Brief Western History of Furniture Design (Part 4): The Indo-Iberian-American Chair

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Article

Brief Western History of Furniture Design (Part 4): the Indo-Iberian-American Chair

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Abstract: This work is a continuation of the article (Part 3) written in ArtyHum No. 90, it mixes the Doctoral Thesis of Dr. Mg. Industrial Designer Ibar Federico Anderson (UNLP) called "The Argentine Belle Époque. Art, domestic architecture and furniture design applied to bourgeois interior decoration (1860-1936)", defended in 2014 at the National University of La Plata; with the Master's Thesis of the University of Palermo by the Architect Gastón Eduardo Girod (University of Buenos Aires) called "The construction of Argentine Creole furniture. Country chairs from San Antonio de Areco, Province of Buenos Aires, in the period 1990-2021", defended in 2023. It seeks to develop a new Theoretical Framework for what will be the Doctoral Thesis at the University of Palermo of Mg. Arch. Gastón Girod; whose title is "The integration of traditional artisan techniques in the design and production of contemporary Argentine furniture in the period 2000-2023."

Two previous works have already been written in 2022 in co-authorship in the ArtyHum magazine. This work emphasizes the publication: "The Argentine country-style chair. When the theory of Art becomes a theoretical paradigm to explain the typology of the artisanal design of the proto-rationalist country-style (or gaucho-style) chair in the Argentine Republic" (ArtyHum No. 85).

Keywords: Contemporary furniture design; traditional artisanal techniques; argentine countryside-style chairs; typology of artisanal design; proto-rationalism; argentine creole furniture

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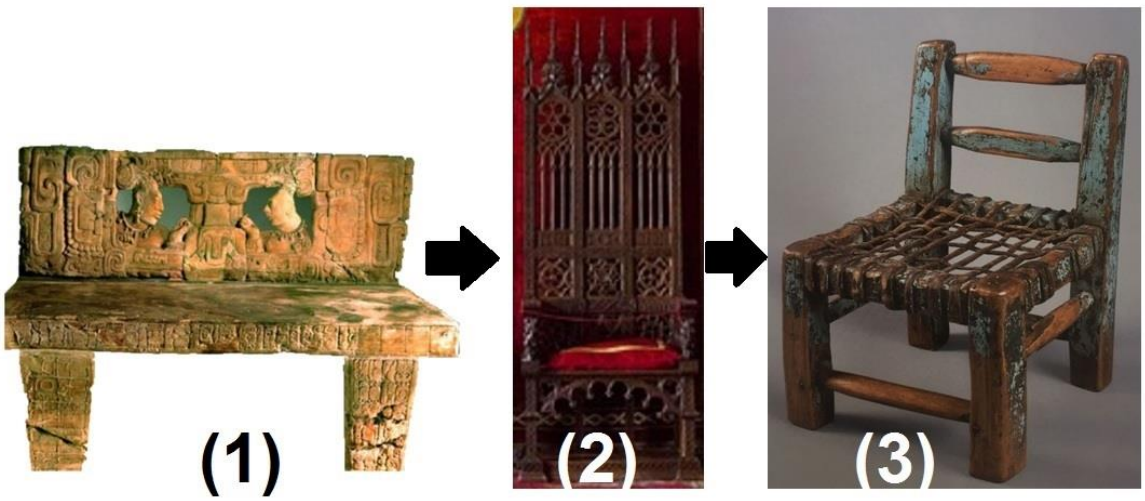

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Introduction to Hegelian Dialectics as the Foundation of the Hypothesis of this Essay

Hegelian dialectics is a philosophical method that explains the development of ideas, historical and cultural processes through three stages: thesis, antithesis and synthesis. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831) says this in his Phenomenology of Spirit (1807). The author, on contradiction as the driving force of movement, expresses: "Contradiction is the root of all movement and all vitality; only insofar as something has a contradiction in itself, does it move, has impulse and activity."[1]

This dialectical movement is a process of overcoming, where each instance does not eliminate the previous one, but rather sublimates it and integrates it into a higher level of understanding and reality.

In his work Encyclopedia of Philosophical Sciences (1817), Hegel also mentions that "the development of the idea occurs in three moments: first, the affirmation of a being in its purest form (thesis); second, its negation as another distinct being (antithesis); and, finally, the reconciliation of both in a higher unity (synthesis)."[2] This framework allows us to analyze historical and cultural phenomena as dynamic and constantly evolving processes, providing an analytical framework for understanding furniture design in America.

On dialectics and its tripartite nature"The development of the idea occurs in three moments: first, the affirmation of a being in its purest form (thesis); second, its negation as another distinct being (antithesis); and, finally, the reconciliation of both in a higher unity (synthesis)."[3]

On synthesis as overcoming contradiction"Truth is not abstract identity, but the unity of the distinct; in this unity, the negative is as essential as the positive."[4] This idea of the creole chair as a synthesis of the cultural syncretism between gaucho traditions, Guaraní spiritual animism, the practice of drinking mate and the vernacular design of proto-rationalist and semi-nomadic crafts will guide this essay, which, on the other hand, does not aspire to arrive at an absolute truth.

Development

In the article entitled A Brief History of Western Cult Furniture Design. The Chair (Part 3). Building a Theoretical Framework of the Chair as a Machine-Tool for Sitting Through Premodernity, Modernity and Postmodernity, written by Anderson and Girod in ArtyHum magazine No. 90. We argued that Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc (1814-1879) analyzes Gothic architecture not only in formal and structural terms, but also in relation to the social, economic and political conditions of the time, arguing that this architecture reflects a specific social order that manifests medieval values and social organization. Although the author does not explicitly use the term, his analysis implies that architecture is a cultural manifestation linked to a given social context, which has influenced later studies on the relationship between architecture and society. Anderson's PhD thesis (2014) connects this concept with the zeitgeist of Siegfried Giedion (1888-1968) who defines the zeitgeist as the cultural and social influence on artistic expressions; suggesting that both Viollet-le-Duc and Giedion consider architecture a reflection of society, where the social order and the spirit of the times are essential to its understanding. This theoretical work aims to interpret the stylistic complexity of non-industrial furniture design through analytical categories of social order that influence various aesthetics applied to vernacular and Creole artisanal design.

In that article in ArtyHum magazine nº 90 we defined the following for Europe: the feudal social order from which a feudal-monastic aesthetic is derived, the absolutist-monarchic social order from which a courtly-monarchic aesthetic is derived (1643-1789) typical of the Ancien Régime, and the liberal social order from which a triple aesthetic is derived: (a) non-modern (1789-1928) typical of

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[1] Hegel, G.W.F., Phenomenology of Spirit, Fondo de Cultura Económica, Mexico, 1981, p. 51.

[2] Ibid, Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences, Alianza Editorial, Madrid, 2005, 212.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Economic Culture Fund, Mexico, 1981, p. 69.

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17th and 19th century artisanal furniture, (b) modern (1928-1959) typical of 20th century furniture and (c) postmodern (1960-2024) typical of contemporary furniture design. But how can we transpose these theoretical-analytical categories from Europe to America?

"The pre-Columbian social order is characterized by a mythical-cosmogonic aesthetic (…). This long period marks the arrival of the first humans to the continent and culminates with European contact."[5]

The pre-Columbian peoples of America cover a broad period and "The arrival of the first humans in America is estimated to be around 15,000 BC, although some theories suggest even earlier dates."[6]There is a wide range of literature suggesting that the arrival of Christopher Columbus in 1492 marked the beginning of significant contact between Europe and American civilizations. "We are talking about a broad period that covers: (circa 15,000 BC - 1492 AD)"[7] During this long period, numerous cultures and civilizations developed in various regions, including the Mayans, Aztecs, Incas and many other indigenous peoples.

Pre-Columbian cultures in the Americas are notable not only for their impressive architectural and artistic legacy, but also for their technological advances and ability to adapt to diverse environments. These societies developed sophisticated tools and techniques for construction, agriculture, and natural resource management. Innovation in irrigation systems, such as Andean terraces and chinampas, not only guaranteed food security but also demonstrated a deep ecological understanding.

Furthermore, the pre-Columbian worldview permeated all aspects of daily life. It not only defined religious practices, but also influenced urban planning, architectural design, and political structures. Cities were conceived as terrestrial representations of a cosmic order, with each construction reflecting the sacred relationship between man and the universe.

The impact of these cultures is not limited to the past; many of their traditions, symbols and practices are still present in contemporary indigenous communities. This cultural continuity reinforces the importance of understanding them not as extinct civilizations, but as living roots that contribute to the identity and cultural diversity of America.

Finally, from a comparative perspective, pre-Columbian cultures stand out for their uniqueness compared to other civilizations of their time. While in Europe and Asia the great architectural works were mainly driven by centralized state or religious structures, in America we observe a unique combination of technological innovation, spirituality and connection with nature that defined its development.

Thus, "In pre-Columbian cultures, rituals and myths not only structured daily life, but served as a bridge between the human world and the cosmos, reflecting a worldview deeply integrated with nature."[8]

Therefore, "Pre-Columbian architecture not only fulfilled practical functions, but also reflected complex social and religious structures."[9]It should also be understood that something similar happens in the rest of the arts; thus, "Pre-Columbian art was not only a form of aesthetic expression, but also a means of communicating religious and cosmological values. Geometric designs and

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[5] Dillehay, T.D., The Settlement of the Americas: A New Prehistory, Basic Books, 2008, p. 34.

[6] Lumbreras, LG, Archaeology of Andean America, Lima: Editorial Milla Batres, 1981, p. 12.

[7] Willey, G.R., & Phillips, P., Method and Theory in American Archaeology, University of Chicago Press, 2001, p. 45.

[8]Eliade, M., The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion, Harcourt, Brace & World, 1963, p. 56.

[9] Pasztory, E., Pre-Columbian Art, Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 98). (Pasztory, E., Pre-Columbian Art, Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 98.

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anthropomorphic representations were loaded with symbolic meanings that reflected their spiritual and social beliefs."[10]

Ceteris paribus, "Pre-Columbian artifacts, from tools to ceremonial vessels, combined functionality and symbolism. These objects were not only useful in everyday life, but were also considered to carry sacred messages, fusing the beautiful and the practical."[11] Thus, "Pre-Columbian ceremonial objects were much more than tools; they encapsulated concepts of cosmic order and served as instruments of connection with the sacred."[12] It must be understood that almost any artifact becomes a ceremonial object. Eliade maintains that, "In each of their artistic expressions, pre-Columbian peoples managed to fuse the functional with the spiritual, achieving creations that still amaze us today for their symbolism and technical sophistication."[13]

Likewise, "The aesthetics of pre-Columbian peoples were deeply integrated with their religious practices. Ceramics, textiles and sculptures served as offerings to the gods and as tangible representations of myths and legends, reinforcing the connection between the human and the divine."[14]

Similarly, "Pre-Columbian artists carefully selected materials such as precious stones, metals, and natural pigments not only for their durability, but also for their symbolic properties. Bright colors and specific textures had meanings associated with fertility, power, and spiritual connection to nature."[15]

The objective is not to detail each of the pre-Columbian civilizations, but broadly speaking we can say that:

-The Mayan civilization: "They existed from 2000 BC until the 16th century, with their peak between 250 and 900 AD, covering southeastern Mexico, Guatemala, Belize and parts of Honduras and El Salvador."[16]They had a hieroglyphic writing system, an advanced calendar, and were experts in astronomy. "They built city-states like Tikal and Chichen Itza, with step pyramids and temples; they were polytheistic, worshipping several gods related to agriculture, the sun, and war."[17]

-The Aztec civilization: "They settled in the 14th century, reaching their splendor between 1428 and 1521 in central Mexico, especially in present-day Mexico City."[18]They had a strong focus on agriculture, growing mainly corn, and developed a writing system alongside a rich tradition of poetry and music. "The capital Tenochtitlan, built on a lake, had temples, palaces and canals, most notably the Templo Mayor pyramid; they practiced human sacrifice as part of their religious rituals to appease the gods."[19]

-The Inca civilization: "Formed around 1438, they fell in 1533 after the Spanish conquest."[20] Their empire extended across Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, Chile and Argentina. "They had an impressive

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[10]Ibid, p.104.

[11] Stone, RJ, Art of the Andes: From Chavín to Inca, Thames & Hudson, 2011, p. 78.

[12] León-Portilla, M., Nahuatl Philosophy Studied in its Sources, UNAM, 1961, p. 112.

[13] Eliade, M., The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion, Harcourt, Brace & World, 1963, p. 78.

[14] Berrin, K., & Pasztory, E., Teotihuacan: Art from the City of the Gods, Thames & Hudson, 1993, p. 63.

[15] Kubler, G., The Shape of Time: Remarks on the History of Things, Yale University Press, 1961, p. 89.

[16] Coe, MD, & Houston, S., The Maya (10th ed.), Thames & Hudson, 2022, p. 78.

[17] Estrada-Belli, F., The First Maya Civilization: Ritual and Power Before the Classic Period, Routledge, 2010, pp. 34-35.

[18] Hassig, R., Aztec Warfare: Imperial Expansion and Political Control, University of Oklahoma Press, 1988, p. 102.

[19] Smith, M.E., The Aztecs: A Very Short Introduction, Oxford University Press, 2003, pp. 56-57.

[20] Cobo, B., History of the New World, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1990, p. 145.

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road system (Qhapaq Ñan) that facilitated trade and communication, and although they did not have a writing system, they used quipus to keep records."[21]They built cities in the mountains, such as Cusco and Machu Picchu, using advanced stone construction techniques. "They were polytheistic, worshipping several gods, the most important being Inti, the sun god."[22]

The aesthetics of pre-Columbian peoples, spanning from approximately 15,000 BC to 1492 AD, can be described as deeply connected to their worldview and mythology. "The idea of a mythical-cosmogonic aesthetic is apt, as many pre-Columbian civilizations had a strong bond with nature, gods, and cosmic cycles."[23]

Pre-Columbian cultures in the Americas, represented by diverse civilizations, are characterized by their ability to adapt to varied environments, complex social organization, and a deeply spiritual worldview. These societies developed advanced agricultural systems that allowed them to thrive in challenging geographical conditions, such as tropical rainforests, high plateaus, and coastal valleys.

