

Patagonia, lights and shadows: Territorial perceptions of a circumpolar space

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Abstract

This article presents some reflections for the understanding of the Argentine Patagonian environment, as an integral and unique space. These reflections are based on the idea that a large part of the constructed images of Patagonia, in some way, prevent a genuine approach to this territory, due to the distortion and/or impoverishment in which they incur. Patagonia has been an imagined territory over which, many times, limiting and stereotyped characteristics have been imposed.

Many of the perceptions of Patagonia have the stamp of otherness, which for some scholars was built mainly by “outsiders” and, at times, incorporated by non-outsiders, in traits that have remained as part of Patagonian stereotypes. The article shows that this singular space confronts us with the urge of being able to perceive something different from what we are used to and, in such a way, approach this complex and elusive territory.

The challenge is to give Patagonia a new significance as a lived territory and banish the Patagonia built with quotes and stereotypes that take it back to represent “territorial characters” rather than territorial realities to live in and care for.

Keys words

Patagonia, perception, geography, circumpolar, territory, environmentalism, sustainable development

Introduction

This paper aims to present some reflections for the understanding of the Argentine Patagonian environment, as an integral and unique space. These reflections are based on the idea that a large part of the constructed images of Patagonia, in some way, prevent a genuine approach to this environment, due to the distortion and/or impoverishment in which they incur. Patagonia

has been an imagined territory over which, many times, limiting and stereotyped characteristics have been imposed.

Without any doubt, Patagonia has been a territory that raises questions due to its difficulty to be apprehended. This, in turn, produces concern because, in general, human beings prefer to have certainties that provide the illusion of control over what they “understand” or are capable of categorizing. Patagonia is elusive to glances of control and resists categorization and much more labels. However, it opens up to questions, some of which were presented in a previous work on sustainable development in Patagonia, listed below (Lara, 1993):

- *“A mysterious land, an uncompleted region, as it were, immature for man?”* as stated by Federico Daus (1978).”

Photo 1. Sunrise at Moreno Lake



Source Albina L. Lara, 2018

- *“An immense, distant, wild land that produces such awe and amazement, as it did to the first explorers who first knew it?” A land full of surprises: valleys, marshy meadows, canyons, oases, ports, etc.? A land of extended monotony and aligned diversity, along the mountain range and along the coast?”* (Lara, 1993).

Photo 2. Perito Moreno Glacier



Source: Fundación Naturaleza para el Futuro, 2002

- *“An eccentric land, both because of its position in the country and its position on the continent, from the peninsula to the South?” An immense land open to the East by that vast sea, soft part of the territory. A land with an indigenous past and with new peoples?” (Lara, 1993).*

When considering the subject of the paper, the first idea was to work on what seemed more classic or obvious in relation to lights and shadows, associating light with positive aspects and the shadow with the negative. The analysis of the main perceptions was based in what was written by travelers, writers, geographers, experts, tourism agencies. In this case, clearly emerged that many of the perceptions have the imprint of otherness, strong in the image of Patagonia, which for some scholars was built mainly by "outsiders" and, sometimes, incorporated by the locals, as features that have remained a remnant of Patagonian stereotypes.

However, during the analysis it began to become clear that these images impoverished the perception of the territory since, erroneous or not, they leave out key territorial elements. It was then that the need to delve especially into the concepts of light and shadow and in the process of apprehending a distinctive environment was identified. To do this, a different perspective was sought on the concepts of light and shadow and humbly ventured into the paradigms of painting, literature and psychology.

Likewise, in contrast to the images constructed from "otherness", it was delved into the concept of emptiness, a word widely used when describing Patagonia as an empty space, where emptiness is used as an adjective to indicate a space that lacks something, that is perceived as important. However, the meaning given to the concept of emptiness in this analysis is quite

different; it is a noun that indicates the place or focus from where the “apprehension” of an environment, a landscape, a culture or another person is possible. The empty space becomes the central element or origin of apprehension, once we have gotten rid of a large number of stereotypes.

Taking these concepts as the starting point, this article intends to show the need to deconstruct the partial and incomplete images of Patagonia integrating lights and shadows into a portrayal more complete and harmonious, as a basic input on the path to sustainable development.

