

YOU ONLY LIVE TWICE

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With his vision of a separate reality, Carlos Castaneda transfixed a generation. In a rare interview, the legendary sorcerer talks to Bruce Wagner about don Juan, freedom, dreaming, and death-and the funny things that happen on the way to infinity.

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Carlos Castaneda doesn't live here anymore. After years of rigorous discipline--years of warriorism---he has escaped the ratty theater of everyday life. He is an empty man, a funnel, a teller of tales and stories; not really a man at all, but a being who no longer has attachments to the world as we know it. He is the last nagual, the cork in a centuries---old lineage of sorcerers whose triumph was to break the "agreement" of normal reality. With the release of his ninth book, *The Art of Dreaming*, he has surfaced---for a moment, and in his way.

COMMON SENSE KILLS

My name is Carlos Castaneda. I would like you to do something today. I would like you to suspend judgment. Please: don't come here armed with "common sense." People find out I'm going to be talking---however they hear---and they come to dis Castaneda. To hurt me. "I have read your books and they are infantile." "All of your later books are boring. Don't come that way. It's useless. Today I want to ask you, just for an hour, to open yourself to the option I'm going to present. Don't listen like honor students. I've spoken to honor students before; they're dead and arrogant. Common sense and idealities are what kill us. We hold onto them with our teeth---that's the "ape."

That's what don Juan Matus called us: insane apes. I have not been available for thirty years. I don't go and talk to people. For a moment, I'm here. A month, maybe two . . . then I'll disappear. We're not insular, not just now. We cannot be that way. We have an indebtedness to pay to those who took the trouble to show us certain things. We inherited this knowledge; don Juan told us not to be apologetic. We want you to see there are weird, pragmatic options that are not beyond your reach. I get exotic enjoyment at observing such flight---pure esotericism. It is for my eyes only. I'm not needy; I don't need anything. I need you like I need a hole in the head. But I am a voyager, a traveler. I navigate---out there. I would like others to have the possibility.

THIS WAY OUT

The navigator has spoken before groups in San Francisco and Los Angeles, and his cohorts---Florinda Donner-Grau, Taisha Abelar, and Carol Tiggs--- have given lectures ("Toltec Dreaming---The Legacy of Don Juan") in Arizona, Maui, and at Esalen. In the last two years, Donner-Grau's and Abelar's books (in which they discuss Castaneda and their tutelage under don Juan Matus) have entered the marketplace: *Being-in-Dreaming* and *The Sorcerer's Crossing*, respectively. The accounts of these two women are a phenomenological mother lode, bona fide chronicles of their initiation and training. They are also a great windfall, for never have readers of Castaneda had access to such direct illuminating reinforcement of his experience. ("The women are in charge," he says. "It is their *game*. I am merely the Filipino chauffeur"). Donner-Grau describes the collective consensus of these works as "intersubjectivity among sorcerers"; each one is like a highly individualistic road map of the same city. They are "energetic" enticements, a perceptual call to freedom rooted in a single, breathtaking premise--- *We must take responsibility for the non-negotiable fact that we are beings who are going to die*. One is struck by the cogency of their case, and for good reason. The players, all Ph.D.'s from UCLA's department of anthropology, are stupendous methodologists whose academic disciplines are in fact oddly suited for describing the magical world they present---a configuration of energy called "the second attention." Not a

place for the timid New Ager.

THE OFFENDING PARTY

I do not lead a double life. I live this life: There is no gap between what I say and what I do. I am not here to pull your chain, or to be entertaining. What I am going to talk about today are not my opinions---they are those of don Juan Matus, the Mexican Indian who showed me this other world. So don't be offended! Juan Matus presented me with a working system backed by twenty seven generations of sorcerers. Without him I would be an old man, a book under my arm, walking with students on the quad. See, we always leave a safety valve; that's why we don't jump. "If all else fails, I can teach anthropology. " We are already losers with losers' scenarios. "I'm Dr. Castaneda . . . and this is my book, The Teachings of Don Juan. Did you know it's in paperback?" I would be the "one book" man---the burnt-out genius. "Did you know it's in a twelfth edition? It's just been translated into Russian."

Or maybe I'd be parking your car and mouthing platitudes: "It's too hot . . .it's fine, but it's too hot. It's too cold . . . it's fine, but it's too cold. I gotta go to the tropics . . . "

SORCERY ACTION THEATER

In 1960, Castaneda was a graduate student in anthropology at UCLA. While in Arizona researching the medicinal properties of plants, he met a Yaqui Indian who agreed to help. The young fieldworker offered five dollars an hour for the services of don Juan Matus, his picturesque guide. The usher refused. Unbeknownst to Castaneda, the old peasant in huaraches was a peerless sorcerer, a nagual who artfully drafted him as a player in the Myth of Energy (Abelar calls it Sorcery Action Theater). In payment for his services, don Juan asked for something different: Castaneda's "total attention."

The astonishing book born of this encounter---*The Teachings of Don Juan: A Yaqui Way of Knowledge*---became an instant classic, neatly blowing the hinges off the doors of perception and electrifying a generation. Since then, he has continued "to peel away at the onion, adding journals of his experience, magisterial elucidations of nonordinary realities that erode the self. A sweeping title for the work might be *The Disappearance of Carlos Castaneda*.

We need to find a different word for *sorcery*," he says. "It's too dark. We associate it with medieval absurdities: *ritual*, *evil*. I like 'warriorism' or 'navigation.' That's what sorcerers do they navigate."

He has written that a working definition of sorcery is "to perceive energy directly." Sorcerers said that the essence of the universe resembled a matrix of energy shot through by incandescent strands of consciousness-actual awareness. Those strands formed "braids containing all-inclusive worlds, each as real as this ours is merely one among an infinity. The sorcerers call the world we know the "human band" or "the first attention."

They also saw the essence of the human form. It was not merely an apelike amalgamation of skin and bones, but an eggshaped ball of luminosity capable of traveling along those incandescent strands to other worlds. Then what held it back? The sorcerers' idea is we are entombed by social upbringing, tricked into perceiving the world as a place of hard objects and finalities. We go to our

graves denying we are magical beings; our agenda is to service the ego instead of the spirit. Before we know it, the battle is over---we die squalidly shackled to the Self. Don Juan Matus made an intriguing proposition: What would happen if Castaneda redeployed his troops? if he freed the energy routinely engaged by the aggressions of courtship and mating? if he curtailed self-importance and withdrew from the "defense, maintenance, and presentation" of the ego---if he ceased to worry whether he was liked, acknowledged, or admired? Would he gain enough energy to see a crack in the world? And if he did, might he go through? The old Indian had *hooked* him on the "intent" of the sorcerers' world.

But what does Castaneda do during the day?

Talks to the crazy apes. For now, anyway---in private homes, ballet studios, bookstores. They make pilgrimages from the world over: icons of New Awareness past, present, and future, energy groupies, shrinks and shamans, lawyers, Deadheads, drummers, debunkers and lucid dreamers, scholars, socialites and seducers, channelers, meditators and moguls, even lovers and cronies "from 10,000 years ago." Furious note takers come, junior naguals in the making. Some will write books about him; the lazier ones, chapters. Others will give seminars---that is, for a fee. "They come to listen for a few hours," he says, "and the next weekend they are giving lectures on Castaneda. *That's* the ape." He stands before them hours at a time enticing and exhorting their energy bodies," and the effect is hot and cold all at once, like dry ice. With numinous finesse, he wrests savage tales of freedom and power like scarves from the empty funnel---moving, elegant, obscene, hilarious, bloodcurdling, and surgically precise. *Ask me anything!* comes the entreaty. *What would you like to know?*

Why were Castaneda and Co. making themselves accessible? Why now? What was in it for them?

