reviews of audiovisual and dramatic works where
applicable (reviews are arranged by the title of the work reviewed according to
the chronology established for that work in Section A above, and subarranged
by the date of publication of the review. All reviews are annotated. The basis
for selecting the review is determined by such factors as its critical excellence,
its regional impact, the unique character of its interpretation, and its interna-
tional evaluation)

Index to critics whose works are listed in Part II of the bibliography.

While ABCMA is issued in both hardcover and paper states, with the preponderance
of copies being issued in the former state, each individual author bibliography is also
available as a separate publication. Considering the cost of the volumes it would be
expected that students of a particular author would welcome the availability of that
particular individual bibliography at the low cost of six dollars. The reviewer is not
aware of any sales statistics concerning the sale of individual bibliographies versus
sales of volumes containing that particular bibliography, but it does appear to jeop-
ardize volume sales to some extent. On the whole, the standardized format described
above lends itself well to this variety of published states. Certainly each individual
bibliography forms a compact and cohesive unit in itself as well as fitting harmoni-
ously, from the technical standpoint, into the larger context of each volume. The
selection of authors whose bibliographies will appear in a given volume, as will be
discussed at a later point, may well detract from this appearance of harmony and
overall cohesiveness.

Ease of access, whether to the authors in a given volume or to the contents of the
individual bibliographies, is far from assured. Apart from the tables of contents in
each volume, only the name tags on the individual spines provide any clue as to the
author bibliographies in a given volume. In the case of Margaret Atwood, whose
bibliography is split by genre between Vols. 1 and 2, this poses an additional
difficulty. Although the editors have given no indication that they are aware of the
problem of general access to the authors whose bibliographies appear in the series, it
can only be presumed that some kind of access will be provided when the series is
completed.

More critical is the lack of access within each individual bibliography. The main
divisions are by genre and date of publication, yet the only access provided is an index
to the names of the critics. It is unfortunate that a full index to all titles is not provided as well to facilitate consultation of the bibliography. Since each item is uniquely numbered within each section, there should be no problem in terms of identifying the necessary reference. In the case of a title change as in, for instance, Robertson Davies' *A Voice from the Attic* which was published in England under the title *The Personal Art: Reading to Good Purpose* (Vol. 3, p. 65-66), both are listed under the same entry number. The English edition is hidden under the North American edition title—a problem of access which would not have arisen if a fuller index had been provided. In this instance, Lomer's bibliography of Leacock's works provided a better model, and one sadly neglected!

In his 1974 assessment, Landon had emphasized the need for more descriptive bibliographies of Canadian writers while acknowledging that these might, in time, grow from existing enumerative bibliographies. The author bibliographies compiled for *ABCMA* are clearly enumerative bibliographies. However, they are enumerative bibliographies with a difference, and have none of the defective characteristics commonly associated with checklists. The essential points which delineate the *ABCMA* bibliographies, and which require some examination, are their intended comprehensiveness, their standardized bibliographical style, and the degree of annotation provided.

As the editors' introduction to each of the four volumes states, *ABCMA* 'is designed to be the first collection of comprehensive, annotated bibliographies of works by and on Canada's major French and English authors from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.' 'Comprehensive,' however, requires some interpretation. *ABCMA* bibliographies are essentially comprehensive only within the chronological constraints set for each volume. Even within these constraints the bibliographies cannot truly be said to be comprehensive. Manuscripts are one area where the record is incomplete and all too often obscure. In some cases the manuscripts remain in private collections—or, as in the case of Gabrielle Roy and Robertson Davies, they were in the author's possession at the time the bibliography was compiled. In such cases it is unfortunate that a greater amount of cooperation with the owner could not have taken place to achieve at least a perfunctory list of the manuscript materials known to exist. In the case of Gabrielle Roy, it was announced in March 1983 that her manuscripts had been acquired by the Literary Manuscripts Division of the National Library of Canada, and presumably a preliminary inventory is now available. It will be interesting to see how and when the *ABCMA* bibliography—with the editors' avowed policy of continuous revision—will incorporate this new information.

Comprehensiveness, while largely a condition of the researcher/compiler's skill and dedication, also depends on the available secondary sources, including other bibliographies and the products of existing indexing services. Considering the absence, still, of competent and comprehensive serial indexes in Canada, it is only possible to 'guesstimate' the comprehensiveness of periodical and newspaper material by and about a given *ABCMA* author. In large part it may be assumed that the majority of newspaper contributions will be in the form of reviews of works by these authors, and this portion of the *ABCMA* record, as indicated above, is planned to be selective rather than comprehensive in coverage. Robertson Davies, as the
one-time editor and proprietor of his own newspaper, poses a different problem: how far is it possible to determine all his contributions to the Peterborough Examiner, especially in the case of unsigned contributions? At the same time, what more eloquent defence may be made for compiling an author’s bibliography during the author’s lifetime and with the author’s assistance!

