

Guided Experiences

El Ateneo, Madrid, Spain, November 3, 1989

On May 2, 1916, here in Madrid in El Ateneo (the Atheneum), Ortega introduced Bergson. On that occasion, Ortega explained that this society, El Ateneo, was an institution dedicated to the cultivation of and reverence for ideas. With that mission in mind, I would like to speak here tonight in this same hall, not about literature, as one would think is called for by the nature of the book we are presenting, not about the tales or stories of which this volume is composed, but rather about the ideas out of which these stories have arisen.

Of course, I'm not saying that when one speaks about a literary subject ideas are absent, but simply that typically the focus is on the aesthetic aspects of the work, though sometimes one will examine the content of the work while looking at its formal aspects. Often, the author may relate his or her life experiences, allowing us access to his or her biography, sensibilities, and perception of the world. What reason is there, then, for my speaking tonight about ideas? Simply because this book is the practical application of a theory of consciousness in which the image, as phenomenon of representation, has special importance. It is true that I will have to say a number of things first, especially for those of you who have not held in your hands the book that we will discuss tonight. In any case, these preliminaries need not impede the communicating of that structure of ideas, that theory which I mentioned.

Let's look first at the history of this work. Originally written in 1980, this book was revised in 1988, and just a few days ago it was published and made available for your consideration. At this point, I would like to read the introductory note by J. Valinsky, which says the following:

The work consists of two parts. The first, "Tales", is a collection of thirteen stories that comprise the more dense and complex part of the work. The second part, "Playing with Images", includes nine descriptions that are simpler than those of the first part.

This material may be viewed in various ways. From a superficial point of view, it may be seen as a series of short stories with happy endings. Another focus, however, reveals this work as a series of psychological practices based on literary forms. While all the stories are written in the first person, it should be noted that this "first person" is not the one habitually found in other writings. Rather than that of the author, the first person in this work is that of the reader—each story provides a different setting that serves as a frame for the reader to fill with his or her own life and concerns.

As an aid, asterisks appear at intervals throughout the text to mark pauses at key points that can help the reader—or listener—introduce, mentally, the images that transform a passive reader into an actor in and coauthor of each description. This original form also allows one person to read aloud (observing the aforementioned pauses), while each listener imagines his or her own literary "knot." This approach—the hallmark of these writings—would in more conventional stories destroy all plot sequence.

It should be noted that in every literary piece, the reader—or spectator in the case of plays, films, or television programs—can identify more or less fully with the characters, while recognizing, either at the time or later on, differences between the actor playing the role in the piece and the observer, who is "outside" the production and is none other than the spectator him or herself. However, in these writings quite the opposite occurs: The main character is at once the observer, agent, and recipient of the actions and emotions. In any case, whether or not we find these "guided experiences" to our liking, we will at least recognize that we are in the presence of a new and innovative literary initiative, which is not something that happens every day.

That is the end of the note.

As we have seen, then, the book is composed of brief stories in which asterisks appear at critical points, indicating a pause in reading—or listening—and allowing one to insert at those points whatever images one deems most appropriate. In this way, the development of the story continues but is rendered more dynamic by the reader's introduction of these new elements. Let's look at the specific case of the first of these tales, titled "The Child":

It is night, and I find myself in an amusement park. Everywhere I see mechanical rides, filled with light and movement, but I do not see any people.

Then I discover a child about ten years old, who is facing away from me. As I move closer, the youngster turns to look at me, and I realize it is myself when I was that age.

Asterisk! That is to say, here we find an interruption, where, following the suggestions in the text, I am to insert myself, as an image, into the story. The story continues this way:

"What are you doing here?" I ask. The child tells me something about an injustice that has happened, and then begins to cry. To console the child, I promise that we'll go on some rides, but the youngster insists on talking about the injustice. In order to understand the child better, I try to recall what happened to me at that age that was so unfair.

Asterisk! From what I've said so far, I'm sure you can understand the mechanics of reading the guided experiences that make up the stories in this book. In addition, you will see that there is a common pattern in how all the guided experiences are constructed. First, there is an entrance to the theme and general setting of the scene; second, there is, in a manner of speaking, an increase in "dramatic tension;" third, we find the representation of a life problem; fourth, there is the denouement, an untying of the central knot or resolution

of the problem; fifth, there is a reduction in overall tension; and sixth, there is a not-too-abrupt exit from the experience, generally retracing the previous steps of the story.

