Research Trajectories in Knowledge Organization

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Declassifying Knowledge Organization

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Abstract: Classification, as is common knowledge, is simultaneously an operation (classer) and an instrument of knowledge organization (classifier), regardless of more technical or specific designations used in that area of research, although an operation that 'naturally' transcends the very realm of knowledge organization (KO) to which it descended from the logos. In this text, a summary of more than 35 years of work, the author presents a series of hypothesis and itineraries of declassified thought, a way of thinking based on strategies of reflexivity and pluralism that buttress the automatic, hierarchical and essentialist tendencies enhanced by totalitarian mind, whether this be harsh or subtle, which are imposed by all levels of power in order to re-orientate them towards civic commitment, re-politicization of KO practices that were never depoliticized. Declassification is a hermeneutics of KO that recuperates criticism, rhetoric, reflection, emotions, affection and even contradiction as the cornerstones of systematic knowledge production processes. The world is not only full of heterogeneous knowledge but also heterogeneous forms of knowing that must be restored and deliberated upon on an equal basis. That is the aim of declassification on putting forward an open and alternative interpretation of rethinking and practising identity, culture, memory or social sciences and KO, particularly in the new digital space of unlimited interaction.

1.0 Introduction: classification and symbolic violence

The classification of the human exomemory, thousands of years before the advent of specific devices for organizing repositories of knowledge, was already a powerful strategy of the *logos* for ordering the world (*ordo*: ruling and control) by means of essentialist demarcations and ontological purifications in an illusion of universalism and consistency which it would only be able to partially

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and just barely break through by exercising sensitive self-surveillance and emancipatory will.

As a weapon of domination, classification has always formed a part of territorial and, above all, cultural and cognitive colonization projects, lurking behind many acts of symbolic violence, reaching its paranoiac climax in the ideology and classified archives of Nazism. As with any other human institution (languages, social organizations, beliefs, sciences, etc.), classification becomes inward-looking so as to defend its colonizing action, revealing totalitarian structures and objectives (even 'authors' resort to a natural 'authoritarianism'). In one way or another, classification usurps, distorts, overlaps, subordinates and colonizes the unlimited flow of sense (semiosis), making free movement practically impossible in the world that it controls by means of its categories.

Furthermore, the inevitability of classification cannot be denied, nor can the good services that it has rendered knowledge, for instance, relating to several discoveries made by positivist epistemology (despite their severe side effects). Nonetheless, and in view of the great harms that hierarchical ordering has brought upon culture, knowledge and human coexistence, in this work what is advocated for is what will be called 'declassification', an undefined, fragile and hybrid form of organization, not opposed to defined, strong and essentialist classification but as an alternative that embraces it. From this perspective, classification would be an exclusionary epistemological operation of categorization, characterized by closed concepts whose ultimate intention (whether the mediator-classifier is aware or not) is dogmatism.

Moreover, declassification should be understood as a hermeneutic operation involving ideas open to different sensibilities whose cornerstone and aim is logical, cultural, social, political or cognitive pluralism. Classification veils, divides and separates while declassification reveals, aggregates, reunites.

Neither do I doubt the good intentions, even when they have tragic consequences, which are sometimes behind some classifying evaluations promoted by culture: Olivé (1999) writes that in Papua New Guinea, when the elders of a certain ethnicity sense their imminent death, they ask their family to bury them alive under the manure of their livestock, with only a reed to breathe through. Charitable Western doctors—convinced that they are doing the right thing—try to prolong their lives by transferring them to Australian hospitals and thus preventing them from exercising their right to a dignified death (on the strength of being the chosen form). In this remarkable episode we can see a form of symbolic violence that our classification of the world, economic model or digital technology applies to alien knowledge or worlds with the same aim of 'saving their lives'.

Declassification implies adopting a complex perspective that does not exclude any pre-, post- or para-epistemological tool. Contradiction, for instance, is a basic resource that, in specific cases, provides if not explications, then powerful intuitions and pragmatic acceptations of the world which do not conform to traditional logic: we want to finish the chocolate cake but we do not want it be finished; we want and, then again, do not want our children to grow up; on being the same tree, it should not change but it does at each and every instant; present time has to pass so as to continue to be; thanks to oxygen, our organism lives while it self-incinerates.

Contradiction is the most taboo concept of the effective world for systematic thinking. Nonetheless, it is one of the staunchest allies of declassification and the subject of the last section of this essay, where several operative strategies that open knowledge to all horizons, contesting the three sacred principles of the logic that governs us (which, however, has been challenged by quantum mechanics for nearly a century now), will be proposed.

I venture to say that, in the majority of statements, concepts and positions, it would be possible to elaborate a contradiction, provoke its paradoxical regimen. From *Aufhebung*[1] to deconstruction, this means that negativity is at the heart of positivity, in other words, that contradiction forms a part—however worthless—of our factual world. For many years now, I have adopted a strategic posture of alliance with contradiction. In this way, when conventional reason reaches its limit, I rely on contradiction as a post-epistemological resource (post- or any other prefix would do here). Detecting contradictions so as to invalidate or reject a piece of preceding knowledge (or theory), one of the frequent objectives of the epistemological battering ram, would not be the goal of declassification. A most atrociously barbaric world gathers pace every day, in spite of 'rational' denunciations, against the logic of any judicious subject. In its desire to explain the world through its contradictory rationale, declassification even favours the fabrication of laboratory contradictions (such as oxymora, for instance, see 4.1 and García Gutiérrez 2007) so as to break and extend the limits of that same knowledge.

All the aforementioned might be sufficient to denounce the violence of classification: the act of classifying does not involve any more than a prescription or proscription, a forcing that leaves little room for appeal. Knowledge (the subject, in sum) cannot but vanquish its sensibility (its *aisthesis*[2]) with the aim of adjusting itself to the labels provided (as *an-aisthesis*) by the 'hierarchy of credibility'[3] (Becker 1967). But classification also has its Achilles heel: it is not only about organizing something in consonance with some of other point of view, but also disorganizing a previous, conceivably invisible system. In fact, we decompose a world so as to impose another

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composition on it; since any new classification involves a calculated or spontaneous dismantling of the area concerned. Therefore, classifying declassifies and declassifying reclassifies: the difference lying in the metacognitive, pluralist and explicitly subjective commitment of declassifying versus the automatism, false objectivism or a preference for the establishment hierarchy by classification.

In the same way that a secret file is unclassified so as to make it public, we should declassify the complexity of the world in order to make it once again accessible to knowledge. And this can only be achieved by installing a metacognitive tool, of critical self-vigilance, in our system of reasoning, based on logical pluralism, which is no more than a profound conviction of respect for the other, the only logic worthy of its name, but let us take good note: whether it be contemporary, successors or predecessors[4].

Attempting to avoid classification, or even just trying to sidestep it, is just as utopian as wanting to flee in the face of language or thinking. If we manage to invalidate a system, another takes its place simultaneously. This is so because classification is a condition for knowledge. We could know with other categories, but this always has to be done through categories. Those other categories and the concepts that they organize ought to prevent impenetrability, impermeability, dogmatism, and relativism, and endow themselves with open, permeable, self-critical, sensitive, plural configurations.

In *Bluebeard's Castle* (1974), George Steiner solemnly stated that all that he wrote and thought revolved around the Auschwitz catastrophe. History was radically changed by the *Shoah*. Nothing would be the same again. And that suffering cannot be rationalized for Auschwitz is beyond reason. Mèlich (1998) has conscientiously analyzed the work of Steiner, stating that the key to contemporary thinking must be found there: "How can you perform Schubert at night, read Rilke in the morning, and torture at midday?" The answer to this would be philosophy's greatest challenge[5]. Today's philosophers and scientists continue to produce knowledge as if the 20st century, the most violent in the history of mankind, had never existed. Knowledge organization (KO) should not be an exception either.

