

Interview by Rolando Graña - "Informe Central" Program on Argentinean TV - June 24, 2006

Graña: ... Good afternoon, Mario. Pleased to meet you.

Silo: Pleased to meet you.

Graña: You're well?

Silo: Yes, good.

Graña: Hello.

Silo: You're right on time.

Graña: But it was a mistake... something happened...

Silo: Why?

Graña: Because to be here on time, with this rain... Ok, let's go.

Graña: It's very nice...

Silo: Yes, yes.

Graña: Why don't you ever talk to the TV?

Silo: Because we have our differences.

Graña: With television, really?

Graña: It's very nice. The acoustics...

Silo: It's great.

Graña: Why is it built like this?

Silo: Because from our point of view what is interesting is the emptiness, more than the content. So they take everything out and there's nothing.

Graña: Like a temple ...

Silo: No icons, wall hangings, nothing...

Graña: It's amazing how the voice resonates.

Silo: Yes, indeed, it's great.

Graña: Now let's go back to the beginning. Where did you come from?

Silo: From Mendoza.

Graña: Okay, but what did you do?

Silo: Nothing, I had finished school, I was doing political science...

Silo: Hello! How are you? Where are you from?

Answer: From Paraguay.

Silo: Very good!

Graña: So, from Mendoza. And your work?

Silo: We had a family business producing alcohol, that did its thing. We sold to pharmacies, to different places. We would bring the fraction from Tucuman.

Graña: You were saying that as a youth you started to travel.

Silo: Yes, around that time.

Graña: At what age?

Silo: I must have been about 19. I went nearby, to the closest places ... to Chile. And from Chile I started to go up through the Atacama.

Graña: What year was this?

Silo: This was in 1956-57. I went up to Peru, and there, the motorbike broke down.

Graña: Ah! On a motorbike, like Che Guevara?

Silo: Yes, yes, I started to hitch rides on small trucks and so on, and got to Colombia. Well, I travelled around to different places, different Latin American countries, and then came back. I continued with my things, the alcohol business, all that stuff.

Then I went to Europe and I also travelled through various countries. I stayed mainly in Naples, about two months. And I continued taking samples. Tests?

Graña: What do you mean, taking samples?

Silo: Taking samples means to see how things were. It seemed to me that there was a great imbalance in the generational process, above all. The way one succeeds another, that has a mechanism, a generational dialectic, as Ortega would say.

But I saw that there was a very important imbalance, generationally speaking. This was clear to me by 1968, when the new generations rose up, when Mao Tse Tung took advantage of this generational uprising to launch his cultural revolution...

Graña: Okay. And here in Argentina it was the time of the guerrilla, fathers against sons...

Silo: Sure, all of that mess. It was what I had seen already in formation.

Graña: It was in the air.

Silo: Yes, yes, clearly. Those were the samples I was taking, above all in terms of the generations. The ones who gave me a lot of direction regarding those generational changes were the young artists. There were many changes in the vision of the world of young artists who did not have access to the media, to big theatres, the big exhibitions, and I especially remember a group that called themselves, the "Nada-ists".

Graña: Nothingness itself ...

Silo: Nothing itself. Those Nada-ists denied everything in a strong dialectic, against their parents, against the established system, against established values. This gave me an important symptomology of what was starting to develop...

Graña: How old were you then?

Silo: I was already 20, something like that. 22, no, about 20 years old.

Graña: You return to Mendoza.

Silo: I return to Mendoza, and keep doing my things. It was later that I went to Europe, continuing to take samples. What happened was that I jumped to '68 to clarify the point that the samples I was taking were useful to understand what happened 10 years later. It was in 1958 that I was taking these samples and seeing this generational dialectic in motion. And in '68, I see that in the Rome Polytechnic, in Cairo University, finally in Paris, finally, not at the beginning, in the cultural revolution of Mao and all of those phenomena, with all that I see the generational dialectic explode. What I had seen very simply in a small circle of artists, young rebels, all of that, now had a psychosocial character.

Graña: How old were you in '69?

Silo: I was 30 years old.

Graña: So, let's see... What would you say if they told you that a long time ago – or even today – that there's a young 30-year old man who goes to a mountain, gathers some 200, 400 people and gives a message. It'd be a phenomenon that would at least appear in the news.

Silo: Yes, it was like that, because ...

Graña: You were very young, it was a strange thing for that moment...

