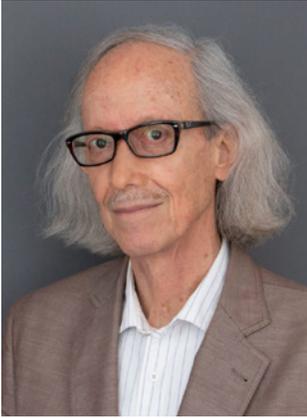


keynote

# Arturo Escobar



**Arturo Escobar** is a Professor of Anthropology at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and Research Associate with the Culture, Memory, and Nation group at Universidad del Valle (Cali) and the Cultural Studies groups at Universidad Javeriana (Bogota). His main interests are: political ecology, ontological design, and the anthropology of development, social movements, and technoscience. Over the past twenty-five years, he has worked closely with several Afro-Colombian social movements in the Colombian Pacific, particular the Process of Black Communities (PCN).

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Excerpts from the talk

There is always something that exceeds the modern world and creates a different set of practices of making life and making life into worlds.

Diversity originates in the paradigm of cultural relativism, and it is a paradigm that makes a lot of sense, but it is still narrow, because it continues to be based on this idea that we have one world or one nature and many cultures. The problem with that is that it paved the way for neoliberal consensus of multiculturalism. So everybody's happy if we accept that the world is one and the best world is the modern, scientific, rational, liberal, secular world, and within that, everybody can accommodate themselves and have their own difference.

Pluralism is a stronger concept, but I think it still continues to be based on the idea that there are multiple belief systems or multiple cosmologies. It accepts the fact that these belief systems are to some extent incommensurable but I don't think pluralism questions sufficiently the idea of science as a belief system, so underneath all of these different belief systems, there is one that is more, that is true, which is science because science is not based on beliefs. But science, as we know, is also belief systems. It's a particular one.

And finally, in what ways is pluriversality different from pluralism? Precisely because it accesses incommensurability completely. Saying that different ways of worlding or different worlds, or different ontologies are incommensurable doesn't mean that they aren't connected or unrelated.

All worlds are completely interconnected, interdependent, intrarelated.