2.0 Reason as a belief

In his *Philosophical Fragments* (1985), a work as monumental as it is modest, with extreme lucidity Kierkegaard took reasoning about faith to the unplumbed depths of the psyche only to proclaim it as a paradox. Reason, nonetheless, as an instrument for demonstrating anything, although exceptionally faith, falls into the inextricable circle of causality, so that, although nobody could deny the Danish philoso-

pher the right, and the incalculable merit, of reasoning about faith in the Creator or faith in general, if only on the strength of the sacred right of freedom of expression, nor could he deprive us of our own right by denying the infallibility of reason as a procedure that affords us access to any superior, metaphysical or Absolute place.

We think what we believe and we believe what we think. But what this implies is not a circle, but a subtle spiral, because belief is always prior to inference and imperceptibly interferes with it. In all cultures, belief is dependent on thought from childhood, and a 'rational' adult will only 'believe' in his or her rationality, one deeply rooted in belief. Many may suffer from (contradictory) paraconsistent bipolarity, since, while believing in reason, they also believe in mythologies with which it is incompatible.

But beliefs in theories and great narratives have sustained imaginaries throughout history: with the same force that, for the aboriginal people, the clan-based taboo of exogamy and the totem were erected (Freud 1995), in other places the Ptolemaic sublunary world was imposed for many centuries on those living before Copernicus. Likewise, Copernicus' heliocentric model fulfilled the expectations of multitudes and generations. The theory of relativity still offers us the most plausible explication for the macrocosm, although in conflict with quantum mechanics. Faith and reason exchange discreet keys. Here follow several explanations.

2.1 Metonymic reduction

Metonymic reduction is an epistemological practice that identifies the part with the whole. The daily classification of Western collective imaginary of the world is an expression of a 'metonymic' rationality which belongs to the instrumental reason censured by Weber or the Frankfurt School itself. Metonymic reduction is the reduction of reductions, a reduction whose only aim is to reduce, simplify, and fragment; a reduction overwhelmingly present in the processes of understanding, enunciation and classification favoured by the dominant form of contemporary rationality.

Cultures are built and maintained on the basis of immutable categories, prejudices and suppositions, and metonymics facilitates enormously the constitution and transmission of that world on offering it in partial visions and mutilating biases. Metonymics follows the progressive path of reduction of the world to the extent of converting it into a handful of slogans and clichés. It is for this reason that the metonymic language of marketing and advertising, which has already infiltrated the discourses produced in Western culture, from the political to the purely scientific, is so efficient. To such an extent, in fact, that the exceptionality of the use of metonymics has become a commonplace cognitive tool, automatic and,

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therefore, scarcely detectable but overwhelmingly present in our daily discourses, choices and actions.

The Portuguese sociologist Boaventura Santos (2005, 155-56) considers that metonymic reason is a form of rationality that imposes: "a homogeneity on the whole and the parts, which do not exist beyond the relationship with the totality…. So it is incomprehensible that some of the parts have their own life beyond the whole …. Western modernity, dominated by metonymic reason, not only has a limited understanding of the world but also of itself." The conviction, so firmly rooted in the West, of assigning a universal value to a strictly local and contemporary worldview has penetrated not only in the daily imaginary of westerners but also in pro-Western and fringe cultures, in many cases by means of the silent and gradual adoption of those same Western worldviews, technologies and languages.

Two immediate cognitive actions are produced through metonymic reason:

– The fragmentation and division of all the instances so as to be studied, dominated and exploited by parts like the human body, invaded cultures, or the Western agencies themselves at the service of an essentialist supra-Western efficiency, as occurs in the field of science, politics, values or the division of labour.

– The promotion of an arbitrary logic that, far beyond Morin's hologrammatical principle (2008), involves identifying the division with the whole of which it was just a part. Thus, classes and parts are regarded in an uncontrolled process as species and wholes, and that such a logic begins to operate in daily practices as an ebullient epistemological flow. In the forest of classified knowledge, each tree, trunk and branch would occupy an unquestionable place.

2.2 Dichotomic reduction

Once it has obtained the license of metonymic production, classifying thought arms itself with two keen properties:

– Sliding: this involves a kind of uncontrollable movement that allows us to pass unjustifiably from one instance to another for the mere fact of possessing homonymous, homographic and homophonic representations. Lacan used to underline the effect of metonymic sliding across the structure of signifiers themselves. The discursive situation is undoubtedly responsible for the sliding that occurs in one direction or another. But, despite being generated on the surface of meaning, the effects on this (for understanding or for enunciation) could not be more decisive.

– Dichotomization: dichotomy offers a world constructed by means of opposing pairs. All instances are constructed on an opposite reference. True enough: dichotomies produce knowledge, but only dichotomic knowledge. What is paradoxical is that this reductive cognitive mode has ended up absorbing other more complex modes. Its nature is based on the following properties:

1) Binarism: subjectivity expresses experiences and perceives the world in conceptual pairs: good or bad, faithful or unfaithful, man or woman, master or slave, North or South. Symbolic comprehension, automation and submission are favoured on reducing alternatives to a binary polarization.

2) Opposition: those pairs, not necessarily harmonic or sympathetic, offer themselves up as an expression of tension or conflict, thus legitimizing it: good *versus* bad, faithful *versus* unfaithful, man *versus* woman, North *versus* South.

3) Subordination: the pair's order would not be neutral but determined by a hegemonic criterion: good over bad, faithful over unfaithful, man over woman, North over South.

4) Generalization and negative exclusion: in certain dichotomies, the subordinate element is presented dismissively as a negation of the subordinating instance that initializes the pair, by means of prefixes such as in-(fidel), un-(loyal), non-(believers), ab-(normal), etc., the denied instance habitually representing a larger or more diverse world than that which is represented by the denying instance: Christians/infidels (Muslims, Animists, Buddhists, atheists, agnostics, etc.), normal/abnormal, and even classified/declassified, however much declassification embraces classification as another mode of organization, but not vice versa.

After dichotomies comes a crushing logical order that I think that, to differ from the opinion of Santos, is not exclusive, even less so of Western culture, but rather a constant in any culture or personality that seeks domination and expansion. And such an order impregnated morals: good/bad; law: innocent/guilty; politics: in favour/against; digital technology: 1/0.

I will end this section with an illustrative example which allows us to rethink the ordinary in extraordinary situations: In the excellent film *XXY* (name of a chromosome), by the Argentine moviemaker Lucía Puenzo (2007), Alex—a teenager classified as intersexual or hermaphrodite by medical taxonomies—is asked by her/his father (Ricardo Darín), anxious because of the physical and psychic violence suffered by the adolescent, in order to know when and what sex will she/he finally choose,

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male or female: "Dad, what if there were nothing to choose?," Alex (choosing) answered him.

2.3 Analogical reduction

As Umberto Eco stated in *Kant and the Platypus* (2000), which, in my opinion, is his best work on knowledge theory, with repercussions that cannot be ignored by experts in KO, British zoologists spent a part of the 19th century debating on how to classify the platypus, a likeable animal discovered for Western biology by colonists in Australia and New Zealand. The aborigines had already made this discovery thousands of years before and had never argued about its zoological classification. The platypus has a duck's beak and lays eggs (bird), a furry tail and strange mammary glands (mammal), it slithers and has claws (reptile), in addition to spending half of its life in aquatic environments where it hunts and obtains sustenance (amphibian). After much debate, the zoologists arrived at the conclusion that the animal should be regarded as a mammal. They had to make a choice and decided on that taxonomy, although how could they explain, among other things, the matter of the eggs and beak?

