Title
Understanding FRBR. Chapter 11, FRBR and Moving Image Materials: Content (Work and Expression) versus Carrier (Manifestation)

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FRBR and Moving Image Materials: Content (Work and Expression) versus Carrier (Manifestation)

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Some of the major problems with *Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules, Second Edition* (AACR2R) stem from the failure to clearly analyze the FRBR entities work and expression (content) so as to distinguish them from manifestation (carrier) for nonbook materials such as moving image materials. In this chapter, a clearer and more logical analysis of these concepts is attempted, and, at the end of the chapter, the progress made so far in RDA (Resource Description and Access) development is assessed as well.

**Moving Image Works and Expressions**

**FRBR Definition**

Let us begin by reminding ourselves of the FRBR definitions of work and expression:

Work (3.2.1): a distinct intellectual or artistic creation.

...Variant texts incorporating revisions or updates to an earlier text are viewed simply as expressions of the same work....Similarly abridgements or enlargements of an existing text, or the addition of parts or an accompaniment to a musical composition are considered to be different expressions of the same work. Translations from one language to another, musical transcriptions and arrangements, and dubbed or subtitled versions of a film are also considered simply as different expressions of the same original work.

...By contrast, when the modification of a work involves a significant degree of independent intellectual or artistic effort, the result is viewed, for the purpose of this study, as a new work. Thus paraphrases, rewritings, adaptations for children,
parodies, musical variations on a theme and free transcriptions of a musical composition are considered to represent new works. Similarly, adaptations of a work from one literary or art form to another (e.g. dramatizations, adaptations from one medium of the graphic arts to another, etc.) are considered to represent new works. Abstracts, digests and summaries are also considered to represent new works.

Examples of new, related works:

- *w₁* John Bunyan’s *The pilgrim’s progress*
- *w₂* an anonymous adaptation of *The pilgrim’s progress* for young readers
- *w₁* William Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*
- *w₂* Franco Zeffirelli’s motion picture *Romeo and Juliet*
- *w₃* Baz Luhrmann’s motion picture *William Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet*

**Expression** (3.2.2): the intellectual or artistic realization of a work in the form of alpha-numeric, musical or choreographic notation, sound, image, object, movement, etc., or any combination of such forms.

... The boundaries of the entity expression are defined... so as to exclude aspects of physical form, such as typeface and page layout, that are not integral to the intellectual or artistic realization of the work as such. Inasmuch as the form of expression is an inherent characteristic of the expression, any change in form (e.g., from alpha-numeric notation to spoken word) results in a new expression. Similarly, changes in the intellectual conventions or instruments that are employed to express a work (e.g., translation from one language to another) result in the production of a new expression. Strictly speaking, any change in intellectual or artistic content constitutes a change in expression. Thus, if a text is revised or modified, the resulting expression is considered to be a new expression, no matter how minor the modification may be.

Examples of different expressions of the same work:

- *w₁* Henry Gray’s *Anatomy of the human body*
  - *e₁* text and illustrations for the first edition
  - *e₂* text and illustrations for the second edition
  - *e₃* text and illustrations for the third edition
- *w₁* J. S. Bach’s *The art of the fugue*
  - *e₁* the composer’s score for organ
  - *e₂* an arrangement for chamber orchestra by Anthony Lewis
- *w₁* *Jules et Jim* (motion picture)
  - *e₁* the original French language version
  - *e₂* the original with English subtitles added

**Work/Expression Discussion**

Clearly, the FRBR definition of work is in line with the definition of work followed by film catalogers, according to which a filmed version of a previously existing work intended for performance, for example, Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*, is a new work related to the play, not an edition or expression of the play.
By extension, a film of Mozart’s *Magic flute* would also be a new work. I have argued elsewhere\(^2\) that moving image works are essentially visual works, not textual or musical works, and that the transformation of a textual or musical work into a visual work necessarily creates a new work. It would appear that FRBR agrees with this analysis.

FRBR examples of different expressions of the same work include a moving image example (*Jules et Jim*), which indicates that any change in the sound, text, music, or image of a moving image work creates a new expression of that work. I have analyzed the various changes in expression that occur with moving image materials elsewhere.\(^3\) Suffice it to say here that any intentional change in *content* of a moving image work (as opposed to changes in *carrier*) creates a new expression of the work, except in the rare cases where the change in content is so substantial as to create a new work. (See the section entitled Manifestation Discussion for a discussion of unintentional/malicious changes in content.)