Their connection with nature and religion was fundamental, manifesting itself in the construction of monuments that integrated functional and symbolic aspects. Pyramids, temples and ceremonial centers were not only architectural structures, but also expressions of their beliefs in cosmic order and its relationship with natural cycles. These works, often aligned with astronomical events, reflect an advanced knowledge of the cosmos.

The social organization of these cultures was based on a hierarchy that combined political and religious power. Leaders, considered intermediaries between gods and men, played a crucial role in the cohesion of their communities. This structure also facilitated the development of trade networks and cultural exchange, promoting a rich diversity of artistic and technological expressions.

Agriculture was an essential pillar for these civilizations, highlighted by innovations such as Andean terraces, irrigation systems and chinampas. These techniques not only guaranteed food security, but also strengthened the economic and social foundations of their empires.

In conclusion, pre-Columbian cultures left an indelible legacy that is reflected in their architecture, art and philosophy of life. Their ability to harmonize with the environment and their deep understanding of natural cycles continue to inspire contemporary studies on sustainability and social organization.

On the other hand, "Pre-Columbian art is characterized by its symbolism and its connection with natural cycles, elements that reinforced both its cultural identity and its understanding of the universe."[24]

Mythic-cosmogonic aesthetics had a lot of symbolism in its art and architecture elements reflecting religious and mythological beliefs. For example, pyramids and temples, such as those at Teotihuacan or Tikal, were aligned with astronomical events.

The materials used were natural and local, such as stone, wood and ceramics, often decorated with symbols that represented their beliefs and connection to the earth. They used vibrant colours and shapes that evoked elements of nature, such as animals and plants, reflecting their environment and spirituality.

It is important to consider that there was great diversity in pre-Columbian aesthetics depending on the region (Andes, Mesoamerica, North America, etc.). Each culture had its own traditions and styles. Many works of art told stories or represented myths, which adds a narrative layer to the aesthetic. Incorporating this aspect can enrich the interpretation.

Consideration should be given to how changes in the environment (such as agriculture and urbanisation) impacted aesthetics and architecture. This could add depth to understanding their

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[21] D'Altroy, TN, The Incas, Blackwell, 2002, pp. 89-90.

[22] Rowe, JH, in Handbook of South American Indians, Smithsonian Institution, 1946, p. 210.

[23] Kubler, G., The Shape of Time: Remarks on the History of Things, Yale University Press, 1961, p. 32.

[24]Stone, RR, Art of the Andes: From Chavín to Inca, Thames & Hudson, 2011, p. 45.

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evolution. How interactions between different groups (trade, migration, etc.) influenced artistic styles and techniques should also be explored.

In summary, mythical-cosmogonic aesthetics are a good basis for understanding the art and design of pre-Columbian peoples within the pre-Columbian social order; they reflect several fundamental aspects of the worldview and daily life of these cultures.

Aesthetics incorporate elements that reflect religious and spiritual beliefs. Temples, pyramids and other buildings were not only functional structures, but also sacred, meant to pay homage to deities and nature. Works of art and design reflect a deep connection with the natural environment. Many designs incorporate elements of local flora and fauna, symbolizing respect and veneration for the earth. The depiction of astronomical and temporal cycles, such as the solstices and equinoxes, shows how these cultures understood their place in the cosmos. This is manifested in the alignment of buildings and in iconography that reflects the relationship with agricultural cycles.

Aesthetics are also a reflection of cultural and social identity. Each pre-Columbian civilization had its own visual language, which served to communicate its history, myths, and values through art, pottery, and architecture. The works often tell stories and depict myths, reinforcing social and cultural cohesion. These visual narratives helped to transmit knowledge, traditions, and values to future generations.

Example: "The Throne of Piedras Negras (…), refers to an archaeological object found at the site of Piedras Negras, an ancient Mayan city in Guatemala."[25]Whose original name was Yokib (meaning great entrance), although there is no definitive consensus on that name, it is a pre-Hispanic archaeological site of the Mayan civilization "(...), located in the Usumacinta basin, was one of the most important centers of the Mayan civilization during the Classic period."[26]Within the Sierra del Lacandón National Park, which contains important remains of one of the most important cities of the Classic Maya; although: "The pottery found here shows that it was occupied from 700 BC to 820 AD, it was between the years 450 AD and 810 AD that the city reached its current size."[27]This period was the most prosperous. "The city reached its peak during the 6th and 7th centuries AD, with a remarkable production of art and architecture."[28]

It is a stone throne or ceremonial throne found archaeologically, a type of object or structure that was used primarily in pre-Hispanic cultures of Mesoamerica, including the Mayans. These thrones not only served as a seat, but also had deep political and religious symbolism, representing the ruler's authority, power, and connection to the divine.

"The throne not only serves as a place to sit, but is a symbol of power and legitimacy."[29] Indeed, "This throne is known for its rich iconography and its importance in the representation of Mayan power and elite."[30] This throne: "It was used in ceremonies and political acts, symbolizing the authority of the ruler and his connection with the gods."[31]Since: "The use of the throne in ceremonies and political

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[25]Schele, L., & Miller, M.E.,*The blood of kings: Dynasty and ritual in Maya art*, George Braziller, 1986, p. 79.

[26]Inomata, T., & Houston, SD, Royal courts of the Ancient Maya: Volume 1. Theory, comparison, and synthesis, Westview Press, 2001, p. 58.

[27]Proskouriakoff, T., "Historical implications of a pattern of dates at Piedras Negras, Guatemala", American Antiquity, 25(4), 1960, p. 454.

[28]Martin, S., & Grube, N., Chronicle of the Maya Kings and Queens: Deciphering the Dynasties of the Ancient Maya, Thames & Hudson, 2008, p. 168.

[29]Houston, SD, Hieroglyphs and history at Dos Pilas: Dynastic politics of the Classic Maya, University of Texas Press, 1993, pp. 58-59.

[30]Houston, SD, & Inomata, T.,*Royal courts of the Ancient Maya: Volume 1: Theory*, *comparison*, *and synthesis*, Westview Press, 2001, p. 112.

[31] Schele, L., & Miller, ME, The blood of kings: Dynasty and ritual in Maya art, George Braziller, 1986, p. 83.

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acts gives it a deep meaning; in these contexts, it becomes an object loaded with ritual meanings."[32]
"The throne not only served a practical function in ceremonies, but also symbolized the ruler's authority and connection to the divine."[33]
The Piedras Negras Throne was deeply linked to Mayan religious beliefs, especially with the gods of fertility, rain and creation, such as K'awiil, Itzamná and Chaac. Through its symbolism, the throne represented the divine legitimation of the ruler and his ability to maintain cosmic and political order, being associated with both the divine and the natural forces essential to the well-being of the people.

Known for its great sculptural production compared to other ancient Mayan sites, the wealth of sculpture, together with the precise chronological information associated with the lives of Piedras Negras' elites, has allowed archaeologists to reconstruct the history of the political system and its geopolitical footprint.

"The ornamentation of the throne represented authority, status and connection to the gods, loading beauty with deep symbolism and purpose."[34]

Figure 2. Throne 1 of Piedras Negras in the National Museum of Anthropology and History of Guatemala, 2004.

The Piedras Negras Throne (Figure 2), refers to an archaeological object found at the site of Piedras Negras, an ancient Mayan city in Guatemala; this throne is known for its rich iconography and its importance in representing Mayan power and elite. Piedras Negras is located in the present-day department of Guatemala, near the Usumacinta River, which was an important political and cultural center during the Classic Mayan period.

[32] Inomata, T., & Houston, SD, Royal courts of the Ancient Maya: Volume 1. Theory, comparison, and synthesis, Westview Press, 2001, p. 120.

[33] Ibid, p. 92.

[34] Ibid, p. 105.

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It was the largest pre-Hispanic city in the Usumacinta basin, and is considered one of the most important cultural monuments in Guatemala, despite its isolation. Piedras Negras is located in the department of Petén, Guatemala, within the Sierra del Lacandón National Park, on the eastern side of the Usumacinta basin. It is located on top of an escarpment, occupying a series of valleys located at a considerable height on the riverbank.

It was used in ceremonies and political events, symbolizing the ruler's authority and connection to the gods. It features characteristics of Classic Mayan art, including intricate reliefs and an aesthetic that combines mythological elements with everyday life. This type of artifact is essential to understanding the social structure, religion, and political practices of the Maya, as well as their cultural legacy.

The premodern hypothesis on object design suggests a unification of the beautiful, the useful and the good, where aesthetics and functionality are intertwined with an ethical purpose. This idea is closely related to the Greek concept of kalokagathia, which represents the harmony between beauty and virtue, emphasizing that the beautiful must also be good and useful. On the Black Stone Throne, the useful, the beautiful and the good are clearly manifested in the following ways:

*-The-useful-ceremonial:*The primary function of the throne is to provide a ceremonial seat for the ruler. This practical use is essential in rituals and political events, where the throne symbolizes the ruler's authority and role in society. Furthermore, the throne is designed to be functional in its context, allowing the leader to actively participate in important ceremonies.

When we talk about ceremonial utility in the context of the Piedras Negras throne, we are not referring solely to the practical utility of sitting; although the throne does indeed provide a seat for the ruler, its functionality goes far beyond this physical aspect. The throne not only serves as a place to sit, but is a symbol of power and legitimacy; by being on the throne, the ruler is placed in a position of visible authority, which reinforces his role in society. The use of the throne in ceremonies and political acts gives it a deep meaning; in these contexts, it becomes an object or artifact loaded with ritual meanings, where the action of sitting implies a series of social and religious interactions that validate the power of the ruler. The function of the throne also implies its use in rituals that connect the ruler with the gods, which transcends the simple act of sitting and becomes a means of establishing spiritual and community relationships. By participating in ceremonies from the throne, the ruler reinforces the social and cultural structure of his community.

The ruler who sits on the Piedras Negras Throne is connected to several important gods in Mayan mythology, including Itzamná, the creator and wisdom god, often associated with heaven and earth, central to Mayan cosmology and symbolizing authority and knowledge; Kukulkán (also known as Quetzalcóatl in other Mesoamerican cultures), the feathered serpent god, associated with wind, rain, and fertility, representing balance and power; Yaxhá, a deity related to rain and agriculture, important for the prosperity of the community; K'awiil, the god of divine authority, frequently depicted with a scepter and a snake-like leg, symbolizing the ruler's power and legitimacy; and the gods of fertility and corn, such as Hun Hunahpú, Chac, and Ixchel, whose influences on agriculture and abundance were crucial to the survival of Mayan society.

*-The-beauty-of-divinity:*The throne's aesthetics are notable for their complexity and formal expression, with intricate reliefs and carved details depicting Mayan figures and symbols. This beauty is not only meant to impress, but also reflects the beliefs and culture of the Mayan elite. The ornamentation and artistic design elevate the object beyond its practical function, creating a visual impact that highlights the ruler's importance.

The throne is made of stone, with carved details that represent Mayan figures and symbols, reflecting religious beliefs and social hierarchy. With a laminar morphology, the throne has a seat and a backrest resolved in rectangular planes with visual continuity. It is supported on two legs located towards the interior of the vertices of the seat, shaped like a stipe that taper downwards. It is interpreted that the wall acts as a support for the backrest due to the absence of rear legs. On the backrest, two subtractions can be observed in the central part, corresponding to the low-relief carving of two faces. It is carved on its entire surface except for the area where the seat rests.

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The perception of beauty on the Piedras Negras throne and in Mayan culture in general cannot be reduced to a modern or Western vision, as proposed by Western (post-Kantian) aesthetics; its understanding was deeply rooted in the Mayan worldview and its cultural context. For the Mayans, beauty was not only related to order and harmony, but also to the connection with the divine. The intricate reliefs and details carved on objects such as the throne were not merely decorative, but told stories, reflected myths and beliefs, and expressed cultural values. The ornamentation of the throne, in particular, transcended mere aesthetics, as it represented authority, status, and connection to the gods, imbuing beauty with deep symbolism and purpose. This relationship between beauty and functionality extended to social perception: a beautifully designed object could reinforce the ruler's power and legitimacy in the eyes of the community, thus contributing to social cohesion and cultural identity. Mayan beauty was not conceived as an end in itself, but as part of a comprehensive approach that included the useful-ceremonial, from a ritualistic perspective, and the good of the beautiful-in-divinity, understood as the response of the gods to the requests of the rulers, creating a balance between the aesthetic, the functional and the ethical (the ethical can be considered as what is correct for the gods within the worldview of said society).

Mayan beauty was not perceived as an end in itself, but as part of a comprehensive approach that included the useful (according to what they considered useful from a ritualistic point of view) and the good (that the gods respond to the requests made by the rulers).

The Piedras Negras Throne, a significant artifact in Mayan culture, exemplifies this relationship. Crafted from stone with intricate reliefs, it not only serves a practical function in ceremonies and political acts, but also symbolizes the ruler's authority and connection to the divine. Its in-divinity aesthetic is intimately linked to its functional-ceremonial (or ritualistic) use and symbolic meaning, reflecting religious beliefs and the social hierarchy of the time.

*-The-good:*The throne also embodies values that we define today as ethical. As an object used in religious and political ceremonies, it represents the connection between the ruler and the gods, underlining his role as intermediary between the divine and the human. This ethical aspect implies that the ruler must act with justice and responsibility, maintaining social order and the prosperity of his community.

Thus, the term "good" in the context of the Piedras Negras Throne refers to the ethical and spiritual dimension that its use implies. Beyond being a ceremonial seat, the throne symbolizes the ruler's responsibility as a mediator between the gods and the community. By sitting on the throne, the leader not only assumes a political role, but also an ethical commitment to act with justice, guarantee prosperity, and maintain the cosmic balance, which was essential for the survival and cohesion of Mayan society. This concept of goodness is intrinsically linked to the Mayan worldview, where the divine, the human, and the social are intertwined in a common purpose.

As in the Greek tradition of kalokagathia, where a beautiful object was meant to be morally correct and useful, the Mayan throne embodies these values. The iconographic richness of the throne reinforces its value in the community, showing that a beautiful object is not only ornamental, but also communicates a cultural and ethical legacy.

Thus, both the premodern hypothesis and the concept of kalokagathia (Greek) allow us to understand the Piedras Negras Throne as a symbol that transcends its practical function, representing the interconnection between beauty, utility and ethical meaning in Mayan culture. This underlines the importance of objects in the social context, where each element contributes to a deeper understanding of the identity and values of the society that created them.

