

THE WHEEL OF TIME



CARLOS CASTANEDA

The Wheel of Time

Carlos Castaneda



TRADITION

CONTENTS

The Wheel of Time

Introduction 1

Quotations from *The Teachings of Don Juan* 11

Commentary 17

Quotations from *A Separate Reality* 21

Commentary 37

Quotations from *Journey to Ixtlan* 45

Commentary 59

Quotations from *Tales of Power* 65

Commentary 83

Quotations from *The Second Ring of Power* 89

Commentary 97

Quotations from *The Eagle's Gift* 103

Commentary 117

Quotations from *The Fire from Within* 125

Commentary 135

Quotations from *The Power of Silence* 139

Commentary 153

Silent Knowledge

Introduction 159

The Magical Passes 173

The Center for Decisions 187

The Recapitulation 193

Dreaming 203

Inner Silence 213

The Westwood Series 217

The Wheel of Time

Introduction

This series of specially selected quotations was gathered from the first eight books that I wrote about the world of the shamans of ancient Mexico. The quotations were taken directly from the explanations given to me as an anthropologist by my teacher and mentor don Juan Matus, a Yaqui Indian shaman from Mexico. He belonged to a lineage of shamans that traced its origins all the way back to the shamans who lived in Mexico in ancient times.

In the most effective manner he could afford, don Juan Matus ushered me into his world, which was, naturally, the world of those shamans of antiquity. Don Juan was, therefore, in a key position. He knew about the existence of another realm of reality, a realm which was neither illusory, nor the product of outbursts of fantasy. For don Juan and the rest of his shaman-companions—there were fifteen of them—the world of the shamans of antiquity was as real and as pragmatic as anything could be.

This work started as a very simple attempt to collect a series of vignettes, sayings, and ideas from the lore of those shamans that would be interesting to read and think about. But once the work was in progress, an unforeseeable twist of direction took place: I realized that the quotations by themselves were imbued with an extraordinary impetus. They revealed a covert train of thought that had never been evident to me before. They were pointing out the direction that don Juan's explanations had taken over the thirteen years in which he guided me as an apprentice.

Better than any type of conceptualization, the quotations revealed an unsuspected and unwavering line of action that don Juan had followed in order to promote and facilitate my entrance into his world. It became something beyond a speculation to me that if don Juan had followed that line, this must have also been the way in which his own teacher had propelled him into the world of shamans.

Don Juan Matus's line of action was his intentional attempt to pull me into what he said was another *cognitive system*. By *cognitive system*, he meant the standard definition of *cognition*: "the processes responsible for the awareness of everyday life, processes which

include memory, experience, perception, and the expert use of any given syntax.” Don Juan’s claim was that the shamans of ancient Mexico had indeed a different cognitive system than the average man’s.

Following all the logic and reasoning available to me as a student of the social sciences, I had to reject his statement. I pointed out to don Juan time and time again that whatever he was claiming was preposterous. It was, to me, an intellectual aberration at best.

It took thirteen years of hard labor on his part and on mine to discombobulate my trust in the normal system of cognition that makes the world around us comprehensible to us. This maneuver pushed me into a very strange state: a state of quasi-distrust in the otherwise implicit acceptance of the cognitive processes of our daily world.

After thirteen years of heavy onslaughts, I realized, against my very will, that don Juan Matus was indeed proceeding from another point of view. Therefore, the shamans of ancient Mexico must have had another system of cognition. To admit this burned my very being. I felt like a traitor. I felt as if I were voicing the most horrendous heresy.

When he felt that he had overcome my worst resistance, don Juan drove his point as

far and as deep as he could into me, and I had to admit, without reservations, that in the world of shamans, shaman practitioners judged the world from points of view which were indescribable to our conceptualization devices. For instance, they perceived energy as it flowed freely in the universe, energy free from the bindings of socialization and syntax, pure vibratory energy. They called this act *seeing*.

Don Juan's prime objective was to help me to perceive energy as it flows in the universe. In the world of shamans, to perceive energy in such a manner is the first mandatory step toward a more engulfing, freer view of a different cognitive system. In order to elicit a *seeing* response in me, don Juan utilized other foreign units of cognition. One of the most important units, he called the *recapitulation*, which consisted of a systematic scrutiny of one's life, segment by segment, an examination made not in the light of criticism or finding flaw, but in the light of an effort to understand one's life, and to change its course. Don Juan's claim was that once any practitioner has viewed his life in the detached manner that the *recapitulation* requires, there's no way to go back to the same life.

To *see* energy as it flows in the universe meant, to don Juan, the capacity to *see* a human being as a *luminous egg* or *luminous ball* of energy, and to be able to distinguish, in that luminous ball of energy, certain features shared by men in common, such as a point of brilliance in the already brilliant luminous ball of energy. The claim of shamans was that it was on that point of brilliance, which those shamans called the *assemblage point*, that perception was assembled. They could extend this thought logically to mean that it was on that point of brilliance that our cognition of the world was manufactured. Odd as it may seem, don Juan Matus was right, in the sense that this is exactly what happens.

The perception of shamans, therefore, was subject to a different process than the perception of average men. Shamans claimed that perceiving energy directly led them to what they called *energetic facts*. By *energetic fact*, they meant a view obtained by *seeing* energy directly that led to conclusions that were final and irreducible; they couldn't be tampered with by speculation, or by trying to fit them into our standard system of interpretation.

Don Juan said that for the shamans of his lineage, it was an *energetic fact* that the world around us is defined by the processes of

cognition, and those processes are not unalterable; they are not givens. They are a matter of training, a matter of practicality and usage. This thought was extended further, to another *energetic fact*: the processes of standard cognition are the product of our upbringing, no more than that.

Don Juan Matus knew, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that whatever he was telling me about the cognitive system of the shamans of ancient Mexico was a reality. Don Juan was, among other things, a *nagual*, which meant, for shaman practitioners, a natural leader, a person who was capable of viewing *energetic facts* without detriment to his well-being. He was, therefore, capacitated to lead his fellow men successfully into avenues of thought and perception impossible to describe.

Considering all the facts that don Juan had taught me about his cognitive world, I arrived at the conclusion, which was the conclusion that he himself shared, that the most important unit of such a world was the idea of *intent*. For the shamans of ancient Mexico, *intent* was a force they could visualize when they *saw* energy as it flows in the universe. They considered it an all-pervasive force that intervened in every aspect of time and space. It was the impetus

behind everything; but what was of inconceivable value to those shamans was that *intent*—a pure abstraction—was intimately attached to man. Man could always manipulate it. The shamans of ancient Mexico realized that the only way to affect this force was through impeccable behavior. Only the most disciplined practitioner could attempt this feat.

Another stupendous unit of that strange cognitive system was the shamans' understanding and usage of the concepts of time and space. For them, time and space were not the same phenomena that form part of our lives by virtue of being an integral part of our normal cognitive system. For the average man, the standard definition of *time* is "a nonspatial continuum in which events occur in apparently irreversible succession from the past through the present to the future." And *space* is defined as "the infinite extension of the three-dimensional field in which stars and galaxies exist; the universe."

For the shamans of ancient Mexico, time was something like a thought; a thought thought by something unrealizable in its magnitude. The logical argument for them was that man, being part of that thought which was thought by forces inconceivable to his mentality, still retained a small percentage

of that thought; a percentage which under certain circumstances of extraordinary discipline could be redeemed.

Space was, for those shamans, an abstract realm of activity. They called it *infinity*, and referred to it as the sum total of all the endeavors of living creatures. Space was, for them, more accessible, something almost down-to-earth. It was as if they had a bigger percentage in the abstract formulation of space. According to the versions given by don Juan, the shamans of ancient Mexico never regarded time and space as obscure abstracts the way we do. For them, both time and space, although incomprehensible in their formulations, were an integral part of man.

Those shamans had another cognitive unit called the *wheel of time*. The way they explained the *wheel of time* was to say that time was like a tunnel of infinite length and width, a tunnel with reflective furrows. Every furrow was infinite, and there were infinite numbers of them. Living creatures were compulsorily made, by the force of life, to gaze into one furrow. To gaze into one furrow alone meant to be trapped by it, to live that furrow.

A warrior's final aim is to focus, through an act of profound discipline, his unwavering attention on the *wheel of time* in order to

make it turn. Warriors who have succeeded in turning the *wheel of time* can gaze into any furrow and draw from it whatever they desire. To be free from the spellbinding force of gazing into only one of those furrows means that warriors can look in either direction: as time retreats or as it advances on them.

Viewed in this manner, the *wheel of time* is an overpowering influence which reaches through the life of the warrior and beyond, as is the case with the quotations of this book. They seem to be strung together by a coil that has a life of its own. That coil, explained by the cognition of shamans, is the *wheel of time*.

Under the impact of the *wheel of time*, the aim of this book became, then, something that had not been part of the original plan. The quotations became the ruling factor, by themselves and in themselves, and the drive imposed on me by them was one of staying as close as I possibly could to the spirit in which the quotations were given. They were given in the spirit of frugality and ultimate directness.

Another thing that I tried unsuccessfully to do with the quotations was to organize them into a series of categories that would make reading them easier. However, the categorization of the quotations became

untenable. There was no way of setting arbitrary categories of meaning that suited me personally to something so amorphous, so vast as a total cognitive world.

The only thing that could be done was to follow the quotations, and let them create a sketch of the skeletal form of the thoughts and feelings that the shamans of ancient Mexico had about life, death, the universe, energy. They are reflections of how those shamans understood not only the universe, but the processes of living and coexisting in our world. And more important yet, they point out the possibility of handling two systems of cognition at once without any detriment to the self.

QUOTATIONS
FROM *THE*
TEACHINGS OF
DON JUAN



Power rests on the kind of knowledge that one holds. What is the sense of knowing things that are useless? They will not prepare us for our unavoidable encounter with the unknown.



Nothing in this world is a gift. Whatever has to be learned must be learned the hard way.



A man goes to knowledge as he goes to war: wide-awake, with fear, with respect, and with absolute assurance. Going to knowledge or going to war in any other manner is a mistake, and whoever makes it might never live to regret it.

When a man has fulfilled all four of these requisites—to be wide awake, to have fear, respect, and absolute assurance—there are no mistakes for which he will have to account; under such conditions his actions lose the blundering quality of the acts of a fool. If such a man fails, or suffers a defeat, he will have lost only a battle, and there will be no pitiful regrets over that.



Dwelling upon the self too much produces a terrible fatigue. A man in that position is deaf and blind to everything else. The fatigue itself makes

him cease to see the marvels all around him.



Every time a man sets himself to learn, he has to labor as hard as anyone can, and the limits of his learning are determined by his own nature. Therefore, there is no point in talking about knowledge. Fear of knowledge is natural; all of us experience it, and there is nothing we can do about it. But no matter how frightening learning is, it is more terrible to think of a man without knowledge.



To be angry at people means that one considers their acts to be important. It is imperative to cease to feel that way. The acts of men cannot be important enough to offset our only viable alternative: our unchangeable encounter with infinity.



Anything is one of a million paths. Therefore, a warrior must always keep in mind that a path is only a path; if he feels that he should not follow it, he must not stay with it under any conditions. His decision to keep on that path or to leave it must be free of fear or ambition. He must look at every path closely and deliberately. There is a question that a warrior has to ask, mandatorily: Does this path have a heart?

All paths are the same: they lead nowhere. However, a path without a heart is never enjoyable. On the other hand, a path with heart is easy—it does not make a warrior work at liking it; it makes for a joyful journey; as long as a man follows it, he is one with it.



There is a world of happiness where there is no difference between things because there is no one there to ask

about the difference. But that is not the world of men. Some men have the vanity to believe that they live in two worlds, but that is only their vanity. There is but one single world for us. We are men, and must follow the world of men contentedly.



A man has four natural enemies: fear, clarity, power, and old age. Fear, clarity, and power can be overcome, but not old age. Its effect can be postponed, but it can never be overcome.

Commentary

The essence of whatever don Juan said at the beginning of my apprenticeship is encapsulated in the abstract nature of the quotations selected from the first book, *The Teachings of Don Juan*. At the time of the events described in that book, don Juan spoke a great deal about *allies*, power plants, Mescalito, the little smoke, the wind, the spirits of rivers and mountains, the spirit of the chaparral, etc., etc. Later on when I questioned him about his emphasis on those elements, and why he wasn't using them anymore, he admitted unabashedly that at the beginning of my apprenticeship, he had gone into all that pseudo-Indian shaman rigmarole for my benefit.

I was flabbergasted. I wondered how he could make such a statement, which was obviously not true. He had really meant what he said about those elements of his world, and I was certainly the man who could attest to the veracity of his words and moods.

"Don't take it so seriously," he said, laughing. "It was very enjoyable for me to get

into all that crap, and it was even more enjoyable because I knew that I was doing it for your benefit.”

“For my benefit, don Juan? What kind of aberration is this?”

“Yes, for your benefit. I tricked you by holding your attention on items of your world which held a profound fascination for you, and you swallowed it hook, line and sinker.

“All I needed was to get your undivided attention. But how could I have done that when you had such an undisciplined spirit? You yourself told me time and time again that you stayed with me because you found what I said about the world fascinating. What you didn’t know how to express was that the fascination that you felt was based on the fact that you vaguely recognized every element I was talking about. You thought that the vagueness was, of course, shamanism, and you went for it, meaning you stayed.”

“Do you do this to everybody, don Juan?”

“Not to everybody, because not everybody comes to me, and above all, I’m not interested in everybody. I was and I am interested in you, you alone. My teacher, the nagual Julian, tricked me in a similar way. He tricked me with my sensuality and greed. He promised

to get me all the beautiful women who surrounded him, and he promised to cover me with gold. He promised me a fortune, and I fell for it. All the shamans of my lineage had been tricked that way, since time immemorial. The shamans of my lineage are not teachers or gurus. They don't give a fig about teaching their knowledge. They want heirs to their knowledge, not people vaguely interested in their knowledge for intellectual reasons."

Don Juan was right when he said that I had fallen for his maneuver fully. I did believe that I had found the perfect shaman anthropological informant. This was the time when, under don Juan's auspices, and due to his influence, I wrote diaries and collected old maps that showed the locations of the Yaqui Indian towns throughout the centuries, beginning with the chronicles of the Jesuits in the late 1700's. I recorded all those locations and I identified the most subtle changes, and began to ponder and wonder why the towns were shifted to other locales, and why they were arranged in slightly different patterns every time they were relocated. Pseudo-speculations about reason, and reasonable doubts overwhelmed me. I collected thousands of sheets of abbreviated notes and possibilities, drawn from books and

chronicles. I was a perfect student of anthropology. Don Juan spurred my fancy in every way he possibly could.

“There are no volunteers on the warriors’ path,” don Juan said to me under the guise of an explanation. “A man has to be forced into the warriors’ path against his will.”

“What do I do, don Juan, with the thousands of notes that you tricked me into collecting?” I asked him at the time.

His answer was a direct shock to me.

“Write a book about them!” he said. “I am sure that if you begin to write it, you’ll never make use of those notes, anyway. They are useless, but who am I to tell you that? Find out for yourself. But don’t endeavor to write a book as a writer. Endeavor to do it as a warrior, as a shaman-warrior.”

“What do you mean by that, don Juan?”

“I don’t know. Find it out for yourself.”

He was absolutely right. I never used those notes. Instead I found myself writing unwittingly about the inconceivable possibilities of the existence of another system of cognition.

QUOTATIONS
FROM A
SEPARATE
REALITY



A warrior knows that he is only a man. His only regret is that his life is so short that he can't grab onto all the things that he would like to. But for him, this is not an issue; it's only a pity.



Feeling important makes one heavy, clumsy and vain. To be a warrior one needs to be light and fluid.



When they are *seen* as fields of energy, human beings appear to be like fibers of light, like white cobwebs, very fine threads that circulate from the head to the toes. Thus to the eye of a seer, a man looks like an egg of circulating fibers. And his arms and legs are like luminous bristles, bursting out in all directions.



The seer *sees* that every man is in touch with everything else, not through his hands, but through a bunch of long fibers that shoot out in all directions from the center of his abdomen. Those fibers join a man to his surroundings; they keep his balance; they give him stability.



When a warrior learns to *see* he *sees* that a man is a luminous egg whether he's a beggar or a king, and that there's no way to change anything; or rather, what could be changed in that luminous egg? What?



A warrior never worries about his fear. Instead, he thinks about the wonders of *seeing* the flow of energy! The rest is frills, unimportant frills.



Only a crackpot would undertake the task of becoming a man of knowledge of his own accord. A sober-headed man has to be tricked into doing it. There are scores of people who would gladly undertake the task, but those don't count. They are usually cracked. They are like gourds that look fine from the outside and yet they would leak the

minute you put pressure on them, the minute you filled them with water.



When a man is not concerned with *seeing*, things look very much the same to him every time he looks at the world. When he learns to *see*, on the other hand, nothing is ever the same every time he *sees* it, and yet it is the same. To the eye of a seer, a man is like an egg. Every time he *sees* the same man he *sees* a luminous egg, yet it is not the same luminous egg.



The shamans of ancient Mexico gave the name *allies* to inexplicable forces that acted upon them. They called them *allies* because they thought they could use them to their hearts' content, a notion that proved nearly fatal to those shamans, because what they called an *ally* is a being without corporeal essence

that exists in the universe. Modern-day shamans call them *inorganic beings*.

To ask what function the allies have is like asking what we men do in the world. We are here, that's all. And the *allies* are here like us; and maybe they were here before us.



The most effective way to live is as a warrior. A warrior may worry and think before making any decision, but once he makes it, he goes on his way, free from worries or thoughts; there will be a million other decisions still awaiting him. That's the warriors' way.



A warrior thinks of his death when things become unclear. The idea of death is the only thing that tempers our spirit.



Death is everywhere. It may be the headlights of a car on a hilltop in the distance behind. They may remain visible for a while, and disappear into the darkness as if they had been scooped away; only to appear on another hilltop, and then disappear again.

Those are the lights on the head of death. Death puts them on like a hat and then shoots off on a gallop, gaining on us, getting closer and closer. Sometimes it turns off its lights. But death never stops.



A warrior must know first that his acts are useless, and yet, he must proceed as if he didn't know it. That's a shaman's *controlled folly*.



The eyes of man can perform two functions: one is *seeing* energy at large as it flows in the universe and the other is “looking at things in this world.” Neither of these functions is better than the other; however to train the eyes only to look is a shameful and unnecessary loss.



A warrior lives by acting, not by thinking about acting, nor by thinking about what he will think when he has finished acting.



A warrior chooses a path with heart, any path with heart, and follows it; and then he rejoices and laughs. He knows because he *sees* that his life will be over altogether too soon. He *sees* that nothing is more important than anything else.



A warrior has no honor, no dignity, no family, no name, no country; he has only life to be lived, and under these circumstances, his only tie to his fellow men is his controlled folly.



Nothing being more important than anything else, a warrior chooses any act, and acts it out as if it mattered to him. His controlled folly makes him say that what he does matters and makes him act as if it did, and yet he knows that it doesn't; so when he fulfills his acts, he retreats in peace, and whether his acts were good or bad, or worked or didn't, is in no way part of his concern.



A warrior may choose to remain totally impassive and never act, and

behave as if being impassive really mattered to him; he would be rightfully true at that too, because that would also be his controlled folly.



There's no emptiness in the life of a warrior. Everything is filled to the brim. Everything is filled to the brim, and everything is equal.



An average man is too concerned with liking people or with being liked himself. A warrior likes, that's all. He likes whatever or whomever he wants, for the hell of it.



A warrior takes responsibility for his acts, for the most trivial of his acts. An average man acts out his thoughts, and

never takes responsibility for what he does.



The average man is either victorious or defeated and, depending on that, he becomes a persecutor or a victim. These two conditions are prevalent as long as one does not *see*. *Seeing* dispels the illusion of victory, or defeat, or suffering.



A warrior knows that he is waiting and what he is waiting for; and while he waits he wants nothing and thus whatever little thing he gets is more than he can take. If he needs to eat he finds a way, because he is not hungry; if something hurts his body he finds a way to stop it, because he is not in pain. To be hungry or to be in pain means that the man is not a warrior; and the forces of his hunger and pain will destroy him.



Denying oneself is an indulgence. The indulgence of denying is by far the worst; it forces us to believe that we are doing great things, when in effect we are only fixed within ourselves.



Intent is not a thought, or an object, or a wish. *Intent* is what can make a man succeed when his thoughts tell him that he is defeated. It operates in spite of the warrior's indulgence. *Intent* is what makes him invulnerable. *Intent* is what sends a shaman through a wall, through space, to infinity.



When a man embarks on the warriors' path he becomes aware, in a gradual manner, that ordinary life has been left forever behind. The means of

the ordinary world are no longer a buffer for him; and he must adopt a new way of life if he is going to survive.



