



Subject Analysis of Visual Materials

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Outline

- Identify some concepts and issues underlying subject analysis for visual materials
- Analyze the subjects of some images



Two Kinds of Subject

- Subject—Of
- Subject—About
- Questions: Do we need to distinguish between these two? If so, how?



Checklist of Subject Possibilities

- Person (Who?)
- Object (What?)
- Event or Activity (What?)
- Time (When?)
- Place (Where?)
- Abstract concept
- Literary work

Vocabulary Possibilities

- Generic (Description)
- Specific (Identification)

How detailed should your subject analysis be?

- Don't index details unless they are significant
- Consider the researcher
- Consider the resources available
 - Time
 - Expertise

Some examples



- Henry Sugimoto. Girls building a snowman at Camp Jerome in winter, 1943. Japanese American National Museum, Los Angeles, California

Persons (Who?)



Subject-Of

- Generic:
 - Children
 - Girls
 - Japanese-Americans
- Specific:
 - Names of the girls if they were known

• • • | Objects (What?)



Subject-Of

- Generic
 - Snowman
 - Barracks
 - Dustpan
 - Snow
 - Shrub?
- Specific
 - None known

• • • | Events or Activities (What?)



- Subject—Of
- Generic:
 - Playing
 - Snowman-building
- Specific:
 - None in this case

• • • | Events or Activities (What?)



- Subject-About
- Generic
 - Internment
- Specific
 - Internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II

• • • | Time (When?)



- Subject-Of
- Generic
 - Winter
 - Daytime
- Specific
 - 1943

● ● ● | Place (Where?)



Subject-Of

- Generic
 - Concentration camp
- Specific
 - Jerome Camp (Arkansas)

● ● ● | Abstract concepts?



Subject-About

- Hope?
- ??

● ● ● | Of and About

- Some examples ...

● ● ● | Allegory of Justice



- Subject-of
 - Naked woman [person]
 - Sword [object]
 - Scales [object]
- Subject-about
 - Justice [abstract concept]

Louis XV



Louis XV
Subject-Of

Louis XV



Louis XV
Subject-About

Destruction of Jerusalem



- Getty Museum.
Unknown
French, Paris,
about 1415
Tempera colors
and gold leaf on
parchment
16 9/16 x 11 5/8 in.
MS. 63, FOL. 237

Place (Where?)



- Subject-Of
 - Walled city (generic)
 - France (specific)
- Subject-About
 - Jerusalem

• • • Time (When?)



- Subject-Of
 - 15th century
- Subject-About
 - 1st century (70 A.D.)

• • • How much detail to analyze?



- Persons
- Men (generic-Of)
 - Soldiers (generic-Of)
 - Kings (generic-Of)
 - Emperor Titus (About?)

• • • How much detail to analyze?



- Objects (Generic-Of)
- Armor
 - Weapons
 - Battlements?
 - Tents?
 - Chairs?

• • • How much detail to analyze?



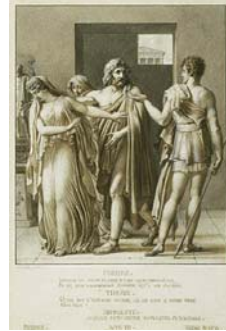
- Events
- Fighting (generic)
 - Siege of Jerusalem (specific)

• • • How much detail to analyze?



Consider using narrative description and keyword access for smaller details (e.g., swords, helmets)

• • • Related literary work



Subject-About

Racine's Phedre
Or, in a controlled form common to library catalogs:
Racine, Jean, 1639-1699. Phedre

• • • Another kind of related work



• • • What is this Of?



Subject-Of

- o Michelangelo's work??
- o God and Adam??
- o Old man and young man and condom

What is this About?



- Subject-About
- o AIDS prevention
 - o ???

Things to think about

- o Distinguish explicitly between Of and About? One option:
 - Specify “depicted” as part of the role, for example:
Subject (depicted): Louis XV
Or
Subject: Louis XV (depicted)

Things to think about, continued

- o Assign generic *and* specific terms for the same entity? Alternative:
 - Systems use the information in authority records to assist retrieval and for navigation from generic to specific. Example: Louis XV is a man and a king

Things to think about, continued

- o Use controlled vocabulary in combination with free text narrative?

• • • | Thank you.