TROTTER: William Monroe Trotter had so many gifts – pedigree, descended, through his mother, from Thomas Jefferson; a good writer, like his father, who also had a hand for business. Trotter was economically comfortable at a young age and superbly educated, with a Harvard degree plus a Phi Beta Kappa key. Driven and inspired by principle, he would not back down from a righteous fight. Why isn’t he more well-known? Was he a radical? A tragic figure What is his true contribution to today? Is there a particular lesson that we take from Trotter to help us face future challenges?

AFRICAN AMERICAN REPRESENTATION: What lessons have been learned from this film in terms of how African Americans have been represented in American mass culture, going back to minstrelsy, and how they will be represented into the future? What needs to change in order for there to be an accurate representation of the role that African Diaspora people have played in the creation and continuance of this nation? What will it take to break free from the imagistic, cultural limitations that have stymied culture across the board and for all?
DW GRIFFITH’S *BIRTH OF A NATION*: What makes this film so insidious from a filmmaking perspective? How prevalent is this film in our culture, whether we know it or not? Is Hollywood still dominated by racist stereotypes when it comes to African Americans or people of color? Does the fact that we have had six African Americans nominated for Oscars this year mean we are making progress?

MISCEGENATION: How important is the miscegenation part of the story? How central of a role does it play in Birth of a Nation and how big of a fear was it then… and is it today in this country?

MEMORY OF THE CIVIL WAR: This film was made to mark the 100th anniversary of the Birth of a Nation, which debuted 50 years after the Civil War and honored its legacy. What is the continuing significance of the Civil War and the century that followed this film?

RECONSTRUCTION: According to professor Henry Louis Gates, Jr., *Birth of a Nation* represents the end of this country’s first reconstruction. Now, Donald Trump’s election spells the end of the second reconstruction. What does the first reconstruction represented historically. What does the second reconstruction represent? Did Trotter help birth the second reconstruction through his direct street action, later adopted by the civil rights movement? Will the second reconstruction end in blood like the first, or is a more hopeful scenario ahead, particularly given the change in the black demographic profile here and nationally?

GOING FORWARD: How is this film relevant to what is going on today? What are the biggest challenges of the century to come? How should we characterize and define that challenge? What lessons should we take from this film moving forward?