Metadata Creation Assignment

Class: Access to Moving Image Collections
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For this assignment I chose to catalogue items from my own film collection. An avid collector for more than 10 years, I have amassed a personal DVD and Blu-ray collection in excess of 500 titles. This collection has great value to me, both as a representation of my film tastes over the years as well as serving as a personal library – I am often loaning films in my collection to friends, often without their making a request! In addition to the amount of money invested in my collection over the years, the collection has huge personal value to me; I keep track of what films are where, who has what films, and when on their shelves I keep them alphabetised for easy access.

However, since moving to the United States, my collection has been split up – several titles came across the Atlantic with me, many more went into storage boxes, while the remainder occupy a shelf at my family home in Ireland. For this reason in particular a better catalogue of my film collection would be extraordinarily useful to me, and to anyone who might want access to or inherit my collection.

The most important qualities to record about the films in my collection are as follows:

- **The title** – what the film is called. No field is more important than this for identifying a work.
- **Any alternative title** – commonly a translation of a foreign title. Particularly useful for films from non-English-speaking territories where both titles have come to be in common use.
- **The director** – the equivalent of the author of a book, for films the director's identity is the second most important piece of

descriptive metadata about a film for identifying it after its title.

- **The producer** – the key supervisor on the film responsible for making sure it is funded. Perhaps more so than in any other art form, where the money comes from in the production of a film can tell a great deal about it. The name of the producer is a key piece of metadata for any moving image work.
- **The writer(s)** – those who contributed to the screenplay. Similar to the director, identifying who wrote a film offers considerable information about it, as well as suggesting ties to other films the writers may have worked on.
- **The key actors** – the stars of the film. In a film the contribution of the actors can be as pivotal as the writing and direction. Casual film fans will be far more concerned with who stars in a film than who worked behind the camera on it.
- **The cinematographer** – the artist who arranges the individual shots of the film, deciding angles and lighting. In a visual medium such as film, knowing who the cinematographer is on a movie can be of substantial use to understanding why a certain title looks the way it does.
- **The production company** – the studio which bankrolls the movie. Similar to the reasons for recording the name of the producer being important, the production company offers considerable information about the film in question, as well as tying it to a whole back catalogue of films.
- **The country where the production was based** – key to identifying cultural context for a film.
- **The year of release** – key to identifying historical context for a film. Also extremely useful for telling apart two films with the same title, especially in the case of remakes which share a title with the original.
- **The format** – specifically Blu-ray or DVD. Important as while most people have access to DVD players, many do not own Blu-ray players. Suggesting someone borrow a film when they have not the ability to play it is worthless, so this is a pivotal piece of structural metadata.
- **The number of discs the film is on** – useful information in case a film has not been contained on a single disc, so that one knows exactly where the entirety of the film is located.
- **The length of the film** – particularly useful for viewing as it makes clear how much time must be blocked off to watch the film in its entirety.
- **The genre of the film** – helpful to casual film fans for finding certain types of film within the collection.
- **The main topics it relates to** – used for searching the collection, and also finding films on similar topics to other films.

- **An abstract** – a summary of the film. Particularly useful to anyone searching the collection who is unfamiliar with the work in question.

As a structure standard for cataloguing the films in my collection, I opted to use MODS. MODS is far more useful for providing metadata for moving image materials than MARC. Fields in MARC are more geared towards written texts than moving images, and the manner in which qualities are scattered throughout the MARC standard makes it far too complex a system to use for a personal collection. While PBCore might be more user-friendly, it is far more balanced towards broadcasting standards than the casual viewing for which my collection is used. Thus MODS seemed the best standard to use for this assignment.

In mapping the above fields into MODS it was not difficult to find the matching standards, although there were some curiosities that emerged. To clarify the roles of individuals who worked on the films I catalogued, I used the value standard marcrelator as it contains a wide range of creator roles. For listing film genre and form, migfg (the Moving Image Genre-Form Guide) was precisely as useful as its title suggests. As for topics, I used the Library of Congress Subject Headings (lcsh) standard, which proved useful although limited for one of my more obscure film choices.

The mapping went as follows:

Field	MODS standard
Title	<titleInfo> / <title>
Alternate title	<titleInfo lang= type=> / <title>
Director	<name> / <namePart> / <role> / <roleTerm> [drt]
Producer	<name> / <namePart> / <role> / <roleTerm> [pro]
Writer (screenwriter)	<name> / <namePart> / <role> / <roleTerm> [aus]
Cinematographer	<name> / <namePart> / <role> / <roleTerm> [cng]
Actor	<name> / <namePart> / <role> / <roleTerm> [act]
Genre	<genre>
Country of production	<originInfo> / <place> / <placeTerm>
Production company	<originInfo> / <publisher>
Date of release	<originInfo> / <dateIssued>
Format	<physicalDescription> / <form>
Number of discs	<physicalDescription> / <extent>
Length of feature	<physicalDescription> / <extent>
Abstract	
Topic	<subject> / <topic> or <subject> / <geographic>

The three films I opted to catalogue were *To Be Or Not To Be* (1942), *Eyes Without a Face* (*Les yeux sans visage*, 1960), and *Wizards* (1977). They mapped with few difficulties into MODS. Marcrelator was particularly useful for mapping the roles of the people involved in making these films. It was especially useful when mapping the several writers who worked on *Eyes Without a Face* – one of the writers is credited specifically as the writer of the film's dialogue, for which marcrelator had a set specific code: aud. In the cast of *Wizards*, it allowed me to credit the narrator, a key member of the cast, with the code "nrt", distinguishing her from the other performers in the film. However, given that *Wizards* is an animated film, it was disappointing to see that marcrelator did not distinguish between actor and voice actor.

Migfg was more successful, and I ran into no trouble listing the specific genres and forms into which these films fell. With lcsh I found a few terms for each of the films, although was disappointed that "Rotoscoping" was not an option in its standards, as *Wizards* is a particularly famous example of this uncommon method of animation. Being set in a fictional world (Montagar), I was unable to put a geographic subject down for *Wizards*, as MODS does not offer a clear way to annotate a geographic region as fictional.

All in all there were very few complications in mapping data about the films in my collection into MODS, and once a structure was created for the first film it became very much a case of filling in the blanks for the next two entries. The most curious thing I found in mapping this metadata was how the only clear way to state the length of the film was under <physicalDescription> / <extent>, which suggests MODS has not fully adjusted to the length of a film not being measured in terms of reels and feet.