Silo: Yes, CBS turned up, they turned up from various places to see that phenomenon because it had characteristics...

Graña: How did they come to be there?

Silo: How did CBS get there, for example?

Graña: Tell me how you managed to get so many people to the mountain, why did they follow you?

Silo: Well, I believe that we took advantage of the mistakes made by the government itself. What in jujitsu they call, taking advantage of the other's force. By prohibiting everyone and prohibiting us...

Graña: Let me take take your bag from your shoulder. Otherwise, you're making me nervous with your finger.

Silo: The fact that we could hold a public act, despite the prohibitions against them, and with the consent of the government – because we did ask, we have always been very obedient, we asked the government. Can we do a public act? How could you ask such a thing, get out of here. Ok.

Graña: It was the dictatorship of Onganía, demonstrations were prohibited.

Silo: Exactly. But if we don't speak in the traditional public places, if we don't speak in the cities, if we don't speak in meeting places, in the public squares, perhaps we could meet in the mountains, or where friends go to have barbeques. Well, they said, if you want to speak there, go ahead and talk to the stones. Ah, okay. So that's what we did. We spoke to the stones and then the party started.

Graña: It wasn't a political message either.

Silo: No, it wasn't. But nevertheless the regime felt attacked and they unleashed all the media under their control to deform the reality of our message.

Graña: What did they say about you at that time?

Silo: Everything, I don't know.

Graña: Well, tell me...

Silo: They talked about gurus. In those times it seems the whole guru thing was very degrading. Today, they talk about football gurus, business gurus, but back then "guru" was something pretty perjorative.

Graña: Well, it was the time of the hippies as well.

Silo: Sure, sure.

Graña: Was it somehow a phenomenon of that hippie culture?

Silo: No, not at all. Hippies in reality never participated in our things. They didn't understand the phenomenon. It's not that we were against that phenomenon, but the hippies weren't very sympathetic to us. In fact, we've never seen many people be very sympathetic... So we must be totally mistaken.

Graña: Well, but you have many adherents throughout the world.

Silo: Well, sure, but there also about 164 countries in the world, according to the United Nations. So if we have a few thousand in each country, the amount is big, but in each place, really, they are little groups. They are small groups – we'll see how it all turns out.

Graña: What were the fundamental concepts of that message in 1969?

Silo: Nonviolence. It was that the question of violence could not simply be resolved, neither through declarations nor political actions. Because the theme of violence was something deeper, more profound, more within each human being.

Graña: Let's recall that in that moment, in the political context, there was a dictatorship on one side and a growing guerilla movement on the other.

Silo: Of course, and they were all violent. So, of course, neither side liked us. For example, the guerillas or those who sided with them saw us as people who were trying to derail the revolution, to soften the fighting spirit, to deceive young people in their struggle for liberty and all that. That's how they saw us. I'm speaking of well-meaning people, not those who just went out to kill. They saw us as a deviating phenomenon. And not to mention the dictatorships who saw us as...

Graña: And the religions?

Silo: The official religion here, at that time...

Graña: Which was much stronger than it is now...

Silo: Stronger, yes. Catholicism was very against us, full of animosity.

Graña: What did they say about you?

Silo: That we were a sect, a satanic sect or something like that. Of course... Satanic. The protestants in England and in other places also saw us as extreme. So, in these areas...

Graña: Let's go back a bit. How does something that starts in Mendoza in '69 suddenly have followers in other countries of the world?

Silo: That's how it is.

Graña: Why?

Silo: I believe again that the dictatorship helped us a lot in the sense that many people had to leave. They imprisoned many people, persecuted many people, and people left. And they went to places connected to Argentina – to Spain and Italy. So you can see this thread as the first groups appear in Spain and Italy. Others went to Venezuela, to the USA and elsewhere, but the strongest groups went to those two places. It's understandable. Because of the similarity of language, the common cultural elements, they went to those two places.

Graña: How did you become so known that you managed to have so many people go to the mountains to listen to you, in 1969? From one point to another, from the young man returning from a trip up to the time of the message, how did you become known? I mean, how did you get followers?

Silo: With small groups, with small groups that we had.

Graña: Groups of what?

Silo: Personal study groups. They were groups that studied what was happening personally, what was happening in the immediate environment, what was happening with the world situation. We focused on that. But when I speak of groups, I'm speaking of, what? Seven people who met in a garage. That's what we did.