Every bit of knowledge that becomes power has death as its central force. Death lends the ultimate touch, and whatever is touched by death indeed becomes power.



Only the idea of death makes a warrior sufficiently detached so that he is capable of abandoning himself to anything. He knows his death is stalking him and won't give him time to cling to anything, so he tries, without craving, all of everything.



We are men and our lot is to learn and to be hurled into inconceivable new worlds. A warrior who *sees* energy knows that there is no end to the new worlds for our vision.



“Death is a twirl; death is a shiny cloud over the horizon; death is me talking to you; death is you and your writing pad; death is nothing. Nothing! It is here, yet it isn’t here at all.”



The spirit of a warrior is not geared to indulging and complaining, nor is it geared to winning or losing. The spirit of a warrior is geared only to struggle, and every struggle is a warrior’s last battle on earth. Thus the outcome matters very little to him. In his last battle on earth a warrior lets his spirit flow free and clear. And as he wages his battle, knowing that his *intent* is

impeccable, a warrior laughs and laughs.



We talk to ourselves incessantly about our world. In fact we maintain our world with our internal talk. And whenever we finish talking to ourselves about ourselves and our world, the world is always as it should be. We renew it, we rekindle 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 internal talk.



The world is all that is encased here: life, death, people, and everything else

that surrounds us. The world is incomprehensible. We won't ever understand it; we won't ever unravel its secrets. Thus we must treat the world as it is: a sheer mystery.



The things that people do cannot under any conditions be more important than the world. And thus a warrior treats the world as an endless mystery and what people do as an endless folly.

Commentary

In the quotations drawn from *A Separate Reality*, the mood that the shamans of ancient Mexico affixed to all their *intentional* endeavors begins to show with remarkable clarity. Don Juan himself pointed out to me in talking about those old shamans that the aspect of their world which was of supreme interest to modern practitioners was the razor-sharp awareness that those shamans had developed about the universal force they called *intent*. They explained that the link each of those men had with such a force was so neat and clean that they could affect things to their hearts' content. Don Juan said that the *intent* of those shamans, developed to such a keen intensity, was the only aid modern practitioners had. He put it in more mundane terms, and said that modern-day practitioners, if they were honest with themselves, would pay whatever price to live under the umbrella of such an *intent*.

Don Juan asserted that anyone who showed even the slightest interest in the world of the shamans of antiquity was

immediately drawn into the circle of their razor-sharp *intent*. Their *intent* was, for don Juan, something incommensurable that none of us could successfully fight away. Besides, he reasoned, there was no necessity to fight away such an *intent*, because it was the only thing that counted; it was the essence of the world of those shamans, the world which modern-day practitioners coveted more than anything imaginable.

The mood of the quotations from *A Separate Reality* is not something that I arranged on purpose. It is a mood that surfaced independent of my aims and wishes. I could even say that it was contrary to what I had in mind. It was the mysterious coil of the *wheel of time* hidden in the text of the book that had suddenly been activated, and it snapped into a state of tension: a tension that dictated the direction of my endeavors.

At the time of writing *A Separate Reality*, as far as my feelings about my work were concerned, I could truthfully assert that I thought that I was happily involved in doing anthropological fieldwork, and my feelings and thoughts were as far away from the world of the shamans of antiquity as anything could be. Don Juan had a different opinion. Being a seasoned warrior, he knew that I couldn't possibly extricate myself from

the magnetic pull that the *intent* of those shamans had created. I was drowning in it, whether or not I believed in it or wished for it.

This state of affairs brought about a subliminal anxiety on my part. It was not an anxiety I could define or pinpoint, or was even aware of. It permeated my acts without the possibility of my consciously dwelling on it, or seeking an explanation. In retrospect, I can only say that I was deadly afraid, although I couldn't determine what I was afraid of.

I tried many times to analyze this sensation of fear, but I would immediately get fatigued, bored. I would instantaneously find my inquiry groundless, superfluous, and I would end up abandoning it. I asked don Juan about my state of being. I wanted his advice, his input.

“You are just afraid,” he said. “That’s all there is to it. Don’t look for mysterious reasons for your fear. The mysterious reason is right here in front of you, within your reach. It is the *intent* of the shamans of ancient Mexico. You are dealing with their world, and that world shows its face to you from time to time. Of course, you can’t take that sight. Neither could I, in my time. Neither could any one of us.”

“You’re talking in riddles, don Juan!”

“Yes, I am, for the moment. It will be clear to you someday. At the present, it’s idiotic to try to talk about it, or explain anything. Nothing of what I’m trying to show you would make sense. Some inconceivable banality would make infinitely more sense to you at this moment.”

He was absolutely right. All my fears were triggered by some banality, of which I was ashamed at the time, and am ashamed of now. I was afraid of demoniacal possession. Such a fear had been encrusted in me very early in life. Anything that was inexplicable was naturally, something evil, something malignant that aimed at destroying me.

The more poignant don Juan’s explanations of the world of the ancient shamans became, the greater my sensation of needing to protect myself. This sensation was not something that could be verbalized. It was, rather than the need to protect the self, the need to protect the veracity and the undeniable value of the world in which we human beings live. To me, my world was the only recognizable world. If it was threatened, there was an immediate reaction on my part, a reaction that manifested itself in some quality of fear that I will be forever at a loss to explain; this fear was something one must

feel in order to grasp its immensity. It was not the fear of dying or of being hurt. It was, rather, something immeasurably deeper than that. It was so deep that any shaman practitioner would be at a loss trying even to conceptualize it.

“You have come, in a roundabout way, to stand directly in front of the *warrior*,” don Juan said.

At that time, he emphasized to no end the concept of the warrior. He said that the warrior was of course, much more than a mere concept. It was a way of life, and that way of life was the only deterrent to fear, and the only channel which a practitioner could use to let the flow of his activity move on freely. Without the concept of the warrior, the stumbling blocks on the path of knowledge were impossible to overcome.

Don Juan defined the *warrior* as the fighter par excellence. It was a mood facilitated by the *intent* of the shamans of antiquity; a mood into which any man could enter.

“The *intent* of those shamans,” don Juan said, “was so keen, so powerful, that it would solidify the structure of the warrior in anyone who tapped it, even though they might not be aware of it.”

In short, the warrior was, for the shamans of ancient Mexico, a unit of combat so tuned to the fight around him, so extraordinarily alert that in his purest form, he needed nothing superfluous to survive. There was no necessity to make gifts to a warrior, or to prop him up with talk or actions, or to try to give him solace and incentive. All of those things were included in the structure of the warrior itself. Since that structure was determined by the *intent* of the shamans of ancient Mexico, they made sure that anything foreseeable would be included. The end result was a fighter who fought alone and drew from his own silent convictions all the impulse he needed to forge ahead, without complaints, without the necessity to be praised.

Personally, I found the concept of the warrior fascinating, and at the same time, one of the most frightening things I had ever encountered. I thought it was a concept that, if I adopted it, would bind me into servitude, and wouldn't give me the time or the disposition to protest or examine or complain. Complaining had been my lifelong habit, and truthfully, I would have fought tooth and nail not to give it up. I thought that complaining was the sign of a sensitive, courageous, forthright man who has no qualms in stating his facts, his likes and dislikes. If all of that

was going to turn into a fighting organism, I stood to lose more than I could afford.

These were my inner thoughts. And yet, I coveted the direction, the peace, the efficiency of the warrior. One of the great aids that the shamans of ancient Mexico employed in establishing the concept of the warrior was the idea of taking our death as a companion, a witness to our acts. Don Juan said that once that premise is accepted, in whatever mild form, a bridge is formed which extends across the gap between our world of daily affairs, and something that is in front of us, but has no name; something that is lost in a fog, and doesn't seem to exist; something so terribly unclear that it cannot be used as a point of reference, and yet, it is there, undeniably present.

Don Juan claimed that the only being on earth capable of crossing over that bridge was the warrior: silent in his struggle, undetainable because he has nothing to lose, functional and efficacious because he has everything to gain.

QUOTATIONS
FROM *JOURNEY*
TO *IXTLAN*



We hardly ever realize that we can cut anything out of our lives, anytime, in the blink of an eye.



One shouldn't worry about taking pictures or making tape recordings. Those are superfluities of sedate lives. One should worry about the spirit, which is always receding.



A warrior doesn't need personal history. One day, he finds it is no longer necessary for him, and he drops it.



Personal history must be constantly renewed by telling parents, relatives, and friends everything one does. On the other hand, for the warrior who has no personal history, no explanations are needed; nobody is angry or disillusioned with his acts. And above all, no one pins him down with their thoughts and their expectations.



When nothing is for sure we remain alert, perennially on our toes. It is more exciting not to know which bush the rabbit is hiding behind than to behave as though we knew everything.



As long as a man feels that he is the most important thing in the world, he cannot really appreciate the world around him. He is like a horse with blinders; all he sees is himself, apart from everything else.



Death is our eternal companion. It is always to our left, an arm's length behind us. Death is the only wise adviser that a warrior has. Whenever he feels that everything is going wrong and he's about to be annihilated, he can turn to his death and ask if that is so. His death will tell him that he is wrong, that nothing really matters outside its touch. His death will tell him, 'I haven't touched you yet.'



Whenever a warrior decides to do something, he must go all the way, but he must take responsibility for what he

does. No matter what he does, he must know first why he is doing it, and then he must proceed with his actions without having doubts or remorse about them.



In a world where death is the hunter, there is no time for regrets or doubts. There is only time for decisions. It doesn't matter what the decisions are. Nothing could be more or less serious than anything else. In a world where death is the hunter, there are no small or big decisions. There are only decisions that a warrior makes in the face of his inevitable death.



A warrior must learn to be available and unavailable at the precise turn of the road. It is useless for a warrior to be unwittingly available at all times, as it is

useless for him to hide when everybody knows that he is hiding.



For a warrior, to be inaccessible means that he touches the world around him sparingly. And above all, he deliberately avoids exhausting himself and others. He doesn't use and squeeze people until they have shriveled to nothing, especially the people he loves.



Once a man worries, he clings to anything out of desperation; and once he clings he is bound to get exhausted or to exhaust whomever or whatever he is clinging to. A warrior-hunter, on the other hand, knows he will lure game into his traps over and over again, so he doesn't worry. To worry is to become accessible, unwittingly accessible.



A warrior-hunter deals intimately with his world, and yet he is inaccessible to that same world. He taps it lightly, stays for as long as he needs to, and then swiftly moves away, leaving hardly a mark.



To be a warrior-hunter is not just to trap game. A warrior-hunter does not catch game because he sets his traps, or because he knows the routines of his prey, but because he himself has no routines. This is his advantage. He is not at all like the animals he is after, fixed by heavy routines and predictable quirks; he is free, fluid, unpredictable.



For an average man, the world is weird because if he's not bored with it,

he's at odds with it. For a warrior, the world is weird because it is stupendous, awesome, mysterious, unfathomable. A warrior must assume responsibility for being here, in this marvelous world, in this marvelous time.



A warrior must learn to make every act count, since he is going to be here in this world for only a short while, in fact, too short for witnessing all the marvels of it.



Acts have power. Especially when the warrior acting knows that those acts are his last battle. There is a strange consuming happiness in acting with the full knowledge that whatever he is doing may very well be his last act on earth.



A warrior must focus his attention on the link between himself and his death. Without remorse or sadness or worrying, he must focus his attention on the fact that he does not have time and let his acts flow accordingly. He must let each of his acts be his last battle on earth. Only under those conditions will his acts have their rightful power. Otherwise they will be, for as long as he lives, the acts of a fool.



A warrior-hunter knows that his death is waiting, and the very act he is performing now may well be his last battle on earth. He calls it a battle because it is a struggle. Most people move from act to act without any struggle or thought. A warrior-hunter, on the contrary, assesses every act; and since he has an intimate knowledge of his death, he proceeds judiciously, as if every act were his last battle. Only a fool

would fail to notice the advantage a warrior-hunter has over his fellow men. A warrior-hunter gives his last battle its due respect. It's only natural that his last act on earth should be the best of himself. It's pleasurable that way. It dulls the edge of his fright.



A warrior is an immaculate hunter who hunts power; he's not drunk, or crazed, and he has neither the time nor the disposition to bluff, or to lie to himself, or to make a wrong move. The stakes are too high for that. The stakes are his trimmed orderly life which he has taken so long to tighten and perfect. He is not going to throw that away by making some stupid miscalculation, by mistaking something for something else.



A man, any man, deserves everything that is a man's lot—joy, pain, sadness

and struggle. The nature of his acts is unimportant as long as he acts as a warrior.

If his spirit is distorted he should simply fix it—purge it, make it perfect—because there is no other task in our entire lives which is more worthwhile. Not to fix the spirit is to seek death, and that is the same as to seek nothing, since death is going to overtake us regardless of anything. To seek the perfection of the warrior's spirit is the only task worthy of our temporariness, and our manhood.



The hardest thing in the world is to assume the mood of a warrior. It is of no use to be sad and complain and feel justified in doing so, believing that someone is always doing something to us. Nobody is doing anything to anybody, much less to a warrior.



A warrior is a hunter. He calculates everything. That's control. Once his calculations are over, he acts. He lets go. That's abandon. A warrior is not a leaf at the mercy of the wind. No one can push him; no one can make him do things against himself or against his better judgment. A warrior is tuned to survive, and he survives in the best of all possible fashions.



A warrior is only a man, a humble man. He cannot change the designs of his death. 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. We may say that that is a gesture which death has with those who have an impeccable spirit.



It doesn't matter how one was brought up. What determines the way one does anything is personal power. A man is only the sum of his personal power, and that sum determines how he lives and how he dies.



Personal power is a feeling. Something like being lucky. Or one may call it a mood. Personal power is something that one acquires by means of a lifetime of struggle.



A warrior acts as if he knows what he is doing, when in effect he knows nothing.



A warrior doesn't know remorse for anything he has done, because to isolate

one's acts as being mean, or ugly, or evil is to place an unwarranted importance on the self.

The trick is in what one emphasizes. We either make ourselves miserable, or we make ourselves strong. The amount of work is the same.



People tell us from the time we are born that the world is such and such and so and so, and naturally we have no choice but to accept that the world is the way people have been telling us it is.



The art of a warrior is to balance the terror of being a man with the wonder of being a man.

Commentary

By the time I was writing *Journey to Ixtlan*, a most mysterious mood was prevalent all around me. Don Juan Matus was applying some extremely pragmatic measures to my daily conduct. He had outlined some steps of action that he wanted me to follow rigorously. He had given me three tasks which had only the vaguest references to my world of everyday life, or to any other world. He wanted me to endeavor in my daily world to erase my personal history by any means conceivable. Then, he wanted me to stop my routines, and finally, he wanted me to dethrone my sense of self-importance.

“How am I going to accomplish all this, don Juan?” I asked him.

“I have no idea,” he responded. “None of us has any idea of how to do that pragmatically and effectively. Yet, if we start the work, we will accomplish it without ever knowing what came to aid us.

“The difficulty that you encounter is the same difficulty that I encountered myself,” he went on. “I assure you that our difficulty is

born out of the total absence in our lives of the idea that would spur us to change. At the time that my teacher gave me this task, all I needed in order to make it work was the idea that it could be done. Once I had the idea, I accomplished it, without knowing how. I recommend that you do the same.”

I went into the most contorted complaints, alluding to the fact that I was a social scientist, accustomed to practical directions that had substance to them, not to something vague which was dependent on magical solutions rather than practical means.

“Say whatever you want,” don Juan responded, laughing. “Once you’re through complaining, forget about your qualms and do what I have asked you to do.”

Don Juan was right. All that I needed, or rather, all that a mysterious part of me which was not overt needed, was the idea. The ‘me’ that I had known through all my life needed infinitely more than the idea. It needed coaching, spurring, direction. I became so intrigued by my success that the tasks of erasing my routines, losing my self-importance and dropping my personal history became a sheer delight.

“You are smack in front of the *warriors’ way*,” don Juan said by way of explanation for my mysterious success.

Slowly and methodically, he had guided my awareness to focus more and more intensely on an abstract elaboration of the concept of the warrior that he called the *warriors' way*, the *warriors' path*. He explained that the *warriors' way* was a structure of ideas established by the shamans of ancient Mexico. Those shamans had derived their construct by means of their ability to *see* energy as it flows freely in the universe. Therefore, the warriors' way was a most harmonious conglomerate of *energetic facts*, irreducible truths determined exclusively by the direction of the flow of energy in the universe. Don Juan categorically stated that there was nothing about the warriors' way that could be argued, nothing that could be changed. It was in itself and by itself a perfect structure, and whoever followed it was corralled by *energetic facts* that admitted no argument, no speculation about their function and their value.

Don Juan said that those old shamans called it the *warriors' way* because its structure encompassed all the living possibilities that a warrior might encounter on the path of knowledge. Those shamans were absolutely thorough and methodical in their search for such possibilities. According to don Juan, they were indeed capable of including in

their abstract structure everything that is humanly possible.

Don Juan compared the warriors' way to an edifice, with each of the elements of this edifice being a propping device whose only function was to sustain the psyche of the warrior in his role of shaman initiate, in order to make his movements easy and meaningful. He stated unequivocally that the warriors' way was the essential construct without which shaman initiates would be shipwrecked in the immensity of the universe.

Don Juan called the warriors' way the crowning glory of the shamans of ancient Mexico. He viewed it as their most important contribution, the essence of their sobriety.

"Is the warriors' way that overwhelmingly important, don Juan?" I asked him once.

"Overwhelmingly important' is a euphemism. The warriors' way is everything. It is the epitome of mental and physical health. I cannot explain it in any other way. For the shamans of ancient Mexico to have created such a structure means to me that they were at the height of their power, the peak of their happiness, the apex of their joy."

On the level of pragmatic acceptance or rejection in which I thought I was submerged at the time, to embrace the warriors' path

thoroughly and unbiasedly was nothing short of an impossibility for me. The more don Juan explained the warriors' path, the more intense the sensation I had that he was indeed plotting to overthrow all my balance.

Don Juan's guidance was, therefore, covert. It manifested itself with stupendous clarity, however, in the quotations drawn from *Journey to Ixtlan*. Don Juan had advanced on me in leaps and bounds at tremendous speed, without my being aware of it, and was suddenly breathing down my neck. I thought time and time again that I was either on the verge of accepting, in a bona fide manner, the existence of another cognitive system, or I was so thoroughly indifferent that I didn't care whether it happened one way or the other.

Of course, there was always the option of running away from all that, but it wasn't tenable. Somehow, don Juan's ministrations, or my heavy use of the concept of the warrior had hardened me to the point that I was no longer that afraid. I was caught, but really, it made no difference. All I knew was that I was there with don Juan for the duration.

QUOTATIONS
FROM *TALES OF*
POWER



The self-confidence of the warrior is not the self-confidence of the average man. The average man seeks certainty in the eyes of the onlooker and calls that self-confidence. The warrior seeks *impeccability* in his own eyes and calls that humbleness. The average man is hooked to his fellow men, while the warrior is hooked only to infinity.



There are lots of things a warrior can do at a certain time which he couldn't do years before. Those things

themselves did not change; what changed was his idea of himself.



The only possible course that a warrior has is to act consistently and without reservations. At a certain moment, he knows enough of the warriors' way to act accordingly, but his old habits and routines may stand in his way.



If a warrior is to succeed in anything, the success must come gently, with a great deal of effort but with no stress or obsession.



The *internal dialogue* is what grounds people in the daily world. The world is such and such or so and so, only because

we talk to ourselves about its being such and such or so and so. The passageway into the world of shamans opens up after the warrior has learned to shut off his internal dialogue.



To change our idea of the world is the crux of shamanism. And stopping the internal dialogue is the only way to accomplish it.



When a warrior learns to stop the internal dialogue, everything becomes possible; the most far-fetched schemes become attainable.



A warrior takes his lot, whatever it may be, and accepts it in ultimate humbleness. He accepts in humbleness

what he is, not as grounds for regret but as a living challenge.



The humbleness of a warrior is not the humbleness of the beggar. The warrior lowers his head to no one, but at the same time, he doesn't permit anyone to lower his head to him. The beggar, on the other hand, falls to his knees at the drop of a hat and scrapes the floor for anyone he deems to be higher; but at the same time, he demands that someone lower than him scrape the floor for him.



Solace, haven, fear, all of these are words which have created moods that one has learned to accept without ever questioning their value.



Our fellow men are black magicians. And whoever is with them is a black magician on the spot. Think for a moment. Can you deviate from the path that your fellow men have lined up for you? And if you remain with them, your thoughts and your actions are fixed forever in their terms. That is slavery. The warrior, on the other hand, is free from all that. Freedom is expensive, but the price is not impossible to pay. So, fear your captors, your masters. Don't waste your time and your power fearing freedom.