### Work/Expression Summary

Our cataloging rules need considerable work in this area if we are to achieve logically structured cataloging records and resultant logical indexes and displays for our users.

### Moving Image Manifestations

#### FRBR Definition

Let us begin by reminding ourselves of the FRBR definition of manifestation:

Manifestation As an entity, manifestation represents all the physical objects that bear the same characteristics, in respect to both intellectual content and physical form. . . . Whether the scope of production is broad (e.g., in the case of publication, etc.) or limited (e.g., in the case of copies made for private study, etc.), the set of copies produced in each case constitutes a manifestation. All copies produced that form part of the same set are considered to be copies of the same manifestation. The boundaries between one manifestation and another are drawn on the basis of both intellectual content and physical form. When the production process involves changes in physical form the resulting product is considered a new manifestation. Changes in physical form include changes affecting display characteristics (e.g., a change in typeface, size of font, page layout, etc.), changes in physical medium (e.g., a change from paper to microfilm as the medium of conveyance), and changes in the container (e.g., a change from cassette to cartridge as the container for a tape). Where the production process involves a publisher, producer, distributor, etc., and there are changes signaled in the product that are related to publication, marketing, etc. (e.g., a change in publisher, repackaging, etc.), the resulting product may be considered a new manifestation. Whenever the production
process involves modifications, additions, deletions, etc. that affect the intellectual or artistic content, the result is a new manifestation embodying a new expression of the work.4

Manifestation Discussion

Logically, we must necessarily proceed hierarchically. If two changes take place, one of which is a change in expression and the other of which is a change in manifestation, overall, we must consider this a change in expression. If a film is released on DVD, and the underlying content is identical to its original release on 35-mm film, the DVD is merely a new manifestation on a different carrier of exactly the same expression of the same work. If the film is released on DVD with commentary by the director on the sound track, however, the intellectual content is no longer the same as the original release on 35-mm film. The change to the DVD format is a mere change in carrier, but the addition of commentary creates a new expression of the work (a change in content), so overall we must now consider the DVD to be a new expression of the moving image work. Hierarchically, expression trumps manifestation.

Let us proceed through the various elements of the physical description of a moving image to see which are associated with content (work/expression) and which are associated with carrier (manifestation). I propose the following rule of thumb: When one changes the carrier, for example, by copying a 16-mm motion picture onto a VHS videocassette, or by digitizing a 16-mm motion picture, whatever does not change in the course of the copying is not related to the carrier or the manifestation but instead is related to the content. Thus, if one digitizes a 16-mm color film, and the digital copy is also color, that is an indication that color pertains to content, not to carrier. That the carrier is no longer 16 mm wide, however, is an indication that film gauge pertains to carrier, not to content.

Please note that changes in content attributes such as color characteristics, aspect ratio, or projection speed usually represent damage, not the creation of a new expression of the work. When a film is shot, it is shot in color or black and white (b&w) with a particular planned size and shape of image at a particular speed. If that film is presented with the wrong color characteristics (a b&w copy of a color film or a colorized copy of a b&w film), in the wrong aspect ratio (panned and scanned copies that are missing some of the image), or at the wrong projection speed (silent films shown at sound speed so that everything is speeded up too much), it is damaged in the same way that a publication of an Agatha Christie novel missing the last five pages would be considered damaged, not a new edition. There may, in fact, be a gap in the FRBR conceptual model, in that it does not make a distinction between intentional and unintentional/malicious content changes. Unintentional/malicious content changes should not be held to create new expressions. If they are held to create new manifestations, they are a special kind of manifestation that needs a condition note to explain the fact that the manifestation is substandard and undesirable.
General Material Designation (GMD)

The following GMDs are currently available in AACR2R for moving image material:

- electronic resource (providing it is moving image)
- motion picture
- videorecording

These GMDs can change from one to the other without creating a new expression or a new work. Thus change in these GMDs involves mere change in carrier, or manifestation change only. For example, a motion picture can be copied to make a videorecording or digitized to create an electronic resource without any change in intellectual content.

