

TWO SPACES, TWO LANDSCAPES

An Experiential Account

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Interest:

The main interest of this writing is to organize certain meaningful experiences and observations from the past few years in order to be able to go more deeply into my personal Work, and also to share these concerns and comprehensions with other Masters who are in a similar situation.

This brief writing has to do with a theme that has been gaining more and more relevance for me: the substitution of an inherited inner landscape for one that I choose. My experiences and reflections on this theme have come together for me in a hypothesis that has helped me continue to give direction to my work. Describing and organizing these experiences and reflections helps me open them up beyond my own subjectivity.

I am not trying to substantiate anything here, nor am I trying to propose a way to approach the Ascesis. But I can say with certainty that this work has helped me overcome suffering, increase my inner freedom, and orient myself toward the Sacred.

Synthesis:

My internal landscape conditions my thoughts, my feelings, my actions, and also my evolutionary possibilities. I realize that the "landscape" in which I was formed is inscribed in a space, and that space has a definite "form" that is registered as a system of representation. This form affects the meanings of all the elements in my interior, as well as the relationships between them and my own placement and identity, influencing my behavior in the world.

With the experience of the Discipline and later of the Message and of the Ascesis, I confirm that this form can be modified, and with it my inner landscape and the meaning of my own life. I base this in part on the experience with the Discipline and in part on working with the Force and the Principles to move in the chosen direction, in search of the form suitable for my deepest purpose.

DEVELOPMENT

Some antecedents:

1. In an experience with the Force, I experience a breakthrough in my level of consciousness. My perception of everything changes, giving me the certainty that profound and meaningful change is possible. This experience has been fundamental to my faith not only in my own evolutionary possibilities, but in the evolutionary possibilities of all of humanity.
2. Conversation with Silo, 2005. He speaks to me of the “central void” and adds that if I am able to cultivate it, my life will be transformed. He gives me some advice and suggestions. This orientation has remained strongly recorded within me, and I keep looking for ways to implement it.
3. The Discipline (Material) puts me in the situation of changing my own system of representation. I discover the meaning of paradoxes, the void, the silence, and the incursion of contents from another plane.
4. Studying the Epilog of *Self Liberation* makes me reflect on my landscape of formation, especially on its intangibles, on how this landscape conditions and limits the direction of my life and on what possibilities I have to change it or substitute another landscape for it, one that is conscious, chosen, and in line with my purpose.
5. The practice of the Entrance in the Ascesis with the Experience of the Force. A style of life in which the Principles and Silo’s Message are co-present. Over time I notice changes in my look, my behavior, and my relationship with the world.

First observations:

For most of my life I’ve been on the path outlined by Silo and his doctrine of overcoming suffering, freeing the mind, and moving toward coherence, unity, and the transcendental. On this path I’ve always registered on one hand an evolutionary intention that impels me in the chosen direction, and on the other a force that stops me, that distracts me and puts resistances in my way. Following the allegory of the “traveler,” I’ve driven my cart to the left or the right, but always in the proposed direction. Years ago I strongly felt the need to “sacrifice the cart of desire” and mount Necessity in order to reach my destiny on time.

It was then that, reviewing certain aspects of my Ascesis – doubts, certainties, failures, and realizations – I discovered that I was experiencing a transition between two landscapes. This transition was neither accidental nor “natural.” There was something, an intention, that was impelling it. One of these landscapes represented “the given” and the other “the chosen.”

I recognized the first as my “landscape of formation.”¹ In this landscape that I did not choose, I grew and learned about the world, life, friendship, and love, and also about pain and suffering. It’s a landscape that has been developing since the beginning of history. In this landscape are set the codes of what must and must not be done, what is worthwhile and what is despicable. As I grew, I discovered that I was not in agreement with a lot of what made up this landscape, but I could see no way to go beyond it. I tried to rebel, but was unable to achieve profound change in the direction I wished to go. My actions remained trapped in the vicious circle of “lack-compensation.” It was like trying to lift myself up by my own bootstraps.

Then, suddenly, and rather as a sideline, I discover that there was also another place in me (I didn’t call it a “landscape”), newer and much less populated, that represented “what I really want,” my best aspirations and my most profound experiences. I kept having this perception (and building it) in the experiences of the Ascesis, the Force, the Ceremonies, and the Message in general. It is an inner place that is growing in me, where I experience unity and freedom, and I comprehend that this is where I want to live always.

