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M. A. de Gaetano. Looking at the Library, Seeing Philosophy (Trieste, Italy)

Looking at the Library, Seeing Philosophy (Trieste, Italy)*

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Born in Trieste (Italy) in 1962, Angelica de Gaetano studied Philosophy, Librarianship, Archivistics and Paleography. She is member of the Italian Library Association. She worked for ten years in a small network of public libraries, periferic yet very innovating. At that time she edited two books and published an article on the values of public libraries. Since 1996 she has been working at the University of Trieste, first in the central cataloguing service, then as chief librarian in the Philosophy and Languages Library. Nowadays she teaches information literacy to undergraduate students, in the past she gave lectures and courses for librarians.

ABSTRACT: This paper focuses on the job undertaken between 2003 and 2004 in order to plan a new location arrangement for the Philosophy collection of one of the libraries at the University of Trieste. The paper describes the basic needs which played a fundamental role in the planning phase. Furthermore, it examines in detail how the most widely known classification systems – particularly the DDC- did not seem the best answer to the specific needs in this context. The solution was to develop an original classification system in order to answer the specific needs. The paper describes its development and the basis upon which it was built: the classification schemes used were those of the most authoritative periodical bibliographies in this field. Among them, the International Philosophical Bibliography system seemed to be closer to the continental tradition of the organization of knowledge in the discipline. Conclusions deal with the management of the transition from the old to the new system giving some information about the possible evaluation of the work that has been carried out.

1. Introduction

I am going to describe the job experience done since 2000 in the Philosophy Library at the University of Trieste. The first aim of the project was not to develop a new general (universal) classification for the philosophical literature, but, less ambitiously, to set up a location arrangement based on classification principles for the existing materials and for those of future acquisition. Therefore this report is connected with location theory and practice and only secondarily with classification issues.

2. The background: a sixty years' history

The Library was founded in the forties, along with the establishment of the Faculty of Letters, as an In-

stitute library. At the time Faculties were organized according with disciplines in Institutes; Departments appeared much later, around 1990. Sixty years later, in the 2000s, books and periodicals (about 46.000 volumes all together) were still ordered and arranged as at the beginning, with the only system in use at the University of Trieste: firstly a subdivision into a few large classes (some based on contents and others on document forms) named sections and marked with roman numerals intended as ordinal numbers, and then another subdivision depending on book size and marked by a letter, followed by the chain number.

This arrangement reflected a collection organisation and management linked with:

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– a rough correspondence between classes and existing curricula or teachers;
– a location in several and separated rooms, often even in teachers' studies, usually not accessed to directly by the public;
– a traditional separation between philosophical disciplines;
– a lack of concern with multiple copy acquisition and preservation;
– little consideration of users' needs, in particular of students' ones.

Moreover, the attribution of a book to a class or another was not decided by a librarian, but by the teacher who had proposed the acquisition, and this meant a sort of loop, where it was the user who organized the information by him/herself.

Here is the location scheme. Note that Monographs (in Italian "Monografie") is used improperly to mean secondary literature and Texts (Testi) to mean primary literature, that Limentani refers to the name of an Italian scholar whose private library was acquired to begin the collections of the Institute library, and that Cons. in Italian stands for Consultazione, which means reference collections.

INSTITUTE OF PHILOSOPHY
1st section
Dictionaries, encyclopedias, handbooks, directories and general histories of philosophy
2nd section
Classics of philosophy
3rd section
Ancient philosophy: monographs
4th section
Medieval and renaissance philosophy: monographs
5th section
Modern philosophy: monographs
6th section
Texts and monographs of contemporary philosophy
7th section
Philosophy of art
8th section
Philosophy of science
9th section
Philosophy of practical reason
10th section
Philosophy of religion
11th section