The flaw with words is that they always make us feel enlightened, but when we turn around to face the world they always fail us and we end up facing the world as we always have, without enlightenment. For this reason, a warrior seeks to act rather than to talk, and to this effect, he gets a new description of the world—a new description where talking is not that

important, and where new acts have new reflections.



A warrior considers himself already dead, so there is nothing for him to lose. The worst has already happened to him, therefore he's clear and calm; judging him by his acts or by his words, one would never suspect that he has witnessed everything.



Knowledge is a most peculiar affair, especially for a warrior. Knowledge for a warrior is something that comes at once, engulfs him, and passes on.



Knowledge comes to a warrior, floating, like specks of gold dust, the same dust that covers the wings of

moths. So for a warrior, knowledge is like taking a shower, or being rained on by specks of dark gold dust.



Whenever the internal dialogue stops, the world collapses, and extraordinary facets of ourselves surface, as though they had been kept heavily guarded by our words.



The world is unfathomable. And so are we, and so is every being that exists in this world.



Warriors do not win victories by beating their heads against walls, but by overtaking the walls. Warriors jump over walls; they don't demolish them.



A warrior must cultivate the feeling that he has everything needed for the extravagant journey that is his life. What counts for a warrior is being alive. Life in itself is sufficient, self-explanatory and complete.

Therefore, one may say without being presumptuous that the experience of experiences is being alive.



An average man thinks that indulging in doubts and tribulations is the sign of sensitivity, spirituality. The truth of the matter is that the average man is the farthest thing imaginable from being sensitive. His puny reason deliberately makes itself into a monster or a saint, but it is truthfully too little for such a big monster or saint mold.



To be a warrior is not a simple matter of wishing to be one. It is rather an endless struggle that will go on to the very last moment of our lives. Nobody is born a warrior, in exactly the same way that nobody is born an average man. We make ourselves into one or the other.



A warrior dies the hard way. His death must struggle to take him. A warrior does not give himself to death so easily.



Human beings are not objects; they have no solidity. They are round, luminous beings; they are boundless. The world of objects and solidity is only a description that was created to help them, to make their passage on earth convenient.



Their reason makes them forget that the description is only a description, and before they realize it, human beings have entrapped the totality of themselves in a vicious circle from which they rarely emerge in their lifetimes.



Human beings are perceivers, but the world that they perceive is an illusion: an illusion created by the description that was told to them from the moment they were born.

So in essence, the world that their reason wants to sustain is the world created by a description and its dogmatic and inviolable rules, which their reason learns to accept and defend.



The concealed advantage of luminous beings is that they have something which is never used: *intent*. The maneuver of shamans is the same as the maneuver of the average man. Both have a description of the world. The average man upholds it with his reason; the shaman upholds it with his *intent*. Both descriptions have their rules; but the advantage of the shaman is that *intent* is more engulfing than reason.



Only as a warrior can one withstand the path of knowledge. A warrior cannot complain or regret anything. His life is an endless challenge, and challenges cannot possibly be good or bad. Challenges are simply challenges.



The basic difference between an ordinary man and a warrior is that a warrior takes everything as a challenge,

while an ordinary man takes everything as a blessing or as a curse.



The trump card of the warrior is that he believes without believing. But obviously a warrior can't just say he believes and let it go at that. That would be too easy. To just believe without any exertion would exonerate him from examining his situation. A warrior, whenever he has to involve himself with believing, does it as a choice. A warrior doesn't believe, a warrior has to believe.



Death is the indispensable ingredient in having to believe. Without the awareness of death, everything is ordinary, trivial. It is only because death is stalking him that a warrior has to believe that the world is an unfathomable mystery. Having to

believe in such a fashion is the warrior's expression of his innermost predilection.



Power always makes a cubic centimeter of chance available to a warrior. The warrior's art is to be perennially fluid in order to pluck it.



The average man is aware of everything only when he thinks he should be; the condition of a warrior, however, is to be aware of everything at all times.



The totality of ourselves is a very mysterious affair. We need only a very small portion of it to fulfill the most complex tasks of life. Yet when we die, we die with the totality of ourselves.



A rule of thumb for a warrior is that he makes his decisions so carefully that nothing that may happen as a result of them can surprise him, much less drain his power.



When a warrior makes the decision to take action, he should be prepared to die. If he is prepared to die, there shouldn't be any pitfalls, any unwelcome surprises, any unnecessary acts. Everything should gently fall into place because he is expecting nothing.



A warrior, as a teacher, must first of all teach about the possibility of acting without believing, without expecting rewards—acting just for the hell of it. His success as a teacher depends on how

well and how harmoniously he guides his wards in this specific respect.



In order to help his ward to erase personal history, the warrior as a teacher teaches three techniques: losing self-importance, assuming responsibility for one's acts, and using death as an adviser. Without the beneficial effect of these three techniques, erasing personal history would involve being shifty, evasive and unnecessarily dubious about oneself and one's actions.



There is no way to get rid of self-pity for good; it has a definite place and character in our lives, a definite facade which is recognizable. Thus, every time the occasion arises, the facade of self-pity becomes active. It has a history. But if one changes the facade, one shifts its place of prominence.

One changes facades by shifting the component elements of the facade itself. Self-pity is useful to the user because he feels important and deserving of better conditions, better treatment, or because he is unwilling to assume responsibility for the acts that brought him to the state that elicited self-pity.



Changing the facade of self-pity means only that one has assigned a secondary place to a formerly important element. Self-pity is still a prominent feature; but it has now taken a position in the background, in the same fashion that the idea of one's impending death, the idea of a warrior's humbleness, or the idea of responsibility for one's acts were all in the background at one time for a warrior, without ever being used until the moment he became a warrior.



A warrior acknowledges his pain but he doesn't indulge in it. The mood of the warrior who enters into the unknown is not one of sadness; on the contrary, he's joyful because he feels humbled by his great fortune, confident that his spirit is impeccable, and above all, fully aware of his efficiency. A warrior's joyfulness comes from having accepted his fate, and from having truthfully assessed what lies ahead of him.

Commentary

Tales of Power is the mark of my ultimate downfall. At the time that the events narrated in that book took place, I suffered a profound emotional upheaval, a warrior's breakdown. Don Juan Matus left this world, and left his four apprentices in it. Each of those apprentices was approached personally by don Juan, and assigned a specific task. I considered the task given to me to be a placebo that had no significance whatsoever in comparison to the loss.

Not to see don Juan anymore could not be soothed by pseudo-tasks. My first plea with don Juan was, naturally, to tell him that I wanted to go with him.

"You are not ready, yet," he said. "Let's be realistic."

"But I could make myself ready in the blink of an eye," I assured him.

"I don't doubt that. You'll be ready, but not for me. I demand perfect efficiency. I demand an impeccable *intent*, an impeccable discipline. You don't have that yet. You will, you're coming to it, but you're not there yet.

“You have the power to take me, don Juan. Raw and imperfect.”

“I suppose I do, but I won’t, because it would be a shameful waste for you. You stand to lose everything, take my word. Don’t insist. Insisting is not in the realm of warriors.”

That statement was sufficient to stop me. Internally, however, I yearned to go with him, to venture beyond the boundaries of everything that I knew as normal and real.

When the moment came in which don Juan actually left the world, he turned into some colored, vaporous luminosity. He was pure energy, flowing freely in the universe. My sensation of loss was so immense at that moment that I wanted to die. I disregarded everything don Juan had said, and without any hesitation, I proceeded to throw myself off a precipice. I reasoned that if I did that, in death, don Juan would have been obliged to take me with him, and save whatever bit of awareness was left in me.

But for reasons that are inexplicable, whether I view it from the premises of my normal cognition, or from the cognition of the shamans’ world, I didn’t die. I was left alone in the world of everyday life, while my three cohorts were scattered all over the world. I was unknown to myself, something

which made my loneliness more poignant than ever.

I saw myself as an agent provocateur, a spy of sorts, that don Juan had left behind for some obscure reasons. The quotations drawn from the corpus of *Tales of Power* show the unknown quality of the world, not the world of shamans, but the world of everyday life, which, according to don Juan, is as mysterious and rich as anything can be. All we need to pluck the wonders of this world of everyday life is enough detachment. But more than detachment, we need enough affection and abandon.

“A warrior must love this world,” don Juan had warned me, “in order for this world that seems so commonplace to open up and show its wonders.”

We were, at the time that he voiced this statement, in the desert of Sonora.

“It is a sublime feeling,” he said, “to be in this marvelous desert, to see those ragged peaks of pseudo-mountains that were really made by the flow of lava of long-gone volcanoes. It is a glorious feeling to find that some of those nuggets of obsidian were created at such high temperatures that they still retain the mark of their origin. They have power galore. To wander aimlessly in those ragged peaks and actually find a piece

of quartz that picks up radio waves is extraordinary. The only drawback to this marvelous picture is that to enter into the marvels of this world, or into the marvels of another world, a man needs to be a warrior: calm, collected, indifferent, seasoned by the onslaughts of the unknown. You are not seasoned that way yet. Therefore, it is your duty to seek that fulfillment before you could talk about venturing into the infinite.”

I have spent thirty-five years of my life seeking the maturity of a warrior. I have gone to places that defy description, seeking that sensation of being seasoned by the onslaughts of the unknown. I went unobtrusively, unannounced, and I came back in the same fashion. The works of warriors are silent and solitary, and when warriors go, or come back, they do it so inconspicuously that nobody is the wiser. To seek a warrior’s maturity in any other fashion would be ostentatious, and therefore, inadmissible.

The quotations from *Tales of Power* were the most poignant reminder to me that the *intent* of the shamans who lived in Mexico in ancient times was still impeccably at work. The *wheel of time* was moving inexorably around me, forcing me to look into grooves which one cannot talk about and still remain coherent.

“Suffice it to say,” don Juan said to me once, “that the immensity of this world, be it the shamans’ world or the average man’s, is so conspicuous that only an aberration could keep us from noticing it. Trying to explain to aberrant beings what it is like to be lost in the grooves of the *wheel of time* is the most absurd thing that a warrior can undertake. Therefore, he makes sure that his journeys are only the property of his condition of being a warrior.”

QUOTATIONS
FROM *THE*
SECOND RING
OF POWER



When one has nothing to lose, one becomes courageous. We are timid only when there is something we can still cling to.



A warrior could not possibly leave anything to chance. He actually affects the outcome of events by the force of his awareness and his *unbending intent*.



If a warrior wants to pay back for all the favors he has received, and he has no one in particular to address his payment to, he can address it to the spirit of man. That's always a very small account, and whatever one puts in it is more than enough.



After arranging the world in a most beautiful and enlightened manner, the scholar goes back home at five o'clock in the afternoon in order to forget his beautiful arrangement.



The *human form* is a conglomerate of energy fields which exists in the universe, and which is related exclusively to human beings. Shamans call it the *human form* because those

energy fields have been bent and contorted by a lifetime of habits and misuse.



A warrior knows that he cannot change, and yet he makes it his business to try to change, nevertheless. The warrior is never disappointed when he fails to change. That's the only advantage a warrior has over the average man.



Warriors must be impeccable in their effort to change, in order to scare the human form and shake it away. After years of impeccability, a moment will come when the human form cannot stand it any longer and leaves. That is to say, a moment will come when the energy fields contorted by a lifetime of habit are straightened out. A warrior gets deeply affected, and can even die as

a result of this straightening out of energy fields, but an impeccable warrior always survives.



The only freedom warriors have is to behave impeccably. Not only is impeccability freedom; it is the only way to straighten out the human form.



Any habit needs all its parts in order to function. If some parts are missing, the habit is disassembled.



The fight is right here on this earth. We are human creatures. Who knows what's waiting for us, or what kind of power we may have?



The world of people goes up and down and people go up and down with their world; warriors have no business following the ups and downs of their fellow men.



The core of our being is the act of perceiving, and the magic of our being is the act of awareness. Perception and awareness are a single, functional, inextricable unit.



We choose only once. We choose either to be warriors or to be ordinary men. A second choice does not exist. Not on this earth.



The warriors' way offers a man a new life and that life has to be completely new. He can't bring to that new life his ugly old ways.



Warriors always take a first event of any series as the blueprint or the map of what is going to develop for them subsequently.



Human beings love to be told what to do, but they love even more to fight and not do what they are told, and thus they get entangled in hating the one who told them in the first place.



Everybody has enough personal power for something. The trick for the warrior is to pull his personal power

away from his weaknesses to his warrior's purpose.



Everyone can *see*, and yet we choose not to remember what we *see*.

Commentary

Years went by before I wrote *The Second Ring of Power*. Don Juan was long gone, and the quotations from that book are memories of what he had said, memories triggered by a new situation, a new development. Another player had appeared in my life. It was don Juan's cohort, Florinda Matus. All of don Juan's apprentices understood that when don Juan left, Florinda was left behind to somehow round up the last part of our training.

“Not until you are capable of taking orders from a woman without detriment to your being will you be complete,” don Juan had said. “But that woman cannot be any woman. It must be somebody special, somebody who has power, and a quality of ruthlessness that will not allow you to be the man-in-charge that you fancy yourself to be.”

Of course, I laughed off his statements. I thought he was definitely joking. The truth of the matter was that he wasn't joking at all. One day, Florinda Donner-Grau and Taisha Abelar returned, and we went to Mexico. We

went to a department store in the city of Guadalajara, and there, we found Florinda Matus, the most gorgeous woman I had ever seen: extremely tall—five feet eleven, lean, angular, with a beautiful face, old, and yet very young.

“Ah! There you are!” she exclaimed, when she saw us. “The Three Musketeers! The Pep Boys—Eenie, Meenie and Mo! I’ve been looking for you all over!”

And without any more to say, she took over. Florinda Donner-Grau, of course, was delighted beyond measure. Taisha Abelar was extremely reserved, as usual, and I was mortified, almost furious. I knew that the arrangement was not going to work. I was ready to clash with this woman the first time she opened her daring mouth and came up with shit like “Eenie, Meenie and Mo—the Pep Boys.”

Unsuspected things that I had in reserve, however, came to my aid, and prevented me from any reaction of wrath or annoyance, and I got along with Florinda superbly, better than I could have dreamed. She ruled us with an iron hand. She was the undisputed queen of our lives. She had the power, the detachment, to carry out her job of tuning us in the most subtle way. She didn’t allow us to drown in self-pity or complaining if

something was not quite to our liking. She was not at all like don Juan. She lacked his sobriety, but she had another quality that balanced her lack: she was as fast as anything could be. One glance was sufficient for her to comprehend an entire situation, and to act instantaneously in accordance with what was expected of her.

One of her favorite ploys, which I enjoyed immensely, was to formally ask an audience, or a group of people she was talking to, “Does anyone here know anything about the pressure and displacement of gases?” She would ask such a question in true seriousness. And when the audience responded, “No, no, we don’t,” she would say, “Then, I could say anything I want, true?!”—and indeed she would go ahead and say anything she wanted. She would actually sometimes say such ridiculous things that I would fall on the floor laughing.

Her other classical question was, “Does anyone here know anything about the retina of chimpanzees? No?”—and Florinda would say barbarities about the retina of chimpanzees. Never in my life had I enjoyed my time more thoroughly. I was her admirer and unbiased follower.

I once had a fistula by the crest of the bone of my hip, a product of a fall that I had taken

years before into a ravine filled with cactus needles. There had been seventy-five needles stuck in my body. One of them either hadn't come out completely or had left a residue of dirt or debris that years later produced a fistula.

My doctor said, "That's nothing. It is just a sack of pus that has to be lanced. It's a very simple operation. It would take a few minutes to clean it out."

I consulted with Florinda, and she said, "You are the nagual. You either cure yourself, or you die. No shades of meaning, no double behavior. For a nagual to be lanced by a doctor—you must have lost your power. For a nagual to die fistulated? What a shame."

Except for Florinda Donner-Grau and Taisha Abelar, the rest of don Juan's apprentices didn't care at all for Florinda. She was a threatening figure. She was someone who never allowed them the freedom that they felt was their due. She never celebrated their pseudo-exploits of shamanism, and she stopped their activities every time they strayed from the warriors' path.

In the corpus of *The Second Ring of Power*, that struggle of the apprentices is more than manifest. Don Juan's other apprentices were a lost lot, filled with egomaniacal outbursts,

each one pulling in his own direction, each one asserting his or her value.

Everything that took place in our lives from that time on was deeply influenced by Florinda Matus, and yet, she never took the front stand. She was always a figure in the background, wise, funny, ruthless. Florinda Donner-Grau and I learned to love her as we had never loved before, and when she left, she willed to Florinda Donner-Grau her name, her jewels, her money, her grace, her savoir-faire. I felt that I could never write a book about Florinda Matus, that if anybody ever did, it would have to be Florinda Donner-Grau, her true heir, her daughter of daughters. I was, like Florinda Matus, only a figure in the background, put there by don Juan Matus to break the loneliness of a warrior, and enjoy my passage on earth.

QUOTATIONS
FROM *THE*
EAGLE'S GIFT



The art of *dreaming* is the capacity to utilize one's ordinary dreams and transform them into controlled awareness by virtue of a specialized form of attention called the *dreaming attention*.



The art of *stalking* is a set of procedures and attitudes that enables a warrior to get the best out of any conceivable situation.



The recommendation for warriors is not to have any material things on which to focus their power, but to focus it on the spirit, on the true flight into the unknown, not on trivialities.

Everyone who wants to follow the warrior's path has to rid himself of the compulsion to possess and hold onto things.



Seeing is a bodily knowledge. The predominance of the visual sense in us influences this bodily knowledge and makes it seem to be eye-related.



Losing the human form is like a spiral. It gives a warrior the freedom to remember himself as straight fields of

energy and this in turn makes him even freer.



A warrior knows that he is waiting, and he knows what he is waiting for, and while he waits, he feasts his eyes upon the world. A warrior's ultimate accomplishment is to enjoy the joy of infinity.



The course of a warrior's destiny is unalterable. The challenge is how far he can go and how impeccable he can be within those rigid bounds.



People's actions no longer affect a warrior when he has no more expectations of any kind. A strange peace becomes the ruling force in his

life. He has adopted one of the concepts of a warrior's life—detachment.



Detachment does not automatically mean wisdom, but it is, nonetheless, an advantage because it allows the warrior to pause momentarily to reassess situations, to reconsider positions. In order to use that extra moment consistently and correctly, however, a warrior has to struggle unyieldingly for the duration of his life.



*I am already given to the power that rules my
fate.*

*And I cling to nothing, so I will have nothing to
defend.*

I have no thoughts, so I will see.

I fear nothing, so I will remember myself.

Detached and at ease,

I will dart past the Eagle to be free.



It is much easier for warriors to fare well under conditions of maximum stress than to be impeccable under normal circumstances.



Human beings are two-sided. The right side encompasses everything the intellect can conceive of. The left side is a realm of indescribable features; a realm impossible to contain in words. The left side is perhaps comprehended, if comprehension is what takes place, with the total body; thus its resistance to conceptualization.



All the faculties, possibilities, and accomplishments of shamanism, from the simplest to the most astounding, are in the human body itself.



The power that governs the destiny of all living beings is called the *Eagle*, not because it is an eagle or has anything to do with an eagle, but because it appears to the eye of the seer as an immeasurable jet-black eagle, standing erect as an eagle stands, its height reaching to infinity.



The Eagle devours the awareness of all the creatures that, alive on earth a moment before and now dead, have floated to the Eagle's beak like a swarm of fireflies, to meet their owner, their reason for having had life. The Eagle disentangles these tiny flames, lays them flat, as a tanner stretches out a hide, and then consumes them; for awareness is the Eagle's food.



The Eagle, that power that governs the destinies of all living things, reflects equally and at once all those living things. There is no way, therefore, for man to pray to the Eagle, to ask favors, to hope for grace. The human part of the Eagle is too insignificant to move the whole.



Every living thing has been granted the power, if it so desires, to seek an opening to freedom and go through it. It is evident to the seer who *sees* the opening, and to the creatures that go through it, that the Eagle has granted that gift in order to perpetuate awareness.



To cross over to freedom does not mean eternal life as eternity is commonly understood—that is, as living forever. Rather, warriors can keep

their awareness, which is ordinarily relinquished at the moment of dying. At the moment of crossing, the body in its entirety is kindled with knowledge. Every cell at once becomes aware of itself and also aware of the totality of the body.



The Eagle's gift of freedom is not a bestowal, but a chance to have a chance.



A warrior is never under siege. To be under siege implies that one has personal possessions that could be blockaded. A warrior has nothing in the world except his impeccability, and impeccability cannot be threatened.



The first principle of the art of stalking is that warriors choose their battleground. A warrior never goes into battle without knowing what the surroundings are.



To discard everything that is unnecessary is the second principle of the art of stalking. A warrior doesn't complicate things. He aims at being simple. He applies all the concentration he has to decide whether or not to enter into battle, for any battle is a battle for his life. This is the third principle of the art of stalking. A warrior must be willing and ready to make his last stand here and now. But not in a helter-skelter way.



