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Marie Coleman Nelson

Paths of Power: Psychoanalysis and Sorcery

Summary:

This essay, which first appeared over thirty years ago in "The Psychoanalytic Review," looks to abstract from the controversial works of self-styled anthropologist Carlos Castaneda implications for the practice of psychoanalytic psychotherapy. Taking as the basis of her study a framework for understanding cultural systems first posited by sociologist Benjamin Nelson, the author establishes a set of correspondences between Nelson's six general classes of directive cues (relating to sign, symbol, object, event, person, situation) and the directive models deployed by Castaneda's tutor, the sorcerer Don Juan. These illustrative correspondences are then seen to replicate crucial aspects of the analytic relationship, as well to evoke certain dialectical techniques employed by the 19th-century Danish philosopher Soren Kierkegaard.

Introduction

Marie Coleman Nelson (1915-1998) was a brilliant and original American psychoanalyst with a distinct interest in anthropology. Nelson's *Paths of Power: Psychoanalysis and Sorcery*, creatively analyses the initiation experiences of Carlos Castaneda. In fact, the author's approach does not rely on an 'anthropological' justification of the text, that is to say, on the kind of reading which, since the 1970s, has had strong ideological implications. Instead, Nelson's approach highlights the authenticity of subjective experience.

Her position would appear to be complementary to Lévi-Strauss's classical stance in his work *The Effectiveness of Symbols* (Lévi-Strauss 1963) where the anthropologist, studying the world of cultural symbols and myths, assimilates the figure of the shaman to that of the psychoanalyst. However, Nelson's perspective is that of a psychoanalyst who finds affinities and resonances in the complex ritual of shamanic initiation. In her words:

On re-visiting Castaneda's work, the reader is fascinated by the multiple levels of reality which are ritualised, as well as the quality of the relation between sorcerer and apprentice. We are made to 'see' how the cultural aspect of sharing, as exemplified in don Juan's proposal of prescriptions and magico-ritual operations, already contains the idea of a certain modality of relation. In fact this is something that may be considered akin to the psychoanalytic setting which, when inspired by a profound sense of

psychoanalysis and by an authentic belief, is by definition a place where 'things' will happen which cannot easily be assimilated to the quotidian and the known.

After a rigorous description of the different levels of reality Castaneda's experiences with Don Juan (levels termed agenda, credenda and miranda, emulanda), Nelson focuses on two fundamental aspects in Castaneda which are clearly connected to her psychoanalytic background and style. These two aspects—complemented and enriched by Nelson's own interest in art and by her acute sensitivity to modes and nuances of communication—concern transformation and metaphor. In Nelson's view, don Juan proposes to his apprentice a process of transformation which necessitates—in a way not unlike the analytic situation—relinquishing Western common-sense logic in order to enter into a condition of alterity (in which things cannot be 'explained', but are rather perceived, lived through, and in some way learned). Metaphor, then, would be a kind of bridge that the 'master' of the ritual uses to overcome the apprentice's 'resistances' to the dimensions of magic and otherness.

In what Victor Turner would have called the ritual process, Don Juan brings to life a theatre-like world of characters who favour processes of triangulation. Characters like the witch Catalina, and later don Genaro (viewed by some as alter-egos of don Juan), act in such a way as to encourage something akin to 'lateral' transferences within a group dimension. These enable Castaneda to oscillate between nagual and tonal, the two fundamental dimensions of human experience—of contact-contagion with the dimension of death—whilst he and his master remain alive.

In this context, Nelson proposes a consideration of the Oedipal triangle which is not based on its sexual aspects but rather emphasises its evolutionary side, underlined in the relation between don Juan and Castaneda. This relationship allows the dyadic mother-child dimension to be overcome, and provides access to a triadic paternal dimension, wherein the paternal function creates an opening onto the complexity and multiplicity of life.

Nelson's position, while derived from Hartman's Ego psychology (and from an idiosyncratic interest in the socio-cultural dimension), overcomes the rigidity and limits of this Freudian structural model by introducing the concept of multiple selves, a tool far more serviceable in understanding the complexity of Castaneda's magico-ritual experiences. An ante-litteram postmodernist of sorts, Nelson thus bears witness to a passion for psychoanalysis, as her position—neither grounded in ideological exaltations nor based on prejudicial foreclosures—exemplifies a true commitment to research of that which is other and alien.

A rich psychoanalytic vein runs through Nelson's work, as it evokes the traditions of Spitz and Searles, of Winnicott, Bollas and Khan. Her openness to the world of magic and otherness stems from a strong subjective motivation, moulded by ten years spent living and working in Africa (where, already on in years, she established in Nairobi one of the continent's first psychotherapy clinics and trainings), her interest in severely disturbed and psychotic patients, her love of art and of all that is creative and imaginative. And we offer the following tribute by Michael Eigen, one-time student of Marie Coleman Nelson and Editor of *The Psychoanalytic Review* (where *Paths of Power* first appeared in 1976): "Marie's aesthetic sense and vulnerable sensitivity did not get full voice in her psychoanalytic writings, although they are present there in a muted way. She tended to speak with a measured voice in those writings, which never failed to instruct and inform. With antennae ever-open to winds of change, she had one hand on the pulse of patients, another on the pulse of societies. Contact with her never failed to heighten my awareness of what was going on in the world, and of how shifting cultural tendencies found expression in clinical work—as this essay on psychoanalysis and sorcery vividly attests."

Alfredo Lombardozi

(translated by Gillian Clayton)

This essay will attempt to abstract from the documented experiences of Carlos Castaneda(1) certain implications for the practice of psychoanalytic psychotherapy. As a graduate student of anthropology, Castaneda's field study of medicinal herbs and psychotropic plants led him into a ten-year apprenticeship with an aging Mexican Yaqui Indian, don Juan Mateus, self-styled sorcerer and "man of knowledge." In four volumes based on extensive field notes Castaneda describes an extraordinary tutelage which ultimately enabled the author to immerse himself at will in a "separate reality" unbound by the limits of space, time, and motion as we know them.

In undertaking this task I urge the reader who doubts the legitimacy of Castaneda's account to grant these pages the same degree of evenly hovering attention that clinicians ideally adopt in their consulting rooms. For my part, I write as one persuaded of the authenticity of his experiences.

During his early meetings with the sorcerer, in which Castaneda pressed don Juan to act as a paid informant on "power plants," the old Indian refused money and mocked the student's prepared genealogical questionnaire, dismissing it as "crap" and adding, indifferently, that he had dropped his personal history. Mystified and frustrated, Castaneda reports that he nevertheless felt there to be "a silent consistency" about don Juan's acts, "a consistency which was thoroughly baffling to me.... His mere company forced me to make a tremendous re-evaluation of my models of behaviour" (JI 30). As their meetings continued, Castaneda realized that the sorcerer's knowledge of psychotropic plants was a minor element in a highly complex system of relating to the universe, that their utility lay mainly in demonstrating the possibility of alternate ways of perceiving it, and that "seeing" was by no means contingent upon their use. Likewise, Castaneda began to grasp that don Juan's core interest lay in training him to become a "man of knowledge" in the fullest sense — a long-term goal which Castaneda, too, found more compelling than the research project which had led their paths to cross. Throughout the lengthy tutelage that developed, don Juan emphasized that he was inducting Castaneda into a body of knowledge uniquely the province of sorcerers, "men of knowledge."

