

Book Reviews

Edited by Clément Arsenault

Book Review Editor

Martha M. Yee. *Moving Image Cataloging: How to Create and How to Use a Moving Image Catalog*. Westport, Conn.: Libraries Unlimited, 2007. xiv, 271 p. ISBN 978-1-59158-438-4.

Characterised from the start by *ad hoc* methods and working in isolation, moving image cataloguing is an area where the need for standards is acute. As Yee observes in the introduction to her work, “the cataloguing field in general is in considerable flux” (p. xiii). This is largely the result of networking information on the web, and the consequent desire to share records. In the case of moving images, there have been dramatic increases in the available mass, facilitated by ready access to technology for creating moving images and the ease of use of the technology, even by children. Thus the time is ripe for some practical help.

It’s hard to find a person more qualified to offer it than Martha Yee. She has been cataloguing moving images for over 25 years at the UCLA Film and Television Archive, holds a Ph.D. in the area, and teaches in the Moving Image Archival Studies programme at the University of California at Los Angeles. In addition, she is active on several committees that deal with cataloguing problems, and has published widely on the subject.

Her book is both a manual for cataloguing moving images and a textbook on the subject. That said, she notes that “instead of telling you how to do it right, this textbook will try to teach you how to think about it right” (p. xiii). She succeeds in describing the process in a text that is easy to understand, that does not seek to avoid the endless complexities of cataloguing, but that discusses them rather painlessly and using examples that are often interesting, even amusing. As a result, those who follow her advice will succeed in learning both to catalogue moving images and to search for them.

The work is divided into ten chapters. Chapters 1–5 cover the question of descriptive cataloguing, including the notions of works, expressions, and manifestations, identification and authorship, authority control, and complications arising from these no-

tions. Chapters 6 and 7 cover the question of subject analysis. Chapter 8 covers newsfilm access and OPAC searching. Chapter 9 deals with subject access to fiction, and access by genre and form, “important facets to bring out for fictional materials” (p. 186). The author notes that “very often, avant-garde films aren’t about anything at all,” in which case it is permissible to avoid adding subject headings (p. 187–188). Finally, chapter 10 discusses the important question of cataloguing in the digital environment. Yee poses the useful question, “Can the computer be a cataloger?” (p. 202). Of course we all know the answer to this question, and it is given simply and elegantly. The author speculates on the future of cataloguing, mostly by pointing to readings on the subject, and ending with a hope that the younger generation will be able to complete the work of making standards work better.

The chapters are presented using a consistent format, the last sections of each chapter uniformly being: Lessons for catalogue searchers, Suggested readings, Additional readings, Essay or class discussion topics, and Exercises. It is in these sections that the value of the work as a textbook is manifested. Yee has drawn on her own experience in the classroom to put these sections together, and others who teach moving image cataloguing can use these as a reliable guide for their own classes. Students who follow up by doing the readings, and especially the exercises, will succeed in developing the competencies necessary to do the demanding work of a moving image cataloguer.

The book has a number of additional features. There is a section with answers to the exercises, which points to source material for deriving good responses, offers explanations of the reasoning used to arrive at the responses presented, and sometimes comments on the choices made, giving students food for thought. A helpful glossary offers clear definitions of terms that appear in italics in the text. This convention is a bit confusing because other information, such as titles, also appears in italics. While the publisher might have chosen a better way to indicate glossary terms to the user, in practice this problem is

minor. Another minor problem noted is a few capitalisation and punctuation glitches in the table of contents, which could have been avoided by a copy edit. In addition to the readings listed with each chapter, there is a bibliography of works consulted, and another of cataloguing standards, both of which provide interesting lists to peruse. Not surprisingly in a textbook, examples are abundant throughout the work, and illustrations are provided when they are thought to be useful. A list of illustrations appears after the table of contents. Finally, an index is provided.

While Yee's book clearly reflects American practice, especially that at the UCLA Film and Television Archive, her advice remains useful for cataloguers in other countries. The *Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules* (AACR2 and revisions), soon to be replaced by a new set of rules, *Resource Description and Access* (RDA), are discussed along with the AMIM rules (*Archival Moving Image Materials: a Cataloging Manual*) and the *FIAF Cataloguing Rules*. MARC 21 is the record format used, and the *Library of Congress Subject Headings* are the focus of the discussion on subject access, although other standards are also included. There is brief mention of the *Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records* (FRBR), an international standard that the author does not favour for reasons she explains, although many moving image cataloguers find FRBR helpful in sorting out their cataloguing headaches. There is discussion of other international cataloguing problems such as the question of versions of films in multiple languages, and throughout the work many examples include data in other languages, nicely illustrating some of the problems involved.

As we mentioned, chapter 8 covers newsfilm access. The author's reference is the newsreels in the UCLA Film and Television Archive. As is the case throughout the work, access in this chapter is explained at the item level. This highlights a problem as yet unsolved, that of uniform methods for providing shot-level access, a level necessary in television news archives and desirable for movies and television programmes as well. While it would be useful to teach cataloguing students to analyse moving images shot by shot and sequence by sequence, no standards for such practice exist. Thus it is not surprising that this topic remains outside the scope of Yee's work. However, it is a topic that could be the subject of another book. For the moment, the present work is a very welcome addition to the teaching tools available to the emerging profession of audiovisual archivist, and those of us who try to impart to students knowledge

such as that contained therein are indebted to Martha Yee for making the considerable effort needed to produce such a work.

James M. Turner, professor,
École de bibliothéconomie et des sciences de
l'information,
Université de Montréal,
CP 6128, succursale Centre-ville,
Montréal (QC) Canada H3C 3J7.
E-mail: james.turner@umontreal.ca

M. P. Satija. *Book Numbers: Indian and Cutter*. New Delhi: Viva Books, 2008. xi, 132 p. ISBN 978-81-309-0957-8 (hbk.)

Although not much is currently being written on book numbers, Dr. M. P. Satija has published many books and journal articles on the topic, as his bibliography attests (p. 124–129). Book numbers are important for library shelf arrangement of print publications and certain electronic ones. They are also essential for the sub-arrangement of documents within a given specific class. Biographies, classics and their associative books, literary books, translations and sequels pose special problems for designing book numbers.

There are many book number techniques and systems, five of which Satija examines. C. A. Cutter (1837–1903) devised tables for author names. Despite having been designed for Western names in Roman script, Cutter's tables are used all over the world. Many locally-designed systems have adapted Cutter's method to different languages. To overcome these limitations, S. R. Ranganathan (1892–1972), the father of library science in India, conceived, in his characteristically global-minded manner, a universal system diametrically opposed to Cutter's method. By all accounts, Ranganathan's system of book numbers is scientific, comprehensive and applicable, irrespective of the language of the book. Satija critically examines all aspects of the Ranganathan system at length. Highlighting the Indian contribution to book numbers, Satija provides the most comprehensive treatment of this Indian system written so far.

Satija also examines the systems of S. Bashiruddin (1982–1984) and Asa Don Dickinson (1876–1960). Bashiruddin imagined a system of author numbers mainly for books in Indian scripts—namely Hindi and Urdu—, but he also proposed a similar method for