An accurate assessment of the comprehensiveness of ABCMA requires an individual assessment of each of the nineteen bibliographies produced for the fourteen Canadian writers included in the first four volumes of the series. This is a task beyond the capabilities of any single reviewer. Certainly, in terms of the authors which are of particular interest to this reviewer [Archibald Lampman and Sinclair Ross] no omissions came to light after personal note files and other, more conventional sources of information had been exhausted.

Part of the purpose of the introductions provided for the individual bibliographies is to allow the compiler of the bibliography to state the problems encountered and the resulting limitations in his or her work. What, exactly, the omission of introductions in Vol. 4 indicates is difficult to determine. Three of the introductions in the earlier volumes have little or nothing to say on the bibliographical side (Gabrielle Roy, Robertson Davies, and Raymond Knister). The problems outlined in the other introductions relate primarily to the difficulties experienced in finding or searching specific categories of material. By far the most common difficulty was identifying material by or about a given author in newspapers, and this extended to reviews in non-Canadian newspapers in those instances where a Canadian writer has lived abroad or acquired some eminence in a foreign country. A close second to newspaper material, especially in the case of poets, is finding and searching runs of early Canadian periodicals [Archibald Lampman and E.J. Pratt] and small press productions [Leonard Cohen and Al Purdy]. In the case of Purdy this was further complicated by the fact that some of his earliest publications were self-published compilations while others were distributed as ephemera. Other elusive categories of material which posed problems for the researchers were masters' theses, foreign translations, and anthology contributions. Obviously, where an author has lived in more than one country the searching difficulties are compounded. In the case of Mordecai Richler, and, one suspects, Dorothy Livesay, the process of continuing revision and re-publication of existing texts posed even greater difficulties for the bibliographers. Given the structure of the entries in the bibliography, where later revisions are contained under an original title, the above-mentioned absence of a title index will create similar problems for the bibliography user.

Two further aspects of the introductions for each author bibliography and for the overall organization of the volumes in the ABCMA series should be noted in passing. The critical aspect of each introduction is designed to be unpretentious; it exists only to place the author and his or her work within a highly condensed critical context. The editors' decision to restrict the authors included in a given volume of the series to a specific genre [Vol. 1, prose; Vol. 2, poetry; Vol. 3, prose; Vol. 4, poetry] provides a somewhat broader context for students of a given author or genre. The value of this organization depends to a large extent on the authors brought together within the confines of a single volume, and on the degree to which comparisons and contrasts of
these authors' philosophies and published output may be relevant. Certainly the combination of nineteenth and twentieth century poets in Vol. 2 seems somewhat awkward and of little value. Where a single author has contributed, in equal parts, to different genre, an artificial division may prove tiresome for the student who wishes to have the totality of a given author's work between two covers. To go back and forth between Vols. 1 and 2 to investigate the work of Margaret Atwood seems more than a little troublesome. In the case of authors whose contribution to a second or third genre is relatively slight, the different genres are combined in the single bibliography and the resulting mixture is placed in an appropriate volume depending on the main genre for which the author is known. Thus, Birney, whose reputation as a novelist was reaffirmed by the publication of the unexpurgated Turvey in 1976, is dealt with as novelist in two terse entries (A22 & A23) in a volume devoted to poetry.

The bibliographical standard adopted for ABCMA is the MLA Handbook [New York: Modern Language Association, 1977]. This choice rests, as the editors state in the introduction to each volume in the series, on the contention that 'the bibliographical style of ABCMA is, therefore, compatible with the most widely accepted form of bibliographical citation used in North American literary scholarship.' Regardless of how widespread the acceptance of the MLA Handbook may be, the principles of bibliographical style outlined in this manual are sufficiently comprehensive to cover most categories of documentation, ranging from manuscripts through all forms of published sources to personal interviews. An editorially decreed bibliographical style is one thing, and a consistent application of that style, especially throughout a bibliographical project as immense as the ABCMA, is another matter. In the main, the bibliographical style, though applied by different hands for different authors and varying categories of material, appears to be remarkably consistent. Some differences, as in the case of a Robertson Davies' review of a book by Hugh MacLennan (cf. MacLennan c21 and Davies b1232), are to be expected. However, these are largely differences in emphasis and treatment and not in the actual elements of information presented.

