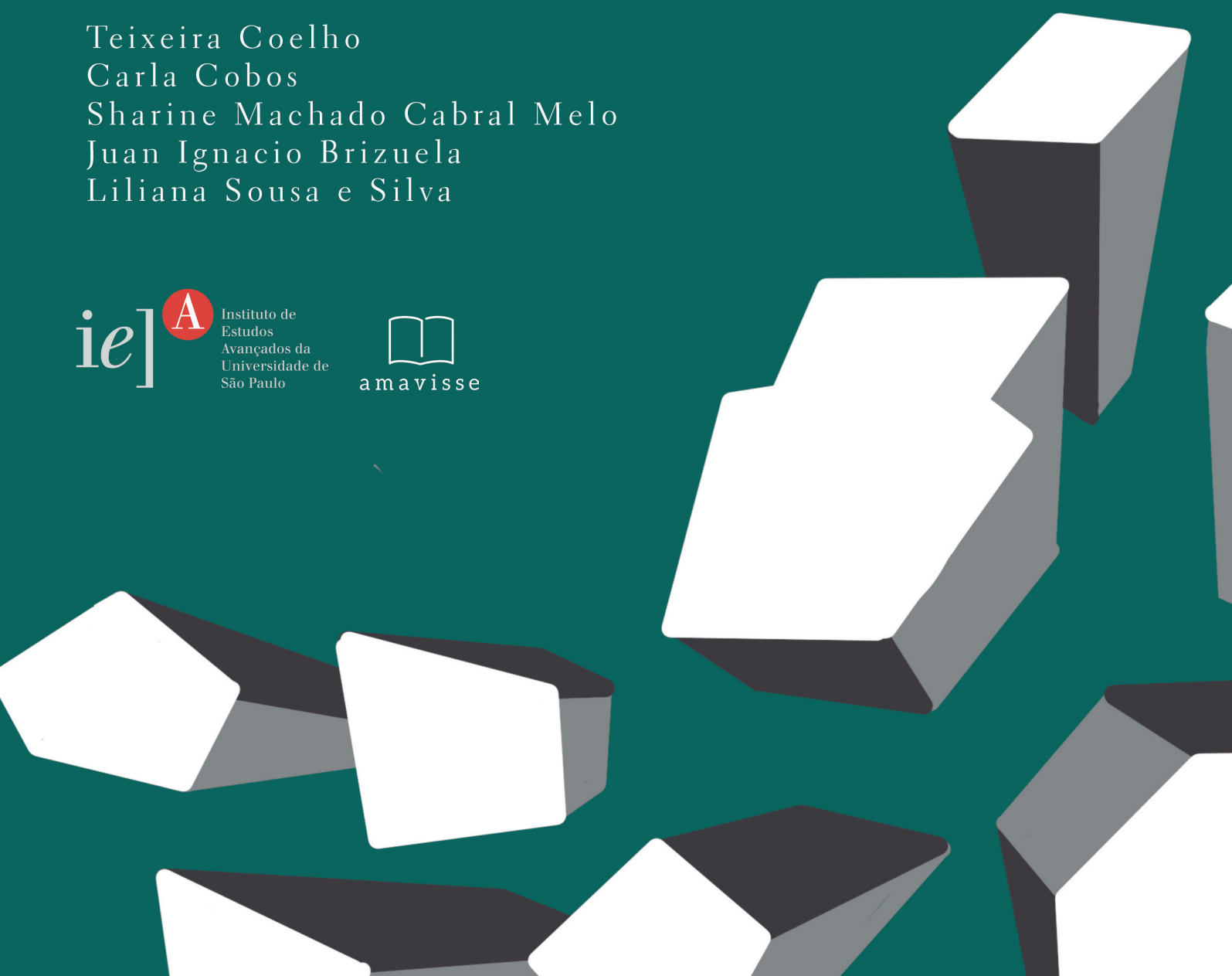# THE INSTITUTIONALITY OF CULTURE AND SOCIOCULTURAL CHANGE

Néstor García Canclini
(Coordination)

Teixeira Coelho
Carla Cobos
Sharine Machado Cabral Melo
Juan Ignacio Brizuela
Liliana Sousa e Silva

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The institutionality of culture and sociocultural change

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INTRODUCTION

The Olavo Setubal Chair of Arts, Culture and Science, the first Chair of Arts and Culture at the University of São Paulo (USP), was established in 2015 and officially launched in February 2016. An initiative of the Institute for Advanced Studies at USP (IEA-USP) in partnership with Itaú Cultural, the Chair is intended to foster interdisciplinary reflections on academic, artistic, cultural and social themes regionally and internationally. Initially funded for five years, the Chair focuses on two main programmes: *Leaders in Art, Culture and Science* and *Global Networks of Young Researchers*.

The *Leaders in Art, Culture and Science* programme follows the pattern adopted by the José Bonifácio Chair, established at USP in 2013. Each year, the Chair is held by an exponent of the artistic, cultural, political, so-cial, economic, scientific, or academic world, who is responsible for guiding the Chair's activities during their tenure. The first holder of the Chair (2016/2017) was Sérgio Paulo Rouanet, philosopher, political scientist, diplomat, and essayist, a former federal Secretary of Culture and author of the bill to encourage culture through tax incentives that came into force in 1991 and bears his name.

The second holder (2017/2018) was Ricardo Ohtake, architect, graphic designer and cultural manager, director of the Instituto Tomie Ohtake, former Secretary of Culture of the State of São Paulo and former director of the Centro Cultural São Paulo, the Museu da Imagem e do Som de São Paulo, and the Cinemateca Brasileira.

The third holder (2018/2019) was Eliana Sousa Silva, social, cultural and ed-

ucational activist, founding director of the Redes de Desenvolvimento da Maré (an entity that supports development, education, arts and culture, the right to public security and access to justice, identities, memory and communication in the Maré *favela* region of Rio de Janeiro).

The fourth Chair (2019/2020) was held, exceptionally, by two academics: Paulo Herkenhoff, critic, curator and art historian, former director of the Museu de Arte do Rio (MAR) and the Museu Nacional de Belas Artes in Rio de Janeiro, and Helena Nader, biomedical scientist and full professor at the Federal University of São Paulo (UNIFESP), who combines her activities as a teacher and researcher with those of an academic administrator, director of scientific entities and advisor to research funding agencies.

The *Global Network of Young Researchers* programme focuses on fostering and promoting interdisciplinary projects involving young researchers up to 40 years of age. The Chair played a key role in the programme by supporting the first edition of the Intercontinental Academia (ICA), jointly organized by the IEA and the Institute for Advanced Research (IAR) of the University of Nagoya in Japan, under the auspices of the University-Based Institutes for Advanced Study (UBIAS) network. ICA brings together young and senior researchers for an immersive period of study of a single topic.

The first edition of the ICA was organized by IEA in April 2015. In March 2016, it was the turn of the University of Nagoya's Institute for Advanced Research to receive participants to continue their studies on the theme of Time, which they had started in

São Paulo the previous year. The success of this new academic platform has led to two further editions which have addressed the themes of Human Dignity, organized by the University of Bielefeld in Germany and the University of Jerusalem in Israel (2016); and Laws: Rigidity and Dynamic, organized by the University of Birmingham in the UK and the University of Singapore (2018-2019). The fourth edition, which will explore the relationships between artificial intelligence and neuro-cognitive science, is currently being organized by the Institute for Advanced Transdisciplinary Studies (IEAT) of the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG) in Belo Horizonte, Brazil, and the Réseau Français des Instituts d'Études Avancées (RFIEA) in Paris.

Continuing the partnership between IEA-USP and Itaú Cultural, the second five-year cycle of the Olavo Setubal Chair of Art, Culture and Science started in 2020. We had the honour of inviting anthropologist Néstor García Canclini to inaugurate this new phase as the first foreign holder of the Chair. Born in La Plata, Argentina in 1939, Canclini has lived in Mexico since 1976, where he is an emeritus researcher in the National System of Researchers and research professor in the Department of Anthropology at the Iztapalapa campus of the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, Mexico City.

For his tenure in the Chair, Canclini proposed the project "The Institutionality of Culture in the Current Context of Sociocultural Change", in order to investigate the institutional aspects of culture in the face of contemporary transformations, such as the weakening of public and cultural institutions

during the neoliberal crisis and the dominance of the digital application over the institution; the trajectory of independent cultural movements in relation to the reconfiguration of cultural markets and the habits of audiences and users; the de-nationalisation of party politics and socio-cultural changes in audience formation; and the exercise of human rights in the context of technological controls, new resistance movements and alternative forms of social organisation.

The new holder of the Chair was installed on October 6, 2020. Due to the limitations imposed by the coronavirus pandemic, the ceremony was virtual, centring on a web page with videos that followed the format of a physical ceremony. Amongst those participating in the ceremony were Vahan Agopyan, the Dean of USP; Guilherme Ary Plonski, Director of IEA-USP; Martin Grossmann, Academic Coordinator of the Chair; Eduardo Saron, Director of Itaú Cultural; and Maria Alice Setubal, representing the Setubal family. Stepping down as joint holders of the Chair in the previous period (2019/2020),

Helena Nader and Paulo Herkenhoff made their farewell speeches.

Following an introduction by Teixeira Coelho, Professor Emeritus at USP, Néstor García Canclini gave a lecture entitled *Institutions Out of Place*. Both then participated in a discussion on the theme Institutions or Platforms: Project and Events with the social anthropologist Carla Pinochet Cobos, of Alberto Hurtado University, Chile.

Given the relevance of the issues addressed in the virtual ceremony, which included some initial thoughts on the theme to be researched, the Olavo Setubal Chair of Art, Culture and Science is now pleased to publish the first Research Notebook on the theme under the coordination of Canclini, including many of the issues raised in the virtual event. The intention is to publish material throughout the process, including interim results of his research and the work of Juan Ignacio Brizuela and Sharine Machado Cabral Melo, postdoctoral research students chosen to work with Canclini during his tenure in the Chair.

Liliana Sousa e Silva,
Executive Coordinator, and *Martin Grossmann*, Academic Coordinator of the Olavo Setubal Chair of Art, Culture and Science

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WELCOMING NÉSTOR CANCLINI

Teixeira Coelho

Photo of Néstor García Canclini, reproduced in Mexican edition of the book *Pistas Falsas* **(Editorial Sexto Piso, 2018).** ©Titi Nicola

The photo above appears on the cover of the Mexican edition of Néstor Canclini's novel *Pistas Falsas* (False Leads), 2018, which I chose to help me navigate across this 'dark patch of jungle' in which I found myself when I accepted the challenging invitation to speak at this ceremony, an invitation which risked diverting me from the direct path, as it still does.

As you can see, in this photo ...

... Néstor appears to be looking into the distance, the sun rising behind him and starting to illuminate a world shrouded in darkness as it appears before him. He does not know yet what is to be encountered there, although he suspects what it may be. Of course, it could be said "The sun's not rising, it's setting!", but my

interpretation is as good as any other and will guide me here. Do not believe what they say about an image being 'objective' and worth a thousand words – images can lie in as many words. So, I prefer to say that this photograph is the inspiration for a painting aptly entitled *Néstor, Rising Sun* – as in Impressionism. Impressionism is, in fact, an excellent deity to invoke at the beginning of this speech, perhaps the most expressive deity there is, whose protection I invoke from the outset.

In a speech like this it is normally expected that the presenter will take a stroll through the past of the one they are introducing. But Néstor is not being received into the arms of an Academy of Letters when, according to Parkinson's Law, the illustri-

ous figure has achieved their ultimate level of incompetence and is being promoted to the first phase of irrelevance. There is nothing more to be done after the Academy or the Nobel Prize. But here, it is different. For Néstor, everything still lies ahead of him and he is looking forward. He may not be very enthusiastic about what he sees, but he is certainly not terrified. He is feeling a little cold, but we can see an almost-smile appearing on his face, the ambiguous and uncertain smile of the immigrant when land hoves into sight. Here, Néstor is an immigrant arriving in a land in which he has chosen to live for at least some of the year, some of the time: the territory of *Pistas Falsas*, the land of literature. And so he looks ahead – just as in this speech I prefer to speak of the present and envision a future.[1] In other words: what will Néstor do from now on, what will he do when he disembarks from this uncertain ship that in some way still shelters him.

I'm not saying that his past doesn't matter. On the contrary. As an anthropologist of contemporary society, all the footprints that Néstor has left on the track continue to walk on in the present: they are not immobile and frozen in time. For example, Néstor's introduction to a 1987 essay, *Políticas culturales y crisis de desarrollo: un balance latino-americano* (Cultural Policies and the Development Crisis) remains entirely relevant. What he said: that politics and culture are in opposition and even active opponents (with politics either trying to dominate culture or to forget that it exists, I should add), are still, for many politicians, the same – 33 years later. And the Néstor of 1987 is still so close to us (things change slowly in these southern latitudes): most artists and people of culture continue to live in a political reality that they see as a foreign and threatening land (a viewpoint for which, I must say, they frequently have reason) and the existence of cultural policies remains questionable. So doubtful is their existence that, a few years later, in 2003, Néstor would ask himself: *"¿La mejor política cultural es la que no existe?"* ("Is the best cultural policy that which does not exist?"). I will not give you my opinion now, I will leave it to Néstor to explore the topic during his time in the Chair ... I want to sit comfortably in the grandstand and quietly appreciate the juggling that he will have to do to answer this question in a way that is, shall we say, acceptable in the context of a chair in... cultural policies.

So, this is clear: what Néstor wrote in the past remains active, like one of those hyperlinks that appear in blue in the middle of a page on the computer screen: click on it and everything appears. I am more interested, however – and I am sure that Néstor is too – in the present and the future of cultural policies. That is why I chose the 'false leads' from his book of the same name[2] as a guide for my walk through this dark jungle. Of course, nobody can accuse these tracks of being misleading advertising as they declare up front what they are or intend to be: false.