"Culture," according to B. Nelson,¹⁰ "may surely be construed as a repertoire of cues, nonverbal as well as verbal, a directive system serving to move individuals and groups to perform in accordance with desired norms." Making due allowance for individual styles and talents among those who practiced sorcery, both the tutorial methods and the knowledge transmitted were

part and parcel of the sorcerers' culture known to don Juan. Viewed thus, Castaneda was hardly acquiring the tricks and trappings of an outlandish profession or learning to imitate an alien life style. He was engaged in an effort to cast off the directive system acquired over a lifetime, as the sorcerer himself reiterated.

Castaneda explains, "Don Juan's task, as a practitioner making his system accessible to me, was to disarrange a particular certainty which I share with everyone else, the certainty that our 'common-sense' views of the world are final" (SR10).

Psychoanalysis, too, though not overtly employing a didactic method, disarranges our common-sense belief pattern, at least those regulating interpersonal contact; it also casts grave doubt on the views of the world with which we are inculcated from childhood. And learning emotionally and cognitively to conceptualize human interaction according to the psychoanalytic experience accords us lifetime membership in our own particular subculture of "veteran analysts." Thereafter we are never quite the same.

Granting the revelatory nature of both orders of experience, the question arises as to whether psychoanalytic psychotherapy has anything to gain from Castaneda's autobiographical account. Had these experiences not been actualized in fact, the terrors, insights, and rewards of the apprenticeship might well pass as a latter-day rendition of the Hero's Journey — a contemporary allegory like *The Inferno* or *Pilgrim's Progress* with added psychological dimension. Though the impact of psychoanalysis only in rare moments matches the global revisualizations that shook Castaneda's world view, many of the affects and attitudes present in his relationship with don Juan and the personal growth which he attained also characterize the transference relationship and as such may hold special interest for clinicians.

I.

A suitable framework for comparing the sorcerer's directive models and his mode of transmitting them with the analytic model known to us is offered by Benjamin Nelson, who amplifies his definition of culture as "streams of cues which are mediated to individuals with a view to charging and aiding them to define and

respond to any possible point of reference — sign, symbol, object, event, person, situation — they might chance to encounter or fancy.”(2) He distinguishes six general classes of directive cues common to all cultural systems :

1. *percipienda* (*perception*) *cues* – this first and most embracing class of cues comprises directives which charge us to perceive any possible object, person, or occasion in one or another way.
2. *sentienda cues* – this second set of cues directs us to have one or another feeling (sentiment) in relation to any possible person, object, event or situation....
3. *agenda cues* – this third set of cues charges us to perform or not to perform one or another act on sanction of penalty or promise of reward.
4. *credenda cues* – are those signals or symbols which tell us what or how we ought to believe or not to believe.
5. *miranda cues* – are those directives which define what or whom we ought to hold in awe, what or whom we ought to marvel at.
6. *emulanda cues* – this sixth set of cues influences us to emulate persons or imitate behaviors of those presented to us as role models, social paradigms, or cynosures.10a

In subsuming my comparison under these headings, overlap will immediately become apparent. With respect to the teachings of don Juan, I shall list them according to the context in which they most frequently appear .

1. *Percipienda (Perception) Cues*

In our world view, reality is exclusive. In the world view of sorcery, reality is a matter of definition and our accepted world view is only one definition; there are realities. A separate reality — in this case, the reality of don Juan’s subculture — may be acquired through training. In the steps which follow great stress is placed on bringing about literal alterations of objects in the field of vision:

Stopping the world: Engaging in specific acts and exercises, under tutelage, which undermine pre-established definitions of the nature of the

world. An important component of stopping the world is learning to suspend one’s habitual internal dialogue. These steps are discussed under Agenda Cues.

Becoming a Hunter: Literally and metaphorically, acquiring a living sense of immersion in the forces of nature and one’s role in nature as hunter and hunted, with the awareness of death as an ever-lurking companion.

Becoming a Warrior: Revisualizing oneself and redefining one’s powers through the altered perceptions entailed in becoming a hunter. By testing oneself and surmounting fear one is

Acquiring Power: Becoming a warrior entails achieving power over oneself (knowing oneself). In the sorcerer’s reality, power is an indiscriminate cosmic force which can be captured and used by “men of knowledge” to transcend ordinary reality. This force may be amorphous or it may be represented in the form of “allies” or “guardians.”

Obtaining an ally: Perceiving or sensing the presence of an ally is not contingent on acquiring power. But until one acquires power, the allies, even when recognized, are extremely dangerous and must be avoided. Armed with the power of a warrior, one obtains the friendship of an ally through encounter with its personification in the luminous form of a bird, animal, insect, or abstract shape.

Achieving a separate reality: By completing the apprenticeship, the candidate has become capable of clairvoyance, metamorphosis, seeing, flying, and traveling (i.e., out-of-body experiences). He is able to multiply his personifications, appearing to others and inter-acting with them as a tangible entity in distant places. He is able to materialize and dematerialize not only himself but a cast of characters, settings, and objects at will.

2. *Sentienda (Feeling, Sentiment) Cues*

In our world view—ordinary reality—man interacts only with the highest forms of life, while lower forms and the inanimate physical world are objects of study, aesthetic interest, or utilitarian concern. The presumption that the latter exert any power with respect to man (except in formal ecological terms) is written

off as anthropomorphism. By contrast, the world of don Juan is infinite and infinitely animated by wondrous forces. He admonishes Castaneda,

For you the world is weird because if you're not bored with it you're at odds with it. For me the world is weird because it is stupendous, awesome, mysterious, unfathomable; my interest has been to convince you that you must assume responsibility for being here, in this marvelous world, in this marvelous desert, in this marvelous time. I want to convince you that you must learn to make every act count, since you are going to be here for only a short while, in fact, too short for witnessing all the marvels of it. (JI 107)

On another occasion when Castaneda feels annoyed and peevisish, the sorcerer adjures,

Think of your death now....It is at arm's length. It may tap you any moment, so really you have no time for crappy thoughts and moods. None of us have time for that. (JI 61)

Armed with the consciousness of death in the midst of life and a powerful sense of relatedness between the animate and the inanimate, one realizes that objects and places, as well as all forms of life, possess powers which exercise benign or malevolent influence. Don Juan teaches Castaneda to trust his feelings about these qualities in his choice of resting and sleeping spots — choices which are not based on aesthetic or even functional considerations, but rather on his sense of responsive harmony or disharmony in a particular location. On one occasion, through an act of clairvoyance (the sorcerer calls it "seeing"), Castaneda finds a hilltop which exerts a particularly beneficial influence upon him. The sorcerer tells Castaneda that this is the place where he will store his reserve of power and return for renewal, in his thoughts, until his death. Says don Juan, "Every rock and pebble and bush on this hill, especially on the top, is under your care....Every worm that lives here is your friend. You can use them and they can use you" (JI 184).