A warrior relaxes and abandons himself; he fears nothing. Only then will the powers that guide human beings

open the road for a warrior and aid him. Only then. That is the fourth principle of the art of stalking.



When faced with odds that cannot be dealt with, warriors retreat for a moment. They let their minds meander. They occupy their time with something else. Anything would do. That is the fifth principle of the art of stalking.



Warriors compress time; this is the sixth principle of the art of stalking. Even an instant counts. In a battle for your life, a second is an eternity, an eternity that may decide the outcome. Warriors aim at succeeding, therefore they compress time. Warriors don't waste an instant.



In order to apply the seventh principle of the art of stalking, one has to apply the other six: a stalker never pushes himself to the front. He is always looking on from behind the scenes.



Applying these principles brings about three results. The first is that stalkers learn never to take themselves seriously; they learn to laugh at themselves. If they are not afraid of being a fool, they can fool anyone. The second is that stalkers learn to have endless patience. Stalkers are never in a hurry; they never fret. And the third is that stalkers learn to have an endless capacity to improvise.



Warriors face the oncoming time. Normally we face time as it recedes from us. Only warriors can change that and face time as it advances on them.



Warriors have only one thing in mind: their freedom. To die and be eaten by the Eagle is no challenge. On the other hand, to sneak around the Eagle and be free is the ultimate audacity.



When warriors talk about time, they are not referring to something which is measured by the movement of a clock. Time is the essence of attention; the Eagle's emanations are made out of time; and properly speaking, when a warrior enters into other aspects of the self, he is becoming acquainted with time.



A warrior can no longer weep, and his only expression of anguish is a shiver

that comes from the very depths of the universe. It is as if one of the Eagle's emanations were made out of pure anguish, and when it hits a warrior, the warrior's shiver is infinite.

Commentary

It was a remarkable sensation for me to examine the quotations drawn from *The Eagle's Gift*. I felt immediately the hard coil of the *intent* of the shamans of ancient Mexico working as vividly as ever. I knew then, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that the quotations from this book were ruled by their *wheel of time*. Further, I knew that this had been the case with everything I had done in the past, such as writing *The Eagle's Gift*, and that it is the case with everything I do, as in writing the present book.

Since I am at a loss to elucidate this matter, the only option open to me is to accept it in humbleness. The shamans of ancient Mexico did have another cognitive system at work, and from the units of that cognitive system, they could still affect me today in the most positive, uplifting fashion.

Due to the effort of Florinda Matus, who engaged me in learning the most elaborate variations of standard shamanistic techniques devised by the shamans of ancient times, such as the recapitulation, I was able to view, for

instance, my experiences with don Juan with a force I never could have imagined. The corpus of my book, *The Eagle's Gift*, is the result of such views that I had of don Juan Matus.

For don Juan Matus, to recapitulate meant to relive and rearrange everything of one's life in one single sweep. He never bothered with the minutiae of elaborate variations of that ancient technique. Florinda, on the other hand, had an entirely different meticulousness. She spent months coaching me to enter into aspects of recapitulating that I am to this day at a loss to explain.

"It is the vastness of the warrior which you are experiencing," she explained. "The techniques are there. Big deal. What is of supreme importance is the man using them, and his desire to go all the way with them."

To recapitulate don Juan in Florinda's terms resulted in views of don Juan of the most excruciating detail and meaning. It was infinitely more intense than talking to don Juan himself. It was Florinda's pragmatism that gave me astounding insights into practical possibilities that were not in the least the concern of the nagual Juan Matus. Florinda, being a true woman pragmatist, had no illusions about herself, no dreams of grandeur. She said that she was a plower who

could not afford to miss a single turn of the way.

“A warrior must go very slowly,” she recommended, “and make use of every available item on the warriors’ path. One of the most remarkable items is the capacity we all have, as warriors, to focus our attention with unwavering force on events lived. Warriors can even focus it on people they have never met. The end result of this deep focusing is always the same. It reconstructs the scene. Whole chunks of behavior, forgotten or brand new, make themselves available to a warrior. Try it.”

I followed her advice, and of course, I focused on don Juan, and I remembered everything that had transpired at any given moment. I remembered details that I had no business remembering. Thanks to the work of Florinda, I was able to reconstruct enormous chunks of activity with don Juan, as well as details of tremendous importance that had bypassed me completely.

The spirit of the quotations from *The Eagle’s Gift* was most shocking to me because the quotations revealed the profound emphasis that don Juan had put on the items of his world, on the warriors’ way as the epitome of human accomplishment. That drive had survived his person, and was as

alive as ever. Sometimes, I sincerely felt that don Juan had never left. I got to the point of actually hearing him moving around the house. I asked Florinda about it.

She said, "Oh, that's nothing. It's just the nagual Juan Matus's emptiness that reaches out to touch you, no matter where his awareness is at the moment."

Her answer left me more puzzled, more intrigued, and more despondent than ever. Although Florinda was the closest person to the nagual Juan Matus, they were astoundingly different. One thing that they both shared was the emptiness of their persons. They were no longer people. Don Juan Matus did not exist as a person. But what existed instead of his person was a collection of stories, each of them apropos to the situation he was discussing, didactic stories and jokes that bore the mark of his sobriety and his frugality.

Florinda was the same; she had stories upon stories. But her stories were about people. They were like a high form of gossip, or gossip elevated, due to her impersonality, to inconceivable heights of effectiveness and enjoyment.

"I want you to examine one man who bears a tremendous resemblance to you," she said one day to me. "I want you to

recapitulate him as if you had known him all your life. This man was transcendental in the formation of our lineage. His name was Elias, the nagual Elias. I call him ‘the nagual who lost heaven.’

“The story is that the nagual Elias was reared by a Jesuit priest, who taught him to read and write and to play the harpsichord. He taught him Latin. The nagual Elias could read the scriptures in Latin as fluently as any scholar could. His destiny was to be a priest, but he was an Indian, and Indians in those days did not fit into clerical hierarchies. They were too awesome-looking, too dark, too Indian. Priests were from the upper social classes, descendants of Spaniards, with white skin, blue eyes; they were handsome, presentable. The nagual Elias was a bear in comparison, but he struggled long, kindled by his mentor’s promise that God would see that he was accepted into the priesthood.

“He was the sexton of the church where his mentor was the parish priest, and one day, an actual witch walked in. Her name was Amalia. They say that she was a wild card. Be that as it may, she ended up seducing the poor sexton, who fell so deeply, so hopelessly in love with Amalia that he ended up in the hut of a nagual man. In time, he became the nagual Elias, a figure to reckon with,

cultured, well-read. It seemed that the niche of nagual was made for him. It allowed him the anonymity and the effectiveness that was denied him in the world.

“He was a dreamer, and so good at it that he covered the most recondite places of the universe in a bodiless state. Sometimes he even brought back objects that had attracted his eye because of the lines of their design, objects that were incomprehensible. He called them ‘inventions.’ He had a whole collection of them.

“I want you to focus your recapitulation attention on those inventions,” Florinda commanded me. “I want you to end up sniffing them, feeling them with your hands, although you have never seen them except through what I am telling you now. To do this focusing means to establish a point of reference, as in an algebraic equation in which something is calculated by playing on a third element. You’ll be able to see the nagual Juan Matus with infinite clarity, using someone else as a point of corroboration.”

The corpus of the book *The Eagle’s Gift* is a review in depth of what don Juan had done to me while he was in the world. The views that I had of don Juan due to my new recapitulation skills—using the nagual Elias as a point of corroboration—were infinitely

more intense than any views that I had of him while he was alive. The recapitulation views I was engaged in lacked the warmth of the living, but they had instead the precision and the accuracy of inanimate objects that one can examine to one's heart's content.

QUOTATIONS
FROM *THE FIRE*
FROM WITHIN



There is no completeness without sadness and longing, for without them there is no sobriety, no kindness. Wisdom without kindness and knowledge without sobriety are useless.



Self-importance is man's greatest enemy. What weakens him is feeling offended by the deeds and misdeeds of his fellow men. Self-importance requires that one spend most of one's life offended by something or someone.



In order to follow the path of knowledge, one has to be very imaginative. On the path of knowledge, nothing is as clear as we'd like it to be.



If seers can hold their own in facing petty tyrants, they can certainly face the unknown with impunity, and then they can even withstand the presence of the unknowable.



What seems natural is to think that a warrior who can hold his own in the face of the unknown can certainly face petty tyrants with impunity. But that's not necessarily so. What destroyed the superb warriors of ancient times was to rely on that assumption. Nothing can temper the spirit of a warrior as much as

the challenge of dealing with impossible people in positions of power. Only under those conditions can warriors acquire the sobriety and serenity to withstand the pressure of the unknowable.



The unknown is something that is veiled from man, shrouded perhaps by a terrifying context, but which, nonetheless, is within man's reach. The unknown becomes the known at a given time. The unknowable, on the other hand, is the indescribable, the unthinkable, the unrealizable. It is something that will never be known to us, and yet it is there, dazzling and at the same time horrifying in its vastness.



We perceive. This is a hard fact. But what we perceive is not a fact of the

same kind, because we learn what to perceive.



Warriors say that we think there is a world of objects out there only because of our awareness. But what's really out there are the Eagle's emanations, fluid, forever in motion, and yet unchanged, eternal.



The deepest flaw of unseasoned warriors is that they are willing to forget the wonder of what they *see*. They become overwhelmed by the fact that they *see* and believe that it's their genius that counts. A seasoned warrior must be a paragon of discipline in order to override the nearly invincible laxness of our human condition. More important than *seeing* itself is what warriors do with what they *see*.



One of the greatest forces in the lives of warriors is fear, because it spurs them to learn.



For a seer, the truth is that all living beings are struggling to die. What stops death is awareness.



The unknown is forever present, but it is outside the possibility of our normal awareness. The unknown is the superfluous part of the average man. And it is superfluous because the average man doesn't have enough free energy to grasp it.



The greatest flaw of human beings is to remain glued to the inventory of reason. Reason doesn't deal with man as energy. Reason deals with instruments that create energy, but it has never seriously occurred to reason that we are better than instruments: we are organisms that create energy. We are bubbles of energy.



Warriors who deliberately attain total awareness are a sight to behold. That is the moment when they burn from within. The fire from within consumes them. And in full awareness they fuse themselves to the emanations of the Eagle at large, and glide into eternity.



Once *inner silence* is attained, everything is possible. The way to stop talking to ourselves is to use exactly the

same method used to teach us to talk to ourselves; we were taught compulsively and unwaveringly, and this is the way we must stop it: compulsively and unwaveringly.



Impeccability begins with a single act that has to be deliberate, precise, and sustained. If that act is repeated long enough, one acquires a sense of unbending *intent*, which can be applied to anything else. If that is accomplished the road is clear. One thing will lead to another until the warrior realizes his full potential.



The mystery of awareness is darkness. Human beings reek of that mystery, of things which are inexplicable. To regard ourselves in any other terms is madness. So a warrior

doesn't demean the mystery of man by trying to rationalize it.



Realizations are of two kinds. One is just pep talk, great outbursts of emotion and nothing more. The other is the product of a shift of the assemblage point; it is not coupled with an emotional outburst, but with action. The emotional realizations come years later after warriors have solidified, by usage, the new position of their assemblage points.



The worst that could happen to us is that we have to die, and since that is already our unalterable fate, we are free; those who have lost everything no longer have anything to fear.



Warriors don't venture into the unknown out of greed. Greed works only in the world of ordinary affairs. To venture into that terrifying loneliness of the unknown, one must have something greater than greed: love. One needs love for life, for intrigue, for mystery. One needs unquenchable curiosity and guts galore.



A warrior thinks only of the mysteries of awareness; mystery is all that matters. We are living beings; we have to die and relinquish our awareness. But if we could change just a tinge of that, what mysteries must await us? What mysteries!

Commentary

The Fire from Within as a book was another of the end results of the influence of Florinda Matus on my life. She guided me to focus this time on don Juan's teacher, the nagual Julian. Both Florinda and my detailed focusing on the man revealed to me that the nagual Julian Osorio had been an actor of some merit—but more than an actor, he had been a licentious man, concerned exclusively with the seduction of women, women of any kind with whom he came in contact during his theatrical presentations. He was so extremely licentious that ultimately, his health failed, and he became infected with tuberculosis.

His teacher, the nagual Elias, found him one afternoon in an open field on the outskirts of the city of Durango, seducing the daughter of a wealthy landowner. Due to the exertion, the actor began to hemorrhage, and the hemorrhage became so heavy that he was on the brink of dying. Florinda said that the nagual Elias *saw* that there was no way for him to help him. To cure the actor was an

impossibility, and the only thing that he could do as a nagual was to arrest the bleeding, which he did. He saw fit to make then a proposition to the actor.

“I’m leaving at five in the morning for the mountains,” he said. “Be at the entrance of the town. Don’t fail. If you fail to come, you will die, sooner than you think. Your only recourse is to go with me. I’ll never be able to cure you, but I will be able to deviate your inexorable walk to the abyss that marks the end of life. All of us human beings go inexorably into that abyss sooner or later. I will head you off to walk the enormous extent of that crack, either to the left or to the right of it. As long as you don’t fall, you will live. You’ll never be well, but you’ll live.”

The nagual Elias didn’t have great expectations about the actor, who was lazy, slovenly, self-indulgent, perhaps even a coward. He was quite surprised when the next day at five in the morning he found the actor waiting for him at the edge of the town. He took him to the mountains, and in time, the actor became the nagual Julian—a tubercular man who was never cured, but who lived to be perhaps one hundred and seven years old, always walking along the edge of the abyss.

“Of course, it is of supreme importance to you,” Florinda said to me once, “that you examine the walk of the nagual Julian along the edge of the abyss. The nagual Juan Matus didn’t care to know anything about it. To him, all of that was superfluous. You’re not as talented as the nagual Juan Matus. Nothing can be superfluous for you, as a warrior. You must allow the thoughts, the feelings, the ideas of the shamans of ancient Mexico to come to you freely.”

Florinda was right. I don’t have the splendor of the nagual Juan Matus. Just as she had said, nothing could be superfluous to me. I needed every prop, every twist. I could not afford to bypass any of the views or ideas of the shamans of ancient Mexico, no matter how far-fetched they might have seemed to me.

To examine the walk of the nagual Julian on the edge of the abyss meant that the ability to focus my recollection could be extended to the feelings that the nagual Julian had about his most extraordinary struggle to remain alive. I was shocked to the marrow of my bones to find out that the struggle of that man was a second-to-second fight, with his terrifying habits of indulging and his extraordinary sensuality pitted against his rigid adherence to survival. His fight was not

sporadic; it was a most sustained, disciplined struggle to remain balanced. Walking on the edge of the abyss meant the battle of a warrior enhanced to such a degree that every second counted. One single moment of weakness would have thrown the nagual Julian into that abyss.

However, if he kept his view, his emphasis, his concern focused on what Florinda called the edge of the abyss, the pressure eased. Whatever he was viewing was not as desperate as what he was viewing when his old habits began to take hold of him. It seemed to me that when I looked at the nagual Julian at those moments, I was recapitulating a different man; a man more peaceful, more detached, more collected.

QUOTATIONS
FROM *THE*
POWER OF
SILENCE



It isn't that a warrior learns shamanism as time goes by; rather, what he learns as time goes by is to save energy. This energy will enable him to handle some of the energy fields which are ordinarily inaccessible to him. Shamanism is a state of awareness, the ability to use energy fields that are not employed in perceiving the everyday-life world that we know.



In the universe there is an immeasurable, indescribable force which shamans call *intent*, and absolutely everything that exists in the entire cosmos is attached to *intent* by a connecting link. Warriors are concerned with discussing, understanding, and employing that connecting link. They are especially concerned with cleaning it of the numbing effects brought about by the ordinary concerns of their everyday lives. Shamanism at this level can be defined as the procedure of cleaning one's connecting link to *intent*.



Shamans are vitally concerned with their past, but not their personal past. For shamans, their past is what other shamans in bygone days have accomplished. They consult their past in order to obtain a point of reference. Only shamans genuinely seek a point of reference in their past. For them, establishing a point of reference means a chance to examine *intent*.



The average man also examines the past. But it's his personal past he examines, for personal reasons. He measures himself against the past, whether his personal past or the past knowledge of his time, in order to find justifications for his present or future behavior, or to establish a model for himself.



The spirit manifests itself to a warrior at every turn. However, this is not the entire truth. The entire truth is that the spirit reveals itself to everyone with the same intensity and consistency, but only warriors are consistently attuned to such revelations.



Warriors speak of shamanism as a magical, mysterious bird which has paused in its flight for a moment in order to give man hope and purpose; warriors live under the wing of that bird, which they call the *bird of wisdom*, the *bird of freedom*.



For a warrior, the spirit is an abstract only because he knows it without words or even thoughts. It's an abstract because he can't conceive what the spirit is. Yet, without the slightest chance or desire to understand it, a warrior handles the spirit. He recognizes it, beckons it, entices it, becomes familiar with it, and expresses it with his acts.



The average man's connecting link with *intent* is practically dead, and warriors begin with a link that is useless, because it does not respond voluntarily.

In order to revive that link, warriors need a rigorous, fierce purpose—a special state of mind called *unbending intent*.



The power of man is incalculable; death exists only because we have *intended* it since the moment of our birth. The *intent* of death can be suspended by making the assemblage point change positions.



The art of stalking is learning all the quirks of your disguise, and learning them so well that no one will know you are disguised. For that you need to be ruthless, cunning, patient and sweet. Ruthlessness should not be harshness, cunning should not be cruelty, patience should not be negligence, and sweetness should not be foolishness.



Warriors have an ulterior purpose for their acts, which has nothing to do with personal gain. The average man acts only if there is the chance for profit. Warriors act not for profit, but for the spirit.



The shaman seers of ancient times, through their *seeing*, first noticed that any unusual behavior produced a tremor in the assemblage point. They soon discovered that if unusual behavior is practiced systematically and directed wisely, it eventually forces the assemblage point to move.



Silent knowledge is nothing but direct contact with *intent*.



Shamanism is a journey of return. A warrior returns victorious to the spirit, having descended into hell. And from hell he brings trophies. Understanding is one of his trophies.



Warriors, because they are stalkers, understand human behavior to perfection. They understand, for instance, that human beings are creatures of inventory. Knowing the ins and outs of a particular inventory is what makes a man a scholar or an expert in his field.



Warriors know that when an average person's inventory fails, the person either enlarges his inventory or his world of self-reflection collapses. The

average person is able to incorporate new items into his inventory if the new items don't contradict the inventory's underlying order. But if the items contradict that order, the person's mind collapses. The inventory is the mind. Warriors count on this when they attempt to break the mirror of self-reflection.



Warriors can never make a bridge to join the people of the world. But, if people desire to do so, they have to make a bridge to join warriors.



In order for the mysteries of shamanism to be available to anyone, the spirit must descend onto whoever is interested. The spirit lets its presence by itself move the man's assemblage point to a specific position. This precise spot is known to shamans as the *place of no pity*.



There really is no procedure involved in making the assemblage point move to the place of no pity. The spirit touches the person and his assemblage point moves. It is as simple as that.



What we need to do to allow magic to get hold of us is to banish doubts from our minds. Once doubts are banished, anything is possible.



Man's possibilities are so vast and mysterious that warriors, rather than thinking about them, have chosen to explore them, with no hope of ever understanding them.



Everything that warriors do is done as a consequence of a movement of their assemblage points, and such movements are ruled by the amount of energy warriors have at their command.



Any movement of the assemblage point means a movement away from an excessive concern with the individual self. Shamans believe it is the position of the assemblage point which makes modern man a homicidal egotist, a being totally involved with his self-image. Having lost hope of ever returning to the source of everything, the average man seeks solace in his selfishness.



The thrust of the warriors' way is to dethrone self-importance. And everything warriors do is directed toward accomplishing this goal.



Shamans have unmasked self-importance and found that it is self-pity masquerading as something else.



In the world of everyday life, one's word or one's decisions can be reversed very easily. The only irrevocable thing in the everyday world is death. In the shamans' world, on the other hand, normal death can be countermanded, but not the shamans' word. In the shamans' world decisions cannot be changed or revised. Once they have been made, they stand forever.



One of the most dramatic things about the human condition is the macabre connection between stupidity and self-reflection. It is stupidity that

forces the average man to discard anything that does not conform with his self-reflective expectations. For example, as average men, we are blind to the most crucial piece of knowledge available to a human being: the existence of the assemblage point and the fact that it can move.



For the rational man to hold steadfastly to his self-image ensures his abysmal ignorance. He ignores the fact that shamanism is not incantations and hocus-pocus, but the freedom to perceive not only the world taken for granted, but everything else that is humanly possible to accomplish. He trembles at the possibility of freedom. And freedom is at his fingertips.



