

Opening Keynote at the 6<sup>th</sup> World Summit on Arts and Culture:  
**Globalization, dreams and skin tables**  
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Large heads of gold are in the sky.  
And my mount is already far from me.  
I kneel twice and cry in anguish and fear.  
Death pursues me.  
I look upwards to where my golden knife reigns  
With its blue queen and I tell it my dreams.  
Bernardo Colipan, I fell off the horse into sleep the other night.

Falling off a horse into sleep – an experience which in the Mapuche world could be assimilated to a “perimontún”, a kind of vision-experience, an occurrence that misaligns the coordinates of time and space – is the metaphor that will string together my reflections, from the detachment of the human-animal bond to the configuration of dreams not as a utopia or a subconscious to be revealed, but instead as the production of symbolic relationships that make possible the constant renewal of personal and social consciousness.

When Magdalena Moreno invited me to participate in this meeting, I accepted because this image of community congregated at a Summit on cultural reflection seemed to me to be a favorable scenario to specifically find out how the notions of culture transit and move at a time in which culture is defined globally, deterritorialized, configuring an ecumene that pours from standardized signs along the arteries of the planet, generating an endless number of questions and paradoxes.

I hope that my well placed thinking can contribute from an individual point of view to clarify the globalized cultural connections – in a point of view conditioned by the political, social and economic history of my country – to the manner in which we currently conceive our culture, namely that way of inhabiting the world – of producing times, ecosystems, interrelationships, symbolic systems of prestige and power, ideas of life and death, machines-technologies, shelters-spheres, but above all dignity, solidarity and cooperation.

From a disciplinary viewpoint - the anthropology of the human race – culture is situated as an analytical center point for understanding how societies depict themselves to themselves, develop their social tales – to build from there a set of values –, they create their coordinates of time and space, communicate with each other and create the limits with which men and women – and the multiple identities that are born from there – face the dilemma of whether to adapt their subjectivities to the courses of the human experience already in place. Social relationships, and among them those of the human race, are relationships where power and knowledge articulate the senses, create positions and reveal the structures on which the meanings that we produce regarding ourselves and things are based.

Without a doubt, a key field when stating one’s opinion on the concept of culture is building othernesses that confirm or deny my ways of inhabiting the world and the social cohesion that arises from this. Contemporary societies experience deep transformations derived from globalizing processes that the market economy and its post-industrial correlate create a favorable atmosphere for and expand, and that the embroidery of the otherness is no longer the same as when the world was divided into two possibilities for development and the binary ideologies dominated social understanding and future projects.

The images carved in stone of the natural states is followed by that of a liquid postmodernity – holds Roger Bartra (2008)- in which different people, many from different origins, flow, cover and enter the interstices of cultural spaces that accept them or reject them. The question about other people no longer operates only from the old opposites of civilization and barbarism, feminine and masculine, white or black, although it contains them by re-reading them; today the crosses, cross-breeding and hybridizations implied by the migratory process, expatriations and forced expulsions, propose new answers and the conception of multiple and positional mobile identities (nomadic in the words of Butler) seems to be more useful for understanding the varied reflections of the cotemporary flows of people, symbols and things.

The tale of the twenty-first century can be read from the paradoxical lines that compose it and that amaze us and make us tremble regarding their effects and outlines. We observe in globalization the desire to build an ecumene, to universalize experiences, to build a horizon where human rights are precisely the foundations of respect for diversity. The multiple manners in which interculturality is lived – for example, in tourism as a large-scale movement of connections between people – causes a widening of insular horizons, dialog between different people, the bond between men and women that as equals value their differences. We can say that in this time we approach a desire for loving and spherical universality – in the terms of Sloterdijk. But this desire coexists, at the same time, with the liquidity of the new ways of inhabiting the world and with a feeling of otherness that remains stationed in the most definitive places of everyday life. Although the contract, as a global notion that defines that we are all equal before the law – our human rights- emerges as regulations, the firm confabulations of this status return, like in a nightmare, differences such as undervaluing, negativity and exclusions. It is sufficient to use the example of femicide as one of the most evident signs of the construction of the feminine otherness into the scapegoat for other underhanded and migrating violence that is expressed in the death of a woman as a symbol and message verifying the masculinities whose power is threatened (as held by Rita Segato regarding the city of Juárez in México).

The diverse, understood as a plurality of subjects that appear in their singular dignity in the public platform, seems to be a positive value that simultaneously operates in reality as an unresolved and intermingled conflict, also, with an unsettling ghost: that of uniqueness and cynicism,“... Globalization, this is the tendency of capital to produce a logic that hegemonizes all areas of human activities at an ideological level... it names precisely the production of a cynical subjectivity, which is exists from the certainty that there is no choice...” as held by Sergio Rojas (Rojas:64). Along with this, the deterritorialized market brings with it a diverse circulation of things, people and signs from the reflection of “scheduled obsolescence”, and I use this term as a metaphor for the volatility, changing things and the sign of the disposable that begins to occupy a place in the imagination and increasingly evident manner in relationships between people.

