

HUMANIZE THE EARTH

Silo

The Inner Look

The Internal Landscape

The Human Landscape

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Spanish original © Silo 1972, 1981, 1988

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Introduction

Humanize the Earth is a collection of three writings that have in common their style of poetic prose, an exhortative turn of phrase, and numbered passages. The first work, *The Inner Look*, was completed in 1972 and revised in 1988; the second, *The Internal Landscape*, was written in 1981 and subsequently revised in 1988; and finally, *The Human Landscape* was completed in 1988. Between the initial publication of *The Inner Look* and its revision sixteen years elapsed, during which time the book circulated in many languages of both East and West, giving rise to personal communication and correspondence between the author and readers from many latitudes. That exchange surely contributed to the author's revisions of several chapters as he observed how the different cultural substrata in which the work was circulating gave rise to many differences in interpretation of the texts. Certain words in particular presented serious difficulties in translation, and readers would not infrequently misapprehend the sense in which they were used. Much the same took place with *The Internal Landscape*, although in that case seven years elapsed between the original publication and the author's revisions to the text. The author had planned to revise and bring up to date the first two books as he completed and compiled them with the third, and we can observe that the revisions to the first two books were finished in the same year as the writing of the third. And so it is that *The Human Landscape*, while it maintains the basic qualities of style of the preceding two works, unlike them it emphasises particularities of the cultural and social world, forcing a turn in the treatment of these themes that inevitably involves all components of this literary work.

Regarding content, we can say that *The Inner Look* focuses on meaning in life. The principal theme of its discourse is the psychological state of *contradiction*. It clarifies that suffering is the register that one has of contradiction, and that surpassing mental suffering is possible in the measure that one's life is oriented toward non-contradictory actions in general and non-contradictory actions in relation to other people in particular. *The Internal Landscape* studies non-meaning in life in relation to the struggle against nihilism within each human being and in social life, exhorting readers to transform their lives into activity and militancy at the service of humanizing the world. Finally, *The Human Landscape* treats the question of establishing a foundation for action in the world, realigning meanings and interpretations of values and institutions that had seemed beyond question and accepted as established once and for all.

The three writings that comprise *Humanize the Earth* are in fact three moments that follow in a sequence running from the most profound internal world, the world of dreams and symbols, toward the external and human landscapes. They involve a journey, a movement in point of view that begins in the most intimate and personal and ends in opening toward the interpersonal, social, and historical world.

- *The Publishers*

Note from the Translators

This new English translation of *Humanize the Earth* – the first since 1999 – comes on the heels of our recent work translating *Silo's Message*. The Book of *Silo's Message*, "The Inner Look," is the first of the three books that comprise *Humanize the Earth*, the other two being "The Internal Landscape" and "The Human Landscape." As the new translation of "The Inner Look" is circulating throughout the world and receiving close readings in communities of *Silo's Message*, we felt it was an opportune time to undertake a new translation of *Humanize the Earth* as a whole.

As is our custom, we have followed the directive given by the author to make the translated work read as if it were written in English. Of course, we also aspired to maintain the unique style of this work, whose language can shift suddenly from poetic-prose to condensed descriptions of psychological phenomena and concise critiques of the social structures of power. Certainly, our method of working as a team has given us the scope we feel is necessary to contend with such linguistic and thematic variety.

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- *The Translators*

The Inner Look

I. The Meditation

1. Here it tells how the non-meaning of life is converted into meaning and fulfillment.
2. Here is joy, love for the body, for nature, for humanity, and for the spirit.
3. Here sacrifices, feelings of guilt, and threats from the beyond are rejected.
4. Here the worldly is not opposed to the eternal.
5. Here it tells of the inner revelation to which all arrive who carefully meditate in humble search.

II. Disposition to Comprehend

1. I know how you feel because I can experience your state, but you do not know how to experience what I am telling you. Therefore, if I speak to you without self-interest of that which makes the human being happy and free, it is worth your while to try to comprehend.
2. Do not think that you will gain understanding by arguing with me. You may do so if you believe that in this way your understanding will become clearer, but it is not the path that corresponds in this case.
3. If you ask me what attitude is appropriate, I will tell you that it is to meditate profoundly and without haste on what I explain here.
4. If you reply that you are busy with more urgent things, I will answer that since your wish is to sleep or to die, I will do nothing to oppose it.
5. Nor should you argue that you dislike my way of presenting things, for you do not criticize the peel when you like the fruit.
6. I state things in the way I consider appropriate, not as might be desired by those who aspire to things remote from inner truth.

III. Non-Meaning

Over many days, I discovered this great paradox: Those who bore failure in their hearts were able to illuminate the final victory, while those who felt triumphant were left by the wayside, like vegetation whose life is muted and diffuse. Over many days, coming from the darkest of darkness, I arrived at the light, guided not by teachings but by meditation.

Thus, I told myself on the first day:

1. There is no meaning in life if everything ends with death.
2. All justification for actions, whether they are despicable or admirable, is always a new dream that leaves emptiness ahead.
3. God is something uncertain.
4. Faith is something as variable as reason and dream.
5. "What one should do" may be thoroughly discussed, but in the end there is nothing that definitively supports any position.
6. The "responsibility" of those who commit themselves to something is no greater than the responsibility of those who do not.
7. I move according to my interests, and this makes me neither a coward nor a hero.
8. "My interests" neither justify nor discredit anything.
9. "My reasons" are no better or worse than the reasons of others.
10. Cruelty horrifies me, but neither because of this nor in itself is it better or worse than kindness.
11. What I or others say today is of no value tomorrow.
12. To die is no better than to live or to never have been born, but neither is it worse.
13. I discovered, not through teachings, but through experience and meditation, that there is no meaning in life if everything ends with death.

IV. Dependence

The second day.

1. Nothing that I do, feel, or think depends on me.
2. I am mutable and depend on the action of my surroundings. When I want to change my environment or my “I,” it is the environment that ends up changing me. Then I seek the city or nature, social redemption or a new struggle that will justify my existence. In every case it is my environment that leads me to choose one attitude or another. In this way, my interests and my surroundings leave me here.
3. I say, then, that it does not matter who or what decides. I say on these occasions that I have to live since I am in the situation of living. I say all this, but there is nothing that justifies it. I can make a decision, hesitate, or remain, but in any case, one thing is only provisionally better than another; ultimately, there is no “better” or “worse.”
4. If someone tells me that those who do not eat die, I will answer that this is indeed so, and that, spurred by their needs, they are compelled to eat. But I will not add that the struggle to eat justifies one’s existence—nor will I say that this struggle is bad. I will simply say that all of this concerns an individual or collective fact related to the need for subsistence, but that it has no meaning in the moment that the last battle is lost.
5. I will say, moreover, that I feel solidarity with the struggle of the poor, the exploited, and the persecuted. I will say that I feel “fulfilled” in this identification, but I will comprehend that it justifies nothing.

V. Intimation of Meaning

The third day.

1. At times I have anticipated events that later took place.
2. At times I have grasped a distant thought.
3. At times I have described places I have never been to.
4. At times I have recounted exactly what took place in my absence.
5. At times an immense joy has astounded me.
6. At times a total comprehension has overwhelmed me.
7. At times a perfect communion with everything has filled me with ecstasy.
8. At times I have broken through my reveries and seen reality in a new way.
9. At times I have seen something for the first time yet recognized it as though I had seen it before.

...And all this has made me think. It is clear to me that without these experiences I could not have left the non-meaning.

VI. Sleep and Awakening

The fourth day.

1. I cannot take as real what I see in my dreams, nor what I see in semi-sleep, nor what I see when I am awake but with reveries.
2. I can take as real what I see when I am awake and without reveries. I am not speaking of what my senses register but rather of the activities of my mind when they refer to the "data" being thought, since they are fed by naive and dubious data from the external and internal senses as well as from memory. What is valid is that my mind knows this when it is awake and believes it when it is asleep. Only rarely do I perceive reality in a new way, and it is then that I realize that what I normally see resembles sleep or semi-sleep.

There is a real way of being awake, and it has led me to meditate profoundly on all that has been said so far. It has, moreover, opened the door for me to discover the meaning of all that exists.

VII. Presence of the Force

The fifth day.

1. When I was truly awake, I scaled from comprehension to comprehension.
2. When I was truly awake yet lacked the strength to continue the ascent, I was able to draw the Force from within myself. This Force was present throughout my body. All the energy was present even in the smallest cells of my body, and it circulated more rapidly and more intensely than my blood.
3. I discovered that the energy concentrated in those points of my body that were active and was absent when they were not.
4. During illness the energy was either lacking or it accumulated precisely in the areas of my body that were affected. But if I was able to re-establish the normal flow of the energy, many illnesses began to recede.

Some peoples knew this, and through various procedures that seem strange to us today, they were able to re-establish the flow of the energy.

Some peoples knew this, and they were able to communicate this energy to others, producing "illuminations" of comprehension and even physical "miracles."

VIII. Control of the Force

The sixth day.

1. There is a way of directing and concentrating the Force that circulates through the body.
2. In the body are points of control on which depend what we know as movement, emotion, and idea. When the energy acts in these points, it gives rise to motor, emotional, and intellectual manifestations.
3. Depending on whether the energy acts more internally or superficially in the body, the states of deep sleep, semi-sleep, or wakefulness arise. Surely, the halos that surround the bodies or heads of the saints (or the great awakened ones) in religious paintings allude to this phenomenon of the energy, which on occasion manifests more externally.
4. There is a point of control of being-truly-awake, and there is a way of bringing the Force to this point.
5. When the energy is led to this point, all the other points of control move in an altered way.

Upon understanding this and launching the Force to this superior point, my entire body felt the impact of an enormous energy. This energy struck powerfully within my consciousness, and I ascended from comprehension to comprehension. But I also observed that if I lost control of the energy I could descend to the depths of the mind. Then, seeing the dividing line between these mental states, I remembered the legends of “heavens” and “hells.”

IX. Manifestations of the Energy

The seventh day.

1. This energy in motion could become “independent” of the body yet maintain its unity.
2. This unified energy was really a sort of “double” of the body, corresponding to the cenesthetic representation of one’s own body within the space of representation. The sciences that deal with mental phenomena have had little to say regarding the existence of this space or the representations that correspond to the internal sensations of the body.
3. The energy divided in this way—that is, imagined as if “outside” of the body or “separated” from its material base—either dissolved as an image or was represented correctly, depending on the internal unity of the one carrying out this work.
4. I was able to confirm that the “exteriorization” of this energy, which represented one’s body as “outside” of one’s body, could be produced even from the lowest levels of the mind. In these cases, a threat to the most basic unity of life provoked this response in order to safeguard the one who was in danger. That is why, in the trances of some mediums whose level of consciousness was low and whose internal unity was imperiled, these responses occurred involuntarily and were not recognized as being self-produced but were attributed to other entities.

The “ghosts” and “spirits” of certain peoples and diviners were nothing but the “doubles” (the self-representations) of those who felt themselves possessed. Having lost control of the Force, their mental state was darkened in trance, and they felt controlled by strange beings who at times produced remarkable phenomena. Doubtless this was the case of many who were said to be “possessed.” What was decisive, then, was control of the Force.

All this completely changed my conception of both daily life and of life after death. Through these thoughts and experiences, I began to lose faith in death, and since then I no longer believe in it, just as I no longer believe in the non-meaning of life.

X. Evidence of Meaning

The eighth day.

1. The real importance of an awakened life became evident to me.
2. The real importance of destroying internal contradictions convinced me.
3. The real importance of mastering the Force in order to achieve unity and continuity filled me with joyful meaning.

XI. The Luminous Center

The ninth day.

1. In the Force was the “light” that came from a “center.”
2. In the dissolution of the energy there was a withdrawal from the center, while in its unification and evolution there was a corresponding functioning of that luminous center.

It did not strike me as strange to find a devotion to the Sun God among various ancient peoples. And I saw that while some worshiped this heavenly object because it gave life to the earth and to nature, others recognized in that majestic body the symbol of a greater reality.