As I kept experiencing this, I began to go more deeply into this theme in my meditations, in different readings, and in conversations with friends. Many questions arose, for example: Why do I suffer? What is the root of my internal contradictions? What is impeding me on my evolutionary path?

When I asked myself “who am I?” I always felt that my answers were insufficient, or wrong; what came up instead was “what I am not,” and I kept discarding answers, one after another, until suddenly I could see myself “enrolled” in a certain form. It was a binary, polarized form. I had a strong intuition about how this form was affecting what I thought, what I felt, what I did. I understood that this form was related to my aspirations, my failures, my pleasures and my suffering. Then, during a study of the *Inner Look*, I rediscovered the chapter (Projection of the Force) where my suspicions were finally clarified, when it says:

“This occurs because all representations of the ‘heights’ extend from eye level upward, above the normal line of sight. And the ‘higher-ups’ are those who ‘possess’ kindness, wisdom, and strength. There, in the ‘heights’ above, we also find the hierarchies, the powers that be, and the flags of State. And we, ordinary mortals, must at all costs ‘ascend’ the social ladder in order to draw closer to power. What a sorry state we are in, still governed by these mechanisms that coincide with our internal representation, in which our heads are in the ‘heights’ and our feet stuck on the ground. What an unhappy state we are in, when we believe in these things, and believe in them because they have their own ‘reality’ in our internal representation.

¹ Even if in the Epilog to Self Liberation the “landscape of formation” is proposed as an epochal condition of childhood, in this case I consider it to be in opposition or dialectic not with my adult life but with my evolutionary purpose.

What a sorry state we are in, when our external look is nothing but an unacknowledged projection of the internal.”²

Recognizing this in myself impacted me strongly, and I could not stop thinking about it. It made a lot of sense to me, but I also felt trapped in that way of looking at things, and I could not find any exit, any way to overcome this condition.

I took note of the way Silo often presents his stories and proposals in this “vertical” format, as he does in the Guided Experiences, the Guide to the Inner Road, and the works of Operative. That is, much of his teaching is inscribed in this landscape, without setting as a condition for our work that we already inhabit a new kind of landscape. I began to understand that: this is the condition of origin, the point we are starting from, the representation of our own body. But he also delivers a message of profound and meaningful change that modifies our landscape from our Look. He proposes the “Inner Look” as the evolutionary way out. It is a Look that transforms landscapes and gives meaning. It is a Look capable of building a reality, a look that rebels against the established, not in its symptoms but at its root, a way to overcome suffering and finally rebel against the apparent finitude of physical death. I tell myself that this is what it means to “change the tires while the car is in motion,” this is what it means to break through our apparent limits, and this is in itself an option for entering into another space. And finally I tell myself: it is good to work with our natural base, the body is key for all work with the energy, centers of register, etc... but translating the natural to the world of the intentional as a determinant is complicated.

The Mandorla

In a polarized world, my searches were also polarized: if I felt guilty, I looked for a way to redeem myself by being kind; if I felt despised, I looked for ways to stand out; if I was suffering from abandonment, I looked for a way to make myself indispensable to others, to possess property and the affections of others...

That world was set up so that nothing escaped that form. Above and below. In all relationships, whether between friends, couples, family members, work mates, or members of a group, that scale of values was always operating. The hero and the coward, the genius and the dolt, the beautiful and the ugly, riches and poverty, good and evil. Always what was of value was above and what was not below; this ruled life, relationships, and society. Everything was a struggle to climb, to be on top, whatever tree it was, according to the values of each group or place. In a polarized world, the extremes are very small. There’s not room for everyone, so to reach the top, you have to push aside those who are already there. This landscape of

² In this chapter my attention is called by the number of “quotes,” revealing perhaps a certain irony in the way of presenting the theme, as if casting doubt on the apparent “reality” in question... as if saying, this is what there is, but there might be another reality. It is what is NOT said in this chapter that most calls my attention.

formation has that form, inherited and never before questioned in its essence, perhaps because everyone was included in it, for lack of other options.

Where did it come from? When did it appear? I have no way to be certain, but something tells me that it comes from very long ago, generations, centuries, perhaps millennia ago, with variations but never changing in its essence: binary, vertical, with opposing poles, everything that happens in it behaving in an exclusive way, and within it lines of tension in an ascending or descending direction.

And that form over time has gotten more and more “charged” with particular meanings, values, and anti-values: one aspires to what is above, and rejects what is below, following a translation, in the final analysis, of the representation of one’s own body.