The mood of a warrior is as important as reverence for the world's mysteries. Throughout his works Castaneda makes no secret of the fact that he easily succumbs to fear and self-pity. On one expedition don Juan encloses Carlos' body in a cage constructed of branches and leaves (a standard procedure of sorcerers to obtain enlightenment and power). After a period of tranquillity in the enclosure Castaneda's pleasant mood gives way to his familiar pattern of sadness and regret that his "spirit had been distorted by the circumstances of [his] life." Castaneda says of don Juan,

He laughed and threatened to cover my head with dirt if I kept on talking in that vein. He said that I was a man. And like any man I deserved everything that was a man's lot – joy, pain, sadness and struggle – and that the nature of one's acts was unimportant as long as one acted as a warrior. (JI 139)

No matter how much you like to feel sorry for yourself, you have to change that," [says don Juan]. "It doesn't jibe with the life of a warrior....It is of no use to be sad and complain and feel justified in...believing that someone is always doing something to us. Nobody is doing anything to anybody, much less to a warrior....You are here, with me, because you want to be here. You should have assumed full responsibility by now, so the idea that you are at the mercy of the wind would be inadmissible. (JI 140)

As these brief excerpts demonstrate, don Juan is emphatic and highly directive with respect to Castaneda's feelings, holding always before him the model of the warrior whose affects as well as actions are regulated by the code of initiative and self-reliance.

3. *Agenda (Procedural) Cues*

Whereas Castaneda seeks always to arrive at understanding through rational discourse, don Juan is aware that his persistent questions and indefatigable recording of their conversations serve as resistance to emotional acceptance of the tutelage. Though he tolerates these distancing techniques with wry humor, his preferred mode of teaching is through enactment and description of the steps involved. All of the experiences which he introduces to enable the apprentice to pass through the "six stages of enlightenment" (my term) listed under Percipienda Cues are communicated through the following action, or procedural, modalities:

Stopping the world involves the mastery of certain acts which generate sensory experiences that defy explanation according to the scientific principles which prevail in our ordinary reality and therefore open the apprentice to a separate reality. The use of psychotropic plants, for example, introduces a separate reality. Learning to “feel with the eyes,” which involves crossing the eyes and avoiding a focussed gaze, is another: through immersion in the sensation of seeing double one is enabled to distinguish between a place of positive power and one of negative power (JI 75).

Setting up dreaming, regarded by don Juan as the first step to power, “meant to have a concise and pragmatic control over the general situation of a dream, comparable to the control one has over any choice in the desert, such as climbing a hill or remaining in the shade of a water canyon.” (JI 126) Don Juan instructs Castaneda to learn to look at his hands in a dream. He explains that every time one looks at anything in a dream it changes shape: “The trick in learning to set up dreaming,” he tells Castaneda, “is obviously not just to look at things but to sustain the sight of them. Dreaming is real when one has succeeded in bringing everything into focus. Then there is no difference between what you do when you sleep and what you do when you are not sleeping” (JI 127). The content of dreams is of no importance; the purpose of dreaming is control and power. This is attained by alternating one’s gaze between one’s hands and other items in the dream. After it becomes possible to gaze at the dream images deliberately and selectively, the candidate is ready to “travel.”

Travelling means, in essence, the transcendence of time and space. It is a literal rendition of teleportation, also known in parapsychological research as the “out-of-body” experience – the difference being that the sorcerer may choose to remain invisible or to appear manifestly to others as himself or in any other guise he selects. Travelling is flying, and it is learned by identification with, or simulation of, a bird during an altered state of consciousness. Certain power plants facilitate such learning, but once learned, this art of sorcery requires no support by hallucinogens.

Becoming a hunter and a warrior. The accomplishments of sorcery are reached through the correct execution of prescribed activities in the natural surround. These involve: (a) Adopting specific stances toward the immediate area to discover what physical elements best aid in the accumulation and execution of powers, for example, finding one’s optimal reclining position with respect to the compass, finding one’s optimal time of day for the mobilization of power, or divining whether the spirit entities of a given location are receptive or hostile to one’s presence. (b) Obtaining an ally. The ally is somewhat equivalent to the guardian spirit of North American Indian folklore⁽³⁾ in the sense that it functions as an intermediary with the spirit world. In that belief system, however, the guardian is generally obtained passively and is benign. In don Juan’s system the ally, or guardian, may present itself as benign or – depending upon the warrior’s power to “see”—it may arrive as a terrifying force, a monster whom one must fight and conquer or else one will perish. In this sense the guardian is conceptualized as a veritable incarnation of abstract power which accrues to the warrior if it is properly seen. (c) Acquiring a song. Through the ingestion of peyote (Mescalito), receiving a song of one’s own. The manner in which this is acquired and the content of the song remain the warrior’s secret; the song is sung under threat by inimical forces. (d) Learning the warrior’s dance. This is a ritually prescribed dance initiated by the warrior to ward off malignant powers who usually present themselves as allies, perhaps as humans. Hunting played a significant part in the tutelage as a vehicle for facing the unknown.

4 and 5. *Credenda (Belief) and Miranda (Reverence) Cues*

As in all novitiates, the success of this tutelage depends upon attention to and respect for the ritual sanctions and prohibitions governing the practice of sorcery. These functions are invested with meaning through the transmission of ethical and sacral precepts. When Castaneda protests to don Juan that the civilized world would dismiss any claim that the images of dreaming were real and not delusional and that it would maintain that those who could not distinguish fantasy from reality were mentally ill (JI 126), don Juan explains that certainly the warrior can tell things apart as well as any other man, adding,

I am not trying to make you into a sick, crazy man....But the forces that guide us brought you to me, and I have been endeavoring to teach you to change your stupid ways and live the strong clean life of a hunter. Then the forces guided you again and told me that you should learn to live the impeccable life of a warrior.

(JI 128)

Patiently and persistently, don Juan presents his apprentice, through verbal descriptions and directives, with the model of a warrior, infusing him with the desire to attain to this state. The sorcerer explains that the idea of imminent death “instead of becoming an obsession, becomes an indifference” (SR 150). To which Castaneda responds that he could hardly conceive of arriving at a sense of detachment, for in the apprenticeship he had experienced the moment when knowledge became a frightening affair. But, he adds, “I could also truthfully say that I no longer found support in the ordinary premises of my daily life. And I wanted, or perhaps more than wanted, I needed, to live like a warrior” (SR 150).

Don Juan then elaborates:

A detached man, who knows he has no possibility of fencing off his death, has only one thing to back himself with: the power of his decisions. He has to be, so to speak, the master of his choices. He must fully understand that his choice is his responsibility and once he makes it there is no longer time for regrets or recriminations. His decisions are final, simply because his death does not permit him time to cling to anything.

And thus with an awareness of his death, with his detachment, and with the power of his decisions a warrior sets his life in a strategical manner. The knowledge of his death guides him and makes him detached and silently lusty; the power of his final decisions makes him able to choose without regrets and what he chooses is always strategically the best; and so he performs everything he has to with gusto and lusty efficiency.” (SR 151)

Achievement of separate reality consists, therefore, of a total revisualization of the world as an awesome embodiment of the extraordinary, combined with a dedicated transformation of the self, via acquisition of power and commitment to a different value system.

