

The Classification of Harris: Influences of Bacon and Hegel in the Universe of Library Classification

Rodrigo de Sales
Universidade Federal Fluminense

Thiago B. Pires
Universidade de Brasília

The studies of library classification generally interact with the historical contextualization approach and with the classification ideas typical of Philosophy. In the 19th century, the North-American philosopher and educator William Torrey Harris developed a book classification at the St. Louis Public School, based on Francis Bacon and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. The objective of the present study is to analyze Harris's classification, reflecting upon his theoretical and philosophical backgrounds. To achieve such objective, the study chose a critical-descriptive analysis of the article entitled *Book Classification* – published originally by Harris in 1870 at *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy* – supported by works on classification and Philosophy. This way, the analysis was in part descriptive, focusing on the classification published in the article *Book Classification*, and partly critical in the sense that it related classificatory perspectives of Bacon and Hegel with Harris's classification. Results show some influences of Bacon and Hegel in Harris's classification. From Bacon, Harris adopted the formative idea of knowledge based on the faculties of mind and the deductive hierarchy, which order the subjects internally from the most general to the most specific. It should be mentioned that Bacon and Hegel believed to be possible to capture a form that defined the structure and dynamics of knowledge. From Hegel, Harris inherited the focus centered on *Idea*, on the reason modeled by *Science*, which made his classification logically idealist. This focus on sciences led Harris to invert the Baconian classes, giving more relevance to reason, which was prominent in the 19th century and in the Hegelian perspective.