Continuing with this pre-modern hypothesis #1: Before the Catholic Monarchs, the Kingdoms of Castile and Aragon each had their own monarchs who exercised forms of absolute power, although not to the same extent as the Catholic Monarchs. "The absolutist monarchy in Spain was consolidated mainly during the reigns of the Catholic Monarchs, Isabel I of Castile (1451-1516) and Ferdinand II of Aragon (1452-1516), who unified the kingdoms of Castile and Aragon at the end of the 15th century,

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laying the foundations of centralized power in the figure of the monarch.”[35]**“Isabel and Fernando initiated a process of centralization of power that would be the seed of the absolute monarchy in Spain. Through the creation of common institutions and the control of local churches, the foundations of a monarchy that did not tolerate the fragmentation of power were laid.”**[36]

Later, “The 17th century in Spain witnessed the transition from a monarchy of divine right to a more authoritarian regime that closed the circle of absolutism.”[37]

Isabella I of Castile reigned from 1474 until her death, and Ferdinand II of Aragon reigned alongside Isabella from 1479 until his death. Their marriage in 1469 unified the kingdoms of Castile and Aragon, laying the groundwork for modern Spain. In 1492, they completed the Reconquista with the conquest of the Kingdom of Granada, the last Muslim stronghold on the Iberian Peninsula. Also in 1492, they issued the Edict of Granada, which expelled Jews who did not convert to Christianity.

They sponsored Christopher Columbus's voyage in 1492, which led to the discovery of the American continent and the beginning of Spanish colonial expansion.

They worked to centralize power in the figure of the monarch, weakening the influence of the nobility and strengthening royal administration.

The union of Castile and Aragon and the policies of the Catholic Monarchs marked the beginning of the absolute monarchy in Spain, which would be further consolidated in the following centuries with the Habsburgs and Bourbons. “The marriage between Isabella of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon not only unified the kingdoms, but also strengthened royal power, paving the way for the establishment of a monarchy that, although not absolutely centralized in its early years, already gave signs of a change towards the concentration of power in the figure of the king.”[38]

“Isabel and Fernando, through their marital and territorial policies, forged a real power that would be consolidated in the figure of the absolutist monarchs in the following decades.”[39]

After the Catholic Monarchs: House of Habsburg: From the reign of Charles I (1516-1556) to that of Philip II (1556-1598). House of Bourbon: From the reign of Philip V (1700-1746) to the 19th century, although there were interruptions at different times, such as the War of Independence (1808-1814).

The absolute monarchy in Spain can be considered from the reign of the Catholic Monarchs (1474) until the fall of the absolute monarchy in the 19th century, although the context and characteristics of absolutism varied: from 1474 (reigns of the Catholic Monarchs), until 1812 (Constitution of Cadiz, which limited the power of the monarch). "The figure of the absolutist king was consolidated over the centuries, especially during the government of the Catholic Monarchs, when the idea of the centralized monarchy in Spain was constructed."[40]

“The Catholic Monarchs not only unified the kingdoms, but also laid the foundations for future absolutism in the Spanish monarchy by strengthening royal authority and central administration.”[41]

This covers a long period of consolidation and evolution of the monarchy in Spain.

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[35]Kamen, H. Empire: How Spain became a world power, 1492-1763, HarperCollins, New York, 2005, p. 78.

[36]Thomas, H. The History of Spain, Editorial Planeta, Barcelona, 1999, pp. 199-200.

[37]Ibid, p. 275.

[38]Ramos, J. A. “Modern Spain: The Foundations of Absolute Power”, Journal of the History of Spain, Madrid, 1984, p. 58.

[39]Peña, AF “The Spanish monarchy and the Catholic Monarchs: genesis of an authoritarian system”, Journal of History and Politics, Madrid, 2010, pp. 122-123.

[40]Ramos, J. A. “Modern Spain: The Foundations of Absolute Power”, Journal of the History of Spain, Madrid, 1984, pp. 56-58.

[41]Kamen, H. “Empire: How Spain became a world power, 1492-1763”, HarperCollins, New York, 2005, pp. 110-112.

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"The Catholic Monarchs understood the importance of political centralization as a means to strengthen the State and maximize its power. This, together with their drive for religious unification, allowed them to move towards an absolutist model that would be more evident in later centuries." [42] ***"The Catholic Monarchs were the initial architects of a monarchical system that, although not fully absolutist in its early days, laid the foundations for the concentration of power in the figure of the king, as evidenced by their political and religious reforms."*** [43]

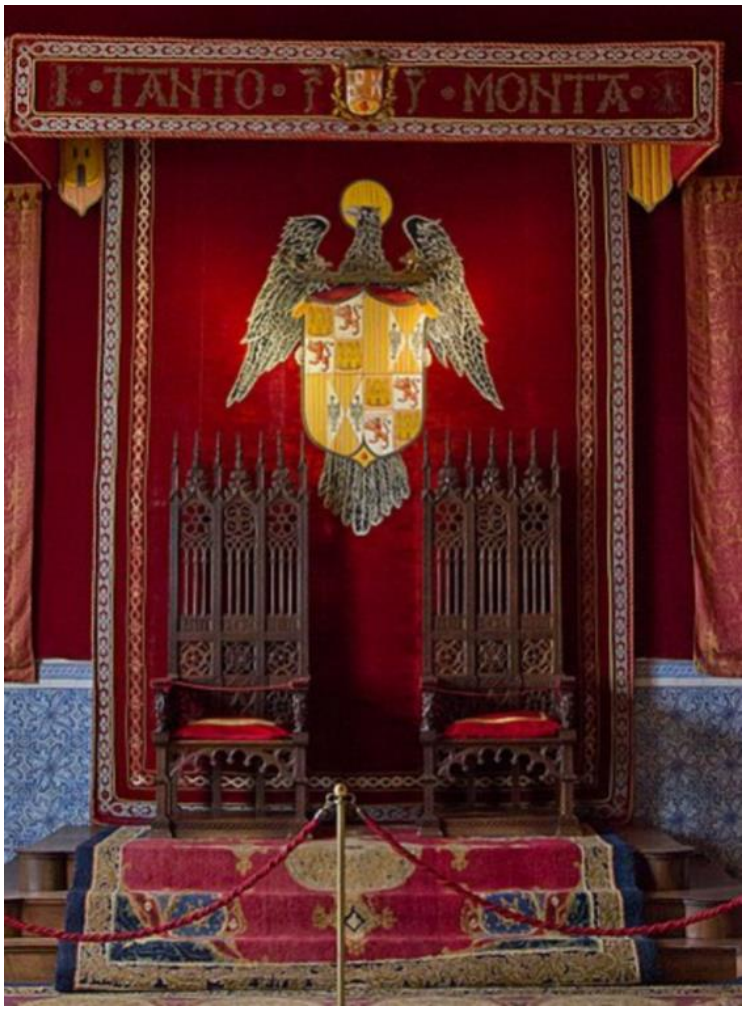

Figure 3. Throne room, Alcázar of Segovia, Spain. View of the throne with the motto of the Catholic Monarchs "tanto monta" on the front of the canopy. The Throne Room is a place of great symbolism in the Alcázar of Segovia, with a throne in which the motto "Tanto monta, monta tanto" stands out on the canopy, which underlines the equality of power between the Catholic Monarchs. This motto, as an emblem of the union of the kingdoms of Castile and Aragon, is present not only in the room but in various visual manifestations throughout the Alcázar, and has become one of the most representative emblems of the Spanish monarchy in the Middle Ages.

The Alcázar of Segovia is one of the most emblematic fortresses in Spain, known for its majestic architecture and its history linked to the Spanish monarchy. Located on a rocky hill, between the Eresma and Clamores rivers, the Alcázar has had various uses over the centuries: it was a royal palace, a prison and an artillery academy, among others. The Throne Room is one of the most significant rooms in the palace, used by the monarchs, especially during the reign of the Catholic

[42]Ibid, p. 104.

[43]García-Bernardo, B. "Absolutism in the Spain of the Catholic Monarchs", History of Spain, Madrid, 2015, pp. 61-62.

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Monarchs (Isabel I of Castile and Ferdinand II of Aragon), to hold audiences and official royal court events. In this room, the monarchs received ambassadors, nobles and courtiers, and made crucial decisions for the kingdom. The decoration of the Throne Room is majestic and rich, reflecting the grandeur of the reign of the Catholic Monarchs. The throne, which occupies the central place, is flanked by artistic details that underline the authority and power of the monarchs.

One of the most representative elements of the Throne Room is the motto "Tanto monta, monta tanto" (It makes no difference whether it is one or the other), inscribed on the front of the canopy that covers the throne. This motto is one of the best-known insignia of the Catholic Monarchs and symbolises the equality and parity between Isabel and Fernando, despite the fact that they ruled in separate kingdoms. Adopted as part of the process of unification of Castile and Aragon after their marriage in 1469, the phrase expresses that, although Isabel was Queen of Castile and Fernando King of Aragon, their powers were equally important and complementary. In simple terms, the motto means "it makes no difference whether it is one or the other", reinforcing the idea that there was no hierarchy between them, but rather an alliance of equals. This phrase symbolises the equal union between the two kingdoms and how, together, they ruled jointly.

The motto "Tanto monta, monta tanto" appears in various places in the Alcázar of Segovia, especially on the canopy of the throne, reinforcing the idea of duality and symmetry between the Catholic Monarchs. In the Throne Room, this motto has a symbolic value and underlines the majesty of the place, as well as the central figure of the monarch in his role of justice and governance. Throughout history, this motto has become one of the most representative emblems of the reign of the Catholic Monarchs and the consolidation of Spain as a unified power.

The Alcázar of Segovia was originally a military fortress built on the site of an ancient Roman fort, but over the centuries, the building has undergone various transformations. During the reign of the Catholic Monarchs and subsequent monarchs, the Alcázar was converted into a royal palace. The Throne Room is just one of the many historic rooms that can be visited within the Alcázar, which also includes the Tower of Juan II, the Queen's Chamber and the palace gardens. Today, the Alcázar of Segovia is one of the most visited tourist destinations in Spain, both for its architectural beauty and its historical significance. The Throne Room, with its decorated throne and the motto of the Catholic Monarchs, remains one of the most emblematic places in the fortress.

The thrones of the Alcázar of Segovia (Figure 3) are related to the Throne of the Catholic Monarchs in terms of style and function. In the Alcázar, the thrones and chairs used by royalty were often made of carved wood, with ornamentation and details that symbolized the power and authority of the monarchs. High backrests and the inclusion of heraldic elements were common in these seats, highlighting the importance of the nobility and their status. Also the canopy that frames and zones the position of the thrones as well as the three steps that place them above ground level. Decoration with tapestry and other materials was also common practice, similar to what is seen in the throne of the Catholic Monarchs, which sought to create a visual impact and emphasize the greatness of the reign.

The throne of the Catholic Monarchs was in the flamboyant Gothic style, made of carved wood, often decorated with tapestry, reflecting the aesthetics and values of the monarchy at that time. Designed to highlight royal authority, it featured ornamental details that reflected the power and grandeur of the monarchy, with high backrests and heraldic symbols on the tapestry. In addition, there were other kings' chairs that reflected the monarch's status. The throne of Charles I, in the Plateresque style, was made of wood with silver details, emphasizing imperial power with intricate reliefs and a monumental design. The councillors' chairs, in the Baroque style, were made of carved wood, often with ivory or mother-of-pearl inlays; they were designed for nobility and councillors, focusing on comfort and ostentation, reflecting their importance in the administration of the kingdom.

Philip II's throne, in the Spanish Renaissance style, was made of walnut and had rich upholstery. Its design was more austere than those of its predecessors, reflecting a shift towards a more sober style, but it was still a symbol of authority. The court chairs, in the Rococo style (18th century), were

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painted or gilded and upholstered in silk; they were lighter and more ornate, reflecting a decorative style popular at court during the 18th century. Each of these seats not only served a practical function (not only did they have an intrinsic or per se utilitarian value; beyond the fact that kings could sit on them), but they had value as a symbol of power (symbolic value) because they were thrones rather than simple chairs and reflected the authority of the monarch, as well as the culture and art of the time (aesthetic value); their design and materials reflect the values and aesthetics of the Spanish monarchy at different times in its history.

This throne not only served a practical function, but also a symbolic one. In symbolic terms, the throne represented the divine and absolute power of the monarchs, but also the policy of centralization that the Catholic Monarchs implemented. The idea of a centralized monarchy, which would be the seed of the absolute monarchy in Spain; these pieces of furniture were not just objects of use, they were visual emblems of the monarch's supremacy, designed to project the grandeur and power of the crown.

Throughout history, the thrones of the Spanish monarchs evolved in style and materials, but always maintained their function as symbols of royal power. The relationship between the Catholic Monarchs and the throne of the Alcázar of Segovia is a clear reflection of the process of consolidation of the absolute monarchy in Spain. The throne, more than a simple seat, was a powerful symbol of royal authority, of the union of kingdoms and of the centralization of power, fundamental principles in the construction of Spain.

On the other hand, the article by Anderson and Girod, published in ArtyHum magazine no. 85, entitled "The Argentine Country Style Chair (Part 2). When Art Theory Becomes a Theoretical Paradigm to Explain the Typology of the Proto-Rationalist Country Style (or Gaucho Style) Chair in the Argentine Republic", continues its analysis of the Argentine Creole chair from an artistic, cultural and historical perspective. This work follows the theoretical lines of that publication in the magazine, where the bases were established to understand the influence of the Iberian colonies and their relationship with local design.

The article explores rural design typologies in Argentina, focusing on the influence of artists such as Florencio Molina Campos (1891-1959), who reflected gaucho life and traditions in his caricatures and artwork. The study analyzes how rustic furniture, particularly the matera chair and other types of handcrafted furniture, reflect a minimalist and functional aesthetic that precedes the Modern Movement in Europe, including the Bauhaus. In addition, the article highlights the analogy between Argentine vernacular design and other rural cultures such as the Shaker community in the United States.

This theoretical analysis suggests that the geometric simplicity and austerity of these premodern pieces of furniture anticipate concepts that would later become fundamental in modern European design.

Anderson and Girod's article makes a connection between proto-rationalism and the design of Argentine country-style chairs, pointing out that the proto-rational ideas of vernacular design of semi-nomadic furniture such as the chair anticipate key features of the Modern Movement in Europe.