Graña: Well, at that time there was a custom of meeting and reading and debating

Silo: Sure.

Graña: Unfortunately that custom has been lost.

Silo: Yes, it wasn't anything strange. And these people, if we continue the thread, we'll see that they were in Mendoza and in Chile, next door. So these small groups were formed. Something was starting up in Buenos Aires. But when we gave that speech in the mountains, who came? Who were those 200 people that came? They are people from Mendoza, from Santiago, and a few friends from Buenos Aires. What I'm saying is that there is nothing mysterious in this development. You can see how it was produced, through geographical proximity or cultural proximity, as in the other cases.

Graña: In those times, when everything was political, be it revolutionary urgency or cold war, you were proposing an emphasis on the personal.

Silo: That's right. Which is the same as what I propose now. A strong emphasis on the personal. Because when we talk about social and economic situations we speak in terms of Humanism, we subscribe to what Humanism proposes as being important. But for us the centre of gravity is what happens in oneself. If you say to me, what do we do with governments, with... Well, look. Humanism exists in different parts of the world, it exists as a political party, it exists as cultural and social organisations. So in social and cultural matters we subscribe to what Humanism proposes. But in terms of what happens with oneself, this we do through what we call The Message. A brief message, very small, with a very small book as well, that speaks of the Path, that speaks of, I don't know, of daily life, and not much more. It's not at all complicated, it's something people can grasp very easily. It is very different to the theoretical formulations that you sometimes find in Humanism.

Graña: You don't present yourself as a philosopher.

Silo: Absolutely not.

Graña: As a preacher?

Silo: No, because what I do in public places is not preaching either. Now, when we meet among friends...

Graña: You aren't a preacher to the masses.

Silo: No. Nothing like what preachers do ever happened.

Graña: Why do people follow you?

Silo: I believe because they find something in common with their situation. I don't believe it's through the power of speech, or through what I present as the important point in explaining things. No, I believe it's because people have this within them.

Graña: The Message speaks strongly to suffering, to people who suffer.

Silo: For sure – to people who suffer, and to failure. To failure, above all. For us this is a major point. Whoever believes that they haven't failed is going to have problems understanding what we are saying. Well, really, they won't have problems, because they are successful people...

Graña: And that was in another time, when there were other illusions.

Silo: Yes, of course.

Graña: Years later they started speaking of "no future"...

Silo: Yes, yes. We have put special emphasis on the theme of failure.

Graña: Why are the themes of failure and suffering such a point of attraction for you, or for people who listen to you?

Silo: Because people recognise it as real, as true, as something they experience. It isn't something advertised in the system. To use the word failure is the least inviting and least promotional thing you can imagine.

Graña: The least seductive.

Silo: We are failures... Oh, very good! We aren't going to hear that.

Graña: But you speak of people's intimate suffering.

Silo: Yes. So there is such truth in what we say that many people register it and say, it must be like that, could be. It goes in that direction. Through a recognition of an inner truth and not through an ideological construct. No, it's through the recognition of an inner truth.

Graña: So, to change yourself. How do you change yourself?

Silo: It is like lifting yourself up by your own hair... It's difficult. But it's precisely the recognition of suffering that pushes you out of suffering. When you recognise that things are bad and that there's no way out, you look for fresh air. You look to open the windows to let the sun in, to let the air in, and then you change, or at least you're able to.

Graña: How many followers do you have in the world?

Silo: Followers? Well, that's one way of calling it. I don't know, maybe 1 million, 2 million, something like that.

Graña: That's a lot.

Silo: You would have to ask the guys who go around with statistics, they know. They count everything. Yes, it's something like that.

Graña: Well, it's not usual that someone who reflects, in Mendoza, ends up with a million people in the world who share his thought. I mean, in Argentina...

Silo: No, I don't believe there is anything like it.

Graña: And an organised thought, too.

Silo: Yes, it has its virtues and it has its defects. But, well...

Graña: Over the years they persecuted you, they accused you. What happened during the dictatorship, for example?

Silo: They put me in prison 17 times, which isn't a lot, because they kept me for one week, they let me go, they sent me to Villa Devoto, to different places.

Graña: During the dictatorship of Onganía or Videla?

Silo: In Videla's mostly.

Graña: On what charges?

Silo: There were never any charges. That was the most interesting thing.