Dictionaries, encyclopedias, handbooks, directories and general histories of pedagogy
12th section
Classics of pedagogy
13th section
Monographs
14th section
Texts and monographs of contemporary pedagogy and didactics
15th section
Psychology
16th section
History and theory of historiography
17th section
Appendixes (large formats)
18th section
Classics of philosophy of law and of politics
19th section
Monographs
20th section
Varia Limentani 1. (Economics and law)
21st section
Varia Limentani 2. (History, politics, etc.)
22nd section
Varia Limentani 3. (Literature)

Cons. 1st
Meeting papers
Cons. 2nd
Varia
Cons. 3rd
Varia
Cons. 4th
Languages coursebooks

In 2000 this scheme looked quite out of date, also in the denomination of the classes, not really working upon its principles as the book size and even the classes themselves could not be correctly used because of a dramatic lack of physical spaces, and no more responding to a renovating library organisation.

3. The reasons for change

The study of a new location arrangement became an urgent need as the library had the chance to move in a new building, which is the present site. At last there could be room enough, open stacks and adequate services, but there should also be the unification with two other department libraries, collecting documents of foreign languages and literatures. That

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is why the study of the new location arrangement for philosophy became part of a larger project of a brand new library, The Philosophy and Languages library (in Italian: Biblioteca di Filosofia e di Lingue).

3.1 More background

There was another important fact that led to the decision of making a change. Just then the University Library System was completing the automation of cooperative cataloguing. Since 1993 – also on the ground of a long lasting experience of centralized cataloguing and administration of a joint catalogue including all libraries – the University had taken part of SBN (the Italian national library network: Sistema Bibliotecario Nazionale), becoming promoter and administrator of the regional pole of the system. In 2000 the OPAC was working well enough and was quite diffused and accessible, so that it could be possible to cease the production and to bring about the update of the card catalogue. But not every library user was ready either for this transition, from printed description of documents to digital information, or (furthermore) for the use of a collective catalogue, as in every library there used to be only a local card catalogue, describing the single collection. And this was particularly true in the humanistic area.

I wondered how, without a local physical and visible catalogue, it could be still possible to become aware of the library dimension and identity, to appraise it at a glance, to browse it. The answer was evident: instead of the catalogue the collection itself should become visible. And not only visible, but also comprehensible, intelligible, recognizable, of course because of public direct access to stacks, but also thanks to a new plain and significant books allocation. My personal conviction was that without the unitary physical representation previously given by the card catalogue, the library had an increasingly urgent need to show itself, to exhibit the collections, to allow public to access documents directly.

Besides, and this is to complete the overview, I remind that the university libraries of Trieste have never started to use classification or subjecting in cataloguing, so even today there is no semantic access to information, except for the word researches that are possible using the opac database, obviously limited to the terms used in documents' description. So I thought it was really important to make up for this fault through a physical arrangement based on classification, that is semantic, principles.

3.2 The tripartite library

The outlines of the new library plan are not really linked with the organisation of the philosophy section, but I nevertheless want to speak about them in this context to help understand the project.

At the very beginning of thinking about a new library, its space was a data. The building had just been restored and the room was fixed in extension and organization. So the library project took form thinking about the container, and this was a good matter, because libraries have a lot to do with materialness. In the common sense the library is above all a place, then a collection of documents arranged in a given place. This is true also from the professional point of view: it is the organisation that makes sense, and for paper documents the organisation is within a room.

Furthermore, the sense of the library can be analyzed, interpreted and developed as a semantic relation (every library collection and every part of it has a specific meaning), a syntactic one (every part of the library in relation with the others) and a pragmatic one (in connection with users).

Keeping this in mind, the plan was carried out bearing in mind the following issues:

- give the readers a comfortable place;
- preserve the identity of the three pre-existing collections and the relationship between users and their study interests;
- bring readers nearer the books by using open stacks and turning free access to better account;
- give more sense to the existing locations, with few definite recataloguing and relocation interventions;
- emphasize also the preservation function of the library, remarking this fundamental role that distinguishes it from commercial services;
- in the end, make it clear that the library can break through its walls, being also digital and virtual and cooperating with other institutions.