The concept of proto-rationalism in the article refers to the austerity and geometric simplicity of gaucho design, which is strikingly similar to the functionalist and minimalist design promoted by the Modern Movement in architecture and furniture design in Europe in the early 20th century. The term suggests that these functional and austere forms of design, devoid of unnecessary ornamentation, already existed in rural cultures in Argentina, long before these principles were formalized in Europe by the great academies or universities.

These design forms were not influenced by European tradition, but emerged from a direct interaction with local materials and needs in Argentina. This design typology, like the gaucho matera chair, has a minimalist and austere geometry that relates to the ascetic life of the gaucho, using indigenous materials such as wood from the fields of the humid pampas and braided leather, reflecting a rational resolution of the aesthetic and functional needs of the rural environment.

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On the other hand, the relationship between the proto-rationalist chair and African masks is very interesting, since an analogy is established between the proto-rationalist design of the Argentine country-style chair and African masks. This comparison focuses on the geometric abstraction that both art forms share, and how both anticipate concepts that were later central to the Modern Movement in Europe, particularly Cubism and the Bauhaus.

African masks, with their minimalist and synthetic geometry, influenced artists such as Pablo Picasso (1881-1973), especially during his so-called "African Period." These masks displayed a simplicity of form and geometric purity that were considered proto-rationalist. Similarly, the design of the Argentine country chair, with its austerity and simple geometry, reflects a proto-rationalist abstraction, but applied in the context of Argentine vernacular and rural design.

Both objects, the chairs and the masks, are examples of how non-Western cultures developed design principles that were later admired and adopted by avant-garde movements in Europe. In the case of the African masks, Picasso was inspired by their abstraction to develop Cubism, while the proto-rationalist design of the gaucho chair is an example of how functional and simple forms were already present in rural cultures before being formalized by the Bauhaus School.

The relationship between the two lies in the fact that both typologies—the Argentine chairs and the African masks—show a design based on simplicity and functionality, with a strong symbolic and aesthetic charge that anticipates the concepts of geometric abstraction and minimalism of modern design known as the Modern Movement in Architecture and furniture design.

The analysis presented by Anderson and Girod on the relationship between proto-rationalism in the design of Argentine gaucho chairs and African masks has a valid theoretical basis from the point of view of art history, anthropology and design, although it is a rather particular approach that seeks to draw deep connections between very different cultures.

The idea of proto-rationalism applied to vernacular design is consistent with the history of design and architecture. In many cultures, pre-modern design solutions were rational in the sense that they were functionally adapted to the conditions of the environment, available materials, and usage needs. In this sense, the gaucho-style chair, with its simple geometry and local materials such as leather and wood, represents a rational response to the needs of the Argentine rural environment.

In terms of design, many objects that we now consider part of modernism or functionalist design have their roots in artisanal and vernacular traditions that prioritized utility over ornamentation. The Bauhaus School, for example, promoted these values, as did the Shaker chair tradition in the US, which also valued austerity and functionality.

However, while African masks had a ceremonial, ritual and spiritual context, Argentine gaucho chairs were functional objects with an everyday purpose. Although both may be proto-rational in their geometric approach and adaptation to specific needs (in the case of masks, the symbolic need; in chairs, the functional need), they are objects of a very different nature. The parallel between the geometric abstraction of the masks and the design of the chairs is more an attempt to highlight that non-Western cultures already had advanced design principles before they were theorized in Europe.

Design anthropology recognises that in many cultures, aesthetics and function are linked, and this is the case in both Africa and Argentina. However, the connection between these two specific cultures (African and Gaucho) is more of a parallel than a mutual influence. The comparison with African masks is interesting from a stylistic and anthropological perspective, although differences in function and cultural context must be taken into account. Both examples show how design in different parts of the world was able to anticipate what would later be known as modern design, reinforcing the idea that design innovation is not exclusive to Europe, but a global phenomenon. In short, the ideas proposed are consistent with the principles of design and anthropology, although the relationship between chairs and African masks is more conceptual than direct.

The Bauhaus and other modernist design movements borrowed many ideas from non-Western cultures and vernacular design. For example, the simple, functional forms seen in Bauhaus furniture, designed by masters such as Marcel Breuer (1902-1981), are based on the belief that form follows function. This principle was already found in many rural cultures, which, out of necessity, created

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functional, geometrically simple furniture. The gaucho design of the Matera chair can be considered a vernacular antecedent of these ideas; as an anthropological and cultural principle, the adaptation of objects to the local context is a constant in the history of global design.

From an anthropological perspective, both forms of design – African masks and gaucho chairs – share a common element: they are products of a deep relationship between culture and object. In the case of African masks, their geometric shape is linked to rites and beliefs, while gaucho chairs reflect rural living conditions, the use of local materials and the need for semi-nomadic people to adapt to the environment.

Although the rural environment and the life of the gaucho are mentioned, a deeper exploration of how gaucho culture, with its semi-nomadic way of life, its relationship to the land and local materials, and its resistance to colonization, directly influenced the rationality behind the designs is missing. Gaucho chairs were not only rational in terms of geometry and materials, but were also the product of a specific philosophy of life and value system. For example, the gauchos' value of self-sufficiency and adaptability, their economy of resources, and their ability to make the most of what was available in nature, are principles that deeply influence the design of these objects. These social and cultural considerations are intimately linked to what could be called semi-nomadic proto-rationalism.

When referring to the semi-nomadic way of life in the context of gauchos, it refers to a lifestyle characterized by constant mobility, but not entirely nomadic. Gauchos were people who moved around regularly, but not continuously or without a fixed home, as would be the case with true nomads. Gauchos moved frequently across the vast plains of Argentina, Uruguay, and Brazil (especially in the Rio Grande do Sul region) due to their work with cattle. They often traveled great distances to herd cattle, hunt wild animals, or find new pastures, but they did not always live on the move. They had specific areas where they spent seasons, and some even had homes or bases where they returned periodically.

Gauchos were highly dependent on the natural resources of the regions in which they moved. They used horses for transport and work, lived off beef, and obtained other resources such as leather and food from their immediate surroundings. This direct relationship with nature required a life that combined mobility and the ability to settle temporarily to take advantage of the resources of a place. Although not completely nomadic, gauchos were not tied to a life in towns or cities with stable infrastructure. Their housing was often improvised or temporary (the ranch), and this is also reflected in their austere lifestyle (the same was true of their furniture). They were self-sufficient people, able to make their tools and furniture from materials they found in the countryside. The gaucho chair or matera chair is an example of a simple, practical, and easy-to-build object that fits with this adaptable lifestyle.

The work of the gaucho was related to cattle raising, hunting, and seasonal activities. This type of life did not require gauchos to remain in one place for long periods, allowing them to move as needed, such as herding cattle or participating in seasonal tasks such as slaughtering. This lifestyle gave them flexibility, but also meant that they were not absolute nomads, as they returned to specific areas depending on the season or work; hence, being semi-nomadic, their furniture was semi-nomadic.

The semi-nomadic way of life of the gauchos combined elements of mobility with moments of temporary settlement. This way of life allowed them to take advantage of the resources of the environment and quickly adapt to changing weather conditions or work requirements. Although they were not total nomads, their mobility and self-sufficiency were crucial aspects, which influenced their material culture, such as simple and functional furniture that they could easily make and use in their daily lives, such as chairs and other handcrafted objects.

As for the relationship with technological and artisanal development, the minimalist semi-nomadic proto-rationalism in the design of vernacular furniture – such as the matera-gaucha chair – is also deeply related to local artisanal techniques and available technology. Although the use of indigenous materials, such as leather and wood, is mentioned, there is not enough discussion on how

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artisanal techniques and technological limitations of the time influenced the design of these chairs (which will be a likely sub-topic of Girod's PhD thesis research). It would have been interesting to explore how production methods (e.g. handwork and available tools) limited or influenced the forms of design, and how this reflected a kind of practical rationality that is aligned with the concept of minimalist semi-nomadic proto-rationalism.

The semi-nomadic lifestyle of the gauchos has a deep relationship with proto-rationalism in the design of objects and furniture, including the chair-materas, due to the need to create practical and adaptable solutions to a changing environment. This lifestyle directly influenced the way the gauchos designed and used their tools and furniture, prioritizing functionality and simplicity over ornamentation, which is key to the concept of minimalist semi-nomadic proto-rationalism.

Proto-rationalism is characterized by a design that responds to basic needs and environmental conditions in a logical and efficient manner. In the case of the gauchos, the way of life required objects to be practical, transportable, and multifunctional. The chair-materas, for example, are lightweight, easy to make from local materials (such as wood and leather), and designed to be highly functional in a rural environment, where mobility was key. This approach is rational because it eliminates all decorative excess, focusing on the pure utility of the object. Thus, the chair-materas reflect a proto-rationalism by solving the needs of the gauchos directly, without unnecessary additions, with a simple and austere design.

Gauchos relied on materials available to them in the natural environment, such as wood from local trees (algarrobo, ñandubay and others depending on the geographical areas where they lived) and leather from the animals they raised. This efficient use of resources is also a reflection of proto-rationalism, as design was closely linked to what was available at the time, optimizing raw materials without the need to import or seek external materials.

Having to move frequently, gauchos learned to use resources pragmatically, which promoted a minimalist and functional aesthetic. In terms of design, this corresponds to a rationalization of materials and construction methods, making objects durable but also adaptable.

Proto-rationalist design is also evident in the structural simplicity of gaucho furniture, such as the matera chair, which not only had to be functional, but also easy to construct, disassemble, or transport. Gauchos could not carry heavy or complicated objects, so design solutions needed to be adaptable and versatile. This simplicity in form and construction is a fundamental principle of proto-rationalism.

The semi-nomadic way of life required objects to be mobile and sturdy. Chairs, stools, and other furniture had to meet these conditions, which promoted an austere, geometric, and rational aesthetic. Gauchos were self-sufficient, meaning that many of the objects they used, such as chairs, were made by themselves or by local artisans. This is also in line with proto-rationalism, as objects were not only functional, but also durable and easy to maintain due to their simplicity.

By not relying on an industrial infrastructure, the design had to be rational in the sense that anyone could make it with the tools and materials available. This not only made the objects highly useful, but also easily replicable and repairable.

Although local materials such as wood and leather are discussed, not enough emphasis is placed on how the use of these materials reflected a symbiotic relationship with the environment. The ability of vernacular rural designers to use sustainable and renewable materials is at the heart of rational design in many pre-industrial cultures that had an ecological concept of man's relationship with the natural environment (La Pachamama or Mother Earth Goddess in Latin America).

This aspect could have been linked to current trends in sustainable design, showing how the proto-rationalism of the gaucho chairs could be seen as a precursor to contemporary principles in environmentally conscious design that make up the most advanced theories of design in developed countries today, ecodesign.[44].This connection between furniture design and cultural symbolism is

[44]Ecodesign, or ecological design, is an approach to industrial design that seeks to minimise the environmental impact of products throughout their life cycle, from the extraction of materials to their manufacture, use and

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not sufficiently explored in the article. For example, materials such as leather or wood, and their relationship to livestock or land, might have had deeper meanings in gaucho life.

The semi-nomadic lifestyle of the gauchos profoundly influenced proto-rationalism in the vernacular design of their furniture. This lifestyle promoted a practical, self-sufficient and functional mindset, where objects had to meet multiple criteria: being easy to construct, using local materials, being transportable and durable. This functional simplicity and adaptation to the environment is at the core of proto-rationalism, which in this context reflects a type of organic design that developed long before the formalization of these concepts in European modernism, such as at the Bauhaus.

On the other hand, the semiotic analysis carried out in the article on the Argentine country-style chair focuses on the relationship between the functionality, aesthetics and symbolism of the object in the context of gaucho and criollo culture. Design objects, such as chairs, speak in a non-verbal language, which implies that, through their form, materials and structure, they transmit meanings that go beyond their simple practical function. This language involves both the aesthetic and the symbolic. Paraphrasing Knapp[45]Nonverbal language is an essential form of human communication, the interpretation of which depends on gestures, postures and facial expressions as well as the cultural context in which it occurs. The interaction between verbal and nonverbal signals allows for a deeper understanding of individuals' intentions and emotions.

In the previous article, entitled A Brief Western History of Cult Furniture Design. The Chair (Part 3), written in ArtyHum No. 90, by Anderson and Girod, three fundamental values were identified in the analysis of the chair, although in reality there are four:

-*Functional-use-value:*This value refers to the practical utility of the chair as an object for sitting. Its design is adapted to the needs of the gaucho, such as his semi-nomadic lifestyle and his daily activities in a practical sense (drinking the infusion: mate).

-*Aesthetic-use-value:*The chair is not only useful, but also has an aesthetic value. The materials used, such as native wood and braided leather, and the simple, minimalist design, give it a particular beauty that is part of Creole culture.

-*Symbolic-use-value:*In addition to its function and aesthetics, the chair has a deep symbolic value, as it refers to the gaucho identity and to the rural history of Argentina. The use of local leather and wood evokes the connection with the land and the culture of asado (barbecue) that comes from working in cattle ranches, central elements of the life of the gaucho.

It is mentioned that in pre-modern design (such as the gaucho chair), the values of utility (functional value) and beauty (aesthetic value) were united. There was no separation between the functional and the aesthetic, since both aspects complemented each other in the design object.

The minimalist geometry and simplicity of the gaucho chair-matera design are based on the functional-use-value associated with its functionalist proto-rationalism (practical, useful, light, transportable) and a symbolic-aesthetic-use-value in the leather seat associated with culture (barbecue and folk music) and cattle work. The analysis also touches on the capitalist-use-value or capitalist-exchange-value (this is the fourth value mentioned above). The chair, being an object[46]

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final disposal; it promotes sustainability and integrates ecological principles into the design process. It began to gain prominence in the 1960s and 1970s, in a context of growing concern for the environment. Countries such as Sweden, Germany and the Netherlands have been pioneers in the implementation of ecodesign policies; the European Union has promoted regulations and directives, such as the Ecodesign Directive of 2009. Key figures include Victor Papanek, a designer who championed ethical and responsible design. Examples of ecodesign include eco-friendly furniture that uses recycled materials and encourages durability.

[45]Knapp, M. L. (1980). Nonverbal communication: The body and the environment. Buenos Aires, Paidos.

[46]An object is defined as a unique and artisanal piece, such as a hand-crafted chair that has existed culturally since pre-Columbian times; this type of object is characterized by its uniqueness, its traditional production process and its symbolic charge, which reflects the identity, values and practices of the society that creates it.

