

LIS 732 Assignment #4
Evaluation of Secondary Products
By Elena Stuart

Indexing and abstracting services represent “secondary” services because their product is not new knowledge in a subject area, but a guide to “primary” sources. Most indexing and abstracting services are aimed at journal articles as they are extensive sources of validated and reliable information. Coverage can be broad or narrow from general areas to specialized topics. However, the services are not limited to journals. Books, newspapers, government documents etc. can be also indexed and abstracted.

I chose the *MLA International Bibliography* for evaluation.

MLA International Bibliography. (1922-). In *Modern Language Association*. Available from multiple vendors. Accessed June 11, 2014

<http://web.b.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.dom.edu/ehost/thesaurus?sid=31f21bce-e308-4da4-aa5b-690a2bfcf9b9%40sessionmgr198&vid=2&hid=123>

(1964). *1960 MLA International Bibliography of books and articles on the modern languages and literatures*. New York: Kraus Reprint Corporation.

(2007). *2006 MLA International Bibliography of books and articles on the modern languages and literatures: Classified listings author index* (Vol. 1-5). The Modern Language Association of America.

Type of service and the origin - The Modern Language Association of America was founded in 1883 with the purpose to provide support and opportunities for its members to share their scholarly findings and teaching experiences. The *MLA Bibliography* was developed in the 1920s as a record of American scholarship in language and literature. For almost fifty years, it was printed as a section in *PMLA*, but in 1969 it became a separate publication. *MLA International Bibliography*, from the Modern Language Association, indexes over 4,400 journals from 1960 forward. The print version extends back to 1921, but was terminated in 2009. Data from 1963 to the present have been available to electronic searchers since the late 1970s.

Purpose and intended users - The *Bibliography* is the electronic research tool for literature. It most accurately reflects the state of literary and linguistics studies in the United States and internationally. Historically it has been geared to university students and scholars, but it can also benefit general or younger users.

General introduction - The *MLA International Bibliography* is a bibliography of journal articles, books, Web sites, and dissertations. It is published by the Modern Language Association, a not-for-profit organization committed to the study and teaching of language and literature.

The *MLA International Bibliography* provides a subject index for books and articles published on modern languages, literatures, folklore, and linguistics. The search is organized by subjects,

names, themes, and characters. It is an essential index for the research in literature including retrospective research. Available online, the *MLA International Bibliography* annually indexes over 66,000 books and articles.

Scope and limitations – The *MLA International Bibliography* is international in scope and includes literature from all over the world with bibliographic records in French, Spanish, German, Russian, Portuguese, Norwegian, and Swedish.

Works on literature that is transmitted orally, in print, or in audiovisual media and on human language, including both natural languages and invented languages (e.g., Esperanto, computer-programming languages), are listed. Works on subjects such as aesthetics, human behavior, communication, and information processes are included only if they treat human language or literature. There are no historical-period restrictions on language coverage. Works exclusively on classical Greek and Latin literatures, the Bible, or the Koran are excluded except as they relate to other literature or language topics within the scope of the bibliography. Works on the teaching of language, literature, and rhetoric and composition at the college level are listed. Works solely on secondary school teaching are excluded unless they contain significant discussion of postsecondary teaching.

Nationality and language. There are no restrictions on the place of origin or publication of a work or on its original language.

Form. Critical works on literature, language, and folklore are included. There is no restriction on the organization, format, or purpose of these works. (Summaries are excluded; individual articles from dictionaries and encyclopedias are excluded.) Literary works and translations are generally excluded unless they are accompanied by a new critical or bibliographical apparatus or they are based on a newly established authoritative text. Reviews of literary and scholarly works are excluded, but review articles so identified by the publication in which they appear are normally included. Other review articles are included only if the review article has its own title; discusses the works within a thematic, scholarly, or other context; and analyzes the works in some depth. Letters to editors, obituary notices, and the like are excluded unless they make a significant contribution to literary, linguistic, or folklore scholarship. Dissertations available through stable repositories such as Dissertations Abstracts International are listed. Textbooks, syllabi, courseware, lesson plans, and how-to guides are excluded.