1. Patagonia, territory perceived as otherness?

As a first step, the concept of otherness that appears in a large part of Patagonia's perceptions is explained, as something which is constructed from alterity and opposition in the sense that we feel different from that other that we were not, we are not and we will not be and, even, that we do not want to be. Many times, the construction of images of otherness is carried out from fear of the different and the unknown, which are among the most powerful human emotions. It is the perception of the other as something diametrically different from our identity.

This idea is opposed to the notion of otherness proposed by Octavio Paz (1996), who argues that otherness appears within identity since identity is not broken or dispersed: rather, it is itself, duality because, without ceasing to be what it is, it is also other. Otherness, then, is the difference within identity. (Paz, 1996b, in Rodriguez Ledesma, 2012). It would be necessary to work from this concept of otherness to be able to create an integral perception of Patagonia. This means that when we recognize the other we recognize ourselves, we recognize our own identity, and we advance in the understanding and admission of our own geography and history.

Stuart Hall (1997 in Rodriguez, 2007) recalls the importance of the images from the past to understand the practices of representation or stereotyping of images of otherness. As Edward Said (2001) explains, the design of otherness, of difference, throughout history was taking visual form and the Western imaginary filled its greed for exoticism through visual representations and photography served to elaborate, as the author expresses textually, “an imagined geography of the conquered worlds”.

When we use stereotypical or mirror images, a genuine relationship with the territory is not established, but only an expansion, either by contrast or similarity of what we perceive of ourselves or of our territory. This produces a significant distortion and an impoverishment of our view.

Patagonian space was characterized by a homogeneous perception from a foreign discourse and, thus, a textual network was configured (called the “founding text”), in which the space appears as an immensity impossible to inhabit: because it is desert-like, because it is sterile, because it is cold, because of the harsh climate (Casini, 2005).

Here, a reflection from Diana Pogliaga (2015) on the role that may have played the economic and utilitarian perspective posed by European modernity, which approaches territory under a logic of exploitation and profit, both of natural resources and of its inhabitants. Then, men and women turned into objects of work depersonalize their desires and disdain the intimate relationship with nature. From this perspective, it is difficult to be questioned by the secrets and beauty of a different landscape. The sobriety or exuberance of the environment becomes an object that is “offered” for the use of its resources, both natural and human. From this point of view there is only one wealth, the economic one even that based on the “unique” landscapes of Patagonia, which excludes the outlook of the territorial reality in all its complexity.

2. The significance of the imaginary, of the non-empty

Patagonia operates in the global imaginary of the planet as one of the most resistant myths and [...] *“the landscape, whether as an expressive or ideological argument, acquires existential density; the wind, the steppe, the mountain, the great and deserted extensions, the solitude of the uninhabited plateaus, the absence, the non-place, are some of our coordinates and they work both to help us and to hinder our progress on the road.”* (Cross, 2013)

Therefore, a genuine question that we could ask ourselves is if Patagonia is a “literary land”, armed with quotes or a land “painted” through stereotyped images. The Patagonian space was characterized as an exotic and empty landscape: the vastness, the desolation, the emptiness. (Casini, 2005) And, as Livon - Grosman (2003) states, it is important to remember that a myth does not hide but distorts, impoverishes and restricts. Thus, Patagonia can be considered as that mythologized region since its inception with features of infinite remoteness. (De Matteo, 2007).

Photo 3. Patagonia, infinite remoteness



Source: Fundación Naturaleza para el Futuro, 2007.

Santiago Bondel (2004) describes it very clearly when he states that Patagonia is a territory loaded with external recognition, both in concrete and symbolic aspects, and whoever seeks to apprehend the territory “stumbles with a major difficulty, that of being before a space already imagined, visualized as a forceful and contradictory reality”. And then, the author emphasizes that in places like this territory, which are related to some grandeur, only what is "attractive, interesting or suggestive" captivates attention. He concludes that Patagonia responds more to a perceptive entity than to a territory with a certain autonomy and functional coherence.

Inevitably, after perceiving the weight of the imaginary about Patagonia and the distortion that it causes for its development, the need arises to empty oneself of images and stereotypes, as Hudson (2006) wrote: “In Patagonia you do not have to enter with preconceptions, not looking for anything, since a feeling will arise that will make us feel and move”.