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linked to rural and artisanal production, it represents an object and not an industrial product (be careful with these concepts, you must know how to differentiate).

The article entitled The Argentine Country Style Chair. When Art Theory Becomes a Theoretical Paradigm to Explain the Typology of the Proto-Rationalist Country Style Chair (or Gaucho Style) in the Argentine Republic, published in the magazine ArtyHum Nº 85; written by Anderson and Girod, is part of a broader research on the craft design and historical evolution of the country style chair in the Argentine Republic, particularly related to the figure of the gaucho and the colonial influences of the Iberian Peninsula.

The paper delves into how the design typology of the gaucho chair is linked to the Spanish and Portuguese colonies in Latin America, pointing out the influence of colonial heritage on Creole design. It analyzes some of the paintings and caricatures of the artist Florencio Molina Campos where iconographies of this type of gaucho chair (materas) are exemplified by the painting, showing how his vernacular, minimalist and proto-rationalist designs anticipate certain concepts of the European Modern Movement, such as those of the Bauhaus.

These objects not only have a use-value, but also an aesthetic-use-value, supported by a production approach that can be considered artisanal. On the other hand, the term product refers to mass-produced goods, which emerged with the Industrial Revolution, especially in the context of Fordist production; this methodology, characterized by the standardization and mechanization of processes, allows for mass production, where efficiency and economy of scale become central elements. In this model, the object loses its uniqueness and is transformed into an interchangeable good (a commodity), designed to satisfy the demands of a mass market. The logic of capitalism, with its emphasis on profit maximization and cost reduction, promotes mass production, where the value of a product is more related to its ability to be consumed in large volumes than to its uniqueness or intrinsic value as an object (we say then that a chair instead of being used (for its use-value) becomes consumed (for its capitalist-exchange-value). In short, the transition from objects to products reflects not only a change in production methods, but also in social relations, consumption and the perception of value in contemporary society. We can go further and say that from the perspective of Theodor Adorno (1903-1969) and Max Horkheimer (1895-1973), as part of the Frankfurt School, they argue that contemporary culture and society are deeply influenced by capitalism and the cultural industry; so the consumption-of-a-chair can be analyzed through various critical lenses related to culture, industry and the Commodification. Consumer culture turns the chair into a status symbol, where its design and price reflect social aspirations; furthermore, commodification transforms human needs (such as sitting in a chair) into commodities, leading to consumer alienation (passive consumers where consumer objects have been commodified), who seek identity in superficial choices.

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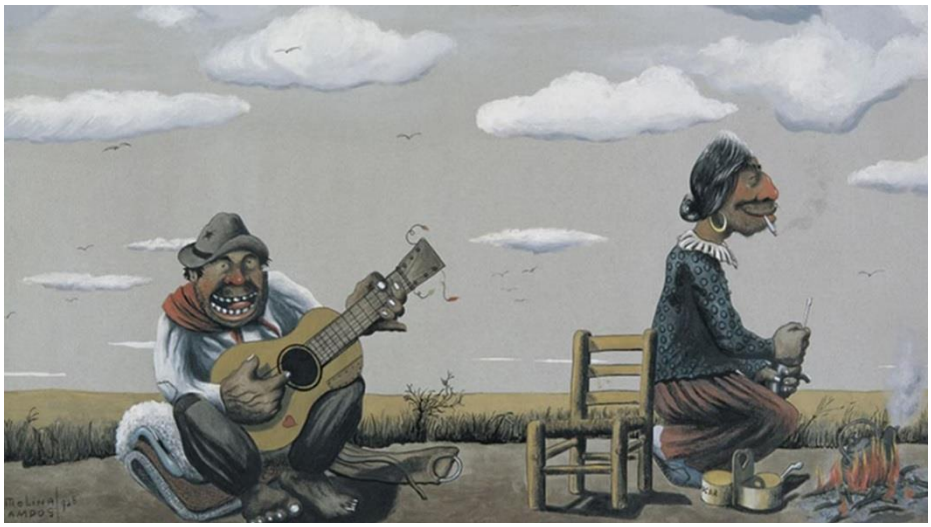

Figure 4. Work "Cantando bonito", by Florencio Molina Campos for his series of almanacs of the Alpargatas SAIC factory © GGM and FFMC (Télam). Source: Diario Infobae, Republic of Argentina.

The gaucho chair, with its austere and functional geometry, resembles the proto-rationalist style of rural cultures, such as the Shaker community in the USA, which is related to a practical and functional approach - or use-value - of local materials.

It is analyzed how these chairs, despite their simplicity and functionality, also have a great aesthetic-use value and symbolic-use value, since materials such as leather and vegetable fibers refer to the history and rural economy of Argentina, in particular livestock production and the culture of the asado criollo (the aesthetics lies in its simplicity and minimalism that gives it a beauty in simplicity and its symbolism lies in the tiento or braided leather of cow (bovine cattle) or foal (equine cattle) which symbolically refers to the criollo livestock in the estancias and going further refers to the wild cattle).[47]). The article concludes that this type of design not only anticipates but is also an integral part of Argentina's cultural heritage, symbolizing a symbiosis between the functional, the aesthetic and the symbolic.

The photograph of the country-style chair seen on Figure 5 is analogous to the iconographic image of the painting on Figure 4; it not only represents the gaucho, but can also be seen as an object (not a product) of cultural belonging that generates an emotional identification and roots in the Creole culture. This identity value could be linked to the way in which people see themselves reflected in these objects, as an extension of their way of life, traditions and values (an intangible cultural heritage).[48].

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[47]The word wild is the term used to refer to any domestic animal that escapes from its owners and becomes wild. Wild refers to something that grows or lives naturally in the countryside, without being domesticated. In the context of animals, it refers to those that have returned to a wild state or that live in freedom, rather than being under human control.

[48]The country-style chair in Argentina can be considered part of the country's intangible cultural heritage, particularly within the context of gaucho and rural culture; this type of heritage encompasses not only physical objects, but also the traditions, customs and practices that give meaning to the identity of a social group. The chair represents more than just a functional object; it is a symbol of gaucho and criollo culture, which is deeply rooted in the history and daily life of rural communities. Its existence reflects traditions, ways of life and values that have been passed down from generation to generation. This emotional bond with the chair contributes to the cultural identity of those who feel represented by it, functioning as a point of connection with their heritage. As a vehicle of collective memory, the chair contains stories, experiences and practices that have shaped life in the Argentine countryside; Each use and each gathering around it—whether to drink mate (the equivalent of

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The country-style chair can also be seen as a vehicle of collective memory. Beyond their functional, aesthetic or symbolic value, these objects act as witnesses of history, encapsulating events and practices that marked generations of rural inhabitants in Argentina. Analyzing how these objects preserve and transmit historical memory could deepen the analysis. This value, linked to nostalgia and legacy, could complement the semiotic analysis in terms of how objects transmit and preserve the history of the Argentine pampas.

*Ritual or ceremonial value:*Although the symbolic value of the chair is mentioned, it could be relevant to explore its role in social rituals. In rural contexts, objects such as the chair can have a ceremonial meaning in everyday or festive practices, such as drinking mate, playing folk guitar, or eating roasted meat. This ritual or ceremonial value can broaden the analysis by considering how the chair is not only a utilitarian object, but also a key component in moments of social interaction, loaded with symbolism that reinforces community ties (such as gastronomy).

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having tea in England, sharing a barbecue or enjoying a guitar playing so important in the culture of the Argentine Republic—evokes memories and traditions, contributing to the construction of a common narrative; these objects, when used in significant contexts, become witnesses of social and cultural history. The chair also has a ritual value in different social practices, acting as a central element in interactions that strengthen community cohesion; for example, in family gatherings or festivities, the chair becomes a space for meeting and dialogue, where ties are reaffirmed and cultural identity is celebrated. This ceremonial aspect gives it a symbolic dimension that goes beyond its everyday use. In Argentina, this type of object can be considered cultural heritage for its capacity to transmit and preserve history, as well as for its role in identity and social cohesion; the safeguarding policies of intangible cultural heritage recognize the importance of these objects and practices in community life, promoting their appreciation and transmission to future generations; Thus, the country-style chair stands as a significant symbol of Argentina's cultural heritage, encapsulating the essence of a way of life, a set of traditions and a legacy that endures over time.

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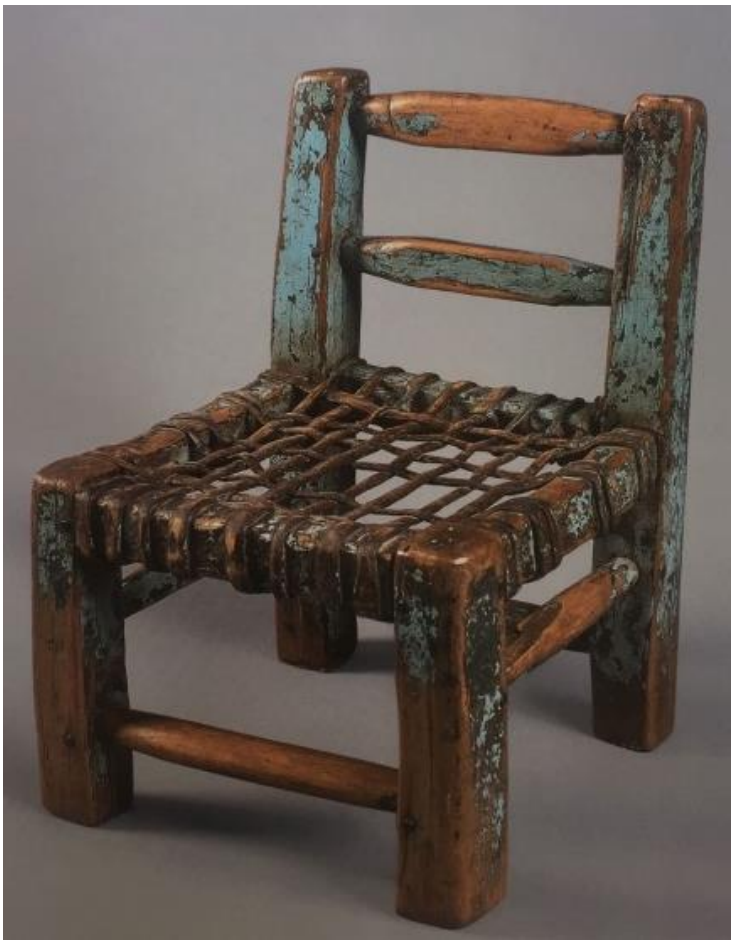

Figure 5. Low mate chair (close to the ground where the fire is), named in this way for the act of "drinking mate" (infusion)[49]In the Argentine Republic, with the kettle on the embers of the fire, it is the cultural equivalent of drinking the infusion corresponding to "tea time" (the emblematic "five o'clock tea") in England.[50]This chair is very similar to the one represented in the pictorial work "Cantando Bonito" by the artist, painter and caricaturist Florencio Molina Campos, for his series of almanacs from the Alpargatas SAIC factory.

[49]The act of "drinking mate" is a tradition rooted in Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay and southern Brazil, and is a symbol of encounter, friendship and culture. Mate is an infusion made with yerba mate leaves (Ilex paraguariensis), placed in a container of the same name, and is drunk with a straw after adding hot water, without boiling. In Argentina, it is the national drink and is consumed in all contexts; in Uruguay, it is even more common, with a thermos and mate being carried anywhere. In Paraguay, tereré predominates, a cold version with ice water and fresh herbs, ideal for the hot climate; while in southern Brazil, chimarrão is characterized by a finer yerba and without a stem, giving a strong infusion. This practice is predominant due to its social, symbolic and transversal value, uniting generations and social classes around a gesture of camaraderie and cultural connection.

[50]The act of "drinking mate" can be considered equivalent to "tea time" in England in terms of its social and cultural value. Both practices transcend the function of simply drinking an infusion, becoming moments of encounter and shared rituals. In Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay and southern Brazil, mate symbolizes unity and camaraderie, while tea in England represents refinement and a pause in routine. Although the context varies, since mate is consumed at any time of day and place, while tea has more defined schedules, both traditions stand out for generating spaces for social interaction, transmitting customs and reinforcing deeply rooted cultural identities.

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In the semiotic analysis the most relevant points with a minimalist and semi-nomadic proto-rationalist vernacular design:

-The object as a non-verbal language: It is stated that design objects, such as chairs, speak in a non-verbal language, which implies that, through their form, materials and structure, they transmit meanings that go beyond their simple practical function or use-value. This language involves both the aesthetic and the symbolic. Four (4) fundamental values are identified in the analysis of the chair:

*-Functional-use-value:*This value refers to the practical utility of the chair as an object for sitting. Its design is tailored to the needs of the gaucho, such as his semi-nomadic lifestyle and daily activities.

*-Aesthetic-use-value:*The chair is not only useful, but also has an aesthetic value. The materials used, such as native wood and braided leather, and the simple, minimalist design, give it a particular beauty that is part of Creole culture.

*-Symbolic-use-value:*It refers to the gaucho identity and to the rural history of Argentina (something like the cultural heritage that represents the work with cattle). The use of local leather and wood evokes the link with the land and the culture of the barbecue (among other evocations), central elements of the life of the gaucho, the cattle rancher and the landowner.

The semiotic analysis focuses on the four main values: functional-use-value, aesthetic-use-value, symbolic-use-value and capitalist-exchange-value. While these encompass a substantial part of the meaning of the Argentine country-style chair, there may be other aspects not analyzed or not sufficiently explored that could enrich the semiotic analysis.

The unity between function and aesthetics present in the gaucho matera chair is mentioned in hypothesis no. 1 or premodern: where the values of the useful (functional value) are united to the kalokagathia, which is equivalent to saying that the beautiful (aesthetic value) and the good (ethical value) were united.[51]. There was no separation between the functional, the aesthetic and the morally ethical, since all these aspects complemented each other –and still do in existing rural areas- in the design object. Since they can still be bought, or ordered to be built by artisans, as objects and not as products; that is, if a craftsman is commissioned to build them and is paid (with money obviously) we would not be buying them as a product even if it is a commodity acquired in a capitalist way (since it is a personal order). We would be acquiring them as an object of artisan design and they do not reach the status of an industrial product. Because their manufacture is not truly industrialized or massive (although it is not industrialized, it could be a non-industrial mass manufacture as was the Thonet chair No. 14, but it is not equivalent to that either); so, what is the gaucho matera chair? Answer: it is an object that operates more like a barter with money (capitalist currency).