Graña: What, they would imprison you in Mendoza and send you down here?

Silo: Oh yes. For example, we held a conference in the Swiss Society here in Buenos Aires. Can you imagine, in the middle of a conference, a few guys show up full of machine-guns and take 500 people to jail for being at the conference. They had to release them later...

Graña: A conference in any case in which you were talking about personal issues?

Silo: For sure. So the thing is complicated as they see it, as they saw it.

Graña: So your thinking was considered subversive.

Silo: Yes, certainly. For example, on that note, I remember at one point there was talk that we were attacking the "National Being" – 'Being' in capitals. And we looked around...

Graña: That's what they said to everybody ...

Silo: Right, so we tried to figure out what this national being was, it was difficult for us to understand what we were involved in, according to the charges. So it was always very blurry, it was always diffuse. And the accusations made against us were so diffuse and so foggy that they also affected our image. Because if today they say one thing, that we're of the far-left, and then of the far-right, and then that we're deviants...

Graña: I remember during the dictatorship in the 80s, a number of articles were published accusing you of being a cult.

Silo: Sure, of course, but it was all very blurry.

Graña: But with cults you assume that people are held prisoner, that their goods are taken...

Silo: Yes, all that.

Graña: Were there every any court cases?

Silo: None, none at all. But they did kill some of our people, and deported others, and jailed others, yes ... but never any charges. That's the truth. So it is either a big misunderstanding, or a malicious thing on a grand scale.

Graña: Of something that happened more than 20 years ago.

Silo: Yes. Well, here we are, and many of them are already gone...

Graña: It's true.

Silo: It's like that, and the hippies are also gone, and the guerrillas too... So we don't have many problems with what is happening now. We look to the process, the future, because soon I'll be gone too, and then what happens? Nothing happens. What happens is that this continues to develop and all is well ... that's how it is.

Graña: Shall we go in?

Silo: Let's.

Graña: Can you explain what this is, for the camera?

Silo: This is a Hall. For us, halls are the places where people can make their reflections, where they can do ceremonies. From the outside it looks like a Buddhist stupa, except that on the inside the Buddhist stupas are full, that is, you can't enter them. This is a kind of empty Buddhist stupa where what matters are the people, not the images ...

Graña: When someone joins a group, what do you teach them, what do you propose?

Silo: Well, in that group, in groups of the Message, people study a little book, which is the book of The Message. So, we study it and discuss it. Many people say, but this is very boring, what is this, where's the attraction? ... And well, they try it out, see how it is, and if they don't like it, they go, and others like it.

Graña: So, some people get it.

Silo: Yes, the person gets enthused and not only that, not only do they like it, they get it, but they say it's worth spreading this. And those are the people who start new groups. This is how it works. It's so simple it's hard to accept. That's how it works.

Graña: As far as I know, you give quite a bit of importance to meditation, don't you?

Silo: Quite a bit, yes.

Graña: How do you relate it to modern life?

Silo: I believe that, in the midst of things, we have something that we call the gift. In the midst of any situation, in the midst of your work, in the midst of a conflict, in the middle of the street, you breathe deeply and just by breathing deeply and asking for something good for others or for yourself, you make contact with yourself.

Graña: Something changes.

Silo: Something changes ... and on you go, in your various activities. When things are good, you do that but you give thanks. To whom? Who knows? It's a mechanism, a mechanism of thanks... This is great, I give thanks. And when things are bad – what a disaster, how can I get out of this thing? – then you call upon your good memories. I remember when things were good and for me that is a reference, that moment in which things were good. Now that things are bad, I can appeal to that memory.

Graña: So in fact you propose concrete methods to improve people's daily lives .

Silo: Absolutely, but soft and simple things,

Graña: I mean, it's not an ideology that discusses things only intellectually, but from practices of the body as well.

Silo: Exactly, it's what we call the experience – experiences that we also see in the ceremonies. We are very ceremonial.

Graña: You have rituals.

Silo: Not exactly rituals, but ceremonies. Ceremonies like in civil life. In civil life there are ceremonies for everything but people don't recognize them, people don't recognize that marriage is done through a ceremony, that there's a ceremony for when you raise the flag, ceremonies to celebrate birthdays. There are ceremonies everywhere. So people don't recognize ceremonies, but we do. We do ceremonies of well-being so that people feel good.