Let me say a little more about the way the situation presented in each story is framed, that is, the context in which each experience occurs. In order to place readers in a situation in which they can more easily make contact with themselves, it is necessary to distort the structure of time and space in the story, and this is done following the lessons we learn from our own dreams. We need to help the reader free the dynamics of his or her images, avoiding the rationalizations that can prevent the story from flowing easily. If, at the same time, there is a destabilizing of the reader's corporal register, the sense of position of the reader's body in space, this will help the reader question anew these moments in his or her life, including future moments in the sense of actions that might yet be carried out. Let's look, then, at an example that illustrates this distortion and destabilization from the experience titled "The Rescue":

I am in a car that is speeding down a large highway. In the strange half-light I'm unsure whether it is dawn or dusk. The driver beside me is someone I've never seen before. In the back seat are two women and a man, who are also strangers to me. The car races onward, surrounded by other cars that are driving recklessly, as if their drivers are drunk or crazy.

I ask my companion what is happening. Looking at me furtively, he answers in a strange language, "Rex voluntas!"

Turning on the radio, which blares noisy static, I can faintly hear a weak metallic voice monotonously repeating, "Rex voluntas, rex voluntas, rex voluntas."

The traffic slows, and by the roadside I see wrecked and overturned cars with fire spreading among them.

We stop, and abandoning the car, join a sea of terrified people rushing toward the fields.

Looking back through the smoke and flames, I see many hapless souls who are trapped and doomed, but I'm forced to keep running by the human stampede that pushes me along. Some of the people stumble to the ground, and amid this delirium I struggle in vain to reach a woman trying to shield her child as the mob tramples over them.

The chaos and violence are spreading everywhere, so I make up my mind to move in a slightly diagonal direction that will let me escape the crowd; I aim toward some higher ground that diverts this mindless stampede. Many of the fallen clutch at my clothes, tearing them to shreds, but I notice that the crush of people around me is growing less.

One man does break free of the mob and comes running toward me. His clothes are in tatters and his body is covered with wounds, yet I feel a great joy that he's been saved. On reaching me he clutches my arm, and yelling like a madman points frantically down the hill. He's speaking a language I do not understand, but I think he wants me to help rescue someone. I tell him to wait for a while—that right now it's impossible. I know he cannot understand me, and his desperation is tearing me apart. Then he tries to go back down, but just as he's leaving I trip him and he falls headlong. He lies sprawled on the ground, sobbing bitterly. For my part I realize that I've saved both his life and his conscience—his conscience because he did try to rescue someone, and his life by preventing his doomed attempt.

Climbing higher, I reach a freshly plowed field. The earth is loose and furrowed. In the distance I hear gunfire, and think I know what is happening—hurriedly I leave. After a while, everything is silent and I stop once more. Looking back toward the city, I see a sinister glow.

I feel the ground begin to shake beneath my feet, and a rumbling from the depths warns me of an imminent earthquake. Within moments I've lost my balance and find myself lying on the ground. Curled on my side and gazing up at the sky, I'm overcome by waves of dizziness.

The earthquake passes, and I look up to see an enormous, blood-red moon.

The heat is unbearable and the air is filled with an acrid odor. Meanwhile, I'm still uncertain whether the day is just beginning or night is falling.

Sitting down, I hear a growing roar. Soon hundreds of aircraft fill the sky, passing overhead like deadly insects and disappearing toward some unknown destiny.

Nearby I come upon a large dog that is staring up at the moon. It begins to howl, almost like a wolf. I call out to it, and the animal approaches me timidly. When it reaches my side, I gently pet its bristling fur and see shivers running down its body.

The dog pulls away from me and begins to leave. I get to my feet and follow it, and we cross a rocky area until we reach a small stream. The thirsty animal rushes forward and eagerly begins to drink, but all at once draws back and falls over. Approaching the dog I touch it, and realize that it's dead.

I feel a new earthquake, which threatens to knock me over, but it subsides.

Turning around, I behold far off in the sky four enormous clouds advancing toward me with the muffled rumbling of thunder. The first cloud is white, the second is red, the third is black, and the fourth is yellow. And these clouds are like four armed horsemen riding on the storm, traveling across the heavens and laying waste to all life upon the earth.