Barter is a system of exchange where goods or services are exchanged directly, without the use of money. In this context, when you commission a craftsman to make a handmade chair and pay with money, it is not strictly barter, as you are using a monetary medium originating in capitalism, rather than exchanging one good for another. However, one could argue that the process has elements of barter, in the sense that you are exchanging money for a personalized good that has a specific value. So, although it is not barter in its classical definition, the personal relationship and the uniqueness of the object can lead to a richer exchange experience than true, ancient barter, but of lower status than the purchase of an industrial product (in the capitalist market). The analysis also touches on capitalist exchange-value (being purchased from a craftsman who sells it and a user who buys it), it represents a commodity that circulates in the capitalist market.

The gaucho matera chair is a symbol of identity and a cultural product that transcends its utilitarian function to become an object loaded with historical and social meaning (aesthetic and symbolic) that circulates in a capitalist market. Hence we say that it is an object with a capitalist exchange value.

We could add an ecological value - or environmental sustainability value - since the local materials used in the manufacture of the chair (wood, plant fibers, leather) are analyzed, the

[51]Kalokagathia (Greek term), refers to the idea of beauty and goodness, associating aesthetics with virtue. The kalokagathia symbolized beauty as morally good or goodness, goodness.

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ecological value or sustainability of these designs could be explored. How is the production of these chairs related to the natural environment? Nowadays, sustainability is an important criterion for evaluating the design of objects. Analyzing this value would allow us to understand how the production of these chairs respects (or not) the ecological balance and how it can become an example of sustainable design (what in the most advanced theories of the developed world has been defined as ecodesign).[52].

The semi-nomadic lifestyle of the gauchos profoundly influenced proto-rationalism in the design of their furniture and tools. This lifestyle promoted a practical, self-sufficient and functional mindset, where objects had to meet multiple criteria: being easy to build, using local materials, being transportable and durable. This functional simplicity and adaptation to the environment is at the core of proto-rationalism, which in this context reflects a type of organic design that developed long before the formalization of these concepts in European modernism (such as at the Bauhaus).

The term semi-nomadic refers to a lifestyle that combines aspects of sedentary and nomadic life, where people move periodically, but not constantly, maintaining ties to a fixed place. This concept is used in anthropological and sociological studies to describe communities that depend on hunting, gathering, or agriculture, moving based on the availability of resources. For a more formal academic definition, one can consult André Leroi-Gourhan's book Anthropology of Nomadic Peoples, published in 1971, where the characteristics of nomadic and semi-nomadic societies are discussed, as well as their relationship with the environment and the design of tools and furniture. Another reference on gauchos is José Luis Romero's 1946 book Los gauchos: historia y cultura de un pueblo, which offers an in-depth analysis of gaucho life and how their semi-nomadic lifestyle influenced their material culture.

The literature of the text El Gaucho Martín Fierro (1872), written by José Hernández (1834-1886) in the 19th century, is an epic poem depicting the life of gauchos in Argentina. This work reflects the cultural identity of the gauchos, their struggle for freedom and their customs, including their relationship with the environment and their semi-nomadic lifestyle, highlighting values such as freedom, justice and resistance, intrinsic aspects of gaucho life. In this context, the mate chairs, used in gaucho coexistence, exemplify a practical approach, as they are transportable and designed to facilitate life in the countryside, allowing one to enjoy a mate in different places, while being functional and suitable for their lifestyle.

Furthermore, the simplicity and functionality of the mate chairs reflect proto-rationalism, where design is a direct response to the needs of the environment. These chairs adapt to the context and cultural practices of the communities that use them. Molina Campos' paintings portray rural and gaucho life in Argentina, capturing the customs and traditions of the gauchos, as well as their environment. In his works, the representation of gaucho life is observed, where gauchos often appear enjoying a mate in their mate chair, emphasizing the importance of these objects in gaucho culture,

[52]Ecodesign, on the other hand, focuses on minimising the environmental impact throughout the product's life cycle; in the case of the chair, the use of local materials such as wood, plant fibres and leather is considered a positive aspect if they are sourced responsibly, favouring the conservation of the natural environment (reducing the carbon footprint). Analysing how its production relates to the environment allows us to explore its ecological impact; if sustainable practices are used, it could be considered an example of ecodesign, while methods that damage the ecosystem would contradict these principles. Today, sustainability is a fundamental criterion for evaluating the design of objects; by integrating this approach into the analysis of the country-style chair, one can see how its production not only meets functional and cultural needs, but also contributes to environmental sustainability, considering it a model of sustainable design that preserves cultural traditions and respects the environment. Thus, the intersection between industrial design theory, ecodesign and the production of the chair offers a rich area of exploration that highlights the importance of sustainability in design, celebrating cultural heritage and the conscious use of natural resources.

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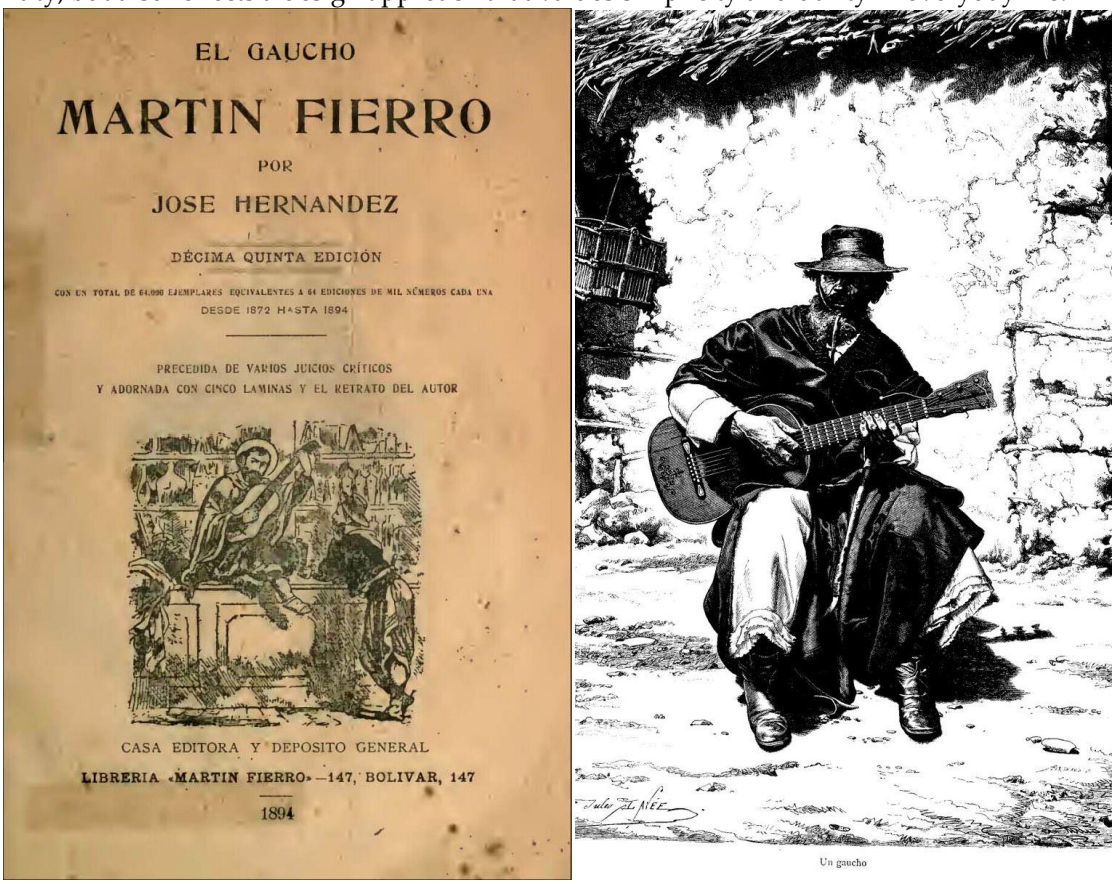
as they are not just furniture, but elements that tell stories about identity and coexistence in the countryside.

José Hernández's literature, Molina Campos' paintings and the Materas chairs are intrinsically connected through the representation of a semi-nomadic lifestyle. Together, they offer a comprehensive view of gaucho culture, highlighting the functionality, adaptability and deep bond with the environment that defines this community. This relationship not only illustrates the gaucho identity, but also reflects a design approach that values simplicity and utility in everyday life.



(**a**) (**b**)

Figure 6.(**a**,**b**) On the left, cover of the famous literary work El gaucho Martín Fierro (edition: 1894) by the author José Hernández. Martín Fierro is the protagonist of the gaucho story written in verse in El Gaucho Martín Fierro (1872) and La vuelta de Martín Fierro (1879), by José Hernández. He is a gaucho from the Argentine pampas who finds himself fighting a Creole duel and killing a man. From that moment on, he must face the social injustices of the time. In the first book, Martín Fierro finds himself separated from his family and in the second book he is reunited with his children. Source: This is a faithful photographic reproduction of a two-dimensional public domain work of art. The work is in the public domain in the Argentine Republic.

On the right, an illustration of a gaucho. Source: The Earth and Man: A Picturesque Description of Our Globe and the Different Races that Inhabit It by Fiedrich von Hellwag - Montaner and Simon editors. Image by an unknown author from 1886.

Discussion

Hypothesis based on Hegelian Dialectics applied to the probable process of syncretism in furniture design in America.

(a) Thesis:The mythical-cosmogonic aesthetics of pre-Columbian peoples (15,000 BC - 1492 AD) constitute a foundational paradigm in the production of artifacts and design objects in America. In these societies, objects not only fulfilled practical functions, but were deeply integrated with cosmology, spirituality, and natural cycles. Pre-Columbian designs, such as ceremonial thrones and

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other carved artifacts, evidence a symbiotic relationship between man, nature, and the cosmos. Pre-Columbian architecture not only fulfilled practical functions, but also reflected complex social and religious structures, and ceremonial objects were instruments of connection with the sacred. This connection imbued objects with profound spiritual and cultural meaning, turning them into manifestations of an aesthetic deeply linked to a mythical-cosmogonic order.

(b) Antithesis:With the arrival of the Spanish colonizers in 1492, and the imposition of the absolutist monarchies, a new aesthetic-cultural model emerged in America. This model was linked to colonial furniture, which reflected the hierarchical and ostentatious values of the absolutist-monarchical order. It is mentioned that the throne of the Catholic Monarchs reflected a centralized and hierarchical power, decorated with elements that symbolized the greatness of the monarchy. This design, influenced by European courtly-monarchical aesthetics, represented a cultural clash with pre-Columbian traditions, prioritizing luxury and power over spiritual and practical connections. In this context, local artisans began to integrate Iberian materials and techniques, transforming traditional practices into a forced syncretism.

(c) Synthesis of the gaucho ethos:Argentine gaucho design of the 19th century, specifically the silla matera, emerges as a Hegelian synthesis that evidences a cultural syncretism between pre-Columbian traditions, the Spanish colonial legacy and the conditions of the Argentine rural environment. The silla matera, described as having an austere and functional design that reflects the semi-nomadic life of the gaucho, using local materials such as wood and leather, integrates the values of the useful, the beautiful and the symbolic. This minimalist proto-rationalist design solves the practical needs of the rural environment, while preserving aesthetic and symbolic elements of pre-existing cultures.

Unlike pre-Columbian objects, which were imbued with cosmogonic and spiritual meaning, the matera chair focuses on solving practical problems. The symbolism it possesses is more cultural than spiritual, reflecting the gaucho ethos, but without a direct link to the mythical-cosmogonic traditions of the native peoples.

The reasons why we come to affirm that the design of objects, artifacts (even furniture), as in the Indo-Ibero-American chair-matera, is the result of the semi-nomadic proto-rationalist minimalist syncretism are discussed below.

Cultural syncretism in Latin America developed in a context of colonialism and cultural resistance, marked by the fusion of indigenous and Hispanic traditions. This process integrated elements of pre-Hispanic worldviews, such as those of the Aztecs, Incas and Mayans, with European practices and beliefs, especially those linked to Catholicism. This cultural amalgamation gave rise to phenomena such as religious mestizaje, visible in expressions such as the Virgin of Guadalupe, which symbolizes both the continuity of indigenous traditions and their adaptation to the structures imposed by the conquistadors. The incorporation of indigenous values into European practices allowed local communities to reconfigure their cultural identities in the midst of colonial domination.

In the literary and artistic sphere, Latin America reflected this fusion through a unique creative production. Authors such as Rubén Darío and José Martí criticized colonial structures and celebrated an aesthetic that broke with traditional Hispanicist paradigms. Rubén Darío, considered the greatest representative of modernism, knew how to mix elements of Hispanic-indigenous cultural fusion with the European avant-garde, managing to renew the literature of the New World. For his part, Martí proposed an emancipatory discourse, anticipating the post-colonialist ideas that would later be fundamental for the modernists. In the 20th century, figures such as the Mexican poet and essayist Octavio Paz (1914-1998), the Chilean poet Pablo Neruda (1904-1973), the Chilean poet and Nobel Prize winner for Literature Gabriela Mistral (1889-1957) and the Mexican painter Frida Kahlo (1907-1954) transformed the artistic and literary panorama, providing it with a hybrid voice –in the words of the writer and anthropologist born in Argentina in 1939: García Canclini- and universal that marked the reconciliation of historical tensions between the indigenous and the European. This artistic and literary production not only reflected the fight against the colonialist practices of the local elites, but also served as a vehicle for the revaluation of silenced cultural elements.

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According to Canclini: "Hybridity is a fundamental characteristic of contemporary cultures, where elements from different traditions, times and spaces mix and give rise to new meanings and significances."[53]

Syncretism, as explained by Colombian philosopher Yuri Gómez, is not only a historical phenomenon, but a continuous praxis that allows humanity to bring together what is different in each act of creation. This practice makes possible the integration of seemingly incompatible elements, generating cultural results that challenge traditional categories and broaden the horizons of knowledge. The pictorial works of artists such as the Mexican muralist Diego Rivera (1886-1957) and the Chilean architect, painter and poet Roberto Matta (1911-2002) illustrate this principle; through their productions, these creators captured the tensions of class, race and power, turning their works into mirrors of the social conflicts that crossed their respective eras. Rivera, with his monumentalism and focus on social struggles, and Matta, with his surrealism loaded with philosophical and political implications, exemplified how art can be a vehicle for cultural analysis and transformation.