A question remains. The enumerative structure is intended to present straightforward bibliographical data of an elementary nature in a sequential manner. How well does or can this structure serve a complex of related bibliographical issues and states which can only be determined by a process of sophisticated analysis? Turning again to Birney's Turvey (A22), six different editions are identified within the same entry, but no distinction is made for different printings. It is likely that the New Canadian Library edition was reprinted more than once; in the case of other novels, Sinclair Ross' As For Me and My House, for instance, the changing covers would seem to indicate this. It remains to be seen if ABCMA has, in fact, disentangled more than just the significant editions of a given title by a given author, and only other, more intense bibliographical scrutiny will demonstrate whether important issue and state differences exist within the identified editions.

In a recent article, 'The Aims and Methods of Annotated Bibliography' [Scholarly Publishing 11 [1980]], A.J. Colaianne has stated that 'one of the reasons for the uneven quality of recent bibliographic work is that the principles of annotated bibliography have never been set down' [p. 32]. This condition has been resolved to
some degree in *ABCMA*, first by the decision to adhere to the bibliographical style outlined in the *MLA Handbook* and, second, by the provision of some editorial direction as to the areas within the individual author bibliographies which might and must be annotated, and of the elements which should be considered in the composition of this annotation.

For the most part, annotation is reserved for works on the author rather than for works by the author. To this extent, then, the series title *Annotated Bibliography of Canada's Major Authors* is misleading since the annotations are limited and selective. In certain instances, usually specified by the editors' general introduction, annotations are provided for works by an author 'to indicate features particular to a given edition.' Again, the example of Birney's *Turvey* provides an instance; the 1976 edition is described, 'This revised edition of 1976 is the original unexpurgated version.'

Listed manuscripts are also annotated to provide 'comments on the comprehensiveness of the collection.' This is one of the ways in which the 'compilers have sought to convey the scope of any given manuscript collection.' Such annotations generally are in the form of a prefatory introduction rather than being provided as part of the regular entry. It might be suggested, where manuscript materials are concerned, that more annotation is clearly required if this portion of the bibliographies is to usefully meet the requirements of the researchers. A case in point: Anne Burke and Dale Darling's list of Raymond Knister manuscript collections (Vol. 3, p. 285-289) contains such unhelpful entries as 'Short stories' (A9, Folder 8) without specifying the titles concerned or otherwise elucidating the mystery of this folder, in the introductory note on the collection. Some fifteen years ago the reviewer had occasion to consult this particular collection, which is held in Queen's University, and a more exhaustive list was compiled and deposited with both the Queen's University Archives office and with the Special Collections section of the Douglas Library. This point is not made to denigrate the Burke/Darling team's work in any way; there is no particular reason why they should have known of the existence of this unpublished inventory. In addition, it should be made clear that the objectives and the degree of description necessary to meet these respective objectives by *ABCMA* and the reviewer obviously differed. However, the reviewer's list only ran to two typewritten pages while still specifying each short story title, and the whole could have been accommodated in the space for the same entry in the Knister bibliography. The fact remains that the *ABCMA* descriptions/annotations of manuscript material are not really informative, and they require a much greater provision of, and precision in, detail if they are to be useful. In this connection, cross references between manuscript items and specific published titles, whether in the text of the bibliography or through an expanded index, would materially strengthen the structure of each author bibliography and provide a much needed means of access to the listed materials for the users of the *ABCMA* series.

The largest degree of annotation occurs in the portion of each author bibliography devoted to works on the author. As outlined in the editors' introduction,

Every entry in this section of the bibliography is annotated with a description of the critical viewpoints expressed in each secondary work. Full-length books devoted to the author's work obviously receive the most extensive annotations.
However, annotations may be equally extensive for articles, interviews, or theses and dissertations which are deemed to be of outstanding critical importance.

In terms of the book reviews, which are selected to meet a formally stated criterion, the annotations are intended to illustrate that decision for inclusion. While the editors have provided some principles governing the elements to be incorporated in the annotations, this probably remains, with so many different compilers, the most subjective aspect of the ABCMA project and, consequently, the one least amenable to editorial control and the most susceptible to Colaianne’s criticism of ‘uneven quality.’ Despite these cautions, the annotations appear for the most part to reflect objective assessments of the critical opinions offered. If a final, personal quibble may be voiced, the reviewer does take some mild exception to the annotation provided for a Lampman article which he published in 1967 [Vol. 2, c91, p. 129]. The annotation implies that the article concerned dealt only with correspondence between Lampman and various others, whereas it also contained a complete analysis of Lampman’s manuscript poems held by Queen’s University, including all substantial variations between the manuscript poems and their published counterparts.