THE ENORMOUS DOOR

There is someone who goes into me unknown and waits for us to join her. She's called Carol Tiggs---my counterpart. She was with us, then vanished. Her disappearance lasted ten years. Where she went is inconceivable. It does not yield to rationality. So please suspend judgment! We were going to have bumper sticker.

COMMON SENSE KILLS

Carol Tiggs went away. She was not living in the mountains of New Mexico, I assure you. One day I was giving a lecture at the Phoenix Bookstore and she materialized. My heart jumped out of my shirt fomp fomp fomp. I kept talking. I talked for two hours without knowing what I was saying. I took her outside and asked her where she had been---ten years! She became cagey and started to sweat. She had only vague recollections. She made jokes.

The reappearance of Carol Tiggs opened an enormous door---energetically---through which we come and go. There's a huge entry where I can hook you to the intent of sorcery. Her return gave us a new ring of power; she brought with her a tremendous mass of energy that allows us to come out. That's why we are available at this moment. Someone was introduced to Carol Tiggs at a lecture. He said, "But you look so normal." Carol Tiggs said: "What did you

expect? Lightning coming out of my tits?"

THE WHORES OF PERCEPTION

Who is Carlos Castaneda, and does he have a life?

It's 1994 already: Why doesn't he just get it over with? Tell us his age and have Avedon take the picture. Hasn't anyone told him that privacy is dead? That the revelation of details no longer diminishes? In exchange for our *total attention*, he's got to orient us. There are things one would like to know---mundane, personal things. Like where does he live? What did he think of Sinatra's *Duets*? What has he done with the egregious profits from his books? Does he drive a turbo Bentley like all the big old Babas? Was that really him with Michael Jordan and Edmund White at uptown Barneys?

They've been trying to pin him down for years.

They even reconstructed his face from memories of old colleagues and dubious acquaintances; the absurd result looks like a police artist's rendering of benevolent Olmec man for *Reader's Digest*. In the '70s, a photo appeared in a *Time* cover story (only the eyes were visible)---when the magazine learned the model was a counterfeit, they never forgave him.

Around when Paul McCartney was declared dead, the rumor solidified. Carlos Castaneda was Margaret Mead.

His agent and lawyers are full-time hedges against the onslaught of correspondents and crazies, spiritual hang gliders, New Age movers and seekers, artists wishing to adapt his work--- famous and unknown, with or without permission---and bogus seminars replete with Carlos impersonators. After thirty years, there is still no price on his head. He has no interest in gurus or guruism; there will be no turbo Bentleys, no ranches of turbaned devotees, no guest-edit of Paris *Vogue*. There will be no Castaneda Institute, no Center for Advanced Sorcery Studies, no Academy of Dreaming---no infomercials, mushrooms, or Tantric sex. There will be no biographies and there will be no scandals. When he's invited to lecture, Castaneda receives no fee and offers to pay his travel fare. The gate is usually a few dollars, to cover rental of the hall. All that is asked of attendees is their total attention.

"Freedom is free," he says. "It cannot be bought or understood. With my books, I've tried to present an option---that awareness can be a medium for transportation or movement. I haven't been so convincing; they think I'm writing *novels*. If I were tall and handsome, things might be different---they would listen to the Big Daddy. People say, 'You're lying.' How could I be lying? You only lie to get something, to manipulate. I don't want anything from anyone --- only consensus. We'd like there to be *consensus* that there are worlds besides our own. If there's consensus to grow wings then there'll be flight. With consensus comes *mass*; with mass there *will* be movement."

Castaneda and his confederates are the energetic radicals of what may be the only significant revolution of our time --- nothing short of transforming the biological imperative into an evolutionary one. If the sovereign social order commands procreation, the fearless order of sorcerers (energetic pirates all) is after something less, well, terrestrial. Their startling, epochal intent is to leave

the earth the way don Juan did twenty years before: as sheer energy, awareness intact. Sorcerers call this somersault "the abstract flight."

THE EXQUISITE APE

When I was young, I used to idolize Alan Watts. After I became "Carlos Castaneda," I had entree and went to him. He scared the living daylights out of me. He was not what he pretended to be---he asked me to bed. I said, "Hey Alan, what is this? "But Carlos," he said, "don't you see the beauty? That I'm able to understand perfection, yet cannot attain my beliefs? I am imperfect but embrace the weakness it means to be human." That's harseshit. I told him: "I know people who say the opposite; they do what they say. And they live to prove we a sublime." There is a woman, big spiritualist. Millions of dollars go through her hands---she's been doing it twenty years. I went to see he4r at someone' house and she was stroking the crotch of a man, right in front of where I stood. Was she doing it to impress me? To shock? I cannot be shocked. Later, I cornered her in the kitchen. I said, "What do you say to yourself when you're alone in the middle of the night?" Don Juan used to put that question to me. "What do you say when you're alone and you look in the mirror?" "Ah, Carlos," she said, "that's the secret. Never to be alone." Is that really the secret? Never to be alone? How horrendous. That's a shitty secret.

This Yaqui sorcerer asked me to suspend judgment for three days---to believe for three days that to be human was not to be weak, but to be sublime. Either one is true, yes...but how much more powerful to be sublime! The ape is insane, but also exquisite. Don Juan was a frigging ape---but he was in impeccable warrior. He left the world, intact. He became energy; he burned from within.

He used to say, "I was born a dog...but I don't have to die like one. Do you want to live like your father?" He asked me that. "Do you want to die like your grandfather?" Then came the bit question: "What are you going to do to avoid dying that way?" I didn't answer---I didn't have to. The answer was: "Nothing." A terrifying moment. How that haunted me.

CRITICAL MASS

I met with Castaneda and "the witches" over a period of a week at restaurants, hotel rooms, and malls. They're attractive and vibrantly youthful. The women dress unobtrusively, with a touch of casual chic. You wouldn't notice them in a crowd, and that's the point.

I skimmed a New Yorker outside the cafe of the Regent Beverly Wilshire. The ad for Drambuie seemed particularly hideous: Inevitably, no matter how much we struggle, In one way or another, one day we become our parents. Instead of resisting this notion, we invite you to celebrate this rite of passage with an exquisite liquor ... Don Juan was laughing in his grave --- or out of it, which brought to mind a welter of questions: Where was he anyway? The same place Carol Tiggs came back from? If that were so, did that mean the old nagual was capable of such reentry? In *The Fire From Within* Castaneda wrote that don Juan and his party evanesced sometime in 1973---fourteen navigators gone, to the "second attention." What exactly was the second attention? It all seemed clear when I was reading the books. I searched my notes. I'd scrawled "second attention = heightened awareness" on the margin of a page, but that didn't help. Impatiently, I riffled through *The Power of Silence*, *The Eagle's Gift*, *Journey to Ixtlan*. Though there was much throughout I didn't understand, the

basics had been thoroughly, coherently described. Why couldn't I hold any of it in my head?

I was failing Sorcery 101.

I ordered a cappuccino and waited. I let my mind drift. I thought about Donner-Grau and the Japanese monkeys. When I'd spoken to her on the phone to arrange an interview, she'd mentioned Imo. Every anthropology student knows about Imo, the famous macaque. One day Imo spontaneously washed off a sweet potato before eating it; in a short while, the macaques of the entire island followed suit. Anthropologists might call this "cultural" behavior, but Donner-Grau said it was a perfect example of critical mass---monkey intersubjectivity.