Change from any other GMD, for example, text, music, sound recording, electronic resource, that is not moving image, into the moving image GMD motion picture or videorecording creates a new work by FRBR definition. In other words, it necessarily involves a major change in content, not a mere change in carrier, such a major change in content, in fact, that a new work is created. Music is not a visual medium; if it is transformed into a visual medium in the form of a moving image work, this is necessarily a fundamental change in its underlying content such that a new work has been created. The reverse holds true, as well. Change from a moving image GMD to a nonmoving image GMD necessarily involves the creation of a new work. The change from a moving image to a still image or to a sound recording, for example, is so fundamental that the result has to be considered a new work, for movement and image are fundamental to the nature of moving image works. I have argued elsewhere that changes in fundamental content usually create new works.5

One possible exception to this rule might occur when the separate functions that are carried out to create a work of mixed authorship such as a moving image work are split up and separately published. For example, the screenplay for a film can be separately published, as can the sound track recording. These could potentially be conceptualized as parts extracted from the moving image work as a whole, and given whole/part work identifiers (main entries) that begin with the work identifier for the moving image work, followed by an identifier for the part. So far, however, no Anglo-American cataloging rules have conceptualized the situation in this way. Separately published scripts and sound track recordings have traditionally been treated as separate but related works.

It might be instructive to compare the case of moving image works to that of musical works. With musical works, change in GMD from music to sound recording represents a new expression, not a new work, because performances of written music are held to be expressions of same. In other words, it involves a change in content (not a change in carrier), but it is the type of change in content that creates a new expression, not a new work.
Specific Material Designation (SMD)

The following are the current SMDs:

- film cartridge
- film cassette
- film loop
- film reel
- videocartridge
- videocassette
- videodisc
- videoreel

Any SMD in the moving image family can be copied onto any other SMD as a mere change in carrier. Thus a film on film reels can be copied onto videocassettes without any change in content. Missing so far are SMDs for electronic resource and DVD. Any SMD in the moving image family can be digitized and/or issued as a DVD as a mere change in carrier.

Physical Description: Extent

Number of SMDs: Change in number of SMD units should be considered to be mere carrier or manifestation change, as it can easily change without any change in intellectual content; examples, film on 8 thousand-foot reels can be moved onto four 2,000-foot reels; videocassette on two one-hour videocassettes can be copied onto one two-hour videocassette.

Playing time: My research shows that change in playing time or footage (or frame count) is the only reliable indicator of expression change from one moving image to another. When multiple copies of the same moving image have been digitized, it is possible that computers will be able to do frame comparisons and reveal differences in intellectual content from one print to another of the same film work. Moving image can be slightly speeded up or slightly slowed down, without the human eye being able to detect it, but not much without ruining the presentation. There can also be variation depending on where someone begins timing the film; for example, do you include entrance music, later distribution credit frames, etc.? The most reliable would be an accurate frame count from the first original release title frame to the last original release title frame, if we could get it. In a way this problem of measuring extent is similar to the one presented by text in which the same number of words or characters can vary in paging without any variation in the intellectual content. Perhaps digitization and computer character counts will eventually provide a solution for that problem as well. It should be noted, though, that one complication is presented by the fact that silent films meant to be projected at a lower fps (frames per second) than standard sound speed (24 fps) are sometimes converted to 24 fps by copying the same frame more than once.

Because of these problems with measuring extent of underlying content, extent can sometimes become caught between content and carrier. Nevertheless,
it is still our best hope for tracking changes in underlying content, if we can figure out accurate ways to measure it and report it.

Physical Description: Other Physical Details

Aspect ratio: Aspect ratio refers to the intended proportion of the moving image width to its height. Before the development of the wide-screen film, the standard aspect ratio was 1.33:1, for example. The image was intended to be projected on a screen 1.33 times as wide as it was tall. Wide-screen films were wider; one wide screen aspect ratio, for example, is 2.35:1; such an image is intended to be projected on a screen 2.35 times as wide as it is tall. To fit such a film on a television screen, it can be letterboxed, that is, surrounded on top and bottom with black so as to retain the original image, or it can be panned and scanned, resulting in loss of image content. For example, in a panned and scanned copy of a wide-screen film showing dialogue between two people, the original image showing both people at once is often cropped to show one of them at a time. Aspect ratio should stay the same across carrier change. If it does not, in a panned and scanned copy, for example, it represents a flaw (a condition note for a flawed item), not even a change in manifestation per se. Because there is an aspect ratio associated with a film work on its original release, and manifestations that have cropped this image content in any way should be considered defective, aspect ratio should be considered to pertain to work, not expression.