Patagonia appears in the world imagination as the last border, a strong perception that, perhaps, has distorted the sense of place even of the Patagonians. How to inhabit the last border, how to establish close relationships with a place that is the last border and, therefore, can make us feel distant? How to make the last corner of the Earth your own?

Perla Zusman (2013) emphasizes the risk of stereotyping images of an environment and confusing them with the environment itself and even conditioning it because the images build a territory, whether they are real or not. In other words, as Cosgrove expresses (in Zusman, 2013), it is a round trip, the environmental imaginaries (ideas, mental images and values in relation to the environment) and visual representations (paintings of landscapes, photographs, maps, digital images, movies and videos) are made conditioned by the psychosocial and cultural; but, in turn, they can have an

conditioned by the psychosocial and cultural; but, in turn, they can have an active role in the construction of the social world, especially in the perspective of environmentalism and environmental politics. For this reason, the author writes, it is essential to analyze what images we create and disseminate and analyze the weight they may have in conditioning the apprehension we make of the territory.

The images created and disseminated can hinder the understanding of social, economic and ecological issues and, therefore, in itself, constitute a risk to sustainability.

3. Those "obvious" lights and shadows

Then a categorization is made of those features that, at first glance, seems to belong to the shadow category, as negative, and those belonging to the light, as positive or, as Bondel (2004) qualifies them, close to *some grandeur*. For this first analysis, this connotation of light and shadow is taken as being the most obvious.

To elaborate this categorization, some quotes from literary works, tourism promotion sites, and geographical papers have been used. The idea was not to carry out a systematic and exhaustive search, but to show some of the main quotes about Patagonia, which are considered to condition its imaginary.

Lights.

From the perspective of light, Patagonia can be perceived as the pristine, the intense, and the adventure land, as identified in the following descriptive statements (cf.: Bondel, 2008):

- Magical, beautiful, dazzling Patagonia, of immeasurable riches, fertile and virgin valleys, and the pioneer spirit, virgin, pristine and wild.

Photo 4: Meliquina Lake



Source: Juan Francisco Otaño, 2015

- Rich in diverse natural resources: oil, gas, hydroelectric potential, tourism and fishing.
- Territory charged with great magnetism and power of seduction with various attractions close to grandeur.
- Enigmatic like few other regions in the world.

Photo5: Enjoying the Patagonian forest at night



Source: Juan Francisco Otaño, 2015

- Provocative and extreme.
- A perfect destination for those who seek to treasure intense experiences.
- Mysterious, manifested through an endless number of magical stories and legends.

Photo 6: Cave of the hands, Santa Cruz



Source Fundación Naturaleza para el Futuro, 2002.

- A land of pristine, wild landscapes that offer "unique spectacles".
- Nature in its pure state that helps us to get away from stress.

Photo 7: Mountain and flowered valley, Tierra del Fuego.



Source: Juan Francisco Otaño, 2015

Shadows

From the perspective of shadow, Patagonia can be perceived as the distant, the arid, the empty, the postponed, the monotonous, the lonely, the vulnerable, as considered in the following descriptive statements:

- Region postponed, cursed, tragic, frozen, of extreme aridity, with devastating wind, the barren land, the discouraging isolation, the suffered settler, the postponed or unfinished Patagonia, subsidized, landowner, "invaded" (Bondel, 2004)

Photo 8: Tree twisted by the wind.



Source: Fundación Naturaleza para el Futuro, 2002

- Land of shipwrecks, exiles, monarchist pretensions, hiding places for war criminals, genocides, executions, persecutions (Bondel, 2004).
- Vulnerable to various natural disasters, such as the Hudson volcano eruption, forest fires, storms or snow avalanches (ibid).
- Place of unspeakable solitudes (Lagmanovich, 2005).
- With a uniform and uninteresting landscape. In the words of Charles Darwin: The earth has been cursed with barrenness (Darwin, 1999).
- Idea of the exotic, but with a connotation of the curse of space, associated with ideas of eccentricity, remoteness and immensity (Casino, 2005).
- Patagonian myth as desert, no man's land, immeasurable (Livon-Grosman, 2003).

This categorization was difficult to carry out because questions always arose, such as: the emptiness, the desert, the desolation, are they the shadow? Because, that desert, at the same time can be a space that challenges, allows to dream, do, plan and, as such, could be part of “the light”.