There were those who went still further and received innumerable gifts from this center, gifts that at times “descended” as tongues of fire over the inspired ones, at times arrived as luminous spheres, and at times appeared as burning bushes before the fearful believer.

XII. The Discoveries

The tenth day.

Few but important were my discoveries, which I summarize in this way:

1. Though the Force circulates through the body involuntarily, it can be directed through conscious effort. Achieving an intentional change in the level of consciousness grants the human being an important glimpse of liberation from the “natural” conditions that seem to impose themselves on the consciousness.
2. Within the body are points that control its diverse activities.
3. There are differences between the state of being truly-awake and other levels of consciousness.
4. The Force can be led to the point of real awakening (understanding by “Force” the mental energy that accompanies particular images and by “point” the location of such an image in a certain “place” in the space of representation).

These conclusions led me to recognize in the prayers of ancient peoples the seed of a great truth—a truth later obscured by external rites and practices that made it impossible for them to develop that internal work which, realized with perfection, puts human beings in contact with their luminous source. Finally, I observed that my “discoveries” were not discoveries at all but arose from the inner revelation to which all arrive who, without contradictions, search for the light in their own hearts.

XIII. The Principles

Different is the attitude toward life and things when inner revelation strikes like lightning.

Following the steps slowly, meditating on what has been said and what has yet to be said, you may convert the non-meaning into meaning. It is not indifferent what you do with your life. Your life, subject to laws, is open to possibilities from which you can choose. I do not speak to you of liberty. I speak to you of liberation, of movement, of process. I do not speak to you of liberty as something static, but of liberating yourself step-by-step, as those who approach their city become liberated from the road necessarily traveled. Thus, “what one must do” depends not upon distant, incomprehensible, and conventional morals, but upon laws: laws of life, of light, of evolution.

Here are the said “Principles” that can help you in your search for internal unity:

1. To go against the evolution of things is to go against yourself.
2. When you force something toward an end, you produce the contrary.
3. Do not oppose a great force. Retreat until it weakens, then advance with resolution.
4. Things are well when they move together, not in isolation.
5. If day and night, summer and winter are well with you, you have surpassed the contradictions.
6. If you pursue pleasure, you enchain yourself to suffering. But as long as you do not harm your health, enjoy without inhibition when the opportunity presents itself.
7. If you pursue an end, you enchain yourself. If everything you do is realized as though it were an end in itself, you liberate yourself.
8. You will make your conflicts disappear when you understand them in their ultimate root, not when you want to resolve them.
9. When you harm others you remain enchained, but if you do not harm anyone you can freely do whatever you want.
10. When you treat others as you want them to treat you, you liberate yourself.
11. It does not matter in which faction events have placed you. What matters is that you comprehend that you have not chosen any faction.

12. Contradictory or unifying actions accumulate within you. If you repeat your acts of internal unity, nothing can detain you.

You will be like a force of Nature when it finds no resistance in its path. Learn to distinguish what is a difficulty, a problem, an inconvenience, from what is a contradiction. While those may move you or spur you on, contradiction traps you in a closed circle with no way out.

Whenever you find great strength, joy, and kindness in your heart, or when you feel free and without contradictions, immediately be internally thankful. When you find yourself in opposite circumstances, ask with faith, and the gratitude you have accumulated will return to you transformed and amplified in benefit.

XIV. The Guide to the Inner Road

If you understand what I have explained so far, you can, through a simple exercise, experience the manifestation of the Force.

It is not the same, however, to observe the more-or-less correct mental position (as if this were a question of approaching a technical task) as it is to adopt the kind of emotional tone and opening that poetry inspires.

The language used to transmit these truths, then, is intended to facilitate an attitude that makes it easier to be in the presence of internal perception, rather than in the presence of an idea of “internal perception.”

Now, follow attentively what I will explain to you because it concerns the inner landscape you may encounter when working with the Force, and the directions you can imprint on your mental movements.

“On the inner road, you may walk darkened or luminous. Attend to the two roads that open before you.

If you let your being cast itself toward dark regions, your body wins the battle, and it dominates. Then, sensations and appearances of spirits, of forces, of memories will arise. On this road you descend further and further. Here dwell Hatred, Vengeance, Strangeness, Possession, Jealousy, and the Desire to Remain. Should you descend even further you will be invaded by Frustration, Resentment, and all those dreams and desires that have brought ruin and death upon humanity.

If you impel your being in a luminous direction, you will find resistance and fatigue at every step. There are things to blame for this fatigue in the ascent. Your life weighs; your memories weigh; your previous actions impede the ascent. The climb is made difficult by the action of your body, which tends to dominate.

In the steps of the ascent, you will find strange regions of pure colors and unknown sounds.

Do not flee purification, which acts like fire and horrifies with its phantoms.

Reject startling fears and disheartenment.

Reject the desire to flee toward low and dark regions.

Reject the attachment to memories.

Remain in internal liberty, indifferent toward the dream of the landscape, with resolution in the ascent.

The pure light dawns in the summits of the great mountain chains, and the waters-of-a-thousand-colors flow down amid unrecognizable melodies toward crystalline plateaus and prairies.

Do not fear the pressure of the light, which pushes you away from its center with increasing strength. Absorb it as though it were a liquid or a wind because in it, certainly, is life.

When you find the hidden city in the great mountain chain you must know the entrance—and you will know it in the moment your life is transformed. Its enormous walls are written in figures, are written in colors, are “sensed.” In this city are kept the done and the yet-to-be-done. But to your inner eye the transparent is opaque. Yes, the walls are impenetrable for you!

Take the Force of the hidden city. Return to the world of dense life with your forehead and your hands luminous.”

XV. The Experience of Peace and the Passage of the Force

1. Completely relax your body and quiet your mind. Then, imagine a transparent and luminous sphere that descends toward you until it comes to rest in your heart. In that moment you will recognize that the sphere ceases to appear as an image and transforms into a sensation within your chest.
2. Observe how the sensation of the sphere slowly expands from your heart toward the outside of your body, while your breathing becomes fuller and deeper. When the sensation reaches the limits of your body, you may stop there and register the experience of internal peace. You may remain there for as long as you feel is appropriate. To conclude the exercise, calm and renewed, reverse the previous expansion, until arriving as in the beginning at your heart, and finally releasing the sphere. This work is called the “Experience of Peace.”
3. Should you instead wish to experience the passage of the Force, you must increase the expansion rather than reversing it, allowing your emotions and your whole being to follow along. Do not try to pay attention to your breathing; let it act by itself while you follow the expansion outward from your body.
4. Let me repeat: Your attention at such moments must be on the sensation of the expanding sphere. If you are unable to achieve this, it is advisable that you stop and try again another time. In any case, even if you do not produce the passage of the Force, you will be able to experience an interesting sensation of peace.
5. If, however, you go further, you will begin to experience the passage of the Force. The sensations from your hands and other areas of your body will have a different tone than usual. Later, you will notice increasing undulations, and in a short while vivid images and powerful emotions may arise. Allow the passage to take place...
6. Upon receiving the Force, you will, depending upon your habitual mode of representation, perceive the light or strange sounds. In any case, what is important is that you experience an amplification of consciousness, one of whose indicators should be a greater lucidity and disposition to understand what is taking place.
7. If this singular state has not faded with the passage of time, you can bring it to an end whenever you wish by imagining or feeling that the sphere contracts and then leaves you in the same way it arrived in the beginning.
8. It is interesting to comprehend that many altered states of consciousness have been and almost always are achieved through the use of mechanisms similar to those described. These may be disguised, however, by strange rituals, or at times reinforced by practices involving extreme fatigue, unbridled motor activity,

repetition, and postures that alter the breathing and distort the general sensation of the intrabody. In this domain you should recognize hypnosis, mediumistic activities, and the effects of drugs which, although acting through another pathway, produce similar alterations. Certainly, all these cases are characterized by an absence of control and a lack of awareness of what is taking place. Do not trust such manifestations and consider them nothing more than “trances” through which dabblers, the ignorant, and (according to legend) even the “saints” have passed.

9. Even if you have followed these recommendations, you may still have been unable to produce the passage of the Force. This should not become a source of concern, however. Simply take it as an indicator of a lack of internal “letting go,” which may reflect excessive tensions or problems with the dynamics of the images—in sum, a fragmentation of emotional behavior—something that will, moreover, also be present in your daily life.

XVI. Projection of the Force

1. If you have experienced the passage of the Force, you will be able to understand how, based on similar phenomena but without understanding, various peoples went on to develop rites and cults that later multiplied endlessly. Through experiences like those previously described, there were many people who felt that their bodies had “doubled,” and the experience of the Force gave them the sensation that they could project this energy outside themselves.
2. The Force was “projected” to others and also to objects particularly “suited” to receive and conserve it. I trust it will not be difficult for you to understand the function filled by the sacraments of various religions, as well as the significance of those sacred places and priests supposedly “charged” with the Force. When certain objects were surrounded with ceremonies and rites and worshiped with faith in temples, surely they “gave back” to the believers the energy accumulated through repeated prayer. It is a limitation in the knowledge of human realities that these themes have almost always been viewed in terms of external explanations, whether based on culture, geography, history, or tradition, when fundamental internal experience is what is essential to understanding all this.
3. “Projecting,” “charging,” and “replenishing” the Force are subjects that we will return to later. For now, let me say that this same mechanism continues to operate even in desacralized societies, where leaders and others imbued with prestige are surrounded by a special aura in the eyes of those who would like to see them, “touch” them, acquire a scrap of their clothing, or their possessions.
4. 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, the flags and the State. And we, ordinary mortals, must at all costs “ascend” the social ladder so as 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 a sorry state we are in when we believe in these things (and we believe in them because they have their own “reality” in our internal representation). What a sorry state we are in when our external look is nothing but an unacknowledged projection of the internal.

XVII. Loss and Repression of the Force

1. The greatest discharges of energy occur through uncontrolled acts, including unbridled imagination, unchecked curiosity, immoderate small talk, excessive sexuality, and exaggerated perception—looking, listening, tasting, and so on in an aimless and excessive manner. But you should also recognize that many act in these ways because it allows them to discharge tensions that would otherwise be painful. All things considered, and given the function served by these discharges, I am sure you will agree with me that it is not reasonable to repress them but rather to give order to them.
2. As for sexuality, you must interpret this correctly: This function must not be repressed because that will only cause torment and internal contradiction. Sexuality directs itself toward and concludes in the act itself, and it is not useful that it continues affecting the imagination or is expressed as an obsessive search for a new object of possession.
3. The control of sex by a particular social or religious “morality” has served purposes that had nothing to do with evolution, but rather the contrary.
4. In repressed societies, the Force (the energy of the representation of the sensation of the intrabody) turned back toward the crepuscular. In those societies, cases increased of the “possessed,” of “witches,” of the sacrilegious, and of criminals of all kinds who rejoiced in suffering and the destruction of life and beauty. In some tribes and civilizations, the criminals were to be found among both the executioners and the executed. In other cases, all that was science and progress was persecuted because it opposed the irrational, the crepuscular, and the repressed.
5. The repression of sex still exists among certain so-called primitive peoples, just as it does in other so-called advanced civilizations. It is evident that although the origins of these two situations may differ, both are marked by great destructiveness.
6. If you ask me to explain further, I will tell you that in reality sex is holy, and it is the center from which life and all creativity spring, just as it is from there that all destruction arises when issues about its functioning are not resolved.
7. Never believe the lies of the poisoners of life when they refer to sex as something despicable. On the contrary, in it is beauty, and not in vain is it related to the best feelings of love.

8. Be careful, then, and consider sex a great wonder, which must be treated with care, without turning it into a source of contradiction or disintegration of vital energy.

XVIII. Action and Reaction of the Force

Earlier I explained to you: “Whenever you find great strength, joy, and kindness in your heart, or when you feel free and without contradictions, immediately be internally thankful.”