1. If anyone still needs to know how and why Néstor Canclini got here, it will be enough, in addition to reading some of his books – always the best option – to consult the pages of *La interculturalidad y sus imaginarios: Conversaciones con Néstor García Canclini* (Edited by Robin Adèle Greeley, Gedisa, 2019) .

2. CANCLINI, N. G. *Pistas falsas*. São Paulo: Instituto Itaú Cultural; Editora Iluminuras, 2020. First Mexican edition under the same title by Editorial Sexto Piso, 2018.

Spanish-speaking writers demonstrate a recurring and admirable property: it is very easy for them to write amusingly. They write funny things. I shall never forget when I first read *Don Quijote,* when I was living in a foreign land, not as an immigrant, but as an involuntary exile – it was during a dictatorship that, as they try to tell us nowadays, never existed here. In brief: when I first read *Don Quijote*, I almost died laughing. I should have been paying attention to all those important things that teachers of literature and literary theory stress so insistently; but I couldn't, because I kept bursting out in laughter... Well, I had a lot of fun reading *Pistas Falsas*. At least as much as Néstor, but I think he had even more fun… And the reason why a book with the title *Pistas Falsas* is relevant, along with all the laughter it provokes, is that it gives us some tracks to follow as to what his time as the holder of the Chair will be like. This is something that will become clear shortly.

Whilst reading this book, which apparently was published between 2035 and 2040 – given that the main character, a Chinese archaeologist, arrived in Buenos Aires in 2030 – I burst out laughing when I came across a transcript of a conversation between that same Chinese archaeologist and some South Americans, who described their respective countries (Néstor has the good taste to avoid describing them as "Latin American") as being (or having been) *countries with no future*, because they had sold everything to Chinese, American and Canadian companies that will depart when the minerals and water run out. Or have they already departed? And I laughed because I remembered a time when one used to harshly criticize the sale of ev-

erything to Western neoliberal imperialists, which are proving to be rather insignificant when compared to the Asian imperialists who are digging wider and deeper holes...

I also had a good laugh when I read the archaeologist's note about an accident in Mexico City between a bus and a large truck of the type used to transport all sorts of materials – trucks they call "materialists" there... "*los materialistas*". An expression which resonates in a way that has nothing metaphysical about it, as the narrator observes (Néstor, I suppose). That reminded me of another moment of conceptual and existential astonishment in my life. The moment when I entered Athens for the first time, by the back door, which is the only right way to enter a city for the first time. I managed this by arriving in Greece by car from Turkey, avoiding the pasteurised, homogenised, and desolate airports that serve as the front entrance to cities now, full of indistinguishable Gucci and Chanel and Tommy Hilfiger and Dolce & Gabbana. In heavy traffic on the first street after leaving the highway, I passed in front of what looks like a large warehouse, old and badly maintained but still active, with several trucks inside, and with the following displayed in badly faded letters on the facade:

<div align="center">

μεταφέρω
metaphor
μεταφέρω

</div>

"Eureka!" Inspired by a spark of understanding, which is fortunately not so rare in my life, I understood straight away: *TRANSPORT*. A trucking company!

Of course! What is a Metaphor for? To transport things, to take them from one place to another, to take ourselves from one place to another. And that was when the materialistic truck of *Pistas Falsas* collided with my metaphorical trucker in the most spectacular disaster in history: between dialectical philosophy, on one hand, and poetic semantics on the other—a vast and illuminating accident which shed more light on the path of cultural policy than a thousand words ossified and repeated to exhaustion. Cultural policy and cultural policy theory are in urgent need of more linguistic shocks like this, the shock of street language powerful enough to eject those old and mummified buzzwords from the well-worn paths that freeze them in a schizophrenic labyrinth. (In passing: the expression "street language" can be advantageously replaced by the term "popular culture").

And I also had a lot of fun when the archaeologist in *Pistas Falsas* visits a certain International Algorithm Centre that is experimenting with new methods of identifying tastes and trends, interviewing its subjects by applying a questionnaire with questions that have yet to be seen in the anti-social media on the internet: "Have you ever changed your religion, your football team or ... your sex?" The option "Have you ever changed your political party?" could have been included with advantage. Anyway, let's not be cynical: this approach opens up more tracks towards an understanding of cultural policy than most of the useless statistical surveys of the consumption of culture that pile up silently on dusty desks.

It was also fun to discover, along with the archaeologist in the book, that writers (writers of literature, for example) had, in their future

(which, according to my calculations, is our past) the unsuspected chance to visit tourist attractions named after them, becoming cogs in the tourist industry in Buenos Aires, which, I should say, welcomes visitors already tired of buying a leather jacket for the tenth time (which, if they are Brazilians, they will hardly wear—I add this personal observation to the serious notes of the Chinese archaeologist), or visiting the glaciers in Patagonia (which, if you look at the date of publication of the book, melted away fifteen years ago) and who then went on to follow the Borges Route or the Ernesto Sabato Route, the Bioy Casares Route, the Victoria Ocampo Route...in a not so unlikely future, perhaps the Néstor Canclini Route. This is fantastic, the value of these alternatives is pure gold for the future of cultural politics and writers – if only someone still remembers the meaning that at one time was given to the word 'writer'.

I really wanted to continue sharing with you the recurring enjoyment I experienced when reading about the archaeological study in *Pistas Falsas* into the cultural ruins of the future that shapes our past. "Ruins with a future?" - the narrator asks. I hope so. I really wanted to continue, but the virus of the year 2020 has managed to eat away at even the time available for this ceremony and I still need to talk about a lot of things – very, very serious things.

For example, there is this: at a certain point, the narrator makes a clear distinction between literature, for which Néstor is now opting, and cultural politics. For the narrator, the difference becomes visible in the comparison between historical heritage in its various manifestations, in which each era finds the

answers it is seeking to the challenges of life and the world, and literature, which is produced to reflect what society cannot find answers to. Is there anything more valuable to our reflections on culture and cultural policy than this distinction? It is likely that the narrator of *Pistas Falsas* agrees with a piece of graffiti that he claims to have found on his visit to Mexico City. I say "claims to have found" because, as *Pistas Falsas* is apparently fiction, who knows if Néstor actually found this graffiti or made it up in a very inventive way. Here we should note that literary people pretend a lot, just as much as Fernando Pessoa's poet: they pretend a lot and in a much more heuristic way than the supposedly objective conclusions of pure reason. But I must not forget to transcribe here the graffiti allegedly seen somewhere in Mexico City: "The more we know, the less we understand (...) and the better it is." At this point I know that I run the risk of not being taken seriously anymore, but is there anything more important for culture and cultural policy than accepting that it is much better to understand less? At least sometimes.

And yet there is this other passage in the book, a very serious one: a report on the visit of the Chinese archaeologist to an exhibition of the work of the artist León Ferrari, a friend I had in common with the narrator of *Pistas Falsas*, that narrator who may be Néstor. During this visit, and in a conversation that is unashamedly erudite, the two interlocutors conclude that there are movements in art that lead it to go beyond the real, to go much further than the real, to surpass the real: at first, art begins by provoking, with much more freedom, the transgressions en-

visioned and then orders them in a way that life cannot even dream of. Neither life, nor philosophy, nor sociology, nor anthropology, nor cultural policy. This statement is mine, of course, but it is not impossible that the narrator of the book may agree with it, and perhaps even Néstor himself. In fact, there is nothing more useful for a researcher or cultural policy actor than to be aware of this irrefutable phenomenon: literature goes much further than cultural policy.

There are passages that I will not report (motivated by a delicacy that I did not know I possessed), such as the poetically loving scenes of desire between the archaeologist and his girlfriend, and those scenes that are actually erotic and which do not usually appear on pages attributed to an archaeologist, even less so in those of an anthropologist.

There are many false leads that Néstor trails throughout his book, preventing us from seeing clearly what he himself is seeing in that expressive photo and what he foresees for his time in this Chair. As the essence of anything always becomes visible in the end, just as every appearance is always essential, I resorted to what is the visible expression of every book – its cover, its *portada*, as it is well expressed in Spanish – in search of more concrete clues. But the cover does not reveal much, with those hands seeming to emerge from the wall of a Paleolithic cave and strive with uncertain phantasmagories.

The cover of the Brazilian edition is perhaps even more disturbing: it shows how everything that was standing has collapsed, not allowing us to see where the real ends and where the fiction begins. I mean, creation. Or vice versa.

Cover of the Mexican edition of the book *Pistas Falsas* (Editorial Sexto Piso, 2018)

Cover of the Brazilian edition of *Pistas Falsas* (Instituto Itaú Cultural; Editora Iluminuras, 2020)

¡QUÉ BELLA ES LA NATURALEZA CUANDO ESTÁ BIEN ENVASADA!

"How beautiful is nature when well packaged."
El Roto comic strip, published in *El País* on September 9, 2019.

Credits GARCÍA, Andrés RÁBAGO/ AUTVIS, Brazil, 2021.

Even better: valuable things do not always become apparent immediately.

To the students of a course on cultural policy in which Néstor (or is it Canclini, I do not remember well) sometimes participated, I always proposed an inspirational exercise reflecting on the works of the greatest Spanish philosopher alive, the cartoonist El Roto – "greatest" being a qualification that leads some Spanish friends, in every case Catalans, to a strong state of exasperation…

Today, alongside El Roto, and in the same literary genre, happy and free of old anxieties, I can suggest that students read and reflect on the work of novelists, such as *The Machine Stopped*[3] by E.M. Forster – and

I confess that it was not easy to insert a novel in the bibliography for a serious course in cultural policy – another writer, now with a companion, the author of *Pistas Falsas,* who recognizes the vast and unstoppable resources of literature, an instrument that, above all, dares to raise its head above the horizon of ignorance. And recommending this crop of work by Néstor is all the more justified since it is evident that with *Pistas Falsas* he is returning to his first venture into literature from the point of view of an anthropologist, or vice versa, as he made manifest in a book dating from his beginnings, back in 1968: *Cortázar, una antropología poética*, a book from that distant year of 1968, a year of so many bad memories for those of us in Brazil. The title of this study of Cortázar's work speaks for itself (A Poetic Anthropology), I

3. TEIXEIRA COELHO, J. Paisagem com risco existencial (posfácio). In: FORSTER, E. M. *A máquina parou*. São Paulo: Itaú Cultural; Editora Iluminuras, 2019, p. 65-102.

shall not add anything more. But I do suggest that you take good note of the subtitle of *Pistas Falsas*: *"Uma ficção antropológica"* (An Anthropological Novel). The circle closes. Ouroboros: the symbol of renewal through the resumption and overcoming of the initial gesture. As it turns out, every so often a soul is reunited with its spirit…

A necessary caveat: do not be fooled by the title *Pistas Falsas*. The title gives a false clue to the nature of the book and the seriousness of what it contains. *Pistas Falsas* actually contains the road map, the *feuille de route*, the trail of pebbles to be followed if the objective is fruitful research into culture and cultural policy, a re-examined and distilled study of the topic. In direct personal contact, outside the sanitized enclosure and the *gestes barriers,* the protective barriers of the well-organised thinking typical of the seminar and conference room, Néstor is a cheerful person – and the migration of this cheerfulness to the interior country of the serious anthropologist is to be celebrated, emphatically. Which will give this edition of the Chair a very special tone. Cultural policy and cultural policy theory may not be aware of it, but they urgently need the renewal to which these *Pistas Falsas* point. A renewal that helps cultural policy become more cultural and less political.

So, it is time to wish Néstor good luck (and good luck to Canclini as well, of course) for his tenure in this Chair. If the two of them succeed in finding each other and agree on the way ahead, as they undoubtedly will, the beneficiaries will be the Chair, the rest of us and, if it is still capable of listening, cultural policy itself.

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INSTITUTIONS OUTSIDE THEIR PLACE

Néstor García Canclini

One way to thank is to explain why you are thanking. Those who have studied the social and human sciences know that knowledge is often revealed in reports. Not just in myths, novels, movies and songs. Scientific theories usually organize the facts, narrating how events, experiences and imagery are structured, giving a basis to durable individual and collective behaviours, as well as their disintegration. Part of the powerful plausibility attached to scientific demonstrations depends on offering contrasting knowledge on an empirical basis, while another part rests with the persuasion of reports whose radiance comes from giving us ordered images of the world.

My ties to Brazil have a long and persistent history. At the age of 16, I stopped going to the Baptist Church, not only as an unbeliever in God, but also in the church, an institution that wanted to separate us from the world. It was when I entered the university, worked in a left-wing group and in the Christian Student Movement (Movimento Estudantil Cristão, MEC), an ecumenical movement that was an antecedent of liberation theology and had its greatest Latin American development in the 1960s and 1970s, in Argentina and Brazil. I had already had, very early in elementary school, the experience of being in a minority and of being seen as someone who did not fully belong to the institution. During Perón's first government, the only period in which there was religious education in the Argentine public school system, we evangelicals and Jews had to be separated from the group at the time of Catholic instruction, and we were sent to a class on morals. To move away from the

church and then read Marxist authors ignored in philosophy classes at the university, doing this not in the institution, but in the student movements, also in MEC, a critic of the institutions and a practitioner of alternative modes of literacy in the campaigns promoted by Paulo Freire, these were ways of thinking and acting based on the feeling of strangeness. Several trips to Porto Alegre, Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo to participate in MEC congresses led me fall into two heresies at the same time: learning to dance - something condemned by evangelical puritanism - and not tango (which involved me as a listener), but rather samba and bossa-nova.

