

"The Mind-forg'd Manacles": Castaneda in the
World of don Juan.

I

The aim of this paper is to offer an exegesis and analysis of Castaneda's reports of the teachings of don Juan (Castaneda 1970, 1971, 1972¹). These reports present anthropology with a number of important theoretical problems. For instance, as Heelas (1972) has shown, the books challenge us to reconsider fundamentally the nature of our discipline as translation by their insusceptibility to either a completely ethnocentric or a completely fideistic analysis.

More important here, however, is that the books raise essential questions as to the status we can accord our texts. A full examination of these questions would be a major task, for which there is no room here; moreover, while the answers we offer to such questions are logically prior to any exegesis, they are pragmatically consequent upon it. This being the case, I have no intention of trying to answer such questions at the moment. But I must make clear the viewpoint from which I initially approached the books.

I have treated the books as though they were literary texts, and the manner of my exposition has more in common with literary criticism than with any other discipline. Of course literary critics differ widely in their approaches, but they share an acceptance of their texts for themselves. They are primarily concerned with what a book has to say to us, rather than with its factuality or factitiousness. This question of the 'reality' we afford to our material is particularly relevant to this case, partly because don Juan's teachings deny the validity of our ordinary reality, but primarily because his own existence has been doubted. But it is a question which underlies all anthropology, and one which has never received the attention it deserves.

Although the question of the general status we accord our material is important, in the present case it is perfectly valid to argue that whether don Juan actually exists is irrelevant. Leach, reviewing the first of Castaneda's books, has said that,

"Indeed if don Juan had been described as a man
from Mars it would have made little difference."
(Leach, 1969:12).

Leach may have intended this to carry a rather derogatory tone, but there is no reason why such an assertion should. Evans-Pritchard, dealing with exactly this problem of the status of texts, has argued that,

"Certainly there was a Richard III, but he was
not the Richard of Shakespeare's play, who in
a sense is more real to us than what we may
regard as the more shadowy historical king,
unless we are historians, and perhaps even
then." (Evans-Pritchard, 1967:24-25).

It is in this light that I shall deal with Castaneda's works; don Juan is important and meaningful, and in this, perhaps the only true sense,

1. Throughout this essay these will be referred to by the numerals I, II, and III respectively.

he is real. I am not concerned here with the possibility that Castaneda may have 'distorted' don Juan. By treating Castaneda as akin to a novelist, such an idea becomes meaningless, for the only don Juan we know or care about is the don Juan seen and presented by Castaneda. Don Juan is 'Castaneda's don Juan', just as Socrates is 'Plato's Socrates'.

II

Don Juan's teachings make up, derive from, and are inextricably linked with a generalized view of the nature of the world. Since don Juan is a pragmatic teacher of action rather than an intellectual philosopher this view becomes apparent only in the course of those teachings. Although it is the general aim of this paper to elucidate those teachings, and hence to demonstrate what is involved in such a view of the world, the teachings themselves make little sense without some introductory remarks about the philosophy they are drawn from. I shall describe don Juan's epistemology and view of reality more fully later (see section V). It will suffice for the moment merely to point out the essential feature of that epistemology.

"For a sorcerer, the world of everyday life is not real, or out there, as we believe it is. For a sorcerer, reality, or the world we all know, is only a description....For don Juan, then, the reality of our day-to-day life consists of an endless flow of perceptual interpretations which we, the individuals who share a specific membership, have learned to make in common".
(III:8-9).

For don Juan, then, perception is a creative act, and by describing a world (including ourselves) we create the world.

The aim of don Juan's teachings is to introduce Castaneda to his knowledge. The end towards which this strives is to become one or both of two things: a sorcerer or a man of knowledge. This is done through the acquisition of certain techniques, and by adopting certain attitudes to life and the world (and it is in these attitudes that don Juan's philosophy becomes apparent).

Becoming a man of knowledge is not a final affair. This is also to a large extent true of becoming a sorcerer, and the bulk of the following remarks about the nature of men of knowledge will apply, usually in an attenuated form, to sorcerers. Becoming a man of knowledge is not like becoming a doctor. There are two essential differences.

Firstly, although the process of becoming a man of knowledge can indeed be described and taught in terms, at least partly, of the acquisition of certain techniques (such as seeing, dreaming, stopping the world etc.); still these techniques differ in an important way from the techniques of medicine. Significant techniques for a man of knowledge operate in the field of action, rather than of words or thought. Given don Juan's view that language is merely one of the elements in our everyday 'description' of the world this could hardly be otherwise. Thus it does not matter whether one understands what is involved in seeing, nor whether one knows how one does it (just as one does not know how one sees), nor even whether one can be sure of doing it again. The only thing that matters is that one does it. But it is impossible to become

a doctor (and the thought is horrific) if 'one does not know what one is doing'. The techniques of a man of knowledge are at the same level as 'understanding'; hence they replace it and cannot be susceptible to it.

Secondly, 'man of knowledge' is not a status one achieves. It is a constantly renewed affair to become a man of knowledge; except when he is acting appropriately (e.g. by seeing), the 'man-of-knowledge-ness' of an erstwhile man of knowledge ceases altogether. It is not kept in a state of inert or uninvoked abeyance. Don Juan expresses it like this:

"To be a man of knowledge has no permanence.
One is never a man of knowledge, not really.
Rather, one becomes a man of knowledge for a
very brief instant". (I:83, see also I:87).

The attitudes of a man are vital to his attempt to become either sorcerer or man of knowledge. Although specific elements of this attitudinal approach are often discussed with direct reference to their relevance for sorcerers and men of knowledge (and as such they will all be examined in greater detail below), they are loosely grouped together into the ideal life-patterns of the hunter and the warrior. To even begin to discuss and catalogue the elements of each of these idea-clusters here would be to pre-empt the whole paper. This is simply because there is very little which is relevant to becoming a sorcerer or man of knowledge which is not, at one point or another, taught in terms of the life of a hunter or warrior.