Graña: And how is it?

Silo: Well, you have to read it. There's a person who reads it, and inspires the others. We ask for those who feel bad, we ask that they feel good.

Graña: Sounds like an evangelist priest to me.

Silo: Okay. The Ceremony of Well-Being... we are gathered here to remember those dear to us. Some of them are having difficulties in their emotional lives, some in relation to their life or their health. To them, we direct our thoughts and our best wishes.

And then the person assisting says, we have faith that our call for their well-being will reach them. And so on.

Graña: It's like a secular religion.

Silo: Yes, it has some of those things. There is a lot of truth in religions.

Graña: And wisdom ...

Silo: And in all of them, absolutely. Just because someone wears a turban doesn't mean they don't speak the truth. Not at all. In all religions there are things that are very true, and that we consider, absolutely. We're not the ones who attack religions – it's religions that attack us.

Graña: How do you get along – do you replace religions, do you coexist?

Silo: Probably we are replacing them.

Graña: Many people who come around, do they continue being religious?

Silo: I think that in general no, although of course some are originally – since this place is a Catholic country – then some will be of Catholic origin, and of other less-popular religions.

Graña: But, leaving your religion is not a condition?

Silo: No, no, here there are no conditions about leaving anything. That's the point.

Graña: Let's go back... So why then did that thing that you were a cult stick to you so much?

Silo: I think it was because of the media.

Graña: Here we go, getting punished again.

Silo: I think it was like that.

Graña: Because in fact there are no trials or convictions against you.

Silo: No, no. And when the media weren't against us directly, they manipulated the information in such a way that there was always a suspicious atmosphere around it. But I think to a large degree it was the media. Of course the media doesn't do things on their own. But that is a different discussion, for me to talk about the media.

Graña: No problem.

Silo: Obviously the media have a direction, they have capital behind them, they have interests. So journalists are wonderful people, it could be, certainly, but the media, for us, are suspect. That is the truth. Just as we are suspect to the media, and so everything is fine and well-balanced.

Graña: It is symmetrical.

Silo: Symmetrical.

Graña: Tell me about the other ceremonies.

Silo: Let's see, they're all here. Ceremonies... Service, Laying on of Hands, Well-Being, the one we just read... Protection. A ceremony for individual or collective participation, everyone is standing ...

Graña: How are these ceremonies generated? These are official?

Silo: Yes, yes. But in different places the people change them and we say we are not tied to anything. For example, a specific and finished ceremony, people change it. We do not say that everyone must adhere strictly to the text, we say that it has to be adapted. And people start adapting it and start changing the words. We have no dogma in terms of ceremonies, experience, or doctrine. People should do what they like and what sounds good to them. If there are words they do not like, they take those words out of the ceremony and put in the ones they feel work better. Because maybe in an urban environment there are a lot of words that go well and in a less-dense, rural habitat, those words do not fit. So people change the words. There shouldn't be dogmas with words, with the ceremonies, with the proposals – we have to let people express themselves through this little form...

Graña: We were looking at the one about Protection ...

Silo: This ceremony is designed to involve children in our community. Since ancient times, children have been the focus of ceremonies such as those of naming and baptisms. These ceremonies have recognized a change of status, a change in a human being's stage of life. There are today and have long been civil formalities that record the date and place of birth and other information. However, the spiritual transcendence that accompanies a ceremony of this kind has nothing to do with the cold formalities of official documents. Rather, it flows from the joy of parents, family, and friends when children are publicly introduced to the community.

This is a ceremony through which the status of children changes as they become participants in a community that makes a commitment to be responsible for them, the children...

Graña: The tribe ...

Silo: The tribe, the tribe ... should unfortunate events leave them unprotected. These have worked very well, for example, with a lot of support from people, in very poor places, in favelas, in slums, where special and unfortunate circumstances have left children vulnerable. So people in the community take responsibility to support them – not contain them, which is a manipulative word – but to support them.

Graña: What relationship do they have with each other? Do they help each other?

Silo: No. I think they feel very good with each other.

Graña: No, I mean in everyday life, does a follower of yours do things differently, they're in contact, their lives change...

Silo: Here for example it's clear, in the case of children, if these children are left alone ...

Graña: Sure, that's why I thought that... I mean, is there a network of support among you?