1. “To be thankful” means to concentrate the positive moods that are associated with an image, with a representation. If you have previously linked positive states in this way, you can evoke that representation when you find yourself in difficult situations, and the positive quality associated with it earlier will arise. Furthermore, since this mental “charge” has been increased through previous repetitions, it can displace the negative emotions that certain situations impose.
2. Thus, whatever you ask for will return from within you amplified in benefit as long as you have accumulated within yourself numerous positive states. By now it should not be necessary to repeat that this mechanism has long been used (though in confused ways) to “charge” external objects, or persons, or internal entities that were “projected,” believing they would respond to prayers and supplication.

XIX. The Internal States

You must now gain sufficient insight into the various internal states in which you may find yourself throughout the course of your life, and particularly in the course of your evolutionary work. I have no way to describe these states except by using images, in this case allegorical ones. These seem to me to have the virtue of “visually” concentrating complex states and moods. The unusual approach of linking these states to one another, as if they were distinct moments in a single process, introduces a departure from the always fragmented descriptions to which we have become accustomed from those who deal with such things.

1. As I mentioned earlier, in the first state, known as Diffuse Vitality, non-meaning prevails. Here, everything is oriented by physical needs, though these are often confused with contradictory images and desires. Here, both motives and everything that is done are shrouded in darkness. In this state you remain vegetating, lost among changing forms. From this point you can evolve only by following one of two paths: the way of Death or the way of Mutation.
2. The path of Death puts you in the presence of a dark and chaotic landscape. The ancients knew this passage and almost always located it “underground” or in the abysmal depths. There are those who visited this kingdom, to later “resurrect” in luminous levels. Understand well that “below” Death lies Diffuse Vitality. Perhaps the human mind relates mortal disintegration to subsequent phenomena of transformation; perhaps it associates this diffuse movement with what takes place before birth. If your direction is that of ascent, “Death” signifies a break with your former stage. By taking the path of Death you ascend to another state.
3. Arriving here you find yourself at the refuge of Regression. Two ways open from here: One is the road of Repentance; the other, which you used for the ascent, is the road of Death. If you take the first road it is because your decision tends to break with your past life. If you go back along the road of Death, you fall again into the depths, with the sensation of being trapped in a closed circle.
4. Earlier I told you that there is another path you might take to escape from the abyss of Vitality; it is the path of Mutation. If you choose this road, it is because you wish to emerge from your unhappy state but are unwilling to abandon some of its apparent benefits. It is, then, a false road known as the “Twisted Hand.” Many are the monsters who have emerged from the depths through this tortuous passageway. They have wanted to storm the heavens without abandoning the hells and consequently have projected infinite contradiction into the middle world.

5. Let us suppose that by ascending from the kingdom of Death and through your conscious Repentance you have now reached the dwelling of Tendency. Two narrow supports, Conservation and Frustration, sustain your dwelling. Conservation is false and unstable; walking along this path you delude yourself with the idea of permanence but, in reality, you descend rapidly. Should you take the path of Frustration, your ascent is arduous, but the only-one-not-false.
6. After failure upon failure, you can reach the next resting place, called the “dwelling of deviation.” Take care in choosing between the two roads now before you. Either you take the road of Resolution, which carries you to Generation, or you take that of Resentment, which causes you to descend once more toward Regression. Here you face another dilemma: Either you choose the labyrinth of conscious life—and you do so with Resolution—or you return, resentfully, to your previous life. There are many who, at this point, unable to surpass themselves, cut off their own possibilities.
7. But you who have ascended with Resolution now find yourself at the shelter known as Generation. Here you face three doors: one called the Fall, another known as Intent, and the third called Degradation. The Fall carries you directly to the depths, and only an external accident can push you toward it; it is unlikely that you would choose that door. The door of Degradation, however, carries you indirectly to the abyss as you retrace your steps in a sort of turbulent spiral in which you continually reconsider all that you have lost and all that you have sacrificed. This examination of consciousness that leads you to Degradation is surely a false examination in which you underestimate and disproportionately evaluate some of what you are comparing. You compare the effort of the ascent with those “benefits” you have left behind. But if you examine things more closely, you will see that you have not abandoned anything for the ascent, but rather for other reasons. Degradation begins, then, when you misrepresent motives that were not really related to the ascent. I ask you now: What betrays the mind? Perhaps it is the false motives of initial enthusiasm? Perhaps it is the difficulty of the undertaking? Perhaps it is the false memories of sacrifices that never were, or that were made for other reasons? Saying this I ask you now: Some time ago your house burned down, and because it did you chose the ascent. Or do you now think that because of this ascent, your house burned down? Have you perhaps noticed what has happened to the other houses around you? There is no doubt that you must choose the middle door.
8. Climbing the stairway of Intent, you will reach an unstable dome. From there, take the narrow, winding passageway known as Volatility until you reach a vast and empty space like a platform, which bears the name Open-Space-of-the-Energy.
9. In that space you may be frightened by the immense, deserted landscape and the terrifying silence of this night, transfigured by enormous and immobile stars. There,

directly over your head, you will see set in the firmament the suggestive form of the Black Moon, a strange, eclipsed moon located exactly opposite the Sun. Here you must await the dawn patiently and with faith, for nothing bad can happen if you remain calm.

10. You may, upon finding yourself in this situation, want to arrange an immediate way out of there. However, should you try to leave instead of prudently awaiting the day, you could end up blindly groping your way anywhere. Remember that all movement here (in the darkness) is false and is generically called Improvisation. If, forgetting what I tell you now, you begin to improvise movements, be certain that you will be dragged by a whirlwind down paths and past dwellings to the darkest depths of Dissolution.
11. How difficult it is to comprehend that the internal states are enchained one to the other! If you could see what inflexible logic the consciousness has, you would realize that those who blindly improvise in this situation inevitably begin to degrade themselves and others. Then, feelings of Frustration arise in them, and later they fall into Resentment, and finally into Death—forgetting all that they had at one moment managed to perceive.
12. If in that open space you manage to reach the day, the radiant Sun will rise before your eyes, illuminating reality for the first time. Then you will see that in everything that exists there lives a Plan.
13. It is unlikely that you will fall from here unless you should voluntarily choose to descend to obscure regions to carry the light into the darkness.

It would not be useful to develop these subjects further, because without experience they can only mislead by transferring to the field of the imaginary something that can actually be achieved. May what has been said here be of service to you. And if you do not find what has been explained here to be useful, to what could you object, since for skepticism nothing has any basis or reason—it is like the image in a mirror, the sound of an echo, the shadow of a shadow.

XX. Internal Reality

1. Take note of my considerations. In them you will not only intuit allegorical phenomena and landscapes of the external world, but you will also find true descriptions of the mental world.
2. Nor should you believe that the “places” through which you pass in your journey have some sort of independent existence. Such confusion has often obscured profound teachings, and even today there are some who believe that the heavens, hells, angels, devils, monsters, enchanted castles, distant cities, and the rest have visible reality for the “enlightened.” The same prejudice, but with the opposite interpretation, has been maintained by skeptics lacking in wisdom who take these things to be simply “illusions” or “hallucinations” suffered by feverish minds.
3. I must repeat, then, you should understand that all this deals with real mental states, even though they are symbolized here by objects that correspond to the external world.
4. Remember what I have said, and learn to discover the truth behind the allegories, which on occasion lead the mind astray, but at other times translate realities that would be impossible to grasp without representation.

When they spoke of a city of the gods, which the heroes of many peoples strove to reach; when they spoke of a paradise where gods and humankind lived together in transfigured original nature; when they spoke of falls and floods, great internal truth was told.

Later, the redeemers brought their messages and came to us in double nature to re-establish that lost unity for which we yearned. Then, too, great inner truth was told.

But when all this was spoken of but set outside the mind, it was an error or a lie.

Inversely, the fusing of the external world with the inner look forces this look to travel new paths.

And so, the hero of this age flies toward the stars; flies through regions previously unknown; flies out from the world and, without knowing it, is impelled toward the internal and luminous center.

The Internal Landscape

I. The Question

1. Here is my question: As life goes by, is it happiness or suffering that grows within you? Do not ask that I define these words. Answer according to how you feel...
2. Though you may be wise and powerful, if happiness and liberty do not grow in you and in those around you, I will reject your example.
3. Accept, instead, my proposal: follow the model of that which is being born, not that which takes the road toward death. Leap over your suffering and then it will not be the abyss but the life within you that grows.
4. There is no passion, no idea, no human act that is free of the abyss. Therefore, let us turn to the only thing worth addressing: the abyss and that which overcomes it.

II. Reality

1. What do you want? If you say that it is love or security that is most important, then you are speaking of moods, of something you do not see.
2. If you say money, power, social recognition, a just cause, God or eternity are what is most important, then you are speaking of something you see or that you imagine.
3. We will be in agreement when you say, "I want this just cause because I reject suffering!"; "I want this because it calms me; I reject that because it troubles me or makes me violent."
4. Could it be that every aspiration, every intention, every affirmation and every negation has your mood at its center? You might reply that whether you are sad or happy a number remains the same, and that the sun would be the sun even if human beings did not exist.
5. I will tell you that a number differs from itself depending on whether you must give or receive, and that the sun fills greater space in human beings than in the heavens.
6. The radiance of a spark or of a star dances for your eye. Thus, there is no light without the eye and for another eye that brilliance would have a different effect.
7. Therefore, let your heart affirm: "I love that radiance I see!" But may it never say, "Neither the sun, nor the spark, nor the star have anything to do with me!"
8. Of what reality do you speak to fish, to reptile, to giant animal, to tiny insect, to bird; to child or elder; to one who sleeps and to one who, cold or feverish, keeps watch in calculation or terror?
9. I say that the echo of the real murmurs or resounds according to the ear that hears, and that for other ears what you call "reality" would play a different song.
10. Therefore, let your heart affirm: "I love the reality that I build!"

III. The External Landscape

Look at this couple slowly walking. While his arm gently encircles her waist, she rests her head on his welcoming shoulder. They stroll on in an autumn of crackling leaves, dying in yellows, reds, and violets. Young and beautiful, they go forward into the gray, overcast afternoon. A cold drizzle falls on the children's toys, abandoned in deserted gardens.

1. For some, this scene revives a gentle and perhaps pleasant nostalgia. For others, it awakens dreams. For still others, promises that will be fulfilled in radiant days to come. Before the same sea, one person feels anguish while another feels comforted and expansive. A thousand more are overwhelmed as they contemplate the frozen crags, while others admire those crystals sculpted on such a gigantic scale. Some are depressed; others feel exalted before the same landscape.
2. If the same landscape is different for two people, where does the difference lie?
3. This happens with what is seen and with what is heard. Consider, for example, the word, "future." One person is set on edge, another remains indifferent, and a third would sacrifice their "today" to reach it.
4. Consider music, for example, or words with a social or religious significance.
5. At times a landscape is rejected or accepted by multitudes or even entire peoples. But is this rejection or acceptance in the landscape, or in the hearts of the multitudes and peoples.
6. Between doubt and hope, your life is oriented toward landscapes that coincide with something that is within you.
7. This whole world, which you have not chosen but which has been given to you to humanize, is the landscape that grows most when life grows. Therefore, may your heart never say: "Neither the autumn, nor the sea, nor the frozen summits have anything to do with me!" Instead, may it affirm, "I love the reality I build!"

IV. The Human Landscape

If even a distant star is connected to you, what should I think of a living landscape in which deer slip among ancient trees and the most savage of animals gently lick their offspring? What should I think of the human landscape, where opulence and misery are found side by side, where some children laugh while others do not even have the strength to cry?

1. For if you say, "We have reached other planets," you must also declare, "We have massacred and enslaved entire peoples, we have filled our jails with those who called out for freedom, we have lied from morning to night. We have falsified our thinking, our affections, our action. We have assaulted life at every turn because we have created suffering."
2. I know my way in this human landscape. What will happen if we pass each other going in opposite directions? I renounce every faction that proclaims an ideal higher than life, and every cause that, to impose itself, produces suffering. And so, before you accuse me for not being part of any faction, examine your own hands. Will you find the blood of complicity on them? If you believe that it is courageous to commit yourself to a faction, what will you say of one whom all the murderous factions accuse of being uncommitted? I want a cause worthy of the human landscape: one that is committed to overcoming pain and suffering.
3. I deny the right to make accusations to any faction in whose history (recent or long past) there figures the suppression of life.
4. I deny the right to cast suspicion to those who hide their own suspicious faces.
5. I deny the right to block the new roads the human being needs to travel, even when arguing the urgencies of the present moment.
6. Not even the worst of the criminal is foreign to me. And if I recognize it in the landscape, I recognize it in myself. So it is that I want to overcome that which in me as in everyone fights to suppress life. I want to overcome the abyss!