4. Patagonia and some of its images

Below are some perceptions that appear as stronger and/or repeated in the imaginary of Patagonia. In this way, some images are listed that deepen the need for another look at this territory; either because the image is distorting or very partial, or this leaves out the complexity of the territory.

The idea of presenting these perceptions has been to keep them present in the process of knowledge of the territory in which it is necessary not only to analyze these images to confront them with reality, but also to ask who benefits and who pays the cost of maintaining them. For example, what is the effect of maintaining the perception of Patagonia as the distant, the pristine, the wild?

In order to bring each image closer to the reader, in general, texts by various authors are included that describe the selected perceptions. Especially important is the view from the Patagonian literature since, as Colombo and Graf (2013) express, the Patagonian poetic imaginary is permanently searching for regional identity and tries to overcome the obstacles imposed from the perspective on a national scale. That is, the search is to capture the essence of the Patagonian from the region itself.

Patagonia has been perceived as cursed and sterile: "The land has received the curse of sterility, and the water that flows over a stony bed shares that same curse." (Darwin, 1999).

Patagonia, / Water, air; life / Darwin fled in terror / Of this cursed land (De Matteo, 2007).

Photo 9: Patagonian steppe



Source: Juan Francisco Otaño, 2015

The poet Ricardo Costa expresses its condition of immensity in this way: *"In Patagonia, the immensity of the landscape is felt; the hostile nature and the distances conceal an imposing emptiness, a nothingness, a chaos that urges silence so that it does not silence us."* (De Matteo, 2007)

The idea of incomprehensible space sometimes appears in relation to something negative, such as helplessness; but, it is also expressed in relation to something positive like the pristine. This is how Juan Carlos Moisés (2013), an author from Chubut, describes it. *"In fact, in Patagonia you write about nothing, about an elusive and disturbing land."*

In relation to the distant and peripheral, Patagonia can be defined as circumpolar because it is a territory close to the South Pole; but, especially for being far from the centers, for being just distant and peripheral. *"I should say that I come from a peripheral territory, characterized by the wind and the solitude of large uninhabited areas. That is why we say: The periphery is our center"* (Cros, 2013).

As Sergio De Matteo (2007) states, "In the gaze converge the fullness and the emptiness that permeates the spirit with the weight of distance, with an infinite length".

Or as Asencio Abeijón expresses it well, *"the profane eyes (that) when taking a look at the immense and mysterious theater of Patagonia find it apparently deserted and without the beauties of the North"* (in Casini, 2005)

Graciela Cros (2013) poetically synthesizes the condition of arid and challenging space: *"We identify with the coirón (Festuca pallescens) in his school of resistance and strength, in his will to flourish in adversity."*

Virginia Haurie (1998) also expresses it in one of the dialogues of the interesting book she wrote on real stories of women on the invisible Patagonia *"You know, the South is hard, ma'am, it's not for the weak. Even more in land. There, by dint of so much silence, we become sullen, sullen and sometimes we even forget to speak"*.

Images of an infinite space and an eternal time: *"Patagonia is time, it is walking and never arriving, it is trying to appropriate that distance and seeing oneself submitted"*. (De Matteo, 2007).

"Out there in the heart of the territory one seems to stand alone, with nothing closer or more palpable than the wind, the intense mirages and the infinite distances" (H. Hesketh Pritchard, in Arce et al., 2000).

Images of nothingness and uniformity also appear: *"The asphalt layer is like the delicate waves of a calm sea [...] It is, in fact, a stone plain, with ochre and yellow colors, in which the Nothingness begins to be a habit. The same Nothingness that*

we will find throughout the trip, which has triggered myths and legends and which exerts an enormous attraction on millions of people from all over the planet. Curious, the people.” (Giardinelli, 2010).

Photo 10: Infinite space.



Source: Fundación Naturaleza para el Futuro, 2007

Or as the aforementioned author expresses, referring to Tres Cerros, a small setting in the province of Santa Cruz, but important for the area: *“What is impressive is living in such tremendous solitude. Everything is gray around and the certainty of abandonment superimposes the melancholy of the place”* [...]. *“The sum of ugly + abandoned + lonely, results in nothing”*.

And in the words of Paul Theroux *“There were no voices here. There was this, what I saw; and though beyond there were mountains and glaciers and albatrosses and indians, here there was nothing to talk about, nothing that could stop me any longer”* (1979, in Lagmanovich 2005).