Mexico holds a prominent place as the epicenter of Latin American cultural syncretism. This country succeeded in developing in an exceptional way the integration of indigenous and European elements in all areas of culture, from religion to art. Events such as the Day of the Dead are an example of cultural fusion in the religious sphere, where pre-Hispanic beliefs about death are fused with the Catholicism brought by the colonizers. In art, muralists such as Diego Rivera, the Mexican painter and writer David Alfaro Siqueiros (1896-1974) and the cartoonist, caricaturist and painter of Mexican muralism José Clemente Orozco (1833-1949) reinterpreted European values from a mestizo perspective, while artists such as Frida Kahlo and the Mexican painter Rufino Tamayo (1899-1992) explored the complexities of Mexican cultural identity. This syncretism not only consolidated Mexico as a reference in art and culture, but also served as a model for other countries in their search for a hybrid identity that embraced both their indigenous roots and their European heritage.

Cultural syncretism, both in Latin America and Western Europe, has been a driving force of change and creativity. In Latin America, it enabled resistance to colonial impositions and the construction of new identities through the mixing of traditions. In Europe, it was key to the formation of a rich and diverse Western civilization, which integrated Greco-Roman, Christian and Germanic elements. In both contexts, the ability to fuse differences has given rise to dynamic civilizations, capable of transcending historical divisions and generating universal cultural expressions. This process remains relevant today, as cultural syncretism remains a tool to address the tensions and challenges of a globalized world.

In the text "The Country Style Chair Argentina", published in ArtyHum magazine n.º 85 by Anderson and Girod; an analysis was proposed that explored the connection between minimalist and proto-rationalist geometry present in apparently distant cultural traditions, such as those of the gauchos in Argentina, the African masks of the Congo and the European Modern Movement, particularly the Bauhaus. Where it was analyzed how certain geometric forms and design principles are repeated in cultures that have not had direct contact, which invites reflection on the similarities in artistic and cultural developments throughout history.

Premodern gaucho furniture, especially stools and other utilitarian objects, is characterized by austere and functional geometry. This design responds to an artisan tradition linked to rural cultures in Latin America, where the economy of materials and adaptation to the natural environment are determining factors. The pastoral life produced by agriculture and manual labor, which dispense with excessive ornamentation, is reflected in these pieces, which are not only functional, but also conform to a certain natural order, anticipating principles that would later be fundamental in modern movements such as the Bauhaus School and its rationalist furniture design.

[53]García Canclini, N. (1990). Hybrid cultures: Strategies for entering and leaving modernity. Mexico: Grijalbo, p. 75.

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This geometry is not merely decorative, but responds to a practical rationality, a type of proto-rationalism that can be considered an early form of what in Europe would be formalized as part of a philosophical current in modern design.

On the other hand, African masks from the Congo, which played a crucial role in the development of Cubism, provided artists such as Pablo Picasso (1881-1973) with a new way of understanding form through geometric abstraction. The masks were not mere representations of human or animal figures, but symbols charged with a strong spiritual and ritual component, which gave their geometry a deep emotional charge. The influence of these masks on Picasso and other Cubists translates into a simplification of form and a reduction to the essential, something that, although developed in a completely different cultural context, is related to the design of gaucho furniture in an anthropological sense. Both types of art share a tendency towards direct expression and the elimination of the superfluous, oriented towards the functional and the spiritual. This connection suggests as an important fact that geometric abstraction is not exclusive to urban and industrialized cultures, but can be found independently in rural and tribal traditions.

The Modern Movement in architecture and design, especially through the Bauhaus School, has historically been considered a European creation focused on functionality, simplicity and geometry. However, this analysis argues that the fundamental ideas behind modernism, such as the reduction to essential geometric forms, the rejection of ornament and the fusion between art and technology, did not emerge exclusively in Europe and the Modern Movement in Architecture and furniture design. In fact, they could be seen as manifestations of principles that already existed in other cultures, such as African art.

Furthermore, it is relevant to consider the comparison between the design traditions of rural communities, such as the gauchos and the Shakers in the United States. The Shakers, known for their austere life and artisanal production, developed furniture and objects with a clear, simple and functional geometry, similar to that of the gauchos. Both traditions share an aesthetic of simplicity, efficiency and purity of form, without superfluous embellishments. This coincidence demonstrates how certain ideas about form, utility and simplicity develop in parallel in very different cultural contexts, without the need for direct contact between cultures.

The minimalist geometry and proto-rationalist abstraction of gaucho furniture therefore reflect a shared intuition about simplicity, functionality, and efficiency that manifests itself autonomously in diverse cultural traditions. African masks, rural furniture from Argentina, and the designs of the Shaker tribes show how pure geometry, abstraction, and austerity can be applied in different contexts, anticipating avant-garde movements in art and modern design. These traditions suggest not only a convergence in forms, but also in fundamental human needs for expression, functionality, and order.

As in the Xiuhtecuhtli mask[54]Proto-rationalist abstraction seems to be a human characteristic present in African and Mesoamerican tribes.The Xiuhtecuhtli mask is known for its geometric style and great detail, highlighting the skill of Aztec artisans in creating ritual objects. The piece is typically geometric, with highly stylized shapes that distort and transform the human face, something

[54] The Xiuhtecuhtli mask, dating to around 1500 AD and originating from the Mixtec-Aztec culture, is a fascinating piece that reflects both the artistic sophistication and religious beliefs of pre-Columbian civilizations in Mesoamerica. Xiuhtecuhtli was the god of fire, heat, and time, fundamental to the Aztec worldview, and his representation on this mask possesses profound symbolism. The mask, which was made of turquoise, a highly valued material in Mesoamerica, has a finish that stands out for its texture and color, which not only gives it visual beauty, but also has a high symbolic value, since turquoise was associated with the divine and the eternal. For a visualization of it, we recommend viewing the following source of the image (free of intellectual property):*https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Aztec_mask_050910_170205.jpg*

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common in many depictions of gods and mythical figures in Aztec art. This stylized approach does not seek realism, but rather to convey the essence or nature of the deity represented.

The face is presented in a very simplified way (geometric), which distances the representation from a realistic human figure, aligning itself with the abstraction tendencies present in most representations of the Aztec gods.

The Xiuhtecuhtli mask reflects a cosmogonic vision typical of the Aztecs, where the divine is represented through shapes and symbols, not through a portrait of the human figure in the strict sense. This type of stylization and geometrization of forms was a concept that also emerged in modern art, especially in Cubism.[55]In this sense, it could be said that the mask has something in common with the forms that Picasso and other avant-garde artists adopted when moving away from naturalism and exploring more abstract representations.

So, the conjecture is that we can –provisionally- affirm (until more cases confirm the theoretical rule) that the design of Indo-Ibero-American artifacts and objects (and by extension furniture) are the result of a semi-nomadic cultural syncretism in the proto-rationalist matera (gaucho) chair.

From a cultural anthropological perspective, syncretism can be defined as the dynamic process of mixing, coexistence and transformation of cultural, religious or artistic elements from diverse traditions, which gives rise to new significant expressions. This phenomenon implies both the persistence and the reconfiguration of cultural forms, generating a hybrid system where identities, practices and symbols are intertwined.

In some cases, anthropology understands syncretism as a process of cultural hybridization, as García Canclini has already mentioned.

Syncretism is closely linked to cultural anthropology in studying how cultures are transformed through the interaction and mixing of diverse elements. From this perspective, syncretism is understood as a process of cultural hybridization, where traditions, beliefs and practices are intertwined in a context of symbolic negotiation. According to Jiménez: “Latin American syncretism,

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[55]Cubism, one of the most innovative and revolutionary artistic movements of the 20th century. Its relationship with African art has been widely documented and debated, as many Cubist artists were deeply inspired by African masks and sculptures, whose abstract and stylized forms provided them with a new visual language that broke with the tradition of realism and academic perspective. Cubism emerged in the early 20th century, around 1907, and was developed primarily by the artists Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque in Paris. The relationship between Cubism and African art can be traced back to the early years of the 20th century, when colonial exhibitions and world fairs in Europe began to display art from African colonies. A key milestone in this process was the Paris World's Fair of 1900, which allowed Europeans to come into contact with a wide variety of African art. However, it was in 1910 that contact with African art reached a critical point, due to the exhibition of African tribal art at the Musée de la Trocadéro (now the Musée de l'Homme) in Paris. This museum displayed sculptures and masks from various African cultures, mainly from West and Central Africa, which left a deep impression on avant-garde artists. The artist most recognized for his connection with African art is Pablo Picasso, who was influenced by the masks he saw at the Trocadéro Museum and in private collections. His work Les Demoiselles d'Avignon (1907) is often cited as the work in which these influences are most clearly reflected. In this painting, Picasso presents five nude figures that, instead of following realistic representation, display angular faces, geometric shapes, and stylized facial forms reminiscent of African masks. Cubism was characterized by a number of innovations that reflected the influence of African art. Firstly, African masks broke with the naturalistic representation of the human figure, and instead of faithfully replicating reality, they distorted the forms and simplified them down to the essential. The relationship between Cubism and African masks was crucial to the development of this artistic avant-garde. The abstract forms, the geometrization of human figures, and the symbolic representation of African masks directly influenced artists such as Picasso and Braque, who challenged traditional norms of representation, changing the history of European art.

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as a phenomenon of cultural hybridization, is structured between the sacred and the cultural, generating new forms of expression that arise from the dialogue between vernacular and aesthetic languages."[56]

This process involves not only the coexistence of cultural elements, but also their reconfiguration to give rise to new identities and meanings. Gómez points out: "Syncretism consists of the involuntary human effort to bring together what is different in each act and make the result resemble what is not similar, universalizing cultural practices through their integration into hybrid systems."[57]

In art and cultural anthropology, this hybridization reflects conflicts and mediations in historical contexts marked by inequalities, such as tensions between colonial practices and local resistance. Villalobos-Herrera emphasizes: "Syncretism in contemporary Latin American art is not only an aesthetic process, but a cultural action that translates identities and historical conflicts into systems of signs, where the local and the global are intertwined."[58]

In short, syncretism, from a cultural anthropological perspective, is a fundamental axis for understanding the processes of cultural hybridization, revealing how cultures negotiate, resist and transform their meanings in response to historical, social and artistic interactions. To reason this statement, it is important to understand how syncretism, understood as the fusion of cultural elements from different origins, influences the design of these objects.

The term semi-nomadic refers to a way of life in which people maintain a degree of mobility, which impacts the functionality and simplicity of the objects they use. In this context, designs must be practical, easily transportable, and functional, which is a characteristic feature of proto-rationalist designs, which focus on utility and efficiency. This proto-rationalist logic, which prioritizes the functional and practical over the ornamental, is evident in the Indo-Ibero-American Matera chair, which moves away from excessive ornamentation to focus on simplicity and adaptability to the needs of everyday life.

Through this syncretism, indigenous influences are blended with design forms introduced by European colonizers, but also adapted to local living conditions, such as mobility and the need for versatile objects. This fusion results in a design that is representative of the cultural, social and environmental conditions of the time, reflecting both colonial heritage and indigenous adaptations. Thus, the chair, as a design object, is a product of the encounter between different worlds, manifesting itself in a form that is both functional and symbolically rich, the result of a cultural syncretism that, at the same time, expresses an emerging rationality in the conception of everyday objects.

Conclusions

Cultural syncretism, understood as the process of mixing and fusing elements from different traditions and cultures, has been a constant in the history of humanity, especially in periods of colonization and mestizaje. This phenomenon not only affects religious beliefs and customs, but also languages, arts and everyday objects, which become material reflections of the interactions between dissimilar cultures. In the context of Latin America, cultural syncretism intensified with the arrival of European colonizers, mainly from Spain and Portugal, to the New World. This process of transculturation impacted not only spiritual practices, but also the daily lives of people, giving rise to a new identity that amalgamates indigenous, African and European customs. A clear example of this amalgamation can be seen in the gaucho furniture, especially in the materas chairs painted by Florencio Molina Campos, which, although apparently simple, reflect a complex mix of cultural influences that go beyond their functional utility, becoming a symbol of Argentine national identity.

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[56] Jiménez, A., Latin American League of Artists: Between Syncretism and Paramodernity, Bogotá: Editorial Arte y Pensamiento, 1998, p. 45.

[57] Gómez, Y., Essays on Cultural Praxis, Bogotá: Editorial Universitaria de Colombia, 2001, p. 112.

[58] Villalobos-Herrera, A., Syncretism and Contemporary Latin American Art, Quito: Culture and Society Editions, 2020, p. 28.

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Gaucho furniture, particularly mate chairs, is a clear example of how cultural syncretism manifests itself in everyday life. These chairs, used by gauchos in their gatherings around the fire to drink mate, are not only functional objects, but also have a deep symbolic value in gaucho culture. The tradition of mate, which has its roots in the indigenous communities of the Río de la Plata region, was adopted by gauchos during the colonial era and transformed into a social ritual expressing hospitality and community. Mate became an act of union among gauchos, and low-lying chairs designed for sitting near the fire facilitated this ritual around the fire. In this way, mate chairs not only serve a practical function, but are also a material symbol of the cultural interaction that took place in Argentina.

Through the design and function of these chairs, we can observe a fusion of traditions: the influence of indigenous customs, such as the practice of drinking mate, with other cultural issues of the European colonizers, and elements derived from the rural life of the gauchos. The mate chairs, in addition to being functional, reflect a local adaptation of European customs.[59]that already existed in the Old World (practical, simple and inexpensive in materials, with little luxury), transformed by the needs and lifestyles of the gauchos. This mixture of elements suggests a process of cultural syncretism in which indigenous, Spanish and African traditions merge to give rise to a new object, loaded with meaning and cultural identity.

*The cultural syncretism observed in the chairs*The importance of the Argentine gaucho's pottery does not lie so much in the aesthetic structure of the piece of furniture, but in its social and cultural function.[60]Through the use of mate, the gauchos adopted indigenous customs that later merged with the social practices of rural communities and with the lifestyles brought by European colonizers. In this context, the mate chairs can be considered a symbol of this cultural fusion: a simple but

[59]In Europe, especially in the Iberian Peninsula (Spain and Portugal), furniture already existed in the form of low-seated chairs, such as the low chairs used by the popular classes, which probably influenced the design of the simpler chairs of the gauchos. Although the gauchos did not have access to the expensive furniture of the urban elites of the Argentine Republic (which was brought from Europe), the concept of low-seated chairs, as part of European furniture, may have been an adopted element, but adapted to the rural living conditions of the gauchos. The simple and functional design of the materas chairs has a practical and economic reason for being, very similar to the simple furniture of the European lower classes, who also adapted their furniture to the rural or work environment. The gauchos, like the humbler classes of Europe, used more practical and functional furniture for their daily lives.