Being a hunter or warrior, like being a man of knowledge, has nothing to do with the acquisition of a status. The two are ideals, and as such don Juan uses them as models of behaviour for Castaneda to follow. True, a (not insignificant) amount of hunting (that is, hunting animals rather than power) does take place. But this serves only to bring the ideal directly in front of Castaneda. To be a hunter or a warrior serves as the perfect image with which don Juan can show Castaneda both the requirements and the rewards of his knowledge:

"Hunters must be exceptionally tight individuals".
(III:78)

"Once upon a time hunting was one of the greatest
acts a man could perform....At one time everybody
knew that a hunter was the best of men." (III:79)

"One goes to knowledge as one goes to war....
One goes to knowledge or to war with fear, with
respect, aware that one is going to war, and with
absolute confidence in oneself." (II:110).

"To seek the perfection of the warrior's spirit
is the only task worthy of our manhood." (III:138).

Both the life of a hunter and that of a warrior are lived with prime regard to strategy, survival, and the correct mood of controlled abandon. It would be an oversimplification to assume that the two are identical. However, it would be a mammoth task to detail the variations between the two, and it would add little to our grasp of don Juan's knowledge,

for in their roles as models for behaviour rather than final aims 'hunter' and 'warrior' do not need to be carefully defined or differentiated. A short summary of don Juan's explicit statements about the relationship between them will therefore serve our aims quite adequately. A hunter is not concerned with power; a warrior is, for a warrior is an immaculate hunter who hunts power (III:118-119). If he succeeds in this hunting, he may become a man of knowledge (III:136). This suggests that the concept of warrior includes that of hunter. Such may well be the case, but I think that to hold such a view would tend to belittle the hunter more than is justified by don Juan's teachings as a whole - if only because he often uses the word 'hunter' as an abbreviation for 'hunter of power'.

Lastly, before turning to the detailed consideration of the elements of the teachings, I must say something about the relationship between the notions 'sorcerer' and 'man of knowledge'. The exact overlap and difference between these two cannot be dismissed as was the one between 'hunter' and 'warrior', for they are the final aims of the apprenticeship. However, a complete discussion of the question would cover the whole subject matter of the paper, for their similarities and differences lie exactly in their respective components. So again I must resist the temptation to specify, and remain in the realm of the general.

The same man can of course be both a sorcerer and a man of knowledge - as in the case of don Juan himself, or of don Genaro. However, it is possible to be a sorcerer without ever having become a man of knowledge, as in the case of don Juan's own benefactor, a reputedly great brujo (sorcerer), who yet never learned to see. Elsewhere it is implied that being a man of knowledge runs contrary to sorcery - that is, once a man has learnt to see, he realizes the futility, the unimportance, of sorcery (II:204); or that it may be possible to learn to see, and so become a man of knowledge, without ever having mastered sorcery (II:240). On balance it appears that a man of knowledge has gone beyond the point reached by a sorcerer, and that 'man of knowledge' is therefore to some extent superior to and inclusive of 'sorcerer'. However, the paths diverge, and in view of don Juan's confessed predilection for seeing as against the manipulatory powers of sorcery, it is not surprising if he sees it as a more worthwhile goal, one which can take a man further into the realms of mystery, and he may be unaware of the full potentiality of sorcery. (This may also have some bearing on the idea of 'warrior' including 'hunter', but since the two pairs cannot be matched symmetrically no simple correlation can be drawn.) Further than this little can be said on such a general level before I have examined the detailed make-up of the two categories. Let me therefore just summarize the different emphases of the two: sorcery is more strongly concerned with techniques, and centres on power; knowledge is more affected by attitudes, and is characterized by stopping the world.

III

The crux of sorcery is power. Very little is said about what sorcery is; the nearest don Juan comes to a definition is when he says,

"Sorcery is to apply one's will to a key joint.... Sorcery is interference. A sorcerer searches and finds the key joint of anything he wants to affect and then he applies his will to it.... All he has to know is how to use his will."
(II:240).

Don Juan's teachings are concerned with sorcery per se to a comparatively

limited extent, for as we have seen he is somewhat scornful of it, and in fact he seems to know not such a great deal about the specific techniques involved, unless these are to be found in the teachings not yet published by Castaneda.

But insofar as they are so directed, they centre on power. One becomes a sorcerer by living the life of a warrior, by being the "impeccable hunter who hunts power" (III:136). A sorcerer then is the warrior who has hunted power successfully, who has stored personal power, and who knows how to release and apply that power, controlled by his will, to effect the ends he desires. Don Juan's benefactor, an unsurpassable brujo, was capable of making people ill simply by looking at them (III:153). But this case serves only to emphasize the mysterious nature of power, for even though he could perform this remarkable feat, don Juan's benefactor could not properly control it. Such is the nature of power: "It commands you and yet it obeys you." (III:153).

Power is in no way a material form. Yet it can be hunted, and stored. It can be drained away by the night, and it can flow into the body from the earth. It can turn any ordinary material object into a body of unbelievable potency. A sorcerer can give a gift of power, but it takes power to cope with such gifts, and for a man without power their potency may prove fatal (II:42-49). On the other hand power itself cannot be given, and in the hunt for personal power a benefactor can use his personal power to help his apprentice only by letting that power help the apprentice in his hunting. Power is always dangerous, never to be fobbed around with. Yet it is not malicious - rather it is mindless and available to be harnessed - rather like those things we call power, such as fire, electricity, or the sea. Elemental and fierce, it is to be controlled and not scorned; used and not resented; directed and respected, not taken lightly. For don Juan it is a universal which, in "this awesome and mysterious world" (III:111) affects men at all times.