When retracing my travels to congresses in Brazil since the 1970s in my curriculum, I notice that several lectures referred to this attempt to accompany the decentralized artistic vanguards of the institutions and to know the behaviours of consumers. The series of lectures that I gave as a visiting professor for three weeks, in 1983, at the University of São Paulo, at the invitation of Aracy Amaral, for a postgraduate course at the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism, was entitled "Popular Needs and Cultural Consumption". I was beginning to discover that we could approach cultural policies in a different way, if we studied them from their reception by the public. Although a publication I produced with the Social Service of Commerce (SESC) asked, with a suspicious title, "What do passports represent today?"[4], my concerns with the institutions have not ceased. For this rea-

son, several meetings to which I was invited in São Paulo and Porto Alegre, and one that I coordinated in Rio, promoted by the Organization of American States, dealt critically with the approaches to Mercosur cultural policy and Latin American integration.

The relationship with Brazil was also intense in the postgraduate studies in anthropology course at the Universidade Autônoma Metropolitana (UAM), by orienting, like other colleagues at UAM, master's and doctoral theses of some Brazilians who did their fieldwork in Brazil or followed courses, thanks to the "sandwich" scholarships.

I want to mention, despite the obligatory brevity of this report, highly esteemed friends and interlocutors, some of whom were decisive in promoting the translation of my books in Brazil, such as Augusto Boal, Teixeira Coelho, Heloísa Buarque de Hollanda, Sergio Miceli, Renato Ortiz and Renata Rocha. I remember the frequent communication and exchange with Antônio Augusto Arantes, Beatriz Jaguaribe, Maria Amélia Bulhões, Gustavo Lins Ribeiro, Antônio Albino Rubim and Regina Silveira, who brought me closer to this country.

Between institutions and corporations

Regarding the explorations of knowledge and society at the end of the last century, times have changed. We experience disintegration, precarious work and consumption; the transit of publics from institutional events to customers of the audiovisual industries and electronic corporations; the aggressive dismantling of institutions (not just due to budget cuts). Global and regional

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4. GARCÍA CANCLINI, N. O que os passaportes representam hoje? In: MOURA, S. (org.). *Panoramas do Sul. Leituras. Perspectivas para outras geografias do pensamento.* São Paulo: Edições SESC, 2015, p. 177-190.

Waiting at the Met (Metropolitan Museum, NY, USA), 1990. Print on paper Collection of the Museum of Contemporary Art of the University of São Paulo © Pedro Meyer
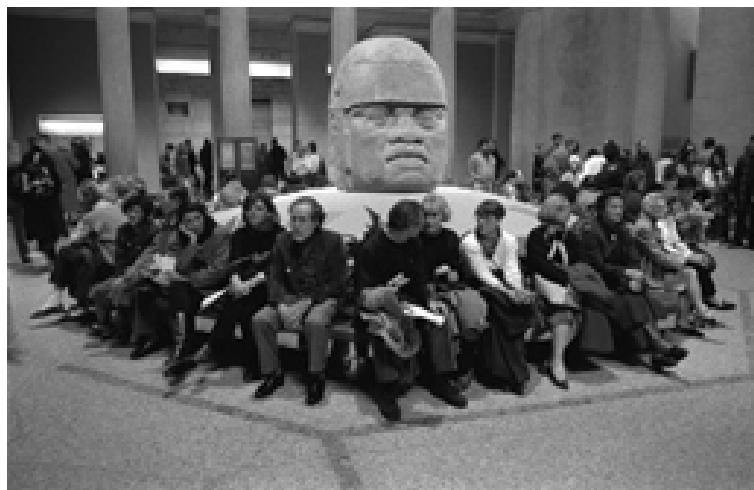
governance bodies (UN, WHO, Mercosur) are also languishing, as well as international coexistence agreements. Since before the pandemic, inequalities, helplessness for the weak and the political and social underestimation of scientific knowledge by many governments have been accentuated.

I would like to incorporate an image into this conference. It is the photo that I have on my left, taken by a great Mexican photographer, Pedro Meyer. In 1993, the Mexican government promoted a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the United States and Canada. To strengthen the Mexican position in the negotiations, a large art exhibition was held, exhibited in three museums in the United States, covering the period from pre-Columbian times, through colonial times, to the production of the 1950s. We can see in the photograph the formidable and solemn columns of the Metropolitan Museum of New York. It is curious because, at the entrance, there is a base that supports one of these gigantic Olmec heads, with a group of visitors sitting around with their backs to the sculp-

ture, certainly resting after a long visit. This tension between the institution that wanted to host a historical exhibition of Mexican culture, the American audiences that visited it and the attitude of rest, in a way turning their backs on them, says a lot about what happens with the waning of global governance bodies and regional, as has been the case with many free trade treaties. Because the FTA between Mexico, the United States and Canada, which started operating on January 1, 1994, confronted a challenging event – the fact that, on the same day, the Zapatista revolt emerged.[5]

In the midst of these contradictions, the health emergency and the need to take care of ourselves have triggered solidarity movements between neighbours and at the

5. Indigenous and peasant social movement that emerged in Chiapas, Mexico, in 1994. Under the leadership of Subcomandante Marcos, the participants were equipped with uniforms and hoods. Zapatismo pays homage to Emiliano Zapata (leader of the Mexican Revolution of 1910), fighting for indigenous and peasant rights and for the political and economic autonomy of their territories.

national and transnational levels, as well as the imagination to use streaming, Zoom and other digital resources in an attempt to reconstruct the public. It is significant that even those of us who do not fail to criticize the institutions and the corporate reorganization of common life, have been led to think that a priority responsibility today is to save the institutions: universities, public hospitals, the corrupt places of parliamentary deliberation and of justice administration and, obviously, civil society organizations whose trajectories sometimes rebuild hope, sometimes end up disappointing us. It is not easy to restrict ourselves practically or intellectually to the options imposed on us, as we seek the continuity of society and not just disputed markets. I see the strangeness and the expectation that all this gives us, condensed in Lenine's song *Paciência*: "a vida não para; a vida é tão rara" ("life does not stop; the life is so rare").

I warmly thank the Institute of Advanced Studies of the University of São Paulo for having given me the honour of occupying the Olavo Setubal Chair of Art, Culture and Science and for having proposed the theme for this year "The institutionality of culture in the current context of socio-cultural changes". My attempts to follow, from Mexico, the troubling adventures of Brazil in the last decade, and especially in the last two years, converge to the surprises that forced me to review what, in my opinion, should be thought about with regard to the declines in the countries where I have lived - Argentina and Mexico - and about the tendency of so many others to turn contradictions into catastrophes. If, as I said, my disappointment in working for the transformation of cultural

policies led me to study the avant-gardes and consumption practices, it was because I bet that artistic innovation and knowledge about audiences could make them less bureaucratic, link them to creativity, with post-dictatorial democratization processes. In recent years, the consensual submission of so many social sectors to political-military power and the advancement of electronic corporations led me to write the book *Cidadãos substituídos por algoritmos* (*Citizens Replaced by Algorithms*), in which a short chapter is entitled "Aplicações vs. Instituições" ("Applications vs. Institutions") (GARCÍA CANCLINI, 2020).

What drives so many intellectuals, scientists and artists, who do not want to be disenchanted, to still look for credible reasons to renew political, media and digital institutions? With what resources can we understand our failures in the face of an idealized civil society, the illusions about what is called - by some rulers - "good and wise people", who vote against themselves?

This year, we will be busy, together with Sharine Machado C Melo and Juan Ignacio Brizuela, winners of the competition to support me as postdoctoral researchers, studying public and private institutions, some innovative, such as the Aldir Blanc Cultural Emergency Law and the Points of Culture, comparing their diversified development in Brazil and Argentina, and other experiences of performative institutionalization, open to experimentation with socio-cultural changes.

When we emphasize socio-cultural it is because, among hundreds of definitions of culture, we choose the set of symbolic practices, anchored in the social and economic, from which we elaborate the meaning of life

in common. Cultural institutions and socio-political movements - such as feminists, of race and ethnicity, of young people - are areas in which we are reconstructing what rusting institutions have dropped: the ways in which we rehearse the sense necessary to live, and to live together.

We will deal with sociocultural institutions and movements that seek to build alternatives to failed states and behaviours induced by digital devices and corporations. We will examine their intersections and misunderstandings. One way can be through the symptoms. Here are some examples.

What is the meaning of the fact, in part positive, that in countries like Argentina and Brazil, governments have provided economic aid to millions of poor families on condition that they send their children to school? In an investigation of paper and screen readers five years ago, we learned that parents - trained in the belief that reading paper books is fundamental to educating them - pay their children for each book they read. In the pandemic months, the role of the school has oscillated between the challenges of virtual education, reopening to resume face-to-face classes and the protection of students and teachers. Phrases like "I prefer my son to lose a year to life" - said by a Brazilian mother - demand that we rethink what it is to educate, inequalities in access, the place of reading in teaching, voices and bodies in institutions.

The three countries to which we pay the most attention - Brazil, Argentina and Mexico - have been experimenting with giving vouchers for books, DVDs, tickets to museums and shows to the low-income population or to young people, especially students.

Fifty reais for 17 million Brazilian workers. In Argentina, in 2018, the Ministries of Culture and Education distributed the Cultural Pass card to high school students and teachers. The governments of Matteo Renzi, in Italy, in 2016, and Emmanuel Macron, in France, distributed "cultural passes" of 500 euros to young people who have just turned 18. Faced with the decline of the cultural audience, the German filmmaker Harun Farocki proposed to subsidize the cinema audience to ensure its survival. In several countries, it was discussed whether the State should subsidize spectacles or spectators, only the offer of public institutions or also of giant internet corporations, such as Google or Netflix.

These nuclei of public life and cultural development - school, reading, music and cinema - seem to be in a very desperate situation for even people who criticize the commodification of symbolic goods to resort to economic stimuli to save their practices. In view of the urgency of sustaining certain creative activities, we want to understand what happens so that what we consider so valuable needs artificial respiration. How to differentiate institutions and companies, if we should highlight aesthetically renowned activities and styles or offers that attract more audiences?

These questions are not only directed at interactions between the State, companies and society, but also at the way in which we, social scientists, question these changes. Studies by cinema audiences have shown that the idea that fewer films would be seen now cannot be sustained, either due to the fact that many cinemas have closed since the appearance of VCRs in the 1980s, or because of the closure of Blockbuster, where DVDs

were rented, nor, later, due to the downloads for the screens. The business model was modified, as business language says, but also the place of the movie theatre, in the midst of technological convergence and changes in consumer habits. Instead of replacing the auditoriums with home screens, there has been a reconfiguration of the institutional-media-digital system, which varies from country to country. In Mexico, viewers were halved between 1976 and 1994. However, in multi-screen theatres, audiences have grown fivefold in the past 25 years and the country now ranks fourth in the world in infrastructure and viewers. Audiences decrease in central countries (Germany, France, Italy) and increase in many "peripherals" (China, Korea, Poland, Russia and Turkey), as demonstrated by Rosas Mantecón (2017), and also Domínguez Domingo and Rosas Mantecón (2019).

On the other hand, when we investigate changes not in reading habits, but in readers, we find that people do not read less than before, as the national surveys conducted in Brazil, in 2011[6], and Mexico, in 2012[7], concluded. These surveys had flaws in their design: they focused on reading books and the behaviours associated with them; they signalled low numbers when it came to libraries and reading newspapers and magazines, but they did not consider digital devices as places where people read and write. The

research carried out in Brazil in 2011 by the Instituto Pró-Livro defines as "reader" anyone "who has read, in whole or in part, at least one book in the last three months". The same document records that, between the ages of 5 and 17 years old, 20% of respondents access the internet every day and 23% of them do it a few times a week. Although 58% of them indicate that they use the internet for recreation or entertainment, 40% affirm that they use it for schoolwork/studies/research, while 42% use it to meet people and "exchange messages", practices that involve reading and, often, writing. Why underestimate the many hours that teenagers and young people (and most adults) spend every day reading and writing on Facebook, Twitter and other social networks?

In the ethnographic investigation that we did after studying this research, it seemed to us that the initial question of an investigation about the readers should not be *how much is read*, but *when and how it is read* (GARCÍA CANCLINI, 2015).

In the competition between written, media and digital culture, the pandemic has made the trends of previous years even more uncertain. More online newspapers, e-mails and books have been read in recent months, in certain areas and levels of education. Television has regained part of its audience. Landline telephone services, which have declined since the end of the last century, have increased by up to 40% in large cities in Mexico and in other countries, associated with the internet, for carrying out housework and other tasks in the home, such as distance education, the exchange of information and products with neighbours.

6. FAILLA, Z. (org.). *Retratos da leitura no Brasil 3*. São Paulo: Instituto Pró-livro; Imprensa Oficial, 2012.
7. Encuesta Nacional de Lectura 2012. Primer informe. Fundación Mexicana para el Fomento de la Lectura, A.C. Available at: https://observatorio.librosmexico.mx/files/enc-nac-lec-2012.pdf. Acesso em: 01 fev. 2021.

Contrary to the imaginary that attributed to digital devices and habits, in the first decade of the 21st century, the power to replace previous forms of cultural communication, the combination of supports during the pandemic months confirms data from recent studies: the written and in-person cultures are complementary to what we do in the virtual realm. Nowadays, we listen to more streamed music, but perhaps the festivals will regain the place of in-person listening with agglomeration, both multitudinous and those with more demanding tastes. Young people, and many adults, do not clearly separate time spent in the virtual space from time unconnected, nor time spent in study from that which they dedicate to entertainment. They recognize their difference but move fluently from reading on paper to the cell phone, from the search for information to the playful chat (GERBER; PINOCHET COBOS, 2013; WINOCUR, 2015).

Institutions, platforms and applications

Changing questions in the research process requires rethinking what it means to talk about cultural institutions today. No one has any doubt when they name UNESCO, museums and libraries, publishers and bookstores, cinemas, theatres and concerts as institutions. However, could the same term be used when looking for information and entertainment on screens, when using WhatsApp or other applications? Publishers manufacture e-books and audiovisual companies co-finance some films with digital consumer sites. And we know that including these communication activities, of electron-

ic content, changes the entire company; the conditions in a publisher, for example, – the production process, the number and qualification of the personnel it employs or dismisses, the contractual clauses and the expectations in the market.

