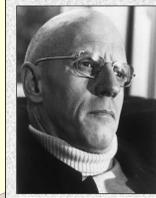


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Foucault and the Bibliographic Universe: What Really Is an Author?

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Introduction

The “Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records” (FRBR) Final Report was issued by the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) in 1997. The Report:

- explicitly made no assumptions about the bibliographic record and its purposes
- took a user-focused approach to its analysis of requirements.
- detailed conceptual and practical considerations related to bibliographic description.

Foucault expresses forms of control, which have parallel constructions in Group 1 Entities.

Foucault then says that the author-function is specifically intended to “construct the rational entity we call an author.” Group 2 Entities likewise are manifestly rational relationships related to creation.

Group 1 Entities and Primary Relationships

FRBR	Foucault	Example
Work	Discourse	Mahler's Symphony No. 3
Expression	Discursive expression	The musical work as conducted and performed by a given conductor/symphony on a certain day
Manifestation	Circulation	Recording of Bernstein conducting the St Louis Symphony Orchestra's performance of Mahler's Symphony No. 3
Item	Control	Shelved library copy of a compact disc of Levine conducting the Philadelphia Orchestra performing Mahler's Symphony No. 3.

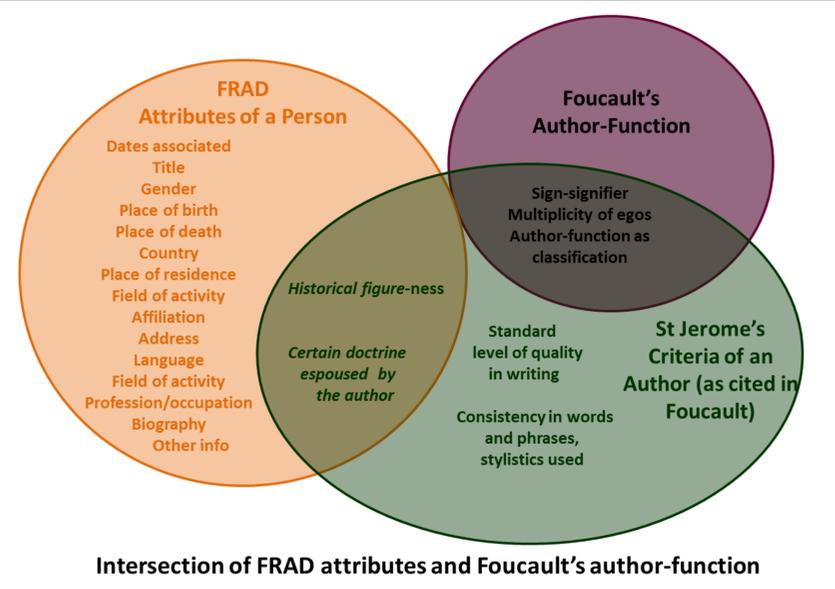
Group 2 Entities: Person, Corporate Body

FRBR	Foucault	Example in FRAD
Created by	Author	Person, corporate body, family
Realized by	Author-function	Attributes of a person (dates, degrees, place of birth, etc.)

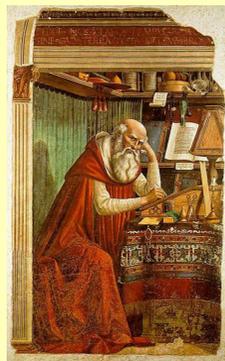
Unexplained in FRAD: Doctrine espoused, standard level of quality in writing, consistency in words and phrases, influences of, influencer of, historical figure status

FRAD: Functional Requirements for Authority Records

An authority record is defined as “the aggregate of information about an instance of an entity whose name is used as a controlled access point for bibliographic citations or records in a catalogue or bibliographic file.”



In describing the author-function, Foucault introduces a layer of complexity by drawing from St. Jerome's criteria for determining authorship. His appropriation of St. Jerome admits to a unity of work and author that is less overtly articulated in FRBR and FRAD.



http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Domenico_Ghirlandajo_-_St_Jerome_in_his_study.jpg

According to Foucault:

- **The author is defined as a constant level of value;**
- **The author is thus defined as a field of conceptual and theoretical coherence;**
- **The author is here conceived as a stylistic unity;**
- **The author is seen as a historical figure at the crossroads of a certain number of events.**

Foucault and FRBR

A principal purpose of the Group 2 Entities is to assist users in their navigation through the bibliographic universe; Foucault's author-function is largely in concert with the purpose of Group 2 Entities.

The clearest difference between the FRBR/FRAD model and Foucault's conceptions appears in relation to Group 3 entities. Group 3 addresses subject interconnections, but those can, at times, be oversimplified. Foucault's expansion of the author-function includes customary authorial and subject relations, but also embraces the potential for epistemological expansion open to influences—positive and negative, explicit and implicit—acceptance and rejection, and more distant relationships.

FRBR Entities



Freud and the Author-Function: Tag Cloud



The above tag cloud illustrates Foucault's notion of author-function and the:

- “space” of ontology
- discourse
- knowledge families
- etc.

Foucault says someone like Freud is an “initiator of discursive practice,” [who] not only made possible a number of analogies that could be adopted by future texts, but, as importantly, [he] also made possible a certain number of differences” (p. 132).

Can such tools as FRBR and FRAD be interpreted and employed in terms of Foucault's further ideas, or (perhaps more importantly) can they be expanded to embrace Foucault's ideas?

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“What, in short, is the strange unit designated by the term, work? What is necessary to its composition, if a work is not something written by a person called an ‘author’?” (Foucault, p. 118).