The new library was thus projected as a tripartite library:

- as regards the location, the library is subdivided in the new site, the remote centres of the University Library System and the other cooperating libraries, and finally the virtual space of digital collections, represented by the public computer stations located in the reading rooms;

– as regards the collections, they are organized in three parts: philosophy, Anglo-German literature and foreign languages and literature of the Mediterranean countries;
– as regards the use of the collections, every part is divided into reference works, located in the reading rooms, current works, located in the stack rooms near the reading ones, and other materials located in a storage area furnished with compact shelves and accessible only by the library staff.

The philosophy section was examined and divided to be located in the unique philosophy reading room (190 square metres, 44 seats, stacks with 155 metres capacity), in the two contiguous store rooms (104 and 88 square metres, containing only free standing double faced stacks with the capacity of 570 and 582 metres) and in a relevant part of the storage area (approximately 400 metres). Each accommodation is supposed to correspond to a diverse use in terms of frequency and duration; books and journals are located in the storage area when rare, damaged or obsolete.

4. The development of a new system

All over the world the system mostly used to classify and arrange books in public libraries is the *Dewey Decimal Classification*. But a university library is not quite the same as a public library. First of all it is important to evaluate the advisability of indexing documents that are collected to be used by scholars of a particular discipline; after all, we must admit that *DDC* is not really well-known in Italian academic institutions and furthermore in recent years web technologies have improved folksonomies and users' classifications. So I decided not to use the *DDC*, even if I acknowledge its primary importance as an international standard indexing code and I like it because of a long personal practice.
The reasons for this choice can be summarised as follows:

– *DDC* classification is very time-consuming: the content analysis involved in is very detailed and requires a subject specialist;
– difficulty in coexisting with the old arrangement and impossibility for the librarians to recatalogue quickly all the books;
– incoherence with the other university libraries;
– lack of familiarity and esteem of the *DDC* by the library patrons;

– questionable structure of the Dewey class 100 and poor correspondence between its numbers and the library collections (literary warrant referred to the documents acquired by the library).

Also because of my personal lack of practice with other classification schemes, I decided to develop an original classification system, responding to two leading principles:

– the aim not to classify in detail books according to their content, but to group them in significant classes, remaining to a level surely less detailed than the one provided for in the DDC, yet suitable to the reader who does not need to do an exact semantic search, but to browse interesting subject areas;
– the need to refer to some authoritative sources, chosen from the area of philosophical studies themselves.

I decided to work out again and to adapt the scheme used by one of the most widely used current periodical bibliographies: the International Philosophical Bibliography edited by l'Institut Supérieur de Philosophie, Louvain-la-Neuve. This scheme of classification has been recently revised, in 1991, and is for sure an authoritative landmark, well-known by the scholars, close to the continental tradition of philosophical studies, tested and built upon literary warrant.
Building the new scheme for Trieste I also used CDD, Library of Congress *Classification* and the structure adopted by the Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy.
A draft version had been discussed with some teachers, and then improved collecting and assimilating their notes about the classes' meanings and relations. The proposed classification is enumerative and can be extended with new classes. In each class books are arranged univocally and progressively by means of a chain number. The new scheme organizes books in a Reference section (marked with the letter C that stands for the Italian Consultazione) that includes a few commonly used dictionaries and encyclopedias; a General section (marked with the letter G that stands for Generale) that contains philosophical reference works located in the reading room, a Historical section (S for Storia) including philosophy and disciplines related in a wider sense, a Thematic section (T, meaning Temi) dedicated to the various branches of philosophy, and in the end a

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small section for non-philosophical works (Others, marked with Z that is the last letter in the Italian alphabet). The main distinction is thus between historical and thematic works. It reflects our (continental) cultural tradition and is largely used in bibliographies; furthermore it suits perfectly the organisation of the main stacks in two rooms.