Level. Works of interest to scholars are included whether they are written for a scholarly or a more general audience, provided that the content or its treatment places them within the scope of the bibliography. Masters' theses, guides that are essentially plot summaries, and other apprentice or simplified works are excluded.

Physical medium. There is no restriction on the physical type or medium of works. Books and articles in books and in periodicals are the most frequently listed materials. Works in other media include films, sound recordings, microforms, and machine-readable materials.

Date. The print format of the *MLA International Bibliography* includes material published from 1921 to 2008. The electronic format includes the same material, but starting with 1926

publications. Works on the teaching of language, the teaching of literature, and rhetoric and composition published in 1998 and later are included.

Subject field(s) covered - Literature, language and linguistics, folklore, literary theory & criticism, dramatic arts, as well as the historical aspects of printing and publishing. Listings on rhetoric and composition and the history, theory and practice of teaching language and literature are also included.

Language(s) - The *MLA International Bibliography* indexes approximately 295 various languages and dialects from Abkhaz to Zulu. It's possible to search by language group. Under **the Search Tools tab – Indexes – Language Index** includes various dialects, languages, and language groups. Records can be searched by these languages groups as well as individual languages and dialects.

Language Groups include:

| | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• African languages• Bantu languages• Celtic languages• central Melanesian languages• Chinese languages | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Micronesian languages• Mongol languages• native American languages• Slavic languages• languages other than English |
|---|--|

List of periodicals and other items (books, reports, patents, etc.) covered – The *MLA International Bibliography* offers a detailed bibliography of journal articles, books and dissertations. Dictionaries, catalogs, handbooks, bibliographies, indexes, and other reference works, as well as working papers, conference papers, and proceedings, are also included.

The *MLA Directory of Periodicals* produced by the Modern Language Association (MLA) contains information available on the journals and series that are covered in the *MLA International Bibliography* database. The *Directory* is a master list that aims to cover journals available to libraries or universities that publishes articles on language, literature, folklore, or pedagogy with some frequency, as well as any series that includes books on those subjects, regardless of the frequency of publication.

Over 5,800 titles are included; of these, over 4,400 are currently indexed. The records consist of editorial addresses, phone numbers, fax numbers, e-mail addresses, frequency of publication, descriptions of the periodicals' scopes, circulation figures, subscription prices and addresses, advertising information, submission guidelines, and information on whether or not journals are peer reviewed. The directory also provides statistics on how many articles and book reviews the periodicals publish each year, as well as how many are submitted.

The Master List of Periodicals of the 2006 edition is four times longer than the one in the 1960 edition (46 pages in 2006 versus 11 pages in 1960).

Adequacy of Instructions for use – The print version (the 2006 edition) has an excellent user guide that on five pages explains clearly the best way of using the bibliography. There is a detailed explanation of an entry using arrows. The language is simple and distinct.

The database offers easy searching by keyword, author, and subject (characters, literary themes, etc.). Even people with relatively limited knowledge of literature, folklore, or linguistics can get the information they need quickly.

Besides, www.mla.org provides excellent instructions explaining different types of searching and browsing strategies, as well as Boolean operators and truncation. There is also a video tutorial series on searching the bibliography consisting of eight videos. Here is the link to one of them: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u5VyRDCp_8w

Frequency, cumulative issues, and duration – Print version of the Bibliography was published annually until 2008. In February of 2009 Modern Library Association stopped the print version. The electronic version is updated frequently. The last update was done 11/19/2013.

Completeness (ex: what is included?) - The electronic version of the bibliography dates back to the 1920's and contains over 2.3 million citations from more than 4,400 journals & series (including peer-reviewed e-journals), and 1,000 book publishers. The indexed materials coverage is international and includes almost 60 titles from J-STOR's language and literature collection as well as links to full text.

