

nineteenth-century Ontario; it is more an annotated inventory of theatre buildings than anything else. Inevitably, the accent here is on reference rather than on historical interpretation. Certainly, the research is impressive, and the information Fairfield provides about the "opera houses" of small-town Ontario as well as large establishments such as Toronto's Royal Alexander Theatre is often fascinating. Still, one wishes that the author had attempted to do more with his material; a work of historical synthesis based on the material gathered would have made a significant contribution to this book. What, for example, was the relationship between theatre and theatre architecture in Ontario? (a question that Fairfield actually alludes to).

Together, the essays, Fairfield's study of theatre buildings, and the chronological list of theatre-related events ensure that *Early Stages* will be a good introductory reference book for readers interested in the field. Still, there are areas where this volume, even as a reference work, could have been improved. First, while the bibliography and the endnotes provide the reader with a sense of what exists in the secondary and thesis literature, little specific information is given about primary source material. Readers will have to consult a forthcoming companion volume for this. Second, *Early Stages* contains virtually no discussion of historiography. Surely an essay dealing with the present state of research and writing in the field would have been appropriate in a book such as this.

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The NFB Film Guide: The Productions of The National Film Board of Canada From 1939 to 1989. DONALD W. BIDD, Editor-in-Chief. Canada: The National Film Board of Canada, 1991. English 960 p.; French 758 p. ISBN 0-660-56485-8.

The National Film Board of Canada, long buffeted by the political winds of change, has, under the helmsmanship of Editor-in-Chief Donald W. Bidd, given the film/video community a work which is both practical and politically astute. A valiant first effort, *The NFB Film Guide* is a welcome addition to any reference shelf.

The NFB Film Guide in English and *Le Répertoire des films de l'ONF* in French form a companion set. Although they are similar in format, the one is not a direct translation of the other, either in text or visuals. For maximum use they should be consulted in tandem.

The basic structure consists of ten parts. Beginning with introductions including endorsing essays and an explanatory foreword, the work also provides a summary user's guide, information on access to the films and videos described, a detailed set of parallel timelines of the NFB and the Canadian Film Industry, several informative essays, and a statement of method, before launching into the heart of the work — the filmographies themselves. Extensive subject, series, director, producer and production year indices accompany the filmographies. A bibliography and guide to research resources complete the work. Three photograph sections complement the text.

With one exception, the layout and presentation of the information is clear and easy to understand. One of the items both scholars and cataloguers will want to check is the

“Statement of Method.” Rather than having its own entry in the Table of Contents, it is buried under the filmography section along with “Highlights of Distribution Statistics” and “Alternative Title Listing,” both of which seem misplaced at the head of the “Filmography.” Traditionally, cataloguers associate alternate title listings with indices; all three sub-sections would be better placed elsewhere.

The presence of photographs, especially in a reference work of this type, serves to stimulate the imagination of the reader. Historical photos of John Grierson, Guy Roberge and others, behind-the-scenes stills of Norman McLaren, various animation techniques, the five-camera rig plus, of course, shots from the films and videos themselves will fascinate and delight novices and aficionados alike. A double delight is the fact that, with the exception of the majority of the photographs in the introductory sections, the photographs from the English and from the French volumes are different, so there are twice as many images to enjoy. (The photos of John Grierson and Guy Roberge are also different in each volume, and both are outstanding.)

The parallel timelines comparing the histories of the Canadian Film Industry and the National Film Board is not the usual brief, self-serving overview so often found in a work of this nature. Authors Gary Evans and Pierre Veronneau do not avoid the many political storms the NFB has had to weather over the course of its journey. They note in 1949 the allegations to communism, in 1964 the *Parti Pris* articles by Gilles Carle and others, and in 1980 the end of the Challenge for Change/Société nouvelle programme. The astute reader understands that, despite bouts of over-bureaucratization, the parochialism of politics, and funding freezes, the NFB has consistently produced world class films and videos. It has served as a harbour for some of the most gifted film and videomakers of the twentieth century, and like its founding father John Grierson, the NFB's name will always be associated with invention and vision. The history of the Canadian film industry, on the other hand, would benefit from a similar approach. The accounting, although full and detailed, provides no sense of the Canadian film industry's ongoing battle to balance regionalism and national identity in the face of Hollywood's hegemony.

Marielle Cartier's essay on the NFB's archival film collection is lively and eminently readable. Educator James E. Page writes a thoughtful and practical essay on how NFB treasures can be used more effectively to enrich the public. After reading André Paquet's insightful article on the French-language productions, there should be little question to what extent the NFB has helped define a Canadian national cinema. But it is Jana Vosikovska and Bill O'Farrell's compelling essay on the National Film Archives which should be mandatory reading for every citizen. It recounts the all-too-familiar scenario of an institution mandated to preserve the cultural identity of a nation while faced with fires, funding limitations, and the spectre of vinegar syndrome. Although unstated it is certainly due in part to the National Film Archives' relentless efforts to preserve Canada's moving image heritage that as many of the NFB's productions exist today.

The NFB Film Guide is best considered as a “work in progress.” It is neither a comprehensive union list of all films and videos made by the NFB, nor a definitive scholarly study. Nor is it a true catalogue of holdings. Rather, it is a first-level effort to pull together into a reasonably consistent and cohesive format the best extant documentation on 4,475 English-language and 3,355 French-language film and video titles. The filmography does not include “televsits,” clips, publicity trailers, public service announcements under

sixty seconds, or films commissioned by the NFB to outside agencies. It does include series and NFB co-productions.

The majority of sources used for documentation were secondary or tertiary — from publicity information sheets, ordering forms, correspondence, manual inventory lists, interviews and traditional reference sources. Where documentation was in conflict, efforts were made to screen the material and preference was given to information derived directly from the screening. However, the majority of films and videos were not viewed.