This brevity of things could well resemble the mimetic reflection of manners in which we think of ourselves and recreate ourselves no longer as a community – in terms of origin and destination – but as fragments. It is because of this that today we cannot sidestep the analysis of globalization since: “We face the need to reflect on processes with a long duration, processes that are beyond the individual scale of perception. In this context, the question on the place of the individual is frequent ...With community dissolved, the body of the individual remains, to be more precise, the body remains as the place of the individual. The individual begins to correspond in the present day to that form of subjectivity that only finds its place in the body” Rojas himself tells us (Rojas:68). From that locus, the determinism of the body invokes gender, class, ethnic origin, generational imagination – among others – that often stimulate, in the liquid scenarios of the movements of people and symbols (of histories), discrimination, exclusion, devaluation, manipulation and violence. From one sole place of enunciation, the body, converted into an object, divests the person of his multiple subjectivities and gives this to the individual being. “Various studies”, says Bartra, “have shown that extreme

individualization is associated with a volatility of customs and with a carnival of changing identities... A large portion of employed indigenous people and those with ancient traditions live in a state of misery in nomadic circuits" (33).

These unusual manners of inhabiting the world, which produce social fragmentation, in parallel activate communities, collective identities and common languages that, attempting to overcome the distance of cynicism, build a "... regulatory objective (which) seems to no longer be the elimination of inequality, but instead the prevention of humiliation or of disdain; the central categories of this new vision are no longer equitable distribution or equality of property, but dignity and respect" (Hannet:10). The struggles for the consideration of differences have posed in the cultural area, a powerful question regarding recognitions, the identity policies, producing a creative and new tension between what is universal and what is individual, opening a possible field to imagine society from paradigms whose ethical substrate is settled on values such as dignity, plurality, knowledge of the other not as identical, but instead as equal. It could be said that we are faced with new political ethics of recognition whose theory is being built, but there are clear indications of its force in the feminism and multiculturalism ways of thinking, the former with its concept of equality in differences, the latter with respect for diversity.

### ***Globalization from the Chilean cultural scenario "An attempt against the impossible"***

Reflecting on the contradictions and paradoxes of globalization from Chile – defined by Gabriela Mistral as that "attempt against the impossible" or as a "parenthesis" between the mountain range and the sea – may perhaps provide general indications on knowing the dilemmas of a particular society that represents (or at least depicts itself) as a model wager on economic liberalism with its consequential global opening. A system, as we know, installed through the sacrificial ritual of the loss of democracy, the violation of human rights and the instatement of an authoritarian order. The changes in Chilean society, read from the overlap, at times conflictive, at others open to dialogue, of the local in the global and vice versa – during the dictatorship and once democracy was recovered – place into evidence a cultural landscape that questions the notion of growth and development.

Chile is living a notable economic boom and the possibility of access to multiple goods is unique in its history, sufficient for the sociologist Tomás Moulian to hold that consumption "consumes us". The symbol of the mall, which has replaced the old town squares as social meeting places, is used by cities and regions as the emblem of "prosperity", and success reached (due to this, in many areas of a historical heritage nature, struggles against building a mall in their localities has become a cultural conflict between different versions of the world and development).

Another contradiction that is brought into question is that related to education. Chile has progressed notably, precisely in the expansion of access by different social classes to primary, secondary and tertiary education, and with pride we boast that at last we have several first generations of families that have entered higher education. Along with this, we are surprised by the phenomenon of functional illiteracy: almost half of the nation's population does not understand what they read. In my opinion, this deals with a dramatic knot, since reading is a refined and complex intellectual exercise, which like no other develops critical thought, which makes possible, when the cultural mechanisms are revealed, the renewal of the social order and its symbolic legitimacies. Maybe the new culture, that has placed excessive importance on economic indexes as the center point for development, the devaluation of the social sciences and humanities, with a clear correlation in educational reforms that emphasize not the pleasurable cultivation of what is literary, but of communication, is part of the causes of this post-modern version of old illiteracy due to lack of schooling or lack of use.

Growth has meant that many social groups can finally enjoy decent housing, salary and a place in society, but this is twinned with an unequal distribution of wealth, a large urban segmentation, the elitism of access to certain symbolic goods, and a deficit of associativity. The new forms of exploitation and production of the extractive industries, fisheries and forestry -nestled in indigenous territories- and their energy requirements, have brought enrichment, but at the same time have resurrected old and unsolved problems with native peoples, rearticulating issues like internal colonialism, racism, poverty of native communities, ancient and new violence, as well as demands for autonomy. These same indigenous people are in turn progressively valued for their cultural goods, sometimes fetishized in the market -phenomenon that Komarof describes in South Africa as "ethnicity s.a."- In other cases they are the subject of related entrepreneurship, as is the case of ethnic tourism. Here images are painted for visitors in which landscapes and heritage coexist with peaceful images of an indigenous universe that is, however, starting to conflict with the idea of "progress" and "conservation". From this same situation agency is constituted for the claiming of rights that are now internationalized (as is Decree 169).