Given the scope and the level of bibliographical work in ABCMA, it remains to determine its readership. By and large, so the argument runs, bibliographies and reference works are acquired by libraries (of which there are far fewer in Canada than one is led to suspect by optimistic statements to the effect ‘that every library in the country will need this work’) and borrowed by impecunious students and scholars. Given the cost of the hardcover volumes, the reviewer suspects this is the case with ABCMA. However, the reasonably priced individual bibliographies should be circulating more widely amongst an individual, rather than an institutional, audience.

The fact remains that ABCMA is an enumerative bibliography and that, as already indicated, it does not go beyond discussion of editions. As such its prime users would likely be upper undergraduate and graduate students. In a sense it is the jumping off point for the full-scale descriptive bibliography recommended by Landon in 1974. Book collectors and book sellers tend to be inveterate bibliography buyers, but it is unlikely that ABCMA will satisfy their needs for elusive ‘points’ and distinctions. It is curious that, given the editors’ intense dedication to their task, they have not specified their intended audience a little more clearly.

A related concern has been the possible effect of ABCMA on the market for full-scale bibliographies. In some circles it has been felt that the production and widespread distribution of such clearly enumerative bibliographies would inhibit the compilation and eventual publication of detailed descriptive bibliographies. If the bibliographies produced in the first half of this century are anything to go by, this fear is unwarranted. Three bibliographies for the works of William Kirby appeared over a period of fifty years and even the last, Brady’s descriptive bibliography of The Golden Dog, is primarily concerned with the early editions of that work. None deals fully with the later editions nor provides a record of the French translations. John Richardson has also been the subject of two compilers’ interest, and yet there is the further suggestion that a closer textual analysis of certain editions would reveal more differences in state and issue than are presently assumed. Bibliography is a cumulative operation in which the new is constantly being erected on the basis of the old. It is
true that funding agencies may look askance at providing grants for bibliographical projects which give every appearance of duplicating existing compilations. Surely these agencies must be educated to the developing exigencies of bibliographical studies so that they do not block any bibliographical publication until it can satisfy every demand for perfection. If that were the case then the state of Canadian bibliography would be grim indeed.

How, then, is ABCMA being received? Joyce Wayne’s article, cited earlier in this review, indicates that sales figures have been encouraging to the extent that two thousand copies of Vol. 3 were printed for ECW Press. For a bibliography, especially for a Canadian bibliography, this is an exceptionally large print run. Recognition of ABCMA, in the form of reviews of individual volumes as they appear, has been generally favourable if low key. An instance of this muted reaction is provided by two papers presented at the recent conference, Bibliography for Canadian Studies: Present Trends and Future Needs, held in Halifax [the papers delivered at this conference were published as an entire volume of Canadian Issues 4 [1982]]. Lillian M. Rider, in her ‘Summary of Developments in Canadian Subject and Area Bibliography Since 1974,’ indicated the indispensability of ABCMA as a source of ‘quick access to criticisms and reviews’ [p. 11] without otherwise commenting on the uniqueness of the coverage provided by the separate bibliographies. Veronica Strong-Boag, in the context of her paper ‘The Fugitive Female: An Introduction to the Bibliography of Canadian Women’s Studies,’ referred to ABCMA as ‘a newcomer of promise’ but felt that it ‘should be used in conjunction with the older guides’ [p. 55].

A proper assessment of ABCMA may have to await the completion of the full series when its critical role in the spectrum of Canadian literary bibliography may be more objectively viewed, not only in terms of existing work but also in terms of such proposed resources as the Association for Canadian and Quebec Literatures’ ‘Bibliography of English Canadian Literature’ [which seems, more recently, to have been ‘lost’ for lack of a coordinator], and the to-be-hoped-for descriptive bibliographies recommended by Landon in 1974. In the meantime, ABCMA is making a useful and possibly even an invaluable contribution to the bibliographical record of Canadian literature. It is not only a worthy successor to Watters’ pioneering efforts but quite clearly – in terms of its élan and scope – the most important bibliographical publication for English Canadian literature in the last decade.

PETER GREIG

(Peter Greig is Head of the Collections Development Section of the Department of National Defence National Headquarters Library in Ottawa.)


A companion volume to R.G. Moyles’ English-Canadian Literature to 1900: A Guide to Information Sources [Gale, 1976], Helen Hoy’s guide is a checklist of works published to 1981 by and about twentieth-century Canadian authors of fiction and non-fiction prose. Most of the seventy-eight individual bibliographies are concerned with