Sound: In the transition from silent films to sound films, films were sometimes issued in two versions, one a silent version, and one a sound version with either partial or entire music, dialogue, and effects track. Silent films were nearly always intended to be accompanied by music tracks; thus a silent film work can exist in multiple expressions, each of which has a different music track. Therefore silent with music track versus silent with no music track is an expression variation. Sound should stay the same across carrier change, so it is associated with content (expression, as above, or work, when a film does not have different sound expressions), not with manifestation (carrier). If sound does not stay the same across a carrier change, it represents a flaw (a condition note for a flawed item), not even a change in manifestation per se.

Color: Color should stay the same across carrier change, so it is associated with work, not with manifestation. A b&w copy of a color film is a flawed copy, as it lacks a key piece of the image content at the time the work was originally released; thus it rates a condition note for a flawed item, and is not even a change in manifestation per se. A colorized video copy of a film originally issued in b&w is also generally considered a flawed item in film archives, although a media collection might consider it to be a different expression of the work.

Projection speed: Projection speed can vary slightly without humans being able to detect it, but not much. Projection speed should stay the same across carrier change, so it is associated with work, not with manifestation. Too much variation would create a flawed manifestation (condition note for flawed item), not a change in expression (see previous discussion).
Physical Description: Dimensions

Size of SMD (e.g., cassette, reel): Dimensions can vary without affecting intellectual content, so they are associated with manifestation or carrier. For example, a VHS videocassette can be copied onto a 3/4-inch videocassette (in a much larger case) without any change in the underlying content.

Manifestation Summary

The following parts of the physical description of a moving image item pertain to its content (expression or work): the fact that it is a moving image (i.e., that it has one of the moving image GMD’s, rather than a nonmoving-image GMD) (work), its extent (playing time or frame count) (expression), its aspect ratio (work), its sound characteristics (expression or work), its color characteristics (work), and its projection speed (work).

The following parts of the physical description of a moving image item pertain to its carrier only (manifestation): its moving image GMD (i.e., the differentiation among “motion picture,” “videorecording,” and “electronic resource” in AACR2R), its SMD, the number of units or SMDs, and the size or dimensions of the unit(s) or SMDs.

Unfortunately, it looks as if RDA is going to provide only slight clarity or improvement in practice in this area, and only at the GMD level. Users will have to continue to struggle with cluttered displays of multiple manifestations in multiple physical formats in no logical order, and preserving audiovisual archives will have to continue to devise nonstandard solutions to the problem to do their work efficiently.

RDA for Moving Image Materials

One reason that the library world agreed to undergo the trauma of a change in cataloging rules from AACR2R to RDA was that RDA promised to deal with the difficulty caused by differences in the definition of work and expression between the music catalogers and the film catalogers. Film catalogers consider a film of a performed work to be a new work related to the previously existing text for the performed work. Thus a film cataloger considers Bergman’s Magic Flute to be a new film work, not an edition of Mozart’s opera. Music catalogers disagree; to them, Bergman’s film is still primarily Mozart’s work; that is, not a new work, but a new expression of Mozart’s work. AACR2R is structured in such a way that there is an expectation that there will be a general rule to address work identification (creation of main entries) for works of mixed authorship such as these; that is, works that are created by the performance of multiple functions by lots of different people. There is a great gap in AACR2R in this area, however, and the general rule is missing. Now the June, 2006, draft chapter 7 of RDA seems to reveal that mixed authorship has been dropped altogether. Instead we are given the confusing situation of having separate sets of rules for
(1) works with more than one author, (2) works based on previously existing works, and (3) performances. Many moving image works are works of mixed responsibility (with more than one author performing more than one function) which are performances of previously existing works. *Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records* (FRBR)\(^9\) itself includes the example of a film performance of a Shakespeare play. Now RDA provides three different places to look for a solution to the question of how to enter the film that is a performance of a Shakespeare play, and none of the three places actually has a rule that addresses the situation. We still have not seen RDA Part B, Chapter 13, that will contain the new draft of these RDA rules for identifying works using “primary access points;” perhaps the rules for works of mixed responsibility will improve based on criticisms received in the review process.