The scheme is completed with a notation system, necessarily more complicated than the one in use in the rest of the University libraries, but sufficiently developed and hospitable. The notation is composed by letters and numbers. The first letter F stands for the Philosophy collections of the library (the others being marked with M, for the Mediterranean area languages and literatures, G for the anglo-germanic ones, and A for the general reference collections).

Here is the adopted scheme, still in revision especially in its more disputable parts.

F/C   **REFERENCE WORKS**

F/C/1   DICTIONARIES
F/C/2   ENCYCLOPEDIAS
F/C/3   LANGUAGE COURSEBOOKS

F/G   **PHILOSOPHY REFERENCE COLLECTION**

F/G/1   GENERAL STUDIES (value, terminology, principles; methods; relationship with other disciplines …)
F/G/2   ENCYCLOPEDIAS AND DICTIONARIES
F/G/3   HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY
F/G/3.1   General history
F/G/3.2   Anthologies and collections
F/G/4   BIBLIOGRAPHIES
F/G/4.1   General
F/G/4.2   Special
F/G/4.3   Bibliography serials
F/G/5   SPECIFIC SUBJECTS IN PHILOSOPHY (non-philosophical issues)
F/G/6   STUDY, TEACHING AND RESEARCH
F/G/7   ORGANISATIONS (institutions, societies, congresses…)
F/G/7.1   Organisations in general
F/G/7.1   University of Trieste
F/G/8   MISCELLANY
F/G/CT   SERIES (books arranged by series)

F/S   **HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHICAL AND SCIENTIFIC THOUGHT**

F/S/1   ANTIQUITY
F/S/1.0   General studies
F/S/1.1   Works (alphabetically arranged by author)
F/S/1.2   Presocratics
F/S/1.3   Socrates and Socratic schools
F/S/1.4   Plato and the Academic tradition
F/S/1.5   Aristotle and the Peripatetic school
F/S/1.6   Hellenistic philosophy
F/S/1.7   Late antiquity

F/S/2   MIDDLE AGES
F/S/2.0   General studies
F/S/2.1   Works (alphabetically arranged by author)
F/S/2.2   Greek Fathers and Byzantine thought
F/S/2.3   Latin Fathers
F/S/2.4   From 6th to 12th Century
F/S/2.5   13th Century
F/S/2.6   14th Century (and over)
F/S/2.7   Islamic thought
F/S/2.8   Jewish thought

F/S/3   FROM RENAISSANCE TO ENLIGHTENMENT
F/S/3.0   General studies
F/S/3.1   Works (alphabetically arranged by author)
F/S/3.2   Renaissance and Humanism
F/S/3.3   17th Century
F/S/3.4   18th Century

F/S/4   FROM ROMANTICISM TO NIHILISM (19th Century)
F/S/4.0   General studies
F/S/4.1   Works (alphabetically arranged by author)
F/S/4.2   Italy
F/S/4.3   Great Britain
F/S/4.4   Germany and Austria
F/S/4.5   France
F/S/4.6   Spain and Portugal
F/S/4.7   Other European countries
F/S/4.8   United States and Canada
F/S/4.9   Other geographical areas

F/S/5   NINETEENTH CENTURY
F/S/5.0   General studies

F/S/5.1	Works (alphabetically arranged by author)
F/S/5.2	Italy
F/S/5.3	Great Britain
F/S/5.4	Germany and Austria
F/S/5.5	France
F/S/5.6	Spain and Portugal
F/S/5.7	Other European countries
F/S/5.8	United States and Canada
F/S/5.9	Other geographical areas
F/S/6	HISTORICAL STUDIES
F/S/6.0	Studies in History of philosophy and of Science (various and miscellaneous periods)
F/S/7	NON-WESTERN TRADITIONS
F/S/7.0	General studies and Comparative Philosophy
F/S/7.1	Works (alphabetically arranged by author)
F/S/7.2	Africa
F/S/7.3	China
F/S/7.4	India
F/S/7.5	Japan
F/S/7.6	Other countries
F/T	**PHILOSOPHY (disciplines and schools)**
F/T/A	METAPHYSICS
F/T/A.01	General studies
F/T/A.02	Texts and anthologies
F/T/A.03	Onthology
F/T/A.04	Cosmology
F/T/A.05	Philosophy of nature
F/T/A.06	Space-time
F/T/A.07	Matter
F/T/A.08	Number and quantity
F/T/B	AESTHETICS
F/T/B.01	General studies
F/T/B.02	Texts and anthologies
F/T/B.03	History
F/T/B.04	Aesthetic judgment
F/T/B.05	Theory of literature
F/T/B.06	Theory of other arts
F/T/C	PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE
F/T/C.01	General studies
F/T/C.02	Texts and anthologies
F/T/C.03	History