Several zoologists, according to Eco, made extravagant comments as regards the platypus, for instance regarding its position in the animal order: mammals with parts of other animals or an exceptional mutation. Recent discoveries show that the platypus belongs to a species that, for millions of years, has been regressing towards its involution. And, in fact, the platypus is not composed of 'bits' of other animals, but other animals possess 'bits' of the platypus.

Comparing formal Kantian categories with the Peircian concept of thirdness, Eco expounds upon the cultural imperative, how taxonomies are reproduced through mechanisms of recognition, taking the famous example of Marco Polo when, on seeing an Asian rhinoceros for the first time during his journey to the East, classified it as a unicorn because of its resemblance to a known animal that, for another thing, had never existed except in mythological narrative and paintings that Polo himself had had the chance to familiarize himself with in Venice.

George Kleiber (1990) talks about a semantics of prototypes that operates mentally by degrees of analogy, far-removed from the world of scholarship, in 'ordinary' people and which can help us to understand analogism at all levels and as regards all issues as a mode of mental configuration of the world. Although this may seem nonsense for zoologists, when a non-specialist talks about mammals, he or she associates them with, for instance, cows or lions, rarely with whales or mice, and never with platypuses, due to their aspect. In the same way as there is a greater concurrence with a prototype, there are also

situations or objects that distance themselves. For a zoologist, a whale is not a fish (since it is a mammal), although for 'ordinary' people a whale could be regarded as being more a fish than a lion, or even an eel (the latter being taxonomically a fish). However, 'far less' a fish than a whale would, for the dominant analogical automatism, always be an otter or a platypus. We are all ignorant and audacious classifiers outside our own territory: a sociologist would succumb to sliding analogies beyond his or her specialization (classifying, for example, plants as edible and inedible), since he or she is only capable of self-monitoring the strict structures of his or her own 'discipline'; and a botanist would make a mess of the family relationships so cherished by ethnographers.

The degrees of constant analogical adscription of all instances with respect to master categories is a fact that ends up by transforming prototypes into stereotypes (Abril 2013). Stereotypes invade concepts and nullify their reliability, although they promulgate an efficient logic of classification that, inexplicably, reason tends not to reject. In fact, many types of racist behaviour would respond to that stereotype. And the answers would be a resounding 'yes' or an outright 'no', when on many occasions we would like them to be vague, equivocal: yes-but, no-but or even yes-but-no, yes-and-no.

In the same vein, the notion of encyclopaedia put forward by Eco (2001) acquires relevance. For Eco, an encyclopaedia is a mental place that contains all the possible experiences concerning a given semiotic instance, naturally in the personal and non-transferrable place of each subject. So, transmitting or receiving a message about Brazil, London, mice or cars projects the full personal encyclopaedia of a subject which, in some way, would coincide with the anamnestic baggage of another subject. For instance, Brazilians and Londoners, or whoever has had a bad experience with mice or cars, will project those concepts in a very different way than people who have never visited those places, whose knowledge boils down to what they have read or what other people have told them.

Reducing to stereotypes cannot be overcome when the classifying intention enters a transitive meaning shift and is now incapable of remembering the primary meaning or functionality. James Clifford (1997) related that the Portland Art Museum intended to reclassify the Rasmussen Collection of 'Native' Art by consulting several Inuit clan representatives from whence the objects came. Far from answering satisfactorily the questions posed by the museum's curators on the origins, functions or traditions of a mask or harpoon, the Inuits confined themselves to telling stories and singing songs based on the memories evoked by those objects, which for them had no artistic or anthropological value, let alone as collection items. During the three days of meetings, they exchanged memories and as-

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serted claims, became depressed and laughed, without contributing any classifying element that served the interests of the exhibition. What perverse logic could possibly lie behind that paternalist strategy in which the classifiers consult their classified individuals?

Several civilizations and cultures, for instance, subcultures that are not necessarily territorial, such as the scientific kind, have specialized in 'hetero-classification', in drawing up lists of clichés with which the classified subjects and objects have to comply, knowing full well that the inclusion of all the subjects and objects in the same category is usually contrived, or that the category ends up by shattering due to internal pressure or because of the dynamics themselves of the restless world that it intends to subordinate.

Epistemological and scientific categories, especially in the social and human sciences, are not prepared to assume constant change from a totalist supra-ordering. In daily life (political, media, community, etc.), analogical reduction, along with the dichotomic and metonymic kind, would be at the origin of numerous conflicts and suppressions.

Together with these three reductions of classifying reason, there operate many other gravitational tendencies that, because of the limited space available, are summarized below:

– Epistemism: this is generated under a dominant paradigm. In the case of scientific reason, its rationality would adapt at all costs to the meta-scientific rules of epistemology, although for Santos, epistemology never applies them to itself (1989).
– Demarcationism: reason that is only capable of constructing knowledge from the disjunctions between cultures, nations, clans, communities, subjectivities or any other kind of ontological demarcation. Essentialism would also be one of those uncontrollable and inexplicable 'rational pulsations'.
– Aestheticism: reason that yields to protocols, standards, formalisms, stabilities, organizations, processes, and repudiates aesthesias (sensibilities) and algies (sufferings). Normativism is derived from aestheticism that is intruded by and intrudes upon everything else. The same can be said for the contagious mimicry of the new (Groys 2014) that, in few years, makes us see clothes, hairstyles, cars, technology or our own face as ridiculous.
– Coherentism: consistent way of thinking that proscribes its chief enemy: contradiction.

Everything has to fit in a story, forcibly if need be. Nothing is easier to decry than contradiction in the forming of reason. It is sometimes so evident that its denunciation

seems indecent. All the eristic masters, from Aristotle to Seneca, from the sophists to the aphorisms of Schopenhauer, took it upon themselves to establish systems keyed to demonstrating this. But the uneasiness provoked by contradiction is generated by the very act of reasoning that wants to, but cannot, free itself of rich impurities and indispensable irrational, emotional and affective genealogies. All these reasons, as can be seen, strengthen, traverse and contradict one another.

3.0 Epistemic obstacles

Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte listened with curiosity to Laplace's theory of the cosmos, warning him that he had not mentioned the Creator: "Sire," he replied, "I never had the need of that hypothesis" (Hottois 2002). In the theological sphere, Anselm of Canterbury applied himself to demonstrating the existence of God through his famous ontological argument, while Kant dismantled it with elegant reasoning. Fear of the Inquisition might have been behind the dualism, the clear separation between soul and body, religion and science, in many 16th-18th century thinkers (even Descartes himself ordered the posthumous publishing of several of his works, including *Le Monde*, and at that time Cartesianism was persecuted). Freer from threat, Kierkegaard (1985), as has been seen, resorted to paradox so as to justify the impossible explanation for faith through reason, and, by the beginning of the 20th century, the neopositivists had already excluded metaphysics from their objectives: that which cannot be verified empirically should not be discussed (Wittgenstein, 1961). In the sphere of pragmatism, William James ([1927] 1995) would declare himself to be a Catholic so as to exclude the problem of religious faith from his epistemological itinerary, and Rorty (1979) took the illusion of philosophy to the established limit lambasting, with good reason, mentalism. With deconstruction, Derrida crossed that limit suspending all origins and all ends, and in *The Logic of Sense*, for Deleuze (1990) sense had no logic. At a more sectoral level, Gaston Bachelard (1980) proposed the epistemological rupture, 'eliminating' the world and demarcating the purified itinerary of science versus daily discourses, while Boaventura Santos (1989), instigating a second rupture, reinstated common sense in a line convergent with that of sociology. Or Jesús Ibáñez (1994) or the ethnomethodology of Garfinkel (1967) who, on the basis of the most radical kind of self-questioning, led Mills (2001) and, above all, Alvin Gouldner (1980) to assert an impossible objectivity in social research. I hope that, with this illustrative background, you will allow me make an omission highly pertinent to thinking about declassification, an issue to be addressed in Section 4, shedding certain epistemological dead weight: what is involved is suspending Reality and Truth, since

their unproductive presence tends to disrupt the process of declassified inquiry.