The title of this conference is in recognition of the seminal article by Roberto Schwarz (1977), "As ideias fora do lugar" ("Ideas Out of Place"), which helped me to rethink the contradictions of modernism without modernization in Latin America, when I wrote my book *Culturas Hibridas (Hybrid Cultures)*, at the end of 1980s (GARCÍA CANCLINI, 2001). How was it possible - asked Schwarz - that the Declaration of Human Rights was partially transcribed into the Brazilian Constitution of 1824, while slavery continued to exist? More than recalling the argument of that text, I am interested in recovering the astonishment that the author of *Ao Vencedor as Batatas* felt at the attempts to create a modern liberal state, in a society organized according to the favor economy. Even the lyrics of the Anthem of the Republic, written in 1890, were full of progressive emotions, but unconcerned with the reality: (We cannot believe that in another age Slaves there were in so noble a country) – the 'another age' having only ended two years before, with the abolition of slavery in 1888.

Thirty years ago, those pages by Schwarz helped me to examine versions of this same contradiction in other Latin American countries. In 2020, the economy of favor continues in clientelism, in daily and institutional corruption, despite the change of parties in governments. It seems to me that the self-destruction of these political institutions

exacerbates the damage. I want to incorporate some new challenges from the digital age.

What does the current situation of production-circulation-consumption or access to cultural goods mean for academic research? In what sense could Google, Facebook or Netflix be called institutions? The research throughout this year and the course we plan to give at the University of São Paulo in 2021 will deal with the processes of deinstitutionalization of culture - such as the disappearance of ministries and other public institutions dedicated to their management -, budgetary asphyxiation, movements of artists and managers in defence of institutions and other searches for alternatives in several countries in Latin America. It is necessary to reformulate the classic notion of cultural institutions in this tension with the new forms of production, intermediation and access that digital devices promote.

What is meant by institutions? The almost nonexistence in Google Scholar and Academia.edu of texts that reconceptualize this term is surprising. In researching sociology and anthropology encyclopaedias of culture, as well as communication, especially those of a critical nature, only in two do I find brief articles on institutions. Although they were published more than twenty years ago, when the internet started to expand and there were no social networks or applications that today are the mainstays of daily communication, these two books provide elements that will be useful to us.

The *Dictionnaire de l'ethnologie et de l'anthropologie*, directed by Pierre Bonte and Michel Izard (1991), defines the institution as "everything that, in a given society, takes

the form of an organized device that seeks to function or reproduce of this society, based on an original will (act of instituting) and adhering, at least tacitly, to its supposed legitimacy". This definition is vague because it aims to cover customs and regulations, marriage and college. In an eagerness to cover both simple societies and those that include administrative apparatus, by encompassing them under the term device, the possibility of including virtual systems, without complex buildings or organizational charts, opens up. It offers space to find continuities between the traditional modes of community organization and the forms of non-physical, or not primarily physical, institutions that allow us to speak about digital communities.

The other book, *Conceitos-chave em Estudos de Comunicação e Cultura* (*Key Concepts in Communication and Culture Studies*) (O'SULLIVAN et al, 2001), coordinated by various specialists in media and cultural studies, including Tim O'Sullivan - who signs the article on institutions - defines them as follows: "the lasting, regulatory and organizing structures of any society, which constrain and control individuals and individuality". Later, he goes on to say that the institution is where "the basic principles and values according to which many social and cultural practices are organized and coordinated."

Both definitions, elaborated, in one case, by an anthropologist and, in the other, by a communication scientist, point out as fundamental traits the durability, regularity and reproduction of society. Here the first difficulty arises in extending the character of institutions to social movements, usually ephemeral, and to electronic or digital de-

vices that disappear (or that are partially replaced: from the Walkman and the cassette, we pass to Spotify and YouTube, and the radio to the podcast). The digital world encourages innovation and behaviour substitution instead of continuity; from Zap to Google. The dematerialization of culture tends to move platforms or applications away from the institutions' reproductive logic.

This transition from the physical organization of cultural life, which partly coincides with globalization and deterritorialization, favours experiences that we imagine are emancipating. Tim O'Sullivan used to say, in a slightly playful tone, that we tend to think of institutions as buildings or places to avoid: prisons, courts, hospitals, nursing homes.[8] We can add the family home and the structure of the controlling village as strictly institutionalized places, from which the transnational communities of consumers of images, stories and identifying signs, in clothes or tattoos, for example, would free us, since they provide us with an elective and changeable company.

It would be possible to have a sociology or anthropology of digital institutions, considering that, like family, school, university and factory, they socialize (GONZÁLES de RIVERA, 2019). However, they also *dissocialize* what is articulated by classical institutions or generate disputes in the forms of interaction between different generations, levels of education and the way in which they are inserted in the community, urban and national forms that continue to contain us.

How do digital institutions socialize and dissocialize? A first answer can be

found in the global centralization of the few companies that control participation in networks, the subtraction of data from users and the intrusion they perform, due to the power that the algorithmic articulation of these data gives them in national, urban and local institutions. The second question is about the possibility that there are loopholes for us to be citizens, when such corporations subject us to processes much opaquer than the government apparatus of a city or nation.

The fascination that the internet generates in us as an "open" network of interactions, the illusion it engendered as a vehicle for democratization vanished – without disappearing – when, in the second decade of the 21st century, we realized that Google, Facebook, Amazon, Apple, Huawei, and others, make us work for free and market our data, tastes and political opinions. We barely understand, in the studies, those clandestine societies which are the digital mega institutions, as well as the political capacity or fragility of the social movements and the spies' rebellions (organizations that defend human rights, feminists, ethnic groups, wikipolitics, Telegram etc.), and what is the new configuration of world, national and global powers.

I cannot go on here, reporting the fruitfulness of anthropological research on trust and risk in specialized systems. What do we mean by specialized systems? In the words of Anthony Giddens (1994, p. 37), these are the "systems of technical achievements of professional experience that organize large areas of the material and social environment in which we live". Another key author in this direction is Ulrich Beck, with his studies on the risk society, in which centralized and

8. O'SULLIVAN, T. et al. *Conceitos-chave em Estudos de Comunicação e Cultura*. São Paulo: UNIMEP, 2001.

hidden management is responsible for much of the depoliticization of democratic institutions. I highlight the research of a group of Spanish anthropologists who develop, in their book *La sonrisa de la institución*, field studies on this process in institutions in their country. They take up something that Giddens left only as a suggestion to understand the functioning of these abstract systems: the *access points*, that is, the windows, the reception rooms, the places where specialists present themselves to lay people, choose ways to make present what is absent, dramatize a calculated staging of the institution. How to understand, when they treat us as customers, consumers, policyholders, users, their rearrangement of the loss of meaning and the forgetfulness of our condition as citizens? The authors call the institution not only state agencies, but "any agency formally constituted for the pursuit of ends based on a core of specialized knowledge" (VELASCO MAILLO et al, 2010, p. 18-19).

We want to emphasize these approaches when examining cultural institutions. In a way, they all are, because these reorganizations in the relationship with the recipients are interventions with the meaning and the loss of meaning that afflict our time. However, we will focus on some properly cultural institutions, challenged in their classic ways of making and communicating culture, by the digital age.

I will end with two brief examples of how we propose to work this year in the Chair. Juan Ignacio Brizuela will develop his investigation "Out of game? The territorial dimension of the processes of institutionalization, deinstitutionalization and cultur-

al reinstitutionalization in Latin America", seeking to reflect on the public culture effectively institutionalized in the last decades in Brazil, Argentina and Mexico, based on the "Pontos de Cultura" ("Points of Culture") program and the "Cultura Viva Comunitária" ("Community Living Culture") movement as paradigmatic phenomena of contemporary Latin American cultural policies. Sharine Machado C. Melo, in turn, will carry out the project "Poets in times of poverty", which aims to investigate network actions articulated by artists, cultural professionals and other members of Brazilian civil society, which result in the elaboration and implementation of public policies for the sector. Its main object of study is the process of creation and approval of Aldir Blanc Emergency Law, in Brazil (Law No. 14.017 / 2020).[9]

For my part, I now place museums as an example of my interest in analysing how some institutions try to renew themselves in the digital age. Some are rehearsing, especially in this pandemic year, after prolonged closings and fearful openings, ways to go beyond interactive videos and scripts to download on the iPhone. They also seek to transcend the use of big data to get to know their visitors and those who are not, to calculate the attention span, in the same way that television stations, publishers and those who guide their "cultural policy" from the measurement of habits and tastes. In addition to frequent errors in these calculations because they do not take into account qualitative differences,

9. A more detailed description of the work of the Chair's postdoctoral researchers can be found in the article "Institutions in cultural emergency", in this same book.

it is interesting to study more accurate data to verify whether museums and other cultural institutions can serve to train citizens who understand interculturality, the rights and duties of coexistence, in addition to more subtle to experience pleasure.

Can museums, in addition to guardians of memory and promoters of experimentation, help us to reconfigure the meaning of living together, of relationships that have not been properly mediated or built by institutions, such as those that manage migration and solidarity?

An even more challenging undertaking: the biennials, which the pandemic left out of place. About 20 of them, which were due to take place in 2020, have been postponed. Nevertheless, in Brazil, the 12th Mercosur Biennial, curated by Andrea Giunta and inaugurated on the internet on April 16, 2020, was able to reinvent itself: it placed videos online with testimonials from isolated artists' experiences, recorded on cell phones, programs educational activities for schools, which this event rooted in Porto Alegre has been doing for years. However, although it was never an "airbnb biennial", visited as part of a tour, says Giunta, she and her team had to ask themselves again how to make thematic nuclei - feminisms, Afro-Latin American creativity - erupt on a virtual platform. The desire on the part of the artists to participate did not diminish and, in the weeks when the Biennial was physically closed, international debates and unforeseen crossings in the original design were opened.

Andrea Giunta and the other curators relearned their craft. The installation of an exhibition, says Giunta, involves moving between the rooms, following maps and impulses, and also experiencing the contact areas between the works; the magnetic field of each work affects the others. "This specific combustion cannot be experienced on the map of an online experience". Instead, "the online biennial provides experiences that the physical space limits", different paths that can be faced by anyone, not only by curators. "In the room, the relations planned for the works can be modified. In the network, they can be multiplied in several options" (GIUNTA, 2020).

I know that we will not arrive at monumental discoveries in response to this invitation from the University of São Paulo, this country where we want to extend to institutions and institutionalization processes what has already been said, in a precursor way, about ideas out of place; or what Flora Süssekind (2000) analysed in her article "Sobre a sensação de não estar completamente" ("On the feeling of not being completely"), in which Macunaíma's return to the island of Maratapá is evoked "in search of the consciousness that he had left there and did not find".

I am grateful to those who invited me to open this Chair, for the first time in charge of a Latin American (not Brazilian), who encourage me to redo the virtue of cultural anthropophagy, the study as a creative appropriation of other people's inventions.

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INSTITUTIONS OR PLATFORMS: PROJECT AND EVENTS

Néstor García Canclini
Teixeira Coelho
Carla Pinochet Cobos

Teixeira Coelho – Following Professor Canclini's inaugural speech at the Olavo Setubal Chair, there will now be a conversation between Professor Canclini himself, who does not need an introduction; Carla Cobos, who is in Chile and has a doctorate in Anthropology of Culture and is a UNESCO consultant for Education in the country and a professor at the Alberto Hidalgo University; and I, who coordinates a study group on Computational Cultures at the Institute for Advanced Studies at USP. Néstor, over to you.

Néstor García Canclini - Thank you, Teixeira. It is a great pleasure to be with you and Carla in this conversation. It seems to me that it is to celebrate the decentralization of the Institute, of the University of São Paulo, that we appreciate it so much, when we think about a certain Latin American scale.

A while ago, when I heard that form is everything, I felt a certain astonishment about how visual communication can be organized and transmitted to such diverse audiences. I thought of a certain strangeness that strikes us, after what we have witnessed for many decades, about the denormalization of contemporary art, the search for innovative thinking beyond the traditional paradigms. That's what we want to talk about a little. The theme that the Olavo Setubal Chair presented for this year at USP addresses the ways in which the notions of institution and cultural institutions are being reconsidered, especially this year, in relation to contemporary socio-cultural changes. I want to suggest a first topic for us to talk about. My impression is that there is a mismatch between cultural institutions, ministries of culture, national

councils - as they are called in each country - or museums, concert halls, theatres, popular music festivals, regarding changes in the management of the culture that have been taking place, sometimes related to institutions, but that, to a large extent, emerge from societies. I will quickly list here some innovations. For example, we have changed a lot compared to twenty or thirty years ago - you know the subject, Teixeira - in terms of training courses in cultural management. Most of those that exist today did not exist ten or fifteen years ago. I would like to cite one of the examples, which catches my attention, which is the new generation of curators, researchers in cultural and artistic issues, and the emergence, in the last decade - a little more, perhaps since the beginning of this 21st century - of statistics and research on culture, on the performance or supposed economic performance of cultural practices, on audiences; many aspects that were not previously measured. Cultural policies were, to a large extent, initiatives or ideas of officials or elites, and today we have satellite accounts of culture, sophisticated knowledge about many audiences (although still insufficient). One last point I would like to highlight is the independent development of creativity in young generations. It seems to me that this is an answer that, to a large extent, is linked to other areas of independence and differentiation of recent generations. But there are also differences regarding the bureaucratic inertia of the institutions and, at the same time, there is a sign of precariousness, a lack of institutional support for culture, and there are places that do not think that the most sensible thing to do would be to include the new

generations of artists, managers cultural, writers. I would like to hear what you think, from your perspectives in Brazil, in Chile, about this difference or disagreement.

Teixeira Coelho - Carla, would you like to say something?