Today, 40 years since the mutations that took place in Chilean society -where the political proposal for cultural change was oriented towards a reduction of welfare state and an increase in private development- strong negative feelings of insecurity, distrust and abandonment have emerged in sectors placed at disadvantage by these transformations. The experience of our model has recently unleashed new social demands that revolve around the notion that education, health and social security, are rights that cannot be subject to market narratives. Matched with these social demands, rumors and murmurs can be heard that fight for cultural citizenships and demands to recognition.

This sketch makes us consider that today Chile faces an unprecedented cultural challenge, and that maybe the answers - that are necessary at the time of booming and economic growth that we are going through- can contribute to problems that are arising and are replicated as well in different parts of our planet. One of these key challenges, in my opinion, is the one that revolves around internal and "external" otherness issues that re-emerge in a local, translocal game with multiple political and symbolic positions.

Although, as mentioned above, indigenous peoples have progressively gained positive spaces in Chilean collective imagination, they remain functioning as an alterity that questions neocolonial forms of multiculturalism. Thus proposing governance challenges that involve, mostly, knowing their past, and understanding their needs from different logics than the ones known to us; ranging from the idea that things of nature are inhabited by ngen (s-spirits of ancestors), in the Mapuche case, to the idea that the "varua" (dreams) link a set of dreamers who decide the course of existence, in the Rapanui culture. These examples perplex us deeply, and make us face the complexity implied in taking on a true respect for diversity, a dialogue between different people and its parallel in cultural policies that can host their heterogeneous and sometimes dissimilar modulations.

#### Corollary

"We will continue writing about grandmothers, Salazar,  
Mine, for example, worked 70 years  
In the German forges  
and read the Hymns to the Night  
in raspberry and cream pies  
and in the hurtful caustic soda  
that whitened the hacienda toilets ....

Oh, grandmothers of the garden and kitchen  
waiting on the “mesa del pellejo” (hidden table where only servants and children eat)  
a flash of tenderness and respect  
in the eyes of their faked children "(Jaime Luis Huenún, Testimony).

In Chile, “La mesa del pellejo” is part of a past custom that consisted in the separation of adults and children at mealtime: it was necessary to establish distances and preserve the order and hierarchy; of each person’s status. The “pellejo” means skin, and the grandmother of Jaime Huenún -huilliche and employee in one of the German houses in southern Chile- is confined to sit there as a minor, oppressed by her devalued status because of her gender and ethnicity. Perhaps that experience – sitting at the skin table- is what we should bring to our hearts when we are confronted with the dilemmas implied in thinking about culture – our way of inhabiting the world- as the inclusion of differences. How is life construed from the standpoint of that skin table?

The scents of food migrate along with the communities that move and recreate their habits in their cities of destination and, as Joel Candau have proven, the odors of others, are perhaps one of the most pristine signs of acceptance or rejection, of the establishment of boundaries between ourselves and the others. Also the flavors migrate, and with them, signs, stories and subjectivities. The locus where the contradictions between status and contract are played, as stated above, is grounded in everyday life, and one of the clearest locations to detect it is within households: the fate of disadvantaged migrants is to work as domestic servants (before it was the case of Huenún’s grandmothers). It should be enough to quote the testimony of a "Peruvian nana" (Peruvian domestic helper) to understand the full implications of the secular maintenance of “the Skin table”.

"The other day something disturbing happened to me: I was in the kitchen so hungry that I had to cook pasta for myself -meals are so small that it annoys me- I was terribly ashamed when suddenly, the lady of the house came in and said something that I will never forget: "How nice! You are feeding yourself!... with a serious tone, not a kidding tone. I felt terribly embarrassed, I could not continue eating, so I threw it all away. I almost had a nervous breakdown. I didn’t answer, I just stayed at the kitchen completely embarrassed. Her husband came later and said: "What a surprise! “ That was for them to be eating! I felt so bad, I had a headache and I thought: I'll never cook anything for me again in front of such cocky people. I did not like the way they were controlling my food. How could I satisfy my appetite with a little vegetable? "(Lorena Nuñez)

The anxiety (that Bartra describes) of indigenous employees of ancient stories in nomadic circuits, can be known and felt in this testimony. The symbolic systems of feeding, the kitchen and commensalism encourage us to dare to imagine other possible models of coexistence in diversity. The ones that eat together at the same table are brothers and sisters. To forget that minimum and wise gesture, it means to leave many people behind, deprived and displaced of the table of plenty in “la mesa del Pellejo”.

However, and here I finish, there are dreams. I started this conference with the image "Falling off a horse into sleep "of the Mapuche-huilliche poet Bernardo Colipan. I'm sure that we will not fall down in front of the conflicting signs of globalization and although the distance between L and Ñ is small (In Spanish: suelo [floor] y sueño [dream]), we will rather fall in the earth of heaven, that one that we all reach when we leave our horses behind and we seat at the same table with the large heads of gold and the blue queen to tell our dreams.