All worlds you aspire to, all justice you demand, all love you search for, all human beings you would follow or destroy are also in you. Everything that changes in you will change your orientation in the landscape in which you live. So, if you need something new, you must overcome the old that dominates within you. And how will you do this? Begin by noticing that even if you change your location, you carry your internal landscape with you.

V. The Internal Landscape

1. You seek what you believe will make you happy. What you believe in, however, does not coincide with what another seeks. It could happen that you and they long for opposite things and that you both come to believe that the happiness of one opposes the happiness of the other. Or you could both long for the same thing and, since it is unique or rare, you again come to believe that the happiness of one opposes the happiness of the other.
2. So, it seems that one could argue as much over the same object as for objects opposed to one another. How strange is the logic of beliefs—capable of provoking similar behavior regarding one object and its opposite!
3. It must be that the heart of what you believe holds the key to what you do. So powerful is your fascination with what you believe that you affirm its reality, even though it exists only in your head.
4. But returning to the point: you seek what you believe will make you happy. What you believe about things is not in them but rather in your internal landscape. When you and I look at that flower, we can agree on many things. But when you say that it will bring you the utmost happiness, you make it difficult for me to understand because you are no longer speaking about the flower but instead of what you believe it will do within you. You speak of an internal landscape that may not coincide with mine. It would be only one more step for you to try to impose your landscape on me. Consider the consequences that might follow in such a case.
5. Clearly your internal landscape is not only what you believe about things but also what you remember, what you feel and what you imagine about yourself and others, about events, values, and the world in general. Perhaps we should understand this: external landscape is what we perceive of things, internal landscape is what we sift from them through the sieve of our internal world. These landscapes are one and constitute our indissoluble vision of reality.

VI. Center and Reflection

“External landscape is what we perceive of things, internal landscape is what we sift from them through the sieve of our internal world. These landscapes are one and constitute our indissoluble vision of reality.” And it is by this vision that we orient ourselves in one direction or another.

1. But it is clear that as you go forward your vision is modified.
2. There is no learning, however small, achieved through contemplation alone. You learn because you do something with what you contemplate. And the more you do, the more you learn, since your vision is modified as you advance.
3. What have you learned of the world? You have learned according to what you have done. What do you want from the world? You want according to what has happened to you. What do you not want from the world? You do not want according to what has happened to you.
4. Hear me, rider galloping astride time: there are three different paths by which you can reach your most profound landscape. And what will you find within it? Place yourself in the center of your internal landscape and you will see that this center is multiplied in every direction.
5. Surrounded by a triangular wall of mirrors, your landscape is reflected infinitely, in infinite hues. There, according to how you orient your vision along the path of images that you have chosen, all movement is transformed and restored time and time again. You can come to see your own back in front of you, and when you move your hand to the right it will respond to the left.
6. If you aspire to something in the mirror of the future, you will see how, in the mirror of today or of the past, it runs in the opposite direction.
7. O rider who gallops astride time, what is your body but time itself?

VII. Pain, Suffering, and Meaning in Life

1. Hunger, thirst, sickness, and all bodily injury are pain. Fear, frustration, hopelessness, and all mental hurt are suffering. Physical pain recedes in the measure that society and science advance. Mental suffering recedes in the measure that faith in life advances; that is, in the measure that life gains a meaning.
2. If perhaps you imagine yourself as a fleeting fireball that has lost its brilliance upon falling to earth, you will accept pain and suffering as the very nature of things. But if you believe that you have been thrown into the world to fulfill the mission of humanizing it, you will be thankful to those who have come before you who, with great labor, built the steps that allow you to continue the ascent.
3. Namer of a thousand names, maker of meaning, transformer of the world, your parents and the parents of your parents continue in you. You are not a falling star but a brilliant arrow flying toward the heavens. You are the meaning of the world, and when you clarify your meaning, you illuminate the earth. When you lose your meaning, the earth darkens, and the abyss opens.
4. I will tell you the meaning of your life here: to humanize the earth! And what does it mean, to humanize the earth? It is to overcome pain and suffering; it is to learn without limits; it is to love the reality you build.
5. I cannot ask that you go further, but neither would it be outrageous if I declare: "Love the reality you build, and not even death will hinder your flight!"
6. You will not fulfill your mission if you do not apply your energies into overcoming pain and suffering in those around you. And if through your action they in turn take up the task of humanizing the world, you will have opened their destiny toward a new life.

VIII. The Rider and His Shadow

As the sun stained the path red the rider's silhouette lengthened along the rocks and dense scrub. Then the rider slowed until stopping by a newly lit fire. Greeted by an old man rubbing his hands over the flames, the rider dismounted, and they spoke. Afterwards, the rider continued on his way.

When the shadow fell beneath the horse's hooves, the rider paused for a moment to speak briefly with a man who hailed him from the side of the road.

As the shadow grew long behind him, the rider no longer slowed his pace. And a young man who wanted to stop him was only able to shout, "You're going the wrong way!"

But night fell and caused the rider to dismount, and he saw the shadow only in his soul. Then, sighing to himself and to the stars, he said:

"On the same day, an old man spoke to me of loneliness, illness, and death.

A second man spoke to me about the way things are and the realities of life. Finally, a young person did not even speak but shouted at me trying to change my course toward an unknown direction.

The old man was afraid of losing his things and his life. The second man feared not being able to attain what he believed were his things and his life. And the youth feared not being able to escape from his things and his life.

Strange encounters these, in which the old person suffers because of his short future, taking refuge in his long past. The second man suffers over his present situation and seeks shelter in what has happened or what will happen, depending on whether he adjusts it in front or behind. And the youth suffers because his short past nips at his heels, spurring his flight towards a long future.

And yet, I recognize my own face in the faces of all three, and it seems to me that all human beings, whatever their age, can move through those times and see in them phantoms that do not exist. Or does that offense of my youth exist today? Does my old age exist today? Does my death already dwell here, today, in this darkness?

All suffering steals in through memory, imagination, or by that which is perceived. But thanks to these three pathways, thought, affection and human action exist. It must be, then, that while these pathways are necessary, if they are contaminated by suffering, they are also conduits of destruction.

But is suffering not the warning that life gives us when its current is inverted? Life can be inverted by something that happened of which I'm unaware. And so that old person, that man, and that youth must have done something that inverted their lives".

And then the rider, meditating in the darkness of the night, fell asleep. And in his sleep, he dreamed, and in his dream the landscape became illuminated. There he was, in the center of a triangular space walled with mirrors. The mirrors reflected his image and multiplied it. Choosing one direction, he saw himself as elderly; choosing another, his face was that of a man, or finally of a youth... But in the center of himself, he felt like a child.

Then, everything began to grow dark, and when he could no longer distinguish anything but a heavy darkness, he awoke. Opening his eyes, he saw the light of the sun. Mounting his horse and seeing his shadow growing longer, he told himself: "Contradiction is what inverts life and generates suffering... The Sun in opposition allows day to become night, but the day will be according to what I do with it."

IX. Contradiction and Unity

1. Contradiction inverts life. This inversion of the growing stream of life is experienced as suffering. Thus, suffering is the signal that warns us of the need to change the direction of the opposing forces.
2. Those who, through repeated frustration, find themselves detained on their way only appear to be detained; in reality, they regress. Time and again, past failures close off their future. Those who feel frustrated see the future as a repetition of their past, even as they experience the need to distance themselves from it.
3. Those who seize the future as prey to resentment, what intricate retaliation will they not attempt to avenge their past?
4. And in frustration and resentment, they do violence to the future, until it bends its back in suffering return.
5. At times, the wise have recommended love as a protective shield against the blows of suffering. But this deceptive word "love," what does it mean to you? Does it mean getting even for the past, or instead a fresh, new, and untainted adventure launched toward the future?
6. Just as I have seen solemnity grotesquely cloak the ridiculous, just as I have seen an empty seriousness cast its pall over the grace of talent, I have recognized in many loves a vindictive self-affirmation.
7. What image have you of the wise? Is it not true that you conceive of them as solemn beings, slow of gesture; like those who have suffered greatly and with that merit beckon you from on high with gentle phrases in which they repeat the word "love?"
8. I have seen in all the truly wise a child running playfully through the world of ideas and things, creating generous and brilliant bubbles that they themselves burst. In the sparkling eyes of all who are truly wise, I have seen "the light feet of joy, dancing toward the future." And very rarely have I heard them utter the word "love," because the truly wise never swear in vain.
9. Do not believe that you will purify your suffering past through revenge, or by using "love" as an incantation, or as the bait for a new trap.

10. You will truly love when you build with an eye toward the future. And if you recall what was once a great love, let that memory be accompanied by a soft and silent nostalgia, with gratitude for all it has taught you up to today.
11. You will not break with your past suffering by falsifying or degrading the future. You will break with it by changing the direction of the forces that provoke contradiction in you.
12. I believe you will know how to distinguish between a difficulty, which is welcome since you can leap over it, and a contradiction—a lonely labyrinth without exit.
13. Every contradictory act that you have done in your life, whatever the circumstances, has the unequivocal flavor of internal violence and self-betrayal. Why you found yourself in that situation does not matter, but only how you organized your reality, your landscape, at that precise moment. Something broke and changed your course. And this predisposed you to a new fracture. In this way, all contradictory acts orient you toward repeating them, just as all acts of unity seek to emerge later.
14. In daily acts, difficulties are overcome, small objectives are achieved, little failures reaped. Pleasant or unpleasant, these acts accompany daily life, like the scaffolding of a great building. It is not the construction itself, but it is necessary for it to be built. It does not matter of what material this scaffolding is made, as long as it is suitable for its purpose.
15. As for the construction itself, where you put defective material, the defects will multiply; where you put solid material, you will project solidity.
16. The essential construction of your life is built of contradictory or unifying actions. Make no mistake at the moment you find yourself faced with your actions, for if you do you will jeopardize your future and invert the current of your life. How then will you escape your suffering?
17. But it happens that by this point your contradictory acts are already numerous. If everything from the foundations up is false, what is there to be done? Tear down your whole life to start anew? Let me tell you that I do not think everything you have built is false, and you should abandon any such drastic ideas that could result in even greater misfortune than you already suffer today.
18. A new life is not based on destroying previous “sins” but on recognizing them, in such a way that it will be clear from now on just how inopportune such errors are.

19. A life begins when unifying acts begin to multiply, in such a way that their superior quality compensates, until finally overbalancing, the previous relationship of forces in a positive way.
20. You must be very clear about this: you are not at war with yourself. You must begin treating yourself as a friend with whom you must reconcile, for ignorance and life itself have driven you apart.
21. You will first need to make a decision to reconcile with yourself, and to understand your previous contradictions. Then, you need to make another decision that you want to overcome your contradictions. Finally, you need to decide to build your life with acts of unity, rejecting those materials that have brought so much harm down upon your head.
22. Indeed, it is advisable that you clarify — in your past and present situations — the contradictory acts that truly imprison you. To recognize them, you can rely on the suffering that is accompanied by internal violence and the feeling of having betrayed yourself. Such actions give clear signals.
23. I am not saying that you must mortify yourself in exhaustively recounting the past and present. I am simply recommending that you consider all those things that changed your course in an unfortunate direction and that keep you tightly bound. Do not fool yourself yet again by telling yourself that these problems have been “overcome.” Nothing is overcome or sufficiently understood that has not been weighed against a new force that compensates and surpasses that influence.
24. All these suggestions will be valuable if you are prepared to create a new landscape in your internal world. But you will be able to do nothing for yourself if you think only of yourself. If you want to advance, you will one day have to accept that your mission is to humanize the world around you.
25. If you want to build a new life free of contradictions that increasingly overcomes suffering, you must be aware of two false arguments. The first is presented as the need to solve one’s own intimate problems before undertaking any constructive action in the world. The second appears as a declamatory “commitment to the world” while you abandon yourself completely.
26. If you wish to grow, you will help those around you to grow. And whether you agree with me or not, what I affirm here is the only way forward.