Man's predicament is that he intuits his hidden resources, but he does not

dare use them. This is why warriors say that man's plight is the counterpoint between his stupidity and his ignorance. Man needs now, more than ever, to be taught new ideas that have to do exclusively with his inner world—shamans' ideas, not social ideas, ideas pertaining to man facing the unknown, facing his personal death. Now, more than anything else, he needs to be taught the secrets of the assemblage point.



The spirit listens only when the speaker speaks in gestures. And gestures do not mean signs or body movements, but acts of true abandon, acts of largesse, of humor. As a gesture for the spirit, warriors bring out the best of themselves and silently offer it to the abstract.

Commentary

The last book that I ever wrote about don Juan as a direct result of the guidance of Florinda Matus was called *The Power of Silence*, a title that was chosen by my editor; my title had been *Inner Silence*. At the time that I was working on the book, the views of the shamans of ancient Mexico had become extremely abstract for me. Florinda tried her best to deviate me from my absorption in the abstract. She attempted to redirect my attention to different aspects of old shamanistic techniques, or she tried to divert me by shocking me with her scandalous behavior. But nothing was sufficient to deviate me from my seemingly inexorable drive.

The Power of Silence is an intellectual review of the thoughts of the shamans of ancient Mexico, in their most abstract guise. As I worked alone on the book, I was contaminated by the mood of those men, by their desire to know more in a quasi-rational way. Florinda explained that in the end, those shamans had become extremely cold and

detached. Nothing warm existed for them anymore. They were set in their quest: their coldness as men was an effort to match the coldness of infinity. They had succeeded in changing their human eyes to match the cold eyes of the unknown.

I sensed this in myself, and tried desperately to turn the tide. I haven't succeeded yet. My thoughts have become more and more like the thoughts of those men at the end of their quest. It is not that I don't laugh. Quite the contrary, my life is an endless joy. But at the same time, it is an endless, merciless quest. Infinity will swallow me, and I want to be prepared for it. I don't want infinity to dissolve me into nothing because I hold human desires, warm affection, attachments, no matter how vague. More than anything else in this world, I want to be like those men. I never knew them. The only shamans I knew were don Juan and his cohorts, and what they expressed was the furthest thing from the coldness that I intuit in those unknown men.

Due to the influence that Florinda had on my life, I succeeded brilliantly in learning to focus my unwavering attention on the mood of people I never knew. I focused my recapitulation attention on the mood of those shamans, and I got trapped by it without

hope of ever extricating myself from their pull. Florinda didn't believe in the finality of my state. She humored me, and laughed at it openly.

"Your state only seems to be final," she said to me, "but it isn't. A moment will come when you will change venues. Perhaps you will chuck every thought about the shamans of ancient Mexico. Perhaps you may even chuck the thoughts and views of the very shamans you worked with so closely, like the nagual Juan Matus. You might refuse his being. You'll see. The warrior has no limits. His sense of improvisation is so acute that he will make constructs out of nothing, but not just mere empty constructs; rather, something workable, pragmatic. You'll see. It is not that you'll forget about them, but at one moment, before you plunge into the abyss, if you have the gall to walk along its edge, if you have the daring not to deviate from it, you will then arrive at warriors' conclusions of an order and stability infinitely more suited to you than the fixation of the shamans of ancient Mexico."

Florinda's words were like a handsome, hopeful prophecy. Perhaps she was right. She was of course right in asserting that the resources of a warrior have no limits. The only flaw is that in order for me to have a

different orderly view of the world and myself, a view even more suited to my temperament, I have to walk along the edge of the abyss, and I have doubts that I have the daring and strength to accomplish that feat.

But who is there to tell?

Silent Knowledge

INTRODUCTION

Silent knowledge was an entire facet of the lives and activities of the shamans or sorcerers who lived in Mexico in ancient times. According to don Juan Matus, the sorcerer-teacher who introduced me in the cognitive world of those sorcerers, silent knowledge was the most coveted end result they sought through every one of their actions and thoughts.

Don Juan defined silent knowledge as a state of human awareness in which everything pertinent to man is instantly revealed, not to the mind or the intellect, but to the entire being. He explained that there was a band of energy in the universe which sorcerers call the band of man, and that such a band was present in man. He assured me that for sorcerer-seers, who see energy directly as it flows in the universe, and who can see a human being as a conglomerate of energy fields in the form of a luminous sphere, the band of man is a fringe of compact luminosity that cuts across the luminous sphere at an angle from its left side to its right. The total luminous sphere is the width and the height of the extended arm, and in that luminous sphere, the band of man is perhaps around a foot wide. Silent knowledge, don Juan explained, is the interplay of energy within that band, an interplay which is instantly revealed to the shaman who has attained inner

silence. Don Juan said that the average man had inklings of this energetic interplay.

Man intuitively it, and gets busy deducing its workings, figuring out its permutations. A sorcerer, on the other hand, gets a blast of the totality of this interplay at any time that the rendition of this interplay is solicited.

Don Juan assured me that the prelude to silent knowledge was a state of human perception which sorcerers called inner silence, a state void of the silent verbalizations that sorcerers call the internal dialogue, or even void of thoughts.

No matter how hard don Juan Matus tried to make his definitions and explanations of silent knowledge available to me, they remained obscure, mysterious, inscrutable. In his effort to clarify his point further, don Juan gave me a series of concrete examples of silent knowledge.

The one I have liked the most, because of its scope and applicability, is something that he called readers of infinity.

Readers of infinity is something that, sounds like a metaphor, but it is rather, a phenomenological description that don Juan made of a shamanistic perceptual condition. He told me that this shamanistic condition conformed with the goals and expectations of modern man, and that the man of the twentieth century is a reader who reads written texts with a special predilection. Such a text could be in the

form of a book, a computer printout, literature, a manual, technical descriptions, etc.

In their continuous search for solutions and answers to their probes, the sorcerers of ancient Mexico found out that from this condition of inner silence, the awareness of man can easily leap to the direct perception of energy against the background of any given horizon.

They used the sky as a horizon, as well as the mountains, or in a more reduced space, the walls of their dwelling. They were capable of seeing energy reflected on those horizons as if they were at the movies. They concisely described this phenomenon as the visualization of energy in the aspect of a hue – to be precise, a spot of redness on the horizon, a pomegranate red. They called it the blotch of pomegranate.

Those sorcerers claimed that that blotch of pomegranate erupted, at a given moment, into images which they saw as if they were veritably watching a movie. This perceptual attainment converted them into what they called viewers of infinity.

Don Juan believed that for me, it was more appropriate to consider that instead of viewing infinity, I should read it, since I was given to reading with the same, if not greater passion than the shamans of ancient Mexico were given to viewing. Don Juan made it very clear to me that to be a reader of infinity doesn't mean that one

reads energy as if one were reading a newspaper, but that words become clearly formulated as one reads them, as if one word leads into another, forming whole concepts that are revealed and then vanish. The art of sorcerers is to have the prowess to gather and preserve them before they enter into oblivion by being replaced with the new words, the new concepts of a never-ending stream of graphic consciousness.

Don Juan further explained that the shamans who lived in Mexico in ancient times, and who established his lineage, were capable of reaching silent knowledge after entering its matrix: inner silence. He said that inner silence was an accomplishment of such tremendous importance for them that they set it up as the essential condition of shamanism.

Don Juan put such emphasis on silent knowledge that I coveted it.

I wanted to get right away to inner silence. I felt that I didn't have a moment to lose. When I asked don Juan to give me a succinct explanation of the procedures involved, he laughed at me.

"To venture into the world of sorcerers," he said, "is not like learning to drive a car. To drive a car, you need manuals and instructions. To enter into inner silence, you need to intend it.

"But how can I intend it?" I insisted.

"The only way you could intend it is by intending it," he declared.

One of the most difficult things for a man of our day to accept is the lack of procedure. Modern man seems to be in the throes of manuals, praxes, methods, steps leading to. Modern man is ceaselessly taking notes, making diagrams, deeply involved in the "know-how." But in the world of sorcerers, don Juan said, procedures and rituals are mere designs to attract and focus attention. They are devices used to force a focusing of interest and determination. They have no other value.

Don Juan believed that modern man is enchanted with the word, as if he retained a feeling that has survived to this day of what it was like to talk for the first time. This seems to account for the heavy emphasis on the word. Verbal incantations seem to be a throw back to that state of being enamored with the word. There must have been, sorcerers believe, a mesmeric power to a long series of voiced words.

Sorcerers, by the force of their practices and goals, refute the power of the word. They define themselves as navigators in the sea of the unknown. For them, navigation is a practicality, and navigation means to move from world to world, without losing, sobriety, without losing strength – and to accomplish this feat of navigation, there cannot be procedures, or steps to be followed, but one single abstract act that defines it all: the act, of reinforcing our link with

the force that permeates the universe, a force which sorcerers call intent. Since we are alive and conscious, we are already intimately related to intent. What we need, sorcerers say, is to make that link the realm of our conscious acts, and that act of becoming conscious of our link with intent is another way of defining silent knowledge.

In the course of my time with don Juan Matus, and in relation to procedures and methods, I learned one thing, however. If there is something that human beings need in order to claim silent knowledge, it is to reinforce their well being, their clarity, their determination. In order to intend, one must be the possessor of physical and mental prowess and a clear spirit.

According to don Juan, the sorcerers of ancient Mexico put an enormous emphasis on physical prowess and mental well-being, and the same emphasis prevailed with the sorcerers of the present day. I was able to corroborate the truth of his statements by observing him and his fifteen other sorcerer-companions. Their superb state of physical and mental balance was the most obvious feature about them.

Don Juan's reply when I asked him directly why sorcerers put so much emphasis on the physical side of man was a total surprise to me.

In those years, I believed in the spiritual side of man; a side which I was, if not totally

convinced of its existence, at least inclined to consider as a possibility, and don Juan was to me, a spiritual being.

"Sorcerers are not spiritual at all." he said. "They are very practical beings. It is a well-known fact, however, that sorcerers, or shamans, as they are called, are generally regarded as eccentric, or even insane.

Perhaps that is what makes you think that they are spiritual. They seem insane because they are always trying to explain things that cannot be explained. In the course of such attempts, they lose all coherence and say inanities which, if examined from the sorcerers' point of view, are not inanities at all, but futile attempts to give complete explanations that cannot be completed under any circumstances."

Don Juan told me that those sorcerers of ancient Mexico discovered and developed a great number of procedures, which they called magical passes, for the attainment of physical and mental well-being.

He also said that the effect of the magical passes was so overwhelming for them that the passes became, as time went by, one of the most important components in the lives of those sorcerers. Don Juan explained that, given as they were to ritualistic behavior, they promptly hid the magical passes in the midst of rituals and veiled the act of teaching or practicing them with

great secrecy. He maintained that these rituals were as nonsensical as anything could be, but that the more asinine they were, the greater their capacity to conceal something of such tremendous value.

The teaching and practice of magical passes were, at the time I entered don Juan's world, as secretive as they had always been, yet no longer excessively ritualistic. Don Juan's comments in this respect were that ritual had lost its impetus as new generations of practitioners became more interested in efficiency and functionalism. He recommended to me, however, that under no circumstances should I talk about the magical passes with any of his disciples or with people in general. His reasons were that the passes pertained exclusively to each person, and that their effect was so shattering that only those who had taken the warriors' path in true seriousness could practice them.

Don Juan taught me and his other three disciples, Talsha Abelar, Florinda Donner-Grau and Carol Tiggs, a given number of magical passes, but along with that wealth of knowledge, he also left us with the certainty that we were the last members of his lineage. The acceptance of this legacy implied automatically the task of finding new ways to disseminate the knowledge of his lineage, since its continuity was no longer an issue.

I need to clarify a very important point in this regard: don Juan Matus was not ever interested in teaching his knowledge. He was interested in perpetuating his lineage. We, his four disciples, were the elements, the means – chosen, he said, by the spirit itself, for he had no active part in it – that were going to ensure that perpetuation. Therefore, he engaged himself in a titanic effort to teach us all he knew about sorcery, or shamanism, and about the development of his lineage.

In the course of training me, he realized that my energetic configuration was, according to him, so vastly different than his own that it couldn't mean anything else but the end of his line. I told him that I resented enormously his interpretation of whatever invisible difference existed between us. I didn't like the burden of being the last of his line, nor did I understand his reasoning.

"Sorcerers, although they seem to make nothing else but decisions, make no decisions at all." he explained. "They have only realizations. I didn't decide to choose you, and I didn't decide that you would be the way you are. Since I couldn't choose to whom I would impart my knowledge, I had to accept whomever the spirit was offering me; and that person was you, and you are energetically capable only of ending, not of continuing."

He said that the ending of his line had nothing to do with him or his efforts, or with his success or failure as a sorcerer seeking total freedom. He understood it as something that had to do with a choice exercised beyond the human level, not by beings or entities, but by the impersonal forces of the universe.

In unanimous agreement, don Juan's three female disciples and I accepted what don Juan called our fate. Accepting it put us face to face with another issue that he referred to as locking the door behind us.

That is to say, we assumed the responsibility of deciding exactly what to do with everything he had taught us and carrying it out impeccably.

First of all, we asked ourselves the crucial question of what to do with the magical passes: the facet of don Juan's knowledge most imbued with pragmatism and function. We decided to use the magical passes, and teach them to whomever wants to learn them. Our decision to end the secrecy that surrounded them for an undetermined length of time was naturally, the corollary of our total conviction that we are indeed the end of don Juan's lineage. It became inconceivable to us that we would carry secrets which are not even ours. To shroud the magical passes in secrecy was not our decision. It is our decision, however, to end such a condition.

All four of us then, endeavored to come up with an amalgamation of the four different lines of passes; passes which were taught to us separately and individually to fit our own particular physical and mental constitutions. We aimed at arriving at a generic form of each movement, a form suitable to everyone.

This amalgamation resulted in a configuration of slightly modified forms of each one of those passes taught to us. We have called this new configuration of movements Tensegrity, a term which belongs to architecture, where it means "the property of skeleton structures that employ continuous tension members and discontinuous compression members in such a way that each member operates with the maximum efficiency and economy."

In order to explain what are the magical passes discovered by the sorcerers of ancient times, as don Juan called them, I would like to make a clarification: ancient times, for don Juan, meant a time from 7000 to 10,000 years ago; a figure that seems somehow incongruous, if it is examined from the point of view of the classificatory schemes of modern scholars. When I confronted don Juan with the discrepancy between his estimate and what I considered to be a more realistic one, he remained adamant in his conviction. He believed it to be a fact that people who lived in the New World from 7000 to

10,000 years ago were deeply concerned with matters of the universe and perception that modern man has not even begun to fathom.

Regardless of our different opinions, the secrecy that has surrounded the magical passes for ages, and the directness of their effect on me, has had a deep influence on the way in which I deal with them.

What I am presenting in this work is an intimate reflection of that influence. I feel obligated to elucidate the subject strictly following the manner in which it was presented to me: to this effect, I need to go back to the beginning of my apprenticeship with don Juan Matus.

He began by making statements about the physical prowess of the sorcerers of ancient times. He endlessly emphasized the need for a pliable, agile body – he promoted its suppleness and strength as the surest means to reach the crowning attainment of a sorcerer's life: silent knowledge.

"Level-headedness and physical prowess were the most important issues in the lives of those men and women," he reiterated to me once, "sobriety and pragmatism are the only indispensable requisites for reaching silent knowledge – for entering into other realms of perception. To navigate, in a genuine way, in the unknown necessitates an attitude of daring, but

not one of recklessness. In order to establish a balance between audacity and recklessness, a sorcerer has to be extremely sober, cautious, skillful, and in superb physical condition."

Don Juan said that there were five issues in the lives of those sorcerers around which rotated the pursuit of silent knowledge.

These five topics were: 1 – The magical passes; 2 – The energetic center in the human body called the center for decisions; 3 – The Recapitulation, the means for enhancing the scope of human awareness; 4 – Dreaming; the bona fide art of breaking the parameters of normal perception; 5 – Inner silence: the stage of human perception in which those sorcerers launched every one of their perceptual attainments.

THE MAGICAL PASSES

The first time Don Juan talked to me at length about magical passes was when he made a derogatory comment about my weight.

"You are way too chubby," he said looking at me from head to toe and shaking his head in disapproval. "You are one step from being fat. Wear and tear is beginning to show in you. Like any other member of your race, you are developing a lump of fat on your neck, like a bull.

It's time that you take seriously one of the sorcerers' greatest findings: the magical passes."

Since he had mentioned magical passes so very lightly before, I didn't even remember at that moment what he had said about them.

"What magical passes are you talking about, don Juan?" I asked, really annoyed, "How can I take them seriously if I have never heard anything about them."

"You are playing possum with me now, aren't you?" he said with a nasty smile. "Not only have I told you a great deal about magical passes, you know a great number of them already. I have been teaching I them to you all along."

He was right in that I was being nasty with him. I had been surprised with a topic that I didn't expect, but it wasn't true that he had taught me any magical passes all along. I

protested vehemently, as if his declarations meant my life or my death.

"Don't be so passionate about defending your wonderful self," he joked. "I didn't mean to offend you." He made a ridiculous gesture of apology with his eyebrows. "What I meant to say is that you do imitate everything that I do, so I have been cashing in on your imitation capacity. I have shown you different magical passes all along, and you have always taken them to be my delight in cracking my joints. I like the way you interpret them: cracking my joints! We are going to keep on referring to them in that manner.

"I have shown you ten different ways of cracking my joints. Each one of them is a magical pass that fits to perfection my body, and yours."

The magical passes don Juan was referring to, as he himself had said, were ways in which I thought he cracked his joints. He used to move his arms, legs, torso and hips in specific ways, I thought, in order to create a maximum stretch of his muscles, bones, and ligaments. The result of these stretching movements, from my point of view, was a succession of cracking sounds which I always thought he was producing for my amazement and amusement, and he indeed had asked me time and time again to imitate him.

In a challenging manner, he had even dared me to memorize the movements and repeat them

at home until I could get my joints to make cracking noises, just like his. I had never succeeded in reproducing the sounds, yet I had definitely but unwittingly learned all the movements.

"Why are they called magical passes?" I asked.

"They are not just called magical passes," he said, "they are magical!" They produce an effect that cannot be accounted for by means of ordinary explanations. These movements are not physical exercises or mere postures of the body; they are real attempts at reaching an optimal state of being. The intent of thousands of sorcerers permeates these movements. Executing them, even in a casual way, makes the mind come to a halt."

"What do you mean that they make the mind come to a halt?"

"Everything that we do in the world," he said, "we recognize and identify by consenting it into lines of similarity."

Don Juan seemed to be struggling to find the way of defining what he was saying. He paused for a long time as if searching for a proper word or a proper arrangement of thought. I remained quiet. I knew so little about the topic that I didn't dare even to think about it.

All I had was my curiosity to know what those mysterious magical passes were.

Don Juan stood up. He seemed to have had enough. We were sitting in the dining room of his house drinking some herb tea that he had made from an aromatic bush in his yard. He excused himself and said that it was time for his nap. Don Juan took short naps all day and all night. His sleeping pattern was established on a mold that called for a maximum of two hours or sleep at a time. When he was extremely tired, he slept six hours in lapses of two hours, with a short period of vigil in between.

We didn't touch upon the subject of the magical passes for a long time. One day, he continued his explanation, out of the blue for me, but not for him, because he seemed to have been aware of our interruption, something which I had totally forgotten.

"For human beings, there are lines of similarity, as I told you," he said, "lines of things which are similar or strung together by purpose.

"For example, if I say to you 'fork', you would immediately bring to yourself the idea of spoon, knife, tablecloth, napkin, plate, cup and saucer, glass of wine, meatball soup, banquet, birthday, fiesta. You can certainly go on naming things strung together by purpose, nearly forever.

"Everything we do is strung like this. The strange part for sorcerers is that they see that all these lines of affinity, all these lines of things strung together by purpose, are associated with

man's idea that things are unchangeable and forever, like the word of God."

"I don't see, don Juan, why you bring the word of God into this elucidation. What does the word of God have to do with what you are trying to explain?"

"Everything! It seems to be that in our minds, the entire universe is like the word of God: absolute and unchanging. This is the way we conduct ourselves; in the depths of our minds, there is a checking device that doesn't permit us to stop to examine that the word of God, as we accept it and believe it to be, pertains to a dead world. A live world, on the other hand, is in constant flux. It moves; it changes; it reverses itself.

"The sorcerers' magical passes are magical because in practicing them, the body realizes that everything, instead being an unchangeable string of affinities, is a current, a flux. And if everything in the universe is a flux, a current, that current can be stopped. A dam can be put on it, and thus halt or deviate its flux."

