

# CONCEPT OF AUTHOR

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*Evaluates the definitions as given in the A A Code, ALA cataloguing rules for author and title entries and CCC. Generalises that author is one who creates the work. Indicates that collaborators taking the place of the author cannot be included under the concept. Similarly a sponsor is also not an author. Distinguishes the two types of author.*

## 0 INTRODUCTION

Theory of library cataloguing is based on certain conventions and concepts. One of the most fundamental and basic concept is the author concept. In other words Author is the determining factor of cataloguing. A theory underlies the concept of the author. The present article aims at the scientific analysis of the concept.

### 1 A. A. Code.

A. A. Code (1908) defines author as "1. The writer of a book, as distinguished from translator, editor, etc. 2. In broader sense, the maker of the book or the person or body immediately responsible for its existence. Thus, a person who collects and puts together the writings of several authors (compiler or editor) may be said to be the author of a collection. Corporate bodies may be considered the authors of publications issued in their name or by their authority".<sup>1</sup>

### 11 Analysis

This definition gives three concepts as regards the author. Firstly "author is one who writes a book". What is a book? A book is "embodied thought"<sup>2</sup> i.e. "record of work on paper or other material, fit for physical handling, transport across space, and preservation through time"<sup>3</sup>. In other words a book is the record of a work. What is a work? A work is "Expressed thought"<sup>4</sup>. Thus we can say that a book is expressed thought embodied on paper or other material so that it can be physically handled, transported across space and preserved through time.

From the above analysis we derive that a book consists of three elements :

- (1) Thought,
- (2) Expression, and
- (3) Physical form

Now the question arises whether the responsibility for all the three elements of a book lies on the author. An author is responsible merely for the thought. Any person who has even written an essay will say that an author is responsible for the thought and the expression and not for the physical form. The responsibility for the physical form lies on the publisher, printer and the binder. Thus we can say that the word "book" is not an appropriate word in the definition for the concept of the author. It must be substituted by the term "work" which includes both thought and expression.

## 2 A. L. A. RULES

This is why *A.L.A. cataloguing rules for author and title entries* (1949) has substituted the word "book" by "work" in the definition of the author which reads now as :

1. "The writer of a work, as distinguished from the translator, editor, etc. By extension, an artist, composer, photographer, cartographer, etc."<sup>4</sup>

This change bears a clear testimony to the fact that the editors of 1949 *ALA Code* became conscious of the fallacy being created by the word "book" in the concept of the author.

The next question arises that once the term "book" has been substituted by the term "work", if there was any sense in retaining the term "writes", writing denotes "expression" which is already included in the concept of the term "work". Thus the term "writes" appears to be superfluous and redundant. It also requires some suitable substitute as *CCC* does in the following definition.

## 3 CCC

- "1. Person creating the work, i.e. the thought and the expression constituting it.

2. Corporate body owning responsibility for a work, i.e. for the thought and the expression constituting it"<sup>5</sup>.

Thus CCC explicitly and clearly brings out the concept of the author based on sound and appropriate terminology.

The *AA code* & *ALA* meant the same though in some ambiguous manner. The ambiguity crept in due to the use of the term "book" and "writes". This is why it is said that a scientific study must have sound and appropriate terminology to denote its concepts. This also stands true with regard to the domain of cataloguing.

#### 4 GENERALISATION

Thus through the above analysis of the three codes we can generalise that the "author is one who is responsible for a work or who creates a work" or in the words of rule No. 1 of *ALA rules*, "The author is considered to be the person or body chiefly responsible for the intellectual content of the book, literary, artistic or musical"<sup>6</sup>.

#### 5 CONCEPT OF IMMEDIATE RESPONSIBILITY

Thus arriving at the basic concept about an author, we shall now analyse if there are any more concepts. Certainly the second part of the definition of both *AA code* and *ALA rules*, gives rise to one more concept.

According to it the person or the body immediately responsible for the existence of the work is also taken to be the author. For example, a person who collects and puts together the work of several authors (compiler or editor) can be said to be the author of a collection.