Carla Pinochet Cobos - Yes. I was just reflecting on this volatility in the new institutions, of which you commented. I mean, about the difficulty experienced by traditional institutions to make room for contemporary transformations linked to digitisation and innovation, which was the proposal used as a starting point for this conversation that Néstor addressed in his lecture, wasn't it? Even today, some cultural institutions, especially those created with the emergence of youth, also operate through projects. The idea of working within projects, or operating under the logic of projects, is something that we have seen with Néstor, in his research into Mexico from 2011/2012 onwards[10]. We have observed that young people have been articulating their activities via cultural networks, using different strategies while aiming at a specific objective. Digital networks and social media have allowed new generations of creators to work on projects and I think that this logic is also contaminating the institutional dimension. Under some logic of simulacrum or semblance of an institution, many of the forms of creation are taking on the language of the institution and immobilising it, in function of these small enterprises that arise and are faced with a different tem-

10. GARCÍA CANCLINI, N.; URTEAGA CASTRO POZO, M. (coord.). *Cultura y Desarrollo*: una visión distinta desde los jóvenes. Madrid: Fundación Carolina – CeALCI – Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, 2011.

porality than that of the long tradition of the conventional institutions, including several contemporary institutions. Obviously, there still exists, in many countries, a structure of large institutions housing several projects. But what I see emerging are small institutions that emerge and then disappear precisely through these digital networks, from the resources of graphic design, from the possibility of strategically positioning themselves in different sectors, which also have a shorter lifespan and fade away, since those goals can disappear as well. So, I think it is a generational thing, with a new rhythm, a different temporality, let's say, from what we can see in traditional institutions, to which, it seems, we might attribute part of this disconnection, this bankruptcy in relation to a more rigid structure. There are great possibilities in this, but at the same time problems, which are those we have identified in our field work and in other investigations that have been arisen elsewhere in Latin America. I think the issue of rhythm, of temporalities, is very significant for us when thinking about the institution.

Teixeira Coelho - Well, Néstor, staying within the limits of your proposition, I would like to put another card on the table that is, I think, linked to your inaugural speech and also to the objective of the Olavo Setubal Chair. It is a topic that became evident to me again yesterday, when talking to you. The Olavo Setubal Chair aims to discuss the issue of Art, Culture and Science where they converge. As I understand the question of science and the question of applied science in our discussion, in this field of ours what is at issue is not only the chance to discuss

practices, not only to propose more suitable programmes, more convenient today, but - before that and to create the conditions to do that - try to understand how the discourse on culture and the discourse on cultural policy are processed. In other words, what is the institution's discourse on culture and cultural policy. In this respect, I note, there is not a big gap between the institution's speech and the speech of the object that the institution declares as its own, considering that the object of the institution is culture or art and, more broadly, cultural policy. I will start with an example, Néstor, from your speech some minutes ago, your inaugural speech in the Chair that preceded our conversation. You quoted Tim O'Sullivan. You spoke of the concept of institution, of what an institution means, how it is defined, how the institution is described, and you mentioned Tim O'Sullivan, who authored an article in the book Conceptos clave en Comunicación (*Key Concepts in Communication*). Tim O'Sullivan's definition is as follows: "the lasting, regulatory and organizing structures of any society, which constrain and control individuals and individuality". And later on, Tim O'Sullivan writes that "institutions are the basic principles and values according to which many social and cultural practices are organised and coordinated". Néstor, I see in this definition from O›Sullivan an example of the mismatch between the language of institution, the language about the institution and the language of the object that institution claims to treat, which are art and culture. Where is the gap? This understanding of Tim O'Sullivan seems to me to put all the weight on a single pole of something that actually

has two poles, which leads me to consider his approach as something Manichean. When he says that institution is what constrains and controls the lives of individuals and individuality, he is forgetting that the institution is exactly, and at the same time, what makes life, existence, appearance, and growth possible for the individual and individuality. What I mean by that is that it seems that Tim O›Sullivan›s expression – but I take it here as an example of a very large number of thinkers – neglects, or does not recognize, or does not admit that there is something embedded in the institution; something that is a paradox. The institution controls and coerces the individual, without a doubt, but it is the institution that allows the individual to emerge as an individuality and, eventually, to associate collectively. What is my point? Nowadays, it seems to me that the discourse on culture and cultural policy refuses to recognize that culture and art are, fundamentally, paradoxical phenomena. The figure of the paradox is being taken out of the picture. And that throws us into a monolithic discourse, almost in unison, which points only to one side of the issue and leaves out the other, which is the hallmark of any ideological discourse. This is not new. To conclude this initial remark, you saw that, in my speech introducing Professor Canclini, I focused a lot on just one book by him, possibly the most recent, Pistas *Falsas*, which, it seems to me, opens a very important window to understand this paradox and point to a central flaw in the discourse on the *fact of culture*. In this book in particular, Néstor does not hide an entire controversial, paradoxical aspect of culture which should, in my view, also be in-

corporated into the discourse on culture. I will not new here all the examples that appear in the book, there are several that illustrate this point, which is fundamental to addressing the issue of the institution. The book itself, as a whole, dismantles institutionality and the discourse on cultural policy. My proposal is that several of the not always explicit suggestions Néstor introduces in his book about how to deal with this subject, are suggestions that we should incorporate in the discussion on the issue of institutionality and, eventually, in the attempt to rescue this institutionality from the impasse it finds itself in today and that leads to its own brutal weakening, to which one should add its dismantling by the politicians themselves, by the political system itself. In short, and trying to make it clear: I see a mismatch between what is proper to the object of cultural policy discourse – and I consider institutionality to be a concrete discourse about cultural policy – and what is, in fact, proper to the object of this discourse and this institutionality, which is typical of art and culture. Art and culture are made of paradoxes; art much more than culture – but culture is also made up of paradoxes. And *Pistas Falsas* gives valuable examples of this. This is the first card I will play, which we will then discuss if you think it is worthwhile.

Néstor García Canclini - What you are saying generates many associations for me. Certainly, it is of great importance to introduce this idea of what the discourse says about institutions and to think about the notion of discourse in a way that supports a semiology that has existed for decades. In Latin America, we had a someone who thought in this sense, Eliseo Verón, who said that there

are no texts without contexts, there are no speeches without social relations that give them meaning. Taking this to the field of institutions, evidently, it has been analysed especially with regard to museums, but there are also others: it is not only what is said by a collection in a museum, but what the building says, from the moment one enters, one climbs the stairs with effort, or one observes an architecture that has increasingly taken on a leading role in defining what should be a museum. I think of Bilbao, I think of many museums, Guggenheim, New York as well, which condition the experience of what it means to relate to art. I think this has led to such excess that, in the architecture of the last few years, there has been a reaction against this embarrassing form and against this imposition, just as you indicated in Tim O'Sullivan's definition, of seeing art and culture, at the same time, as structures that organize individual practices. On the other hand, I believe that there are reactions against this mode of imposition. One of them would be, for example, the self-criticisms of many architects, even those who have made great buildings, narcissists and protagonists who - as is the case with Rem Koolhaas, who has made many in the world - try to impose their figure and their form, their way of thinking, their speech on many institutions of all kinds. In the last exhibition Koolhaas made, at the beginning of 2020, at the Guggenheim in New York, he planted tomatoes on the avenue that leads to Guggenheim, proposing a change in the route that would later be followed inside the museum, right? There is a challenge that I find much more evident in what Carla highlighted when she spoke

about small institutions. Not only the canons of the 19th or mid-20th century, or the scenographic architects. I also think about community museums, institutions that arose from the needs of a neighbourhood, many Medialabs (I am thinking of Madrid, but there are some in Latin America). There are many institutions that have been generated from local needs. I do not know, I ask the question to continue commenting, to what extent some of the good curators, who for me would be more attractive, more stimulating, are rethinking many museums, not as an institution, but as a platform. It would be necessary to make a genealogy of this use of discourse outside the institutional world, within institutions, but, possibly, this notion of platform is removed from digital platforms and digital imperialism in our more formal institutional daily life. Anyway, it seems to me that there is a way to redefine institutions. It seems very significant, in the sense of Carla's book,[11] that, when she decided to study museums and not values, she presented two museums that are anti-museums: the Museo del Barro, in Asunción (Paraguay), and the Micromuseo Al Fondo Hay Sitio, in Peru. There are two experiences… In the case of the Paraguayan museum, they build a building, build an institution, an architect intervenes, but from multiple collections, which mix with what is called art, popular worship, avant-garde, handicrafts, etc. And then we detonated the notion of institution. It seems to me that it is a possibility to rethink institutions from the community and this notion

11. PINOCHET COBOS, C. *Derivas críticas del museo en América Latina.* México, Ciudad de México: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 2016.

of platform, even for large institutions. We remain with you, Carla.

Carla Pinochet Cobos - I would like to return a little to the question, to Professor Teixeira's provocation regarding the distance between language and the object, the discourse, and the object of cultural institutions: to also ask if this was not always representative of the difficulties faced by cultural institutions or if there is a rather more recent genealogy. That is to say, if it resonates with changes in contemporary cultural scenes. Historically, in the 20th century the arts reacted to the difficulty of bureaucratic, institutional language and were always looking for a way out, break outs, for different ways to relate to the institutional, to openly and critically break with institutional structures and to reinvent them. I believe that, as Néstor suggests, there is a genealogy in Latin America of museums that extend beyond their limits, of institutions in general, that speak to us of bottom-up strategies or strategies that, in some way, reinvent institutional functions, that adapt them to the context, or rather, the opposite: it is the context that shapes what an institution can become in these spaces. It seems to me that more conventional prerogatives can be seen to emerge from these disruptive actions, which today expand the limits of the institutional and help it become productive in the contemporary social fabric. So as not to restate the cases that Néstor has already mentioned, the context of the pandemic is what I see now, and how it has brutally disrupted most institutions and imposed upon them the need to reinvent themselves, looking for ways to act, even if it is digitally. In the context of Chile, where

there was a social crisis in October last year leading to a major readjustment of the political landscape, there are museums that have also become low-priced canteens and community-garden museums. I think the formula could be summarises as museum-slash, museum-school, museum-political space, museological spaces for diverse social articulations, which, without a doubt, do not coincide, are not restricted to the modern, metropolitan, western definition of what a museum should be, of what the institution should be. So, it seems to me that this is a first point to put forward in this Latin American panorama on the institutional issue. Also, thinking of Néstor's presentation and the question about the definition of an institution, why have we yet to rethink or find new ways to contextualize an institution that responds to digital and technological innovations in general, I recalled a text, an old one, in fact, written by Roger Bastide[12]. In *Arte e Sociedade (Art and Society)*, he explores the needs and discourse of two trajectories, two traditions of the institution. In the first, the most conventional, which is founded in common sense, he speaks of person-institutions, those that can be considered the idea of a company or activity that are self-perpetuating and acquire a legal structure which can be extended over time. This is the definition that we usually refer to when we talk about institutions. But the other definition takes us back to this whole sociological, argumentative tradition. And he calls them thing-institutions. What are these thing-institutions? Sociological institutions, in the first sense of

12. BASTIDE, R. *Arte e sociedade*. São Paulo: Companhia Editora Nacional, 1972.

the term, which connect us to a series of customs, values, forms in common and which unite us as a society. This social glue is, say, the institutional matrix of a society, although it does not necessarily become material in the form of buildings or infrastructure of any kind. I think that cultural institutions – trying to think about the specificity of cultural institutions as opposed to banks, hospitals, or other such institutions – may have to do with moving between one thing and another, between one definition and another. They are in a kind of interstice between the person-institution and the thing-institution, it seems to me. Because they force us to think precisely about the dimension of meaning. I return to Teixeira's question or approaches, when he speaks of this gap between the object and the discourse with which art and culture are elaborated. I believe that this indeterminacy, this tension, can also be very appropriately placed as a bridge, as a mediation. In other words, cultural institutions have a vocation to work with the institutional, not only in the order of an organogram, functions or in a physical space, but they also need, I think, that strength, that energy that comes from working with something that has to do with the elaboration of feeling. I wanted to share these ideas around the notion of an institution that, it seems to me, orbit around what you are proposing.

Néstor García Canclini – It was a brief mediation between what we hope Teixeira will tell us now, summarizing the difference he makes between culture and art, its gaps; in principle, I have written about it. I agree and, at the same time, I see inevitable entanglements. To a large extent, Art History shows us cases, not all, of artists who aspired to institutionalize themselves, who aspired to make culture and not just art. And some succeeded, that is, installed codes. But, on the other hand, we could think from the point of view of culture, how it benefits when it is subverted, altered, stimulated to re-imagine itself, with something I would call a little more than art, which is creativity. And this creativity can arise, of course, from the so-called "experts", in quotes, which are artists or writers, filmmakers, and can arise from the process of circulation of works and their reception by different audiences, who change their meaning and make so that something proposed as a culture, as a cultural asset, even heritage, is re-signified when absorbed and produces new meanings that, at times, surprise the artist who generated it, if he is still alive. And how do you see it, Teixeira?