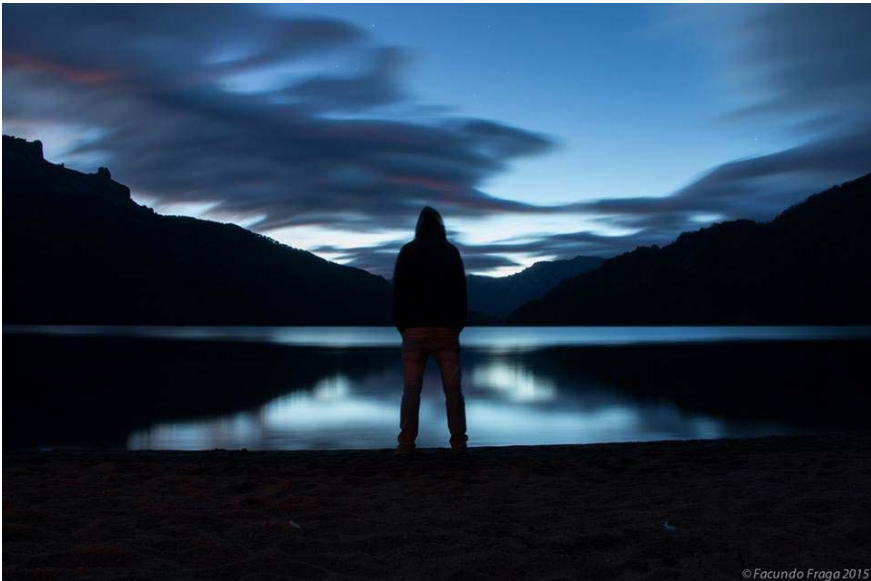
The questions that arise are, firstly, if that perception of nothingness also has to do with the awe when facing something so different from what some of the authors were used to and, secondly, if that feeling of Nostalgia has to do with the space itself or with the reasons why some of the people go to Patagonia, to travel, to live. Are loneliness and nostalgia from the place? Or do we superimpose our own sadness and nostalgia on the place?

Images of loneliness, mysterious beauty and freedom are presented:

*“Alone,
like little souls on the side of the road
we abandon ourselves without committing time to it.”*
(Mapu, 2004)

Guillermo Hudson (2007), however, was fascinated by the solitude of Patagonia, which gave him a feeling of freedom and even joy, saying in his words *“In my opinion there is nothing in life as delightful as that feeling of relief evasion and absolute freedom that one experiences in a vast solitude, where perhaps man has never been or, in any case, has not left any trace of his existence (...) Not once, not twice, not three times, but day after day I returned to this solitude by going to it in the morning as if attending a festival”*.

Photo11. Loneliness at Lake Faulkner



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Source: Juan Francisco Otaño, 2015

Patagonia awakens the magical and mysterious, as Santiago Bondel (2008) says: *“discourses about the territory are characterized by a certain eagerness for that which is extraordinary, eccentric, wonderful, and magical and surprising, which, in turn, conditions marketing strategies. tourism and media demands”*.

The writer Mempo Giardinelli, in *Final de novela en Patagonia* (2000), expresses that Patagonia becomes both a mysterious and empty space, as well as a wonderful space, equally distant and desolate; Patagonia appears not as a chosen place to live, but as a suitable place for a tragic adventures (in Casini, Silvia).

Although it is not a perception that is repeated, David Aracena (1986) shows a Patagonia in the stories of his work *Papa High Boots*, which seduces for being a space felt as a homeland, as a land chosen to stay, and even as a land to which to return after a long exile. He creates an everyday atmosphere, which denies the idea of emptiness present in other writers and confirms the presence of man in the environment (in Casini, 2005).

And finally, Patagonia appears as a land of contrasts, of extremes. Silvia Casini (2005), in her deep analysis, makes it clear that Patagonia in the "founding texts" is not a place for common people to live, but a defined space with extreme predications, like wonder or hell, but always as a land for great adventures. According to Paul Theroux, this was a paradox of Patagonia, where, according to him, one must choose between the tiny or the immense: the enormity of the deserted space, or the vision of a tiny flower, because there is no intermediate zone (in Lagmanovich, 2005).