X. Valid Action

1. Contradiction is not the only source of mental harm; every inversion of the growing current of life is experienced as suffering. But while many forms of suffering can be overcome by the empire of circumstance, contradiction persists, weaving its dark web of shadows.
2. Who has not suffered the loss of affections, images, or objects? Who has not feared, who has not despaired, who has not felt pity, or been stirred in angry rebellion against people, nature, or unwanted but inevitable endings? But what was feared in darkness faded with the coming of day, and much of what was lost was forgotten. Yet that innermost betrayal of oneself persists in the past and poisons the future.
3. What is most important in human life is built with materials of unity or contradiction. And this is the profound memory that either continues projecting existence beyond all apparent limit or causes it to disintegrate precisely at this threshold. May all human beings in their final review find remembrance of their internal unity!
4. And what is the flavor of an act of unity? To recognize it, rely on that profound peace which, accompanied by a gentle joy, brings you into agreement with yourself. This act bears the sign of the most integral truth, for in it thought, feeling, and action in the world are united in close friendship. Valid action is unmistakable and would be affirmed a thousand times over should you live as many lives!
5. Every phenomenon that makes suffering recede in others is registered as a valid action, as an act of unity, in the one who produced it.
6. Two tendencies limit all action: there is the abyss that grows through contradiction, and above it, the flight that allows it to be overcome through valid action.
7. And the string of life receives its singular modulation, loosening or tightening, until reaching the note aspired to. There must be one note, one adjustment, and one special procedure, so that the vibration rolls and then resounds appropriately.
8. As humans began to stand upright in the landscape, the morality of the peoples babbled at them. And morality signaled the “yes” and the “no” of every action, championing the “good” and persecuting the “bad.” But will “the good” continue being “the good” in such a diverse landscape? If an immutable God affirms it, so

be it! But if for many God has disappeared, who is left to judge? For the law changes with the opinion of the times.

9. The point then is this: will those principles of valid action that allow every human being to live in internal unity be fixed images that have to be obeyed, or will they correspond to what one experiences when they are rejected or fulfilled?
10. We will not discuss the nature of the principles of valid action here; we will simply note the need for them.

XI. Projection of the Internal Landscape

We have spoken of landscapes, of suffering, of contradiction, and of those actions that give unity to the current of life. It may be believed that all that remains enclosed within each human being or that, in any case, it is exteriorized as individual action with no further consequence. Well, things are the other way around.

1. All contradiction inverts life, jeopardizing the future of whomever suffers it, as well as those who are in contact with this agent of misfortune. All personal contradiction contaminates the immediate human landscape like an invisible sickness that is detected only through its effects.
2. Long ago, demons and witches were blamed for every plague that battered a region. But over time, the advance of science did more for both accusers and accused than the millennia of irresponsible clamor. With which faction would you have sided? Whether on the side of the pure or the reprobates, you would have only increased your folly.
3. Even today, when you look for culprits to blame for your misfortunes, you join in the long chain of superstition. Reflect, then, before pointing your finger, for perhaps it was accident, or in other cases, the projection of your contradictions that provoked these unhappy outcomes.
4. That your children orient themselves in a direction opposite your designs has more to do with you than with your neighbor, and more to do with you, certainly, than with an earthquake in some distant latitude.
5. So, if your influence reaches an entire people, take great care to overcome your contradiction so as not to poison with it the air that everyone else breathes. You will be responsible for yourself and for those who gather around you.
6. Therefore, if your mission is to humanize the Earth, strengthen your hands – hands of a noble laborer.

XII. Compensation, Reflection, and Future

1. Is life perhaps nothing more than action and reaction? Hunger dreams of satiety, enchainment of freedom, pain seeks pleasure, and pleasure grows weary of itself.
2. If life is but the pursuit of security for those who fear the future, self-affirmation for the disoriented, longing for revenge for past frustration... what freedom, responsibility, and commitment could be held aloft as an unvanquished banner?
3. And if life is but a mirror that reflects a landscape, how could it change that which it reflects?
4. Between the cold mechanics of pendulums or the phantasmal optics of what are only mirrors, what do you affirm that can be affirmed without denying? What do you affirm without regressing, or with more than arithmetic repetition?
5. If you affirm that which searches for itself, whose nature is to transform itself, that which cannot be satiated and which by its essence is open to the future, then you love the reality you build. This, then, is your life: the reality you build!
6. And there will be action and reaction, as there will be reflection and accident. But if you have opened the future, there will be nothing to detain you.
7. May life speak through your mouth, and may it say: "There is nothing that can detain me!"
8. Oh, useless and wicked prophecy that proclaims global catastrophe. I affirm that the human being will not only continue to live but will grow without limit. And I say that the deniers of life wish to steal all hope—that beating heart of human action.
9. In the darkest moments, may your future joy remind you of these words: "Life searches for growth, not the compensation of nothingness!"

XIII. Provisional Meanings

1. When, swayed by the pendulum of compensation, I search for meanings to justify my existence, I move towards what I need or believe I need. In either case, whether I obtain what I want or not, what will happen with my meaning (inasmuch as it is movement in a given direction)?
2. These provisional meanings, though necessary for the development of human activity, cannot serve as the foundation for my existence. Moreover, if I define myself by a particular situation, what will happen when, through some accident, it falls apart?
3. Unless you wish to reduce existence to nothing more than exhaustion or frustration, you will need to discover a meaning that not even death (were that the accident) could exhaust or frustrate.
4. You will not be able to justify existence if you put the absurdity of death as its end. Until now, we have been companions in the struggle. Neither you nor I wished to submit to any god, and this is how I would like to remember you always. Why, then, do you abandon me when I set out to defy inexorable death? How is it that we have said: "Not even the gods are above life!" and yet now you kneel before the negation of life? You may do as you like, but I will bow my head before no idol, even when it is supposedly "justified" by faith in reason.
5. If reason is to be at the service of life, let it lead us to leap over death. May reason, then, produce a meaning exempt from all frustration, all accident, and all exhaustion.
6. I will not accept at my side those who propose transcendence out of fear, but rather those who rise up in rebellion against the inevitability of death.
7. For this reason, I want those saints who do not fear but truly love. I want those who, day by day, conquer pain and suffering with their science and their reason. And in truth, I see no difference between saints and those who, with their science, encourage life. What better examples could there be, what guides superior to these?
8. A meaning that aspires to go beyond the provisional will not accept death as the end of life but will affirm transcendence as the maximum disobedience to this apparent Destiny. And those who affirm that their actions unleash events that continue in others hold in their hands a strand of the thread of eternity.

XIV. Faith

1. I become filled with suspicion whenever I hear the word faith.
2. Every time someone speaks of “faith,” I wonder what is served by such a pronouncement.
3. I have seen the difference between naive faith (also known as “credulity”) and the violent and unwarranted faith that gives rise to fanaticism. Neither is acceptable, since one opens the door to accident while the other imposes its feverish landscape.
4. But there must be something important in this tremendous force that is capable of mobilizing the best of causes. Let faith then be a belief whose foundation lies in its usefulness for life!
5. If someone says that faith and science are opposed, I will reply that I would have to choose science, as long as it is not opposed to life.
6. Nothing prevents faith and science, if they have the same direction, from producing progress, adding enthusiasm to help this sustained effort.
7. And those who would humanize, let them help raise our spirits by pointing out the possibilities that the future holds. Or is the skeptic’s anticipation of defeat useful for life? Could science have sustained itself without faith?
8. There is a type of faith that goes against life. It is the faith that proclaims: “Science will destroy our world!” How much better it would be to put faith in humanizing science day by day, and act so that the direction with which it was endowed from its birth may triumph.
9. The usefulness of faith is evident if it is a faith that opens the future and gives meaning to life, orienting it away from suffering and contradiction and toward all valid action.
10. That faith, like faith placed in oneself, in others, and in the world around us, is useful for life.
11. Saying, “faith is useful!” will surely annoy some particularly sensitive ears. But do not worry, for if those musicians examine themselves a little, they will recognize how useful faith is for them as well, even if their faith flows from an instrument different from the one you play.

12. If you achieve faith in yourself and in the best of those around you, faith in our world and in a life always open to the future, every problem that until now has seemed unsurmountable will diminish.

XV. To Give and To Receive

1. Let us look at the relationship you establish with your external landscape. Perhaps you consider objects, people, values, and affections as things laid out before you to choose among and devour, according to your particular appetites. That centripetal vision of the world probably denotes a contradiction from your thoughts to your muscles.
2. If this is the case, surely you will have the highest regard for everything that has to do with you—your suffering as much as your pleasures. It is unlikely you will want to overcome your deepest personal problems, since within them you recognize a tone that, above all else, is your own. From your thoughts to your muscles, everything has been taught to contract, not to let go. And in this way, even when you act with generosity it is calculation that motivates your letting go.
3. Everything goes in. Nothing goes out. And so, everything becomes intoxicated, from your thoughts to your muscles.
4. And you contaminate everyone around you. How can you then reproach them for their “ingratitude” toward you?
5. If we speak of “giving” and “helping,” you will think of what others can give you, or of how they should help you. But in fact, the greatest help they could give you would be to teach you how to relax your contraction.
6. I say that your selfishness is not a sin but rather the fundamental error in your calculations, for you have naively believed that to receive is greater than to give.
7. Recall the best moments of your life and you will see that they have always invariably been accompanied by a disinterested giving. This reflection alone should be enough to change the direction of your existence... But it will not be sufficient.
8. Let us hope that I have been speaking to someone else and not to you, since you must have understood phrases such as: “to humanize the Earth,” “open the future,” “overcome suffering in the world around you,” and so many others that have as their base the capacity to give.
9. To “love the reality you are building” does not mean to put the solution of your own problems as the key to the world.

10. To conclude: do you wish to overcome your profound contradiction? Then produce valid actions. If they are valid, it will be because you are helping those around you.

XVI. The Models of Life

1. In your internal landscape there is an ideal man or woman that you search for in the external landscape. Through so many relationships, your ideal remains always just out of reach—like two fragments of flint that do not quite strike except for that brief moment when perfect love dazzles us with its spark.
2. All human beings in their own way launch their lives toward the external landscape, seeking to complete their hidden models.
3. But the external landscape continues imposing its own laws and as time goes by, your once most cherished dream ends up as an image before which you now feel shame, or only as a faded memory. Nevertheless, within the human species there are profound models that sleep, biding their time. These models are the translation of impulses that your body sends to the space of representation.
4. We will not discuss the origin or permanence of these models; nor will we speak of the complexity of the world in which they are found. We are simply noting their existence and pointing out that their function is to compensate for needs and aspirations that, in turn, motivate our activity toward the external landscape.
5. The unique response that cultures and peoples give to the external landscape is always colored by the internal models that history and their own bodies continue to define.
6. Wise are those who know their profound models and wiser still are those who can place them at the service of the best causes.

XVII. The Internal Guide

1. Whom do you so admire that you would like to have been them?
2. Let me ask more gently: Whom do you consider so exemplary that you wish you could find some of that person's particular virtues in yourself?
3. In sorrow or confusion, have you ever appealed to the memory of someone who, whether existing or not, came to your aid as a comforting image?
4. I am speaking of specific models that we could call internal "guides," which at times coincide with people in your external landscape.
5. Those models which you have wanted to follow since you were very young, have changed only in the most external layer of your daily awareness.
6. I have seen how children play and talk with their imaginary companions and guides. I have seen people of all ages connect with these guides in prayers offered in sincere devotion.
7. The more strongly these guides were called, the further away they responded from, and the better the signal they sent. Because of this I knew that the most profound guides are the most powerful. But only a great need can awaken them from their millennia of lethargy.
8. Such a model "possesses" three important attributes: strength, wisdom, and kindness.
9. If you want to know yourself better, observe the characteristics of those you admire. Notice how the qualities that you most appreciate in them are at work in the configuration of your internal guides. Consider that even though your initial references may have disappeared over time, the "imprint" they have left within you continues motivating you in the external landscape.
10. And if you want to understand how cultures are influenced by one another, study not only their mode of producing objects, but also their mode of disseminating their models.
11. It is important, then, that you direct your attention to the best qualities in others because you will project into the world what you have configured in yourself.