Castaneda appeared. He smiled broadly, shook my hand, and sat down. I was about to bring up the monkeys when he began to weep. The forehead crinkled; his entire body convulsed in lamentation. Soon he was gasping like a grouper thrown from the tank. His lower lip twitched, wet and electrified. His arm unfurled toward me, the hand palsied and trembling---then it opened like a night---blooming bud from *Little Shop of Horrors*, as if to receive alms.

"Please!" He declared a shaky truce with his facial muscles just to spit out the words. He bore down on me in needy supplication. "Please love me!"

Castaneda was sobbing again, a great broken, choking hydrant, his bathos effortless as he became an obscene weeping *contraption*. "That's what we are: *apes with tin cups. So routinary, so weak. Masturbatory. We are sublime, but the insane ape lacks the energy to see---so the brain of the beast prevails. We cannot grab our window of opportunity, our 'cubic centimeter of chance.'* How could we? We're too busy holding onto Mommy's hand. Thinking how *wonderful* we are, how *sensitive*, how *unique*. We are not unique! The scenarios of our lives have already been written," he said, grinning ominously, "by *others*. We know . . . but we don't care. *Fuck it*, we say. We are the *ultimate* cynics. *Cono! Carajo!* That's how we live! In a gutter of warm shit. *What have they done to us?* That's what don Juan used to say. He used to ask me, 'How's the carrot?' 'What do you mean?' 'The carrot they shoved up your ass.' I was terribly offended; he could really do it to me! That's when he said, 'Be grateful they haven't put a handle on it yet.' "

"But if we have a choice, why do we stay in the gutter?"

"It's too warm. We don't want to leave---we *hate* to say goodbye. And we worry---*ooo-fa*, how we worry---twenty-six hours a day! And what do you think we worry about?" He smiled again, a rubbery Cheshire cat. "About *me!* What about *me?* What's in it for *me?* What's gonna happen to me? Such egomania! So *horrendous*. But fascinating! "

I told him his views seemed a little harsh, and he laughed. "Yes," he said, in the ludicrously constipated, judgey tones of an academic. "Castaneda is a bitter and insane old man." His caricatures were drolly, brutally on target.

"The greedy ape reaches through a grate for a seed and cannot relinquish control. There are studies; nothing will make him drop that seed. The hand will cling even after you hack off the arm---we die holding onto *mierda*. But why?"

*Is that all there is---*like Miss Peggy Lee said? That cannot be; That's too horrendous. We have to learn how to let go. We collect memories and paste them in books, ticket stubs to a Broadway show ten years ago. We die holding onto souvenirs. To be a sorcerer is to have the energy, curiosity, and guts to let go, to somersault into the unknown---all one needs is some retooling, redefinition. *We must see ourselves as beings who are going to die.* Once you accept that, *worlds* open up for you. But to embrace this definition, you must have 'balls of steel.' "

THE NATURAL HERITAGE OF SENTIENT BEINGS

When you say "mountain" or "tree" or "White House," you invoke a universe of detail with a single utterance; that's magic. See, we're visual creatures. You could lick the White House---smell it, touch it---and it wouldn't tell you anything. But one look, and you know everything there is to know: the "cradle of democracy," whatever. You don't even need to look, you already see Clinton sitting inside, Nixon on his knees praying---whatever. Our world is an agglutination of detail, an avalanche of glosses---we don't perceive, we merely interpret. And our interpretation system has made us lazy and cynical. We prefer to say "Castaneda's a liar" or "This business of perceptual options just isn't for me." What is for you? What's "real"? This hard, shitty, meaningless daily world? Are despair and senility what's real? That the world is "given" and "final" is a fallacious concept. From an early age we get "membership." One day, when we've learned the shorthand of interpretation, the world says "welcome." Welcome to what? To prison. Welcome to hell. What if it turns out that Castaneda is inventing nothing? If that's true, then you're in a very bad spot.

The interpretation system can be interrupted; it is not final. There are worlds within worlds, each as real as this. In that wall over there is a world, this room is a universe of detail. Autistics get caught, frozen in detail---they trace a finger on the crack until it bleeds. We get caught in the room of everyday life. There are options other than this world, as real as this room, places where you can live or die. Sorcerers do that---how exciting! To think that this is the only all---inclusive world . . .that's the epitome of arrogance. Why not open the door to another room? That's the natural heritage of sentient beings. It's time to interpret and construct new glosses. Go to a place where there's no a priori knowledge. Don't throw away your old system of interpretation---use it, from nine to five. After five? Magic hour.

NO SE HABLA ESPAÑOL AQUÍ

But what does he *mean* by "magic hour"?

Their books are meticulously detailed evocations of the unknown, yet the irony remains; there's no real Lexicon for their experience. Magic hour isn't word-friendly---its surplus energies are experienced *bodily*. Whenever Castaneda left don Juan to return to Los Angeles, the old nagual liked to say he knew what his student would be up to. He could make a list, he said---maybe a long list, but still, a list---upon which Castaneda's thoughts and actions could inevitably be found. But it was impossible for Castaneda to do the same for his teacher. There was no intersubjectivity between the two men. Whatever it was the Indian did in the second attention could only be experienced , not conveyed. Back then, Castaneda had neither the energy nor the preparation it took for

such consensus.

But the ape is possessed by words and syntax. He must *understand*, at all costs. And there must be regimen to his understanding.

"We are linear beings: dangerous creatures of habit and repetition. We need to know: *There's the chicken place! There's the shoelace place! There's the car wash!* If one day one of them isn't there---we go bananas." He insisted on paying for lunch. When the waiter returned with the slip, I had a sudden urge to grab the credit card and see if it was in his name. He caught my glance.

"A business manager tried to get me to do the old American Express ad: CARLOS CASTANEDA, MEMBER since 1968." He laughed gleefully, circling back to his theme. "We are heavy, heavy apes, very ritualistic. My friend Ralph used to see his grandmother on Monday nights. She died. And he said, 'Hey Joe---I was Joe then---'hey Joe, now we can get together on Monday nights. Are you free Mondays, Joe? 'You mean every Monday, Ralph?' 'Yes, yes! Every Monday. Won't it be great?' 'But every Monday? forever?' 'Yes, Joe! You and me on Mondays---*forever!*' "

SORCERY 101

I met a scientist at a party---a well---known man. Eminent. A luminary. "Dr. X." He wanted to dis me, heavily. He said, "I read your first book; the rest were boring. Look, I'm not interested in anecdotes. I'm interested in proof." Dr. X confronted me. He must have thought I was as important as he was. I said, "If I was to prove the law of gravity, wouldn't you need a degree of training to follow me? You'd need 'membership'--- maybe even equipment. You'd need to have taken Physics 1, 2, 16, maybe even Physics 23. You'd have already made tremendous sacrifices to learn: to go to school, to study long hours. You may even have stopped dating. " I told him if he wanted proof he'd have to take Sorcery 101. But he wouldn't do that; that takes preparation. He got angry and left the room. Sorcery is a flow, a process. Just as in physics you need certain knowledge to follow the flow of the equations, Dr. X would have had to do some very basic things to be in a position to have enough energy to understand the flow of sorcery. He would have had to "recapitulate" his life. So: the scientist wanted proof but didn't want to prepare. That's the way we are. We don't want to do the work---we want to be helicoptered to awareness, without getting mud in our shoesies. And if we don't like what we see, we want to be helicoptered back.

THE TRACKS OF TIME

It is tiring being with this man. He's overly, ruthlessly present--- the fullness of his attention exhausts. He seems to respond to my queries with all he has; there's a liquid, eloquent urgency to his speech, dogged and final, elegant, elegiac. Castaneda said he feels time "advancing" upon him. You sense his weight, something foreign you can't identify, ethereal yet indolent, densely inert--- like a plug or buoy, a cork lying heavily on the waves.