Power derives from a large number of sources. It is present in many of the elements of the world, but there are a number of specific sources to which don Juan leads Castaneda in his attempts to fill him with power sufficient to stop the world. Power is to be found in a particular way of walking, and of running (the gait of power); in beneficial spots (sitios); in the fighting form; in the twilight; in shadows; in the entities or spirits of the world, and the plants by which some of them are reached; in power objects, such as power food or a spirit catcher.

Power is something which flows through the body, filling it with a glorious ability to perform stupendous feats. One of the very first things which don Juan teaches Castaneda is a specific form for walking (III:38), which Castaneda soon finds amazing him as he is pulled forwards by his hands (III:45). More important, though, is the gait of power (III:204ff), which enables a man to run through the desert in pitch dark night, avoiding all the pitfalls of holes and sharp rocks. The gait of power too requires a specific form, but beyond that it operates because the runner allows power to fill him, and trusts the power to guide him. However, the gait of power does not allow a man to roam the desert with his head in the clouds and a general faith that power will look after him; rather it requires a degree of intense concentration far beyond that required for ordinary tasks. The runner has to keep scanning the ground in front of him (and it is to facilitate this that the posture is designed), and the slightest glance to the side will make him lose his balance. Power, here as always, can be a great aid; but it will help the strong only, bringing harm to the weak.

Sitting on his beneficial spot will harbour and increase a man's personal power as he draws it from the earth. Sitting on the enemy spot, on the other hand, leads to the rapid draining away of any personal power a man may have, and instead of feeling restored and serene he will quickly become exhausted, confused, and ill-tempered. Sitting on the beneficial spot is a form of personal recharging; sitting on the enemy spot a form of discharge and dissipation.

A man has many spots in the world which are beneficial to him, but none so much so as his place of predilection (III:180ff). It is not clear how one chooses a place of predilection, but the impression is that it depends, like so many things, on omens; Castaneda's place is the spot where he first sees, a place where he unexpectedly finds an omen he was looking for. On his place of predilection a warrior can make a 'bed of strings', that is, a circle of stones where he will always feel an immense contentment and well-being, sustained by their power. A man owns his place of predilection in the sense of being able to use it, and to remember it. He visits it either by walking or by dreaming, filling himself with it until it oozes from him, and he from it. He must go there whenever he taps power, and that is the place where he stores his power. He cares for it and everything on it. It is his responsibility, just as he is its (c.f. below, p.167, on the balance of the world).

But if a man's place of predilection is the most important place in his life, it is also the last, just as it is the first place in his death. For it is at the place of his predilection that the warrior performs his last stand in the presence of his death. A warrior's last dance on earth is composed of steps each set of which derives from one of his life's struggles. The forms are those he adopted in the struggles, which helped him to survive, and so the warrior's last dance is the reliving of the great moments of his life, the tale of his struggles, whether they ended in victory or defeat. Only when he has completed his dance can his death carry him away. The dance is the warrior's last act on earth, in which he uses up all his personal power:

"If a dying warrior has limited power, his dance is short; if his power is grandiose, his dance is magnificent." (III:188).

When death taps the warrior, it carries him to his place of predilection; there he uses his power and will to hold death at bay while he performs his dance. In a final display of the mood of a warrior, his unbending intent and his relentless will combine to defy death while death has this gesture with a man of impeccable spirit.

"A warrior is only a man....but his impeccable spirit, which has stored power after stupendous hardships, can certainly hold his death for a moment, a moment long enough to let him rejoice for the last time in recalling his power." (III:188).

The fighting form is not really a source of power distinct from the last stand, for in fact it merely forms the first set of steps in that dance. But Castaneda has a fighting form which is developed in his first true struggle. This is his battle with 'la Cañalina' (a sorceress), and the steps of his fighting form consist of the imitation of a rabbit's thumping, designed at the time to attract the sorceress out of curiosity (III:259ff.). Although it is designed for that occasion, it is useful on other occasions as a form of power defence (e.g. II:307).

The twilight is a time of power. "The world is a mysterious place. Especially in the twilight." (III:88). At twilight, there is no ordinary wind, there is only power (III:89). This power, like any other, can be used by a hunter. A hunter can make himself accessible to power by exposing himself to the 'wind' of twilight (III:84ff). By adopting the right attitude to the twilight, the hunter lets it fill him, giving him peace and calmness (II:252). Animals caught at twilight are one source of power food (III:114), and don Juan and Castaneda use the power of the twilight to 'catch' 'la Catalina'. The twilight is the crack between the worlds (I:94) (that is, the world of men and the world of sorcerers). What this means is that at this time the world of sorcerers becomes more apparent to, and hence more obtrusive in, the world of men.

In a sense, the powers of the world are not so much more abundant or stronger in the twilight, rather they are more in evidence. Yet in don Juan's phenomenological view of the world, these two are the same. In the daytime, when the world we all know and share through our mutual and continual reconstruction is predominantly apparent, entities, spirits, power etc. appear to all but a man of knowledge as shadows. But in the twilight, in the darkness of the night, and in the darkness of the day (i.e. those times in the day when a man manages to become aware of the powers as a man of knowledge does (II:36, III:200)), at those times all things lose their customary clarity, all are shadows, and those entities become more obvious for what they are. Not even something as immaterial as shadows can have this close relationship with power entities and remain impassive; so shadows too are power (e.g. II:280-281, III:229, 234-238).

There are essentially three types of entity (II:280ff.). There are the silent ones, which have no power to give, and which are usually associated with a particular place. Then there are those which only cause fright. They are malicious spirits, which try to frighten men, sometimes to their death. This second type often hang around the haunts of the first type. Lastly there are power entities - those that have something to give. These are also dangerous to men of course, but they are in no way inimical to men; they are simply available. Like the second type, they cannot affect men directly, but can work on or for them through a variety of media. This latter type of entity can be used by men who are hunting power. All that is necessary is that they be pursued and overcome; after that they are at the hunter's mercy, and must, for example, tell him the answer to any question he asks. The technique for locating them is plain if not oversimple - as indeed is the method for overcoming them. All that is required is that the hunter have an unbending intent.