3.1 Suspending Reality and Truth

While representativists claim that the mind reflects an objective exterior reality, radical constructivists sustain that such a reality does not exist, since it would be a strict mental production. For declassification, this discussion is unnecessary. Suspending Reality is a strategy for avoiding an 'Absolute' of classification that suppresses our conceptual world. We can name Reality (several religions have already done so in their own way), but not talk about it or transmit what it supposedly tells us (something which religions also tend to do with absolute normality). Among other things, this is so because Reality would be a totality from which this world of awareness, at least one, has emerged plausibly from among trillions of other different, convergent or parallel worlds. We will never know whether awareness comes into being in a specific universe, in several universes or in an infinite number of infinite universes by fate, chance or accident, insomuch as to determine this would be akin to encompassing the vast totality or speaking from its exterior.

As it begins to be interfered with by concepts and transferred, communicated and substituted by humans, they gradually stop perceiving Reality. This does not mean to say that Reality does not exist but, simply, that the dimension that its offers to intelligent mammals is vulnerable and increasingly more vague due to our conceptual mediation (and measuring) and practically extinguished by meta-conceptualization, as will be seen further on. From the inaccessibility of the Real only our factual world would be left, a world whose perception would also be confined by the meta-conceptual apparatus of each culture. In exchange for this necessary suspension, I will embrace the hybridist conception of Latour (1993), according to which, and breaking a Cartesian dualism, no evident ontological frontier would exist between people (subjects) and cars or computers (objects), forasmuch as the objects have been designed and made by the subjects, who in turn construct themselves on the basis of the very objects that they handle; that is to say, the objects and we, the subjects, are hybridizations.

Who cares about truth if we live in the normality of its simulacrum? If we take a look at the varied conceptions of truth, the truthful, whose totality is unreachable, is dispensable. The veil of Māyā, in this case, our conceptual system, makes it unnecessary to operate with the reference of that other absolute. Truth was assumed by the powerful by invoking stars, divinities, curses and catastrophes so as to impose it. The custodians of truth were lords, sorcerers, shamans, clergymen, the guardians who took it upon themselves to destroy all that which threatened dogmatism and its continuity. Later on, its couriers were the intermediate institutions (Durkheimean expression) and especially the educational, scientific, political and media arenas. Truth, therefore, has always been problematic since its mythical beginnings. Its condition of impossibility lies exactly in the need for its conceptual representation.

If what we understand by truth is the adaptation and correspondence between enunciations and the facts to which they refer, what would settle such a relationship would be other favourable or unfavourable ones, something therefore subject to interpretation, bias. Under this prism, truth would correspond to the most plausible enunciation. Authenticity would, in all cases, be one of the substitutes accepted by declassification in absence of that universal truth.

If we approach truth from another perspective, such as the acceptance of something as truthful, we introduce more relentless interferences: an indeterminate number of people that assume the truth of an enunciation, reaching an agreement that legitimates a position, an incursion of rhetoric so as to demonstrate, through argumentation, an enunciation that does not demonstrate itself or convince the rest of the world. We would now be under the conception of truth as an agreement, another practical vision also assumable for declassified thought. For an enunciation or fact, an occurrence that is not free of enunciation and, therefore, rhetoric, to be true, we would need permanent unanimity, that is, a futile verification. And there will always be a subject or culture, or an objection in a sole subject or culture now or in the future, that will invalidate those pretensions.

In daily life, nobody can be sure of telling the truth. Deception and self-deception are integrated into mental structures and our conception of the world (even animals 'deceive' instinctively to seduce, camouflage themselves or intimidate). All generations (also a false concept) have thought about the world on the basis of naïve or deliberate deceit and have constructed the world on these foundations. Lies are motivated by survival, instinct, introversion, jealousy, greed, desire, shameful interests. But the main driver of falsehood is fear; even fear of telling the truth.

The majority of people lie from self-deception; they lie without knowing. A declaration of sincerity can be, as stated by Elster (1988), a perverse way of gaining credence with others. Absolute Truth belongs to classification, and relative, fragmented truth in construction is not absolute Truth. Then what is the point of appealing to it, if only as a simple rhetorical, opportunist or eristic practice? The poet Paul Valéry said rightly: self-deception can reside in the purest sincerity (1960).

And one last word of caution: he that searches for absolute truth (or authenticity or the essence) will only be

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able to approach it in absolute untruth. Of untruth, as with offence, we can be sure of its sincerity. Of truth, as with flattery, we should always be in doubt: vituperation and scorn have more possibilities of being sincere. Essentialism will always doubt the genealogical purity. But the sole purity would be that of the hybrid. This being so, truth has more conditions of possibility in what is false.

3.2 On concepts and categories

The history of the world of human understanding is the history of concepts and this incessant colonization. It is for this reason that the approach of the so-called 'post-colonial studies' to the field of KO is of enormous interest. It might indeed be true, as Hardt and Negri (2000) have critically affirmed, that the initial originality of the theorists of post-colonialism (Bhabha 1994; Spivak 1999; Mignolo 2000, etc.) has got bogged down in the mangrove swamp of the old colonial categories about which they pretend to caution us and from which they profess to free us with their proposals. In fact, I believe that the opposition of emic/etic research methods (or even their 'complementation' as a way of achieving 'objectivity') is detrimental, insomuch as the outside/inside perspective must be simultaneous. The difficulty and challenge is to obtain a plural and, in any case, hermeneutic perspective. Post-colonialism habitually takes advantage of spaces and cultures usurped by foreign powers, but these powers also colonize inwardly. The post-colonial discourse should be complemented by post-colonial strategies, if only from a now insufficient geopolitical standpoint, even though we do not know how to think outside the conception of frontier, as claimed by Kymlicka (1995).

Colonial processes neither start nor end in mere territorial or cultural invasions. Both the biophysical world and the universe of knowledge are products of unlimited recolonizations, be they deliberate or fortuitous. No living organism manages to eradicate bacteria because if it did indeed rid itself of some of them, others would take their place and, if it managed to rid itself of all of them, it would have transformed itself into a post-organic organism, since bacteria themselves are a condition and symptom of biosystems. The same happens with immaterial instances, such as knowledge or thought, which cannot avoid exterior colonization or contamination, because this forms a part of their inexorable evolution. What is important, when all is said and done, is that a dominant colonial knowledge policy, as in the case at hand, never quite manages to substitute or even eradicate knowledge practices regarded as peripheral, nor does it violate the epistemological limits of the very production of knowledge.

Culture, identity, memory, rationality, information, knowledge and its classification would be colonized in-

stances that disseminate colonization. The structures that, for Bataille or Althuser, always speak for themselves penetrate particularly what and how we know, what we classify and organize. Here is one of the basic theoretical challenges of declassified thought: the production of an open, esthesic, compassionate, heeding knowledge, a self- and hetero-decolonizing knowledge.

We know through concepts that are not exempt, such as that of the aforementioned bacteria, through unexplored yearnings for colonization. We colonize by knowing, stating and organizing knowledge by means of concepts. Through closed, resemanticized and updated concepts, we supposedly narrate open and remote stories. By dint of rigid concepts, we predict flexible futures. By virtue of static concepts, we discover flows and changes. It is known concepts that take the unknown hostage. Hence, a decolonizing conscience, with which the theory of KO cannot afford to dispense, would have to oversee any inevitably colonizing movement, above all if it is involutive. This would be an expressible teleological paradox with the peerless strength of an oxymoron: declassifying as a decolonizing re-colonizing project.