Another reason that the library world agreed to undergo the trauma of a change in cataloging rules from AACR2R to RDA was that RDA promised to incorporate FRBR definitions in order to provide a clearer logical framework for the building of catalogs. In the past, the work has been represented by authority records and by main entries (work identifiers) in bibliographic records. The various expressions and manifestations of a work have been represented by bibliographic records, without differentiation between the two entities, *expression* and *manifestation*. In other words, in the past, we have often made a new bibliographic record for a mere change in carrier without any underlying change in intellectual content (i.e., for a mere change in manifestation). It was hoped that RDA would tease out the differences between expression change and manifestation change and help to create catalogs that could group all the manifestations of the same expression of a work together, to help users make better choices more efficiently when seeking a work that exists in multiple expressions, each of which has multiple manifestations (copies of the same intellectual content in different formats or on different carriers).

Drafts of RDA so far demonstrate that RDA is not fulfilling this promise.\(^10\) The FRBR entities are barely referenced in the text, and the status quo is maintained; that is, any change in manifestation (carrier) results in the creation of a new bibliographic record. This is a disaster for catalog users interested in prolific works that exist in multiple expressions and manifestations (and these are the most popular works among users). It is also a disaster for any preserving audiovisual archive that makes multiple copies in multiple physical formats in the course of the preservation process. It appears that we may need to wait for a transformation of the shared cataloging environment before catalog users or preserving audiovisual archives will see any relief for their problems in this area. It is hoped that the analysis in this chapter will help come up with better solutions for moving image materials when we reach that point.

Drafts of RDA so far also lack a clear analysis of content versus carrier in Chapters 3 and 4.\(^11\) Chapter 4 of Part I is called “content description,” but content is undefined. Does it refer to work information (form) or expression information (language)? subject information (what the work is about)? relationships between work/expressions? It is unclear why it is necessary to have separate rules for “content description.” If content means work/expressions information,
the following should also be considered “content description”: (1) a statement of responsibility concerning translation or illustration, (2) an edition statement about revision of content, or (3) an extent statement that reveals significant differences in length between two different expressions.

The meaning of content seems to have changed completely from the meaning it had in the discussions leading up to RDA, in which content referred to expression and work, as opposed to carrier, the latter standing in for manifestation. Here content seems to refer to what the work is about.

It should be noted that as new drafts have come out, the newest being in March 2007, more and more content rules have been moving from Chapter 3 (“Carrier”) to Chapter 4 (“Content”). For example, duration is now in Chapter 4, but extent is still in Chapter 3, as are color, sound characteristics, projection characteristics, and film length. However, much content (work and expression) is still being described in earlier RDA chapters.

Given all of the discussion leading up the decision to create a new code that centered around the possibility that reorganization by International Standard Bibliographic Description (ISBD) area might help us deal with new and diverse materials to catalog, one might have expected the rules to be organized by ISBD area. Given all of the discussion leading up the decision to create a new code that centered around the need to analyze the AACR2R class of material concept to determine which categories were actually content categories and which were actually carrier categories, one might have expected the rules to be organized into two parts, one for content and one for carrier.

Instead, the rules in RDA Part 1 are fundamentally organized by FRBR function, as Barbara Tillett explains (see Chapter 7). RDA Chapter 2 concerns identification (of a manifestation?), Chapters 3–4 concern selection (of a manifestation?), Chapter 5 concerns obtaining (a manifestation?), and Part B concerns finding (what? All FRBR entities?). The logic of this principle of organization escapes me, for any given element of the description might be of value for identification or selection of any FRBR entity, depending on the state of knowledge of the catalog user. Consider, for example, the title. When the user is looking for a known item, the title can help the user identify a known work or a known expression. When a user finds the same title in the course of doing a subject search, the title can help to characterize an unknown work—in other words it can help the user make a selection (or rejection) of a work. It would seem that the repetition and redundancy complained of by many RDA commentators may be the result of this faulty logic, as the title needs repetition under each FRBR function and each FRBR entity. Because the desire to reorganize the rules based on either ISBD area or on content versus carrier was behind the decision to create a new code of cataloging rules in the first place, failure to address this issue causes the RDA project to have the appearance of a bait and switch operation.