I begin running to escape the approaching clouds, for I realize that if their rain touches me I'll be contaminated. As I run toward the highway, suddenly my path is blocked by a gigantic figure—towering over me I see a huge robot swinging a sword of fire in a menacing arc. I shout that I must keep going because the radioactive clouds are approaching, but the robot replies that it has been stationed here to prevent

destructive people from entering; adding that it's armed with lasers, it warns me not to come any closer. I see that the robot stands on the dividing line between two distinct areas-the one I'm coming from, barren and dying, and the one ahead, filled with vegetation and life.

So I shout to the robot, "You must let me pass because I've done a good deed!"

"What is a good deed?" the robot asks.

"A constructive action, something that builds and contributes to life", I answer.

"Then tell me what you've done that's so good", the robot demands.

"I've saved a human being from certain death, and what's more, I've saved his conscience as well."

At once the giant robot stands aside, and I leap into the protected area just as the first drops of poisoned rain begin to fall.

Here I'll stop reading from this story, but there is also an endnote about this story that contains the following comments:

The eeriness of the plot is achieved through the ambiguity of time ("In the strange half-light I'm unsure whether it is dawn or dusk"); the contrast of place ("I see that the robot stands on the dividing line between two distinct areas-the one I'm coming from, barren and dying, and the one ahead, filled with vegetation and life"); the inability to communicate with other people and the Babel-like confusion of tongues ("I ask my companion what is happening. Looking at me furtively, he answers in a strange language, Rex voluntas!"); and finally by leaving the protagonist at the mercy of uncontrollable forces-heat, earthquakes, strange astronomical phenomena, polluted water, a climate of war, an armed giant robot, and so on.

Time and again the protagonist's body is destabilized-it is pushed and shoved, it must walk across the soft, uneven ground of the freshly plowed field, it is knocked to the ground by an earthquake.

The aforementioned pattern in the framing of the situation is repeated in a number of guided experiences, each time with different images and each time stressing the particular problem or "knot" that is the focus of that story. For example, in the experience titled "My Greatest Mistake", everything revolves around a kind of misunderstanding, which is treated by presenting a confusion of perspectives. In turn, since this story involves an event in our past that we wish could be changed, that we wish had happened in a different way, temporal and spatial modifications are introduced to modify our perception of the phenomena, and these changes eventually transform the point of view from which we see our past. Thus, while it is not possible to modify the actions that occurred, it is possible to change the point of view from which we see them, and this allows the way that we structure or integrate those contents, those memories, to change for the better in significant ways. Let's look at part of that story.

I am standing before some sort of court. Every seat in the silent courtroom is filled, and I'm surrounded by a sea of stern faces. The court clerk adjusts his glasses and picks up a long document. Breaking the tremendous tension that fills the room, he solemnly pronounces, "It is the sentence of this court that the accused shall be put to death".

Immediately there is an uproar-some people applaud while others boo, and I see a woman faint. Finally an official manages to restore order in the courtroom.

Staring at me darkly, the clerk demands, "Does the accused have anything to say?" When I say that I do, everyone sits down. I ask for a glass of water, and after a brief commotion they bring me one. Raising the glass, I take a sip, and finishing with a loud and prolonged gargle, I exclaim, "That's it!"

Someone from the jury harshly demands, "What do you mean, 'That's it'?"

"That's it", I repeat. But to satisfy the juror, I say that the water here does taste excellent, much better than I expected, and continue with two or three other pleasantries of this sort.

The court clerk finishes reading the document with these words: "Accordingly, the sentence shall be carried out today: You will be abandoned in the desert without food or water-above all, without water. I have spoken!"

"What do you mean you have spoken?" I demand. Arching his eyebrows, the clerk only reaffirms, "What I have spoken, I have spoken!"

Soon I find myself riding in a fire truck through the middle of the desert, escorted by two firemen. We stop, and one of them says, "Get out!" As soon as I step down from the truck, the vehicle turns around and heads back the way it came. I watch it grow smaller and smaller as it moves off across the dunes.

Other events transpire in the story and finally the following occurs.

Now the storm has passed and the sun has set. In the twilight I see before me a whitish dome several stories high. Although I think it must be a mirage, I get to my feet and make my way toward it. As I draw closer, I see that the structure is made of a smooth material, a shiny plastic perhaps inflated with air.