Dun Juan's words were eliciting a strange reaction in me. I felt strangely threatened, but the threat wasn't actually a threat to my person; it was more a threat to something that was imposed on me. I had the clear feeling for the first time ever that don Juan was deliberately

exacerbating a part that seemed to be me but that really wasn't.

I became so utterly confused after a few moments in the throes of this contradiction that I heard myself speaking without any volition of my own. I heard myself saying. "But, don Juan, are you telling me that every time you crack your joints, or every time I try to imitate you. I am really changing things in me?"

"Ah, something in you that is not really you is angry now." Don Juan retorted, laughing.

I had another moment of intense internal contradiction. Something in me was very angry, and yet it couldn't have been me. Don Juan shook me by the shoulders forcefully. I felt my neck wobbling back and forth under the impact of his grip. The maneuver calmed me down all at once. He made me sit down on a low retaining brick wall. There were always lines of ants crawling on it, and I never really liked to sit on that wall. I would get ants on my clothes immediately. I was always deeply aware of ants crawling on me, but this time, however, the moment I sat down, the ants discontinued their line. I saw them milling around on each side of my body as if they were bewildered, uncertain. I became extremely curious at the possibility that they would detour to my back or to my front. I wanted to see which way they would go. But don

Juan's words took all my attention and I forgot about the ants.

"Don't worry about the ants," don Juan said, reading my thoughts.

"You are at this moment charged with an unusual energy, the product of your internal dilemmas. The ants will find you impenetrable and dangerous, and they will mill around you on either side of your body until your energy becomes normal or until you get up and leave. And now, to answer your question that your mind intended as a nasty retort, I can tell you that it is true that every time we execute a magical pass, we are, indeed, altering the basic structures of our beings. We are putting a dam on a flow that we were taught to take as an inalterable string of things."

In a faltering voice that didn't seem to be mine, I asked don Juan to give me an example of putting a dam on the flow he was talking about. I told him that I wanted to visualize it in my mind.

"In your mind? You had better learn to call things by their name.

"What you call your mind is not your mind. Sorcerers are convinced that our minds are extraneous things that have been put on each one of us. Accept it, without any further explanation at this moment about who put it on us, or how it was put there."

I had another wave of the same threatening sensation as before. I felt it this time more clearly. The wave didn't stem from me, yet it was attached to me. Don Juan was doing something, to me mysteriously positive and terribly negative at the same time. I sensed it as an attempt to cut a thin film that seemed to be glued to me. His eyes were fixed on mine with an unblinking stare.

He moved his eyes away and began to talk without looking at me anymore. "I'll give you an example," he said. "For instance, at my age, I should be prey to high blood pressure. If I went to see a doctor, the doctor, upon seeing me, would assume that I must be an old Indian, plagued with uncertainties, frustrations and bad diet, all of this, naturally, resulting in a most expected and predictable condition of high blood pressure: an acceptable corollary of my age.

"I don't have any problems with high blood pressure, not because I am stronger than the average man or because of my genetic frame, but because my magical passes have made my body break through any patterns of behavior that result in high blood pressure. I can truthfully say that every time I crack my joints, following the execution of a magical pass, I am blocking off the flow of expectations and behavior that ordinarily result in high blood pressure at my age.

"Another example I can give you is the agility of my knees. Haven't you noticed how

much more agile I am than you? When it comes to moving my knees, I'm a kid! With my magical passes, I put a dam on the current of behavior and physicality that makes the knees of people, men and women, stiff with age."

One of the most annoying feelings I had ever experienced was for me the fact that don Juan Matus, although he could have been my grandfather, was infinitely younger than I. In comparison, I was stiff, opinionated, repetitious. I was senile. He, on the other hand, was fresh, inventive, agile, resourceful; in short, he possessed something which, although I was young, I did not: youth. He delighted in telling me repeatedly that youth was not in any way a deterrent to senility.

Following a burst of energy that seemed to explode inside me, I openly admitted my chagrin. "How is it possible, don Juan," I said, "that you could be younger than I?"

"I have vanquished my mind." he said, opening his eyes wide to denote bewilderment. "I don't have a mind to tell me that it is time to be old. I don't honor agreements in which I didn't participate. Remember this: it is not a slogan for sorcerers to say that they do not honor agreements in which they did not participate. To be plagued by old age is one such agreement."

We were silent for a long time. Don Juan seemed to be waiting, I thought, for the effect

that his words might cause in me. What I thought to be my internal psychological unity was further ripped apart by a clearly dual response coming from me. On one level, I repudiated with all my might the nonsense that don Juan was verbalizing; on another level, however, I couldn't fail to notice how accurate his remarks were. Don Juan was old, and yet, he wasn't old at all. He was ages younger than I. He was free from encumbering thoughts and habit patterns. He was roaming at will in incredible worlds. He was free, while I was imprisoned by heavy patterns and habits, by petty and futile considerations about myself, which I felt on that occasion, for the first time ever, weren't even mine.

I finally broke the silence when I had gained a modicum of control over my dual considerations. "How were those magical passes invented, don Juan?" I asked.

"Nobody invented them." he said sternly. "To think that they were invented implies instantly the intervention of the mind, and this is not the case when it comes to those magical passes. Sorcerers of ancient times, through their dreaming practices, discovered that if they moved in a certain way, the flow of their thoughts and actions stopped.

"The magical passes are the result of a state of mindlessness. Or rather yet, the result of

having disconnected the mind. In order to dream, practitioners must exert such a tremendous discipline over themselves that the result is the fleeing of the mind."

"What is this, don Juan, that you are referring to as the fleeing of the mind?"

"The grand trick of those sorcerers of ancient times was to burden their minds with discipline. They found out that if they taxed their minds with attention, especially the kind of attention that sorcerers call dreaming attention, the mind flees, giving to any one of the practitioners involved in this maneuver the total certainty of the mind's foreign origin."

I became genuinely agitated, I wanted to know more, and yet, a strange feeling in me clamored for me to stop. It alluded to dark results and punishment; something like the wrath of God descending on me for tampering with something veiled by God himself.

I made a supreme effort to allow my curiosity to win. "What do you mean?" What – what – what do you mean," I heard myself say, "by taxing the mind?"

"Discipline taxes the mind." he said, "but by discipline, I don't mean harsh routines. Sorcerers understand discipline as the capacity to face with serenity odds that are not included in our expectations. For them, discipline is a volitional act that enables them to intake

anything that comes their way without regrets or expectations. For sorcerers, discipline is an art: the art of facing infinity without flinching, not because they are filled with toughness, but because they are filled with awe. Summing it all up, I would say that discipline is the art of feeling awe. So, through their discipline, sorcerers vanquish their minds: the foreign installation."

Don Juan said that through their dreaming practices, the sorcerers of ancient Mexico discovered that certain movements fostered further silence, and created a peculiar sensation of plenitude and well-being. They became so enthralled with this feeling that they struggled to repeat it in their hours of vigil.

Don Juan explained that at first, they believed it was a mood of well-being that dreaming created, but that when they tried to repeat that mood, they found that it was impossible. Then they realized that in their dreaming, when that feeling of well-being occurred, they were always engaged in movement. Penuriously, they began to piece together the movements they remembered. Their efforts paid off.

They were capable of recreating movements that had seemed to them to be automatic reactions of the body in a state of dreaming. Don Juan said that the result was the magical passes.

Encouraged by their success, they were capable of recreating hundreds of movements, which they performed without ever even attempting to classify them into an understandable scheme. The idea was that in dreaming, the movements happened spontaneously, and that there was a force that guided their effect, without the intervention of their volition. They explained this force as an agglutinating factor that binds our fields of energy together to make us into a coherent unit.

In the realm of practicalities, the magical passes were, for those sorcerers of ancient Mexico, genuine avenues for preparing them for their navigation into the unknown. They established a basic criteria for practicing them, which is the criterion observed today in dealing with Tensegrity. That criterion is called saturation, meaning that they bombarded their bodies with a profusion of magical passes, in order to allow the force that binds us together to guide them for maximum overall effect.

THE CENTER FOR DECISIONS

The second topic of tremendous interest for the sorcerers of ancient Mexico was the center for decisions. Those sorcerers were convinced, by the practical results of their endeavors, that there was a spot on the human body that accounted for decision-making: the “v” spot on the crest of the sternum at the base of the neck. They claimed that it was a center of tremendous subtleness and that it stored a specific type of energy which they were incapable of defining, perhaps because it defied definition. Yet, they were utterly convinced that they could feel the effect of its energy, and its presence. They asserted that this special energy was pushed out of that center very early in the lives of human beings, and that it never returns to it, thus depriving human beings of something perhaps more important than all the energy of the other centers combined.

Shamans have pointed out, over the centuries, the incapacity of human beings to make decisions. They have pointed out that human beings have created gigantic institutions that assumed responsibility for decision-making. Therefore, human beings don't decide for themselves, but let the social order decide for them, and they merely fulfill the decisions already made on their behalf.

The "v" spot at the base of the neck was for them a place of such importance that they rarely touched it, and if they did, the touch was ritualistic and always performed by someone else, with the aid of an object. Don Juan Matus told me that they used highly polished pieces of hard wood or polished bones of animals, or even human beings, and used the round head of the bone so as to have a perfectly round object the size of the hollow spot on the neck. They would press with those bones or pieces of wood to create pressure on the borders of that hollow spot. Don Juan said that those objects were also used, although rarely, for self-application in the form of a massage, or in terms of what we understand nowadays as acupressure.

"How did they come to find out that that hollow spot is the center for decisions," I asked.

"Every center of energy in the body," he replied, "shows a concentration of energy; a sort of vortex of energy, like a funnel that actually seems to rotate counterclockwise, from the perspective of the seer who gazes into it. The strength of a particular center depends on the force of that movement. If it barely, barely moves, the center is exhausted, depleted of energy."

Don Juan explained that there were six enormous vortexes of energy in the human body that could be dealt with, or were accessible to

being manipulated. The first was on the area of the liver and gallbladder; the second on the area of the pancreas and spleen; the third in the area of the kidneys and adrenals; and the fourth on the hollow spot at the base of the neck on the frontal part of the body. This center he depicted as having a special energy, which appears to the eye of the seer as possessing a transparency, something that could be described as resembling water; energy so fluid that it is liquid. He also said that the liquid appearance of this special energy is the mark of a filter-like quality that screens any energy coming to it, and draws from it only the part that is liquid-like. This quality of liquidness is a uniform and consistent feature of this center. A fifth center which was pertinent only to women, was the area of the womb. He said that in some women, there seems to exist a similar liquid energy in the womb, a natural filter that screens out superfluous energy, but that this feature was not present in every womb. And there was a center on top of the head, which was not dealt with at all by the sorcerers of ancient times. Every one of their magical passes had something to do with those five centers, but not with the sixth one on the top of the head.

"Why this discrimination, don Juan?" I asked.

"That sixth center of energy," he said, "does not quite belong to man." We human beings are

under siege, so to speak. It is as if that center has been taken over by an unseen enemy. And the only way to overcome this enemy is by fortifying all the other centers."

"Isn't it a bit paranoiac to feel that we are under siege, don Juan?"

"Well, maybe for you, but certainly not for me. I see energy, and I see that the energy over the center on the top of the head doesn't fluctuate like the energy of the other centers. It has a back and forth movement – quite disgusting, and quite foreign. I also see that in a sorcerer who has been capable of vanquishing the mind, which sorcerers call a foreign installation, the fluctuation of that center has become exactly like the fluctuation of all the others. The rotation of the energy at the center for decisions is the weakest of them all. That's why man can rarely decide anything. Sorcerers see that after they practice certain magical passes, that center becomes active, and they can certainly make decisions to their heart's content, while they couldn't even go to the corner before."

Don Juan was quite emphatic about the fact that those shamans had an aversion that bordered on phobia about touching their own hollow spot at the base of the neck on the crest of the sternum. The only way in which they accepted any interference whatsoever with that spot was through the use of their magical passes, which

were purported to reinforce it by bringing dispersed energy to it, clearing away, in this manner, any hesitation in decision-making borne out of the natural energy dispersion brought about by the wear and tear of everyday life.

The general idea which those sorcerers had was that the human body, viewed by seers, is a concrete and sealed unit of energy fields.

No energy could be injected into this sealed unit, and no energy could escape from it. For the shamans of don Juan's lineage, the feeling of losing energy, which all of us experience at one time or another, was the result of energy being dispersed or being chased away from the five natural centers of energy described before. Energy, those shamans believed, is pushed out of those centers and dispersed toward the outer limits of our being.

When shamans of ancient Mexico referred to the outer limits of our being, they were speaking of human beings as they are perceived by shaman seers, that is to say, when they are perceived as a conglomerate of energy fields resembling a luminous sphere. They considered this sphere of energy to be our true self; true in the sense that it was irreducible for them in terms of energy.

In other words, they were capable of extending the limits of their perception to the point that they were able to perceive energy at

large, as it flows in the universe. Under such conditions, human beings are luminous spheres, and this "vision" is irreducible because it seems that the totality of human potentials to perceive were played by those sorcerers, and perceiving a luminous sphere of pure energy was the end result of such a total play.

Any sense of gaining energy was understood by those sorcerers as the concentration of previously dispersed energy on the abovementioned centers of vitality. They called this maneuver "redistributing energy previously dispersed." In order to accomplish this redistribution, they used the magical passes which were proven, over the millennia, to be most effective. Tensegrity, the modern version of magical passes, accomplishes the same goal: it redeploys energy already dispersed, but without the shamans' ritualistic encumbrances.

THE RECAPITULATION

The third subject of profound interest for the sorcerers of ancient Mexico was the Recapitulation. Those sorcerers believed that, just like the magical passes, it prepared the ground for silent knowledge. The Recapitulation was, for them, the act of reliving past experiences in order to achieve two transcendental goals. The first was an effort to conform with their overall view of the universe and life and awareness, and the other was the extremely pragmatical goal of acquiring perceptual fluidity.

Their overall view of the universe and life and awareness was that there existed an indescribable force which they metaphorically called the Eagle, and which they understood as the force that lends awareness to all living beings, from viruses to men. They believed that the Eagle lends awareness to a newborn being, and that this being enhances that awareness by means of its life experiences until a moment in which the force demands its return. All living beings die, in the understanding of those sorcerers, because they are forced to return the awareness lent to them. This enriched awareness returns to the giver.

Don Juan said that there was no way for our linear mode of thinking to explain such a thing, because there was no explanation for why

awareness was lent, or why it was taken back; it was a fact in the universe, and not all the facts in the universe could be explained in terms of cause and effect, or a purpose which can be determined a priori.

The sorcerers of ancient Mexico believed that to recapitulate meant to give to this force, the Eagle, what it was seeking: our life experiences, but to give them under a degree of control that permitted those sorcerers to separate awareness from life. They claimed that awareness and life are not inextricably intertwined, but that they are joined only circumstantially. They affirmed that the Eagle doesn't want to take our lives; it wants only our life experiences. But lack of discipline in human beings doesn't permit them to separate their life force from the force of their life experiences, and they lose their lives, when it was meant that they would lose only the force of their life experiences. The Recapitulation is the procedure by which sorcerers give the Eagle a substitute for their lives. They give the Eagle their life experiences by recounting them, but they retain their life force.

The perceptual claims of sorcerers, when examined in terms of the linear concepts of our world, make no sense whatsoever. Western man abandoned any attempt at a serious philosophical discourse based on statements made by the shamans of the New World. For instance, the

idea of the Recapitulation seems to us something more congruous with psychoanalysts. Any scholar faced with this might be willing to think of the Recapitulation as a psychological procedure, a sort of self help technique. According to don Juan Matus, man always loses by default. Don Juan believed that there are alternative ways of relating ourselves to the universe, life, awareness, and perception because the way in which we do, at present, is only one of a multiplicity of options.

To recapitulate, for shaman practitioners, means to give to an incomprehensible force – the Eagle – the very thing it seems to be looking for: their life experiences, that is to say, the awareness that they have enhanced through those very life experiences. Don Juan could not explain these phenomena to me in terms of standard logic or in terms of the need to seek explainable causation. He said that all of this was in the realm of practicalities, and that all we could aspire to do was to accomplish the feat without dispensing explanations. He also said that there were thousands of sorcerers who had accomplished the feat of retaining their life force after they had given the Eagle the force of their life experiences. This meant to don Juan that those sorcerers didn't die in the usual sense in which we understand death, but that they transcended it by retaining their life force and

vanishing from the face of the earth, embarked on a definitive journey of perception.

The belief of sorcerers is that when death takes place in this fashion, all of our being is turned into energy, but a special kind of energy that retains the mark of our individuality. He tried to explain this in a metaphorical sense, saying that during the course of our lives, we are composed of quite a number of "single nations." He said that we have the nation of the lungs, the nation of the heart, the nation of the stomach, the nation of the kidneys, etc., and that each of those nations sometimes works independently from the rest, but that at the moment of death, all of them are unified into one single entity. He called that state total freedom, and he said that a human being freed from socialization and the dominion of syntax and transformed into a portion of unified purified energy flies, evaporates, evanesces, whatever, into the unknown, into infinity, transformed into an inorganic being; one that possesses awareness but not an organism.

I asked him if this was immortality. He said that not in any way was this immortality; it was merely the entrance into an evolutionary process, using the only medium for evolution that man has: awareness.

Sorcerers are convinced that man cannot evolve biologically any more; therefore, they

consider man's awareness as the only medium for evolution. To be transformed into an inorganic being is evolution for sorcerers: and for them it means, don Juan said, that a new, indescribable type of awareness is lent to them, an awareness that lasts veritably millions of years, but that someday, it would have to be returned to the giver: the Eagle.

I asked Don Juan if the inorganic beings that, according to sorcerers, populate the twin world of ours, were evolved beings that had been human once. He said that they were intrinsically inorganic beings the same way that we were intrinsically organic ones; they were beings whose consciousness could evolve just like ours, and that it doubtlessly did, but that he had no firsthand knowledge of how this happened.

What he did know, however, was that a human being whose awareness had evolved was an inorganic being of a special kind.

Don Juan gave me a series of descriptions of this evolution, which I always took to be poetic metaphors. I singled out the one that pleased me the most, which was total freedom. I fancied a human being that enters into that state to be the most courageous, the most imaginative being possible. Don Juan said that I was not fancying anything at all – that to enter into that state, a human being must appeal to his or her sublime

side, which, he said, human beings have, but it never occurred to them to use it.

Don Juan stated that the second aspect of the Recapitulation was the acquisition of fluidity. He told me that the sorcerers' rationale behind this had to do with one of the most elusive subjects of sorcery: the assemblage point, a point of intense luminosity the size of a tennis ball, perceivable to sorcerers who are capable of seeing energy directly as it flows in the universe. As previously stated, a human being, as viewed by the eye of the seer, appears as a ball of luminosity; in the back of this ball of luminosity, seers find a point of more intense brilliance yet.

They call it the assemblage point, because they see that zillions of energy fields in the form of filaments of light from the universe at large converge on that point and go through it. This confluence of filaments gives the assemblage point its brilliancy.

The assemblage point makes it possible for a human being to perceive energy by turning it into sensorial data, which the assemblage point interprets as the world of everyday life; this interpretation is made in terms of human socialization and human potentials.

Don Juan said that to recapitulate was to relive every, or nearly every experience that one had, and that in doing so, the assemblage point was displaced, ever to slightly, or a great deal,

propelled by the force of memory to adapt the position it had when the event being recapitulated took place. This act of going back and forth from previous positions to the one which is current gives the practitioner the necessary fluidity to withstand unusual odds in their journey into infinity; odds which are not in any way part of a practitioner's habitual cognition.

The Recapitulation as a formal procedure was done in ancient times by recollecting every person the practitioners knew and every experience in which they took part. Don Juan suggested that I make written list of all the persons that I had met in my life, as a mnemonic device. Once I had written that list, he proceeded to tell me how to use it. He guided me to take the first person on the list, which went back from the present to the past, and set up, in my memory, my last interaction with that person. He called this act arranging the event to be recapitulated. A detailed recollection of minutiae was requested by don Juan as the proper means to hone one's capacity to remember. He said that this recollection entailed getting all the pertinent physical details, such as the surroundings where the event being recollected took place.

Once the event was arranged, he stated that one should enter into the locale itself, as one were actually going into it, paying special

attention to any relevant physical configuration. If, for instance, the interaction took place in an office, one must remember the floor, the doors, the walls, the pictures, the windows, the desks, the objects on the desks – everything that one may have gathered in a glance and forgotten all about.

Don Juan assured me that the Recapitulation as a formal procedure must begin by the recounting of events that had just taken place.

In this fashion, the primacy of the experience look precedence; something that just happened is something one can remember with great accuracy. He claimed that one is capable of storing detailed information one is not aware of, and that that detail is for the Eagle.

The actual Recapitulation of the event requires that one breathe deeply, fanning the head, so to speak, from right to left, then from left to right again, as many times as needed, while remembering all the details accessible. Don Juan said that sorcerers talk about this act as breathing in all of one's feelings spent in the event being recollected, and expelling all the unwanted moods and feelings that were left with us.