The predominant relationships are of adhesion or rejection; one moves like the squid, sucking in from above and expelling below, like a system of self-propulsion. On rejecting something, I impel myself toward its opposite, that which makes up for it, and thus we adopt a fundamental behavior of “lack and compensation” that tends to rule all of life.

This type of representation gives form to the human landscape in which I recognize my inheritance, my life, my past, and which, even though I’ve taken a different direction, continues to act in my present.

When Silo defines New Humanism and proclaims “no human being above another human being,” I accept it immediately; but my actions, my feelings, and ultimately my thoughts continue in great part anchored to this landscape which conditions its inhabitants (contents), its systems of relationship, and therefore its process.³

The Sphere

At a certain moment, perhaps from an accumulation of situations and practices, mainly with the Principles and the work with the Force, I began, little by little, to experience another space, with another form and another feeling. At first it is very faint, and I perceive it only for brief moments. It is something completely different

³ That biography is constantly acting in every one of us, and therefore we do not *passively* capture the world that is presented to us in each new perception, but rather our biographical images act as a previously constituted “landscape” for that perception. So it is that every day we carry out various activities during which we “cover” the world with our daydreams, compulsions, and deepest aspirations. One’s action or inhibition vis-à-vis the world is closely tied to the theme of the image, so that transformations of the image are also important keys to behavioral variation; since it is clearly possible to transform images and transfer their charges, one must therefore infer that changes in behavior do occur in these cases. (Silo, Presentation of the book “Universal Root Myths,” Buenos Aires, April 1991.)

from what I'm used to, where the usual tensions begin to dissipate and I find myself surrounded with a calm and silence that at first I reject because I experience them as "nothingness."

After a short while I realize that it is an empty space, but that at the same time it is full of meaning, and I feel good being there. I realize that this experience can radically change the meaning of my life.

I also discover that this form, this "container," affects the meanings of all things that are included in it. So the people, the objects, the places, etc... and even the ideas and emotions are totally different if I am in one space or another. Entering this new space is experienced also as a "change of dwelling." Saying "go to the top" is not the same as saying "go to the center." In the work with the Sphere, I make contact with a register of the "center." This center acts as a reference and I can experience how my internal contents, aspirations, and relationships are readjusted based on this form. So what is relevant is near the center, and what is more provisional moves toward the periphery.

In the work with the Force, working with the image and then with the cenesthetic sensation of the sphere, this transformation takes place, beginning from the vertical space, bringing the sphere down from the heights and installing it in the chest. From there the "descending" direction changes its axis and is projected outward in all directions, while the look is situated in the center. This forms a spherical space in which I am included, and helps me integrate my perception of myself. This space is at once an image and a cenesthetic sensation. When both coincide, the register grows stronger and deeper.

Even though this incorporation of the sphere as a space has been taking place co-presently, I resolve also to begin recording this form more explicitly. For example, in giving thanks and asking.⁴ In this case, I give thanks by charging a positive and unitive state in a sphere in my chest, and when I am in need, I place myself inside the sphere and ask. This operates by returning the charge, but in addition it begins to help me record the sphere as "the form in which valid actions are carried out." Gratitude for me is a spherical emotion; the "Golden Rule" is a spherical mental direction, where there is a center that irradiates and on doing so is strengthened. In working in this way, the center is not related to the "I."

Related Notes (from personal notes, letters, and different conversations)

⁴ The Inner Look, Silo, Chapter XVIII, Action and Reaction of the Force.

The Two Landscapes

“As a personal reflection, if it might serve in some complementary way, I can add the importance of considering here one's own “landscape of formation,” or as I prefer to call it, “landscape of deformation.” In it I see, beyond the elements it includes (objects, fashions, attributes, people, celebrities), beyond the relationships among them (how I value objects and moral acts), and beyond the implicit process (tradition, what is accepted, different stories, the mental direction), I also see a kind of morphology, a “wrapping,” a form in which all the objects are inscribed and that in turn conditions them to relate with each other in a certain way. It's as if you had a long, narrow room, which made you arrange the furniture in a certain way. In this case, in the landscape of formation, I see a “dominant form” that is a vertical mandorla, an elongated bipolar container that makes us (as contents) behave in a way consistent with this form.