Beside beliefs and aspirations associated with direct experience, philosophic assumptions concerning the nature of man and his relation to the universe prevail. The world is composed of two forces: and man is composed of two forces: these are the tonal and the nagual. The tonal is rational, orderly, and life-affirming; the nagual is powerful, magical, and deadly. In Castaneda’s tutelage don Juan represents the tonal, while don Genaro, another sorcerer participating in his instruction, represents the nagual (TP 118-194).

6. *Emulanda (Emulation) Cues*

Noteworthy in the apprenticeship is the fact that whereas don Juan transmits a general corpus of knowledge and urges Castaneda to adopt the philosophy and emulate the stance of a warrior, he at no time exerts pressure on the apprentice to emulate his personal qualities. On the contrary, he not only describes the ways in which the individual styles and talents of sorcerers vary, but he calls attention to the differences between his own modes of response and those of Castaneda in many situations that they share (e.g., effects of hallucinogens, places of power, affinities for elements, and times of day for employing power).

II.

Armed with this general outline of the tutelage, we may now relate certain of its aspects to the psychoanalytic model and assess the tutorial interaction from a psychoanalytic point of view. For readers unfamiliar with Castaneda’s account I should probably interpolate here that even though Castaneda at one or two points in conversation with don Juan proposes equivalency between concepts advanced by the sorcerer and the concepts of ego and superego, he shows no psychoanalytic sophistication in describing his relationship with don Juan.(4) Nevertheless, a distinct parallel may be drawn between their association and the bond which prevails between the psychoanalyst and the analysand.

From the outset of their relationship don Juan assumes the responsibility of a master, guiding Castaneda beyond his limited goal of fact-gathering and helping him to set his sights on a different order of achievement. Castaneda’s effort to control the initial contact by distancing tactics succumbs before the old Indian’s penetrating gaze and ironic responses, which intimate that he has more important knowledge to convey than simple plant lore.

By his own description a troubled and insecure person, Castaneda is emotionally – the analyst would say transferentially – drawn to don Juan. He returns repeatedly to see the sorcerer, rationalizing at first that he does so to obtain data for his thesis. Thus begins his long apprenticeship.

The Handling of Resistances

From the sorcerer's viewpoint, Castaneda's chief resistances are intellectualization, note-taking, striving for rational explanations, and procrastination through interminable talk and questioning.

Throughout the tutelage don Juan treats Castaneda's voluminous recording much as Albert Schweitzer dealt with the mothers of Lambarene who superstitiously painted their newborn infants white to ward off evil spirits. Once Schweitzer realized that his rational objections fell on deaf ears, he began instead to caution them, "Don't forget to paint the baby."⁽⁵⁾ Similarly, don Juan modifies his opposition to Castaneda's note-taking, sometimes teasing his apprentice a little about it and at other times reminding him to get out his pad and pencil.

Especially when the sorcerer and apprentice are involved in an enterprise that requires ritual or cautionary silence, don Juan finds Castaneda's compulsive inquiries and conversation difficult to tolerate. Still, he understands that Castaneda's talking prevents him from transcending ordinary reality. "You think and talk too much," he tells the apprentice. "You must stop talking to yourself...Think about it. Whenever you are alone, what do you do?" Castaneda replies that he talks to himself – about anything.

Don Juan says,

I'll tell you what we talk to ourselves about. We talk about our world. In fact we maintain our world with our internal talk.... Whenever we finish talking to ourselves the world is always as it should be. We renew it, we kindle it with life, we uphold it with our internal talk. Not only that, but we also choose our paths as we talk to ourselves. Thus we repeat the same choices over and over until the day we die, because we keep on repeating the same internal talk over and over until the day we die. A warrior is aware of this and strives to stop his talking." (SR 218)(6)

"How can I stop talking to myself?" asks Castaneda. Don Juan advises him to use his ears to take some of the burden from his eyes, adding that we talk to others and to ourselves mainly about what we see, and that a warrior is aware of that and listens to the world; "He listens to the sounds of the world."

At this point Castaneda puts his notes away, whereupon "Don Juan laughed and said that he did not mean I should force the issue, that listening to the sounds of the world had to be done harmoniously and with great patience" (SR 129).

And now don Juan adds a statement that illustrates his unusual grasp of the nature of resistance. He tells Castaneda,

Your problem is that you confuse the world with what people do. Again you're not unique at that. Every one of us does that. The things people do are the shields against the forces that surround us; what we do as people gives us comfort and makes us feel safe; what people do is rightfully very important, but only as a shield. We never learn that the things we do as people are only shields and we let them dominate and topple our lives. In fact I could say that for mankind, what people do is greater and more important than the world itself. (SR 219)

Castaneda asks, "What do you call the world?" To which don Juan replies, "The world is all that is encased here." He stomps the ground. "Life, death, people, the allies, and everything else that surrounds us...we won't ever understand its secrets. Thus we must treat it as it is, a sheer mystery.... An average man doesn't do this, though. The world is never a mystery for him, and when he arrives at old age he is convinced he has nothing more to live for"(SR 220).

Intent upon freeing Castaneda to conceptualize himself in a separate reality, don Juan perceives man's "internal talk" as a constant repetition and reaffirmation of the symbols and values of his culture – ordinary reality – and as such a powerful obstacle to new learning.

Oedipal Factors

Although the theme is never so clearly defined by Castaneda, it is apparent that his tutorial relationship with don Juan constitutes a remedial Oedipal attachment as well, and that despite his resistances, the predominantly positive relationship with the old man greatly facilitates the achievement of their goal. Castaneda's first experience with peyote (TDJ 98) is interpreted by the sorcerer as a positive sign supporting the notion that Castaneda should be introduced, as don Juan's successor, into general mysteries known only to sorcerers, and to the specific powers in his personal command. In short, ample evidence accrues that don Juan looks upon Castaneda as his spiritual son and that he expends tremendous effort grooming him for the role.

That don Juan even attempts to help Castaneda work through (in psychoanalytic parlance) his resistance to his real father as an obstacle to his acceptance of the sorcerer's teachings is brilliantly exemplified in a chapter on assuming responsibility (JI 58-69). Castaneda complains about his father's weakness and indifference to him, and a heated discussion ensues in which don Juan attempts to show Castaneda that when he, Castaneda, had in childhood made a commitment to go swimming once with his father, it was still his responsibility to fulfill his side of the bargain even though Carlos' father defaulted on his promise. Castaneda asks, "Why do you tell me all this, don Juan? Why are you doing this to me?"

'You came to me,' he [don Juan] said. 'No, that was not the case, you were brought to me. And I have had a gesture with you.'

'I beg your pardon?'

'You could have had a gesture with your father by swimming for him, but you didn't, perhaps because you were too young. I have lived longer than you. I have nothing pending. There is no hurry in my life, therefore I can properly have a gesture with you.' (JI 66)

The gravity of this conversation, in which don Juan calls the attention of his apprentice to the responsibilities inherent in personal commitment and implicitly offers himself as a remedial parent, demonstrates the sorcerer's awareness of his multiple roles in the relationship with Castaneda.