Subscription to the *MLA International Bibliography* includes access to the *MLA Directory of Periodicals* database. The database also has an identifiable subset of more than 100,000 records that constitute the JSTOR subfile. This consists of citation records for documents in JSTOR's Language and Literature Collection. The documents date back as far as 1881 and contain direct links to the full-text articles on the JSTOR website, available to subscribers of JSTOR.

Structure, quality of entries in each issue

Example of an entry from the 1960 edition:

419. Immerwahr, Raymond. "The First Romantic Aesthetics". *MLQ*, XXI, 3-26.

Example of an entry from the 2006 edition:

[18231] Golburt, Luba. "Derzhavin's Ruins and the Birth of Historical Elegy". *SlavR*. 2006 Winter; 65(4): 670-93. [English summary. Elegy. Treatment of ruins of Tsarskoe Selo (palace complex); relationship to national history.]

These examples show a difference. The 1960 edition does not provide year of publication as the 2006 edition does. It is probably because a significant four-year time lag between the publication of items indexed and the publication of the bibliography.

The second example is an entry of a Russian article. It has an English annotation that is very informative and its presence improves the quality.

The electronic version continues to improve the quality of an entry as illustrated in the screenshot shown on page 6.

Approximate number of entries in each issue – The quantity of entries in the 1960 edition of the book – 12,927, in the 2006 – 71,870.

Filing principles for entries – The *MLA International Bibliography* is compiled from a basic master list of about 1,060 periodicals central to the modern field and from various book sources. The MLA Executive Council specified for inclusion books and articles in English, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Scandinavian, Dutch and a selection of 10 East European languages. This is a selection for scholars in the field of modern languages and literatures.

In the 1960s, items received after 15 January of any year went to the next edition. The style of entry follows the “Bibliographic Style Sheet” prepared for the *MLA International Bibliography* by James L. Woodress.

In the **Density of entries** category there are two examples of entries from the print and electronic versions of the *Bibliography*. They look very different which means that the technological environment has changed filing principles for entries. In print version space mattered enormously. The main idea was to place all the meaningful information using as less space as possible. The electronic environment does not set any limitation in terms of amount of information. Electronic entry allows use of a big font size and includes an abstract that provides helpful information for user. The link to a full-text database now is a requirement as well as the date when the record was added to the database.

Density of entries – A printed typical entry includes its number, an author’s name, a title of a work, abbreviation of a journal, number of an issue, and pages. It can also include cross-reference links like in the example of the entry from the 1960 edition below.

Example of an entry from the 1960 edition:

12514. Zaitzev, Boris. “Mes rencontres avec Tchékov”. NL, 18 fév., p.7
See also 3793, 12841.

It could also include an annotation. The 1960 edition has 90% of the listings without annotations. The 2006 edition includes more annotations that are very helpful in orientating a user.

The entry from the electronic database provides much more information. The screenshot below shows that in addition to typical information provided by an entry from a print version of the *Bibliography* its electronic version gives us ISSN, subject terms, a document type, electronic access information, abstract of an article as well as the name of a full-text database.

Example of an entry from the *MLA International Bibliography* database:

Martin, Michelle. "The Burden Of Legend: Beat Studies In The Twenty-First Century." *Journal Of Modern Literature* 36.4 (2013): 161-172. *MLA International Bibliography*. Web. 15 June 2014.

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The Burden of Legend: Beat Studies in the Twenty-First Century

Authors: [Martin, Michelle](#)

Source: [Journal of Modern Literature](#) (JML) 2013 Summer; 36 (4): 161-172. [[Journal Detail](#)]

Notes: English summary.