Photo12. Flower in Cerro Hielo Azul, Río Negro



Source: Juan Francisco Otaño

The question here is: on what scale is the human being situated as part of that territory, in the immense or in the miniscule? What is the human scale in Patagonia?

5. Concepts for redefinition

Light and shadow, as complementary polarities

In general, talking about light and shadow gives an idea of polarity, of conflicting notions and up to this point it is this definition that has been used when presenting the lights and shadows of Patagonia.

However, it was sought, as an instrument to grasp a complex reality, to incorporate the idea of complementary polarities. These concepts have been worked on in ancient times, especially in the Far East, through the Tao as the two fundamental principles of reality, the bright and active or Yang, and the dark or shadowy or Ying. Also in yoga there are two energies that affect all life, as opposing but complementary energies, through the energies of the sun (*ha*) and energies of the moon (*tha*).

For painting, it is key to work with lights and shadows and, therefore, some concepts are incorporated that can be useful in understanding the role of each one. In addition, the incorporation of the painting approach is related to the way in which different authors and we ourselves have "painted" the image of Patagonia.

The American illustrator Howard Pyle¹ (1853-1911) quoted by Andrew Loomis, presents interesting explanations about the role of light and shadow in painting, which are especially functional in the analysis that I try to elaborate here. According to Pyle, the objects of nature are visible thanks to light, which, in turn, allows us to perceive colors and textures. The shadow, on the other hand, provides shape and contours, which are essential because if there were no shadows, everything would be a flat glare of light, color and textures. In turn, the lights and the shadows seem to have very different personalities: the shadows are mysterious and indefinite, and revitalize the objects that are submerged in them. According to Anthony Ryder, the shadow form is quiet and soft, like a whisper. Obviously, if the form provided by the shadow is silent or whispering, if we do not silence our mind and empty it of the images already built, it is impossible to listen to it. (Loomis, 2013)

¹ Howard Pyle's theory is cited according to Andrew Loomis, 1892-1959, American illustrator, <http://ars-fabrica.tumblr.com/post/53436682139/concepto-de-luz-y-sombra>.

As Andrew Loomis explains, the shadow is amorphous, indefinite and chaotic and because it is sensual and mysterious, it invites speculation. On the other hand, light is volumetric, defined and ordered and since it is cerebral and honest, it suggests truth. Therefore, he concludes that the balance between light and shadow is the key. That is, they are complementary.

To deepen into the idea of the importance of the shadow, the view of Junichirò Tanizaki is presented, in his work *El elogio de la sombra*² (1933), in which he critically reviews the main aesthetic notions of Japanese culture. In his essay, Tanizaki explains that in *“the West, the most powerful ally of beauty was always light; in traditional Japanese aesthetics, the essential thing is to capture the enigma of the shadow. The beautiful is not a substance in itself but a play of chiaroscuro produced by the juxtaposition of the different substances that forms the subtle play of the modulations of the shadow.”*

When he emphasizes the role of the shadow, he considers that the western way of visualizing seeks to end with the smallest gap, with the last refuge of the shadow. Another interesting idea of the author is that we forget what is invisible to us and we consider that what is not seen, (we do not see and/or we are not able to see) does not exist. This means a loss of diversity in life.

Psychology has also worked on the concept of the shadow; particularly, we consider what was developed by the psychologist Carl Gustav Jung (1875 - 1961), who referred to the need to integrate opposites, trying to unmask, raise awareness and recognize the shadow as one's own to reach individuation. Jung designated as shadow those hidden or unconscious aspects of oneself, both positive and negative. He further explains that the components of our mental constitution cannot be uprooted without serious loss, since when they are repressed or disdained; their energy is submerged in the unconscious with inexplicable consequences.

If we were to bring these reflections on light and shadow to music, we could speak in a minor mode and we could associate it with shadows, darkness, melancholy, and the major mode, associated with light, happiness, and the obvious. Both major and minor modes are necessary to create nuances and increase the beauty of a composition.

² *The praise of the shadow.*

Emptiness, door for apprehension

To investigate the concept of emptiness were taken the ideas of Francois Cheng (2012), a Chinese-born French academician, writer and poet. The void for him is related to the principle of alternation of yin-yang, it is not something non-existent, but a dynamic and active element. It is where transformations are generated and where what is full can reach fullness.