We're walking in Boyle Heights. He stops to demonstrate a martial arts position called the horse---legs slightly bent, as if in the saddle. "They stood like this in Buenos Aires---in my day. Everything was very stylized. They were adopting the poses of men long dead. My grandfather stood this way. The muscle under here"---he points to the backside of his thigh---"that's where we store

nostalgia. Self-pity is a most horrendous thing."

"What did you mean about 'time advancing' on you?"

'Don Juan had a metaphor. We stand in a caboose, watching the tracks of time recede. 'there I am a five years old! There I go ---' We have merely to turn around and let the time *advance* on us. That way, there are no a prioris. Nothing is presumed; nothing presupposed; nothing neatly packaged."

We sat on a bus bench. Across the street a beggar held a piece of cardboard for the motorists. Castaneda stared past him toward the horizon. "I don't have a tinge of tomorrow---and nothing from the past. The department of anthropology doesn't exist for me anymore. Don Juan used to say the first part of his life was a waste---he was in limbo. The second part of his life was absorbed in the future; the third, in the past, nostalgia. Only the last part of his life was *now*. That's where I am."

I decided to ask something personal and prepared to be rebuffed. For them, biographical evidence will mesmerize as surely as a crack in the wall---leaving everyone with bloody fingers.

"When you were a boy, who was the most important man in your life?"

"My grandfather --- he raised me." His hard eyes were glinting. "He had a stud pig called Rudy. Made a lot of money. Rudy had a little blond face---gorgeous. They used to put a hat on him, a vest. My grandfather made a tunnel from the sty to the showroom. There would come Rudy with his midget face, trailing this *huge* body behind! Rudy, with his screwdriver *pincho*; we watched that pig commit *barbarities*."

"What was he like---your grandfather."

"I adored him. He was the one who made the agenda; I was going to carry his banner. That was my fate, but *not* my destiny. My grandfather was an amorous man. He schooled me in seduction at an early age. When I was twelve, I walked like him, talked like him---with a constricted larynx. He's the one who taught me to 'go in through the window.' He said women would run if I approached them head-on---I was too *plain*. He made me go up to little girls and say: 'You're so beautiful!' Then I'd turn and walk away. 'You are the most beautiful girl I have ever seen!'---quickly walk away. After three or four times they'd say, 'Hey! Tell me your name.' That's how I got 'in through the window.'"

He got up and walked. The beggar was heading for the bushy dead zone that surrounded the freeway. When we got to his car, Castaneda opened the door and stood a moment.

"A sorcerer asked me a question, a long time ago: *What kind of face does the bogeyman have, for you?* I was intrigued. This thing I thought would be shadowy, murky, had a human face--- the bogeyman often has the face of something you think you love. For me, it was my grandfather. My grandfather, who I adored. I got in and he started the car. The last part of the beggar disappeared into the grubby hedgerow."

"I was my grandfather. Dangerous, mercenary, conniving. petty, vindictive,

filled with doubt---and immovable. Don Juan knew this."

FALLING IN LOVE AGAIN

At seventy-five, we're still looking for "love" and "companionship." My grandfather used to wake up in the middle of the night crying, "Do you think she loves me?" His last words were, "Here I go baby, here I go!" He had a big orgasm and died. For years I thought that was the greatest thing---magnificent. Then don Juan said, "Your grandfather died like a pig. His life and death had no meaning."

Don Juan said death can't be soothing--- only triumph can. I asked him what he meant by triumph and he said freedom: when you break through the veil and take your life force with you. "But there's still so much that I want to do! "He said, "You mean there are still so many women you want to fuck." He was right. That's how primitive we are.

The ape will consider the unknown, but before he jumps he demands to know: What's in it for me? We're businessmen, investors, used to cutting our losses---it's a merchant's world. If we make an "investment," we want guarantees. We fall in love but only if we're loved back. When we don't love anymore, we cut the head off and replace it with another. Our "love" is merely hysteria. We are not affectionate beings, we are heartless.

I thought I knew how to love. Don Juan said, "How could you? They never taught you about love. They taught you how to seduce, to envy, to hate. You don't even love yourself---otherwise you wouldn't have put your body through such barbarities. You don't have the guts to love like a sorcerer. Could you love forever, beyond death? Without the slightest reinforcement---nothing in return? Could you love without investment, for the piss of it? You'll never know what it's like to love like that, relentlessly. Do you really want to die without knowing?"

No---I didn't. Before I die, I have to know what it's like to love like that. He hooked me that way. When I opened my eyes, I was already rolling down the hill. I'm still rolling.

RECAPITULATE YOUR LIFE!

I had too many Cokes and was paranoid.

Castaneda said sugar is as effective a killer as common sense. "We are not 'psychological' creatures. Our neuroses are by---products of what we put in our mouths.'--- I was certain he saw my "energy body" irradiating cola. I felt absurd, defeated---I decided I would binge that night on profiteroles. Such is the piquant, dark-chocolated shame of the picayune ape.

"I had a great love affair with Coke. My grandfather possessed a pseudosensuality.

' I gotta have that pussy! I need it! I need it now!' My grandfather thought he was the hottest dick in town. Most extravagant. I had the same thing--- everything went right to my balls, but it wasn't *real*. Don Juan told me, 'You're being triggered by sugar. You're too *flimsy* to have that kind of sexual energy.' Too fat to have this 'hot dick.'"

Everyone's smoking in Universal CityWalk. Strange, sitting with Carlos

Castaneda in this architectural approximation of middle-class Los Angeles---this "agglutination of detail," this 'avalanche of glosses" that is a virtual city. There are no black people and nothing resembling heightened awareness; we've shifted from *the human band* to the *band of MCA*. We are inhabiting a perversely bland version of a familiar scene from his books, the one where he abruptly finds himself in a simulacrum of the everyday world.

"You said that if Dr. X had 'recapitulated his life,' he might have retrieved some energy. What did you mean?"

"The recapitulation is the most important thing we do. To begin, you make a list of everyone you ever knew. Everyone you ever spoke to or had dealings with."

"Everyone?"

"Yes. You go down the list, chronologically re-creating the scenes of exchange."
"But that could take years."

"Sure. A thorough recapitulation takes a long time. *And then you start over.* We are never through recapitulating---that way there's no residue. See, there's no 'rest.' Rest is a middle-class concept---the idea that if you work hard enough, you've earned a *vacation*. Time to go four-wheeling in the Range Rover or *fishing* in Montana. That's horseshit."

"You re-create the scene ... "

"Start with sexual encounters. You see the sheets, the furniture, the dialogue. Then get to the person, the feeling. What were you feeling? Watch! Breathe in the energy you expended in the exchange; give back what isn't yours."

"It almost sounds like psychoanalysis."

"You don't analyze, you observe. The filigrees, the detail---you're hooking yourself to the sorcerers' *intent*. It's a maneuver, a magical act hundreds of years old, the key to restoring energy that will free you for other things."

"You move your head and breathe---"

"Go down the list until you get to mommy and daddy. By then you'll be *shocked*; you'll see patterns of repetition that will *nauseate* you. Who is sponsoring your insanity's? Who is making the agenda? The recapitulation will give you a moment of silence---it will allow you to *vacate the premises* and make room for something else. From the recapitulation you come up with endless tales of the Self, but you are no longer bleeding."

EVERYTHING YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT ENERGY.. BUT WERE AFRAID TO ASK

When I came to don Juan, I was already fucked to death; I'd exhausted myself that way. I'm not in the world anymore, not like that; sorcerers use that kind of energy to fly off, or to change. Fucking is our most important act, energetically. See, we've dispersed our best generals but don't try to call them back; we lose by default. That's why it's so important to recapitulate your life.