A man dressed in Bedouin garb greets me, and we enter the dome through a carpeted passageway. A door slides open, and I feel a refreshing rush of cool air. Once inside, I notice that everything is upside down-the ceiling is like a smooth floor from which things are suspended. I see round tables above us with their legs pointing up toward the ceiling. I see water falling downward in streams that curve and return upward and high overhead there are human forms seated upside down.

Noticing my astonishment, the Bedouin hands me a pair of glasses saying, "Try these on!" When I put on the glasses, everything is restored to its normal appearance-in front of me I see a large fountain shooting

streams of water high into the air. The tables and all the other things are right side up, and everything is exquisitely coordinated in color and form.

I see the court clerk coming toward me, crawling on all fours. He says he feels terribly dizzy, so I explain to him that he's seeing reality upside down and needs to remove his glasses. Taking them off, he stands up and says with a sigh, "Indeed, now everything is fine-except that I'm so nearsighted." He goes on to say he has been searching for me in order to explain that there has been a most deplorable mistake, and I'm not the person who should have been put on trial at all. Immediately he leaves through a side door.

Walking a few steps, I find myself with a group of people seated in a circle on cushions. They are elders of both sexes, with varied racial features and attire. All of them have beautiful faces. Each time one of them begins to speak, I hear the sound of faraway gears, of gigantic machinery, of immense clocks. I hear intermittent thunder, the cracking of rocks, icebergs splitting off, the rhythmic roaring of volcanoes, the light impact of a gentle rain, the muffled beating of hearts-motor, muscle, life-and everything in perfect harmony, a majestic symphony of sounds.

The Bedouin hands me a pair of headphones, saying, "Try these on, they translate." Putting them on, I clearly hear a human voice. I realize it is the same symphony of one of the elders, now translated for my clumsy ear. This time as he opens his mouth I hear, "We are the hours, we are the minutes, we are the seconds. We are the various forms of time. Because a mistake was made with you, we will give you the opportunity to begin your life anew. But from what point do you wish to start again? Perhaps from your birth, or perhaps from just before your first failure. Reflect on this."

Asterisk! And so on.

Here I should add some further comments with respect to the type of images that are used, because while one may have the impression that all the descriptions involve a strong visual component, it happens that many people tend to favor a form of representation that instead is basically auditory, or kinesthetic, or coenesthetic, or perhaps a mixture. In this regard I would like to read a few paragraphs from a more recent work, an essay titled "Psychology of the Image" from the book *Contributions to Thought*. It reads as follows:

Psychologists through the ages have made extensive lists dealing with perceptions and sensations, and today, with the discovery of new neuroreceptors, they have begun to talk about thermoceptors and baroreceptors, as well as internal detectors of acidity, alkalinity, and so forth.

To the sensations corresponding to the external senses we will add those that correspond to diffuse senses such as the kinesthetic (movement and corporal posture) and coenesthetic (register of temperature, pain, and so on-that is, the register of the intrabody in general) which, even when explained in terms of an internal tactile sense, cannot be reduced to that.

For our purposes today this quotation is sufficient, even though we do not pretend with it to exhaust all possible registers that correspond to the internal senses and the multiple combinations of perception between and among them. What we need to do now is to establish parallels between the representations and perceptions that are generically classified as "internal" and those termed "external." It is unfortunate that discussions of representation have so often been limited to visual images and that spatiality is almost always taken to refer to the visual, when in fact auditory perceptions and representations also denote sources of stimuli that may be localized in some "place." The same thing also happens with regard to perceptions and representations of touch, smell, and taste, as well as those related to the position of the body (kinesthesia) and the phenomena of the intrabody (coenesthesia). Since 1943, laboratory observations have shown that some individuals have a propensity for non-visual images. This led W. Grey Walter in 1967 to develop his classification of distinct types of imaginative contents. Irrespective of the accuracy of that formulation, the idea began to be taken seriously among psychologists that the recognition of one's body in space or the memory of an object could often be based on something besides visual images. Indeed, psychologists began to take seriously the case of perfectly normal subjects who described a sort of "blindness" with respect to visual representation. No longer was it possible after these studies to consider visual images as the nucleus of the system of representation, casting other forms of imaging into the dustbin of "eidetic disintegration", or indeed into the field of literature, where it is only idiots and the mentally retarded who say things like this character in Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*:

I squatted there, holding the slipper. I couldn't see it, but my hands saw it, and I could hear it getting night, and my hands saw the slipper but I couldn't see myself, but my hands could see the slipper, and I squatted there, hearing it getting dark.