Also among this group are the allies. Allies vary a good deal, or so it would seem, but most of our knowledge of them comes from the two well-known to don Juan. The allies, like the 'helpers' of a diablero (evil sorcerer), are personalized entities or spirits available to a sorcerer who has contacted them. Once a sorcerer has tapped an ally, which he does by overcoming it in a sort of cosmic wrestling match, the ally is always available to him. The sorcerer can then go to the ally for advice on beneficial courses of action in particular situations, especially struggles of power.

The two allies particularly known to don Juan are associated with and reached through the psychotropic plants the devil's weed (jimson weed, Datura innoxia) and humito ('the little smoke', whose main hallucinogenic component is a mushroom of the Psilocybe genus). There is not a great deal I wish to say about these. As he admits he has realized in the introduction to Journey to Ixtlan (III:13), Castaneda has placed a disproportionate

amount of emphasis on the importance of these plants. Certainly don Juan uses them a good deal, but that is because he has to break down the certainty of a "very strange plugged-up fool" (II:128) (see below p164). It is sufficient to note here that humito, don Juan's ally, is characterized (by him) as essentially 'male', that is, predictable, reliable, undemanding. The little smoke takes one's body away (I:138), and gives one the necessary speed to catch the fleeting other world of seeing (II:138), and also to survive in that world (c.f. Castaneda's experience with the guardian of the other world (II:160-162)).

The devil's weed, on the other hand, is essentially 'female' in character; demanding, fickle, grasping, jealous, petty. It has many uses, from simple curing and causing of diseases, to divination, to flying. The devil's weed is the seat of power (note that it was the ally of don Juan's benefactor) and as such seems to be conducive to all aspects of sorcery.

Mescalito the spirit reached through the peyote cactus (Lophophora williamsii) is an entity at a different level. He is a far more generalized spirit, unique in that he is the only one of a fairly general category (each ally is unique in its own right, but they have enough in common to be put together in the category 'ally' which is at an equivalent level to the category constituted solely by Mescalito). Mescalito is a benefactor theoretically available to anyone, but in practice available only to those whom he accepts, the qualification being that he be approached in the right spirit by one with a correct will - otherwise he will be terrifying. He differs from the allies in that he is a teacher rather than a power available for use for personal reasons (I:69). He is a benefactor in the sense that he teaches the right way to live - that is, he offers a more fulfilled and fulfilling life to those who follow his lessons. (Note that 'benefactor' is also the term used to describe a human teacher.) Mescalito does not relieve a man of the tasks of everyday life, but he removes the element of drudgery from those tasks. His lesson is a moral, not a moralistic one, given in some ineffable way; he does not talk, nor does he show by example, but the man who encounters him becomes in an almost telepathically direct manner aware of his lesson. He is partially stabilized in appearance; that is, he tends to appear as either a man or a light, and will not vary his appearance to someone he has accepted - but he is capable of appearing in any form. He is decidedly male, referred to as 'he' where the allies are merely 'it' (I:88).

Power objects have power not so much from their intrinsic nature as from their contact with a spirit or other form of power. It is this which imbues them with power and makes them significant in the world of sorcerers. Certain types of object are more suitable (or more usual) for this purpose - quartz crystals for example - but, as don Juan says,

"If you don't have the crystals but do find the spirit you may put anything in his way to be touched. You could put your dicks in the way if you can't find anything else." (III:246)..

Power food is on a par with power objects - it is its deviation from power that makes it powerful. As for instance when a rabbit is 'guided' into Castaneda's trap at twilight (III:113ff).

There is a counter to power, and these are the shields. These are not something which make ready sense until we have some grasp of not-doing,

for all that shields consist of essentially is doing. That is, insisting on the ordinary side of the world, and insisting on relating to the world in an ordinary manner. This may be either inadvertently, as is the case for the vast majority of people, or it may be a deliberately carried out and stressed procedure by which the warrior protects his 'gap' from the powers inimical to it. Suffice it simply to say that if the world is as we create it, it is possible, by stressing the ordinary perception of the world, to hold power at bay; and this is what most people do all the time.

But there is another, and a better, way to fight off the forces of the world. The sorcerer uses his will to guard himself. I noted at the beginning of this section don Juan's statement that sorcery is the application of one's will. He says elsewhere that it is only when a warrior can grab onto things with his will that he can rightfully be considered a sorcerer (II:185). His will, says don Juan, is a sorcerer's only way of balancing himself against the forces of this world (II:258). It is by exercising his impeccable will that a sorcerer closes his 'gap' (see below), and keeps himself safe from the dangers of the mysterious world in which he moves (II:261, 273). Castaneda himself discovers this when he is confronted by the guardian of the other world, but at that time he has not tuned his will enough to be able to stop it harming him (II:154).

Will can, moreover, accomplish far more stupendous feats than these. Although at times don Juan seems to use 'will' as a synonym for 'unbending intent' (e.g. I:182, 183), it is far more than that. By the use of will it is possible to 'think oneself' into a standing position without using the muscles (I:135); to move, in the same manner (II:155); even to go through a wall or to the moon (II:180). It is with his will that a sorcerer may travel to the 'other world', the world of a diablero's helpers (I:182). In fact the will enables a sorcerer to perform any number of astounding feats, which defy common sense, and this is one of its main elements. Will can make a man succeed when his thoughts say he must be defeated (II:179-180). Will is something very special and mysterious, something clear and powerful which directs a sorcerer's acts so that he can perform these amazing feats (II:178). However, its operation is not easy of exposition, for it is at one and the same time a power, a mode of perceiving, and a control.