The world's instances intertwine like rhizomes, with spontaneous ruptures, unimaginable and hazardous absences and alliances, and it is the logos that makes them harmonic, determinist and self-referential by closing ranks with concepts whose abysmal interstices and flows of their porosities are concealed by grammars, contexts and pragmatic uses. If we say a thousand million, a hundred million or even a hundred people, our mind simulates a conceptual image which it is essential to evade immediately so as not to be overwhelmed by an unending brevity, an unlimited laconism. We operate with deliberately vague images, even for something so supposedly specific, but topically unapproachable, as a two-digit figure.

We cannot even have a Cartesian, precise, clear and distinct idea of the open, intertwined and vast world represented by 10 miles or just a hamlet. We are incapable of simultaneously grasping the totality or density of our own home, workplace or specialization. We shift lineally, precariously and discontinuously through those closed concepts with pretentions of totality, but when we catch hold of a small part, the rest escapes us as does totality itself, which would never be equal to the sum of its parts, also totalities, and not even to the totality that was or could be at an instant or from another perspective.

With surprising naturalness, we are capable of applying ourselves to using concepts that speak of possible instances only because they dare to invoke them. Protected by these objections, we cannot even adhere to the old and comfortable nominalist dilemma. For nominalism, universals do not exist: woman, humanity, slavery, etc., but rather there exist specific entities: women, people, slaves,

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although what are these now reckonable entities if not still inconceivable instances (and all this without taking into account the quantum universe)? The problem of universals would not lie then in the impossible idea that leads us to a general concept, but in the impossibility of any specific concept that pretends to close the world to which it refers. What coincidence would there be between two casual interlocutors with different experiences of the conception of Rio de Janeiro; or one of its districts, streets or palaces, or a modest family living in a favela? Would it be possible to grasp in one word, phrase, book, or library the complexity of all the historical intersections, magnitudes or complex associations comprising Rio or any of its subcomponents in space or time? What diverse and apprehensible world represents the concept of Carioca, Brazilian or Latin American, beyond a figure and a number of unequally shared attachments or memories? Even though they did not resemble modern Brazilians, were the inhabitants of Brazil 100, 500 or 3,000 years ago Brazilian? Will these inhabitants be Brazilian in 10 centuries' time? How does the diachronic and synchronic diversity of a place, its society and the generations that have lived there register a closed conception? Will a concept register trajectories and changes? Are not trajectories and changes a part of the conception of the world? What precise meaning do the concepts of society, subject or generation, for instance, have in a trajectory or change? Is a photogram, a two-dimensional concept, sufficient to express an escape, cause, finality, meaning, doubt, contradiction or opening? If insufficient, how can we possibly overcome such a semic lacuna and be capable of closing and classifying concepts? By means of rough and anaesthetic brushstrokes, classification resolves what for declassified thinking is an unstoppable flow and perceptive sensitive vocation. The taxonomies that we elaborate are, in reality, metaphysical taxidermies.

The problem does not lie then in the impossibility of universals, as claimed by the nominalists, but in the impossibility of the concepts themselves as closed entities submissive to closed structures. Limits, although we possess many of them, are not mental but epistemological. The human mind has proven over and over again to transgress the closed conception of the world in revolutions, heuristics, art, and even in the pragmatic resolution of daily dilemmas.

The world that we perceive is made up of a number of materials to which we give names (Olson 2002). These materials do not have a hierarchy. Only names and concepts happen and are organized in a hierarchy in that huge and unquestionable legacy which is culture. The materials from which the world is built, and to which we give names, are not made of themselves, but of other materials to which, at some moment and scale of compo-

sition, we now cannot give names, but, notwithstanding, they do not cease to determine the nature of the former, even more so than accessible and named materials.

Unnameable or unnamed materials participate and are participated by named materials. But they belong to other worlds and, on many occasions, other dimensions. An ape would never be able to explain to itself what the virus responsible for its extinction was like. A virus would never have access to the world of the ape, although it is responsible for its death. But a virus is also alien to the materials that give or deprive it of life. And those materials, of whose biocondition we will soon lose the notion, would be fuel for the unknown instances that harass, condition, and suspend them.

Wholes and parts never simultaneously cease being parts and wholes, as causes and effects never cease being effects and causes that flow in all dimensions and directions, destroying and reconstructing meaning. If it managed to escape from all pretence of subordinating meaning and start accompanying it with uncertainty and paraconsistency, the main obstacle for classification would thus be overcome. But then we would not be practicing classification but declassified thinking.

While concepts are notions, instances that allow us to interact mentally and directly with the world, categories would be concepts that organize other concepts, namely, metaconcepts, notions that supra-organize, subordinate, and associate concepts. Under our prism, a category would not be merely formal or neutral, but full and involved.

When we insert a supra-ordering metacognitive practice in the conception of the world to which we refer, to wit, an intentional perspective over our perspective, a word over our word, a conception over another conception, we are categorizing. We will call metaconcepts several concepts whose primary functionality of understanding the world transmutes into a secondary, although directive, functionality of understanding other concepts. Such an action, unnoticed in daily life, would be decisive for cognitive development, the loss of Reality, and the domination of the planet.

With the liberation and dissemination of meta-resources, on the basis of the metalogos, humans dedicated their time to dominating their own cognitive tool, taking an enormous leap forward in the opposite direction to Reality, but accompanying this with propitious expeditions and conquests in their own world. In Western culture, science is the high priest and custodian of the metalogos, the production of categories, and now metacategories, resources 'meta", which increasingly widen the divide.

3.3 Deepness and concretion

To know more; to know it all. We are approaching with obscene slowness the far beyond and the here and now.

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But how deeply will we quench our thirst? A complicated dilemma: Valéry also stated, to our disappointment (1960, 215): "*la profondeur est dans la peau.*"

Deepness would then be more than an optical effect of a situated psychism. Deepness would be a metaphor and a relative measurement: as a metaphor of the physical world, it is associated with notions of height or abyss. As a relative measurement, the degree of deepness depends on the physical position of the observer. To generalize is to make a statement of universal value (woman), although to specify is also to make a generalization but with a local value (this woman). The languages that we use never hesitate to promote generalization as a default value of their structures. It would be impossible to say what is to generalize or to specify without generalizing. The concretion 'this woman' also contains and paradigmatically opens up to a generic universe, but syntagmatically (at the hub of its associations) it houses other universes that complicate matters, as does "this American woman, Californian, New Yorker … even 'this Jane.'"

On the basis of the impossibility of specifying, the system leaves us the generalizing algorithm for any other circumstance. And we see that, effectively, generalization works and redeems us. Generalization is analgesic, anaesthetic, amnesic (for that reason some inconveniences and memories can be tolerated by individuals).

Such a generalizing logic glides through the confines of thought, legitimizing itself in practice to such an extent that the most specific would simultaneously be the most general. And, in our eyes, the most profound would be the most superficial. Consequently, an explanation makes such an abusive use of generalization that has difficulty escaping from contradiction. The thicker the brushstroke is, the smaller the chance we will apparently have of erring. However, this is precisely when we err most.

4.0 Declassification

The following paragraphs will cover a number of declassifying tools of a different nature stationed on the abandoned frontiers and peripheries of our cognitive and post-cultural matrix, fundamentally in pluralistic, paraconsistent and ontologically hybrid places. Declassification, with its indirect and fragile resources, would not only allow for an alternative re-description of voracious transculture, but would also provide individuals and communities tools for resisting, appropriating and reclassifying within it.