Teixeira Coelho - I see this as something very complicated [laughs]. It seems to me that we are here talking about institutions in two different levels . One is the institution that I would say is medium-sized , medium-range, like the museum, for example. But I was talking about an institutionality that is broader than that of the museum, which is the institutionality of the cultural policy regarding a city, a province or a country and which, in principle, is designed to support the medium-sized institutions – like a museum, a movie theatre, a cultural centre – in their operation or whose intention, on the contrary, is to prevent this medium-sized institution from fulfilling its role. I may be assuming things that are not being said here, but I believe that Carla's bet, for example, is that middle-sized institutions, such

as a museum, a cultural centre, can eventually achieve their goals of aiming for a refoundation of culture, of the use of culture, of creativity, as Néstor says, almost *independently* of macro institutionality, which sets the rules that allows these medium-sized institutions to exist. In the level of macro institutionality, I would say that there is a mismatch between reality and discourse. Let me take an example from Néstor's own book, *Pistas Falsas*, a very interesting passage. I will not say that the passage is Néstor's, it is by the narrator of Néstor's book; I don't know whether the narrator of Néstor's book is Néstor the author, he will tell us later on. But there is a passage in *Pistas Falsas* in which a very interesting clue is given about how the brain of a macro institution works. The narrator of Néstor's book makes a distinction between heritage, which is the sum of the answers that a society has found to deal with its own age and literature. I will take the word literature in the broadest sense of art or creativity, creativity in a way that is not that of science. Heritage is the sum of the answers that a society has found to cope with its time, and literature, or art, is that which copes with questions that have no answer. The institutionality of cultural policy – whichever political party may be responsible for it at the time – wants very much to find answers and to give answers. And when it does not find answers, it forces or forges an answer, it points to a given answer. The institution does not want to know what lies behind the questions, it just wants answers. Failure to recognise that there are, in culture, some practices that are concerned with unanswered questions prevents the machinery of the institution, the macro institution, from

fulfilling the objectives it claims to have but that it actually does not have – and that it has less and less. Here, I should perhaps introduce another one of Néstor's questions – or maybe it was Canclini who asked this question, not Néstor – a question from 2003. It appeared within quotation marks in the original and I keep them here: "Is the best cultural policy the one that does not exist?" I would almost say that, in the case of the macro institution, that is, this set of rules that organises – from top to bottom – the cultural life of a certain place, from above, it is better that it does not exist at all. In fact, it no longer exists. At least that is the situation here in Brazil. This has become very clear now over the last, let's say, four years. And even a little more than that. The institution has become a major obstacle for quite some time now, because it wants to find the answers. And I am not just referring to the institutionality of governmental entities: collectives, the way they are usually named here, are no less institutional. This institutionality is blind and deaf to what is opposed to heritage, to what has to deal with that which has no answer. This, for me, is a structural barrier. I may be, perhaps, too radical here, but the actions that the average institutions, such as a museum, a cultural centre are able to carry out with great difficulty are cancelled out by the weight of the macro institution, that exerts a force in the opposite direction. This is what has transformed the institutionality of culture, in a country like Brazil, into a complete failure – and in a way it is a relief. To give an example that makes it clear that this is not a subjective opinion: in the last, let me see, in the last 23 or 24 years, we have had 21 ministers of culture. The av-

erage life in office of a minister of culture in Brazil is one year and four months. This means, bearing in mind that every minister wants to erase, "smudge out", what has been done before and start from scratch when they take over, this means that for 23 years there has been no macro institutionality in a country like Brazil. And there is no such macro institutionality, among other things, due to lack of resources, competence, capacity, because what greater institutionality seeks is not what seeks those who are on the street doing art, doing culture. Even so, that which the latter support is the idea that what should prevail is heritage, that is, the answers. People change but the structure remains. Both inside the government and in the institution that claims to oppose the government. In the case of Brazil, from a certain moment on, let us say from the 1930's, the 40's, the discourse of great institutionality and the discourse of the creators, the people who deal with art and culture proper clashed head-on. And we never, never, have rebuilt the bridge between these two territories, between heritage and literature, in Néstor words, or between heritage and art.

Néstor García Canclini - I would like to recall that text on the best cultural policy, which is one that does not exist ...

Teixeira Coelho That was a question, wasn't it? You were asking a question in that case, right?

Néstor García Canclini - That's right. Precisely, as a question ... I would have to re-read it and the current distance and the proximity I feel with the text may be interesting. Because I believe that what motivated me to write and publish it in one of the main liter-

ary supplements in Mexico, which no longer exists as a literary and cultural supplement, was the collapse that was seen in historical policies and the role of the State as a "public actor", with all the quotes we want, in the history of Mexico, which, as we know, was much more powerful than in any other Latin American country and with greater continuity, mainly while the PRI [Institutional Revolutionary Party] ruled. I remember that I was motivated by a certain malaise that was generated by the State's lack of responsibility regarding the cultural life of Mexico. But there was also, if I remember correctly, a sense of irony because we saw the transition, in those dying institutions, to a deconstruction that was already irreversible and that was not just the result of the misunderstanding of some leaders, in this case, President Fox[13] and his culture team. However, before we had the result of international processes, in which many of the evidence to which it referred occurred, of budgetary suffocation of cultural institutions, of disinterest and incompetence of cultural authorities. The President was given a phrase from a writer for him to read, and he said: José Luis "Borgues". That was the level. At the same time, today the issue raises a double question: on the one hand, this idea, which has advanced, of rethinking institutions as platforms that should offer opportunities for cultural and artistic action to take place with the greatest freedom of experimentation and work with society in the productive sense, as art implies playfulness, because otherwise, there is no productivity of thought. Also, it seems to me that there is

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13. Vicente Fox was president of Mexico from 2000 to 2006.

a responsibility of the public power that remains, although it should be reconsidered. A public power such as a Ministry of Culture, which establishes rigid platforms and not institutions that prescribe budgets allocated by political interest or replaced by enmity. It seems to me that it is another way of thinking: the need for these institutions to innovate, to change their meaning. For me, there is a role for the public that remains the responsibility of the reconceived State - which, in turn, is something that seems to me absolutely utopian and unrealizable - based on society and its effective or more or less democratically expressed needs. We are going in the opposite direction. It is not a path ... simply to authoritarianism - there are many authoritarian events in the exercise of cultural power in Brazil, Chile, Mexico and other Latin American countries - but part of a reconsideration of the meaning of the institutions that, in my opinion - I am thinking of some institutions in Mexico, such as the Cinemateca Nacional, some community libraries and many others -, they are remaking this sense of the public with the small budget they have, conceiving themselves as representatives of a public interest that they must expand and not simply represent, not to put it as a corset for society, but as an opportunity. Carla, what do you say about that?

Carla Pinochet Cobos - I want to make a point about the first issue we are talking about, in relation to this deinstitutionalization process. There is a significant caveat to be expressed when it comes to the diversity of local contexts in Latin America. I believe that in Mexico; in Brazil, without a doubt; and in Argentina, this process is being expe-

rienced as a loss of rights, in line with this logic of decentralization. It seems to me that in places like Chile – but also Paraguay or Peru, for instance – what we find is a long history of cultural policies based on the absence of cultural policies. Basically, cultural spaces end up meeting the obligations or actions of government that should be the responsibility of the State, and they sometimes happen in very hostile contexts. Once again, I want to go back to the recent situation in Chile, for example, to make clear the magnitude of the support for the state that the cultural creators assumed. On the one hand, they adopted different emergency strategies, from raffles, bingo, community kitchens, donations, etc. of all types, which are undoubtedly at the smaller scale. But they also took on a management role in the absence of measures by the Ministry of Culture, which have been noted for their absence, which failed to adopt any form of containment. The cultural sector set up a negotiating forum, and then left it immediately because it had no effect, and then went on to create a cultural lobby. That is, they went to the Legislative Assembly to seek interlocutors for their demands. All of this generated roadmaps, protocols, different measures, both in practice and in the medium-term to continue surviving. In Chile, the cultural sector was the one most affected by the crisis. We are talking about 44% of the people who work in the sector and are now unemployed, that is, they lost their jobs or were unable to exercise them, because, undoubtedly, some aspects of culture and the arts involve social life, contact, copresence, with the sociability that public life implies. Even more than restaurants, than hotels, the

cultural sector was very badly affected. It also comes to mind that when I was doing fieldwork in Paraguay, I remember one interviewee who said to me, "Here, when it comes to cultural policy, thinking about Stroessner's dictatorship has been a non-cultural policy." In other words, a policy in absentia, a policy of hostility, repression and censorship. Obviously, some things have changed in different countries, but I think that these smaller cultural sectors today experience this deinstitutionalization in a different way from the great institutional framework that Professor Teixeira spoke about. There are countries like Brazil, Mexico, or places that had a cultural infrastructure of another order, of a different magnitude, and also a much more organic way of thinking. This is an aspect I would like to return to. I will also make a brief reference to this idea of the platform as an institutional language, opening up to a new way of doing culture. I believe that, again, we encounter a generational question, a reaction by the new generations to the authoritarian, to the rigid, to the structured, to a certain way of building knowledge that is not deliberative, that is not collaborative. However, I would like to add that those solutions – which, to a large extent, I celebrate – and these discourses of empowerment of the community, of the popular, of the diverse, came hand in hand with a series of other issues that are also interesting to put on the table. A big question has always been feminism and how to decentralise and depatriarchalize institutions at different levels. I think that when institutions put these signifiers into play, such as the community, the diverse or the supposed logic of the platform as a horizontal work ideal, there is also

a reaction from those communities that end up feeling under- represented, who somehow believe that these mechanisms contribute more to power than to real empowerment of communities. Therefore, it is interesting for me to observe the processes that Néstor describes, also the reactions that they have stimulated, also for the distrust that this triggers in different sectors of the population; mistrust of different orders of magnitude, some with more reason than others. But I think that this discourse about the fall of the old school, the authority and the centralised structure takes a risk that is very interesting to observe, that the critical voices proliferate. And those critical voices will not be satisfied simply with a pretence of collaboration or involvement of the community. So, we arrive at some complex questions, about how participation can truly be built from below or, in some way, truly a force for change.

Teixeira Coelho - I will state the issue once again and perhaps make it more dramatic. Let us say that there is, in fact, a tragedy of institutionality; I use the word "tragedy" here in the sense that it was used in Greek theatre. "Tragedy": that which is beyond salvation, has no solution. It is different from drama. Drama has ups and downs, the hero suffers a setback but they may get up and carry on. Usually, dramas end well. The tragedy does not end well. Picking up on something that Carla has just said about critical voices, it seems to me that critical voices have to know what they say, and they have to know why they are saying it and about what they are saying. What I am going to say now is based on my experience of living, since the mid-1980s, amidst young cultural managers.

Young cultural managers are usually Secretaries of Culture in small cities scattered around Brazil. They are, therefore, young people who, theoretically, are on the same wavelength as the young people they serve, although they do not only serve young people. It means that both of them, the servers and the people who benefit from their action, must live, must have lived through, more or less, the same aspirations and disenchantments. Where is the tragedy of culture? Why am I talking about critical voices, and what does it have to do with these young people? These young people, even though they are Secretaries of Culture, are very often critical. And even if the mayor – who is their boss – is from a conservative or reactionary party, the young managers assume a critical stance. But when I see the actual behaviour and the discourse of these young cultural managers, I find that this discourse seeks the same thing that seeks the broader institution they are challenging. What is the broader institution looking for? An answer. What are they looking for themselves? An answer. These young cultural managers and, of course, the broader institution behind them, have not yet understood that culture and art are made of paradoxes. And if they do not change their behaviour, if they do not understand that, if they do not understand that what they propose in art and culture are things for which there are no answers and that art and culture should be supported exactly because of that, the broader institution gets weak. And, if it weakens, it remains like a ghost, haunting people. And this is where I see a tragedy. I will quote another passage from the book *Pistas Falsas.* I do not know whether this

passage is another one that I should attribute to the narrator in the book or to the author of the book. I know that I certainly cannot attribute it to Canclini. So, I will assign it to Néstor. I mentioned, just now, the distinction that Néstor makes between heritage and art: heritage, the set of answers that society has found to face the issues that cornered it in the past; art, that which knows it will not find the answers. Starting from there, another r passage from *Pistas Falsas* says the following: "Art is that which goes beyond the real, which goes further than the real, which passes by the real." And I notice that what young people want, even nowadays, at least when they arrive at the graduation course I mentioned, what they want is, in fact, the same thing that the institutionality they themselves condemn wants. Institutionality wants answers; what it wants is to step into what is real. And my suspicion, my fear is that, even if we move from a medium-level institution, like the museum, for example, to the larger institutional platform of a cultural policy, the same institutionality will be will be reproduced, because the questions that are being submitted to the platform and the answers that people expect to hear from the platform are the same they expected from the larger institutionality that no longer meets their wants and needs. My feeling is that the critical voices criticise the exteriority of the phenomenon – and it is important that they do so – but that, in criticizing the exteriority of the phenomenon, they bet on the fact that they themselves have an answer. And that is where they are mistaken.

Néstor García Canclini - I suppose that if we had the opportunity to receive questions from the public, we would contin-

ue to experience what, perhaps, the three of us have experienced at the end of some conferences: "Well, but are you optimist or pessimist?" I already said something once, and I still think that neither of these notions is productive for knowledge, nor, I would say now, to discover how to live together and with meaning. The sense and the loss of meaning have been exacerbated in this pandemic. I recall two phrases by two Mexicans. One is by a well-known writer, Margo Glantz, who, when asked what she thought would change after the pandemic - she said this three months ago in an interview - said: "People change in the first month and then go back to same thing." And the other is from a film director and cultural manager, Benjamín Juárez Echenique, who is a professor in Boston and ran the National Centre for the Arts in Mexico, and said - in something that is on YouTube, that I saw recently - that, if deep down you look at what is being said about the future, there is something hidden there, which is: "I want the world to change after the pandemic, so that I can continue doing what I did before". These are two answers with different meanings, but it seems to me that they help us to leave, at least in the end, a contribution on the question of meaning: I think that many of us have thought, for a long time, that we cannot answer with great stories, with theories, with comprehensive explanations. It is a very open question. We could even go back to one of the results we found in that research that we did with more than ten researchers - among whom was Carla here in Mexico, almost a decade ago - and we saw that young people were already working, not with the idea of a career, but with projects. I

have the impression, and I would like to hear Carla's word, perhaps to conclude, that more and more, given the impossibility of works, the younger generations work with events. And they react with indignation, with indifference, to anti-event protests. But where does that take us, right? What possibility of reconstructing some type of institutionality, which is not only representative of citizen diversity, but which also allows for the existence of citizens? Because that is another aspect that we missed. It's not just the institution, it's not just the state, but it's also the places where we believed we could be something else, in addition to network users and consumers, etc. What do you think, Carla?