To return, then, to our comments on Guided Experiences, I think we can agree that even when the guided experiences in this book are presented in a way that is predominantly visual, anyone can adapt them to his or her own system of representation. Furthermore, some of the guided experiences are clearly based on other types of images. This is the case, for example, in "The Creature", as you can see from this brief passage.

It is night, and I find myself in total darkness. Somewhere nearby is the edge of a cliff. Groping ahead with my foot, I can feel uneven ground that is covered with vegetation and rocks. I also sense the presence of the creature that has always provoked in me a special feeling of terror and disgust. There may be one of them, or there may be many-but I'm certain that something is relentlessly drawing near.

A ringing in my ears, at times mingling with a faraway wind, contrasts with the utter silence. My wide-open eyes cannot see a thing. My heart is pounding, my breathing is shallow, and my dry mouth has a bitter taste.

Something is approaching-what is creeping up behind me, making my scalp bristle and sending cold chills up my spine?

My knees feel weak, and if something grabs me or jumps on me from behind I'll be completely defenseless. I'm paralyzed-all I can do is wait.

Let's also look at another case, one that involves not only different types of images but also the translation of one system of representation into another. This is part of the guided experience called "The Festival":

Lying in a bed, I gradually become aware that I'm in a hospital room. Faintly I hear the dripping of a faucet. I try to move my arms and legs and then my head, but they don't respond. It's an effort just to keep my eyes open.

The ceiling is smooth and white. As each drop of water drips from the faucet, a ray of light flashes across the ceiling. One drop, one ray. Then another. Then many rays, and after this I see waves of light. The ceiling keeps on changing with the rhythm of my heart, perhaps an effect of the arteries in my head as blood pulses through them.

Now the rhythm outlines the face of a young person.

Later on in this same experience we move beyond visual perception, which becomes included in a more complex system of representation and is translated into other perceptions and therefore other representations:

I fix my attention on a flower, connected to its stem by a slender stalk that, within transparent skin, gleams a deep green. I reach out my hand, lightly running my finger along the polished fresh stem, barely disturbed by tiny knobs. Moving up through emerald leaves, I come to the petals, which open in a multicolored explosion. Petals like stained glass in a solemn cathedral, petals like rubies, petals like embers awakening into flame-and in this dance of hues, I feel the flower lives as if a part of me.

The flower, disturbed by my touch, releases a sleepy drop of dew, barely clinging to the tip of a leaf. As it falls the drop vibrates, forming an oval as it lengthens. And now in the emptiness it flattens out, only to become round again, falling in endless time-falling, falling, through endless space. Finally landing on a mushroom's cap, the drop rolls like heavy mercury, sliding to the edge. There, in a spasm of freedom, it hurls itself into a tiny pool, raising a tempest of waves that bathe an island of marble.

Ahead the festival continues, and I know that this music connects me with that young woman gazing at her clothes, and that young man leaning against a tree and petting a blue cat.

I know that I have lived all this before, and I have known the tree's jagged outline, and the sharply defined volume of each thing.

In the velvet butterflies that flutter around me, I recognize the warmth of lips and the fragility of sweet dreams.

And so on.

In these experiences, images are not only located in front of the protagonist or in the surroundings, but may also be inside the subject. We should note here that there are dreams in which the dreamer sees him or herself in the scene among other objects-that is, with a look that is "external." But it also happens that the dreamer will sometimes see the scene from his or her own point of view, almost the way it would be seen when awake, in vigil. In these cases, the dreamer's look has moved inside, is more internalized. In our representations right now-in everyday representation-we see things that are located outside us precisely as external to us; that is, we look out from "behind" a tactile, coenesthetic boundary given by the register of our eyes and face and head. Thus, when I close my eyes and represent what I have previously seen, I experience these things as "outside", even though I am looking at them not outside, in perception, but rather inside myself, within my space of representation. In any case, my look is separate from the object, and I see the object as though it were outside myself, even though I am in fact representing it "inside my head", so to speak.

