

Commentaries on Silo's Message

These Commentaries do not cover all of the topics in Silo's Message, but only those that seem necessary for a better understanding of this writing.

*We will approach Silo's Message respecting the order of that exposition. Therefore, the first part will be devoted to the chapters and paragraphs of the book, *The Inner Look*; the second part will consider "The Experience;" and the third, "The Path."*

First Part of Silo's Message

In the first part we will comment on the book, *The Inner Look*, and consider **the first three chapters**, which are introductory and refer to certain precautions that should be taken in order to correctly frame the most important themes.

Until Chapter V the text provides explanations against a background of non-meaning that the seeker of more definitive truths will feel inclined to dismiss. There we find chapters and paragraphs that deserve some consideration. But first we must ask ourselves: What does this book aspire to convey? It tries to transmit a teaching about conduct and about human interiority, with reference to meaning in life.

Why does the book have the title *The Inner Look*? Isn't the organ of sight placed so as to glimpse the outside world, like a window, or two if that were the case; isn't the eye located so as to open each day upon the awakening of the consciousness? The back of the eye receives the impacts of the external world. But sometimes, when I close my eyes, I remember the outside world, or I imagine it, or I daydream about it, or I dream it. I see this world with an inner eye which also looks at a screen, but not one that corresponds to the external world.

To mention an "inner look" is to imply someone who looks and a something that is looked at. This is what the book is about, and its title foreshadows an unexpected confrontation with that which is accepted naively. The title of the book summarizes these ideas: "There are other things that are seen with other eyes, and there is an observer that can be positioned in a way that is different from the habitual." We must now make a small distinction.

When I say, "I see something," I announce that I'm in a passive attitude with respect to a phenomenon that strikes my eyes. When, however, I say that, "I look at something," I'm announcing that I direct my eyes in a certain direction. Almost in the same sense, I can speak of "inner seeing," of attending to internal scenes such as those of divagation or dreams, distinguishing the "inner look" as an active direction of my consciousness. In this way, I can remember my dreams, or my life, or my fantasies, and look at them actively, illuminating them in their apparent absurdity, seeking to give them meaning. The inner look is an active direction of the consciousness. It is a direction that seeks significance and meaning in the apparently confusing and chaotic inner world. This direction is previous to that look; it impels it. It is this direction that permits the activity of looking internally. And if you manage to grasp that the inner look is necessary to reveal the meaning that impels it, you will understand that in some moment the you who looks will have to see yourself. This "yourself" or "oneself" is not the look or even the consciousness. This "self" is what gives meaning to the look and the operations of the consciousness. It is previous and transcendent to the

consciousness itself. In a very broad fashion we will call this “self,” “Mind,” in order to not confuse it with the operations of the consciousness, nor with the consciousness itself. But when someone seeks to apprehend the Mind as though it were simply one more phenomenon of the consciousness, it will escape them, for it admits neither representation nor comprehension.

The inner look will have to collide with the meaning that the Mind gives to all phenomena, even one’s own consciousness and one’s own life, and the collision with this meaning will illuminate the consciousness and life. This is what The Book addresses in its most profound nucleus.

All of the above leads us to reflect on the title of the work. As we enter the book, the first paragraph of the first chapter tells us: *“Here it tells how the non-meaning of life can be converted into meaning and fulfillment.”* And paragraph 5 of the same chapter explains: *“Here it tells of the inner revelation at which all arrive who carefully meditate in humble search.”*

The objective is set: to convert the non-meaning of life into meaning. Moreover, the way is outlined to reach the revelation of meaning, based on careful meditation.

Entering the material...

Chapter I develops the way to reach inner revelation, cautioning against false attitudes that lead one away from the proposed objective.

Chapter III deals with what has been called “the non-meaning.” The development of this chapter begins with the paradox of “triumph-failure” in these terms: “Those who bore failure in their hearts were able to illuminate the final victory, while those who felt triumphant were left by the wayside, vegetating in their muted and diffuse life.”

In this chapter, “failure” is vindicated as non-compliance with the temporary meanings in life and a state of dissatisfaction that drives definitive searches. The chapter highlights the danger of enchantment with the temporary triumphs of life, those that if achieved simply demand more, and lead finally to disappointment; and if not achieved still lead to definitive disappointment, to skepticism and to nihilism.

Further on in the same chapter but still in the first paragraph it states: *“There is no meaning in life if everything ends with death.”* However, it remains to be demonstrated whether life does or does not end with death, on the one hand, and whether life does or does not have meaning as a function of the fact of death... Resolution of these double questions, which are beyond the field of Logic, is approached throughout the book, in terms of existence. Be that as it may, this first paragraph of **Chapter III**, is not something to be read quickly, immediately moving on to the next paragraph. It calls for a pause and some reflection, since it involves a central point of Doctrine. The following paragraphs in the chapter highlight the relativity of human values and actions.

Chapter IV considers all the factors of dependence that operate on the human being, diminishing possibilities of choice and free action.

Chapter V deals with the appearance of certain states of consciousness whose character is different from the habitual. They involve suggestive phenomena which are not thereby

extraordinary, but that in any case have the virtue of awakening intimations of a new meaning in life. This intimation of meaning, while far from giving one faith, or promoting belief, is something that can change or relativize a skeptical denial of meaning in life.

The register of such phenomena does not go beyond provoking intellectual doubt, but does, through that character of experience, have the advantage of affecting the subject in daily life. In this sense, it has greater capacity for transformation than a theory or set of ideas, which would simply change the point of view regarding a given position toward life.

