RDA and Non-human Personages

Amanda K. Sprochi
Chair, Fictitious Entities Working Group
University of Missouri
# Agents in the LRM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Constraints</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LRM-E6</td>
<td>Agent</td>
<td>An entity capable of exercising responsibility relationships relating to works, expressions, manifestations or items</td>
<td>Superclass: Res Subclasses: Person, CollectiveAgent</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Scope notes</td>
<td>The entity agent is a superclass strictly equivalent to the union of the entities person and collective agent. It is defined to reduce redundancy in the model by providing a single class to serve as the domain or range of certain relationships that apply to all specific types of agents. Being an agent requires having, or having had, the potential of intentional relationships with instances of entities of bibliographic interest (works, expressions, manifestations, items), whether that specific agent has ever done so or not. Human beings are directly or indirectly the motive force behind all such actions taken by all agents. Automatons (such as, weather recording devices, software translation programs, etc.), sometimes referred to as technological agents, are in this model viewed as tools used and set up by an actual agent.</td>
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In the LRM, a *person* entity is defined as “an individual human being”

Restricted to “real persons who live or are assumed to have lived”

Proof of existence of a *person* is not required if there is general acceptance of their “probably historicity”

Fictional, literary, or purely legendary figures are not *persons*
Collective Agents

- “Designates a wide range of named groups of persons that bear a particular name and act together as a unit”
- Organizations, associations, families, congresses, corporations, expeditions, exhibitions, festivals, fairs
- To be a collective agent, actions that reflect agency with respect to entities of bibliographic interest must take place (publishing, approving, sponsoring, etc.)
What about non-humans?

• In the LRM, agents must be human or collectives of humans
• Animals, legendary figures, spirits, fictional characters, muppets, gods, angels, etc. CANNOT be agents under the LRM
• Bibliographical problem: many works claim to be the product of non-human creators, and many of our users search for non-human creators and agents to find relevant materials
RDA and Non-Human Personages

• The RSC Fictitious Entities Working Group was assigned this problem to work on

• Some assumptions:
  – Access points for non-human entities purporting to be creators of works of bibliographical interest are necessary
  – The principles of collocation and authority control need to be maintained
  – The LRM does not stipulate what kinds of names may or may not be included in an authority file
RDA and Non-Human Personages

• Some constraints:
  – Adding fictitious entities or non-humans as a new entity was not allowable
  – Replicating and modifying established relationship designators to fit fictitious or non-human personages was also not allowable
  – Solutions had to be compatible with linked data requirements
  – No “thinking in MARC” as RDA is supposed to be standard neutral
“Non-human personages”

• “Fictitious entities” became problematic
  – Not all non-human persons are fictitious
  – The fictitiousness of any given individual or body may vary between different user groups or cultural communities
  – “Entity” has a specific meaning in the LRM

• The FEWG suggested “Non-human personage” as a catch all description meant to be value- and model-neutral
Non-human personages as “agents”

• FEWG identified two main types of non-human personages in agent-type roles
  – Clear use of a non-human/fictitious personage as a pseudonym for a “real” person
  – Non-humans performing in an agent-like capacity
    • Animals performing in film, television, stage shows, etc.
    • Animal communication (blue whale and bird song, Koko the gorilla’s ASL)
    • Spirits, angels, gods etc. acting as creators of works
Users encompass all ages and educational levels

- Pre-K children and adults with doctorates and everyone in between are all potential catalog users

- Ranganathan’s principles:
  - Every Reader their book
  - Every book its reader
  - Save the time of the reader
User task examples

• Preschool kid wants to find the latest Geronimo Stilton book (Geronimo Stilton as author)
• Researcher wants to find all stories written by Dr. John Watson about Sherlock Holmes
• Fan of dogs wants to read Millie Bush’s biography
• Film buff wants to watch all movies with Asta the dog
Non-human personages as pseudonyms

• Non-humans clearly acting as pseudonyms, treat as pseudonyms
  – No qualitative difference between a person using a “person-like” pseudonym vs. a “non-human” pseudonym
    ➢ Geronimo Stilton is a pseudonym for (probably) Elisabetta Dami
    ➢ John Watson is a pseudonym for Nicholas Meyer
    ➢ Millie is a pseudonym for Barbara Bush
The Seven-Per-Cent

Solution

Being a reprint from the

reminiscences of JOHN H. WATSON, M.D.

as edited by NICHOLAS MEYER

W. W. Norton & Company
New York • London

For Sally
Millie’s Book
As Dictated to Barbara Bush

With best wishes,
Barbara Bush
November 1999

William Morrow and Company, Inc.
New York
Real identity: Dami, Elisabetta
500 1 ǂi Alternative identity: ǂa Stilton, Geronimo.
Pseudonyms and linked data

The Curse of the Cheese Pyramid

Has author/is author of

Geronimo Stilton

Alternate/real identity

Elisabetta Dami
Animal and non-human performers

- Non-human/animal performers/creators present a special case
  - They cannot be agents, BUT
  - They are also clearly not pseudonyms of a “real” person in an agent capacity
  - They DO perform tasks and roles that we would normally attribute to an agent
Animal Performers

• Example: Skippy the dog was an animal performer in many films in the 1920s
• According to the LRM, he cannot be listed as an “actor” which is an agent relator
• However, he clearly acts in films and he is clearly not a pseudonym for a human agent
• The FEWG suggested putting animal performers in a separate category, and using the Nomen entity with appropriate relationship designators
Koko (Gorilla) born 1971

San Francisco Zoo (San Francisco, Calif.)
San Francisco (Calif.)
Woodside (Calif.)

Sign language

Female

Hanabi-Ko (Gorilla) born 1971
Hanabiko (Gorilla) born 1971
Fine Animal Gorilla born 1971
Koko (Gorilla) born 1971
Keke (Gorilla) born 1971

Non-Latin script references not evaluated.
Koko ‡c (Gorilla), ‡d 1971- ‡e animal performer
Other slippery non-human type things

• Figures like gods, angles, spirits and the like may not clearly fall into one of these two categories
• Whether or not a non-human personage is seen as a pseudonym for a “real” person or not will eventually have to be determined by the cataloging agency(ies) maintaining authority files
• Different culture groups may have differing opinions on what constitutes “real” and/or “living or may have lived”
• RDA is deliberately non-directive to accommodate these views
HISTORICAL REVELATIONS

OF THE RELATION EXISTING BETWEEN

CHRISTIANITY AND PAGANISM

SINCE THE

Disintegration of the Roman Empire.

BY THE

ROMAN EMPEROR JULIAN

(Called the Apostate).

BOSTON:

COLBY & RICH, PUBLISHERS,
Corner Bosworth and Province Streets.

1886.
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What’s next?

• FEWG has presented their recommendations to the RSC+ committee.
• Final decisions and approval are the RSCs’ prerogative—they can take or leave our suggestions as they wish.
• The FEWG has more or less finished its work and will be dismissed at the official conclusion of the RSC+ experiment.
Amanda K. Sprochi
FEWG Chair
Health Sciences Cataloger
The University of Missouri
sprochial@health.missouri.edu

QUESTIONS? ASK ME!