I have already discussed the effects of will as a power. As a power it is something which must be controlled, tuned, and developed (II:179, 178). Don Juan defines will as a power over against a thought or an object or a wish or an idea (II:179, 182). The power is a force which comes out of a man's 'gap'. This is a place in his abdomen, the same place from which come the luminous fibres which compose a man as he is seen. The will shoots out of this gap and when developed can touch anything the sorcerer wants (II:185). This gap is also the place where death enters a man. Death operates by making a man expand beyond control. Since it is with his will that a sorcerer assembles himself, he holds off his death until he becomes enfeebled with age. Indeed a sorcerer tunes his will by letting death enter his gap, then he exercises his will to prevent himself expanding too much, and re-assembles himself (II:239).

But as it shoots out of his gap, a sorcerer's will is far more than simply a force. One part of the relationship entailed in the grabbing of the world by the will is that a sorcerer perceives through it. As such, it is not simply a sixth sense, for the perception offered

by the will shows the world as much less 'real' and 'out there' than the five senses do (II:181). But, just as we cannot describe what is entailed in the process of hearing, don Juan cannot describe the mechanisms of perceiving with the will; he can only say that the perception consists of a relation between a man and the perceived world, a force which attaches itself to the world (II:180), and this is true of all modes of perception in don Juan's epistemology.

Will is also "'a kind of control'" (II:178). Like any form of power, it is both to be controlled and a method of controlling the world. It is most important as control, however, in the life of a man of knowledge. It is will which controls don Juan's folly, it is his will which makes him go on living, and acting, and acting as though he cared, in the face of the absolute equality he has discovered in all things by seeing the world (II:101, 106; see below pp.167-168 for an exposition of the ideas of absolute equality and controlled folly).

A warrior becomes a sorcerer by the acquisition of will. He develops his will, and yet at the same time it is something he must wait for with patience, knowing that he is waiting for it (II:178). In fact,

"'A warrior has only his will and his patience
and with them he builds anything he wants.'
(II:177).

Using the patience he has acquired for himself, and with the advice of his death, a warrior proceeds until he has developed his will; and only then does he become a sorcerer.

IV

I hope I have now given a reasonable idea of what is involved in the concepts 'power' and 'will', and the ways in which a man uses them to become a sorcerer. It is now time to look at the other side of the coin (though remember the coin is a transparent one). The elements of power I have been concerned with so far are, I maintain, the items of the path to sorcery. But it is essential to remember that the path to sorcery and the path to knowledge run parallel or together for much of the way, and a good deal of power is required to stop the world and become a man of knowledge.

Although power is necessary in order to collapse the world there is another, rather more important side to the process. When the world collapses, something stops inside a man and the world rearranges itself. Much of don Juan's teaching is an attempt to lead that "'strange plugged-up fool'" (II:129) Castaneda to the brink of this, and then push, and to keep doing so until Castaneda takes that final step. It is essential to break Castaneda's certainty that the world is only as he believes it 'really' is, because it is by believing in a different world that one becomes able to perceive it. Don Juan tries to do this not only by constantly telling Castaneda about his gross and monstrously misplaced assurance, but also by trying to disrupt the routines of Castaneda's life, in the widest sense of the term. That is, he tries to prevent, alter, stop or destroy Castaneda's doing. Doing and not-doing are the whole key to stopping the world.

I have already said that for don Juan the world is as it is because we say it is. If the world is to remain like this, we must keep on saying so; it is this constant re-affirmation of the way the world is which is what

is meant by the term doing. The everyday world seems concrete, real, stable, because we all agree on our views of it, we all deliberately share the same perception of it, largely because of the socialization process which turns us from the chaos of childhood into the order of adulthood. Over and over again people tell a child how to look at the world, and because memory of the unordered state is impossible (memory being the allocation to familiar categories of unfamiliar experiences), adults believe that the way they conceive the world is simply the way they perceive it, the way they construct it is merely the way they construe it. In our ordinary doing we keep on saying that the ordinary world is ordinary, and so it stays that way. Not-doing consists in assaulting this ordinary world with extraordinary doings, and by this means turning it into an extraordinary world. It is at this turning point, when the conventional mental blocks have been broken down, that the world collapses; the world is stopped, and can rearrange itself, or be rearranged, in a new pattern.

Don Juan leads his more direct attacks on Castaneda's mental routines with the use of the psychotropic plants. With the aid of these don Juan can confront Castaneda with 'impossible' yet 'real' (in the sense of indisputably perceived) situations, such as his own ability to fly (I:125ff.) or become a crow (I:162ff.), to play and communicate with luminous dogs (I:43ff.) etc. If Castaneda were to accept these experiences as true, he would of course have to slough off his idea of reality. However his view of reality allows for a rationalization of the experiences because of their drug-induced nature.

Don Juan has, however, a series of far more devastating dramatic performances which he throws at Castaneda. Because Castaneda has no ready-made get-out, these events are far more likely to disrupt him. Don Genaro is a past master at this art, and is often roped in by don Juan for this purpose. The absurd and the impossible are his speciality, as when he crosses a 150 foot high waterfall in a series of leaps from one rock to another (II:123-128); as when he moves ten miles in a flash (II:313-314); as when he sits on his head (II:119-120); as when he takes Castaneda's car away (III:280-290) (which is reminiscent of don Juan preventing Castaneda's car from working by jamming the spark plugs with his will (II:240-242)). Many of these manoeuvres bring Castaneda to the brink of seeing, which really only takes place when one stops the world, but every time he falls back into his rationalist everyday world, seeking to explain (or explain away) and understand. The two men of knowledge also use innumerable lesser devices of the same ilk in their attempt to confound Castaneda with the ridiculous. Don Genaro's clowning, in particular, is hilarious, even in print, but to no avail. Castaneda's encounter with 'la Catalina' (I:175-181) may be another example of this technique - certainly he prefers to believe that don Juan is pretending to be someone trying to impersonate him, rather than accept that a sorceress might have adopted don Juan's form, but in the light of the other stupendous events taking place in this world there is no reason for rationalization. All this is designed to show Castaneda that the world is a mysterious place, uncomprehended, ultimately incomprehensible. It is now plain why the lesson can only properly be given in terms of action rather than words, and why it is useless to discuss the lessons afterwards; words are inextricably linked with the doing of the ordinary world, indeed they are part of it, serving only to maintain that world, hopelessly incapable of reaching beyond it to other worlds.