The recapitulation separates our commitment to the social order from our life

force. The two are not inextricable. Once I was able to subtract the social being from my native energy, I could clearly see: I wasn't that "sexy."

Sometimes I talk to groups of psychiatrists. They want to know about the orgasm. When you're out there flying in the immensity's, you don't give a shit about the "Big O." Most of us are frigid; all this sensuality is mental masturbation. We are "bored fucks"---no energy at the moment of conception. Either we're first born and the parents didn't know how to do it, or last born and they're not interested anymore. We're fucked either way. We're just biological meat with bad habits and no energy. We are boring creatures, but instead we say, "I'm so bored."

Fucking is much more injurious for women ---men are drones. The universe is female. Women have total access, they're already there. It's just they're so stupidly socialized. Women are portentous fliers; they have a second brain, an organ they can use for unimaginable flight. They use their wombs for dreaming.

Do we have to stop fucking? The men ask Florinda that. She says, "Go ahead! Stick your little pee-pee wherever you want! " Oh, she's a horrible witch! She's worse with the women--- the weekend goddesses who paint their nipples and go on retreats. She says, "Yes, you're here being goddesses. But what do you do when you get home? You get fucked, like slaves! The men leave luminous worms in your pussy!"

A truly terrible witch!

THE COYOTE TRAIL

Florinda Donner-Grau takes no prisoners. She is small-boned, charming, and aggressive--- like a jockey with a shiv.

When Donner-Grau first encountered don Juan and his circle, she thought they were unemployed circus workers who trafficked in stolen goods. How else to explain the Baccarat crystal, the exquisite clothes, the antiquarian jewelry? She felt adventurous around them--- by nature she was cocky, daring, vivacious. For a South American girl, her life had been freewheeling.

"I thought I was the most wonderful being who ever was---so bold, so *special*. I raced cars and dressed like a man. Then this old Indian said the only thing 'special' about me was my blonde hair and blue eyes in a country where those things were revered. I wanted to strike him---in fact, I think I did. But he was right, you know. This celebration of Self is totally insane. What the sorcerers do is *kill* the Self. You must die, in that sense, in order to live---not live in order to die."

Don Juan encouraged his students to have a "romance with knowledge." He wanted their minds sufficiently trained to view sorcery as an authentic philosophical system; in a delicious reversal distinctive to the sorcerer's world, fieldwork led to academia. The road to magic hour was funny that way.

She recalled the first time Castaneda took her to Mexico to see Don Juan. "We went via this long, snaky route---you know, the 'coyote trail.' I thought he was taking a weird route so we wouldn't be followed, but it was something else. You had to have enough energy to find that old Indian. After I don't know how long, there was someone on the road waving us in. I said to Carlos, 'Hey,

aren't you going to stop?' He said, 'It isn't necessary.' See, we had *crossed over the fog*. "

We rocketed past Pepperdine. Someone was selling crystals by the road. I wondered if Shirley MacLaine's house had burned; I wondered if Dick Van Dyke had rebuilt. Maybe Van Dyke had moved into MacLaine's with the Sean Penns.

"What happens with people who are interested in your work---the ones who read your books and write letters? Do you help them?"

"People are intellectually curious, they're 'teased' or whatever. They stay until it gets too difficult. The recapitulation is *very* unpleasant; they want immediate results, instant gratification. For a lot of the New Agers, it's *The Dating Game*. They case the room---furtive, prolonged eye contact with potential partners. Or it's just shopping on Montana Avenue. When the thing becomes too expensive in terms of what they have to give of themselves, they don't want to pursue it. You see, we want *minimal* investment with *maximal* return. No one is really interested in doing the work."

"But they *would* be interested, if there was some kind of *proof* what you're saying---"

"Carlos has a great story. There was a woman he'd known for years. She called from Europe, in terrible shape. He said come to Mexico---you know, 'jump into my world.' She hesitated. Then she said, 'I'll come---as long as I know my huaraches are waiting on the other side of the river.' She wanted guarantees she'd land on her feet. Of course, there are no guarantees. We're all like that: We will jump, as long as we know our huaraches are waiting for us on the other side."

"What if you jump---as best you can---and it turns out it was only a fever dream?"

"Then have a good fever."

CARLOS CASTANEDA'S PRIVATE PARTS

This is not a book for people.

That's what someone who has known him for years said about *The Art of Dreaming*. In fact, it is the crown of Castaneda's work, an instruction manual to an undiscovered country---the delineation of ancient techniques used by sorcerers to enter the second attention. Like his other books, it's lucid and unnerving, yet there's something haunting about this one. It *smells* like it was made somewhere else. I was curious how it all began.

"I used to take notes, with don Juan---*thousands* of notes. Finally, he said, 'Why don't you write a book?' I told him that was impossible. 'I'm not a writer. 'But you could write a *shitty* book, couldn't you?' I thought to myself, Yes! I could write a shitty book. Don Juan laid down a challenge: 'Can you write this book, knowing it may bring notoriety? Can you remain impeccable? If they *love* you or hate you is meaningless. Can you write this book and not give in to what may come your way?' I agreed. Yes. *I'll do it*."

"And *terrifying* things came my way. But the panties didn't fit."

I told him I wasn't sure about the last remark, and he laughed.

"That's an old joke. A woman's car breaks down and a man repairs it. She has no money and offers him earrings. He tells her his wife wouldn't believe him. She offers her watch but he tells her bandits will steal it. Finally, she takes off her panties to give him. 'No, please,' he says. 'They're not my size.'"

THE CRITERIA FOR BEING DEAD

I had never been alone until I met don Juan. He said, "Get rid of your friends. They will never allow you to act with independence--- they know you too well. You will never be able to come from left field with something. ..shattering." Don Juan told me to rent a room, the more sordid the better. Something with green floors and green curtains that reeked of piss and cigarettes. "Stay there," he said. "Be alone until you are dead." I told him I couldn't do it. I didn't want to leave my friends. He said, "Well, I can't talk to you ever again." He waved goodbye, big smile. Boy, was I relieved! This weird old man---this Indian---had thrown me out. The whole thing had tied itself up so neatly. The closer I got to L.A., the more desperate I became. I realized what I was going home to---my "friends." And for what? To have meaningless dialogue with those who knew me so well. To sit on the couch by the phone waiting to be invited to a party. Endless repetition. I went to the green room and called don Juan. "Hey, not that I'm going to do it--- but tell me, what is the criteria for being dead?" "When you no longer care whether you have company or whether you are alone. That is the criteria for being dead."

It took three months to be dead. I climbed the walls desperate for a friend to drop by. But I stayed. By the end, I'd gotten rid of assumptions; you don't go crazy being alone. You go crazy the way you're going, that's for sure. You can count on it.

ASSEMBLING AWARENESS

We headed in his station wagon toward the cheap apartment house where Castaneda went to die.

"We could go to your old room," I said, "and knock on the door. For the hell of it." He said that might be taking things too far.

"What do you want out of life?' That's what Don Juan used to ask me. My classic response 'Frankly, Don Juan, I don't know.' That was my pose as the 'thoughtful' man--- the intellectual. Don Juan said, 'That answer would satisfy your *mother*, not me.' See, I couldn't *think*---I was bankrupt. And he was an *Indian*. *Carajo, cono!* God, you don't know what that means. I was polite, but I looked down on him. One day he asked if we were equals. Tears sprang to my eyes as I threw my arms around him. 'Of course we're equals, don Juan! How could you say such a thing!' Big hug; I was practically weeping. 'You really mean it?' he said. 'Yes, by God!' When I stopped hugging him he said, 'No, we are *not* equals. I am an impeccable warrior---and you are an *asshole*. I could sum up my whole life in a moment. You cannot even think." We pulled over and parked underneath some trees. Castaneda stared at the seedy building with an odd ebullience, shocked it was still there. He said it should have been torn down long ago---that its perseverance in the world was some kind of

weird magic. Children were playing with a giant plastic fire engine. A homeless woman drifted past like a somnambulist. He made no move to get out. He began talking about what "dying in that green room" meant. By the time he left that place, Castaneda was finally able to listen unjaundiced to the old Indian's far-out premises.