Don Juan's position in the matter as a *Sentienda cue* is of still broader interest. Castaneda has sometimes been characterized as a prime exponent of the "new narcissism" – the cultist retreat from social commitment. P. Marin says of his works,

Perhaps the best example of all this [i.e., salvationist doctrines] is the immense popularity of Castaneda's works about don Juan. What they offer the yearning reader is...the dream of an individual potency to be derived magically from another world. In essence it is an updated version of the Protestant dream of the salvation of the soul, and the important thing about the power celebrated within them is that it occurs neither in the actual polis nor in the company of significant others.

It is found, instead, in a moral and human desert, a fictitious landscape emptied of comrade or lover or child, of every genuine human relation (save that of master and disciple) in which joy or courage might actually be found.(7)

Don Juan's observation that Castaneda could have swum for his father rings strangely on the ear of our reality – not because the ethic of the sorcerer's world exemplifies, as Marin puts it, "a moral and human desert"—and the absence of human relatedness—

but, on the contrary, because it even surpasses expectations of relatedness in our culture. For what child among us would be expected to swim for an absent father after the latter has symbolically abandoned him? And if our "civilized" child gave hint of embracing the sorcerer's solution through the expression of a fantasy in which the father figured as present, one would hardly reward his resolution of the hurt; rather, one would feel a twinge of concern lest his restitutive fantasy become a chronic means of evading reality. Despite his general kindness and forbearance toward Castaneda's intellectualizations and the depth of his understanding of factors in the young man's childhood which conspired to undermine him (SR 133-143), the sorcerer does not coddle the apprentice. When Castaneda dissolves in tears of self-pity, don Juan comments dryly, "You indulge yourself too much," and when he solicits sympathy the typical response of the sorcerer is to divert him through the initiation of a task. When Castaneda dwells on the content of fantasies aroused in

the course of an act of sorcery, or of dreams, don Juan treats the material in its most literal aspects and encourages the apprentice to tell what exactly happened, not his thoughts about it. Thus he trains Castaneda to regard the very data which psychoanalysis would welcome as free association and fantasy as subordinate to the action and “story line” of the experience. In so doing the events in which Castaneda participates and which he perceives as bizarre gradually acquire the tangibility of a separate reality which is as real as the events of ordinary existence seem to be.

Tricking the Apprentice

Entering into the sorcerer’s culture was for Castaneda as disorienting as entering into the activities of our workaday world proves to be for the schizophrenic. And it is interesting to note that don Juan’s matter-of-fact instruction, early in the tutelage, accords well with what often proves an effective technique for reducing schizophrenic confusion. However, the secondary gain derived from finding a non-threatening transference object may militate against the taking of initiative. Given the awesome nature of the forces Castaneda was learning to harness, it is understandable that he entered reluctantly upon many tasks.

At a certain point in the apprenticeship, therefore, don Juan deceives Castaneda into the role of adversary against La Catalina, a witch. The sorcerer, with a show of abject fear, claims that his life is in danger, that the sorceress is intent on destroying him and that the next time she comes near him will be his last day on earth. Only Castaneda can save don Juan because La Catalina does not know him and so will allow the apprentice to approach her closely enough to pierce her with a wild boar’s hoof. Don Juan stresses the danger of such an encounter and tells the apprentice that he will understand if he prefers not to risk it. He also paints a terrifying picture of the dread consequences if Castaneda fails to “pierce” her. An oppressive anguish envelops the apprentice. Concerned to save don Juan, he is still terrified for himself. Don Juan smiles benevolently, telling him to leave now and think it over; whenever he feels that he really wants to help he can return and should Castaneda not elect to return, don Juan will understand that, too. Relieved that he is “off the hook” Castaneda drives away, but “somehow the thought of being free to leave did not soothe me” (SR 209). He turns around and returns, causing don Juan no surprise. The sorcerer rehearses with Castaneda the manner in which he is to hold the boar’s leg. He tells him how he is to trot and to spread his fingers to the twilight, asking it to give him power and calm.

The next day they drive to a spot where La Catalina usually crosses the highway. At don Juan’s command Castaneda leaps out of the car and runs toward the sorceress, extending the wild boar’s leg as he has been instructed:

The woman was almost on the highway. I ran and overtook her, I was so close to her that I felt her clothes on my face. I took the wild boar hoof from under my shirt and thrust it at her. I did not feel any resistance to the blunt object I had in my hand. I saw a fleeting shadow in front of me, like a drape; my head turned to my right and I saw the woman standing fifty feet away on the opposite side of the road. (SR 210)

Men approach. Castaneda rushes back to his car and the two speed off. After he has recovered from his exertion and dumbfounded at the woman’s incredible feat of flying across the road in a split second, he asks don Juan what happened back there. Says Castaneda,

He giggled like a child without answering. Then he asked me if I had noticed the way the woman got out of the way. He praised her excellent speed. Don Juan’s talk seemed so incongruous that I could not really follow him. He praised the woman! He said her power was impeccable and she was a relentless enemy. I asked don Juan if he did not mind my failure. I was truly surprised and annoyed at his change of mood. He seemed to be actually glad.

He told me to stop. I parked alongside the road. He put his hand on my shoulder and looked piercingly into my eyes.

‘Whatever I have done to you today was a trick,’ he said bluntly. ‘The rule is that a man of knowledge has to trap his apprentice. Today I have trapped you and I have tricked you into learning.’ (SR 211)

The sorcerer explains that by attacking Catalina, Castaneda has made himself a potential object for her retaliatory witchcraft, and thus will be forced into using and sharpening his own powers. Castaneda feels a

terrible anger with don Juan: "I told him that one should not play with a person's innermost feelings and loyalties."

Don Juan laughed until tears rolled down his cheeks, and I hated him. I had an overwhelming desire to punch him and leave....'Don't be so angry,' don Juan said soothingly. (SR 212) His method was so unethical to me that I became furious. 'Let me tell you something,' don Juan finally said....'If we wouldn't be tricked we would never learn. The same thing happened to me....The art of a benefactor is to take us to the brink. A benefactor can only point the way and trick.' (JI 257)

Triangulation and the Advent of Don Genaro

Don Juan's involvement of La Catalina to trick Castaneda into a more dynamic utilization of the arts of sorcery occurred in temporal conjunction with the introduction of another sorcerer, don Genaro, who was to figure with increasing prominence as don Juan's collaborator in the tutelage of Castaneda. Genaro appears upon the scene in 1968 (SR 92), seven years after the apprenticeship began. He plays a critical, sometimes terrifying role in freeing Castaneda of his logical assumptions concerning the nature of reality .

Whenever don Juan brings Castaneda and don Genaro together, the essentially trusting quality of the apprentice's relationship with don Juan is radically altered, for on these occasions don Juan yields his authority to his colleague, supporting Genaro in his role of trickster-transformer.(8) Don Genaro's lessons generally occur in two parts. The first is characterized by a period of relaxed talk between the three, friendly verbal instruction of Castaneda and joking interspersed with sudden "acts of power" by Genaro which catch Castaneda off guard.