Silo: Yes, but I don't think it's anything formal at all. Probably people who are friends will do business together. Those who know each other will speak to another on their behalf, as friends. Surely this happens, just as it happens in all groups of friends. But institutionally nothing like that happens. Neither is it proposed.

We don't preach: "Okay, you guys who are all in this thing, all work together so that things improve." No, it does not work like that. It does not work like that because even the differences in economic status and so on, are very large, very diverse. There are different strata, different ages, different life situations.

Graña: At one point you proposed, or formed, or encouraged the formation of a political party.

Silo: Yes of course, because it's also a way of expressing oneself in the world. Humanism has many forms of expression. Humanist political parties are one form, the Center of Cultures is another, the Community for Human Development is another, there are many forms of expression. In Humanism, we have invested heavily in diversity. We have not aimed for that monolithic thing, the monolithic party that absorbs everything...

Graña: Why were you never a candidate?

Silo: How could I be a candidate if I'm not a politician? But what I thought was good was that people express themselves politically. How can we leave all this in the hands of these irresponsible people we know of all over the world? I think that little by little we have to make a contribution. That does not mean that one has to be a politician – it's not my role. Shoemaker, stick to your shoes... I really believe that.

Graña: Why orange?

Silo: Because it's what is most visible. In terms of advertising and publicity, you should see the vibrational frequency that orange has. That's why it's used in first-aid, in the mountains, because you can see it from a helicopter. It's used at sea, for rescues... a raft that's adrift. Orange, so it can be seen from afar. It's a nice color and not a pure color like red, yellow, so monotonous... It's an interesting color that now the Dutch use on their shirts. And they are very good.

Graña: How did it go with these years of politics? What was the experience of the Humanist Party?

Silo: Well, I know that in the last election, in this country, the humanists got 250,000 votes, which is not known through the press but all the data is there. 250,000 votes is very little, but if we compare that with the rest of the Left in Argentina, virtually all of them together are in a lower position than the Humanist Party. That's the truth.

Graña: Are there other Humanist parties in other parts of the world? Similar to this one.

Silo: Yes, sure. For example in Chile, Humanism shared the leadership of the Left with the Communist Party. And the Humanist Party candidate was the Presidential candidate among the four candidates at that time. I use this as an example of political activities.

Graña: As a politician, what would you promote?

Silo: I would promote what the Humanist Parties are doing.

Graña: Okay, but ideologically.

Silo: Ideologically, in the case of Latin America, I would propose support for – nevermind the results, and nevermind the rigidities that some of them might have – I would of course support Chavez, I'd support Evo Morales, Kirschner, Tabaré Vázquez... I'd support those who in some way are making efforts to achieve a certain independence.

Graña: So in traditional ideological terms you are a man of the Left.

Silo: Yes, yes, that's right.

Graña: And you add to that this thing of a personal search with meditation and individual techniques.

Silo: I would say it is the reverse. Basically I am a man who first thinks in terms of internal fulfilment, and second, who expresses himself in the world in different artistic, political, cultural forms of expression, and so on. That's how I would put it. But basically our proposal is of internal change. And if there is no internal change, there is no system that can change this.

Graña: In 1969, you were already speaking against drugs when they were not yet a problem.

Silo: Sure, sure.

Graña: And today?

Silo: It's the same, except that the world has gotten worse. That's how it is. We spoke against violence and it's the same, only that the world has gotten worse. We spoke against social breakdown, but the world is going towards upheaval. We spoke about the collapse of a system, half of the system fell... now, it's time for the other half, the other half of the system.

That is, we spoke about that, we still do, but conditions are becoming different and are starting to resemble much of what we talked about 30 years ago. Every day they resemble it more... I say this without much satisfaction. Because what it implies are big problems, a lot of suffering, a lot of crisis. But intellectually yes, why not, we say it with some pride. Quietly, but with some pride in having been so ahead of these unfortunate events, that today are going full speed ahead all over. Things are a disaster. But that's what we spoke about when they were saying: why are you talking about pacifism in this country, why don't you go to Vietnam? They said that, they said things like that.

Graña: What can be done against internal violence?

Silo: Against internal violence... Against internal violence, you have to come to understand that everything is very illusory. Everything is very illusory and we are all heading quickly toward death. So everything that you do, better that you do it to improve your condition, to find something transcendent. Because in any case everything ends with death. And if everything ends with death, there is no meaning in life. Unless you find other possibilities.

Graña: For example...