This chapter touches on certain events which, whether true or not from an objective point of view, place the subject in a mental situation that is different from the habitual. These events have the capacity to present themselves along with intuitions that make one suspect there is another way of living reality. And it is precisely this “suspicion” of another kind of reality that opens us to other horizons. In every age, so-called “miracles” (in the sense of phenomena contrary to normal perception) bring with them intuitions that place the subject in another mental ambit. To this other ambit, which we call “inspired consciousness,” we attribute numerous meanings and correlatively many expressions.

The paragraphs of this chapter configure a kind of incomplete but adequate list of registers which, when they occur, invariably give rise to questions about the meaning of life. Their register is of such psychic intensity that it demands answers in relation to their meaning. And whatever the answers, the intimate flavor they leave is always an intimation of a different reality. Let’s consider the cases: *“At times I have anticipated events that later took place. At times I have grasped a distant thought. At times I have described places I have never been. At times I have recounted exactly what took place in my absence. At times an immense joy has surprised me. At times a total comprehension has overwhelmed me. At times a perfect communion with everything has filled me with ecstasy. At times I have broken through my reveries and seen reality in a new way. 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 emerged from the non-meaning.”*

Chapter VI establishes differences between the states of sleep, semi-sleep, and vigil. The intention is placed on showing the relative nature of the idea that people normally have about everyday reality, and about the accuracy of that perceived reality.

Chapters VII, VIII, IX, X, XI, XII, and later chapters **XV, XVI, XVII, and XVIII** deal, directly or indirectly, with the phenomenon of The Force.

The theme of the Force is of the utmost interest because it gives us a practical way to put in motion experiences that orient us toward meaning. This is different from the experiences mentioned in chapter V that, although they provide an intimation of meaning, occur spontaneously or without any particular direction. At the end of these commentaries on The Inner Look we will deal with the subject of The Force and its implications.

For now we will concentrate on The Book’s four remaining chapters.

Chapter XIII sets forth the “Principles of Valid Action.” It deals with the formulation of a behavior in life that is presented for those who wish to develop a coherent life built on two basic internal registers: that of unity and that of contradiction. In this way, the justification for this “morality” is found in the registers that it produces, and not in particular ideas or beliefs tied to one place, time, or cultural model. The register of internal unity that is being sought is

accompanied by certain indicators that should be taken into account. These are: 1. The sensation of internal growth; 2. Continuity in time; and 3. Affirming that one would want to repeat it in the future. The sensation of internal growth appears as a true and positive indicator that always accompanies the experience of personal improvement. Regarding continuity in time, it means that through comparison with later, or imagined, or remembered situations, one is able to confirm that the validity of the experience does not change, even with changing circumstances. Lastly, if after the act one wishes to repeat it, we can say that the sensation of internal unity affirms the validity of this action. On the contrary, contradictory actions might have some of the characteristics of unitive actions, or none of them, but they never have all three.

There exists, nevertheless, another kind of action that we cannot strictly call “valid,” but neither can we call them “contradictory.” While such an action does not prevent our development, it does not produce great improvement either. These actions can be more or less disagreeable or more or less pleasurable, but from the point of view of validity they do not add anything or take anything away. These types of actions are the everyday actions, the mechanically habitual actions. They are perhaps necessary for our subsistence and coexistence. But according to the model of unitive and contradictory actions that we have been examining, such an action does not in itself constitute a moral act. The Principles, referred to as “Principles of Valid Action,” are classified as: 1. The Principle of Adaptation; 2. The Principle of Action and Reaction; 3. The Principle of Opportune Action; 4. The Principle of Proportion; 5. The Principle of Conformity; 6. The Principle of Pleasure; 7. The Principle of Immediate Action; 8. The Principle of Comprehended Action; 9. The Principle of Liberty; 10. The Principle of Solidarity; 11. The Principle of Negation of Opposites, and 12. The Principle of Accumulating Actions.

Chapter XIV of The Book is about the “Guide to the Inner Road.” This Guide has no greater pretensions than any other guided experience, although it is framed within practices proposed in a transcendental direction that are “suggestive” or give an “intimation of meaning.”

Chapter XIX talks about “the internal states.” This chapter is not a guided experience and it does not claim to hold transferential solutions. Instead it tries, in an allegorical way, to describe present situations in which readers may find themselves. This chapter is a poetic and allegorical description of various situations in which a person can find themselves while on their path towards the encounter with the meaning of life. As its first paragraph states: “You must now gain sufficient insight into the various internal states you may find yourself in throughout the course of your life, particularly in the course of your evolutionary work.” Here we understand “evolutionary work” as that which permits one to clear up unknowns in the development of the meaning of life.

Chapter XX, titled “Internal Reality,” is a little obscure. Its interpretation appears difficult for those who are not familiar with the theory of symbols and allegories and the phenomena of production, translation, and deformation of impulses. In any case, and leaving aside the theoretical comprehension of this final chapter, it is not difficult to find people who can perceive with relative clarity their internal states and are able to grasp those meanings on a profound level, as they would that of any poetic phrase.

Returning now to the chapters related to the Force:

The themes of the Force, the Luminous Center, the Internal Light, the Double, and the Projection of the Energy, admit two different views. First, we can consider them as

phenomena of personal experience, and therefore tend not to discuss them with people who have not registered them, or in the best of cases limit ourselves to more or less subjective descriptions. Secondly, we can consider them within a larger theory that can explain them, without appealing to the test of subjective experience. Such a theory derived from a Transcendental Psychology, is of a complexity and profundity that make it impossible to deal with in these simple “Commentaries on Silo’s Message.”