Don Juan told him that when sorcerers see energy, the human form presents itself as a luminous egg. Behind the egg---roughly an arm's length from the shoulders---is the "assemblage point," where incandescent strands of awareness are gathered. The way we perceive the world is determined by the point's position. The assemblage point of mankind is *fixed* at the same point on each egg; such uniformity accounts for our shared view of everyday life. (Sorcerers call this arena of awareness "the first attention.") Our way of perceiving changes with the point's *displacement* by injury, shock, drugs---or in sleep, when we dream. "The art of dreaming" is to displace and fix the assemblage point in a new position, engendering the perception of alternate, all-inclusive worlds ("the second attention"). Smaller *shifts* of the point within the egg are still inside the human band and account for the hallucinations of delirium ---or the world encountered during dreams. Larger *movements* of the assemblage point, more dramatic, pull the "energy body" outside the human band to nonhuman realms. That is where don Juan and his party journeyed in 1973 when they "burned from within," fulfilling the unthinkable assertion of his lineage: evolutionary flight.

Castaneda learned that whole civilizations---a conglomerate of dreamers---had vanished in the same way.

He told me about a sorcerer of his lineage who had tuberculosis---and was able to *shift* his assemblage point away from death. That sorcerer had to remain impeccable; his illness hung over him like a sword. He could not afford an ego--he knew precisely where his death lay, waiting for him.

Castaneda turned to me, smiling. "Hey . . ."

He had a strangely effusive look, and I was ready. For three weeks I'd been awash in his books and their contagious presentation of possibilities. Perhaps this was the moment in which I'd make my pact with *Mescalito*. Or had we already "crossed over the fog" without my knowing?

"Hey," he said again, his eyes fairly twinkling. "Do you want to get a hamburger?"

BOYCOTTING THE PAGEANT

"That the assemblage point of man is fixed in one position is a crime."

I sat with Taisha Abelar on a bench in front of the art museum on Wilshire. She didn't sync up with my image of her. Castaneda said that as part of Abelar's training, she'd assumed different personas---one being the "Madwoman of Oaxaca," a lecherous, mud---smearred beggar woman---back in her days as a struggling actress in Sorcery Action Theater.

"I was going to call my book *The Great Crossing* but I thought that was too Eastern." "The Buddhist concept is pretty similar."

"There are lots of parallels. Our group has been crossing over for years but only recently have we compared notes---because our leaving is imminent. Seventy-five percent of our energy is there, 25 percent here. That's why we have to go."

"Is *that* where Carol Tiggs was? That 75 percent place?"

"You mean the Twilight Zone?"

She waited a deadpan beat, then laughed.

"We felt Carol Tiggs on our bodies when she was gone. She had tremendous mass. She was like a lighthouse; a beacon. She gave us hope---an incentive to go on. Because we knew she was there. Whenever I would become self-indulgent, I felt her tap me on the shoulder. She was our magnificent obsession."

"Why is it so difficult for the 'ape' to make his journey?"

"We perceive minimally; the more entanglements we have in this world, the harder it is to say goodbye. And we all have them---we all want fame, we want to be loved, to be liked. My gosh, some of us have children. Why would anyone want to leave? We wear a hood, cloaked . . . we have our happy moments that last us the rest of our lives. I know someone who was Miss Alabama. Is that enough to keep her from freedom? Yes. 'Miss Alabama' is enough to pin her down."

It was time to pose one of the Large Questions (there were a number of them): When they spoke of "crossing over," did that mean with their physical bodies? She replied that changing the Self didn't mean the Freudian ego but the actual, concrete Self---yes, the physical body. "When don Juan and his party left," she said, "they went with the totality of their beings. They left with their boots on."

She said *dreaming* was the only authentic new realm of philosophical discourse---that Merleau-Ponty was wrong when he said mankind was condemned to prejudge an a priori world. "There is a place of no a prioris---the second attention. Don Juan always said philosophers were 'sorcerers *manques*.' What they lacked was the energy to jump beyond their idealities.

"We all carry bags toward freedom: Drop the baggage. We even need to drop the baggage of sorcery. "

"The baggage of sorcery?"

"We don't do sorcery; we do *nothing*. All we do is move the assemblage point. In the end, 'being a sorcerer' will trap you as sure as Miss Alabama."

A shabby, toothless woman shuffled toward us with postcards for sale---the Madwoman of the Miracle Mile. I picked one and gave her a dollar. I showed it to Abelar; it was a picture of Jesus, laughing.

"A rare moment," she said.

THE GUESTS ARRIVE

Where in this world is there left to explore?

It's all a priori---done and exhausted. We are slated for senility; it waits for us like magina, the river sickness. When I was a boy, I heard of it. A disease of memories and remembrance. It attacks people who live on the river shore. You become possessed of a longing that pushes you to move on and on---to roam without sense, endlessly. The river meanders; people used to say "the river is alive." When it reverses its course, it never remembers it was once flowing east to west. The river forgets itself.

There was a woman I used to visit at the convalescent home. She was there fifteen years. For fifteen years she prepared for a party she was throwing at the Hotel del Coronado. This was her delusion; she would ready herself each day but the guests would never come. She finally died. Who knows---maybe that was the day they finally arrived.

THE INDEX OF INTENT

"How should I say you look?"

His voice became unctuously absurd. He was Fernando Rey, the bourgeois narcissist---with just a hint of Laurence Harvey.

"You may say I resemble Lee Marvin."

It was dusk in Roxbury Park. There was the steady, distant *whomp* of a tennis ball volleying against a concrete backstop.

"I read an article once in *Esquire* about California witchcraft. The first sentence went: 'Lee Marvin is scared.' Whenever something is not quite right, you can hear me: *Lee Marvin is scared.*"

We agreed I would describe Castaneda as wheelchair-bound, with beautifully 'cut' arms and torso. I would say he wore fragrance by Bijan and long hair that delicately framed a face like the young Foucault.

He began to laugh. "I knew this woman once, she gives seminars now on Castaneda. When she felt depressed, she had a trick---a way to get out of it. She'd say to herself: 'Carlos Castaneda looks like a Mexican waiter' This is all it took to pull her up. *Carlos Castaneda looks like a Mexican waiter!*---instantly refreshed. Fascinating! How sad. But for her, it was good as Prozac! "

I'd been leafing through the books again and wanted to ask about "intent." It was one of the most abstract, prevalent concepts of their world. They spoke of *intending* freedom, of intending the energy body---they even spoke of *intending* intent.

"I don't understand *intent*."

"You don't understand *anything*." I was taken aback. "None of us do! We don't understand the world, we merely handle it---but we handle it beautifully. So when you say 'I don't understand,' that's just a slogan. You never understood anything to begin with."

I was feeling argumentative. Even sorcery had a "working definition." Why couldn't he give one for "intent"?