The second part of instruction, which occurs hours or even days later, consists of more elaborate demonstrations of sorcery by don Genaro, such as vanishing from their midst and reappearing "On a distant mountain top (SR 260), initiating Castaneda into an out-of-body experience (TP 76), and making his car seem to disappear and rematerialize after an exhaustive search by all three in the surrounding area {JI 280-290}.(9)

For the purpose of this essay I shall concentrate on the dynamics of the first stage of these meetings between Castaneda and the sorcerers. Calling him "Little Carlito," the sorcerers carry on mocking dialogues in his presence concerning his resistances and progress. Genaro enacts absurd pantomimes of Castaneda's gestures—his expressions of suspicion and awe, his questioning, his note-taking. The apprentice's emotions veer sharply from liking Genaro and enjoying his company to fearing him. In this atmosphere Genaro performs sudden physical feats which violate Castaneda's conviction of "ordinary reality." Encouraged by don Juan, Genaro goes to the bushes—ostensibly to relieve himself—and causes rumbling sounds "like a thunderous avalanche." He stands on his head while clasping his knees in a sitting position. A slight man, he taps Castaneda lightly on the back in what the apprentice first interprets as a friendly "gesture of concern" – then, says Castaneda, "I suddenly felt that he had put the weight of a boulder on my back. I had the sensation that he had increased the weight of his hand...until it made me sag all the way down and I hit my head on the ground" (SR 250). Another time a similar sudden pressure by Genaro toppled Castaneda over into don Juan's lap. "Don Juan asked me in a joking tone if I was trying to sleep on his lap" (SR 254). Though filled with conflicting emotions during these bizarre encounters, Castaneda specifically disclaims any loss of ordinary waking attention.

The sorcerers' references to him as "Little Carlito," their toying with him, and don Juan's jesting implication that in falling over he was trying to sleep in Juan's lap suggests a combined effort on their part to induce a suspension of disbelief in which Castaneda might more readily enter into their separate reality. His swings of emotion between fear and comfort, joy and despair, are reminiscent of accounts of brainwashing techniques. Their behavior is also reminiscent of Ferenczi's (10) account of the taming of a wild horse, in which the trainer, by alternating between murmuring lovingly into the horse's ear and shouting at it angrily, rendered it tractable and responsive in one lesson.

The induction of alternating currents of emotion undoubtedly creates a malleable psychological state. Rosen's (11) intensive therapeutic interaction with schizophrenics uses this principle; he attributes its effectiveness to his symbolic assumption of the paternal or maternal role. The paradigmatic therapist may also veer tactically from one extremity of emotional expression to its opposite to increase the patient's

tolerance for a wide variety of responses from the people with whom he comes in contact. (12)
But do these explanations probe the heart of the matter? In 1971 Castaneda and don Juan engage in a discussion which sheds light on the underlying issue. Castaneda consults don Juan about the child of a friend, a boy of nine who runs away, has tantrums, and is disruptive at home and in school. When the apprentice asks what might be done about it, don Juan replies that the worst thing the boy's father could do would be to force the child to agree with him, to spank him, or to scare him. Castaneda wonders how the child can be taught if the father is not firm, and don Juan concurs that the boy should be spanked, if necessary but by someone else. Castaneda is indignant at the thought of a father allowing a stranger to touch his child. The sorcerer explains that "the worst thing one can do is confront human beings bluntly" (JI 10). He adds that if the father were a warrior he would help his child to "stop the world." But lacking such capacity he should go to skid row and hire the worst looking man he could find.

"To scare the little boy?" interjects Castaneda. Don Juan answers,

Not just to scare the little boy, you fool. That little fellow must be stopped, and being beaten by his father won't do it. If one wants to stop our fellow men one must always be outside the circle that presses them. That way one can always direct the pressure.

He further recommends that the derelict be paid to spank the boy suddenly, on cue, after some objectionable behavior, following which the father should help the child regain his confidence. Then the child should somehow be shown a dead child and induced to touch the body. "After the boy does that he will be renewed. The world will never be the same for him" (JI 12).

Such advice may horrify the reader, but it contains – as Castaneda realized – the essence of the sorcerer's theory and technique. It implicitly explains that "seeing" is accomplished through triangulation of the field or the objects of attention. Note the parallels in the following themes:

1. "Seeing" in dreams is accomplished by looking at and between the hands; the image of the dream emerges in the area behind and between the upheld hands.
2. Discerning "power" or the "ally" is accomplished by letting the eye travel lightly between two converging or adjacent objects.
3. La Catalina and don Genaro are called upon to serve as auxiliary objects who detach a portion of Castaneda's static preoccupation with his relationship with don Juan, thus dividing his attention to allow entry of elements belonging to the "separate reality."

Similarly, the sorcerer realizes that as long as the boy and the father are locked in a dyadic struggle for control, nothing can change; that only a "startling" representative of the ignored outside world, behaving as though he were affected by the boy's offenses, can open the boy's eyes to a different reality—social reality, in this case—and only the sight of a dead child will activate awareness of time, change, and consequence in the boy's universe.

In Ferenczi's account of the training of the wild horse the alternation of two kinds of stimuli -tender murmurs and angry shouts – by the trainer may similarly be deemed to have provided two reference points of experience, between which the horse acquired some sense of himself as a horse-in-context rather than a horse-in-limbo. One might say he acquired horse sense.

By the same token, the Oedipal situation may be understood not simply in its psychosexual aspect, but as a psychological force field between the two nodal points: mother and father. In the infant's growing awareness the father corresponds functionally to don Juan's skid row bum, intruding upon the mother-child symbiosis not chiefly by virtue of his sexual priority, but because his insistent intrusion as a third element imparts a dynamic imbalance into the static dynamic

bind (cf. Haley, 1963). Here father is the serpent who drives mother and infant out of the Garden of Eden. Historically, psychoanalysis regards the dyadic transference as the ideal condition for treatment. This exclusivity, paralleled only by the exclusivity of mother and child, also seems to prevail in the early stage of Castaneda's apprenticeship. Indeed, the ethic of the sorcerers seems to recognize and respect the situation much as psychoanalysts do (or should); Castaneda reports that in 1962 he dropped in on another sorcerer,

Secateca, ostensibly for a friendly visit. Secateca challenged his presence, asking him why he came: “Don’t you talk with Juan?... Isn’t he teaching you?... Don’t you trust Juan?” (SR 12). Whereupon Castaneda beat a hasty retreat.

But by 1972, when on one occasion he and don Juan are pleasantly relaxing, the sorcerer repeatedly suggests that Castaneda “call” don Genaro (to materialize). The apprentice protests that he is perfectly content as things are. Says he, “I had a terribly sour taste on the roof of my mouth. Beads of perspiration ran down from my brow to my upper lip. I wanted to say something, but there was really nothing to say. (TP 65)

Don Juan certainly recognizes that like the little boy locked in the dyadic resistance with his father, Castaneda is now indulging his filial attachment – status quo transference resistance, if you will – to him at the expense of growth in the tutelage. The sorcerer’s persistent inclusion of don Genaro in this period creates a dynamic tension from which Castaneda cannot escape into “ordinary reality.” The account of their triadic encounters reveals don Juan’s complex role: like a maternal figure he is, encouraging toward Castaneda, but he is also in league with Genaro’s shaking up the apprentice with his supernatural horseplay. Castaneda expects don Juan to “save” him, but he can only escape from one to the other and both conspire against his static preference for comfort and safety.