So we understand things according to their polarity, and their opposite is what validates the equation. In this vertical placement, what is worthwhile is above and what is not worthwhile is below: “good and bad, rich and poor, ugly and beautiful, etc.” So we move by an axis that goes toward one extreme and rejects the other extreme, and at the same time we think in this way, and we place ourselves in this way with respect to others within these lines of tension. In our most intimate workings we find here the dynamic of the reverie nucleus that drags (or pushes) our whole being in a compensatory dynamic, which is definitively paralyzing because compensation always operates within the same axis and does not take us in a truly evolutionary direction. It's like going back and forth on a swing, we go from one extreme to the other but in the end we are always at the same point.

In contrast, a new landscape, as proposed in the Ascesis and in my own experience, configured around a conscious evolutionary Purpose, has a form that is radically different from the landscape of formation. I imagine and feel it as a sphere, with a center that I try to keep empty, and this emptiness gives freedom to my thoughts, feelings, and actions. The binary pendulum of compensation is no longer operating; instead there is a radiation from the center, which in turn produces a greater charge in that center.

It is experienced as a space in which all the objects of the former landscape can exist, but where these objects in turn are different, because due to the action of the container or the greater form, they are structured differently and take on a different meaning. For example, instead of seeking the “good as opposed to bad,” one seeks the unitive that overcomes the contradictory, the coherence that overcomes fragmentation, etc. The aspiration is not “upward” but “toward the center”; it is not toward possession, but toward liberation.

Here, for example, I experience the Principles as guidelines that operate within this morphology. The Principles help generate a “centered” attitude. Of course at first one doesn't instantly replace the other; I should say instead that landscape 1 is

experienced with greater clarity, and landscape 2 only during brief experiences and rare comprehensions. And in addition, these landscapes do not function separately but instead in juxtaposition with each other, which creates a very interesting dynamic, because I can almost simultaneously experience qualitatively different visions or looks regarding the same object, and can choose one or the other. For example, in the landscape of formation, I find someone offensive because he insults me, puts me down, and humiliates me; and at the same time in the other (new) landscape his attitude serves me because it helps me reflect on how I am in relation to the other and on what I can do to overcome the contradiction he generates within me. (Letter to Pablo Fernandez, February 2016)

“Terra incognita” - unknown territory

As the forms of an old, exhausted landscape fade, a void is experienced. It is not a suffering void, but a jubilant and inspiring one. A new world begins to take shape. “The unexplored land is looked down on from above,” said the Master, referring to the explorers of the past.⁵

This void is like a vortex, like a powerful whirlwind that changes the meanings of things. So “strength” and “kindness” are no longer moral or heroic attributes, but “currents” in which I travel, currents that have a tangible and unarguable reality. A new landscape takes shape, with new and mysterious forms, with sounds that are “felt,” with emotions that are intense and neutral all at once, with movements of expansion and not displacement. The experiences of “suspicion of the Meaning,” even if they do not take me to that unexplored land, imprint in me a strong intuition of their existence, and leave deep tracks in the direction of the meaning.

The Universe is curved, the Purpose also

The Purpose is the map of the path I want to follow, and the force that impels me. I can see neither its beginning nor its end, but instead feel its force and its direction, like a great wind or a wave that includes and pushes me. As I stay in the intent, my perspective opens and the horizons unfold. This is no longer the flat and rectilinear world in which I was born. It is not the trajectory of an arrow shot into the sky or at

⁵ “The new cannot be defined. It has been proposed since ancient times that *the unknown land is glimpsed*, but it cannot be defined.” “When facing something new, you cannot explain or describe it. We can define the world that is departing, not what is coming, and that’s the way it is, it’s not pathological. Like with the reverie nucleus that you see when it changes. You see the nucleus that has already completed its phase, but not the one that is beginning to form. This is not pathological and one should not feel bad, it’s just the way it is.” “Here the dynamic gerund is operating; it is doing, it is expressing, it is manifesting. That’s the way the future is.” (Notes from a conversation with Silo, February 1991)

a target. The Guide's arm is not stretched out to point at a spot in the distance. Now the Guide draws an equilateral triangle in the air that, upon completing itself, begins to spin: Strength, Kindness, Wisdom. Each word in itself leads us in a straight line, but together they make the triangle spin, forming a circle that in turn leads us toward the center. Now Mount Meru is not a pyramid, but a ring, the ascent curves in on itself and the summit is in the center.

When I began this work, my image of the Purpose was an arrow, a straight path going up. Somehow, this image was very difficult to follow. Some time later I began to see that this path was not the one I wanted. Now the Purpose is beginning to take a spherical form, going outward and toward the center.

The Purpose is not an object, nor is it a goal or a place; it is an act, an intention, a process.