Don Juan also employs a number of less direct means to try to snap the chains of Castaneda's reason (II:313). These are the more generalized

procedures he prescribes for Castaneda, which together make up almost the complete ideal of the life of a warrior.

Firstly, Castaneda must break his ordinary routines in the usual sense of that word, i.e. in the sense of simple habits of the body, such as eating at a set time, for which don Juan frequently castigates Castaneda (see especially III:97ff). He does this most effectively by reminding Castaneda that the difference between a hunter and his victim is that the hunter knows his prey's habits. The truly great hunters, by refusing to adopt routines, render themselves unpredictable, and so free of the danger of being hunted in their turn (III:100).

Castaneda must also abolish his personal history. Don Juan has no personal history not because he does not know what and who he is (though he claims (III:32) that he does not), but because no-one else knows (III:29-30). If nobody knows for certain what events and actions go to make up a person's past, then in a very real and important sense they will know nothing of what he is. They will have no idea of him as a (certain type of) individual, and he will have no image of self which can be fed either by himself or by others. The aim therefore is to destroy any stable personal identity, both for oneself and for others, thus becoming unpredictable and free, and preventing people from taking one for granted (III:34). One's own self (identity, selfhood) is created by one's own and others' perceptions of one in the same way as the world is constructed by perception.

One of the ways by which this self is maintained is by internal talk. Men are always naturally talking to themselves when they are not talking to others or acting, and this internal talk is one of the most important ways in which the world is continuously recreated as a stable idea (II:263). To become a man of knowledge it is essential that this internal talk become a controllable factor; this is simply a matter of hard work.

"The art of a hunter is to become inaccessible" (III:94).
 "Therein lies the secret of great hunters. To be available and unavailable at the precise turn of the road" (III:90). This idea of being inaccessible or unavailable embraces a number of other ideas (many of which also contribute to other idea clusters). One of these is the importance of avoiding routines (in a fairly specific sense, for which see above). All these ideas are fairly closely linked together - even more closely linked than is usually the case in this tightly-meshed world. A consideration of these and their ramifications will take us through all that we need to know about the ways by which Castaneda is led to break free of his encumbering reason. It is perhaps also worth mentioning that all these ideas are closely tied with the idea of living like a hunter and warrior.

Becoming inaccessible is the logical conclusion of the need to erase personal history. Unavailability is not simply a matter of avoiding people, or becoming a recluse, both of which are mere indulgence. Don Juan tries to make the idea simpler by saying that it involves hiding without anyone knowing that one is hiding. It is a kind of detachment, in which one is not at all times on tap to anyone who cares to make use of one.

One way in which a warrior can achieve this detachment is by pondering his death. A hunter knows, from the experience of having played the role himself, that death is always stalking, and may strike at any moment. A hunter focusses on this, and turns it into a profound

conviction rather than mere intellectual knowledge. By paying death this, its due respect, he imbues his acts with purpose and power (III:109,112). This focus on death leads to a number of further considerations in the life of a warrior. All of these are in a sense dependent on the idea that a warrior assumes responsibility for his actions. Since that idea too derives generally, even if not directly, from the focus on death, this will be the most appropriate place to treat with it.

The assumption of responsibility for all one's acts and decisions denies the warrior the possibility of any feeling of self-pity, or of blaming others for his fate. The world, including other people, can of course impinge on a warrior, but it cannot insult or offend him, for he has put himself beyond its malice, by insisting on a view of the world in which malice is irrelevant. Once he has decided on a course of action, a warrior refuses to have any regrets, accepting that whatever fate befalls him is in a large sense his own doing, and that the decision he made at the time was the best possible in the light of what he knew. He cannot be offended by anything other than his own actions, for anything else is simply the manifestation of external forces. Since the consciousness of those forces is not his own, he cannot be either aware of or responsible for them. Being beyond his control it would be futile for him to moan about them or feel resentment against them. In a sense his own actions also come into this category, for once they are past they too are beyond his control.

I have pointed out that being inaccessible requires that one only be lightly tapped by the world (above, p.166). This tenderness is necessarily a reciprocal thing - for if one were to treat the world otherwise, one would automatically be letting, or even making it squeeze one out of shape. A hunter knows that he will always lure game into his traps, so he does not worry. Worry, with its atmosphere of desperate clinging, is exhausting for both the worrier and the world or person to which he clings. And how can a hunter waste his time worrying when he knows that his impending death is always right beside him? A hunter knows too that he must maintain the balance of the world, for he is conscious of the fact that the world is alive, and that if, for example, he does not apologize to the plants and animals he uses for having harmed them, they will turn on him and injure him.

He knows about the necessity of being in balance with the world from another direction too. He knows that all the animals and the plants of this world are his equal, for death is the "irreplaceable partner" (II:182) of them all. This is the realization Castaneda finally comes to in front of a beetle (III:295). Losing all self-importance so that all things become equal - it is only when he has attained this conviction that a warrior can succeed in seeing.