4.1 Some post-epistemological resources

Conventional classification is based on an underlying dichotomic logic from which spring hierarchizations an-

chored to a particular vision indifferent to cultural, ideological and cognitive pluralism. Dichotomy would therefore be a front open to declassifying action. Several control and dichotomic reversion strategies will be briefly covered below, while, in the two following sections, a more in-depth look will be taken at strategies that contain dialogical and paraconsistent procedures. As regards the declassification of dichotomies, there are several available options:

– Edgar Morin, on the basis of his complex methodology (2008), suggests conciliating oppositions, regarding them as necessary collaborators. So, rather than the opposite of disorder, order would be its inevitable complement: there is no order without disorder, no light without darkness, no one side of a coin without its flipside. Even allowing for evident cognitive developments and the usefulness, in some cases, of conciliating oppositions, this balanced solution sometimes would not go beyond the good intentions of salvaging a couple that does not now work or should never have existed.

– Boaventura Santos advocates for "considering the terms of dichotomies outside the articulations and relationships of power that unite them, as a first step towards freeing them from the said relationships and revealing other alternative ones that have been obscured by hegemonic dichotomies. To consider the South as if the North did not exist, to consider women as if men did not exist, to consider the slave as if the slave owner did not exist" (Santos 2005,160). In this relevant proposition, it should be noted that a radical extirpation of oppositions, without due precautions, could lead to cognitive reductions or distensions: in many cases, maybe 'thinking without' is no improvement on 'thinking against'.

– From the deconstruction of dichotomies, a reconstruction processus of oxymora and hyperbatic oxymora (inversions) has been developed (García Gutiérrez 2007), inducing the cooperation of the elements of many automatic oppositions, such as centre/periphery, so as to transform them into two efficient epistemological and heuristic resources: central periphery (Bangalore or São Paulo, for instance) and peripheral centre (be it The Bronx or the poorest districts of LA). The calculated construction of oxymora is a powerful metacognitive tool of declassifying thought in certain cases.

– Finally, multivalency, ambiguity or polysemy can be generated in each concept in such a way that dichotomy is always overwhelmed or annulled in a controlled fashion. The multiplicity of meaning of a concept implies a clause of immediate rupture with its possible dichotomies. For instance, in the North/South dichotomy, it should be considered that neither absolute North nor absolute South exists. Even from the per-

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spective of industrial development, there is North in South and South in North. All concepts generalize and, at a certain semic threshold, lapse necessarily into self-denial (see 4.3). For declassification, this conscience of conceptual precariousness is exceedingly relevant.

4.2 Pluralist and dialectic strategies

In this section, which is more applied to and focused on sectors related to political, social and cultural stances, I am going to describe two types of operators that, hypothetically, would help to break with unilateral and homogenizing schemas of dependence, whose presence is both massive and disturbing. In any case, what is involved is a theoretical proposal of cross-operators that, in a declassifying fashion, organize worlds spanned by constructions of history and memory, many fields of the liberal arts and sciences or media discourses. Such theoretical operators would have to be incorporated either by forcing or replacing and eliminating the hierarchical or reductive functions of the traditional operators of classifications, thesauri and ontologies.

What is understood here as an operator is a logical-semantic transversal tool (and, it should not be forgotten, of a necessarily ethical and political nature), whose primordial function involves establishing relationships between registers and serving as a link between these and the participants in a network. For instance, the hierarchical tools BT, NT and associative RT, belonging to conventional thesauri, are operators of organization that satisfy precise, unequivocal and symmetric epistemological criteria.

The basic difference of these types of closed and univalent operators, with respect to this proposal, lies in the logics on which they are based. Declassifying operators are precisely resources of intervention and facilitation whose aim is to guarantee decolonizing thought and the equal flow of information systems, but also to warn citizens about those registers that contravene interculturally established decisions and agreements, such as human rights, to question certain presences by means of the legitimate criticism of producers-mediators and users-mediators, and to promote a social transformation keyed to emancipation and plurality of knowledge.

On being open, the logic of the operators proposed here includes the closed logic of the traditional relational operators BT, NT, and RT, or any other one, and as a result it does not oppose them provided that they contain the principles of declassification. So, for example, under declassification we could continue to use operators of classive and partitive hierarchies, whole/part and genre/specie, subject to the extirpation of their logic of

subordination and supra-ordering as a primary systemic logic, operating as mere partial resources of proximity, provided that they do not stem from the reproduction of epistemological, social or hegemonic political hierarchies without alternative voices.

The declassification of KO systems in the aforementioned sectors could have an anti-dogmatic, hermeneutic and decolonizing operator, that is, based on the imperative of the direct democratic participation of all the possible positions and worlds that need it—including all the oppositions and contradictions regarding a conception—construed in a plural fashion so as to ensure the presence of all worldviews and propitiate the differences even of those positions regarded as unjust or anti-democratic. Under the priority of ideological and logical pluralism, but also facilitating part of that established in the principles of interaction and transformation that orientate the promotion of social change, the complex operator Λ (Lambda) is proposed (named after Morin's complexity). Such an operator would be essential, for instance, in conceptual maps in which appear complex notions like terrorism, veil, 'illegal' people or abortion, to mention only a few of the most controversial ones. Operator Λ would guarantee all the ideological interpretations and equal opportunities of those concepts. The complex operator is not designed to intervene in or control visions and meanings as regards an issue (see García Gutiérrez 2008, 2011a, 2011c).

Furthermore, an anti-relativist operator would act in a compensatory fashion, that is, it would side against injustices and inequalities established in the exomemory, intervene in the conflicts of interest between local positions and inter-ideological agreements, establish conditions for dialogue keyed to consensus, and apply the results of the latter. Transcultural operator V, as a result of an inter-cultural or inter-ideological agreement, would be responsible for those functions (see García Gutiérrez 2007, 2008, 2011a, 2011c).

Let us look at several clarifying issues touching on the shared and different aspects in both operators, operators that do not oppose each other, but intersect, supervise and complement each other. Complex operator Λ, whose most notable function would be to detect confrontations, contradictions, oppositions, dichotomies and antonymies in pursuit of their coexistence, includes all the possible meanings of an issue or the meaning of unshared issues, specifying them so that all participations or searches in the network are recognized by the shared subjectivities of a community or culture or by individual subjectivities. It is therefore an operator closer to '*de facto* multiculturalism' (Olivé 1999), to an initial co-presence of positions in equal conditions and with the same chance of visibility.

With regard to transcultural operator V, it is the synthetic product of a permanently open, democratic dia-

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logue between representations of diverse positions (political, cultural, discursive, etc.) that negotiate the homologation and integration of certain issues that affect them from argument premises (and not mere arguments) or *topoi*. Therefore, this operator V implies the reaching of an agreement with respect to an issue and its formalization as a category transversal to the positions as a trans-category, constituting, from such a sanction, an ethical world norm that could interfere in the local registers that infringe it, not invalidating or censoring them, since they would always enjoy the protection offered by the complex operator, but warning the participating citizens about their content.

Both operators are profoundly democratic, since when Λ is supported by the specification of all the positions and worldviews, without exclusion, as itineraries of representation and localization of the registers, namely, guaranteeing the representativeness on an equal footing of all the initial positions with respect to an issue, V is essentially regulative and executive, that is, it balances the possible unjust treatment of some or other position in the network, even respecting the presence of such registers accommodating the prior principle of emancipation, in terms of a interculturally accepted categorical scale in such a way that abuses in the network do not go unpunished if the transcultural community can avoid it with alerts, warnings and recriminations. As a result, the transcultural operator is as fully democratic as the complex operator, since its application would only be authorized by democratic decision (transcultural synthesis) endorsed by the majority of the positions, a consensus that can be widened and must be revised periodically.

While the transcultural operator is the antidote to the relativism of which the complex operator could be accused, which does not determine the moral or cultural merits of a register, concept or position, the complex operator likewise involves the democratic and hermeneutic balance of a transcultural operator accused of lack of support or sufficient legitimization. If the complex operator leads all the positions and perspectives to mutual friction from which emerge third itineraries, spontaneous and deliberate new connivances, the transcultural operator is substance of a dialogical rationality in pursuit of convergence.