F/T/C.04	Language, meaning, communication
F/T/C.05	Linguitics
F/T/C.06	Semantics
F/T/C.07	Pragmatics
F/T/C.08	Semiotics
F/T/D	THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE (epistemology)
F/T/D.01	General studies
F/T/D.02	Texts and anthologies
F/T/D.03	Knowledge (conditions, sources, limits, value)
F/T/D.04	Sociology of knowledge
F/T/D.05	Truth; error
F/T/D.06	Belief; faith
F/T/D.07	Objectivity-subjectivity
F/T/E	LOGIC
F/T/E.01	General studies
F/T/E.02	Texts and anthologies
F/T/E.03	Argumentation (rhetoric; informal logic)
F/T/E.04	Classical logic (mathematical, formal, symbolic logics)
F/T/E.05	Non-classical logics (intuitionistic, many-valued, fuzzy logics)
F/T/E.06	Modal and philosophical logics
F/T/E.07	Logic and artificial intelligence
F/T/E.08	Philosophy and fundamentals of mathematics
F/T/F	PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE
F/T/F.01	General studies
F/T/F.02	Texts and anthologies
F/T/F.03	Causality and explanation
F/T/F.04	Philosophy and methodology of human and social sciences
F/T/F.05	Philosophy and methodology of natural sciences
F/T/F.06	Philosophy and methodology of applied sciences
F/T/F.07	Realism-antirealism
F/T/F.08	Science and society
F/T/F.09	Scientific theory
F/T/F.10	Inference and scientific justification (induction, probability, theories evaluation)
F/T/G	PHILOSOPHY OF MIND
F/T/G.01	General studies
F/T/G.02	Texts and anthologies
F/T/G.03	Action

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F/T/G.04	Perception
F/T/G.05	Consciousness
F/T/G.06	Corporeity and emotion
F/T/G.07	Mind-body
F/T/G.08	Psychologic philosophy
F/T/H	ETHICS
F/T/H.01	General studies
F/T/H.02	Texts and anthologies
F/T/H.03	History
F/T/H.04	Moral theories
F/T/H.05	Bioethics and environmental ethics
F/T/H.06	Professional and business ethics
F/T/H.07	Other applied ethics
F/T/L	PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION
F/T/L.01	General studies
F/T/L.02	Texts and anthologies
F/T/L.03	Religion and society
F/T/L.04	Religious experience
F/T/L.05	Theological issues
F/T/M	PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION
F/T/M.01	General studies
F/T/M.02	Texts and anthologies
F/T/M.03	Education
F/T/M.04	Teaching; didactics
F/T/P	POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY
F/T/P.01	General studies
F/T/P.02	Texts and anthologies
F/T/P.03	History
F/T/P.04	Community and society
F/T/P.05	Democracy
F/T/P.06	International relations
F/T/P.07	Justice
F/T/P.08	Liberty and liberalism
F/T/P.09	National identities and minorities; globalization
F/T/P.10	Political theories
F/T/P.11	The State; the government
F/T/Q	PHILOSOPHY OF LAW
F/T/Q.01	General studies
F/T/Q.02	Texts and anthologies
F/T/Q.03	Natural and positive law
F/T/Q.04	Rights
F/T/R	CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHY
F/T/R.01	General studies
F/T/R.02	Phenomenology
F/T/R.03	Hermeneutics