Peer Reviewed: Yes

ISSN: 0022-281X
1529-1464 (electronic)

General Subject: [Subject Literature: American literature](#)

Areas: [Period: 1900-1999](#)

Subject Terms: [Beat Generation](#); [review article](#)

Document Information: *Publication Type:* journal article
Language of Publication: English
Update Code: 201307
Sequence Numbers: 2013-1-19451

Electronic Access: http://muse.jhu.edu.ezproxy.dom.edu/journals/journal_of_modern_literature/v036/36.4.martin.html
DOI: 10.2979/jmodelite.36.4.161

Abstract: This review considers five new books related to the Beat Movement. Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg: The Letters, edited by Bill Morgan and David Stanford, compiles a vast wealth of exchanges between the two Beat icons, spanning several decades of their friendship. Bill Morgan's new history, *The Typewriter is Holy*, presents an extensive overview of the movement, encompassing key figures and events in an accessible narrative. Todd F. Tietchen's book, *The Cubalogues: Beat Writers in Revolutionary Havana*, focuses on the experiences of Beat authors in Cuba and provides an in-depth analysis of how Cuban-American interchanges influenced the political orientations of these Beat writers, claiming that Cuba's early revolutionary era inspired radical Beat politics while later serving as a cautionary example. In *Capturing the Beat Moment: Cultural Politics and the Poetics of Presence*, Erik Mortenson argues that Beat artistic practices should be understood as a 'poetics of presence' and re-periodizes Beat literature as early postmodern. For the 25th anniversary of the publication of William S. Burroughs's *Queer*, Oliver Harris has edited a new, substantially changed edition of the novel. In his introduction, Harris provides his rationale guiding the changes and examines the scope of the novel's politics. [End Page 161] **Keywords:** Beats, biographical criticism, literary movements, literary topographies, politics

Accession Number: 2013383054

Full Text Database: Academic Search Premier

Basis for selection of materials for inclusion - Only published items are listed. In general, only new publications are included; revised editions of previously published works are considered new works. Reprints are excluded unless they are of significant literary or scholarly works that were unavailable to the scholarly community. There is no restriction concerning availability or accessibility of the published items; however, only items that have been analyzed by a bibliographer are included. Self-published material is not included.

The *MLA International Bibliography* includes serial publications in electronic form, online bibliographies, electronic monographs, scholarly web sites. To be included, they must meet certain criteria which were elaborated separately for each type. The following are some of the criteria: to be electronic; be examined by an indexer; identify the publisher and/or sponsoring organization; or provide for archiving of past issues.

Time lag – 4 years in 1960; 1 year in 2006. The electronic version has several updates a year.

Authority – The resource has a very authoritative and solid look. It is compiled by the staff of the MLA Office of Bibliographic Information Services with the cooperation of more than 100 contributing bibliographers in the United States and abroad. All bibliographers are listed on the website. Bibliographers are grouped together in sections according to their area of scholarly expertise, and their work is coordinated either by a section or by an index editor from the MLA staff. Bibliographers are trained individually and what is interesting is that they are not paid for their work.

Usage of controlled vocabulary – The *MLA International Bibliography* has its own thesaurus that helps to provide more specificity in the range of subject headings. A thesaurus is used to standardize the terms used in the bibliography. Terms come from the literature itself. To reflect

the changing needs and interests of the scholarly community, the thesaurus undergoes constant revision. At present over 45,000 terms and 327,000 names are controlled. In indexing an item for the bibliography the indexers use terms that describe its content. These descriptors, based on the document author's wording, are assigned to facets pertinent to that item, and these facets control its classification and provide subject access to it in the index.

Format of the product – Print and electronic versions of the product exist. The print format of the *MLA International Bibliography* includes material published from 1921 to 2008. The electronic format includes the same material, but starting with 1926 publications. In February of 2009 The Modern Library Association stopped the print version.

