

Brian Graney: ...the confusion around getting in the building this morning and getting to the building. So I'm just going to move briskly through a few introductory remarks and then get right into our presentations. I'm also just going to make brief introductions to our panelists at the start of the day so that we can keep things moving at a good pace throughout our time today.

So first, I just wanted to read through the conception of the workshop as it was proposed over a year ago. So reconsidering how we define content of a film print beyond the audiovisual information recorded within the frames, introduces a series of questions bearing on the representation of film as a visual object. First, how might we reevaluate and amend current best practices for digitization of motion picture films which by design emit or obscure physical attributes of the original artifact, what tools might be turned to unconventional uses in representing film as static images for close examination and study. How might this representation of film as a material object offer a conceptual bridge for integrating audiovisual media and digital platforms within a wider network of related visual and textual documentation?

So this, as I said, has been dated somewhat by being drafted over a year ago and especially in light of our discussions yesterday where there was a much stronger emphasis on related visual and textual documentation. Some of the ideas coming out of yesterday were centered more on issues of loss, invisibility, inaccessibility and representation than on issues of materiality.

So while materiality was perhaps less centrally located in yesterday's discussion I do want to return to it this morning for a question Greg [Waller] posed yesterday about whether the issues just mentioned and representation in particular were related to those of materiality. I also want to ask if the location of materiality in yesterday's discussion is less central because it's less significant, somewhat interesting in a generic sense but not to be overstated, or if the fringe is pushed to the periphery in discussions of early black film because of its own invisibility inaccessibility, representation and, of course, loss as an object of scholarship.

So there's a recent article in the Digital Humanities Quarterly by Johanna Drucker at UCLA called "Performative Materiality and Theoretical Approaches to Interface," which I think sets up some interesting definitions that are useful to bear in mind when we're thinking about materiality today and material representation. She criticizes literal materiality and its tendency to assign intrinsic and inherent values to material properties of artifacts. She's writing specifically of digital media but I think it applies to some analog media as well. She also distinguishes literal materiality and says, "Based on mechanistic models that suggests that the specific properties of artifacts can be read as if meaning were a self-evident product of form, as if the details minute and careful description of this whole property reveals inherent values." She's talking about media

specificity here, the properties of a particular medium not so much of a particular object. She differentiates this literal materiality from forensic materiality which it attends to the specific properties of inscription. “Materiality,” she writes, “at this level is concrete, subject to scrutiny and available to observation through empirical methods. For a humanist the extension of such a positivist approach to material has to be tempered with the recognition that the value of the text, even its context and meaning, is always a product of reading within specific circumstances. The value of forensic materiality depends on the same web of cultural associations and historically situated values as any other interpretive act.”

So I think in addition to those earlier questions about materiality that I opened with another to add is whether we’re talking principally about literal or forensic materiality, the generic properties of the medium or specific properties of the object. I hope that’s something that we’ll come back to over the course of the day.

Our agenda, just to run through it, we’ll begin with Reto Kromer, the founder and president of AV Preservation by RETO.ch, limited liability company, with a technical report from the field and Andy Uhrich Ph.D. in the Department of Communication and Culture here at IU with preexisting digital tools for the visual and textual analysis of moving images. Will Cowan, head of software development at IU Libraries discussing scholarly use of digital video and online tools for segmentation and annotation. John Walsh, Associate Professor of Information Science in the School of Informatics and Computing discussing TEI guidelines for the representation of documents in TEI boilerplates. Doug Reside, Digital Curator for New York Public Libraries for the Performing Arts, presenting digital collections in web portals of the Jerome Robbins Dance Division Archive of the Recorded Moving Image.

Also, throughout the day I’d like for these presentations to be open and two-way discussions. So feel free to ask your questions throughout the presentations, beginning now with Reto [Kromer].