XVIII. The Change

Let us look back for a moment.

We consider the human being as integrally connected to the world, influencing it and being influenced by it. We have said that human action is manifest in the external landscape according to how the internal landscape is being formed. That action will vary but what defines a life is its contradictory or unifying activity. While contradiction inverts life, contaminating the world with suffering, unifying actions open the future, causing suffering to recede in oneself and the world.

“To humanize the Earth” is the same as to “give” in unifying actions. Every aim that has receiving as its end can have only a provisional meaning and is destined to lead toward contradiction.

Faith is an enormous energy that can be mobilized in the service of life. And there are other forces that also operate in the internal landscape, motivating human activity toward the external landscape. These are the “models.”

1. There can be no doubt, the question is this: do you want to overcome the abyss?
2. Perhaps you do. But how will you take a new direction if the avalanche has already been unleashed, dragging with it everything in its path?
3. Whatever you decide, you must know what resources and what energy you can count on to produce this change.
4. While your choice is very much your own, I would like to point out that changing the direction of your life is not something you can do relying solely on the resources of internal work. Rather, you will need to act in the world decisively, modifying behaviors.
5. But how will you carry out this task in your immediate environment, which decisively influences you, and which you in turn influence? The only way is to awaken the faith that it is possible to convert this inverted life.
6. This is where I will leave you. If you are prepared to change your life, you will transform the world — and then it will not be the abyss that triumphs but that which overcomes it.

The Human Landscape

I. Landscapes and Looks

1. Let us speak of landscapes and looks, turning again to what was said elsewhere: "External landscape is what we perceive of things, internal landscape is what we sift from them through the sieve of our internal world. These landscapes are one and constitute our indissoluble vision of reality."
2. Starting with the perception of external objects, a naive look can confuse "what is seen" and reality itself. There will be those who go further, believing that they remember reality exactly as it was. And there will be no lack of those who confuse their illusion, their hallucination, or dream images with material objects that have actually been perceived and transformed in different states of consciousness
3. It is not difficult for reasonable people to understand that previously perceived objects can appear distorted in dreams and memories. But the simplicity of daily action, of doing with and among things, is shaken to its core by the idea that perceived objects are always covered by a multicolored mantle woven of other, simultaneous perceptions and memories; that perception is an overall way of being among things, an emotional tone, and the general state of one's body.
4. The naïve look grasps the "external" world along with its own pain or its own joy. I look not only with my eyes but also with my heart, with gentle recollection, with ominous suspicion, with cold calculation, with stealthy comparison. I look through allegories, signs, and symbols, and though I do not see these things in my looking, they act on it nonetheless, just as when I look, I do not see my eye or its activity.
5. Because of the complexity of perceiving, when I speak of external or internal reality, I prefer to use the word "landscape" rather than "object." And with that, I take it as a given that I am referring to complexes and structures, and not to the isolated and abstracted individuality of an object. I also want to emphasize that these landscapes correspond to acts of perception which I call "looks" (encroaching, perhaps illegitimately, on numerous fields unrelated to visualization). These "looks" are active and complex acts which organize "landscapes" and not simple, passive acts of receiving external information (data which reach my external senses) or internal information (sensations from my own body, memories, and apperceptions). Needless to say, in these mutual interrelations between "looks" and "landscapes", the distinction between internal and external is established by the direction of the intentionality of the consciousness, not as set forth in the naive schemas presented to schoolchildren.

6. If you have understood the foregoing, you will understand that when I speak of “human landscape” I am referring to a type of external landscape that is composed of people and also by human acts and intentions embodied in objects, even when the human being as such is not present.
7. It is important, moreover, to distinguish between internal world and *internal landscape*; between nature and *external landscape*; between society and *human landscape*, emphasizing that to speak of *landscapes* always implies one who looks, as opposed to the other cases in which the internal (or psychological) world, nature, and society naively appear as existing in themselves, independent of all interpretation.

II. What is Human and the External Look

1. Nothing substantial is being said when we are told that “Human beings are constituted in an environment” and that, thanks to this environment (natural for some, social for others, and both natural and social for still others), the human being is “constituted.” This idea appears even more inconsistent when we focus on the relationship implied by the word “constituted”—assuming, of course, that we already understand the terms “human being” and “environment.” Presumably, “environment” is that which surrounds the human being or that in which the human being is immersed, and “human being” is that which is within or immersed in that “environment.”

We find ourselves, then, as at the beginning, in a circle of vacuities. Though the two terms being related point to separate entities, we note that an intention exists to bridge this separation in a deceptive relationship through use of the word “constitute.” The word “constitute” has implications of genesis, that is, of explaining something by means of its origin.

2. The previous assertion would be of no interest were it not for the fact that it is presented as a paradigm of various assertions that for millennia have offered an image of the human being as seen from the standpoint of things and not from the standpoint of the look that looks at things. Because to say, “the human being is a social animal” or “human beings are made in the image of God” is to make society or God into the entity that looks at the human being. But, in reality, it is only from the *human look* that society and God are conceived, negated, or accepted.
3. And so, in a world where an inhuman look has long been established, there have also been established behaviors and institutions that annihilate the human being. And like this, in the observation of nature, among other things, questions were raised about the nature of the human being and the responses were like those that might be given about any natural object.
4. Even those currents of thought that presented the human being as subject to continuous transformation considered what is human from an external look, from different perspectives of historical naturalism.
5. The underlying idea of “human nature” corresponds to an external look on what is human. But human beings are historical beings whose mode of social action transforms their own nature. Knowing this subordinates the concept of “human nature” to activity, to existence—making it subject to the transformations and

revelations directed by this existence. In this way, the body, as the prosthesis of intention, extends its potentialities and humanizes the world. And this world can no longer be seen as simple externality but rather as a natural or human *landscape*, subject to current or possible human transformations. It is through this activity that the human being transforms itself.

III. The Human Body as the Object of Intention

1. The body, as a natural object, is subject to natural modifications and thanks to human intention is, of course, susceptible to transformation not only in its most external expressions but also in its innermost functioning. One's own body takes on its greatest significance when viewed in this way—as a prosthesis of intention. However, between the immediate (unmediated) governance of one's own body and the adaptation of this body to other needs and designs, a social process intervenes that does not depend on the isolated individual but rather involves others.
2. Ownership of my psychophysical structure is given by my intentionality, while external objects appear to me as beyond my immediate ownership and only indirectly subject to my control (through the action of my body). There is a particular type of object, however, that I intuit as the property of a foreign intention, and that is the body of the other. That *otherness* puts me in the position of being “seen from outside,” seen from the intention of the other. The vision I have of the other is, therefore, an interpretation, a “landscape” that will extend to every object that bears the mark of human intention, whether produced or used by someone in the present or the past. In that “human landscape” I can annihilate the intention of others, considering them as prostheses of my own body, in which case I must “empty” their subjectivity completely—or at least within those areas of thought, feeling or action I wish to control directly. This objectification necessarily dehumanizes me, and so I justify this situation as the action of a greater force beyond my control (“Passion,” “God,” the “Cause,” “Natural Inequality,” “Fate,” “Society,” etc.).

IV. Memory and the Human Landscape

1. When faced with an unfamiliar landscape, I appeal to my memory and notice what is new by “recognizing” its absence within me. The same thing happens with a human landscape in which the language, clothing, and social customs contrast sharply with the landscape in which my memories were formed. But in societies where change happens slowly, my previous landscape tends to impose itself over these novel aspects which I perceive as “irrelevant.”
2. If I live in a society where change occurs swiftly, I tend to not recognize the value of change or consider it as a “deviation,” without realizing that the inner loss that I experience is the loss of the social landscape in which my memory was formed.
3. Thanks to all this I understand that when a generation comes to power, it tends to give external expression to the myths and theories, desires and values of landscapes that no longer exist but that continue to live and act in the social memory in which this group was formed. That landscape was assimilated as the human landscape by their children and as an “irrelevance” or a “deviation” by their parents.

However much the generations may struggle between themselves, the generation that comes to power immediately becomes obstructionist by imposing its formative landscape on a human landscape that has already changed, or which this generation itself may have helped to change. In this way, in the transformation instituted by a new group, there is a delay that it drags from its time of formation. And against that delay a newer group that is forming will clash.

When I have spoken of the “power” that a generation acquires, I trust that I have been correctly understood as referring to power in its different expressions: political, social, cultural, and so forth.

V. The Distance Imposed by the Human Landscape

1. Every generation has its cunning and will not hesitate to call for the most sophisticated of “reforms” if it can thereby increase its power. However, this leads to countless difficulties as the transformation that it has set in motion drags towards the future a society that, in the present dynamic, is already in contradiction with the inner social landscape that it seeks to maintain. This is why I say that “every generation has its cunning” but also its own trap.
2. Which human landscape do these unwarranted longings confront? To begin with, it is a perceived human landscape that is different from the landscape that is remembered. But furthermore, it is also a human landscape that does not correspond with the affective tone, with the general emotional climate of our memories of people, buildings, streets, occupations, institutions. That “distancing” or “estrangement” clearly shows that, even when dealing with everyday or familiar matters, every perceived landscape is a distinct and all-encompassing reality different from the one remembered. This is how the appetites that for so long yearned to possess certain objects (things, person, situations) were disappointed in their fulfillment. And that is the distance that the dynamic of the human landscape imposes upon every memory, whether held individually or collectively; by one, by many, or by an entire generation that, coexisting in the same social space, is surrounded by a similar emotional background. How much greater becomes the distance, then, when different generations—representatives of distinct times coexisting within a single space—try to reach agreement about something! And if it seems that we are speaking of enemies, I must point out that these gulfs open even between people who appear to coincide in their interests.
3. Never do I touch the same object twice in the same way, nor feel the same intention twice. And that which I believe to perceive as intention in others is only a distance which I interpret differently every time. In this way, the human landscape, whose distinguishing characteristic is intention, throws into sharp relief the estrangement that many have spoken of in their time as perhaps the result of the objective conditions of a society devoid of solidarity that casts the dispossessed consciousness into exile. Having erred in their appraisal of the essence of human intention, they found that as the human landscape accelerated, the society that they built with such effort was fractured by generational chasms and became estranged from itself. Other societies, developing along different paths, suffered the identical impact. All this by now demonstrates that the fundamental problems of the human being need to be resolved by focusing on the intention that transcends objects and for which the social object is simply the dwelling. In the

same way, all of nature, including the human body, should be understood as the dwelling of the transformative intention.

4. The perception of the human landscape brings me face to face with myself—it is an emotional engagement, a thing that negates me or that propels me forward. And from my “today,” even as I continue to add memories, I am drawn forward by future intention. That future which conditions the present; that image; that feeling, confused or desired; that action, chosen or imposed, also marks my past, because it changes what I believe to have been my past.