Quality of the finished product (layout, paper, typography, binding, etc.) – The 2006 edition has 2111 pages. It is very thick and heavy. The binding looks very reliable. The paper is of good quality. It is a type of thinnest paper typically used for dictionaries. Layout is user-friendly. Headings and subheading are used to emphasize and separate different parts of the text from each other. The usage of different font sizes helps to see the necessary things quickly. The 1960 edition has also a good and reliable binding, but the font size was not used to separate different parts of the text. Layout is also less appealing. It takes more time to see the necessary thing on a page. The paper is much thicker and of a good quality. There are only 361 pages in this edition.

Errors, omissions, and duplications - Indexing of the *MLA International Bibliography* requires the bibliographer to assign descriptive terms in a consistent structure and adhere to a standard citation format. Bibliographers are encouraged to include brief summaries of each work indexed so that the index editors can represent the indexed documents accurately and comprehensively. The staff strives to exclude errors but if a user has found a mistake he/she can inform Barbara Chen, the editor whose e-mail is provided for this purpose by www.mla.org.

Cross-reference – Cross-reference is actively used. Below there are two examples with the cross-reference from the 1960 edition.

Example of an entry from the 1960 edition:

12514. Zaitzev, Boris. “Mes rencontres avec Tchekov”. NL, 18 fév., p.7
See also 3793, 12841.

Derzhavin. *See* 12855

12855. Lotman, Ju. “Zapisi narodnyx pričitanij načala XIX veka iz arxiva G.P. Deržavina”. RLiT, № 3, pp. 145-150

Relevance, exhaustivity, and specificity – Folklore is represented by folk literature, music, art, rituals, and belief systems. Linguistics and language materials range from history and theory of linguistics, comparative linguistics, semantics, stylistics, and syntax to translation. Other topics include literary theory and criticism, dramatic arts (film, radio, television, theater), and history of printing and publishing.

This database includes journal abbreviations and acronyms for almost 3,500 titles, with full journal names standardized and ISSNs attached. *MLA International Bibliography* also contains nearly 11,000 subject names and terms. In addition to the bibliography, the database includes the *MLA Directory of Periodicals*; the association's proprietary thesaurus used to assign descriptors to each record in the bibliography; and a proprietary, searchable directory of noted authors' names, with links to brief descriptive notes.

The MLA Database has over 2,107,000 records including over 4,400 serial publications; 52 searchable fields. 26 browsable indexes including Author, Influence, Literary Genre, Literary Technique, Place, Scholarly Theory, and 19 other indexes.

The unique feature of the database is its two thesauri with three different ways to search them:

- a. An extensive hierarchy of more than 45,000 descriptive terms and a personal names thesaurus with more than 327,000 names.
- b. 3 different ways to search and view — alphabetically, hierarchically, or search for any word that can occur in a term using the rotated (permuted) index.

Cost – The annual subscription fee to four-year academic institutions is based on the student Full Time Equivalent enrollment at the institution. At the low end are institutions with less than 500 FTE students with the maximum fee charged to institutions with more than 50,000 FTE students. The subscription fee ranges from \$4,000 per year to \$25,000 per year. Two year academic institutions pay half of the subscription fee based on their FTE student population.

Overall user-friendliness – The 2006 edition is more user-friendly than the 1960 edition. The structure of the layout is significantly improved increasing readability. Different font sizes help faster orientation. Headings and subheadings are distinctly emphasized. There are more annotations. The edition is supplied with an excellent guide for a user that provides a very thorough and easy-to-understand explanation.

The database is even more user-friendly as it provides abstracts that help enormously. It also gives the direct link to a full-text.

Others - Effective with its April 2008 online update, the *MLA International Bibliography* will include publisher-provided abstracts in its bibliographic citations. To date more than 50,000 abstracts are available for search and display. Users may limit their search to the abstracts field. Abstracts are provided as an enhancement and are not edited by the *MLA International Bibliography*. Abstracts are regularly added to both current and retrospective records.

Elena,

Good submission. You have covered all the relevant areas in your evaluation and presented well. Your participation on the discussion board was also good. Thanks for taking the course from me. Enjoy the rest of summer.

25 points out of 25 (Grade A)

Kanti