
Good author bibliographies are great gifts. The bibliographer demonstrates respect for an author by recording the details of a literary life accurately and thoroughly. As Roy Miki reminds us in *A Record of Writing: An Annotated and Illustrated Bibliography of George Bowering* (Vancouver: Talon Books, 1989), ‘a bibliography is a record of the writing, not its explanation; its value resides in the context to which it initiates curiosity and offers readers the larger perspective which can lead to an understanding of both writer and work’ (p. ix). In this respect, Ruth Panofsky’s annotated bibliography of Adele Wiseman succeeds admirably. However, credit is due more to Panofsky’s accuracy, skill, and thoroughness in tracing Wiseman’s record of publication and critical reception than to ECW’s established approach to author bibliography, *The Annotated Bibliography of Canada’s Major Authors* (ABCMA).

Although ABCMA was completed in eight volumes, allowance has been made for certain authors originally excluded from the ‘majors.’ Two discrete bibliographies in paper boards have been issued to date: Timothy Findley in 1991 and Adele Wiseman in 1992. Whereas ABCMA offprints of individual author’s annotated bibliographies are available in softcover at $9.00, Wiseman and Findley are available only in paper boards at $30.00. Libraries and individual researchers may balk at the price. They might also take issue with ECW’s insistence on the imprimatur ‘major’ or with their attempt to establish a Canadian literary canon as a boon to national identity. It is regrettable that years of debate about these subjects have had no impact on the ECW approach. A contemporary reader does not expect Panofsky to justify her project with the argument that Wiseman’s ‘are seminal works in the Canadian literary canon’ (p. xvii). That a scholar as talented and perceptive as Panofsky has elected to compile Wiseman’s bibliography should be praise and reason enough.

To anyone acquainted with ABCMA, the organization of Wiseman’s bibliography bears strong familial resemblance. However, Panofsky’s work helps offset inherent detractions. Her clear-sighted introduction to Wiseman’s publishing history and critical reception manages to be thorough, suggestive, and helpful in only nine pages. Born in Winnipeg in 1928 to Jewish immigrants from the
Ukraine, Adele Wiseman's literary career was never easy. Fortunately, early encouragement from Malcolm Ross and a lifelong friendship with Margaret Laurence aided Wiseman in her particular literary vision. Wiseman was not a prolific writer of fiction nor one whose critical reception was even. While her first novel, *The Sacrifice* (1956), was widely praised and earned Wiseman the Governor General's award for fiction that year, her second novel, *Crackpot* (1974), was unsuccessful. She also wrote two plays, which remain unproduced, and a children's story, *Kenji and the Cricket*, published in 1988. *Old Woman at Play* (1978), an illustrated account of her mother's craft of doll-making, and *Memoirs of a Book-Molesting Childhood* (1987), a delightful collection of articles covering a wide range of subjects, mirror the concerns of her fiction with less apparent effort. And, as Panofsky reminds us, continuing and changing critical response to Wiseman's work is a healthy indication of her significance.

Part A of the bibliography, 'Works by Adele Wiseman,' will make fascinating reading for the neophyte scholar. While *ecw* house style does not allow for inclusion of details such as print runs, Panofsky compensates with a few well-chosen facts in her introduction. It is also a pleasure to find manuscript holdings included in part A. Since Panofsky gathered information from Canadian manuscript repositories about Wiseman holdings, it is regrettable that publication could not have been delayed until the finding-aid to the Wiseman papers in process at Scott Library, York University (following Wiseman's death) had been completed. A full descriptive bibliography of Wiseman's primary works, including details about the rich archival holdings at York, would have been Panofsky's work outstanding, particularly since many entries were the result of discoveries made possible through access to the Wiseman papers. Serious researchers would have appreciated such information, and would have been willing to wait for it.

If part A does not provide enough detail to satisfy the researcher, part B may provide too much. The intended audience for the *ecw* annotated bibliography — from high school student on up — is to blame. To her credit, Panofsky succeeds with the difficult and unenviable task of annotating secondary sources. Despite reservations about the necessity for or value of annotations, careful reading reveals intriguing details about Wiseman's life and work. However, the length of part B suggests that Panofsky is straining to extend the bibliography to fulfill *ecw* page-length requirements. A sub-section devoted to such standard reference guides as the *Oxford Companion to Canadian Literature* is superfluous; Findley's bibliography, also 150 pages, omits such information. Other entries which report mere mention of Wiseman are also of questionable value. Yet, I have to admit, it might be of interest that John Metcalf includes Wiseman among a list of Canadian writers who, while not part of the mainstream, have been successful writers [see F111]. I am not sure I could say as much about a Japanese-language article on modern women which describes Wiseman as 'well-fed, with hair that resembles a man' (p. 109). Indeed, the reader is left to wonder about critical reception of Wiseman abroad. Are those few international sources Panofsky lists all that exist or all that could be found?

Few Canadian publishers are willing to support the publication of research tools with the dedication of *ecw*. Other Canadian models for author bibliographies
should be encouraged and supported. Ruth Panofsky does superlative work within the available format. *Adele Wiseman: An Annotated Bibliography* is a provocative and compelling guide equal to its subject. Panofsky’s felicitous prose and thorough research enhance a worthy publication, which, despite my quarrels with her publishers, is a welcome addition to the libraries of high schools, colleges, universities, and scholars’ shelves.

LORNA KNIGHT

*National Library of Canada*


Donald Stephens’s ‘Editor’s Introduction’ to his CEECT edition of *The Canadian Brothers* states the novel’s claims to our attention in a concise manner: ‘the personal and the public combine to provide a vision of a fallen, sinful world where individuals, families, and nations are doomed by ancient actions and old wrongs to murder, fratricide, and war’ (p. xxxvi). What enabled John Richardson to come up with a vision of this historical and psychological breadth?

Stephens observes the author’s dependence upon personal experience for his fictional material. In fact, the exhaustion of this material helps to explain Richardson’s decline as a writer after the appearance of this novel. Yet he also exploited personal experience in producing two earlier works, *Écarté* (1829) and *Frascati’s* (1830). Their depiction of demi-mondaine Restoration Paris bears only archival significance today. *The Canadian Brothers*, however, completing as it does Richardson’s Lawrentian sequence, continues to engage serious students of Canadian literature. Why?

James Reaney’s brilliant ‘Tales of the Great River: Aubert de Gaspé and John Richardson’ found in *Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada*, 4th Ser. 17 (1979): 159–71, tells us everything that we need to know about the importance of Richardson’s public vision. Following Stephens’s lead, I want to speculate here about the personal experience that looped the writer into a set of materials and concerns whose relevance extended into the realm of the communal.

We naturally assume that a writer’s métier comes to him inevitably, and that he or she must duck to keep from being hurt by this matter that falls out of the sky. Not so in Richardson’s case! He first publishes an anonymous prose narrative of his war experiences, and then an exuberantly bad epic about Tecumseh that is based on them. Rather than build upon this foundation of frontier material, the material that will make his name endure, the writer instead turns out those two