It will be recalled, too, that Castaneda’s tutelaries represent the tonal (don Juan) and the nagual (don Genaro), and that it is their task to nurture both elements in him. As he moves closer to warriorhood it becomes incumbent upon him to mediate these forces within himself, and the sorcerers’ joint engagement of his attention constitutes an external paradigm of the internal resolution that must be achieved between the two.

III.

The separate reality of sorcery and the ordinary reality in which we are immersed seem as different as night and day. Allegorically, however, marked similarities prevail between “seeing” as a goal of sorcery and “insight” as a goal of therapy, both being regarded as systems of transformation. Earlier in this essay the guardian is described as the very incarnation of abstract power which the apprentice dares not confront until he has acquired some degree of personal power, or knowledge, with which to neutralize its terrible force. In sorcery the warrior may be destroyed or driven mad by the guardian if the latter is confronted prematurely. In psychoanalysis, too, the patient must first acquire some confidence that his demons cannot destroy him before he can tolerate their naming or interpretation by the therapist.

There is a marked resemblance between the development of a reservoir of therapeutic courage and the development of the capacity to “see” in the modality of the sorcerers. After one experience in which Castaneda comes close to seeing, he and don Juan discuss a prior attempt on his part to meet the “guardian of another world” which had failed; the guardian, a colossal insect, had attacked and terrified him. Don Juan explains that the guardian was able to launch the attack because Castaneda had not really “seen” it, hence “overcome” it. Castaneda speculates that perhaps this happened because he had not liked the guardian or found it beautiful. Don Juan emphatically disagrees

It doesn’t matter whether you like or dislike the guardian. As long as you have a feeling toward it, the guardian will remain the same.

It’s size was awesome. It was a monster. You know what all these things are. So the guardian was always something you knew, and as long as it was something you knew you did not see it....The guardian had to become nothing and yet it had to stand in front of you. It had to be there and it had, at the same time, to be nothing. (SR 169-170)

To paraphrase: As long as one’s culturally and emotionally conditioned directive cues are rigidly maintained in an unknown situation, the “demons” will prevail. Both insight and seeing, then, involve the repudiation of habituated rationalizations that sustain the resistances of ordinary (i.e. social) reality. Castaneda’s willingness to forego comfort and undergo the traumas of the tutelage contrasts sharply with his unwillingness to suspend his interpretations of the experiences according to the *sentienda* and *credenda* cues of Western thought. Once when he and don Juan are seated in a restaurant, the apprentice queries the

sorcerer on the components of the tonal and the nagual. Don Juan likens the tonal to the table, all that man knows, is, and conceptualizes being elements on the table – including his cosmological and ontological constructs (TP 126-127). The nagual, by contrast, comprises everything that cannot be conceptualized – everything that is off the table. In short, according to the sorcerer's view, both our tangible and intangible representations, being products of man's surround and his thoughts, are conceptually bound and functionally circumscribed by man's limitations, and only the world of sorcery is able to harness the invisible power of the nagual.

It is at exactly this point that sorcery and psychoanalysis converge. For in both systems of personal transformation, sorcerer's apprentice and analysand are each obliged to "suspend judgment." This, in effect, means abandoning the familiar directive cues by which they have interpreted their lives. Both processes emphasize the immediacy of experience, and in the capture of the moment the perpetual search for causation is suspended.

With considerable pride modern science has abandoned demonological theories of mental disturbance in favor of rational explanations, and it is indeed tempting to equate the tonal to man's individual and collective egohood, and the nagual to his chaotic and unknowable id. But unlike Freud's view of the id as instinctual force possessing no consciousness, don Juan specifically characterizes the nagual as having consciousness and being "aware of everything" (TP 131).

If we were to substitute for our definition of the id don Juan's definition of the nagual, a host of phenomena which refuse to be buried by scientific explanation would be encompassed: notions of demonic possession, out-of-body experiences, divination of various kinds, unidentified flying objects, poltergeist activity, and the tremendous body of evidence of otherwise inexplicable hexings, healings, and hauntings accumulated in the course of anthropological and parapsychological research.

It has been noted in some quarters of the therapeutic profession that certain modes of supporting the resistance of schizophrenic and pathologically narcissistic individuals enables them to re-enter what we like to describe as the "real world." (13) Don Juan discusses the vulnerability of the tonal, the "social person" (TP 122), to damage and the importance of enabling it to relinquish control gladly (TP 156) so that it may become free, fluid, and capable of being shrunk. A shove can shrink the tonal, and then the nagual, "if it is already in motion, no matter how small this motion is, will take over and achieve extraordinary deeds" (TP 157).

The sorcerer's system exemplified in the preceding passages contains valuable implications for psychotherapy. True, one will not physically shove the patient on the couch. But it does suggest that the traditional injunction by which the psychoanalyst abides – to maintain "evenly hovering attention" – may not provide the ideal stance for enabling the patient to relinquish control gladly, nor may our overvaluation of the patient's internal dialogue facilitate his abandonment of the culturally sanctioned modes of mental activity. Both may on occasion require suspension if he is to enter into a psychological reality different from the one he brings into treatment. Finally, the unpredictable behavior of don Juan and don Genaro, introduced, as Castaneda later learns, for the purpose of shrinking his tonal and admitting the nagual, suggests that the therapist who wishes to generate revisualizations of reality by the patient and to introduce more viable cues to interaction than those commonly followed by the patient, may be obliged to behave unpredictably from time to time. The unpredictable communication demonstrates to the listener that his internalized model of reality cannot hope to define its limits, for there are, as the sorcerer says, other realities.

POSTSCRIPT

Between the writing and the publication of this essay considerable commentary has begun to appear on the works of Castaneda. Against the positive reception by general readers, an acrimonious outcry has been leveled against his four-volume narrative in intellectual circles – by conservative anthropologists who charge that the data and protocols do not constitute genuine anthropology, by parapsychologists who charge they cannot be proven, by social critics (e.g., Marin, cited above) who charge him with peddling a revamped version of an old salvationist doctrine.

For his part, Castaneda makes no effort to justify his works. He remains unconcerned about his public

image, avoids lionization by the literati, invites no forgiveness as a consummate put-on artist by parading evidence of his extensive royalties. On the contrary, rather than betraying the spirit of his apprenticeship, the author's persistently elusive life style only reinforces the impression conveyed in his writings that he has indeed gained access to a separate reality and needs none of us. For the image-makers this must be truly frustrating.

Castaneda's personal life is important only insofar as it obliges us to direct our inquiry away from the narrowly factual (as don Juan had taught him) and toward the deeper issues that link his particular apprenticeship to the hero's journey of myth and folklore. For true to the classic saga, the mundane biography of the questing hero is lost to history and only the journey remains as a paradigm for future explorers.