"I cannot tell you what *intent* is. I don't know myself. Just make it a *new indexical category*. We are taxonomists---how we love to keep indexes! Once, don Juan asked me: 'What is a university?' I told him it was a school for higher learning. He said, 'But what is a "school for higher learning"?' I told him it was a place where people met to learn. 'A park? A field?' He got me. I realized that 'university' had a different meaning for the taxpayer, for the teacher, for the student. We have no idea what 'university' is! It's an indexical category, like 'mountain' or 'honor.' You don't need to know what 'honor' is to move toward it. So move toward *intent*. Make *intent* an index. *Intent* is merely the awareness of a possibility---of a *chance to have a chance*. It's one of the perennial forces in the universe that we never call on---by hooking onto the intent of the sorcerer's world, you're giving yourself a chance to have a chance. You're not hooking onto the world of your father, the world of being buried six feet under. *Intend* to move your assemblage point. How? By *intending!* Pure sorcery."

"Move toward it, without understanding."

"Certainly! 'Intent' is just an index---most fallacious, but utterly utilizable. Just like 'Lee Marvin is scared.'"

POOR BABYISM

I meet people all the time who are dying to tell me their tales of sexual abuse. One guy told me when he was ten, his father grabbed his cock and said, "This is for fucking!" That traumatized him for ten years! He spent thousands on psychoanalysis. Are we that vulnerable? Bullshit. We've been around five billion years! But that defines him: He is a "sexual abuse victim." Mierda.

We are all poor babies.

Don Juan forced me to examine how I related to people wanted them to feel sorry for me. That was my "one trick." We have one trick that we learn early on and repeat until we die. If we are very imaginative, we have two. Turn on the television and listen to the talk shows: poor babies to the end.

We love Jesus---bleeding, nailed to the cross. That's our symbol. No one's interested in the Christ who was resurrected and ascended to Heaven. We want to be martyrs, losers; we don't want to succeed. Poor babies, praying to the poor baby. When Man fell to his knees, he became the asshole he is today.

CONFESSIONS OF AN AWARENESS ADDICT

Castaneda has long eschewed psychotropic drugs, yet they were an enormous part of his initiation into the nagual's world. I asked what that was about.

"Being male, I was very rigid---my assemblage point was immovable. Don Juan was running out of time, so he employed desperate measures.

"That's why he gave you the drugs? To dislodge your assemblage point?"

He nodded. "But with drugs, there's no control; it moves helter-skelter."

"Does that mean the time came when you were able to shift your assemblage point and dream without the use of drugs?"

"Certainly! That was don Juan's doing. You see, Juan Matus didn't give a fuck about 'Carlos Castaneda'. He was interested in that other being, the *energy body* ---what sorcerers call "the double". That's what he wanted to awaken. You use your Double to dream, to navigate in the second attention. That's what pulls you to freedom. 'I trust that the Double will do its duty,' he said. 'I will do *anything* for it---to help it awaken.' I got chills. These people were for real. They did not die crying for their mommies. Crying for pussy."

We were at a little cafe in the middle of the Santa Monica Airport. I went to the bright bathroom to wet my face and take it all in. I stared in the mirror and thought about the Double. I remembered something don Juan told Castaneda in *The Art of Dreaming*. "Your passion," he said , "is to jump without capriciousness or premeditation to cut someone else's chains."

On the way back, I formed a question.

"What was it like---I mean, the first time you shifted your assemblage point without drugs?"

He paused for a moment, then moved his head from side to side.

"*Lee Marvin was very scared!*" He laughed. "Once you start breaking the barriers of normal, historical perception, you believe you are insane. You need the nagual then, simply to laugh. He laughs your fears away."

THE PLUMED SERPENT

I saw them go---don Juan and his group, a whole flock of sorcerers. They went to a place free from humanness and the compulsive worshipping of man. They burned from within. They made a movement as they went, they call it the "plumed serpent." They became energy; even their shoes. They made one last turn, one pass, to see this exquisite world for the last time. Ooh-woo-woo! I get chills---I shake. One last turn . . . for my eyes only.

I could have gone with him. When don Juan left he said, "It takes all my guts to go. I need all my courage, all my hope---no expectations. To stay behind, you will need all your hope and all your courage." I took a beautiful jump into the abyss and woke up in my office, near Tiny Naylor's. I interrupted the flow of psychological continuity: Whatever woke up in that office could not be the "me" that I knew linearly. That's why I'm the nagual.

The nagual is a nonentity---not a person. In place of the ego is something else, something very old. Something observant, detached--- and infinitely less committed to the Self. A man with an ego is driven by psychological desires. The nagual has none. He receives orders from some ineffable source that cannot be discussed. That's the final understanding: The nagual, in the end, becomes a tale, a story. He cannot be offended, jealous, possessive---he can't be anything. But he can tell tales of jealousy and passion.

The only thing the nagual fears is "ontological sadness." Not nostalgia for the good old days---that's egomania. Ontological sadness is something different. There's a perennial force that exists in the universe, like gravity, and the nagual feels it. It's not a psychological state. It is a confluence of forces that

unite to clobber this poor microbe who has vanquished his ego. It is felt when there are no longer any attachments. You see it coming, then you feel it on top of you.

THE LONELINESS OF THE LONG-DISTANCE REPLICANT

He used to love the movies, 10,000 years ago. Back when they showed all-nighters at the Vista in Hollywood, back when he was learning the criteria for being dead. He doesn't go anymore, but the witches still do. It's a diversion from their freakish, epic activities---sort of like safe-sex dreaming. But not really.

"You know, there's a scene in *Blade Runner* that really got to us. The writer doesn't know what he's saying, but he hit something. The *replicant* is talking at the end: 'My eyes have seen inconceivable things.' He's talking about the constellations---'I have seen attack ships off of Orion'---nonsense, inanities. That was the only flaw for us, because the writer hasn't seen *anything*. But then the speech becomes beautiful. It's raining and the replicant says, 'What if all those moments will be lost in time . . . *like tears in the rain?*'

"This is a very serious question for us. They may be just tears in the rain---yes. But you do your best, sir. You do your best and if your best isn't good enough, then *fuck it*. If your best isn't good enough, *fuck God himself*."

A FOOTNOTE TO FEMINISTS

Before I met him a final time, I was scheduled to see the mysterious Carol Tiggs for breakfast. Twenty years before, she had "jumped" with don Juan Matus's party into the unknown. Unimaginably, she had returned, somehow triggering a veritable road show of sorcerers. I was feeling more and more uneasy about our pending appointment. Each time the Large Question loomed ("Where the hell were you those ten years? "), it *evanesced* . I felt like I was on the tracks; Carol Tiggs was waving from the caboose.

In a universe of dualities, Tiggs and Castaneda are energetic counterparts. They are not in the world together as man and wife. They have "double" energy; to a seer, their energetic bodies would appear as two luminous eggs instead of one. This doesn't make them "better" than Donner-Grau or Abelar or anyone---on the contrary. It gave them the predilection, as Juan Matus once said, to be "twice the asshole." Until now, Castaneda wrote exclusively about don Juan's world, never his own. But *The Art of Dreaming* is suffused with Carol Tiggs's dark, extraneous presence---and rife with hair-raising accounts of their excursions into the second attention, including the precipitous rescue of a "sentient being from another dimension" who takes the form of an angular, steely-eyed little girl called the Blue Scout.

I was just about to leave when the phone rang. I was sure it was Tiggs, calling to cancel. It was Donner-Grau.

I told her a dream I had that morning. I was with Castaneda in a gift shop called the Coyote Trail. She didn't care! She said normal dreams were just "meaningless masturbations." Cruel, heartless witch.

"I wanted to add something. People say to me, 'Here you are putting feminism

down... the "leader" of this group was Juan Matus and now the new nagual is Carlos Castaneda---why is it always a male?' Well, the reason those males were 'leaders' was a matter of energy---not because they knew more or were 'better.' See, the universe truly is *female*; the male is pampered because he is unique. Carlos guides us not in what we do in the world, but in *dreaming*.