[60]The social and cultural function of the mate chairs is linked to the shared social ritual of drinking mate. This is the main cultural expression that connects the use of the piece of furniture with the processes of cultural syncretism. Mate chairs are used to gather around the fire, which is a common element in many indigenous cultures (such as the Guaraní people) and which is central to gaucho life. In the indigenous tradition, fire not only fulfills a practical function, but also a spiritual and social one, being a place of meeting, conversation, and coexistence. The gauchos adopted this indigenous custom and integrated it into their daily lives, with mate as a symbol of hospitality, camaraderie, and sociability. The low shape of the mate chairs has a practical function that reflects the need to be close to the fire. This connects with the custom of indigenous peoples who, before the arrival of the colonizers, already used low-height seats. Although the colonizers brought higher chairs, the use of a low chair to sit near the fire is a local adaptation, which the gauchos inherited and transformed into something of their own, more suited to their needs. Likewise, mate has its origins in indigenous communities, especially the Guaraní, who already consumed the yerba mate plant (Ilex paraguariensis) long before the arrival of the Europeans. The gauchos adopted this custom as an integral part of their daily life and turned it into a social ritual of sharing mate, usually around the fire, reflecting the combination of indigenous customs with the social practices of the gauchos, who lived in rural and semi-nomadic environments, close to nature.

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meaningful object that fuses indigenous proto-rationalist practicality with colonial social customs and the semi-nomadic gaucho identity.

In short, the cultural syncretism in the Materas chairs is not due to a simple adaptation of European styles, but rather reflects a combination of indigenous uses and improvements in social customs introduced by the European colonies, generating a space for social coexistence that transcends direct colonial influences and makes evident the creation of a new national cultural identity.

In the work Martín Fierro, the Argentine national poem written by José Hernández, becomes a fundamental reference to understand this relationship between gaucho life and the furniture used in it. The gaucho, the central figure of the work, lives in close contact with nature and its traditions, and is often represented in his interaction with the mate and in his coexistence around the fire. In this context, the mate is not only a drink, but a ritual that reflects the values of the gaucho community, and the low chairs, used to share this ritual, are the stage in which this cultural unity is expressed. Thus, the gaucho's furniture, like the mate, is not only an object, but a symbol of the gaucho culture, of the process of mestizaje and of the construction of a new national identity.

In conclusion, the gaucho's furniture, particularly the mate chair, can be considered a symbol of the cultural syncretism that characterizes the evolution of Argentine identity. Mate chairs are not only functional objects that serve to share mate, but are also a reflection of the diverse cultural influences that merged in the Pampas region. Their simple and practical design not only responds to the needs of the gaucho, but is also a material symbol of the history of Argentina, a country born of the mestizaje and interaction between diverse cultures. Therefore, we can affirm that mate chairs, like mate, are a product of the syncretism that materializes in Argentine culture, a culture that, through its art, its customs and its objects, reflects the rich interaction of indigenous and European influences.

Thus, we affirm that the American chair is an example of vernacular design and cultural syncretism that combines a proto-rationalist aesthetic (austere, practical and functionalist) with semi-nomadic materials (light, inexpensive and easy to obtain), integrating traditional pre-Columbian materials with new European colonial customs. The Argentine gaucho chair, in particular, is presented as a model of vernacular design that reflects austere functionality and adaptation to the rural environment long before the formalization of these concepts in European modernism, such as the Bauhaus. This proto-rationalist design arises from practical needs, using local materials such as leather and wood, with a simple and resistant geometry, perfectly adapted to the semi-nomadic lifestyle of the gauchos, which required light, transportable and durable objects. In addition, these chairs have a deep symbolic value, as they evoke Creole identity, connection with the land and traditions such as barbecue and folk music, which reinforces their cultural importance for the Argentine Republic.

In conclusion, Argentine Creole furniture, particularly the mate chair (gaucha), can be considered a symbol of the cultural syncretism that characterizes the evolution of Argentine identity. Mate chairs are not only functional objects (practical use-value) that serve to share mate, but are also a reflection of the diverse cultural influences that merged in the Pampas region, with a strong aesthetic-symbolic charge (austere-proto-rationalist-aesthetic-use-value + cultural-symbolic use-value associated with the folkloric tradition of “drinking mate”). The mate chair is a non-industrial product (but rather artisanal) that may (or may not) be serially produced in a semi-artisanal way by contemporary artisans. Its simple and practical design not only responds to the needs of the gaucho, but is also a material symbol of the history of Argentina, a country born from the fusion and interaction between diverse cultures (pre-Columbian American + European).

We can therefore affirm that the mate chairs, like “tomar mate” (the historical equivalent of “tomar té” or “tomar café”), are a product of the syncretism that materializes in Argentine culture, a culture that, through its art, its customs and its objects (artifacts and other cultural products such as furniture), reflects the rich interaction of indigenous, European and African influences. These chairs represent an example of vernacular design and cultural syncretism, combining an austere, practical and functionalist proto-rationalist aesthetic with semi-nomadic materials that are light, inexpensive

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and easy to obtain. This proto-rationalist design arises from practical needs, using local materials such as leather and wood, with a simple and resistant geometry, perfectly adapted to the semi-nomadic lifestyle of the gauchos, which required light, transportable and durable objects.

Furthermore, these chairs have a deep symbolic value, as they evoke the Creole identity, the connection with the land and traditions such as the asado-criollo (beef) from the Argentine pampas (brought by the English to Argentine soil) and folk music, which reinforces their cultural importance for the Argentine Republic. The traditions of the settlers and immigrants (mainly Spanish and Italian to the Argentine Republic) reinforce the current cultural ties that unite the Old World with the New World. Our grandparents.

These chairs, created from locally available materials such as native wood and cattle leather, represent a harmonious integration of functionality, aesthetics and sustainability. This connection with the natural environment and the ability to harness renewable resources underlines their relevance not only as part of Argentina's cultural heritage, but also as a precedent in the conception of environmentally conscious and respectful design. Their proto-rationalist design, which privileges resource economy and structural simplicity, is a reminder that design does not need to be complex to be effective, beautiful and long-lasting.

In another order of things, it was verified that the hypothesis of applying the Hegelian dialectic to Creole material culture[61](as a Hegelian synthesis) beyond the gaucho[62]same and should not be confused with the settlers[63], between pre-Columbian material culture (as a Hegelian thesis) and the cultural shock of the European conquest (as a Hegelian antithesis) is coherent and enriching from a

[61] The term criollo historically refers to people born in America of European, especially Spanish, descent during the colonial period. Criollos were a social class distinct from peninsulares (Europeans born in Spain), and although they shared the same cultural heritage, their identity was deeply influenced by the American environment and, in many cases, by interaction with indigenous and African cultures. In this sense, criollos developed a hybrid identity that incorporated European and local elements, both culturally and materially. Thus, the criollo of the pampas is a more comprehensive category because it includes not only the gaucho as a semi-nomadic worker and figure of the rural environment, but also other cultural, social and material manifestations that shaped the identity of the communities of the Argentine pampas and that were the result of this process of hybridization. Creole encompasses a greater diversity of experiences because it includes both rural workers and ranchers and communities that began to settle more permanently, creating a more complex and diversified pattern of life. In addition, Creole integrates European, indigenous and African elements, not only in terms of material practices (such as the designs of tools, furniture and clothing), but also in cultural, linguistic, religious and gastronomic traditions.

[62] ANDThe gaucho is an emblematic figure of the culture of the Pampas, but his scope is limited if we consider the broader phenomenon of Hegelian cultural synthesis that emerged from the contact between pre-Columbian culture and European influence in the territory. In material terms, while the gaucho can be linked to specific objects such as the matera chair or the facón, the criollo also includes those who worked in workshops, built ranches or developed commercial practices, integrating European elements such as iron or colonial architecture with indigenous techniques.

[63]ANDThe term colonist generally describes people who emigrated from Europe to settle in the American colonies, either as part of conquest, evangelization, or economic development projects. Initially, colonists were foreigners who had arrived on the continent, but over time, their descendants born in America came to be considered Creoles.

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historical, philosophical and anthropological perspective.[64]. Thus confirming the hypothesis as a tripartite structure.

Pre-Columbian culture represents a mythical-cosmogonic order, deeply connected to nature, with material practices such as the use of wood, leather and agricultural techniques that fused functionality and symbolism; this creates a basis for adaptability and respect for the environment. On the other hand, the European conquest introduces the Christian model and Western technological practices, which, while deconstructing the original worldview, also contribute new organizational, material and aesthetic forms, such as the use of iron and organizational models that came from monarchical structures.

In short, by considering the Creole of the Pampas as the synthesizing product of this process, it is being emphasized that it is not only a figure, like the gaucho, but a broader cultural identity, which reflects a complex integration of influences and which encompasses both rural and semi-nomadic activities as well as the expressions of a society in transformation towards more settled and diversified structures.

Although the gaucho is an emblematic figure of the culture of the Pampas, its scope is limited if one considers the broader phenomenon of Hegelian cultural synthesis (cultural syncretism) that arose from the contact between pre-Columbian culture and European influence in the territory. The Creole of the Pampas is a more comprehensive category because it includes not only the gaucho as a semi-nomadic worker and figure of the rural environment, but also other cultural, social and material manifestations that formed the identity of the communities of the Argentine Pampas and that were the result of this process of cultural hybridization.

The gaucho is traditionally associated with a semi-nomadic life, based on cattle raising and mobility, but the criollo also represents forms of settlement and social organization that include the adaptation of agricultural techniques, the development of local institutions, and the incorporation of cultural values and practices that went beyond daily survival. In material terms, while the gaucho can be linked to specific objects such as the silla matera (or the facón), the criollo also includes those who worked in workshops, built estancias, or developed commercial practices, integrating European elements such as iron or colonial architecture with indigenous techniques.

In short, by considering the Creole of the Pampas as the synthesizing product (or Hegelian synthesis) of this process, it is being emphasized that it is not only a figure, like the gaucho, but a broader cultural identity, which reflects a complex integration of influences and which encompasses both rural and semi-nomadic activities as well as the expressions of a society in transformation towards more settled and diversified structures.

The Creole of the Pampas, including the gaucho, represents the fusion of the indigenous and the European, not as a simple mixture, but as a reinterpretation in a unique context: the Pampas. The

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[64]The phrase about the application of Hegelian dialectics to the analysis of Creole material culture is based on a theoretical framework where the tripartite structure of thesis, antithesis and synthesis allows for the interpretation of material cultural evolution in Latin America, exemplified in the design of furniture such as the Creole chair. The pre-Columbian social order represents the thesis, characterized by a mythical-cosmogonic aesthetic linked to the cosmos and nature, which structured its artifacts. The arrival of the Europeans constitutes the antithesis, a disruptive event that reconfigured aesthetic, economic and symbolic codes by imposing new practices and styles under the influence of a monarchical-absolutist aesthetic. The synthesis emerges in Creole culture, which integrates and sublimates these opposing forces on a higher level, generating material expressions such as the matera chair of Creole artisans. This object exemplifies a functional and aesthetic solution that combines traditional artisan techniques, indigenous materials and a geometric simplicity that responds to both practical needs and emerging cultural values. Beyond its usefulness, the mate chair embodies the identity roots and the dialogue between the aboriginal-gaucho and the new European practices of social gatherings, illustrating how the Hegelian logic of denial and reconciliation allows us to understand historical processes of cultural transformation.

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gaucho chair-matera, analyzed, symbolizes this synthesis; it is a proto-rationalist object, born from the functional need of the environment and enriched by the aesthetics and functionality adapted from the European legacy.

Objects such as the gaucha-matera chair were consolidated in the 18th and 19th centuries and clearly show the integration of leather, inherited from indigenous tradition, with the proto-rationalist design that would anticipate the European avant-gardes (such as the Bauhaus of 1919); if we take the midpoint of the estimated origin of the gaucha-matera chair, for example, 1820, we can affirm that this design anticipated the functionalist principles of the Bauhaus almost 100 years before the official foundation of the Bauhaus with its rationalist functionalism in furniture design.

This concept extends to multiple aspects of Creole culture, from music to gastronomy. Although the gaucho is a key figure in this Hegelian synthesis, its scope seems more limited than the concept of the Creole in general, which better encapsulates the dialectical transformation of the Argentine pampas into a hybrid cultural space.

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Sheets

Front page.

Image of own elaboration from images No. 2, 3 and 4 (trying to exemplify the mythical-cosmogonic pre-Columbian social order (image No. 2), the social order of the Spanish colonies and their monarchical influence on American soil (image No. 3) and the non-modern liberal social order of the agro-export model of the Argentine Republic influenced by the syncretism of the pre-Columbian order plus the Ibero-American order (image No. 4); what we can define as a model of a semi-nomadic, proto-rationalist Creole chair and an Indo-Ibero-American cultural syncretism. The images have been obtained from Wikipedia (with a copyright and intellectual property free license), they have been used as illustrative examples, respecting the jurisprudence of "Fair Use" for strictly academic, educational and non-economic purposes; of use proportional to its scientific-cultural purposes. Only image No. 4 has been taken from a previous article by the same authors of this article in the magazine ArtyHum Nº 85. Images Nº 2 and 3 correspond to Wikipedia.

Figure 2.

Fountain:https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Piedrasnegrastrono.jpg

Figure 3.

Fountain:https://historia.nationalgeographic.com.es/a/boda-clandestina-reyes-catolicos_15525

Figure 4.

Fountain:https://www.infobae.com/cultura/2021/11/17/advierten-que-120-obras-de-molina-campos-estan-en-riesgo-de-conservacion-y-lejos-del-publico/

Figure 5.

Source (image taken from a previous article by the same authors of this article):https://www.artyhum.com/revista/85/#p=17

Figure 6a.

Fountain:https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Martin_fierro_1894.jpg

Figure 6b.

Fountain: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Gaucho.jpg

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