According to Cheng, the emptiness encourages the process of interiorization and transformation through which each thing realizes its identity and otherness and thereby can achieve totality. The void is both the origin and the central mechanism of the world of things and in this way, the void looks towards the fullness. Emptiness is a hole in which things, that it contains, live and proliferate, and it never overflows. Emptiness is at the origin and inside each thing; it allows the transmutation between heaven and earth, therefore between time and space, respectively.

When we observe from our own stereotyped images there is no emptiness, there is no apprehension of what is different, there is no internalization, there is only reproduction of what is our own, whether it is what seems similar to us or what seems different to us, and it even scares or worries us. Following Cheng, it can be said that without emptiness there is no fullness, transformation or search for identity.

Certainly, complete vacuum is almost impossible; but, by not allowing at least a hint of emptiness to occur, we impoverish our knowledge of the world and of others and, in this case, our knowledge of the territory.

Approaching this emptiness can produce sensations of restlessness, instability and discomfort in the face of the unknown, the not understood or what we cannot represent, as in the analysis carried out by the Argentine painter Mónica Girón³, who affirms that when we cannot bear the sensations that it causes us this emptiness, is that we deny or underestimate what caused it. There is another interesting element in Mónica Girón's painting that is applicable to the analysis being presented here. She plays with the visible and the invisible and redefines it in each of her works.

³ www.monicagiron.com

Photo13: Stones with Patagonian bares.



Source: Mónica Giron, 1992 www.monicaqiron.com

In an environment we also face the visible and the invisible and the integration of both in the field of vision is what can give us an integral view, created from emptiness.

6. Conclusions

Patagonia has inherited images and stereotypes from different authors of different historical backgrounds; these stereotypes have conditioned or hindered the genuine development of the region since the man-milieu relationship is produced with that poor and/or distorted image of the territory.

Through the analysis carried out, the need to allow ourselves to see/feel the features of the shadow, such as that subtle of the Patagonian territory was emphasized. When our contemplation impoverishes a territory, we impoverish its capacity for authentic development; and we also impoverish ourselves.

To open oneself up to the knowledge of the territory, it is necessary to empty oneself of stereotypes, of images and unite "light and shadow" from a broad perspective, to perceive and understand this territory in depth. From this perspective, it can be thought that various authors have "brought to light" the most visible and obvious features for their time, their interests and their culture. Surely, with a restrictive gaze, what is not "enlightened" is lost, that which is quieter, softer, also legitimate and, decidedly, a vital part of the Patagonian environment.

Here is a quote from Tanizaki (1933) as he speaks of the nudity of Japanese rooms and the perception of the Westerner to apply it to the analysis carried out: "*The Westerner believes to be only before gray walls and devoid of any ornamentation, a totally legitimate interpretation from his point of view, of sight, but which shows that he has not grasped the enigma of the shadow at all.*" The author affirms that if the shadow is expelled, the trivial reality of empty and naked space remains. Something similar may have happened when "outsiders" and non-outsiders built limited images of Patagonia that impoverish or restrict it.

A valid question, then, is what happens to that which was covered and overshadowed by the "resplendent", but that has an immense capacity to surprise, to complete, to grow.

As explained in this article, to integrate the complementary lights and shadows, it is necessary to reach the emptiness, to that nothingness that approaches the full, the full, and, from there, perceive more fully the Patagonian environment, diverse, different, with lights and shadows. As Casini (2005) concludes in his study, Patagonia is a text that includes many versions and, therefore, it is necessary to recover these different visions and versions.

This unique space confronts us with the challenge of being able to perceive something different from what we are used to and, in this way, approach the complex and unique territory.

The challenge is to resignify Patagonia as a territory lived from its lights and shadows, as complementary energies and to banish the mythical Patagonia, composed with quotes and stereotypes that bring it back to represent "territorial characters" rather than territorial realities to live, care for and develop.

To accomplish this, it is necessary to reach Francois Cheng's emptiness that allows us to divest ourselves of labels such as Patagonia-brand, Patagonia-adventure, Patagonia-distant, and Patagonia-desert.

The emergence of this territory, perhaps less strident, but more complete, is a basic condition for sustainable development, which is "a deep and intimate dialogue between man in community and his environment" (Lara, 1993).

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