VI. Education

1. Perception of the external landscape and its effect on it involves the body and an emotional way of being in the world. Of course, it also involves the very vision of reality itself, as I have previously mentioned. That is why I believe that to educate is fundamentally to prepare the new generations to exercise a non-naïve vision of reality, so that their look considers the world not as some supposed objective reality in itself but rather as the object of transformation to which human action is applied. At this point I am not speaking of information about the world but rather of the intellectual exercise of a particular unbiased vision on landscapes, and of an attentive practice turned to one's own look. A basic education should take into account the practice of coherent thinking. In this case, I am not speaking strictly of knowledge but rather contact with one's own registers of thinking.
2. Next, education should provide the stimulus for emotional awareness and development. Therefore, in planning a comprehensive education one should consider practices of representation on one hand and expression on the other, as well as the development of skills in harmony and rhythm. This is not an argument for implementing procedures with the aim of "producing" artistic talents, but rather to enable individuals to make emotional contact with themselves and others, avoiding the disorders produced by an education based on isolation and inhibition.
3. Finally, consideration should be given to a practice that puts into harmonious play all of a person's corporal resources. Sports lead to a one-sided rather than comprehensive development, and this discipline would resemble gymnastics practiced as an art more than a sport, because it involves getting in touch with one's own body and managing it with ease. For this reason, sports should not be considered a developmental activity, although the cultivation of sports could be important if based on the discipline referred to above.
4. Up to now I have spoken about education from the point of view of the human being's formative activities in their human landscape, but I have not spoken about how information is related to knowledge, or to the incorporation of data through study, or about practice as a form of study.

VII. History

1. As long as the historical process continues to be considered from an external look, it will be futile to explain it as the progressive unfolding of human intentionality in its struggle to overcome (physical) pain and (mental) suffering. In that way, while some people will be concerned with revealing the inner laws of human events on the basis of matter, or the spirit, or a certain line of reasoning, in truth the internal mechanism they seek will always be seen from “outside” the human being.
2. Of course, the historical process will then continue being understood as the development of a form that, essentially, is nothing but the mental form of those who see things in this way. And it does not matter what type of dogma is appealed to because the pervading background that dictates this adherence will always be that which one wants to see.

VIII. Ideologies

1. The ideologies that prevailed in certain historical moments, and that demonstrated their utility orienting action and interpreting the world in which both individuals and human groups operated, were displaced by others whose greatest achievement consisted in appearing as reality itself, as the most concrete and immediate, and exempt of all “ideology.”
2. In this way, the opportunists of other times, whose hallmark was their betrayal of every commitment, emerged during periods of ideological crisis calling themselves “pragmatists” or “realists,” without knowing the origin of these terms. In any case, they shamelessly exhibited their false schematism, presenting it as the pinnacle of the “development” of intelligence and virtue.
3. As social change accelerated, the gulf between successive generations grew more quickly since the human landscape in which they were formed increasingly diverged from the human landscape in which they had to act. This left them bereft of any theory or model of conduct. Therefore, they needed to give increasingly rapid and more improvised responses, becoming more “circumstantial” and specific in the application of every action, and with this, all idea of process and all notion of historicity began to wane, giving way instead to an analytic and fragmentary look.
4. These pragmatic cynics turned out to be the embarrassed grandchildren of those dedicated builders of “unhappy consciousness,” and the children of those who denounced ideologies as the “disguising” of reality. That is why all pragmatism bears the stamp of familial absolutism. And so, they were heard to say: “We must abide by reality and not theories.” But this brought them countless difficulties when irrationalist currents emerged that then declared: “We must abide by our reality and not your theories.”

IX. Violence

1. When discussing methodologies of action in terms of social or political struggle, the subject of violence frequently arises. There are, however, prior issues that bear on this topic.
2. As long as the human being does not fully realize a human society—a society in which power is in the hands of the social whole and not some part of it that subordinates and objectifies the whole—violence will be the banner under which all social activity takes place. Therefore, when speaking of violence, we must also mention the established world. And if this world is opposed by a nonviolent struggle, it must first be emphasized that a nonviolent attitude is such because it does not tolerate violence. And so, it is not a matter of justifying a certain type of struggle, but of defining the conditions of violence which this inhuman system imposes.
3. At the same time, countless errors result from confusing nonviolence with pacifism. Nonviolence needs no justification as a methodology of action, but pacifism needs to take into consideration what circumstances bring us closer to or move us further from peace, understanding peace as a state of non-belligerence. So it is that pacifism addresses issues such as disarmament, making it the essential priority for society, when in reality the amassing of arms is only one example of the threats of physical violence wielded by the power established by a minority that manipulates the State. The issue of disarmament is of utmost importance, but although pacifism focuses on this urgent issue, even if it is successful in its demands it will not be able to change the context of this violence and certainly cannot, except in the most artificial fashion, extend its proposals to the modification of the social structure. Clearly, within this current there are different models of pacifism with various theoretical foundations. However, none of them leads to a broader proposal. If its vision of the world were broader, we would certainly be dealing with a doctrine that included pacifism. And in this case, we should discuss the foundations of that doctrine before accepting or rejecting the type of pacifism that derives from it.

X. Law

1. “One’s rights end where the rights of others begin.” Therefore: “The rights of others end where one’s rights begin.” But since it is the first phrase and not the second that is emphasized, everything suggests that those who maintain this position see themselves as “the others”—that is, as the representatives of the others, as the representatives of an established system that needs no justification.
2. There has been no lack of those who derive law from a purported “human nature,” but as this has already been discussed, it adds nothing to the subject at hand.
3. Practical people have not lost themselves in theorizing and have declared that laws are necessary if people are to coexist in a society. It has also been said that laws are made to defend the interests of those who impose them.
4. It seems that it is a previous situation of power that establishes a certain law, which in turn legitimizes that power. And so, it is power as the imposition of an intention (accepted or not) which is the central theme. It is said that might does not make right, but this absurdity can only be accepted if power is conceived as a brute, physical act. In reality, power (economic, political, etc.) does not need to be expressed perceptually in order to make its presence felt and to command respect. Moreover, even the naked threat of physical force (the force of arms, for example) is used to impose situations that are justified legally. Nor should we overlook the fact that the use of arms in one or another direction depends on human intention and not on a right.
5. Those who violate the law ignore a situation imposed in the present and expose their temporality (their future) to the decisions of others. But it is clear that the “present” in which the law begins to take force has its roots in the past. Custom, morality, religion, and social consensus are the sources generally invoked to justify the existence of the law. Each of these, in turn, depends on the power that imposed it. These sources are re-examined when the power that created them has declined or transformed to such a degree that maintaining the prior judicial order begins to conflict with “what is reasonable,” with “common sense,” and so forth. When a legislator changes a law, or a group of the people’s representatives change the constitution of a country, the law is apparently not being violated because those who are acting are not exposed to the decisions of others—that is, because they hold power in their hands, or act as representatives of power. And in those situations, it becomes clear that power generates rights and obligations, and not the other way around.

6. Human rights are not universally in effect as we would wish, because they do not depend on the universal power of humanity but rather upon the power of one part over the whole. And since we find that across every latitude even the most basic demands over the control of one's own body are trampled upon, we can speak only of aspirations which need to become rights. Human rights do not belong to the past, they are there in the future, drawing our intentionality, fueling a struggle that is revived with every new violation to human destiny. For this reason, every demand made for human rights has meaning, because it shows the powers-that-be that they are not omnipotent and that they do not control the future.

XI. The State

1. It has been said that a nation is a legal entity formed by the totality of inhabitants of a country under the rule of a given government. This idea was then extended to the territory of that country.–But in truth, a nation can exist for millennia without being ruled by a given government, without being limited to a single territory, and without being legally recognized by any State. What defines a nation is the mutual recognition established between people who identify themselves as sharing similar values and who aspire to a common future. And that has nothing to do with race, or language, or with history understood as “a long period of time that begins in a mythic past.” A nation can form today, can grow toward the future or founder tomorrow, and could also incorporate into its project other human groups. In this sense, one could speak of the formation of a human nation that has not yet been consolidated as such, and which has suffered countless persecutions and failures. Above all, it has suffered the failure of the future landscape.
2. The strange ability to form nationalities and to be itself the nation is often attributed to the State, an entity that in fact has to do with certain forms of government regulated by law. This recent fiction of the nation state is suffering the onslaught of a rapidly changing human landscape. Thus, the powers that formed the present-day State and endowed it with simple attributes of intermediation are now in the situation of moving beyond the form of this apparatus which apparently concentrates in itself the power of a nation.
3. The “powers” of the State are not the real powers that generate rights and obligations and that administer or enforce certain rules. But as the monopoly of this apparatus grew and became the successive (or permanent) spoils of warring factions, it has ended up blocking the freedom of action of the real powers and hindering the activity of the people, to the benefit only of an increasingly irrelevant bureaucracy. Thus, only the most obstructionist elements of society are served by the form of the present-day State. The point is that, along with the progressive decentralization and decrease of State power, there must be a corresponding growth in the power of the social whole. The only guarantee that today’s grotesque State will not simply be replaced by the unbridled power of the same interests that created it (and which now strive to dispense with it), is to be found in those factors that the people themselves manage and supervise with solidarity, free from the paternalism of any faction.

4. And a people that is in the position to increase its real power (not mediated by the State or by some part of the whole) will be in the best condition to project itself toward the future as the vanguard of the universal human nation.
5. Do not believe that the artificial union of countries into supranational entities increases the decision-making power of their respective peoples. It did not increase when empires annexed territories and nations under the homogeneous rule of their particular interests.
6. While many now anticipate a regional unification of wealth (or poverty) in dialectic with extra-regional powers, this in itself will not solve the fundamental problem of realizing a fully human society, even if provisional benefits result from these unions. And any type of society that is not fully human will be subject to the snares and catastrophes that result from the surrendering of its decisions to the will of particular interests.
7. If, as a result of regional unifications, there emerges a monstrous Superstate, or the unrestrained dominion of the (now totally homogenized) particular interests of earlier times that imposes its power over the social whole in a highly sophisticated way, countless conflicts will arise that will unleash devastating centrifugal forces and affect the very basis of those unions. If, on the other hand, it is the people's decision-making power that increases, then the integration of diverse communities will herald the emergence of the developing human nation.

XII. Religion

1. That which is said about things and events is not the things and the events themselves, but rather “figures” that have a certain structure in common with them. Thanks to that common structure, it is possible to talk about things and events. That structure, however, cannot in turn be talked about in the same way that things are talked about because it is the structure of that which is being said as well as the structure of things and events. Thus, language can point to but not speak of that which “includes” everything (even language itself). Such is the case of “God.”
2. Different things have been said about God, but it all appears as nonsense once one notices what is said, or what is intended by what is said.
3. Nothing can be said about God. One can speak only of what has been said about God. Many things have been said about God, and much can be said about what has been said, but not because of this are we making progress on the theme of God insofar as it refers to God *per se*.
4. This kind of tongue twister aside, religions can be of profound interest only in as far as they attempt to point to, and not talk about, God.
5. Religions, however, express what exists in their respective landscapes. For this reason, a religion is neither true nor false because its value is not logical. Its value lies in the type of internal register that it arouses in the agreement between the landscapes the religion wants to show and what is in fact shown.
6. Religious literature is typically linked to external and human landscapes, and the characteristics and attributes of its gods are not independent of those landscapes. Nevertheless, even when these external and human landscapes change, this religious literature can endure into the new times. This is not surprising given that non-religious literature also finds a following and stirs emotions in very distant times. Nor does a cult’s persistence in time say much about its “truth,” since legal formalities and social ceremonies pass from culture to culture and continue to be observed even when their original significance is lost.
7. A religion irrupts into a human landscape in a particular historical period, and it is often said then that God “reveals” himself to the human being. But for that revelation to be accepted in that historical moment, something must have happened in the internal landscape of the human being. The interpretation of that change has generally been made from “outside” of the human being, locating the change in the external or social world. By doing so, certain aspects have been

gained, but what has been lost is the comprehension of the religious phenomena as an internal register.