Carla Pinochet Cobos - Yes, I think this proposal to change the focus from project to event is interesting. We would have to think about exactly what we mean by an event, what is the timing of the event, or rather, what do you think the day after the event. Maybe I am very affected by what happened in Chile a year ago, but I see an exercise in rebellion that has some possibilities, that has something, let's say, to break with an order that is, without a doubt, hostile. It is very difficult for new generations to encounter ways of living in this neoliberal order. I see that reaction that could be more in the order of an event than the construction of a project. I think it has a little to do with it. Perhaps the event operates through a logic of breaking and entering, of destroying the previous order as well. However, I see that there is an insistence, that there is a somewhat stubborn vision, to not to return to that order, to that look, say ... to the normality that was the problem. Many of the social permanence slogans in Chile –

which have also existed in other contexts, for example, in feminist movements throughout Latin America – have strategically used this event, this preform, this media campaign, this multitudinous march, at different scales and under different logics, which operates as a way of happening, of breaking into a scene historically denied to certain sectors, with the purpose of, above all, seeing, looking again, and demonstrating that this order normalised, this daily functioning, was an unacceptable fact. It goes beyond the limits of what is admissible. It seems to me that there may be something short-term in those strategies, which may not be so focused on thinking about how to build a new normal or how it can be instituted from another social pattern, despatriotised, denneoliberalised, etc. However, there is still this insistence on demonstrating to very persistent sectors – indeed, they have, today, some outbreaks of the extreme right, very dangerous and very violent – that this model was responsible for a precarious life. I believe that this is the concept, that of precarious life. So, effectively, in the face of diminished projects, disjointed projects or reduced to their minimum structure, their minimum temporality, instability. I see that this generation is much more precarious than the previous ones, but at the same time, it has a very strong conviction to destroy authoritarianism. There is an emerging sensitivity, which does not end up unfolding. Perhaps, in Gramsci's terms, we could say that the new has not yet been fully born. There is no long-term constructive look, as I agree that it is a logic of the event. But, without a doubt, the conviction of not naturalising, of going backwards between

cultural backgrounds, has permeated us very deeply. Above all, I say this as a woman. We had to unlearn a number of ways to relate to others and to ourselves and perhaps this is not the time for such a constructive sense, but rather, say, revisionist, for deconstruction. In Chile, this is related to the constituent process. That is to say, the process is disruptive, on the one hand, but, at the same time, it envisions the possibility of thinking about a new order. And here comes the complexity of mistrust in politicians, of all the impunity that has accumulated over the years, of brutal inequality. Obviously, it is very complex. But I think that this event, which is undoubtedly the space where most of the energy was placed, requires that energy, because there is a lot to unlearn, there is a lot to look at again. That's it.

Néstor García Canclini - Thank you very much, Carla. Teixeira, say something to close.

Teixeira Coelho - In conclusion: you mentioned the filmmaker who wants things to change a little so that they can continue to do what they did before. This is a quote from the prince of Lampedusa in *Il Gattopardo*[14]: "It is necessary that things change so that they stay exactly as they are". And that distresses me a little, Néstor, because what I see are precisely small changes that only reinforce what has happened before. So, in closing, I will not analyse things anymore. I will just say this. First: I will insist that cultural managers – many of whom are also creators, are the same age as the young people they serve, are on the same wavelength

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14. LAMPEDUSA, G. T. *O leopardo*. Trad. Maurício Santana Dias. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2017.

and have their own art studios, etc. – I will insist that they read *Pistas Falsas* because the book gives false leads about what they have to do. But make no mistake, these false leads are true leads. At this stage in the game, only false leads can lead us to the real path. I think that, in this book, it is quite clear that there is a Néstor who has just entered the field, the territory of literature, and there is a Canclini, who operates in another way. And I, as I said in my speech just now to welcome Professor Canclini, I hope that Néstor and Canclini, at the end of the Chair, will come together, come to an agreement and propose a way forward. I will say that reading this book is essential for people, for cultural managers, those who are movers of the cultural scene, whether as activists or as cultural producers themselves, for them to understand that culture and art are made of paradoxes. And it is important to ask questions knowing that they have no answer; it is not that they will find the answer: there are no answers. I am very concerned with the fact that, willing to destroy authoritarianism, what several of these cultural agents are doing is opening up new possibilities for another kind of authoritarianism that is, in essence, the same thing under a different dress. We are seeing this and I believe that, right here in Brazil, there is a kind of isomorphism between anti-institutionality and institutionality because the questions that should be being asked are not being asked. I think that *Pistas Falsas* – Néstor, I didn't want to quote other passages here but I can do it, if I am asked to – there are several passages that point to exactly that. There is one in particular – I quote this to finish – there is one in which the principal

character in the book says that he read something on a wall in México-DF. Well, since we are dealing with false clues, I don't know whether the character, in fact, read this graffiti on any wall or if it was the narrator who invented that graffiti, or if it was Néstor who invented the graffiti; in any case, it is a very appropriate graffiti and I would like cultural managers to think about how they can build an institutional system on top of it. The graffiti goes like this: "The more we know, the less we understand; and it's better that way."

[*Laughter*]

Néstor García Canclini - Thank you very much. I shall complicate the issue a little more, because I have to say that the narrator is neither Néstor nor Canclini, but an archaeologist who comes to Latin America. But let's leave it at that. I find it incredible that questions have arisen that give a lot of impetus and possibilities to rethink, to reflect without haste and do an investigation with answers, for me, this year in the Chair, and for Sharine Melo and Juan Brizuela, who will be the postdoctoral researchers, competitively selected, who will support me in the research and do their own work in Brazil and Argentina. Many thanks also to the Institute for Advanced Studies at USP, which sponsors this conversation. I think it is a good way to keep many questions open, without rushing to find the keys to the movements, events that are, fortunately, with the possibility of opening up even more. A warm hug to everyone.

Carla Pinochet Cobos - Thank you very much for the invitation and for the opportunity for this dialogue.

Teixeira Coelho - A pleasure to be with both of you   .

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INSTITUTIONS IN CULTURAL EMERGENCY: FROM LIVING COMMUNITY CULTURE TO THE ALDIR BLANC LAW

Juan Ignacio Brizuela
Sharine Machado C. Melo

What cultural institutions are we going to talk about if they do not exist in our territories? It is easy to believe that this question is raised in the artistic and cultural sectors in Brazil, Mexico, Argentina, or any other Latin American country. We are paraphrasing here a phrase quoted by Professor Néstor García Canclini in 1987[15], but it was repeated with frightening regularity over the following decades, in different contexts. Of course, as scholars of cultural policy, we need to reflect carefully on whether, in fact, anything has changed over the years. Even more, if there has never been relative stability in the insti-

tutionality of culture in these countries, what are the problems to be faced in the light of the current processes of deinstitutionalisation, de-nationalisation and cultural un-democratisation in Latin America?

As postdoctoral researchers for the Olavo Setubal Chair of Art, Culture and Science at the Institute for Advanced Studies at USP, we believe we face a dilemma similar to that noted by the current Holder of the Chair over 30 years ago. At the end of the 1980s, it was not possible to say definitively that there were no cultural policies in Latin America. However, they were not as evident, regular, or frequent in their development as other public policies for other sectors. Likewise, talking today about cultural institutions in Brazil, Mexico and Argentina – the three countries that we will focus on most during

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15. "These are some of the reasons why cultural policies are a space of doubtful existence. 'What cultural policies are we going to talk about if they don't exist in my country?' Say sociologists and writers from Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Peru" (GARCÍA CANCLINI, 2019, p. 46).

this research – such policies are not that evident, regular or frequent for ordinary people in comparison with the debate about other institutions of modernity. Thus, reflecting on cultural institutions in the current Latin American context is almost as challenging as talking about cultural policies in the late 1980s, but no less urgent and necessary.

Considering this general panorama, we now wish to present the research projects that we are developing under the general framework of the institutionality of culture in the current context of socio-cultural change.

The survey "Offside? The territorial dimension of the processes of institutionalization, deinstitutionalization and cultural reinstitutionalization in Latin America"[16] (Juan Ignacio Brizuela) aims to reflect on the public culture effectively institutionalized in the last decades in Brazil, Argentina and Mexico using the Points of Culture (Pontos de Cultura) and Living Community Culture (Cultura Viva Comunitária - CVC)[17] programmes as paradigms of contemporary Latin American cultural policies. In the early 21st century, we observed significant uplifts in national budgets and increases in state programmes for culture in these countries, considered in their sociological dimension (BOTELHO, 2001). Some attempts were made at strategic planning, training, and qualification of

16. "Offside? The territorial dimension of the processes of institutionalization, deinstitutionalization and cultural reinstitutionalization in Latin America."

17. Latin American transnational articulation of community, artistic and cultural groups that appears inspired by the actions of the Cultura Viva Program (whose axis are, precisely, the points of culture). This diverse and multisectoral network began to organize in 2009 and was consolidated in 2013, during the 1st Latin American Congress on Community Living Culture held in La Paz, Bolivia.

public agents of culture, among other initiatives that adopted innovative participatory management models for the sector. Culture ceased to be considered only as "a good deal" or as a pointless expense for the government and came to be seen as an investment capable of developing public policies in the fullest and broadest possible sense: citizen-focused, symbolic, and economic.

However, the regional processes of cultural (re)-democratisation and the realisation of full citizenship also experienced contradictory events involving the demobilisation, "de-citizenship" and "de-democratisation" of public culture, as recorded by Rubim (2007) in the sad traditions of cultural policy in Brazil: absences, authoritarianism, and instabilities. In fact, if we consider longer time periods of 50 years or even a century up to the present, we observe that democracy and cultural institutionality are not phenomena that necessarily nourish each other, especially in the state sphere. Thus, the artistic movements of the 1980s initially fought for the deinstitutionalisation of public culture promoted by authoritarian governments, especially the "bricks and mortar heritage" policy (FONSECA, 2003) that favoured more elitist and restricted perspectives of culture. In other words, the institutionalisation of a public, democratic, and citizen-focused culture was the exception and not the rule in our countries throughout the 20th century.

In this context, we note the resistance movements that seek to renew the institutions and/or promote another institutionalisation of culture that is broader, participatory, democratic, and public in its deepest sense, as are the Points of Culture and the

articulations of the Living Community Culture programmes. In addition, we take on the challenge of trying to identify and assess the degree of public institutionalisation of this type of transnational cultural movement (if we can effectively call this popular phenomenon a cultural institution). Considering some prior research carried out on this theme (MELO, 2016; BRIZUELA, 2017), we note paradoxes, instabilities, and continuities in relation to the institutionalization process of Points of Culture and Living Community Culture in Brazil and Argentina.

A paradox in the government of Dilma Rousseff in Brazil registered by Barbalho (2015), for example, signals both a process of legal and structural consolidation of culture (approval of the Proposed Amendment to Constitution No. 416/2005 that institutes the National System of Culture, Law No. 13018/2014 that institutes the National Living Culture Programme, among others) and a setback to the emblematic programs introduced by Gilberto Gil and Juca Ferreira during the Lula government, including the Points of Culture programme (TURINO, 2013). Not to mention the historical circumstances, articulations and transversal mobilisations that would lead the Bolsonaro government to invest the highest amount of federal funding in culture in Brazil's history through the Aldir Blanc Law. In fact, another public campaign by the Brazilian government was against the so-called Rouanet Law, which provides tax incentives for culture and in 2019 approved the largest investment in nominal values since its creation.

An apparently unusual continuity in

Argentina was signalled in our doctoral thesis (BRIZUELA, 2017) in relation to the continuation of the Puntos de Cultura (Points of Culture) programme through the transition from the government of Cristina Kirchner to that of Mauricio Macri; not only because the policy continued and had new public funding bid programmes, but because the same management and coordination team for the programme was maintained throughout the four years of Macri's government. Indeed, the changes in the internal management of the culture portfolio during the Kirchner government, especially when it was raised in status to a Ministry, generated greater instabilities for the programme than the overall transfer of power between presidents at opposite ends of the political spectrum.

In Mexico, we also see contradictory elements and, once again, community culture as the protagonist. On the one hand, the process of apparent institutional hierarchy through the creation of the Secretariat of Culture in 2015 (equivalent to a Ministry in other countries), for the first time in the history of federal public management, and the largest public budget for culture in Ibero-America in 2016, according to a comparative study published a few years ago and funded by OEI [Organization of Ibero-American States for Education, Science and Culture] (2017). Also historic was the election of Andrés Manuel López Obrador (Morena) as new president in 2018, breaking the hegemony of the PRI [Institutional Revolutionary Party], which had only alternated in power with the PAN [National Action Party] since the 2000s. With a speech more linked to the progressive political sectors of the continent and a promise

to fight the corruption of traditional parties, Morena's government annually makes specific cuts to the culture budget, weakening the institutionalisation of the sector. In parallel, a cultural policy that seemed central to the new government, the Community Culture Program, which aimed to reach 720 Mexican municipalities, was subject to a major reduction in resources. This programme and the lives of historic institutions, such as museums, cultural centres, funds for research and support for artists, are being severely affected by the layoffs of staff and the reduced budget. This cultural policy has led to artists and cultural workers coming together in critical opposition, a process we are following through documents and interviews with a number of those involved. Two names of these collectives are significant: *Asamblea por las Culturas*[18] (Assembly for Culture) and *No vivimos del aplauso* [19] (We Live for Applause).