##### 51. Problem

Analysing the concept more closely, we find that an editor or a compiler cannot be taken as to be the author of a collection. He is in no way responsible for the thought and the expression constituting the different works in the collection. His role has been merely that of collecting the different works and putting them in some specific order. On the other hand the responsibility for the thought and the expression rests on the writers of the different chapters, so naturally they are the authors.

This problem then naturally raises a question. Why all the codes including CCC prefer in such cases the editor or the compiler as the author when the actual authors already exist. It is to be kept in mind that though CCC does not provide for such a concept in its definition, yet it accepts it in its rule No. 5126 which reads as:

"If the title page does not give the name of a personal author or the names of joint personal authors or indicate corporate authorship or give a pseudonym or pseudonyms in the author statement but contains the name of a collaborator, that name is to be used as the Heading and a Descriptive Element is to be added thereafter indicating the role of the person".

### 52 Solution

Two alternatives appear as a solution to this question. The first can be mentioned as treating the authors of the different works in the collection as joint authors. But it is not possible because in the case of joint authors, the portion for which each is responsible in the whole work is not specified or separable.

The second alternative is to treat the author of the first work as the author of the collection. But it will mean giving preference to the first author and his work, whereas all the authors and their respective works stand in equal status. Certainly it is a great demand on other authors and at the same time injustice also.

Thus we can derive, that an editor or a compiler is taken to be as author not because he is actually the author but for the sake of convenience or in the absence of any better solution.

This problem raises one mere question. Whether it is in any way proper or appropriate to include this concept with the basic concept i.e. "author is one who creates the work" as has been done in *AA code* and *ALA rules*. The answer to this question rests on the earlier decision that an editor or compiler is in no case an author. He is merely a collaborator. No doubt he can occupy the place of the author but even he remains a collaborator. He occupies the place of the author as a collaborator and not as an author. This is why some descriptive element is attached to the editor and the compiler. But this is never done in the case of an author. Therefore it can be safely said that the inclusion of this concept with the basic concept is not proper. The solution of CCC is better i.e. indicating in a rule rather than including with the basic concept.

### 6 TYPES OF AUTHOR

One more concept about which all the three codes agree can be enumerated as that there are two types of author i.e.

- (1) Personal author ; and
- (2) Corporate author

As the treatment of the concept of personal author and the corporate author will make this article very lengthy, they will be discussed in a separate article.

### 7 CONCEPT OF SPONSOR

The last lines of the definitions of both AA code and ALA rules suggest one more concept i.e. "corporate bodies may be considered the authors of publications issued in their name or by their authority." According to this even a sponsoring body is an author. To analyse this concept and judge its validity we should first try at the concept of the sponsor. "Sponsor is a person or corporate body with whose good will, authority, or finance or under whose auspices a work is published, though the responsibility for the thought and the expression constituting the work does not at all rest with the said person or corporate body, but rests solely on the author of the work as a whole or on the respective authors of the different contributions in the work"<sup>8</sup>. Thus when a sponsor has no responsibility at all for the thought and the expression constituting the work, inclusion of sponsoring body under the concept of author is fundamentally wrong. CCC accepts it by simple remark that "a sponsor is not author"<sup>9</sup>.

### 8 CONCLUSION

Thus we can generalise that the author is neither a collaborator nor a sponsoring body, but a person or a body responsible for the thought and the expression constituting the work. AD Osborn seems to deviate from this generalisation as the remarks that the "Principle of authorship is relatively clear for works by a single author; but as the idea of a single author becomes more and more remote in the regression through joint authorship, multiple authorship, and on to anonymous works somewhat in the sense of the *Prussian Instructions*, the principle of authorship becomes more and more tenuous and less and less of value as a guiding principle"<sup>10</sup>.

The reaction of AD Osborn can be accounted for the mixing of the concept of the collaborator and the sponsor with the concept of the author. If the concept of the author is limited merely to the person or body creating the work, there is no doubt that it will serve a guiding principle for all cataloguing purposes.

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