In the example from "The Child" that we considered earlier, I see myself when I was little. In reality, I see the child from the register-the internal sensation-that I have of myself today, in which I recognize myself. That is, I see the child as outside myself, but from my present inner look. The child (which is me many years ago) speaks to me now of an injustice that took place long ago. In order to know what the child is talking about, I make an effort to remember (the I of today tries, not the child) what happened to me when I was that child (that which-I-once-was). As I do so, my look moves deeper "inside" me to my own recollections, and the child I see is outside the direction of my recollection. So when I encounter myself in a scene from my childhood, how do I recognize myself as truly myself? It must surely be through a look that is external to me, but internal with reference to what is external, in this case the child in the amusement park.

This raises a number of interesting questions, but we can simplify the subject if we remember that we differentiate "outside" and "inside" simply by virtue of the difference given by the tactile-coenesthetic boundary of eyes, face, and head, and this is what makes it possible to speak of some representations as "outside" and others as "inside." Now that this is clear, let's consider some examples of differences in the location of looks and scenes. In the experience titled "The Chimney Sweep" we find the following.

After a while the Chimney Sweep rises and picks up a very long, slightly curved pair of forceps. Standing in front of me he says, "Open your mouth!" When I do, I feel him insert the long instrument into my mouth, and it seems to reach all the way down into my stomach. To my surprise, however, I find that it's not too uncomfortable.

Suddenly he shouts, "I've caught it!" and little by little he begins pulling out the forceps. At first it feels like something is tearing apart inside of me. But then I feel a pleasant tingling sensation, as if something malignant is being pulled loose from my lungs and internal organs, something that has been stuck there for a long, long time.

Here it is clear that we are working with coenesthetic registers, images from the intrabody. But when these are imagined as "outside" (as with what is perceived as "outside" in daily life), they produce effects in the intrabody. The modification of the scene and one's look follow the mechanics that we observed in the story of the child, except that in this case what we imagine as "outside" is not like the "child" that we considered visually. Rather, it's a sort of coenesthetic register that's placed "outside", not in the sense that I feel something in my interior and now that feeling is outside my body, but rather that now what I feel in my intrabody is external to my look (i.e., outside of a new coenesthetic register that is even deeper, even more internal). Without this mechanism for introducing change in the position and point of view of both one's look and the scene being viewed, many phenomena of daily life would not be possible. How could an external object produce repugnance in me simply through my looking at it? How could I "feel" horror when another person is cut? How could I feel solidarity with another's pain, or with his or her suffering or pleasure?

Let's examine a few paragraphs from the experience titled "My Ideal".

I am walking through a fairground filled with exhibition halls and displays, and I see many children playing on high-tech mechanical rides.

I come upon a giant figure made of some solid material. It stands upright, and its large head is painted in bright colors. There is a ladder extending up to its mouth, which the little ones climb to reach the enormous opening. Whenever one enters, the mouth gently closes, and soon the child pops out the back of the giant, coming down a slide and landing in the sand below. One by one the children go in and come out, as a song flows from the giant:

See Gargantua gobble up the children; with great care, not harming a hair; tra la la, tra la la, with great care, not harming a hair!

I decide to climb up the short ladder. As I enter the huge mouth, I meet an attendant who tells me, "Children go down the slide, but grownups use the elevator."

The attendant continues the explanation as our elevator descends through a transparent tube. Soon I say that I think we're probably at ground level by now.

"That's right", replies the attendant, "although we're still only passing through the esophagus. The rest of the giant's body is below ground, unlike the children's giant, which is completely on the surface. You see", my guide informs me, "there are actually two Gargantuas in one-one for children, and another one for grownups. We've already passed the diaphragm, and soon we'll stop at a very pleasant place-look, the elevator door is opening and I can show you the stomach. Would you like to get out here? As you can see, this modern restaurant serves delicious food from all over the world."

The proposal of "external" images acting upon internal representations is clearly visible in the experience titled "The Miner." Here is how this story goes:

Suddenly I yell at the top of my lungs as the floor gives way beneath me, dragging me down in its collapse.

I plunge downward until a sharp jerk on the rope at my waist abruptly breaks my fall; I'm left dangling absurdly at the end of the rope like some muddy pendulum.