The complex operator is linked at a systemic level, that is, to an epistemography (García Gutiérrez 1998) as a concept network or open system. The complete visibility of the democratic function of this operator only appears at the system level, and not in each particular register. As to transcultural operator V, even performing at a systemic level as well, its complete realization is only achieved when it is specifically assigned to a register affecting the provided analytic description by means of other re-

sources used by the position and local interest. However, its efficiency lies in a constant activism by intercultural dialogues and the adequate use to which it is put by culturally and socially committed mediators.

In his discourse ethics, Otto Apel (1996) put forward a set of six conditions for free and open dialogue, the first restriction being the only one inspired by moral concerns and the other five being rational:

– All parties should mutually regard each other as their equal and the same consideration should be given to the positions of all of the participants.
– The absence of direct restrictions and indirect institutional or structural pressures.
– The only admissible form of persuasion should be rational argument.
– No proposition should be exempt from questioning.
– Propositions are only accepted if all of the parties are in agreement.
– Dialogue is open and no authority shall be able to declare that a conclusion is foregone forevermore.

However, Apelian discourse ethics depend on the goodwill of the parties who, in the case of exomemory organization, have something more to defend than their own personal interests, the interests of a plural memory, and they have to be aware of the unlimited manipulation that totalitarian propaganda of the dominant power in each culture has tended to apply to language—to which must be added the fact of the difficulty of making decisions on issues linked to emotions. That would be sufficient reason to adopt anti-eristic measures (see Shopenhauer 2013; García Gutiérrez 2011c).

The interlocutors-translators in KO, yet another part of global cultural production, should have at hand a mechanism that guarantees confidence, beyond ethical claims, based on the following table summarizing the acknowledgements and rights that must be accepted by all of the parties involved in the dialogic activity, after being thoroughly trained in transcultural dialectics (see García Gutiérrez 2005):

– Acknowledging the possible existence of other outlooks on an issue.
– Acknowledging the possibility of conversing about any issue.
– Acknowledging the possibility of being in the wrong.
– Acknowledging the possibility of changing positions (in the face of the most convincing argument).

These principles, however, do not prevent the following demands being made through loyalty to the position or representation of each interlocutor:

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– The right that all positions be acknowledged.
– The right to defend any position through dialogue.
– The right of each interlocutor to change position.

The interlocutors represent emotionally, but above all rationally, a collective position and, by virtue of that rationality which has to prevail for dialogue and consensus to be possible, should be capable of undertaking the symbolically flexible tasks listed below in order of increasing difficulty:

– Simulating a self-critical and reflexive attitude towards all cultural positions.
– Identifying each position (with respect to a controversial issue, for example) in a hermeneutic range whose poles are occupied by the initially most conflicting positions.
– Self- and alter-classifying in the same schema, analyzing the discordance between possible variations of place.
– Identifying potential common ground and premises of arguments, a point that will be further addressed below.
– Identifying the degree to which the parties are willing to make concessions in the first and following instances.
– Possessing in-depth knowledge of contrary positions, which should be sufficiently solid and extensive so as to convincingly rebut the other interlocutors' arguments.
– Being able to simulate a contrary position versus their own (thinking from the 'other side' of the frontier) should they possess in-depth knowledge of the diverging position.
– Simulating third-party, intermediate and eclectic positions as possible common ground or for aligning positions initially far-removed. In the absence of dialogue, simulating hyper-national, hypo-national and anational, believer and agnostic, oppressor and oppressed, traditional and rebellious perspectives on the same issue, like for example violence, abortion, the veil, feminism, nationalism, culture, military intervention, education. Self-monitoring the replies given on hundreds of political issues from all possible dichotomies so as to then dismantle the same dichotomies and occupy interstitial positions. Declassifying mediators should be trained for any type of simulation in the changing environment of global transculture.
– Modifying the perspectives of positions on a polemic subject: for instance, if subthemes of the subject are negotiated, surpassing that level by introducing a discussion on other more abstract or general categories. Non-distractive versatility and transversality define an essential quality of transcultural interlocutors.
– Rotating positions in defence and demolition of abstract categories constructed in relation to a theme.

The test of alterization pretends in some way to achieve the same objectives of social justice that John Rawls (1971) searched for with his theoretical conception of 'original position'. Once this hurdle has been overcome, transcultural interlocutors will be trained to defend general principles and rights with the same vigour as their own particular positions.

Establishing dialogue, however, will not be possible without the following determinations and conditions:

– Recognizing imbalances, injustices, the cloaking and silencing of issues, categories or positions on issues by several qualified interlocutors. In this regard, the intervention of the interlocutors should be *proprio motu*, as well as including rational claims of discrimination that could affect positions.
– Recognizing the unquestionable need to arrive at agreements on an issue after thorough deliberation that includes consulting other representatives of the positions themselves and other non-represented positions. After building a consensus, all possible representations would have to be involved, including leeway for those that do not yet exist or have yet to be expressed, by virtue of the transcultural operator's openness to the future.
– Recognizing the *tópoi* of each position and creating an inventory of *tópoi* that facilitates subsequent transcultural translation.

In his diatopic hermeneutics, Boaventura Santos (2005) does indeed restore the ancient concept of *tópoi* to which he attributed a powerful practical dimension. Historians, anthropologists, social researchers in general, and knowledge organizers in this instance, are prone to carrying out drastic reductions of the world and, especially, the 'world of others'. In this sense, customs, systems, cultures and even complete civilizations are consumed by implacable metonymic reductions. In the case of contemporary cultures, the reduction of the other to the 'common Western place' is habitually practised with astonishing naturalness, but, in spite of the damage done to its material and symbolic universe, that 'other' is present and could also be capable of defending itself. Reduction, however, would be irreversible and unavoidable if it were practised on cultures, practices or knowledge of another time, even if these correspond to the life experiences of our own now absent ancestors.

Diatopic hermeneutics advocates for the construction of nuanced premises or *tópoi* (plural of *tópos*), prior to the construction of the arguments themselves of a dialogue (since, in reality, the analysis of other cultures or, by extension, sensibilities should be based on dialogic criteria), both for that of contemporary cultures and those that have al-

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ready disappeared. The *tópoi* would be agreed (or agreed in a simulated way) pre-dialogic places on the basis of which it were possible to establish arguments and, therefore, guarantees of dialogue and an approximation to equal opportunities. What would not be involved, then, is the lineal translation of the other, as colonial anthropology did, but to give it a voice that makes an authentic cultural translation possible (see Santos 2005, Ch. 5). The opportunities for research and practice of this procedure open up promising and innovative possibilities for democratic KO.

4.3 Paraconsistent strategies

The dichotomic wellspring is inexhaustible and we are assuming that behind each dichotomy (of all thought, then) there is a contradiction. The universe of available contradictions is immense and, nevertheless, insufficient for the objectives of this offensive: contradiction does not exist in nature (or maybe it does, although we will always be in the dark), but is a merely epistemological issue. It is us humans of a specific cultural axiology, possibly, at this very moment, all humans are yoked to transculture, who see contradiction in all that surrounds us, in others and in ourselves. The contradiction that emanates from an opposition can be as artificial as the opposition itself, although it could provide an unexplored post-epistemological space.

Settling for demonstrating contradictions in discourse or third-party actions is a fairly unproductive exercise: however much Marx scientifically demonstrated the demise of capitalism, based on its internal contradictions, he seems to have got his predictions wrong. It is possible that the end of capitalism can only be verified together with the extinction of the human race on a devastated planet. Declassification would not, therefore, waste time censuring contradictions: one of its procedures would consist in using them to discover the world, acknowledging their undeniable constitutive role.