F/T/R.04	Phenomenology
F/T/R.05	Structuralism, post-structuralism, cultural studies
F/T/R.06	Analitic and post-analitic philosophy
F/T/R.07	Psychoanalitic theories
F/T/R.08	Women's thought
F/T/R.09	Postmodernism
F/T/R.10	Others
F/Z	**OTHERS**
F/Z/000	General works
F/Z/100	Psychology
F/Z/200	Religion
F/Z/300	Social sciences
F/Z/400	Language
F/Z/500	Natural sciences and mathematics
F/Z/600	Technology
F/Z/700	Arts
F/Z/800	Literature
F/Z/900	History and geography

4.1 Some problems

Now I would like to point out some relevant questions emerged at the very beginning of the use of the new schema.

4.1.1 Works

In the previous organisation of the library there was a very large section named Classics, where the various editions of primary literature were located according to book size and order of acquisition. Most works of the Nineteenth century and the totality of those of the Twentieth were not included in this section, but were located together with secondary literature in another large section named Contemporary philosophy. Besides, texts of politics, education and psychology intended as classics were located separately, precisely in the sections created for those disciplines. This arrangement was debatable and no longer useful: to begin with, the concept of classic works is questionable itself, then the separate location of primary literature for some disciplines results in a different treatment for some authors and involves a dispersion of the works of authors that have contributed to more than one philosophical discipline.

Because of the relevance of authorship in philosophical studies, I decided to give priority to the grouping of the works of every single philosopher.

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Primary literature is thus mostly located in the historical section, according to the different periods and using an alphabetic notation (three letters or more if necessary). For each author all works are gathered together, regardless of whether they are critical editions, single works, editions in the original language or translations. This was decided in order to maintain notations as simple as possible and to avoid the frequent shifting of books locations.

As the new classification was to be adopted at the beginning of the new millennium, I thought it could be correct to place all twentieth century authors in the historical section, and to apply the denomination of contemporary philosophy to authors still alive and working. The age of each author is determined by the flourish, not by the date of birth.

4.1.2 Secondary literature

Secondary literature works are not located near the corresponding philosophers, but are arranged in each class according to the period they write about or, for the Nineteenth and Twentieth centuries, the geographical area. Because of this ordering system, researches about a single author might become more difficult and their result not so prompt, but on the other hand it is easier to perceive the wholeness of a period and for the librarian to locate effectually works about more than one author, about a school, about a theme.

4.1.3 Related-disciplines

Philosophical research and teaching at the University of Trieste had always involved also related disciplines and subjects, in particular history of science and political theory. For this reason I decided not to create separate sections for these disciplines (that obviously could in every other context stand alone), but to keep them all together, to make the most of history of thought and philosophical and scientific research, emphasizing a comprehensive point of view. That is why in the historical section there are also the works of authors who are not (or not only) philosophers, but mainly scientists, psychologists, sociologists and so on.

4.1.4 Conflicts

Classifying books displays conflicts, especially between the decision to locate them in the historical part or according to the discipline. I acknowledged

that sometimes it is useful to locate primary literature in the disciplines, so I provided for a Texts and anthologies subdivision in every single class. Works published in editions that emphasize the use in a specific – not historical – context are located here. When in doubt, however, historical and authorial classification is preferred. If in primary literature the author prevails, on the contrary in secondary literature the discipline or subject is the first facet.

4.1.5 Contemporary philosophy

It is difficult and even useless to distinguish between texts and critics in contemporary philosophical literature. Moreover in this field research itself has little to do with the historical point of view. For these reasons contemporary philosophy is not in the historical section, but constitutes the last group in the thematic one. Contemporary philosophy is organized referring to currents and schools; this important criterion is used only in this part of the classification, even if it is well known and useful in history of philosophy, as it seems to describe well enough a moving scenery. However I must admit that book classification in this area remains often troublesome and doubtful.