Each entry was catalogued according to AACR2. Minimum data on each title is in a MARC format in the data files of the NFB at UTLAS. Field definition appears to be standard with the exception that alternate and variant titles are treated as if the same. Although names were standardized, no authority work was performed. Cataloguers interested in shared cataloguing may also gain access through the bilingual FORMAT database or through the services of the database vendor QL. As new information becomes available the FORMAT database will be updated.

Cataloguing moving images is costly and time consuming. It requires special skills and specific knowledge. For proper and accurate description the film or video must be viewed, credits must be taken directly from the screen, and the condition of the material must be inspected. Research into contemporary sources and review of accompanying paper documentation must take place. In short, for the cataloguer not only to be able to write informed summaries, but to be able to accomplish subject analysis he or she must know that, for example, *Mindscape* (Le Paysagiste), used the pinboard technique or that *La Lutte* (Wrestling) is an example of direct cinema. The French volume, which is not an exact translation of the English companion, notes “l'écran d'épingles” and “la technique candid eye.” The English volume does not.

When names are standardized, as they are with this guide, credits and dates indices can be computer-generated with a high level of accuracy. A subject index cannot. For example, in the subject index under “pinboard” *Mindscape* is not listed in either the French or the English volumes. “Cinema direct” is not at all included as an entry in either subject index. In general, the French summaries for French-made films are better written and more accurate than their English counterparts. On the other hand, there are titles, such as the works of Hugh Foulds, which simply are not included in the French volume. This no doubt accounts in part for the nearly 200-page difference between the two volumes.

It is ironic and all-too-typical that in this the Age of the Moving Image — the Age of Film and Video — it requires nothing less than a miracle to document the works of one of the most significant film and video producing organizations the twentieth century has witnessed. The moving image community is consistently underresourced, without standardized research methods and practice, and without a strong infrastructure to support high-quality descriptive documentation. It is to their credit that the National Archives of Canada, La Cinémathèque québécoise, the Canadian Studies Directorate of the Secretary of State of Canada, and UTLAS International Canada took the risk to sponsor a project which can only be viewed favourably by the scholarly and moving image archival communities. The partnership of these four organizations to sponsor *The NFB Film Guide* is a minor coup. The courage and vision of Donald W. Bidd to propose and to accept such an undertaking falls clearly within the best tradition of the NFB. *The NFB Film Guide*, containing more than 8,000 films and videos,

accomplishes its stated goal to act as a catalyst to stimulate interest by the public, to encourage access to the materials, and to engage in dialogue with the film studies community. To build this "work-in-progress" into a definitive research tool documenting Canada's stunning contribution to film and video deserves, and will now require, the continued support of us all.

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Plague: A Story of Smallpox in Montreal. MICHAEL BLISS. Toronto: Harper Collins, 1991. xiii, 306 p. ISBN 0-00-215693-8.

Après un ouvrage consacré à la découverte de l'insuline en 1982 et une biographie de Frederick Banting en 1984, Michael Bliss publie un ouvrage de plus de trois cents pages sur la terrible épidémie de variole qu'a connue Montréal en 1885.

Dans l'espace de quelques semaines, cette maladie hautement contagieuse fait plus de 3 100 victimes. Il est à peine exagéré de dire que cette épidémie fait ses ravages à l'est du boulevard Saint-Laurent, c'est-à-dire parmi les populations francophones de la ville. Ces derniers représentent 91% des victimes et 85% de ceux-ci sont des enfants de moins de dix ans. L'épidémie variolique de Montréal est la dernière épidémie majeure de variole à frapper une ville moderne et n'était jusqu'à maintenant connue que des rares spécialistes (Osler, Heagerty, Farley, Keating et Keel).

Depuis une quinzaine d'années les historiens (Terry Copp, Bettina Bradbury) ont clairement démontré que Montréal durant la seconde moitié du XIX^e siècle est une ville particulièrement dangeureuse pour les nouveau-nés, notamment dans l'est. Les maladies contagieuses telles la variole, la diphtérie, la typhoïde et la tuberculose y sévissent à l'état endémique; les logements ouvriers sont exigu et surpeuplés, les quartiers ouvriers de l'est n'ont à peu près pas de systèmes d'égoûts et lorsqu'il y en a ceux-ci sont insuffisants et souvent construits en bois; 87% des familles des quartiers Sainte-Marie et Saint-Jacques possèdent encore des fosses d'aisance; la présence d'au moins cinq cents petites étables dans la ville n'a rien pour assainir le paysage. La mortalité infantile des francophones atteint des proportions effarantes (entre 200 et 290 pour 1 000). C'est sur cette toile de fond sanitaire que Michael Bliss brosse le tableau de l'épidémie.

L'auteur a choisi de décrire cette épidémie dans son évolution chronologique. Rien d'emblée ne laisse présager une épidémie de cette envergure. En 1885, il y avait déjà quatre ans que l'on n'avait pas enregistré un cas de décès par variole à Montréal et, depuis l'épidémie de 1832, ce n'était pas tant la variole que l'on redoutait que le choléra. Lorsque la variole commence de à propager à Montréal en février 1885, le Bureau de santé de la ville n'est nullement préparé à endiguer les vagues d'une épidémie. Un «Hôpital des variolés» est rapidement mis sur pied. Le nom seul de l'institution effraie et la population refuse d'y envoyer ses enfants, certaine qu'ils y trouveront la mort. Les placards indiquant la présence de variole dans les demeures sont plus ou moins rapidement arrachés.

Le Bureau de santé de Montréal décide de recommander la vaccination comme principale mesure de prophylactique contre la variole. Cette mesure rencontre cependant de