Let us now have a look at three theoretical strategies of declassification (see García Gutiérrez 2011b, 2013) as a mode of paraconsistent knowledge, going beyond the limits of the three principles of conventional logic that govern us and restoring a calculated contradiction as a post-epistemological resource:

4.3.1 Strategy 1

Every instance possesses an open regime and can be as well as another or multiple instance, beyond the possibilities of poly-hierarchies. An infinite number of notional interweavings stalk instances, configurating and reconfigurating propositions in a syntagmatic axis (that of grammatical combinations, for structuralism) which devours paradigmatic verticality. No property is essential for

a concept, nor does it have to be favoured over the rest. Specifically, William James warned ([1927] 1995, II: 333, 335): "There is no property absolutely essential to any one thing.... The essence of a thing is that one of its properties which is so important for my interests that in comparison with it I may neglect the rest."

When we make allusions using an automatism of the parts, classes, properties or functions of a house or car, of an institution, city, computer or citizens, we are classifying the world in an essentialist way. The verb to be connects, explicitly or tacitly, the part with its whole, the class with its species: the wheel (is) of the car, the screen (is) of the computer, the kitchen (is) of the house, the house is a dwelling, sardines are fish, the computer is technology, Jim is a lawyer, etc. These essentialist operations involve organizing the world on the basis of a unicist and reducing logic, since it asserts by denying or concealing the possible worlds that modal logic invokes and, above all, the factual worlds. That practical logic is a resource of conventional classification.

Therefore, the declassified formula would be as follows: an instance not only is (itself), it also always is (another instance). We will call this first synthesized formula: strategy of ontological extension. On extending the limits of the essence, this strategy deletes them, depurifies, hybridizes, contaminates imaginary essences, opens and devaluates hierarchies. Its aim is to contest the sacred principle of identity: A=A and the abolition of conceptual submission to assumed supra-conceptual instances. Here are several declassifying arguments: A is never equal to itself, inasmuch as the logic of change impedes the permanence of a state. The representation of A would be equal to itself outside time, but outside temporality there is neither a conception of A nor any conception at all. A would be a representation of something outside A which is not A. It is still A but simultaneously it is not A anymore. Hierarchy is a conventional ordering of concepts and, therefore, responds to an epistemological order, given that it is not 'natural' and not even interculturally-shared.

4.3.2 Strategy 2

What will be addressed now is a second formula derived from the first: if an instance not only is (itself), but also always is (another instance), then it is also plausible that it is not in other possible worlds and, in at least one of them, it would necessarily not be. The possibilities of not-to-be flow through the possibilities of to be, and I put special emphasis on the plural: possibilities of not-to-be. It is common knowledge that there exist numerous manifestations of to be, introduced by is also, perchance as many possibilities as enunciative situations and, nevertheless, it is for being unaware of the domain of not-to-

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be that we can credit the not-to-be with only one absolute possibility: simply not-to-be. Not-to-be is a product of the insufficiency or the perceptive reductionism of the essentialist conscience and, therefore, very likely as voluble, elastic and reversible as the fact of to be and with many other ineffable properties that cannot be said or said yet (such as emptiness or nothingness, a world that begins to be 'said' by subatomic physics). And all without prejudice to the possibility that the denied (by the not-to-be) might be much more complex than the asserted world (by the to-be).

By deconditioning and making the counterfactual mode implicit[6] (Lewis 1973), we deduce from the argument

> if an instance not only is, but also always is, then it would not necessarily be in at least one possible world

the second synthetic formula: an instance that also always is (another instance), also is not (itself) in at least a possible world. We will call this second hypothesis: strategy of necessary contradiction. The aim of this strategy is to refute and force the transgression, overcoming the last contrary epistemic resistance, of the classic principle of contradiction. Let us now analyze this using some previous examples: the centre is also not the centre; the periphery is also not the periphery; the North is also not the North; the South is also not the South; the beautiful is also not beautiful; the ugly is also not ugly; the faithful is also not faithful, the unfaithful is also not unfaithful, etc.

4.3.3 Strategy 3

Lastly, we will call a third declassifying formula a **strategy of dissolutive superposition**, which acts upon cases that permit a simultaneous vision of the two poles of dichotomy: To be or not to be, is now not the question, rather it would be: to be and not to be. An: either is or is not instance, the principle of excluded third, introduces a dualist rift in the very foundations of thought. To propose—and enforce—that an instance could be and not be at the same time, on multiple occasions, repairs it.

We would then be simultaneously rational and irrational (without complementarily opposing or conceiving such instances), judges and the judged, educators and the educated, predators and the preyed on (however much positivist training stubbornly holds the opposite, the flood of meaning inundates everything). Yet we would be much more by applying hyperbatic inversion: observers observed and not just observed observers; dominators dominated and not only dominated dominators. This circumstance would not exclusively affect human roles, but also physical qualities or any other instance or property that could be susceptible to paraconsistency: attractive and ugly; tall and short; generous and egoist. The surface is deep and deepness superficial: abyssal creatures are exactly where they should be—at what inverse depth would a boat be for them? The North is always South and the West is also the East. On the planet, in outer space, and especially in the quantum world, to go up, to go down, to be or not to be, is only a matter of narrative, of enunciators and addressee. Bifurcations and biases are products of perspective and situations. An instance does not have any more value than that which its 'instant' ascribes it, or any more meaning than that which an immovable perspective, and therefore dogmatic, closed, impossible (and contradictory) in itself, endows it.

As to hierarchy, the main logical (and political) architecture of the conventional classification of the world, with its opposing base, declassification would break with all/part and specie/gender on regarding them as a variety of asymmetric dichotomy. And the same would happen with the submission of adjectives and properties to nouns and other assumed cognitive foundations. In declassified thought, all essences would be exchangeable and soluble, all concepts precarious and negotiable.

A red car would not only be essentially a car, but also essentially red. Nouns would have to lose their secular privileges over quality: the red car is a good representative of the field of vehicles, but also of redness and many implicit properties and extensions in the red car notion: of the parts, components and functions of all cars and also the genealogy that has led it to be what it is and what the subjective term encyclopaedia represents: an example of modernity, development, pollution, etc. We might only pay attention to a car due to the intensity of its colour, because it is metallic, noisy or goes fast, something that would devalue, from that perspective, the paradigmatic status of the concept of car itself, while at the same time it would syntagmatically enrich it with perspectives, qualities and nuances from our particular encyclopaedia of associations. Commonly, nouns have occupied a centrality that cloaks adjective, peripheral thought. Hence, one of the priorities of declassification is to restore all that 'secondary' apparatus of language.

5.0 Protrepticus of declassification

It is the obligation of a determined vanguard of KO, without complexes, opportunisms or fears, to address (de)classification, whatever its field of action, with the same objective borrowed from Holloway (2010): to change the world without taking power.

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Notes

1. A seemingly contradictory central Hegelian concept that simultaneously means to uplift, abolish, cancel or suspend (Hegel, 2009) and which forms the basis of Hegel's dialectic method.

2. Although the word aesthetics originally stems from *aisthesis*—the art of sensitivity—it was soon used specifically to refer to the study of forms and the beautiful, ending up subjecting and anesthetizing its initial purpose.

3. Hierarchy of credibility is an expression introduced by Howard S. Becker (1967). Those at the top of organizations or societies are seen to be more credible than those at the bottom.

4. In our contemporary civilization, we tend to have no qualms about making decisions affecting our grandchildren, but we do not accept that our grandparents have previously decided for us.

5. How can language resist inhumanity, brutality? If literature, philosophy, the liberal arts… are powerless to detain barbarity, why then educate? (Mèlich 1998, 171-189); to which I naturally add: Why then research or think?

6. Namely, the enunciation privileged by the modal logic of possible worlds and which we adopt here, for example (if it were, if it rained, there would be, it would be, etc.).

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