Center and periphery

The Purpose is a sphere, it keeps getting more abstract and indescribable toward the center, and more tangible and anecdotal toward the periphery. I cannot see in the center, but I can in the most external part, uniting elements of the periphery: my answers, my actions in the world, my relationships with others, my beliefs, my affectivity.

This periphery, which can be expressed in small daily or situational purposes, gives account in its totality of a central purpose that brings together everything around it, like a solar system. I can feel it and experience it because the whole periphery gives account of something that gives it cohesion.⁶

⁶ "He tells me he has noticed I am in the theme of the 'void.' I tell him yes, that is a theme for me at this moment, maybe because of a change in my vital stage... that I feel a sensation of the void inside me, but it is not uncomfortable or suffering, but on the contrary something I experience as lightness, as freedom.

Then he tells me that is very interesting, that thing of the void. That I should cultivate that "central void," that it is like a center of gravity. Beyond the anecdotal aspect, to take advantage of the opportunity and cultivate that void, not in daily life but deep inside, in the center. To begin to put the void in daily life would be a mistake, it would make the I fall apart and everything would stop working, even your sphincters. No, the void must be cultivated in the center, gently, 'as if I didn't want it.' And besides that, you have to do it very gently, 'like Lao Tse said, govern a great land as if frying little fishes.'

So as you keep cultivating that central void, everything begins to organize itself differently, everything changes, time and space. You won't see these transformations in the center itself but on the periphery." He cites the Tao: "A room is empty, the walls are solid but the room is empty." He insists that this is important, cultivating the central void... not to try to fill that center. If the center is empty, then I can do anything, like in roulette, play one number and then another, there's a lot of freedom, a lot of mobility, it's fantastic. He mentions our Halls, which are a central void, a space... our form is empty." (From a conversation with Silo, November 2005)

The Principles

I might define them as a “means of transportation” between the two landscapes. They give an account of how things work in one space and in the other. In my experience, I began to see in the principles a way of finding or even of recovering my “center.” So I arrived at a representation of myself as a circle with a manifest center, and the particular representation of each Principle in a figure where that equilibrium was modified or altered. That type of representation led me to look for an “internal order” more than trying to resolve or understand specific situations. It was a very different kind of representation than what I had habitually believed in. It represented an inner feeling, in which liberty was “toward the inside,” toward the center, and not toward the outside, as I had believed. A meeting and not an escape. My representation of the Principles is like a sphere that surrounds me, protects me and nourishes me with a new meaning. Each principle is like a place within that sphere, and covers different aspects of my existence. Working together, they give way to a representation that tends to modify the facts of the landscape in which I was formed, and that are still acting in me. This new representation, this “sphere-as-container” keeps changing not only my known world but also the meaning of what there is in that world, its contents and their interrelationships. This experience I can only make note of and describe over a longer period, a span of years, in comparing similar moments with different answers or attitudes.

In the center of this space I experience a “void,” as if it were the center of a galaxy in which all the elements are spinning and the center “gives order” without being material. The resulting experience, comparing different moments, is one of growing freedom that begins to dissolve my boundaries and my conditionings.⁷

“The register is not in my head, but begins in my chest; it’s as if my chest were now the center of something that is expanding, something that keeps opening in all directions, and this register keeps changing my image of the world, little by little. Sometimes I don’t know where it is taking me, this also confuses me, but then I think: ‘I don’t need to know,’ and I let everything flow, and then I understand that that’s the way it is, that it is fine, that it is another knowing that is being born or being formed in my interior.”⁸

Conclusion

I ask myself: who am I, and where am I going. I don’t manage to answer completely; instead I find myself with many beliefs about who I am and where I am going.

⁷ Commentaries on the Inner Look, Rafael Edwards, November 2017

⁸ Interactivity and the spaces, personal notes, May 2004

Finally I understand that I am not isolated, and that I am part of the world I live in. This world, which I did not choose, is already written in a certain way, and I set out to change it. But to change it I need to change “that world” that is represented inside me. That world has a shape, an exclusive form that is binary and vertical, and that conditions my thoughts, feelings, and actions. With the work of the Discipline and the Message I begin to register the existence of a new world that is beginning to grow within me. This world is a sphere, inclusive, with a center that generates, it is a world of love and coherence. I put myself in harmony with this new space, I begin to recognize it not only in me but in others, in human environments, and I recognize it as something that gives meaning.

I resolve to go more deeply in this direction.