Like the mythological hero, Castaneda is essentially orphaned and upon reaching young manhood sets out to seek his fortune – in this instance, to gather material for his doctoral dissertation. He is portrayed as timid, callow, self-indulgent, and lacking in insight. Thus far the journey resembles the folk tales of many societies. But unlike the typical narrative of the East, in which the adventurer often sets out to find a holy man with whom to study, or the Greek myth, in which the hero finds supernatural helpers and enemies along the way, Castaneda meets

at the outset a supraordinary father surrogate (functionally androgynous) who accompanies him on his journey and introduces him to the forces of good and evil. Toward the end of his odyssey he meets his spiritual brothers, the fellow apprentices, and also the sorcerer don Genaro, who assumes the more actively defined paternal role toward him even as don Juan relinquishes his protective stance toward Carlos in favor of a more intimate, conspiratorial alliance with Genaro.

This frame recapitulates the life cycle. It embodies the themes of birth, induction into the natural and supernatural world by the mother, enforced identification with the father, extrusion from the family triangle, puberty rites and socialization (i.e., the brothers), dissolution of the home setting, and ultimate dispersal of the new generation into the unknown future while the parents, bound together in a lonely dyad, merge with the shades of history .

Castaneda's long apprenticeship defies simple explanation. From what may be summarized psychoanalytically, he was at its outset a poorly nurtured, neurotic young man with at least one pronounced conversion symptom (vomiting) and various obsessive-compulsive defenses to bind anxiety, the most evident being over-intellectualization, questioning, and recording. He was deeply in need of a patient and interested father with whose life and pursuits he might identify. Had Castaneda been a man of the nineteenth rather than the twentieth century, he might well have elected to pursue God, as did Kierkegaard.(14) In fact, some of the themes which Kierkegaard undertook to examine in his relation to man and God are echoed in Castaneda's apprenticeship. It seems pertinent to explore this briefly, for it is my impression that most of the questions now posed regarding the factual legitimacy of his works will in the course of time pale to insignificance by comparison to the deeper interpersonal and moral issues imbedded in his writings.

I refer particularly to the dialectical techniques employed by Kierkegaard in his efforts to awaken in the frivolous and worldly citizens of Copenhagen a revisualization of the concept of Christianity and of what it meant to be a Christian. To this end Kierkegaard published in the local press, under a number of pseudonyms, articles representing variant views on the issues with which he was concerned—for the purpose, he explained, of “making people a bit angry so as to make them upbraid one again and again without ceasing for that very thing which one would wish to have emphatically accentuated and, if possible, brought to the attention of all.”(15) This method, which Kierkegaard called “dialectical reduplication,” was carried into his very life style through the deliberate adoption of various public roles. While he was writing an aesthetic work, *Either/Or*, which he planned to follow with his profoundly religious *Two Edifying Discourses*, Kierkegaard matched his public behavior to the sophisticated mood of *Either/Or*, allowing himself to be observed and characterized as a man-about-town, a superficial, worldly, charming, idle fellow – one of the crowd. Of this technique for role-playing dichotomies (e.g., creating a sharp contrast with the subsequent publication of the serious *Two Edifying Discourses*) Kierkegaard said,

I can imagine this objection [to the use of such deceptions] made from the point of view of a scrupulous and pusillanimous notion of the duty of telling the truth, a notion which consistently leads to being always mute for fear of saying something false; and since silence may be a falsehood, it consistently leads to the false dilemma: Do it or don't do it: be silent or speak out; both are equally futile....Teleological suspension in relation to the communication of truth (i.e., to suppress something for the time being in order that the truth may become truer) is a plain duty to the truth and is compromised in the responsibility a man has before God for a proper use of the reflection bestowed upon him.(16)

Kierkegaard's recognition – that truth can only emerge through the activation of dialectical tension between dichotomous paradigms emphatically rendered, and that the generation of such tension by means of what in the moment may appear as falsehood serves the cause of a larger truth in the long run – is an orientation central to don Juan's tutelage and therefore certainly to Castaneda's work.

“If we wouldn't be tricked we would never learn....The art of a benefactor is to take us to the brink. A benefactor can only point the way and trick” (JI 257). Thus do sorcerer and man of God agree. In his introduction to Kierkegaard's *The Point of View for My Work as an Author*, Benjamin Nelson comments,

Early in the course of his [Kierkegaard's] authorship, he insists, he had become convinced that entirely new resources would need to be deployed if his contemporaries were to be converted from the nominal religion hardly different from paganism, which they professed – namely Christendom –to the Christianity proclaimed by Christ and Luther. He says clearly that none of the inherited direct methods of quickening spirits not friendly counsel, neighborly admonitions, learned explanations, moral censure – ... sufficed any longer to dislodge his contemporaries from their havens of self-satisfaction and indifference....His deeds and works became a series of contrived camouflages and 'deceptions,' illustrating the adventures of his pseudonymous heroes and heroines (his alter egos) among the blandishments in every sphere of human existence....The author's guide and teacher through all these byways was the wondrous Socrates who had devoted his life to setting an example and embodying a paradigm, compelling his indifferent contemporaries by his odd acts and odder questions to know themselves so that they might pursue the good in deepest inwardness.(17)

Is it not conceivable that in his detailed account of apprenticeship as a sorcerer Castaneda, like Kierkegaard, has presented us with a paradigm not of the static attainment of knowledge, but of the living search for knowledge and the obligatory tasks attendant upon such a search? If this be so, Carlos Castaneda can no more be forgiven than was Kierkegaard, who by his assumption of masks tricked his unsuspecting audience into fuller authenticity

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Notes:

1. The Teachings of Don Juan: A Yaqui Way of Knowledge is identified throughout this essay by the initials TDJ. A Separate Reality: Further Conversations with Don Juan is identified as SR. Journey to Ixtlan: The Lessons of Don Juan is identified as JI. Tales of Power is identified as TP.

2. B. Nelson, 1964, p.145.

3. Benedict, 1923.

4. While planning this essay I attempted to obtain illumination on this score by writing to Mr. Castaneda, but I received no reply.

5. Schweitzer, 1931.

6. Compare this observation with Benjamin Nelson's (Nelson et al, 1968) comment on culture: "Culture always cries out to be regarded as symbolic form translating experience as dramatic design....'In the Beginning,' we are reminded, 'was the Word,' and by the power of the Word... the chaos of Existence is converted into a cosmos of culture. Forever after, Nature is left to imitate Art and Illusion to interpenetrate

'Reality.'"

7. See Marin, 1975.

8. Trickster-transformer: the mythical culture hero who not only combats witchcraft and magic but actively and unpredictably perpetrates it.

9. One anthropologist who has worked with North American Indians tells me that events of this type have been personally experienced and observed by anthropologists in the field.

10. Ferenczi, 1913.

11. Rosen, 1953

12. See B. Nelson (1965) and M.C. Nelson et al (1968).

13. See Lindner (1956), Spotnitz (1969), and M.C. Nelson et al (1968).

14. Lowrie, 1962.

15. Kierkegaard (1848), p. 123.

16. Kierkegaard (1848), p. 90-91.

17. B. Nelson, in Kierkegaard (1848), p. x.