Silo: For example, transcendence beyond death. It is a possibility that reasonable people should explore. Why so much censorship, so much self-censorship? The rationalism of the 19th and 20th centuries is over. People should explore those new paths and ask themselves, is it true that everything ends with death? or...

Graña: ... And what do you think?

Silo: I think not. That is what I believe, and what I believe is irrelevant.

Graña: But there are many people for whom it is not irrelevant what you believe.

Silo: True, but very few people, compared to 6 billion people in the world. One million next to 6 billion... one in six thousand, that's nothing. Aside from the problem of numbers there is the problem of influences. There are ten people out there with so much influence that they control the economy of the world. Well, I don't think that those ten are with us. So besides the numbers, there is the matter of influences. Our influence is very little...

Graña: I read that you talk a lot about the relationship between violence and desire.

Silo: Yes, for sure. And if today, for example, there wouldn't exist this desire to seize oil wells, to seize raw materials, to seize all the economic forces on the planet, the problem would be different. But this desire, this continual predation, this thing of taking things from the other, sure, it's a tremendous cause of violence.

Graña: In those years, did your movement take any position on the debate at the time regarding sexual freedom?

Silo: The movement has always been very free in sexual matters. It didn't even have to make statements in that regard.

Graña: At that time, I mean, the sexual issue was a big topic...

Silo: Sure. And the Movement now is not concerned with making statements on that topic. People should do what they want. For the few years that people are on this earth, on top of it all to live so constrained, so limited... and no one knows why. No, we've never preached on this, but people in the Movement have always been very free in sexual matters. I've never seen special taboos...

Graña: How are the meditation practices that you offer to people who come around?

Silo: They're here, we meditate on these points. We meditate on what we call The Path.

Graña: When did you learn the importance of meditation? Was it some practice, some yoga, I don't know...

Silo: No, I think that came on its own, through experience, simply through experience. From having organized one's thought a certain way, it comes from there. Not from a "guru", or a teacher or things like that.

Graña: Well ... tell me.

Silo: I was saying that in The Path it says: "If you believe that your life will end with death, what you think, feel and do have no meaning. Everything will end with incoherence and disintegration. If you believe that your life does not end with death, you must bring into agreement what you think, what you feel and what you do. Everything needs to advance toward coherence, toward unity, etc." Each of these phrases... is a source for meditation. Those are the meditations. More than gazing at one's navel, we meditate on themes, themes above all.

Graña: Let me ask you a question. Why have you never spoken on television?

Silo: Well, actually I have spoken, here and there, when there was a call from someone who directed for TV and who said, why don't you come here to talk, let's talk, let's discuss, yes, with no limitations, no requirements, no conditions, without signing any book ... ok, fine. So we went. That's happened very rarely. Rarely, but it has happened. It happened here, it happened in Spain, in Italy, France, Moscow, it's happened in many places but, "cum grano salis", in small doses, but it's happened.

Graña: In other parts of the world, the Message and the groups are similar. The search is similar?

Silo: Yes, the search is similar, I think the forms differ, yes...

Graña: I suppose you must have traveled, gotten to know people in other countries... How are they different?

Silo: They differ in the organization of their words, they differ on how to present it, there are differences.

Graña: It must be strange to hear people speaking in Russian, discussing what you've proposed.

Silo: Sure, of course, but it's not that I understand Russian. It's strange but it works well. It works well, because it works at the human level, independent of the linguistic qualities that might exist in one place or another, in the details... It works well everywhere. And that's what we're doing.

Graña: How would you define yourself? If you had to explain, if you had to introduce yourself, how would you define yourself?

Silo: I would define myself as ... someone who does not have things very clear. Compared to the clarity that everyone has. All of you are very clear, you are wonderful, and I'm a poor guy who does not know where he is. Of course, Lao Tse said something similar. Everybody knows things, everybody knows what is good, what is bad, what one should do, what one shouldn't do, and I go about like an idiot in the world, without understanding where I'm going. That's very good, that's very intelligent.

Graña: Well, pretending that you know removes uncertainty.

Silo: Sure. So I would present myself as a person full of doubts. As someone who does not understand well the laws of history, the laws of men... Basically like that. And from that point, we could start to talk. Maybe, maybe. Well, I have to go.

Graña: Thank you.

Silo: No, thank you.

Graña: Thank you all.

Silo: See you.