
The subject of this fine bibliography is a particularly difficult one. As Oore and MacLennan point out in their preface, Marie-Claire Blais is very prolific, has contributed to many genres and diverse media, and her avant-garde writing is not always easy to classify. However, by using the general guidelines of ECW’s established and highly-regarded *Annotated Bibliography of Canada’s Major Authors* series and expanding on it where necessary, they have masterfully presented their author in all her diversity and complexity.

The bibliography is comprehensive in the period it covers — 1957–1990. Since the study appeared in 1998, it is regrettable that the authors did not include more recent items. One can only hope that they are already planning a second volume or are contemplating an on-line update.

There are two major parts to the bibliography. The first covers works by Blais and includes ballet and film adaptations as well as audio-visual material, editorial work, and radio and television material. Scholars will appreciate the section on manuscript and archival collections. The second part presents works on Blais. This section includes books, articles, sections of books, theses and dissertations, radio programmes, television programmes, and audio-visual material. The order of critical commentary is chronological, which permits readers of the bibliography to reflect on the evolution of critical thinking on Blais. For those looking for an individual critic’s comments, an “Index to Critics” is provided.

The annotations are lengthy, detailed, and very well done. They are written in a clear and highly accessible form so that this volume can be used by any reader interested in the author. There is also a section on reviews. The authors of the bibliography decided to present approximately 20 to 25% of these reviews on any given work, giving more than that for works heavily reviewed and less for works with fewer reviews. A range of perspectives is provided.

There is a “Subject Index” that allows the reader to find comments on a specific work easily. There is also a section that lists awards and honours received by Blais.

The volume is written in English and therefore makes its rich resources available to those reading the author in translation. While this may prevent unilingual Francophone readers from reading the commentaries, one suspects that ECW, as well as Oore and MacLennan, are satisfied with the trade-off.

My one negative comment concerns the size of the print — it is small — and the fact that there is no space between the bibliographic citation and the
annotation. This format makes the otherwise handsome volume harder to read than it should be.

The authors of the bibliography are to be congratulated on a splendid job dealing with a complex subject. This study will most certainly be appreciated and very widely consulted.

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What is the relationship between the history of the book and library history? Are they separate fields of study or simply facets of the same field? Is one hierarchically superior or inferior to the other, and if so which is which? What about their methodologies and attitudes toward internal analysis and external context?

These questions must be asked since the two fields intersect in numerous ways. In addition, library history possesses a large and growing body of scholarly writing of which a high proportion relates to public libraries. Even so, comprehensive histories are hard to find, despite some notable examples: Alistair Black’s *A New History of the English Public Library: Social and Intellectual Contexts, 1850–1914* (1996), Lorne Bruce’s *Books for All: The Public Library Movement in Ontario, 1850–1930* (1994), and Thomas Kelly’s *A History of Public Libraries in Great Britain, 1845–1975* (1977). Interestingly enough the United States, with the world’s largest and most developed public library system, has yet to produce a comprehensive history. Various periods and aspects have been chronicled, of which Lowell Martin’s volume is an important example.

This study of the public library in the United States during the present century is intriguing for many reasons, not least for purporting to carry the narrative through 1999, although published in 1998. Equally intriguing is the realization that Martin’s very slim book has managed to straddle all three major types of history: scholarly/academic, commemorative, and public policy. The book’s scholarly nature can be seen in its footnotes and bibliography as well in Martin’s academic credentials: a Ph.D. and at least fourteen monographs. During his professional career, which began 60 years ago, he has achieved distinction as a librarian, library educator, consultant, and publisher. The