RDA Chapter 3 (“Carrier”) has sections for “media type” (3.2) and “carrier type” (3.3). The definition of carrier provided in RDA: Resource Description and Access: Scope and Structure indicates that carrier is being defined in such a way that it incorporates both content attributes (for moving image, color) and carrier attributes, and sure enough, the current draft of Chapter 3 has subsequent
sections for extent (film length, not playing time, 3.4) and other technical details, including color characteristics (3.12) and sound characteristics (3.17)—all content attributes, not carrier attributes—for moving image material. The *Categorization of Content and Carrier* document, which came out in August 2006 and the subsequent new draft of Chapter 3 in March 2007 are based on the clear analysis of content and carrier contained in the *RDA/ONIX Framework for Resource Categorization*. The latter document did not deal with the problem of assigning attributes such as extent or color characteristics to content or to carrier, however, and in that regard, the RDA draft still muddles content and carrier. It should be noted that the RDA/ONIX framework has had a salutary effect on what used to be called the GMD (a content attribute), in that the new section 4.2 of RDA (“content type”) replaces “motion picture,” “videorecording,” and “electronic resource,” with “moving image.” The media type (section 3.2) and the carrier type (section 3.3) in conjunction will clarify whether the carrier for the moving image is “computer,” “projected,” or “video.” This is a much cleaner and more logical categorization than we have ever had to work with before, and Tom Delsey is to be commended for this particular improvement in the rules.

Unfortunately, the language in RDA as applied to moving image materials is rather clumsy and arcane. DVDs are called “videodiscs” in rule 3.3 (“carrier type”)—very confusing for users because, to them, a videodisc is a different obsolete format; the fact that the “videodisc” is actually a DVD only comes out much further below as an encoding format (rule 3.20.0.5). “Projected” is an odd term to differentiate a motion picture film carrier from a videotape carrier, because video can also be projected. The differentiation between “digital” and “video” in 3.19 and 3.20 reintroduces the cross-classification that was so problematic in AACR2, since most users use the term “digital video” to refer to moving image materials that have been digitized. In the glossary, “Projection” is defined as “media.” “Projection” is the process of projecting; it would be better to use the term “Projected media.”

“Coloured” is an unfortunate translation of the AACR2R abbreviation “col.,” since there are rarely-used color processes that involve coloring black and white film stock in order to create a color film, as opposed to the standard process of using color film stock to create a color film. For moving image users, “coloured” will imply the use of those rare processes. It would be better to use either “colour” or “in colour.”

**Conclusion**

Unfortunately, it appears that the library world is being subjected to all of the trauma involved in changing cataloging rules, without the benefit of the changes recommended in Toronto in 1997. Many in the library world were willing to consider changing the rules only if they could have the improvements promised in Toronto: (1) implementation of FRBR definitions that could underpin more logical indexes and displays in online public access catalogs,
better rules for works intended for performance, (3) a cleaner separation between content and carrier rules, and (4) a rearrangement of the descriptive rules by ISBD area so as to facilitate the cataloging of manifestations of expressions of works that didn’t fall cleanly into AACR2R’s “classes of materials.” Few of these promises have been kept. Instead the rules have been hijacked by those who wish to try to entice other communities (cultural objects, metadata, etc.) into using rules that were originally designed to be used in institutions that are charged with collecting, providing access to, and describing works of prolific authors that are published in multiple expressions and manifestations, thereby creating a permanent cultural record accessible by future generations. It seems highly unlikely that these other communities will actually be interested in spending considerable amounts of money purchasing access to these rules from ALA Publishing. So we may be left with rules that are useful to no one and purchased by no one. They have certainly become no more useful for moving image materials than were the AACR2R rules.

Notes


3. Martha M. Yee. “Manifestations and Near-Equivalents: Theory, with Special Attention to Moving-Image Materials.” *Library Resources & Technical Services* 38:3 (July, 1994): 227–256. Note that the term *manifestation* was used in its old, pre-FRBR sense (edition or expression) in this paper published before FRBR had come into existence. Also, see Martha M. Yee. “The Concept of Work for Moving Image Materials.”


13. Ibid.