The natural implication of this creates a worry in the mind of anyone with an 'ordinary' view of the world. If all things are equal, and if one is beyond being affected by the world, there is no way in which one can say that anything one does matters. It seems that one cannot avoid the conclusion that all actions are equal, and that everything one ever does is a waste of time. This is true in a sense, yet it is not as devastating as it at first appears. For a warrior is aware of this aspect of his life - indeed without it the life of a warrior would be seriously weakened. The apparent nihilism is turned to a strength through the notion of controlled folly. Every time a man of knowledge acts in relation to his fellow men he is exercising his controlled folly. The world

of men does not matter to him, ~~for having~~ seen he has seen through his fellow men and realized that they are all luminous eggs, whether they be beggars or kings, and nothing can ever change that (II:34). In a vital sense, the world of men is simply no longer real for a man of knowledge, as don Genaro's story of his 'journey to Ixtlan' demonstrates only too poignantly. His journey is not a mere metaphor; it is a real symbol of the fact that he has lost all ties with the world of 'real' men to which he was once so passionately attached. It takes a long time for Castaneda to come to the realization that there are no beginnings to which one can go back, or which one can start from. But ~~this is~~ a universal fact of life made devastatingly obvious by don Genaro's story. Once he has passed into the 'other world' don Genaro discovers that he has become incapable of emotional contact with the world of men. It is not simply that a man of knowledge has become superior to other men - such elitism would be contrary to the whole spirit of the knowledge he has found. He sees all action as folly, but there is a significant difference in the case of his own actions. Because he is aware that his, and everybody's, actions are mere folly; because he has seen men; because he has come to realize that all beings are equal; because of all he has learnt in progressing along the path to knowledge; because of all this he has his actions, his folly, under control. The paradoxical mixture between simultaneous abandon and strategy is present throughout don Juan's teachings, but it is possible to see through it to the fact that the paradox exists only if we are tied to a particular perspective. Shift the perspective and we find, as Castaneda discovered, that the world rearranges itself and the 'illusion' disappears. I can only repeat don Juan's words:

"I am happy that you finally asked me about my controlled folly after so many years, and yet it wouldn't have mattered to me in the least if you had never asked. Yet I have chosen to feel happy, as if I cared, that you asked, as if it would matter that I care. That is controlled folly!". (II:99).

For a man of knowledge exercising his controlled folly all things are unimportant. They are unimportant not because they are all worthless, but because they are all worthy (this is why Castaneda is wrong to get upset about the idea that don Juan does not 'really' care about him (II:100)). So it does not matter how a man of knowledge acts - yet he chooses to act as though it did matter, and that, the exercise of his will, is his element of control.

All that can be said in terms of doing one thing rather than another is that a man of knowledge has predilections. These are not preferences, in the sense of choices deliberately made with some end in view. Rather they are tendencies resulting from the bent of his nature. We would not usually say that men exercise a choice in walking on two legs instead of four - rather we would say that that is the way they are made, and the fact that they could act differently is irrelevant. The same is true of don Juan's predilection for laughing as against crying, for living against dying. He too could act otherwise, but such is not the bent of his nature, and it would be misleading to talk in any other terms. To act as a warrior is to act with simultaneous control and abandon. One does not care about the outcome, yet one acts as though one cared passionately, and strives with all one's might for whatever aim one is following. In the face of his impending death, a warrior is unconcerned about defeat or victory, for he is always fighting his last battle on earth. That is the nature of controlled folly.

Don Juan tries to teach Castaneda one other technique to enable him to stop the world. This is dreaming. Dreaming differs from dreaming in that dreaming is a way of knowing the world, it both requires and leads to power and control (III:142). Thus dreaming is something which helps in stopping the world, yet it is also one of the activities which a man of knowledge can use to know things by after he has succeeded in stopping the world.

This becomes particularly plain in view of the fact that dreaming is an equivalent of seeing. Seeing is just one of the possible ways a man of knowledge can employ to know things. The total number of such possible modes of perception is never delimited by don Juan; but each man of knowledge has his own predilection - for example, don Juan's is seeing, Sacateca's is dancing (II:20). It is impossible to describe to one who has not seen, or danced, or dreamed, what such a way of knowing is like: "There is no point in talking about what seeing is like," (II:174, see also II:50). because "Seeing is not a matter of talk," (II:130). "Seeing is not a matter of looking and keeping quiet....Seeing is a technique one has to learn. Or maybe it is a technique some of us already know," (II:200).

Because it is incapable of description, don Juan's statements on seeing are often contradictory. For a number of reasons, of which this ineffability is just one, I feel it would be of little advantage to say much more here about seeing. Firstly because seeing has, in my opinion, already received a disproportionate degree of attention. The whole of the second book centres on the problem of seeing, and Heelas (1972) too has helped to elucidate the idea. Moreover seeing is, as I have already said, only one of a number of possible ways of perceiving the world anew. And since such a new perception of the world is, for don Juan, the ultimate aim of Castaneda's apprenticeship, its ramifications are present in everything don Juan says, in everything I have said. There is just one problem which I feel I ought to clear up. Don Juan says that when a man sees 'the same thing' it is both the same and different. Castaneda has trouble understanding how this can be so, and in particular how, if things differ they can be identified, and how if things are the same they can be differentiated from each other. I do not see why Castaneda should find this problematic, simply because it is in no way different from the situation involved in ordinary looking.

I have now examined all the elements required to stop the world, and it will be worthwhile at this point re-iterating just what happens when the world collapses. It may seem that the collapse of the world derives from or consists of an illusion; after seeing what was 'really' a dead branch moved by the wind as a dying monstrous beast Castaneda is in a perfect state to stop the world, a state which includes fear, awe, power, and death, control and abandon. Castaneda's reaction is to seek an explanation, and at that point "something in me arranged the world and I knew what the animal was"(III:132). What he should have done was to sustain the sight of the animal, because "That branch was a real animal and it was alive at the moment the power touched it" (III:133). As long as Castaneda insists on seeing the world as he is used to it, (as he all too often does, see e.g. III:222-224) he will never manage to see it. Stopping the world involves stopping our normal perceptual and interpretative flow, and substituting another for it. At this point one can see the 'lines of the world', one can talk to coyotes which talk back, one has discovered an essential yet ineffable secret (III:296-298). In September of 1969 Castaneda encounters

"The first time I did not believe in the final 'reality' of my perception. I had been edging toward that feeling and I had perhaps intellectualized it at various times, but never had I been at the brink of a serious doubt".(II:230).