My fall has been stopped just above a carpeted floor, and I see before me an elegant room flooded with light. I glimpse some sort of laboratory filled with enormous bookshelves, but my predicament is so pressing that I'm completely absorbed in trying to free myself.

With my left hand I grasp the taut rope above; with my right hand I release the buckle fastening the rope around my waist, and tumble softly onto the carpet.

"What manners, my friend, what manners!" says a high-pitched voice behind me. I spin around and stop short.

Standing before me is a little man, scarcely taller than my knee. Except for his slightly pointed ears, he could be described as very well-proportioned. He is dressed in bright colors, yet in the unmistakable style of a miner.

I feel at once ridiculous and dismayed when he offers me a glass of punch. It's quite refreshing, however, so I drink it straight down.

Now the little man cups his hands before his mouth and makes the plaintive cry I recognize so well. On hearing it I'm outraged, and demand to know just what he means by tricking me this way. To my bewilderment, he replies that thanks to this experience, in the future my digestion will be much improved.

This extraordinary little character goes on to explain to me how the rope squeezing my waist and stomach during my fall has done me a world of good, as did the journey I made through the tunnel crawling on my

elbows. He concludes his strange remarks by asking me whether the expression "You are in the bowels of the earth" means anything to me.

I answer that this is just a figure of speech, but the little man assures me that in this case it holds a great truth. Then he adds, "You are in your own bowels. When something goes wrong in their viscera, people can think all kinds of crazy thoughts. In turn, these negative thoughts can harm their internal organs. So from now on you must take good care of yourself in this regard. If you don't, I'll begin walking around, and you'll feel sharp pains and all kinds of internal discomfort. And I have colleagues who are in charge of other parts of your body like your lungs, your heart, and so on."

Having said this, the little man begins walking around on the walls and ceiling. As he does so, I feel twinges of discomfort near my stomach, liver, and kidneys.

Afterwards the little man sprays me from head to toe with a stream of water from a golden hose, thoroughly cleansing me of all the mud, and in an instant I'm dry. I stretch out on a spacious sofa and begin to relax. Rhythmically the little man passes a soft brush over my waist and abdomen, producing a remarkable sensation of relaxation in these areas. I realize that when discomfort is relieved in my stomach, liver, and kidneys, my ideas and feelings change for the better.

I feel a strong vibration and find myself back in the elevator, rising toward the surface of the earth.

In this guided experience, the little man proves to be a true expert in the theory of the coenesthetic image, though naturally he doesn't tell us how it's possible for an image to be connected with the intrabody and to act upon it.

Earlier we saw, with some difficulty, that the perception of external objects serves as a basis for the elaboration of images, and that this allows us to re-present what has earlier been presented to the senses. We saw that in this re-presentation, there occur modifications, changes in the location and point of view of the observer's look with regard to a given scene, and we asked ourselves about the connection between the perception of an object or scene that we find disgusting or repulsive and our internal reactions to this perception. That is, we are talking about sensations in the intrabody, which then serve as the basis for new representations that are also "internal."

So here we are, filled with questions that have not been fully answered, and I fear that with so little time remaining it is here that we will have to end this talk. But first I would like to add one or two thoughts.

Insofar as we continue to consider the mental image to be only a simple copy of perception; insofar as we continue to believe that consciousness in general maintains a passive attitude before the world (acting only as some sort of reflection of it), we will neither be able to answer the foregoing questions nor others that are truly fundamental.

For us, the image is an active form, placing the consciousness (as structure) in-the-world. The image can act on the body and the body-in-the-world because of intentionality, which is directed outside itself and does not simply correspond to a for-itself or some "natural", reflected, and mechanical in-itself. The image acts within a temporo-spatial structure and within an internal "spatiality" that has thus been termed the "space of representation." The various and complex functions that the image carries out depend in general on the position it occupies within that spatiality. A fuller justification of what I am explaining here would, of course, require an understanding of the associated theory of consciousness, and for that I refer you to the essay "Psychology of the Image" in the book Contributions to Thought.

If, however, through these "literary divertimenti" as they have been called in the introductory note, I have been able to help you see the application in practice of a broad conception, then I have not failed to do what I promised at the outset of my presentation when I said that I was going to talk about these Guided Experiences, not from a literary point of view but from the standpoint of the ideas that have given rise to this literary expression.

Thank you very much.