In the act of inhaling and exhaling, sorcerers believe, lies the mystery of the Recapitulation: since breathing is a life-sustaining

function, sorcerers believe that one could also deliver this facsimile of one's life experience to the force that lends us consciousness. When I pressed him for a rational explanation, his position was that things like the Recapitulation could only be experienced, not explained. In the act of doing, sorcerers find liberation. To explain it is to dissipate the energy in fruitless efforts. His invitation was congruous with everything related to his knowledge, the invitation to take action.

The list with the names of people is used then, as a mnemonic device which propels memory into an inconceivable journey. The sorcerers' logic is that remembering events that just took place prepares the ground for remembering events more distant in time with the same clarity and immediacy. Sorcerers consider recollection of this sort as reliving experiences already lived and drawing from this recollection an extraordinary force, an extraordinary impetus that stirs energy dispersed from our centers of action, and returns it to them, energy which is accumulated on the periphery of the luminous spheres of energy that we are. They refer to this redeployment of energy that the Recapitulation causes as gaining fluidity after giving the Eagle what it is looking for.

On a more mundane level, the Recapitulation gives one the capacity to examine the repetition in one's life. Recapitulating

convinces one, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that one is at the mercy of forces which ultimately make no sense, although at first sight they seem perfectly reasonable. Sorcerers affirm that if any behavioral change is going to be accomplished, it has to be done through the Recapitulation as the only vehicle that can enhance awareness by liberating one from the unvoiced demands of socialization, something so automatic that it cannot be examined; it can only be viewed. This is the reason why sorcerers call the Recapitulation a view from the bridge. It takes a long time to exhaust the list of people, because it is intimately related to events sometimes by sheer osmosis: persons are related in impersonal events in which no people were involved, but which happened around the time that one knew the person being recapitulated. In such cases, the event should be recollected by itself.

What sorcerers seek avidly in the Recapitulation is the memory of interaction, because in interaction, they discover the deep effects of socialization, which they try to overcome by any means available.

DREAMING

The fourth topic on the priority list of the sorcerers of ancient Mexico was dreaming, the art of breaking the parameters of normal perception. For those sorcerers and the members of their modern lineages, to travel in the unknown was indeed the driving force of sorcery.

Don Juan demonstrated to me countless times that everything he and his companions did was funneled into that drive. The two arts on which they based their journeys were two tremendously sophisticated lines or activity: the art of dreaming and the art of stalking.

The art of stalking was for don Juan the other side of the coin, in relation in the art of dreaming. To make the two arts explicit to me, he first presented what he said was the cornerstone of sorcery: the possibility of perceiving energy directly, as it flows in the universe.

He explained that what human beings ordinarily take for perceiving is rather the act of interpreting sensory data. He maintained that from the moment of birth, everything around us supplies us with a possibility of interpretation. This possibility turns in time into a full system by means of which we conduct all of our perceptual transactions in the world. He was convinced that not for an instant do we have the

opportunity to conceive the possibility of perceiving the flow of energy directly. For don Juan, and other sorcerers like him, what transforms an average man into a sorcerer is the act of canceling out the effect of our interpretation system and perceiving energy directly.

Don Juan explained that human beings appear as luminous spheres when they are perceived directly as energy. He referred to seeing energy directly as the articulation point of sorcery. He assured me that everything sorcerers do rotates around it, or originates from it, and that the two main currents of activity stemming from seeing energy directly are the art of dreaming and the art of stalking.

Another issue that he elucidated at length was the assemblage point. He said that when sorcerers are capable of seeing human beings as luminous spheres, they also see the epicenter of sorcery: a point the size of a tennis ball, more intensely luminous than the rest of the luminous sphere. Don Juan called it the assemblage point, and said that it is precisely there, on that point, that perception is assembled.

"The art of dreaming," he said to me once, "consists of purposely displacing the assemblage point from its habitual position. The art of stalking consists in volitionally making it stay

fixed on the new position to which it has been displaced."

According to don Juan's explanation, these two arts are cushioned in a philosophical framework called the warriors' way, or the sorcerers' path: a set of premises by means of which sorcerers live and act in the world. To follow the premises of the warriors' way was for don Juan and his companions the crowning achievement of sorcery. Don Juan believed that only by strictly adhering to the warriors' way can sorcerers find the energy and determination for journeying in the unknown.

Don Juan stressed, in every way he was able, the value of a pragmatic attitude on the part of the practitioners for dreaming and stalking. He defined a pragmatic attitude as the capacity of absorbing any contingency that may appear along the warriors' way. He himself was, to me, the living example of such an attitude. There wasn't any uncertainty or liability that his mere presence would not dispel.

He pointed out that in order to arrive at this desirable pragmatic attitude, a practitioner has to have a superbly pliable, agile, strong body. He said that for sorcerers, the physical body is the only entity that makes any sense to them, and that there is no such thing as a dualism between body and mind. Sorcerers believe that the physical body involves both the body and the

mind as we know them. He told me that in order to counterbalance the physical body as a holistic unit, sorcerers consider another configuration of energy: the energy body, also known as the other, the double, the dreaming body.

Don Juan described the art of dreaming as the possibility to use normal dreams as a bona fide entrance for human awareness into other realms of perceiving. He claimed that ordinary dreams could be used as a hatch that leads into other regions of energy different than the energy of the world of everyday life, and yet utterly similar to it at a basic core. He said that the result of such an entrance was the perception of veritable worlds where one can live or die, just like the one in which we live, but worlds which are astoundingly different than ours, and yet, utterly similar. Pressed for a linear explanation of this seeming contradiction, don Juan Matus reiterated his standard position: that the answers to all those questions were in the practice, not in the intellectual inquiry. In order to talk about such possibilities, one has to use the syntax of language, whatever language one speaks, and that syntax, by the force of usage, limits the possibilities of expression. The syntax of any language refers only to perceptual possibilities found in the world in which we live.

Don Juan made a significant differentiation in Spanish, between two verbs; one was to

dream, *soñar*, and the other was *ensoñar*, which is to dream the way sorcerers dream. In English, there is no clear distinction between these two states: the normal dreaming, *sueño*, and the more complex state that sorcerers call *ensueño*. Don Juan also described dreaming as a state of profound meditation in which a shift of perception plays a key role.

Don Juan explained that the art of dreaming originated in a very casual observation that the sorcerers of ancient Mexico made when they saw people that were asleep. They noticed that during sleep the assemblage point is displaced in a very natural, easy way from its habitual position, and it moves anywhere along the periphery of the luminous sphere, or to any place in the interior of it. Correlating their seeing with the reports of the people that had been asleep, they realized that the greater the observed displacement of the assemblage point, the more astounding the reports of things and scenes experienced in dreams.

Those sorcerers avidly looked for opportunities to displace their own assemblage points, and they ended up using psychotropic plants to accomplish this. Soon, they realized that the displacement brought about by using these plants was erratic, forced, and out of control. Don Juan said that in the midst of this failure, they discovered one thing of great value.

The sorcerers of ancient times called it dreaming attention, or the capacity that practitioners acquire to maintain their awareness unwaveringly on the items of their dreams.

The end result of those sorcerers' new endeavors was the art of dreaming as it stands today. Through discipline, they succeeded in developing their dreaming attention to an extraordinary degree. They were able to focus it on any element of their dreams, and found out, in this fashion, that there were two kinds of dreams. One was the dreams that we are all familiar with, in which phantasmagorical elements come into play, something which we could categorize as the product of our mentality, our psyche; perhaps something that has to do with our neurological makeup. The other kind of dreams they called energy-generating dreams. Don Juan said that those sorcerers of ancient times found themselves in dreams that were not dreams, but actual visitations made in a dream-like state to bona fide places other than this world – real places, just like the world in which we live: places where the objects of the dream generated energy, just like trees, or animals, or even rocks generate energy in our daily world.

Their visions of such places, were, however, too fleeting, too temporary, to be of any value to them. They attributed this flaw to the fact that their assemblage points could not be held, for

any considerable time, fixed at the position to which they had been displaced. Their attempts to remedy the situation resulted in the other high art of sorcery: the art of stalking, or the feat of holding the assemblage point fixed at the position to which it had been displaced. This fixation allowed them the opportunity to witness that world in its full extent. Don Juan said that some of those sorcerers never returned from their journeys. In other words, they opted for staying there, wherever "there" was.

Don Juan said that in mapping human beings as luminous spheres, those sorcerers at ancient times discovered six hundred spots in the total luminous sphere which give, as a result, if the assemblage point happened to be fixed at any of them, the entrance into a total new world. His answer to my unavoidable question, "But where are those worlds" was "in the position of the assemblage point." Nothing could be truer than that statement, and yet, it doesn't make any sense whatsoever to us.

However, if it is examined in the light of the sorcerers' capacity to see energy as it flows in the universe, it makes sense for them. Their position is that the assemblage point at its habitual location receives an inflow of energy fields from the universe at large in the form of luminous energy filaments. Consistently, the same filaments, numbering in the billions, go through

the assemblage point, giving as a result the world that we know. If the assemblage point is displaced to another position, another set of energy filaments goes through. Sorcerers feel that this new set of energy filaments cannot possibly give a view of the same world; that by definition that world has to be different from the world of everyday life. Since the assemblage point is not only the center where perception is assembled, but the center where interpretation of sensory data is accomplished, sorcerers feel that it will interpret the new influx of energy fields in very much the same terms in which it interprets the world of everyday life. The result of this new interpretation is the view of a world which is strangely similar to ours, and yet intrinsically different. Don Juan said that it is only the interpretation of the assemblage point which accounts for the sense of similarity, and that energetically, other worlds are as different from ours as they could possibly be.

In order to express this wondrous quality of the assemblage point and the possibilities of perception brought about by dreaming, a new syntax is needed; or perhaps the same syntax of our language could cover it if this experience made available to any one of us, and not merely to shaman initiates.

Another thing which was of tremendous interest to me, but which bewildered me to no

end, was don Juan's statement that there was really no procedure to speak of that would teach anyone how to dream; that more than anything else, dreaming was a penurious effort on the part of the practitioners to put themselves in contact with the indescribable perennial force that sorcerers call intent. Once this link was established, dreaming also mysteriously became established. Don Juan asserted that this linkage could be accomplished following any pattern that implied discipline.

However, what was of supreme importance for don Juan in order to accomplish the feat of dreaming was to follow the warriors' path, or the philosophical construct which sorcerers use to buttress their actions, wherever they happen to be, in this world, or in any other world besides this one. Following the warriors' path brought about a homogeneity of results in the absence of any precise patterning. The devices that sorcerers of ancient times used to aid the displacement of the assemblage point were the magical passes, which purported to give them the stability necessary to call forth dreaming attention, without which there is no possibility of dreaming in the fashion of the sorcerers of ancient Mexico. Without the aid of dreaming attention, practitioners could aspire at best, to have lucid dreams about phantasmagorical worlds, or even perhaps views of worlds that generate energy, but

which made no sense whatsoever in the absence of an all-inclusive rationale that would properly categorize them.

INNER SILENCE

The fifth topic, which is the culmination of the other four, and which was most avidly sought by the sorcerers of ancient Mexico, is inner silence. Inner silence was defined by don Juan as a natural state of human perception in which thoughts are blocked off and all of man's faculties function from a level of awareness which doesn't require the functioning of our daily cognitive system.

Don Juan associated inner silence with darkness because human perception, deprived of its habitual companion the internal dialogue – that is to say, a silent verbal rendition of cognitive processes – falls into something that resembles a dark pit. The body functions as usual, but awareness becomes sharper. Decisions are instantaneous, and they seem to stem from a special sort of knowledge which is deprived of thought-verbalizations.

The shamans of ancient Mexico, who discovered and used the magical passes that are the core of Tensegrity, believed that human perception functioning in a condition of inner silence is capable of reaching indescribable levels. They even maintained that some of those levels of perception pertained to other worlds, which they believed to coexist with our own: worlds that are as inclusive as the one in which we live;

worlds in which we could live or die, but that are inexplicable in terms of the linear paradigms that the habitual state of human perception employs for explaining the universe.

Inner silence, in the understanding of the sorcerers of don Juan's lineage, is the matrix for a gigantic step of evolution; the sorcerers of ancient Mexico called this gigantic step of evolution silent knowledge.

Silent knowledge is a state of human awareness where knowing is automatic and instantaneous. Knowledge in this state is not the product of cerebral cogitations or logical inductions and deductions, or of generalizations based on similarities and dissimilarities. In silent knowledge, there is nothing a priori, nothing that could constitute a body of knowledge. For silent knowledge, everything is imminently now. Complex pieces of information can be grasped without any preliminaries.

Don Juan believed that silent knowledge was insinuated to early man, but that early man was not really the possessor of silent knowledge. He said that such an insinuation was infinitely stronger than what man experiences nowadays, where the bulk of knowledge is the product of rote learning. He believed that although we have lost the insinuation, the avenue that leads to silent knowledge will always be open to man, and that it stems from the matrix of inner silence.

The attainment of inner silence is the prerequisite for all of the things that we have delineated in this elucidation. Don Juan taught that inner silence must be gained by a consistent pressure of discipline. He said that it has to be accrued, or that it has to be stored, bit by bit, second by second. In other words, one has to force oneself to be silent, if it is only for a few seconds. Don Juan claimed that if one is persistent, persistence overcomes habit, and thus, one arrives at a threshold of accrued seconds or minutes, a threshold which varies from person to person. If, for instance, the threshold of inner silence is for any given individual, ten minutes, once this mark is reached, inner silence happens by itself, by its own accord, so to speak.

There is no possible way of knowing what our individual threshold might be. The only way to find out is by trying. This is for instance, what happened to me. Following don Juan's suggestion, I persisted in forcing myself to remain silent, and one day, while walking at UCLA from the anthropology department to the cafeteria, I reached my mysterious threshold. I knew I had reached it, because in one instant, I experienced something don Juan had described at length to me: he had called it stopping the world. In one instant, the world stopped being what it was, and for the first time in my life, I became conscious that I was seeing energy as it flows in

the universe. I had to sit down on some brick steps. I knew that wherever I was sitting, there were some brick steps, but I knew it only intellectually, through memory, experientially. I was resting on energy, I was myself energy, and so was everything around me.

I realized then something which became the horror of my day, something that no one could explain to me except don Juan; I became conscious that although I was seeing it for the first time in my life, I had been seeing energy as it flows in the universe all my life, but I had not been conscious of it. To see energy as it flows in the universe was not the novelty. The novelty was the query that arose with such fury that it made me surface back into the world of everyday life. "What has been keeping me from realizing that I have seen energy as it flows in the universe all my life?" I asked myself.

Don Juan explained it to me, making a distinction between general awareness and being deliberately conscious of something. He said that our human condition is to have this deep awareness, but that all the instances of this deep awareness are not at the level of being deliberately conscious of them. He said that inner silence had bridged the gap, as was its function, and had allowed me to become conscious of things I had only been aware of in a general sense.

THE WESTWOOD SERIES

The aim of this elucidation has been to present what don Juan Matus called the five concerns of the sorcerers of ancient Mexico. He presented to his disciples these five concerns: the magical passes, the center for decisions, the Recapitulation, dreaming, and inner silence in the order in which I have explained them. He said that this sequence was an arrangement made by those ancient sorcerers patterning themselves on the understanding that they had of the world around them.

Don Juan explained that one of the astounding findings of those sorcerers was the existence of an agglutinating force that binds energy fields together into concrete, functional units. He said that those sorcerers described this force as a vibration, or a vibratory condition that permeated groups of energy fields and glued them together by saturating them. He stated that the magical passes fulfilled the function of this vibratory condition, and he aimed to saturate his disciples with them, following the same pattern used by the sorcerers of ancient times.

Don Juan said that when those sorcerers put together this shamanistic group of five concerns, they copied the patterning of energy that was revealed to them when they were capable of seeing energy as it flows in the universe. The

binding force was the magical passes, and the magical passes were what permeated through the four remaining units and grouped them together into a functional unit: five energy fields glued together by one of them.

In the times of the sorcerers of ancient Mexico, the same magical passes, which were taught only to shaman initiates, and which saturated the other four units, are the same as the magical passes of Tensegrity. In a modern setting, these magical passes of Tensegrity can be used by anyone, and still agglutinate those four energy fields into a concrete and functional unit.

The group of magical passes that fulfill the function of agglutinating the other four units has been called The Westwood Series.

The Westwood Series is divided into four sections. The first section, and the most important, comprises magical passes that expedite decision-making. The second in order of importance is the one related to the Recapitulation. The third is related to dreaming, and the fourth is constituted of magical passes directly connected to the preparation for inner silence.

The Westwood Series will be emphasized in all the workshops given in the present year, here in the United States and abroad.

Magical Passes for Reinforcing the Decision-Making System

The goal of this group of magical passes is to activate the hollow spot in the form of a "V" at the base of the neck on the crest of the sternum with a special kind of energy, which shamans or ancient Mexico believed accounts for decision-making.

1. Bringing Energy to the "V" Spot with a Back and Forth Motion of the Arms

In this magical pass, the arms shoot out to the front at a forty-five degree angle with an exhalation. Then they are retrieved with an inhalation, with the shoulders raised high, in order to maintain the same degree of inclination. In the second facet of this movement, the arms are extended downward with an inhalation, and pulled back with an exhalation.

2. Bringing Energy to the "V" Spot with a Circular Motion of the Arms

Energy is brought to the center of decision by two circles drawn with the hands and arms, which are kept at the same forty-five degree inclination. Full circles are drawn by moving the hands outward laterally, and the movements consist of two facets. In the first, air is exhaled as

the circles are drawn, and air is inhaled as the arms retrieve backwards.

In the second facet, air is inhaled as the hands and arms draw the circles and exhaled as the arms retrieve.

3. Bringing Energy to the Decision-Making Center with a Back and Forth Motion with the Palms Turned Upwards

This movement is like the first one, and it is executed in exactly the same fashion, except that it is done with the palms of the hands turned upwards. The inhalations and exhalations are also exactly as in the first movement: air is exhaled as the hands and arms move forward at a forty-five degree level of inclination, and it is inhaled as the arms move backwards. Then air is inhaled as the hands and arms move downward and exhaled as the hands and arms retrieve.

4. Bringing Energy to the Decision-Making Center in a Circular Motion of the Arms with the Palms Turned Upwards

Again, this magical pass is exactly like the second, with the same two facets of inhalation and exhalation, but the two circles are drawn by the hands and arms with the palms of the hands turned upward. In the first facet, air is exhaled as the hands and arms move, and inhaled as the arms retrieve. In the second facet, air is inhaled as

the hands and arms move, and exhaled as the arms move back towards the shoulders.

5. Bringing Energy to the "V" Spot from the Midsection of the Body

In this magical pass, the arms are bent at the elbows and kept high at the same line of the shoulders. The hands are held in a fist without touching. The fists are turned slightly upwards to get a better leverage to the arms, which move in a titter-totter fashion from right to left and left to right. The motion is not accomplished by moving the shoulders but by moving the midsection to the right and to the left and the right again, and so on. In order to stir up the energy that will go in the center of decisions for a count of twenty times.

6. Bringing Energy to the "V" Spot from the Area of the Shoulder Blades

The arms are bent, as in the previous movement, and they are heavily drawn towards the front. The right fist crosses over the left one.

The bent elbows are pushed forward, extending the shoulder blades, one at a time, to the maximum. Energy is purported to be stirred at that level and transferred to the base of the neck at the front of the body.

7. Stirring Energy Around the "V" Spot with a Bent Wrist

Energy is stirred around the "V" spot with a gentle movement of each hand. Then it is projected out with a series of forceful blows delivered by the extended arms, one at a time, with the hands bent inward at the wrist.

8. Transferring Energy from the Solar Plexus to the "V" Spot

Energy is stirred twice around the solar plexus area with a circular motion of the each hand with the palm turned upwards, and it is projected out with the other arm, the hand striking edgewise.

9. Bringing Energy to the "V" Spot from the Knees

This pass consists of a series of singular movements, the first of which stirs energy around the center of decisions by striking it as if holding a whip that lashes at it with each hand. The whip moves twice around the head before it strikes out. Then, a deep inhalation is taken, and an exhalation follows by sliding the hands and arms downward until they hit the top of the knees. A deep inhalation is taken there, and the arms are raised with the left arm in the lead; they go over the head to the back of the neck. The breath is

held as the top of the trunk moves three times from right to left and left to right. The air is exhaled then, as the arms and hands move back downward to the top of the knees.

A deep inhalation is taken, and then the air is exhaled as the arms are crossed at the wrists and raised to the level of the "V" spot. The left arm is closer to the body. This inhalation and exhalation is repeated two more times. The sorcerers who discovered this pass used the exhalations to ensure this transfer of energy.