Twenty months later he succeeds in stopping the world; that is he finds an alternative perception of the world to replace, temporarily, his old assured one.

V

Those, then are the ingredients of the teachings as such. To end this analysis, I shall return to don Juan's theory of knowledge and reality. The outline of this should already be plain from what has gone before, but an explicit statement is worthwhile both because that will illuminate the teachings, and because don Juan's epistemology is of great relevance for anthropology (both as a subject matter, as Heelas (1972) has shown, and as a theory equivalent to our own). I have already said, in discussing doing and not-doing (above pp.164-5) and personal history (above p.166) that for don Juan perception is interpretation or description, and that the worlds provided by this creative act are all that there is in 'reality'. I shall now elaborate more fully this phenomenological view of the world.

"The world is such-and-saubb or so-and-so only because we tell ourselves that that is the way it is. If we stop telling ourselves that the world is so-and-so, the world will stop being so-and-so." (II:264).

For don Juan all that reality consists of is "an endless flow of perceptual interpretations" (III:9). It is the agreed interpretations which go to make up the everyday world of doing. It is possible to hook oneself onto any number of doings, until one realizes that they are all false, that only impending death is real (III:239). We all live together in the same world because as children we are taught the everyday world, a picture is continuously built up for us until we learn to see the world in that way (III:9, 299).

This is remarkably similar to Blake's world view, which is why I have drawn my title from Blake. Thus in The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, Blake says,

"A fool sees not the same tree that a wise man sees" (Plate 7).

"Then I asked: "does a firm perswasion that a thing is so, make it so?"

He replied: "All poets believe that it does, and in ages of imagination this firm perswasion removed mountains." (Plates 12-13).

Such a view of the world leads to certain irresistible conclusions, for both Blake and don Juan. The first, and in many ways most important of these, is the collapse of the distinction between subject and object. The insistence on the creative nature of perception, and hence on the integration of subject and object, is also a major starting point for phenomenological philosophy:

"....that act of positing the world, that interest in it which delimits us...."(Merleau-Ponty, 1962:xiv).

The collapse comes about for two reasons. Partly because of the realization of the inadequacy of thought, or understanding, hence language (of which more below), as against what Blake termed 'imagination'. But primarily because, in making the world what it is by the way we perceive it, at the same time, in the same process, we make ourselves what we are (see above p.166 on personal history). The 'perceiving self' is never an entity distinct from 'the world' because it too is known, even to itself, only through perception, that is, an interpretative process. Even Descartes' 'cogito ergo sum' falsely separates subject from object; Blake and don Juan are incapable of objectivizing the self sufficiently to allow it to transcend the phenomenological nature of everything, and so become a subject set against others as objects. This is never explicit in don Juan's teachings, for he assumes the integration of the two at all times, and unless the two are first separated the point does not need to be made. However, it shows whenever he answers Castaneda's queries about whether 'unusual' events are real. There are events he says, to think about which in terms of men and crows is false (I:168), as it is false to think of men flying 'like birds' rather than simply as men flying 'as men who have taken the devil's weed' (I:128). Similarly,

"Nothing in the life of a sorcerer is made out of anything else. If something is anything at all, it is the thing itself" (II:273).

Blake argued that,

"But first the notion that man has a body distinct from his soul is to be expunged" (The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, plate 14).

Northrop Frye, analysing Blake's epistemology, has said that

"The acceptance of the esse-est percipii principle unites the subject and object. By introducing the idea of "reflection" we separate them again" (Frye, 1969:16-17).

This leads us to the next consequence of don Juan's world view: the failure of rationality. Don Juan repeatedly tells Castaneda that 'understanding' is only one of the possible ways of apprehending the world (see for example II:310-315, III:233). Understanding the world, the doing of the world, is the categorizing of experiences:

"When you're trying to figure it out, all you're really doing is trying to make the world familiar" (III:168).

For don Juan 'nonsensical things' are those things we see by ourselves, without any guide or direction (I:157). It is in this sense - that one must turn everything from the familiar and categorized to the unknown - that one must overcome everything before one can see (II:207). Blake too shares this view of the weakness of categorical knowledge:

"The infinite superiority of the distinct perception of things to the attempt of memory to classify them into general principles" (Frye, 1969:16).

"There is no "general nature", therefore nothing is real beyond the imaginative patterns men make of reality" (Frye, 1969:19).

It is but a short step from ~~here to don Juan's~~ view that language is inadequate. When he tries to explain doing and not-doing, he ends up with a despairing,

1. "That's the problem with talking....It always makes one confuse the issues" (II:227).

Because language is part of our ordinary doing, because it is an essential element in our maintenance of the world as we know it, there are bound to be situations in the ways of a sorcerer where words will be mute, and only actions will have the power to speak to us.

Two final points about the nature of perception remain to be made. Firstly, men's perceptions of 'the same thing' may differ (I:128-9). The same is true for Blake, who takes this idea to its logical conclusion:

"There are exactly as many kinds of reality as there are men" (Frye, 1969:19).

Secondly, a perception is something which can be either sustained or broken down (See for example III: 133, 165, 222-224). This aspect gives an idea of the kind of attitude which turns an attempted perception into reality. It is not simply a matter of squinting so as to look at something differently with the eyes (II:304); rather it is a question of conviction and faith in the mind of the beholder.

For don Juan there are many worlds, many ways men can hook onto those worlds. There are many things in those worlds which cannot be known, more which cannot be told. The worlds are inherently alive; to be lived in, not acted upon. Ultimately, for all don Juan's knowledge, the world remains "stupendous, awesome, mysterious, unfathomable" (III:107), "incomprehensiblea sheer mystery" (II:264).

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