5. Organizing the existing collection and managing change

Unfortunately it became soon a matter of fact that there were not and there would never be enough resources to recatalogue all the existing documents. As the urge for a new arrangement was also clearly felt, I decided to use the new system for the new acquisitions and to put off the solution of the problem of the pre-existing documents. Anyhow, during the settlement in the new library, we were able to make some relocations: all reference books were examined, those still up-to-date and useful were located in the reading room according to the new classification system and the others were put in the storage area with the old call numbers. Many works of primary literature were relocated as well, and also some important works in many volumes still in course of publication.

At present we often do relocations, but there is not a definite working plan. So a complete relocation is not scheduled, but it is provided for, in particular for the space on the shelves.

As two different location systems would have been in use in the new library, sections have been organized in the space to limit scattering. The whole

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old collection is not completely separated from the new, but old and new sections follow one another maintaining a logical order, first in the historical section (that corresponds with old classes 2-6) and then in the thematic one (old classes 7 to19). An accurate signage helps readers, distinguishing new sections from old ones.

The letter F is placed before the old notation in the online catalogue, to indicate the physical part of the library where to find the book and also to remove ambiguity with other identical notations that can derive from the other two pre-existing libraries. There was no need to change the labels, because they are evidently different in patterns and the old ones bear the printed name of the original department or institute library.

6. Impact

I must admit I have not carried out an extensive analysis on the users' perception of and satisfaction with the new arrangement. I know that readers appreciate open stacks, but I must realize that few people understand the importance of classifying books to give them an adequate location on the shelves. The relocation of primary literature according to the author is for sure the most appreciated innovation, but its incompleteness in comparison with the collections makes it scarcely utilizable at present.

From the librarian's point of view, even such a simple classification requires the work of a subject specialist and a certain amount of working time. Yet I believe that this is the minimum required to do our work: arrange a book in a semantic section makes sense, and the process is involved with the development of collections. It is even more important in the context of Italian university libraries, where the acquisition of a work is very often due to some specific research needs and only rarely to an organic acquisition plan.

7. Conclusion

A new topic has lately emerged in the Italian debate, matching some of the problems I felt still unsolved in this experience. I mean the discussion about Web 2.0 and its influence in library world, in particular in cataloguing issues. As it is well known, each document of a library can be described with metadata ex-

pressed by librarians or also by authors themselves; the new aspect is that thanks to new web resources it can be described also by users. The first process is carried out by the traditional librarians' work, intended as an analytic and formalized representation of the content of the document; the second is scarcely represented in our organisations, even if title words act in this sense, as they are expressed by authors and searchable in opacs as metadata. The third process, the user's involvement represents the new challenge.

In my library, as I have just explained, the content organisation remained at a higher and more general level than the one commonly used in classification, simply assigning every document to one of the predefined classes. This, originally due to the lack of human resources, has become nowadays a more sensible choice, because users can have new powerful instruments to complete a poor but manageable classification with adequate and shared tagging. Our patrons are, or at least are going to become, discipline specialists; philosophic works are inevitably and constitutionally polysemic; "authoriality" is so important that it makes philosophic works assimilable to literature works, in that the latter have no subject in cataloguing. In this context the librarian's work can look too simplified, unreliable, even useless. It is the users' turn and chance: a tagging work can be done for personal use, or even better, to be used by a working community, and if the community is composed by scholars of the discipline, the result will for sure build up more than a folksonomy. No specific competence in classifying and indexing is required, and it is possible to devise many different systems based on different criteria or made in different times. The librarian's work stops at the basic level of a simply and obvious location of the books on the shelves; afterwards this work is completed by publishing (in the sense of making public) basic records that can be used and grouped according to users' needs and in case re-distributed via the library web.

In this sense the library can become a "conversation", and in the specific case of a university library it would be a conversation between a research community and its instruments and products. This way also the role of the librarian can become clearer and the debate about intermediation and disintermediation can proceed a step further.