Finally, we understand that for these community-based organizations threats are not restricted to decreasing public funding for culture, displacing their audience to digital applications or servers, or changes conditioned by neoliberalism and, more recently, by the COVID-19 pandemic. The main challenge facing these community cultural groups on a daily basis is territorial, in the face of the increasingly strong and expressive expansion of neo-Pentecostal institutions (PY; FREITAS, 2015; PY, 2017) which, at least in Brazil – and especially in the most remote territories of the metropolises – are those which most profoundly change consumption habits, cultural and artistic practices, and ways of life, deeply affecting the very survival of a large number of largely minority cultural groups which are grouped together in the Community Living Culture movement. And it is also these neo-Pentecostal groups that most strongly dispute the deeper symbolic meanings of the public cultural sphere, associated with new forms of sociocultural organisation, institutionalising multidirectional links with public agencies, private foundations and higher education institutions, making very effective use of innovative ways of producing and transmitting their interests in networks.

To summarise, the project aims to analyse socio-cultural experiences and studies produced in Brazil, Argentina and Mexico related to the Living Community Culture movement, focusing on territorial disputes in the processes of institutionalisation, deinstitutionalisation and re-institutionalisation of public cultural policies and examining the multiplicity of actors in their various spheres of activity, including political parties and trade unions, ecclesiastical and neo-Pentecostal institutions, as well as business sectors with diffuse interests.

For its part, the research project "Poets in times of poverty" (Sharine Machado)[20] intends to investigate networking activities articulated by artists, cultural professionals and other members of Brazilian civil society which lead to the development and implementation of public policies for the sector.

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18. Assembly for Cultures, in free translation.
19. We don't live for applause, in free translation.

20. This title is taken from the poem "Bilhete para o Bivar", by Roberto Piva (2004): "(...) And why be a poet / in times of poverty? Exclaims / crazy Hölderlin / murderers dressed in foliage / hordes of psychopaths / thrown in the squares / while the last / poets / wander in the night / padded".

Its main point of focus is the process involved in drafting and gaining approval of the Cultural Emergency Aldir Blanc Law [21] (Law No. 14017/2020). Sanctioned in June 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the mechanism transferred R$3 billion reais (about US$580 million as of December 2020) from the National Culture Fund to the States, the Federal District and Brazilian municipalities for use in emergency actions including monthly income support for cultural workers, subsidies to maintain spaces, open calls, funding applications and award programmes. The amount is the largest ever invested in a culture and the arts activity in Brazil, surpassing even programs of significant repercussion and capillarity, such as Cultura Viva (Living Culture). Although it results from the circumstances and faces a series of practical problems, such as delays in regulation by the federal government, short timeframes for budgetary disbursement and a lack of structure at local government level, the programme has ignited important debates on Brazilian cultural policies, shedding light on the National Culture System[22] and decentralised resource management.

However, what draws the most attention is the fact that the Aldir Blanc Law has emerged from the joint actions of civil movements and involves the most diverse political spectra, from left to right, in the middle of a serious health, political and economic crisis and a conservative government. The formulation of the law brought together thousands of people in videoconferences: the YouTube channel Emergência Cultural (Cultural Emergency), which is used for the meetings and now has about 15,000 subscribers and over 220,000 views. In a way, the engagement of thousands of artists and cultural professionals in a movement that demands the implementation of public policies for the sector – even if it is an emergency action – challenges the feeling of distrust of democratic institutions which has been growing in recent years, and puts in perspective the apparent lack of interest by a large proportion of citizens in political and collective matters.

Based on the surprise caused by this event, the project is inspired by a brief passage from Foucault's last work (2011). In *The Courage of Truth,* the author suggests that interest in the artists' way of life gained unprecedented dimensions in Western culture in the 18th and 19th centuries. The philosopher does not refer to individual biographical works, which had already attracted the attention of Giorgio Vasari, but to a special interest in the conduct and thinking of artists, as if their lives were the condition for the existence of the works, making them possible. Foucault sees in this tendency some elements that refer to cynicism, a philosophical doctrine of ancient Greece marked by combative practice and the act of telling the truth. By breaking with codes, laws, habits and institutions, modern artists such as Baudelaire, Flaubert, and Manet would reveal a deep desire for the

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21. Honored by the naming of the Cultural Emergency Law in Brazil, Aldir Blanc was an important Brazilian lyricist, composer, and chronicler, who died in 2020 as a result of complications arising from COVID-19.

22. Included in 2012 in the Federal Constitution and inspired by the Unified Health System (SUS), the National Culture System provides for the joint management of public policies for the sector, through action plans articulated between the Federal Government, the Federative Units and the Municipalities, with the participation of Civil Society.

transformation of the world, anchored in the possibilities of invention of the subject himself: the will to "become other than what it is, another of itself" (FOUCAULT, 2018, p. 21). It is possible to derive from these ideas a whole heterogeneous and rather diffuse imaginary: from social activism and peripheral circuits to avant-garde movements, which confront behavioural patterns and promote experiences of otherness.

But are these lines sketched out by Foucault (2011) still sufficient when considering institutional relations in the field of culture and the arts? According to Canclini (2012, p. 24), the experience of "encapsulation-transgression" loses its relevance precisely when art is inserted in "media, urban spaces, digital networks and forms of social participation". However, by conditioning the work to the lives of the artists, a reading of Foucault's work also allows us to trace relations with broader social issues: the growing importance for productive activities of investing in the workers' cognitive, affective, and emotional lives; and the growing fluidity between work and personal life. Leaving aside the romantic imaginary, much of what is seen on a daily basis are professionals who use their technical skills, subjective resources, perceptions and affections to compose their work, while moving between alternative circuits, theatres and art galleries, YouTube channels, and radio and TV studios. Thus, another field of debate is revealed, which does not cease to involve lifestyles and institutional relations, but which now opens up informal work in the cultural industries, the lack of public policies and a perverse economic logic which runs across this scenario.

On the other hand, the powerful production of urban centres and peripheries, the engagement in collective projects and the formation of networks of affections have all emerged within the same context.

In this fragmentary environment, culture and, especially, the arts still play a fundamental role, according to Canclini (2012, p. 246): the possibility of opening up to the new, of valuing imminence and, thus, "defatalising" the "conventional structures of language", the "habits of the trades" and the "canon of the legitimate". Perhaps it is also because of this spark of transformation, this always oblique relationship with the real, as the anthropologist summarises, that art and culture maintain a complex and ambivalent link with public power: from the creation of ministries and secretariats in modern states to the sad incursions of authoritarian governments, such as Nazism, Fascism or Stalinism. In the second half of the twentieth century, this interest intensified: the very notion of patronage or sponsorship, previously restricted to fine arts and historical heritage, was expanded in such a way as to encompass – if not in practice, at least in reports, plans and the aims of public and private institutions – the diversity of cultural manifestations and the complexity of their hybridisation processes. To a large extent, the promotion of culture, the arts and, more recently, creativity has gained the dimension of a social policy, or of a democratising project, as Canclini (2008) prefers, which has come to be seen as fundamental to human, social, and even economic development. Examples are the notions of creative economy or economics of culture, which advanced in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

However, when promoting culture and the arts as levers for sustainable economic and social growth, part of this discourse ended up corroborating a romanticised view that camouflages, among other factors, the precarious working conditions and the insecurity that artists and cultural professionals share with other liberal professionals. According to researcher Justin O'Connor (2020), the situation can be even more critical: for him, what is seen as universal, "the possibilities opened by culture and creativity"[23], is actually circumscribed by unequal opportunities, which are interconnected regional, ethnic and gender issues. Public administration has also been rewritten by neoliberal metrics: indicators based on the number of visitors to museums or the number of tickets sold for shows reinforce the economic logic even when the sector is highly subsidised. As a result, the effective reach of the actions is obscured by a false impression of audience attendance, often restricted to just some social groups, despite the unprecedented circulation of aesthetic works through the mass and digital media.

In Brazil and Latin America in general, where inequalities are very evident, the problem is even clearer. In the last decade, a decline in public and private investment has shown the distance between the ideal of a society whose productive and human development engines are culture and the arts and the lack of interest from the authorities and citizens in both the promotion of these sec-

tors and contemporary artistic creation. According to IBGE, between 2011 and 2018, all levels of the Brazilian public sector reduced their share of spending in the cultural area, which reduced, on average, from 0.28% to 0.21%. The amounts effectively invested by the private sector (taking into account the incentive of the Cultural Promotion Act but discounting the values of the tax incentives) also fell: from R\$99 million in 2011 (about US\$53 million in December 2011) to R\$23 million in 2018 (about US\$1 million dollars in December 2018) (NERY, 2019). In addition to the effects of the economic crisis affecting the country, these falls reflect the phenomenon defined by Canclini (2020) as a certain loss of senses and perception of citizenship.

It is precisely in this inhospitable context, aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic, that network articulation in favour of the Aldir Blanc Law is gaining strength. The act is not limited to emergency actions aimed at the cultural sector, as the official documents say; it is also not a question of a return to institutionalisation along modern lines or of a utopia that overshadows the criticism of many artists of the power and violence of the State. Its symbolic strength (more erratic, although no less potent) lies in the collective organisation of civil society – led by politicians, but also by artists and cultural professionals – to create tactical and transversal links with the public authorities in a joint for specific purposes. The new factor is that instead of claims compartmentalised by groups that democratically dispute the public space such as theatre or dance collectives from the centre or the peripheries, what was seen was the coming together of different

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23. "I am suggesting that what the cultural sector sees as universal – the possibilities opened up by culture and creativity – is in fact highly circumscribed by class chances (intertwined with gender, ethnicity and regionality)" (O'CONNOR, 2020, s.n.).

forces for a common purpose. At the same time that it reactivates State mechanisms, this organisation reflects new ways of exercising citizenship, arising from both cultural and artistic practices and from engaging in community decisions based on virtual and face-to-face networks. That this movement, like others of our time, is intense but of short duration is a secondary factor. Perhaps it is more important to capture the event itself: it is the openness to otherness, largely removed by the market, by the health and social crisis, or by neoliberalism, which transforms not the law itself, but the yearnings that engendered it, into a historical fact.

Updating Foucault's reflections, could this be one of many ways found by artists and cultural professionals to create conditions for not only their works, but their own professional occupations to exist? Wouldn't their lives be invested in the hours they spent in front of computer screens and cell phones during the process of drafting and passing the law? Mobilisation also leads to another question: in a neoliberal society, at a time when the arts flirt with the financial market and with large media corporations, when digital networks and technologies facilitate financing, production, and diffusion of the works, what is the potential remaining for the public space to be a depository of this collective desire for otherness? In order to investigate these issues, the proposal is to compile empirical data on public policies for culture and the arts in Brazil, especially on the Aldir Blanc Law and the National Culture System. Interviews will also be conducted with artists, researchers, social activists, and culture professionals involved in the creation

and implementation of the law, seeking to understand the desires and motivations that arouse interest in this collective engagement. Before, however, we listen to these conversations, we are working with a hypothesis.

Even knowing, following the research by Foucault, that power permeates the whole of society, it is not possible to deny how unequal relationships of power are, leading to domination and violence, ethnic, social or gender-related prejudices, and to all of forms of oppression – all of which are so striking in societies that have passed through long colonial periods, such as the countries of Latin America. In a text written on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the death of Foucault, Rancière (2004, s.n.) affirms that his philosophy does not define "any mass weapon" to fight these situations. But he delves "into examining the real workings by which effective thinking acts on bodies" and, with that, draws a new map. This cartography, according to the commentator, "makes it possible for the network of its reasons to casually join the network of the reasons of those who, here or there, make use of their own knowledge and their own reasons for introducing the grain of sand that gets stuck in the machine". What activates this possibility is the "feeling of the intolerable". Art and culture do not deal with these issues directly. But, just like the cynical doctrine evoked by Foucault, they envision freeing themselves from false generalities that guide a large part of social relations, imagine possibilities – also erratic and transitory – and dare to produce new meanings, perceptions and affections.

In an interview about the Iranian

revolution in the late 1970s, Foucault (2018, p. 34) stated that there was nothing left but the rubble of "great revolutionary hopes". The phrase still rings true in a totally different context. But the author also suggested that, in periods like these, a certain "will for spirituality" may emerge. Foucault spoke literally in the face of the religious fundamentalism that was growing in Iran. But the expression can be taken as a metaphor for the desire for otherness that is expressed collectively. That, in a time of crisis, artists and cultural professionals perceive the activation of the public space as one of so many ways to enable the existence of art can be a sign not only of their desire to "become another of themselves", but mainly from the understanding – even if sudden and ephemeral – that this process of change necessarily passes through what is common. But what would that common be? According to Rancière (2012, p. 20-21), "the power of everyone to chart their own path". Although their purposes and methods are not confused, the importance of studying these political issues is intertwined with the importance of culture and art for contemporary society, as in this phrase by Canclini (2012, p. 246): "valuing the imminent where dissent is possible".

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Since becoming postdoctoral students for the Olavo Setubal Chair of Art, Culture and Science, we have discovered several affinities between our research projects. In addition to the general theme of the investigations coordinated by Canclini, which address the institutionality of culture, there are other interests in common, among them: social movements in the cultural and artistic field; cultural policies at the local and national level; and the complex relationships between actions in the territories and the growing interaction in virtual networks. Although the projects follow particular paths, their paths intersect at all times and the investigations are integrated in order to draw cartographies, listen to the voices of different social groups, and record the narratives that emerge and join in this complex moment in which we live.

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The Research Notebook *The institutionality of culture and sociocultural changes* brings together the initial thoughts and considerations of Néstor García Canclini's tenure as the holder of Olavo Setubal Chair of Art, Culture and Science (2020/2021). This publication offers a compilation of the speeches from the inauguration ceremony, in addition to the research proposals planned for the period. Canclini urges us to rethink the classical notion of cultural institutions, considering the tension with the new forms of production, intermediation and access that digital devices promote. What is the role of these institutions in the development of a citizenship guided by interculturality, by the rights and duties of coexistence?

Néstor Garcia Canclini
Olavo Setubal Chair of Art, Culture and Science (2020/2021)

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