8. But religions have also portrayed themselves as something external, and in so doing they have prepared the ground for the interpretations already mentioned.
9. When I speak of “external religion,” I am not referring to psychological images projected as icons, paintings, statues, structures, or relics (things proper to visual perception). Nor am I referring to projections in the form of chants or prayers (proper to auditory perception), nor to their projection as gestures, postures, or the orientation of the body in certain directions (proper to kinesthetic and cenesthetic perception). Finally, I do not say that a religion is external because it has its sacred books or sacraments. I do not even call it external because it adds a church, an organization, or holy days to its liturgy, or because it requires of its followers a certain physical state or age to carry out particular operations. No, that form through which the supporters of one religion or another fight among themselves, each accusing the other faction of various degrees of idolatry because of the kind of image they prefer to work with, has no bearing on this matter (aside from demonstrating the contending parties’ total psychological ignorance).
10. I call any religion “external” if it claims to speak of God and the will of God instead of speaking about the religious, and of the innermost register of the human being. Seeking support in an externalized form of worship could be meaningful if through such practices the believers were able to awaken in themselves (were able to reveal) the presence of God.
11. The fact that until now religions have been external corresponds to the human landscape in which they were born and developed. Nevertheless, the birth of an inner religion is possible, or religions may convert to an inner religiosity if they are to survive. But this will occur to the extent that the internal landscape is in conditions to accept a new revelation. We are beginning to catch glimpses of this in those societies in which the human landscape is undergoing such drastic change that the need for internal references becomes increasingly a matter of extreme urgency.
12. None of what has been said about religions can remain standing today because both apologists and critics for some time now have failed to notice the internal change in the human being. If some thought of religions as soporifics to political or social action, they now confront them for the powerful stimulus they provide in those fields. If others imagined them imposing their message, they now find that this message has changed. Those who believed religions would last forever today doubt their eternity, and those who assumed they would soon disappear are now

surprised to witness the irruption of new forms that are manifestly or latently mystical.

13. There are few in this field who intuit what the future holds because there are so few who are dedicated to the task of understanding in what direction human intentionality, which definitively transcends the individual human being, is heading. If human beings want something new to “show itself,” it is because that which tends to show itself is already operating in their internal landscape. But it is not by claiming to be the representative of a god that the internal register of the human being becomes the dwelling or landscape of a transcendent look or intention.

XIII. The Open Roads

1. And what of work, money, love, death, and so many aspects of the human landscape barely touched on in these comments? There is certainly much more to say for anyone who wishes to, as long as it is done bearing in mind this way of approaching the issues: referring looks to landscapes and understanding that landscapes change looks.
2. So, it follows that there is no need to speak of other subjects if there are others interested in these ideas and the way we have spoken about them up to now, since they can speak in the same way that we would. On the other hand, if we are talking about things that are of no interest to anyone, or with a form of expression that does not allow things to be brought to light, it would make no sense to continue to speak for others.

Notes to Humanize the Earth

The Inner Look

The Inner Look is divided into twenty chapters and each one of those is divided into fragments. The principal motifs of the book can be grouped as follows:

- A. The first two chapters are introductory and present the intention of the one explaining and the attitude of the one attending, and the way to realize this relationship.
- B. Chapters III to XIII develop the most general topics, explained in ten “days” of reflection.
- C. Chapter XIII marks a turning point, moving from more general topics to consider conducts and attitudes for facing life.
- D. The subsequent chapters are concerned with internal work.

The order of the themes is as follows:

- I. THE MEDITATION – The objective of the book: the conversion of non-meaning into meaning.
- II. DISPOSITION TO COMPREHEND – The mental attitude required for understanding the themes.
- III. NON-MEANING – The meaning of life and death.
- IV. DEPENDENCE – The action of the environment on the human being.
- V. INTIMATION OF MEANING – Some non-habitual mental phenomena.
- VI. SLEEP AND AWAKENING – Differences between levels of consciousness (sleep, semisleep, vigil with reveries, and full vigil) and how reality is perceived. External and internal senses, and memory.
- VII. PRESENCE OF THE FORCE – Ascent of comprehension in vigil. The energy or force that is rooted in and moves throughout the body.
- VIII. CONTROL OF THE FORCE – Relates the depth or superficiality of the energy to the levels of consciousness.

- IX. MANIFESTATIONS OF THE ENERGY – Control and loss of control of the energy.
- X. EVIDENCE OF MEANING – Internal contradiction, unity, and continuity.
- XI. THE LUMINOUS CENTER – The energy, linked to the internal allegorization of the “luminous center”. The phenomena of internal integration “ascend towards the light.” Internal dissolution is registered as “withdrawal from the light.”
- XII. THE DISCOVERIES – Circulation of the energy. Levels. The nature of the force represented as “light.” Examples from diverse peoples regarding these themes.
- XIII. THE PRINCIPLES – The Principles as a reference for internal unity.
- XIV. THE GUIDE TO THE INNER ROAD – Representation of the phenomena that accompany the directions of “descent” and “ascent.”
- XV. THE EXPERIENCE OF PEACE AND THE PASSAGE OF THE FORCE – Procedures.
- XVI. PROJECTION OF THE FORCE – The meaning of “projection.”
- XVII. LOSS AND REPRESSION OF THE FORCE – Discharges of energy. Sex as the center that produces energy.
- XVIII. ACTION AND REACTION OF THE FORCE – The association of representations with emotional charges. The evocation of the image linked to emotional states elicits (returns) the associated emotional states. “Thanking” as a technique of associating images to emotional states that can be used in daily life.
- XIX. THE INTERNAL STATES – Mental situations in which those interested in internal work can find themselves.
- XX. INTERNAL REALITY – The mental processes linked to allegorical representations of the external world.

The Internal Landscape

The Internal Landscape is divided into eighteen chapters, and each one of those is divided into fragments. The principal themes can be grouped as follows:

- A. Chapters I and II are introductory and direct questions to the reader about their happiness, suffering, and interests in life.
- B. Chapters III to VI examine the different types of landscapes (external, human, and internal) and their interaction.
- C. Chapter VII develops the themes of pain, suffering, and meaning in life. These points, and others related to valid action in the world, continue until Chapter XIII.
- D. In Chapters XIV to XVIII, the direction of human actions and the motives behind that direction are the central themes. Proposals for change regarding the meaning of life are also made.

The order of the themes is as follows:

- I. THE QUESTION – Inquires about happiness and suffering. Proposes a direction of overcoming suffering.
- II. REALITY – Discusses the nature of the “real”, linking what is perceived to the conformation of the human being.
- III. THE EXTERNAL LANDSCAPE – Emphasizes that every external landscape varies according to what happens within the one who perceives.
- IV. THE HUMAN LANDSCAPE – Shows the human landscape as involving the interiority of the subject. Denies that groups or factions have the right to demand that others adopt their answers to the problems individuals and societies currently face. Affirms the need to define action in the human world.
- V. THE INTERNAL LANDSCAPE – Explains that beliefs are at the root of human activity. Emphasizes, however, that the internal landscape is not only a field of beliefs but also of memories, perceptions, and images. Notes that the relation internal-external landscape is a structure in which both terms are correlates that can alternately be taken as acts or objects.

- VI. CENTER AND REFLECTION – Indicates the possibility of placing oneself in the center of the internal landscape, from where any direction chosen is a reflection of that center. Moreover, it shows that learning occurs through doing, not through contemplation.
- VII. PAIN, SUFFERING, AND MEANING IN LIFE – Distinguishes between physical pain and mental suffering. Introduces the phrase ‘humanize the Earth’ as the key to the meaning of life, emphasizing the primacy of the future over the present or the past.
- VIII. THE RIDER AND HIS SHADOW – Breaks the monotony of the previous chapters with a shift in style. Nevertheless, it again considers the problems of the different times in life and seeks within them the root of memory, perception, and imagination. Those three pathways are then considered “the three pathways of suffering” insofar as that contradiction inverts the times of consciousness.
- IX. CONTRADICTION AND UNITY – Continues the exposition on the interplay of times. Notes differences between everyday problems or difficulties, and contradiction. Defines the characteristics of the latter. Makes proposals for change in the organization of the internal landscape.
- X. VALID ACTION – Explains that it is not only contradiction that generates suffering but every inversion in the growing current of life. Emphasizes the importance of “valid action” as a unitive act that can overcome contradiction. This chapter puts forward an implicit critique of the foundations of morality in so far as they are not developed based on the need to give unity to the human being, giving references to overcome contradiction and suffering.
- XI. PROJECTION OF THE INTERNAL LANDSCAPE – Emphasizes that both contradictory and unitive acts implicate the future of the person producing them, and the future of those who are in contact with them. In this sense, individual contradiction “contaminates” others, and individual unity also affects others.
- XII. COMPENSATION, REFLECTION, AND FUTURE – The background of this chapter is the age-old debate between determinism and freedom. It concisely reviews the mechanics of actions as the interplay of compensatory acts and as a reflection of the external landscape, without overlooking accidents as another phenomenon that can undo all human projects. Finally, it emphasizes the search for the growth of life without limits as a leap over determining conditions.

- XIII. PROVISIONAL MEANINGS – Outlines a dialectic between “provisional meanings” and “meaning in life.” Places the affirmation of life as the highest value and suggests that rebellion against death is the motor of all progress.
- XIV. FAITH – Considers the feeling of suspicion that is experienced upon hearing the word “faith.” Distinguishes between naive faith, fanatical faith, and faith at the service of life. Gives faith special importance as the energy that mobilizes vital enthusiasm.
- XV. TO GIVE AND TO RECEIVE – Establishes that the act of giving opens the future, and that all valid actions go in this direction. In contrast, receiving is centripetal and perishes in the receiver. It is by giving that the direction of a contradictory life can be changed.
- XVI. THE MODELS OF LIFE – Explains that “models” are images that motivate activity toward the external world. Notes the modifications that these images undergo as the internal landscape changes.
- XVII. THE INTERNAL GUIDE – Refers to the existence of models in the internal landscape that are exemplars of action for the subject. Such models can be called “internal guides.”
- XVIII. THE CHANGE – Studies the possibility of voluntary change in human conduct.

The Human Landscape

The Human Landscape is divided into thirteen chapters, and each one of those is divided into fragments. The principal themes can be grouped as follows:

- A. The first five chapters are dedicated to clarifying the meaning of the human landscape and the look that is related to that landscape.
- B. The following seven chapters address different questions that arise in the human landscape.
- C. Chapter XIII concludes the themes that have been developed, inviting the reader to continue the study of important issues that have been treated only in passing in this work.

The order of the themes is as follows:

- I. LANDSCAPES AND LOOKS – Establishes differences between internal, external, and human landscapes. Introduces distinctions between “looks” of different types.
- II. WHAT IS HUMAN AND THE EXTERNAL LOOK – Considers what has been said about the human being from an “external look.”
- III. THE HUMAN BODY AS THE OBJECT OF INTENTION – Intentionality and the governing of one’s own body without intermediation. The objectification of others’ bodies and the “emptying” of their subjectivity.
- IV. MEMORY AND THE HUMAN LANDSCAPE – The lack of correspondence between the human landscape perceived in the present and the human landscape deriving from the formative period of the one perceiving.
- V. THE DISTANCE IMPOSED BY THE HUMAN LANDSCAPE – The distance between the perceived human landscape and the represented human landscape arises not only from the difference in times but also from ways of being in the world that are mediated by the emotions and the presence of one’s own body.
- VI. EDUCATION – Says that an integral education should consider coherent thinking as contact with one’s own registers of thinking; that it should consider awareness and emotional development as contact with oneself and others; and that it should not overlook practices that bring into play the full range of each person’s corporal resources. Distinguishes between education as formation, information as the integration of data through study, and practice as a form of study.

- VII. HISTORY – Until now History has been looked at from the “outside,” without taking human intentionality into account.
- VIII. IDEOLOGIES – In times when ideologies are in crisis there arise “ideologemes” that claim to represent reality itself. Such is the case with so-called “pragmatism.”
- IX. VIOLENCE – Nonviolence as a methodology of social and political struggle needs no justification. It is a system in which violence predominates that needs to justify imposing itself. Distinctions between pacifism and nonviolence are established.
- X. LAW – Considers both the origin of law and the theme of power as a precondition for any law.
- XI. THE STATE – The State as an apparatus of intermediation between the real power held by a part of society and the social whole.
- XII. RELIGION – Religions as “externality” in as much as they attempt to speak about God and not about the inner register of God in the human being.
- XIII. THE OPEN ROADS – Conclusion of the book and invitation to the reader to study and further develop important themes of the human landscape that have not been addressed in this work.