The next group of three magical passes purports to transfer energy, which belongs only to the center of decisions, from the frontal edge of the luminous sphere, where it has been accumulated over the years, to the back, and then from the back of the luminous sphere to the front. This transferred energy is believed to go through the "V" spot, which acts as a filter, utilizing only the energy that is proper to it and discarding the rest.

It is of interest to note here that, because of this selective process of the "V" spot, it is essential to perform this series of passes as many times as possible.

10. Energy Going Through the "V" Spot from the Front to the Back and from the Back to the Front with Two Blows

This magical pass begins with a deep inhalation; then the air is exhaled slowly as the left arm strikes out at the level of the solar plexus with the palm of the hand turned upward. Energy is grabbed there with a quick clasp of the hand. The hand moves back as if to strike with a backhand blow. The exhalation ends as the hand opens, releasing the clasped energy.

A deep inhalation is taken. The energy is tapped ten times with the palm of the open hand as the exhalation slowly begins. Then the energy is clasped before the arm moves to the front and ends up in front of the "V" spot, in a punch-like movement. The hand opens, releasing the energy. The arm moves backward and then over the head and strikes the energy with the palm as if the energy were a bubble that breaks with the force of the blow, right in front of the decision-making center; the exhalation ends there.

The same movement is repeated with the right arm.

11. Transferring Energy from the Front to the Back and from the Back to the Front with a Hook of the Arm

This magical pass begins also with a deep inhalation. Then the air is slowly exhaled as the left arm moves forward with the palm of the hand turned upward. Energy is quickly grasped. The hand, now in a fist, rotates until the back of

the hand is upward and strikes over the shoulder to the back. The hand opens to release the trapped energy and the exhalation ends.

A deep inhalation is taken. Then, a slow exhalation begins as the hand, bent downward, scoops the energy three times, as if to roll it into a ball. The ball is tossed upward, and quickly grabbed with the hand bent at the wrist like a hook. The arm moves to the front to the right shoulder and strikes forward as if holding the ball of energy on the bent wrist, between the hand and the forearm. The hand then opens to release the trapped ball of energy, and the arm moves back and over the head and strikes it with the palm, with great force, in order to break the ball of energy right in front of the decision making center. The exhalation ends as the whole body shakes with the force of the strike.

The same movement is repeated with the other arm.

12. Transferring Energy from the Front to the Back and the Back to the Front with Three Blows

This magical pass also begins with a deep inhalation. A slow exhalation follows as the left arm strikes forward with the open hand, palm turned upwards. Energy is quickly clasped, and the arm retrieves as if to deliver an elbow blow to the back. Then it moves laterally to the right and delivers a side punch. The arm is moved to the

left side and to the back, delivering the third blow as if with the back hand. The exhalation ends as the hand opens and releases the trapped energy.

A deep inhalation is taken. A slow exhalation follows as the hand with a bent wrist scoops the energy three times. This energy is grabbed with a blow-like grasp. The arm moves to the front at the level of the decision-making center in a swing-like punch. It draws a half circle in front of the body and moves back to come over the shoulder and deliver a back-fist blow right at the level of the center for decisions. The exhalation ends as the left hand moves to the back over the shoulders and the head to strike the released energy with an open palm.

Repeat the same movement with the other arm.

Magical Passes for Aiding the Recapitulation

The recapitulation is intimately related to breathing. Sorcerers affirm that breath, being a magical, life-sustaining function, also helps to expedite the Recapitulation. The core of the magical passes that aid the recapitulation is breath.

The recapitulation also affects the energy body because it calls all the forces available. The energy body is essential for the recapitulation

1. Forging the Trunk of the Energy Body

The trunk of the energy body is forged with three strikes delivered with the palms of the hands. The first strike defines the shoulders of the energy body. The hands are held at the level of the ears with the palms facing outward, and from that position they strike forward at the level of the shoulders, as if they were striking the shoulders of a well developed body. The hands move then back to their original position around the ears, with the palms facing outward, and strike the mid-trunk of that imaginary body at the level of the chest. The second strike is not as wide as the first one, and the third strike is much narrower, because it purports to strike the waistline of a triangular shaped trunk.

2. Slapping the Energy Body

This magical pass is purported to define the arms and forearms, especially the hands, of the energy body. The left and the right hands come down from above the head. The palm of each hand bears down, creating a current of energy that defines each arm, forearm, and hand of the energy body. The left arm hits across the body to strike the left arm of the energy body and then the right arm does the same: it hits across the body to strike the right arm of the energy body.

3. Spreading the Energy Body Laterally

This magical pass delineates the width of the energy body as a conglomerate of energy fields. The shamans that lived in Mexico in ancient times asserted that the energy body in its natural form was a bit looser than the physical body "seen" as a luminous sphere, or a conglomerate of energy fields. While the physical body as a luminous sphere has super-defined boundaries, the energy body lacks that consistency. "Spreading the Energy Body Laterally" is purported to give it defined boundaries.

4. Establishing the Core of the Energy Body

The sorcerers of don Juan's lineage maintained that the human body "seen" as a conglomerate of energy fields does have not only super-defined boundaries, but a core of compact

luminosity, which is known by sorcerers as "the band of man," or the energy fields with which man is most familiar. The idea was that within the luminous sphere, which is also the totality of man, there are areas of energy unknown to our familiar level of awareness. Those are the energy fields that are distant from this "band of man."

To execute this magical pass the forearms are held in a perfectly vertical position at the level of the chest, with the elbows kept in close to the body, at the width of the trunk. The wrists are snapped back gently, and then forward with great force, without moving the forearms.

5. Forging the Heels and the Calves of the Energy Body

The left foot is held in front of the body with the heel raised to mid-calf. The heel is turned out to a position perpendicular to the other leg. Then the left heel strikes to the right as if a kick with the heel were being delivered.

The same movement is executed with the right heel.

6. Forging the Knees of the Energy Body

In this magical pass, the total weight of the body is placed on one foot. This pass begins with the bent knee raised to the level of the hips, if possible, or even higher. Three swings are

executed, moving the knee as if drawing an inward circle.

The same movement is repeated with the right leg, and then it is repeated again with each leg, but this time the knee draws an outward circle. The supporting leg stands with the knee slightly bent forward.

7. Forging the Thighs of the Energy Body

The body bends slightly at the knees as the hands go down the thighs. The hands stop on top of the kneecaps, and then they are pulled back on the thighs with an inhalation, as if they were dragging the energy. There is a slight quality of a claw to each hand.

The movement is repeated, exhaling as the knees bend, and the hands go down to the top of the kneecap, inhaling as they are pulled back.

8. Stirring Up the Personal History by Making it Flexible

This magical pass stretches the hamstring and relaxes it by bringing each leg, one at a time, bent at the knee, to strike the buttocks with a gentle tap of the heel. The left heel strikes the left buttock, the right heel strikes the right.

9. Stirring Up the Personal History with the Heel to the Ground by Tapping it Twenty Times

The right leg is set with the foot aligned with the shoulders. The left foot is placed as far as possible in front of the body as the body almost sits on the right leg. The tension and contraction of the right leg, are maximum. The left leg kicks the ground twenty times with the heel.

The same movement is executed with the other leg.

10. Stirring Up the Personal History with the Heel to the Ground by Holding it for a Count of Twenty

The same movement is executed in this pass, but instead of tapping with the heel, the body is kept at an even tension by holding that stretch for a count of twenty.

The same Movement is executed with the other leg.

The following four magical passes are so intimately joined to breathing that they have to be done sparingly – once a day.

11. The Recapitulation Wings

This magical pass begins with a deep inhalation as both forearms are raised to the level of the shoulders, with the hands at the level of the ears. The forearms are kept vertical and equidistant from each other. An exhalation

follows as the forearms are pulled back as far as possible without slanting them in any direction. A deep inhalation follows, and the left arm draws a semi-circle that starts at the level of the shoulder and goes forward as far as the arm can be extended and then laterally, drawing a semi-circle to the back as far as it can be extended.

The arm makes a curve at the end of this extension and goes back to the front, and then to its initial resting position by the side of the body.

The same movement is repeated by the other arm. Both arms draw this wing-like semi-circle, within the duration of a long exhalation.

This movement ends with a deep abdominal breath.

12. The Window of Recapitulation

The first part of this magical pass is exactly like the preceding one; a deep breath is taken with the hands raised to the ear level. The forearms maintain a perfect verticality. This is followed by a long exhalation as the arms are pulled backwards. A deep inhalation is taken as the elbows are raised at the level of the eyes, and the arms make an opening in front of the eyes by overlapping the hands, with the wrists bent and the fingers pointing upwards. The hands create in this fashion an opening in front of the eyes that looks like a small window, through which, sorcerers affirm, a practitioner can peer into

infinity. A deep exhalation follows as the arms are extended laterally and the hands are straightened out and kept at the same level of the elbows.

In this magical pass, the window of recapitulation is made holding the left arm closer to the body and the right arm is placed in front of the left.

13. The Five Deep Breaths

The beginning of this magical pass is exactly like the other two. At the second inhalation, the arms go down and cross at the level of the knees, as the practitioner adopts a semi-squat position. The hands grab the part underneath the knees. The index and middle finger are placed against the tendon at the back of the knee and the thumb is wrapped around the inner part of the knee. The exhalation ends then, and a deep inhalation is taken, pressing the tendon.

Sorcerers maintain that this is the only position in which a practitioner can take deep breaths that fill the top as well as the lower part of the lungs by pushing the diaphragm downwards. Five breaths are taken in this fashion.

14. Drawing Energy from our Fringe of Awareness

The belief of sorcerers is that the only glow of awareness left in us is at the bottom of the luminous sphere that we are, a fringe that extends in a circle and reaches the level of the toes. The first part of this magical pass, as it is with this series of four, is the same as the other three. At the second inhalation, the arms go down and the arms wrap around the inside of the calves as the practitioner adopts a squatting position. The backs of the hands rest on top of the toes, and in this fashion, three deep inhalations and three deep exhalations are taken.

After the last exhalation, the body straightens as a deep inhalation is taken to finish the magical pass.

Magical Passes that Aid Dreaming

Dreaming has to do exclusively with the displacement of the assemblage point. The magical passes that the sorcerers of ancient Mexico used to aid their dreaming are purported to displace the assemblage point by hurling it outward.

1. Getting the Assemblage Point Loose with a Movement that Places the Outer Edge of the Hand in Front of the Face

The left arm moves in front of the face in an upward thrust.

The palm is turned until the outer edge of the hand is facing inward.

The fingers are held together.

This magical pass is executed by each arm in succession for as many times as the practitioner desires. Also, the knees are kept bent for greater stability and thrusting force.

2. Forcing the Assemblage Point to Drop Down

The body is kept in a totally vertical position. The knees are straight, and the hamstrings as tight as possible, the left arm is placed at the back, a few inches away from the body, the palm facing downward with a pronounced bend of the wrist, and the fingers pointing backward. The right arm is placed in

front in the same position, palm facing downward, with a pronounced bend of the wrist, the fingers pointing forward.

The head turns in the direction of the arm that is kept at the back.

The same movement is repeated with the other arm.

3. Enticing the Assemblage Point to Drop by Drawing Energy from the Adrenals and Transferring it to the Front

This magical pass starts by placing the left arm behind the body with the hand held like a claw at the kidney level. The fingers are held tightly together as the hand drags across the kidney area from right to left.

Then the right arm executes the same movement, while the left arm, with the fingers straight, smears the energy from the kidney area across the stomach area, from right to left. This magical pass is repeated with each arm in succession as many times as the practitioner desires. The knees are kept bent for greater stability and force.

4. Playing Out the "A" and "B" Types of Energy

The sorcerers believe that everything in the universe is composed of dual forces, and that we are subjected to that duality in every aspect of our lives. At the level of energy, they believe that

there are two forces at play. Modern sorcerers call them the "A" and "B" forces, or the 1 and 2 forces, or the left and right. Don Juan Matus called it, when he taught this to his disciples, the "A" and "B" forces. He said that the "A" force is what is employed ordinarily in our daily affairs, and he represented it by a straight vertical line. The "B" force, he said, is ordinarily an obscure force that rarely enters into action: It is kept lying down. He represented it with a horizontal line drawn to the left of the vertical one, at its base, making in this fashion a reversed capital letter "L".

He said that sorcerers were beings which had succeeded in turning the force "B" which is ordinarily lying down, horizontally, out of use, into an active vertical line. And consequently, they succeeded in pulling force "A" to rest. He represented this process by drawing a horizontal line at the base of the vertical one, to its right, and having, as a result, a capital letter "L".

This process is depicted in the magical pass with the forearms. It starts with the right forearm raised in front of the body, with the elbow at the level of the shoulders, and the left arm bent at the elbow, with the back of the hand underneath the right elbow. The pressure of both arms is a downward pressure, and this is balanced by an upward thrust, as if two forces were

simultaneously acting on the two arms. They are kept under this tension for a count of twenty.

Then the same movement is executed by reversing the position of the arms.

5. Rolling Energy from the Assemblage Point and Projecting it Out with a Fist

The arms are kept at the shoulder level with the elbows bent. The hands overlap each other, and they are turned with the palms down. A circle is made with the hands rotating around each other; the movement is inward, toward the face. They rotate three times around each other, then the left arm is thrust forward with the hand in a fist, as if to strike an invisible target. Three more circles are drawn with each hand, and the right arm strikes the same target, with the hand in a fist.

6. Hurling the Assemblage Point Like a Knife over the Shoulder

This magical pass is an actual attempt to hurl the assemblage point, in order to displace it from its habitual position. The practitioner holds the assemblage point as if it were a knife. The left hand reaches back, grabs the assemblage point and hurls it forward like a knife, then the right hand does the same movement. Sorcerers affirm that something in the intent of hurling the assemblage point causes a profound effect

towards the actual displacement of the assemblage point. The knees are kept bent for hurling stability. This pass is done as many times as the practitioner desires.

7. Hurling the Assemblage Point Like a Knife from the Back by the Waist

The knees are kept bent as the body leans forward. Then the left hand grabs the assemblage point and hurls it forward with a quick slashing movement of the wrist. The same movement is repeated with the right hand. This pass is done as many times as the practitioner desires.

8. Hurling the Assemblage Point Like a Disk from the Shoulder

This pass begins with a slow rotation of the body. The right arm moves to the left side of the left leg, then the left arm moves to the right side of the right leg, then the right arm moves again to the left side of the left leg. The left hand reaches back, grabs the assemblage point, takes it to the right shoulder and hurls it forward like a disk.

The legs are kept bent slightly at the knees and a great pressure is asserted at the back of the thighs. The right arm sticks out behind the body to give stability to the act of hurling a disk. This position is held for a count of twenty.

The same movement is repeated with the other arm.

9. Hurling the Assemblage Point Like a Ball
Above the Head

The left hand moves back quickly and grabs the assemblage point, rotates in a big circle above the head and tosses the assemblage point forward from a place above the head.

This movement is repeated with the right hand. The knees are kept bent for this pass.

Magical Passes that Aid the Attainment of Inner Silence

Inner silence was described by don Juan Matus as a condition of human perception in which cognition functions without its seemingly perennial companion: the internal dialogue. Inner silence was considered by don Juan and all the sorcerers of his lineage as the essential quality of evolved perception.

1. Drawing Two Half Circles with Each Foot

The total weight of the body is on the right leg as the left foot draws two semi-circles, starting from a point a half step in front of the body. It moves laterally to draw a semi-circle that ends by the heel of the right foot, and then another one that ends half a step behind the right body.

The same movement is executed with the right foot after the whole weight of the body is transferred to the left leg. The knee of the leg that supports the weight is bent for strength and stability. The practitioner breathes normally.

2. Drawing a Half Moon with Each Foot

This magical pass starts with the left leg drawing a semi-circle around the body from the front to the back, while, the weight of the body is kept on the right leg, with the knee slightly bent.

The same movement is executed with the right leg. The practitioner breathes normally.

3. The Scarecrow in the Wind with the Arms Down

The arms are kept extended laterally at the level of the shoulders with the elbows bent and the forearms dangling downward. The forearms swing freely from side to side, as if moved by the wind alone for a count of twenty. The forearms and the wrists are kept straight and vertical. The knees are locked.

4. The Scarecrow in the Wind with the Arms Up

Just as in the preceding movement, the arms are extended laterally at the level of the shoulders, with the forearms turned upward, bent at the elbow. The forearms and wrists are kept straight and vertical. Then they swing freely downward and upward again, for a count of twenty times. The knees are locked lightly.

5. Pushing Energy Backwards with the Full Arm

The two arms are fully extended backwards as high as possible, holding the hands in a fist position. The knees are locked, and the trunk bends slightly forward as the air is exhaled. Then the arms are brought forward by bending the elbows, but holding the forearms tight against

the body, as high as possible. This movement is repeated twenty times, and then the breathing is reversed. Instead of exhaling as the arms are pulled backwards, an inhalation is taken. An exhalation follows as the elbows are bent, and the forearm is brought upward against the axilla.

6. Pivoting the Forearm

The arms are held in front of the body with the elbows bent and the forearms upward. Each hand is bent at the wrist, resembling the head of a bird, which is at the eye level. Keeping the elbows vertical and straight, the hands are flipped back and forth, pivoting on the forearms. The knees are kept bent for stability and strength.

7. Moving Energy in a Ripple

The knees are kept bent, and the trunk stoops over. The two arms are kept dangling at the side. The left arm moves forward with three ripples, cuts across the body in a sickle shape from left to right and then from right to left and moves back again to the side of the body with three ripples.

This movement is repeated twenty times with each arm.

8. The "T" Energy of the Hands

The two arms are held at right angles right in front of the solar plexus, making the shape of a letter "T". The left arm is the top of the letter "T" with the palm turned upward. The right arm is the bar of the letter "T" with the palm turned downward, and then the hands flip back and forth with a considerable force twenty times.

This same movement is executed twenty times, placing the right arm as the top of the letter "T".

9. Pressing the Thumb Against the Curled-Up Finger

The forearms, bent at the elbows, are held right in front of the body in a perfectly horizontal position, maintaining the width of the body. The fingers are curled in a loose fist, and the thumb is held straight on the curled index. An intermittent pressure is exerted between the thumb against the index finger and the curled fingers against the palm of the hand. They contract and relax, spreading the impulse to the arms. The knees are kept bent for stability.

10. Drawing an Acute Angle with the Arms Between the Legs

In this magical pass, the knees are kept locked, with the hamstrings as tight as possible. The trunk is bent forward, with the head almost at the level of the knees. The arms dangle in front

and moving back and forth, draw an acute angle, with its vertex between the legs.

This movement is repeated twenty times.

11. Drawing an Acute Angle with the Arms in Front of the Face

In this magical pass, the knees are kept locked, with the hamstrings as tight as possible. The trunk is bent forward, with the head almost at the level of the knees. The arms dangle in front of the body and, moving back and forth, draw an acute angle, with its vertex in front of the knees. This movement is also repeated twenty times.

12. Drawing a Circle of Energy Between the Legs and in Front of the Body

In this magical pass, the knees are kept locked, with the hamstrings as tight as possible. The trunk is bent forward, with the head almost at the level of the knees. The arms dangle in front of the body and the left hand crosses and rests in front of the right one, as the two arms swing back between the legs. Then they are pushed out and draw two outward circles that end at a position away from the body in front of the knees, and two inward circles that end in a position between the legs. While drawing the four circles the left wrist is kept on top of the right one.

This movement is repeated ten times. Then the right wrist is made to rest on top of the left one, and four circles are drawn again in the same fashion. This movement is also repeated ten times.

13. Three Fingers on the Floor

The arms move above the head with a deep inhalation; then, as the air is exhaled, the arms are brought down all the way to the floor, keeping the knees locked and the hamstrings as tight as possible. The index and middle fingers of each hand touch the floor a foot in front of the body, and then the thumb is also brought to rest on the floor. A deep inhalation is taken as the body slowly straightens.

14. The Knuckles on the Toes

The arms move above the head with a deep inhalation; then, as the air is exhaled, the arms are brought down all the way to the floor, keeping the knees locked and the hamstrings as tight as possible. The knuckles are brought to rest on top of the toes as the exhalation ends.

A deep inhalation is taken as the body straightens.

15. Drawing Energy from the Floor with the Breath

A deep inhalation is taken as the arms are raised above the head; the knees are kept bent; the trunk turns to the left, and bends down as far as possible. The hands, with the palms down, come to rest around the left foot with the right hand in front and the left hand behind; they move back and forth five times as the exhalation ends. A deep inhalation is taken then, and the body straightens; the hands move over the head. The trunk turns in the right, and the exhalation begins as it bends down as far as possible. The exhalation ends after the hands move back and forth five times. Another deep breath is taken then, and the body straightens up; the arms move above the head, and then they come down as the air is exhaled.