"Don Juan had this horrible phrase. He used to say women are 'cracked cunts'--he wasn't being derogatory. It's *precisely* because we are 'cracked' that we have the facility for *dreaming*. Males are rigid through and through. But women have no sobriety, no structure, no *context*; in sorcery, that's what the male provides. The feminists become enraged when I say females are inherently *complacent*, but it's true! That's because we *receive knowledge directly*. We don't have to endlessly talk about it---that's the male process.

"Do you know what the nagual is? The myth of the nagual? That there are unlimited possibilities for all of us to be something else than what we are meant to be. You don't have to follow the route of your parents. Whether I'm going to succeed or not is immaterial."

FOR YOUR EYES ONLY

Just after I hung up, the phone rang again. Carol Tiggs was calling to cancel. I expected to feel relief but it was a bringdown.

I'd spoken to people who had seen her lecture in Maui and Arizona. They said she was gorgeous; that she worked the room like a stand-up; that she did a mean Elvis. "I'm sorry we can't meet," she said. At least she sounded genuine. "I was looking forward to it."

"It's okay. I'll catch up with you at one of your lectures."

"Oh, I don't think I'll be doing that again for a while." There was a pause. "I have something for you."

"Is it the lightning from your tits?"

She hesitated a moment then broke into peals of laughter.

"Something much more dramatic." I felt a tug at the pit of my stomach. "You know, they always said people have this split between mind and body---this imbalance, this 'mindbody problem.' But the real dichotomy is between *physical body* and *energy body*. We die without having ever awakened that magical Double, and it *hates* us for that. It hates us so much it eventually kills us. That's the whole 'secret' of sorcery: accessing the Double for abstract flight. Sorcerers jump into the void of pure perception with their energy body."

Another pause. I wondered if that was all she was going to say. I was about to speak but something held my words in check.

"There's a song that don Juan thought was beautiful---he said the lyricist *nearly* got it right. Don Juan substituted one word to make it perfect. He put in freedom where the songwriter had written love."

Then the ghostly recitation began:

You only live twice
 Or so it seems.
 One life for yourself
 And one for your dreams.
 You drift through the years
 And life seems tame.
 'Til one dream appears
 And Freedom is its name.
 And Freedom's a stranger
 Who'll beckon you on
 Don't think of the danger
 Or the stranger is gone.
 This dream is for you
 So pay the price.
 Make one dream come true. . . *

* From "You Only Live Twice" by John Barry and Leslie Bricusse

She held back in silence a moment.

Then she said "Sweet dreams," parodied a witchy cackle, and hung up.

ITCH OF THE NAGUAL

As the days became chillier it was easy to feel regret---about anything, even Prozac. What if it turns out Castaneda is inventing nothing? If that's true, then you are in a very bad spot.

We met for the last time on a cold day at the beach, by the pier. He said he couldn't stay long. He was sorry I wasn't able to meet Carol Tiggs. Some other time. I felt much the poor baby---*Damnit, I just want to be loved.* I was scared as Lee Marvin; I was Rutger Hauer with a tin cup; a shrieking Miracle Mile Jesus.

And Jesus looked down on all the people and said: I'm so bored.

We sat down on one of the benches on the bluff. I wanted to detain him, just for a moment. "Tell me the last time you felt nostalgia."

He answered without hesitation.

"When I had to say goodbye to my grandfather. He was long dead by then. Don Juan told me it was time to say goodbye: I was preparing for a long journey, no return. You have to say goodbye, he said, because *you will never come back*. I conjured my grandfather in front of me---saw him in perfect detail. A total vision of him. He had 'dancing eyes.' Don Juan said, 'Make your goodbye forever.' Oh, the anguish! It was time to drop the banner, and I did. My grandfather became a story. I've told it thousands of times."

We walked to his car.

"I feel an itch in my solar plexus---very exciting. I remember don Juan used to feel that, but I didn't understand what it meant. It means it will soon be time to go." He shivered with delight. "How exquisite!" As he drove off, he shouted

at me through the window: *Goodbye, illustrious gentleman!*

THE DIMMING OF THE LIGHTS

I heard about a lecture in San Francisco. I was finished writing about them but decided to drive up. To put a cork in it, so to speak.

The auditorium was in an industrial park in Silicon Valley. His plane was late; when he walked in, the hall was filled. He spoke eloquently for three hours without a break. He answered questions with incitements, solicitations, and parries. No one moved.

At the end, he talked about killing the ego. Don Juan had a metaphor: " 'The lights are dimming, the musicians packing away their instruments. There is no more time for dancing: *It is time to die.*' Juan Matus said there was endless time, *and no time at all---*the contradiction is *sorcery*. Live it! Live it gorgeously.

"A young man rose from the audience.

"But how can we do this without someone like don Juan? How can we do it without *joining---*"

"No one 'joins' us. *There are no gurus*. You don't need don Juan," he said emphatically. "*I* needed him---so I can explain it to *you*. If you want freedom, you need *decision*. We need mass in the world; we don't want to be masturbators. If you recapitulate, you'll gather the energy---*we will find you*. But you need a lot of energy. And for that, you have to work your *balls* off. So, suspend your judgment and take the option. Do it.

"Don Juan used to say, 'One of us is an asshole. *And it isn't me.*'" He paused a beat. "*That's* what I came to tell you today."

Everyone roared with laughter and rose in applause as Castaneda left through the back door.

I WANTED TO CHASE HIM DOWN, SCREAMING

Please love me! That would have been good for a laugh, anyway. But I forgot my tin cup.

I walked the sidewalk edges of the pond in darkness. A light wind scattered the brittle leaves on its border. One of our conversations came back---he'd been talking about love. I heard his voice and imagined myself on the caboose, slowly turning to face the words as they advanced...

"I fell in love when I was nine years old. Truly, I found my other Self. *Truly*. But it was not fated. Don Juan told me I would have been static, immobile. My fate was *dynamic*. One day, the love of my life---this nine-year old girl!---moved away. My grandmother said, 'Don't be a coward! Go after her!' I loved my grandmother but never told her, because she embarrassed me---she had a speech impediment. She called me 'afor' instead of 'amor.' It was really just a foreign accent, but I was very young, I didn't know. My grandmother put a bunch of coins in my hand. 'Go and get her! We'll hide her and I'll raise her!' I took the money and started to go. Just then, my grandmother's lover whispered something in her ear. She turned to me with an empty look. 'Afor,'

she said, 'Afor, my precious darling . . .' and she took the money back. 'I am sorry, but we have just run out of time.' And I forgot about it---it took don Juan to put it together, years later.

"It haunts me. When I feel the itch---and the clock says quarter to twelve---I get chills! I shake, to this day!"

" 'Afor . . . my *darling*. We have just run out of time.' "

End of Article

THE FOUR YOGAS OF



ENLIGHTENMENT

GUIDE TO DON JUAN'S NAGUALISM
& ESOTERIC BUDDHISM

**EDWARD
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THE FOUR YOGAS OF ENLIGHTENMENT[®]

GUIDE TO DON JUAN'S NAGUALISM
& ESOTERIC BUDDHISM

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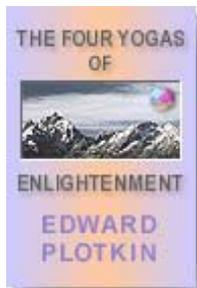
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THE FOUR YOGAS OF ENLIGHTENMENT®

guide to
don juan's nagualism & esoteric buddhism
EDWARD PLOTKIN

CHAPTER 1 - THE MASTERY OF AWARENESS

Stopping the World

On a day forever etched in my memory I unexpectedly discovered the extraordinary teachings of the Yaqui Indian seer, don Juan. While looking for something new and interesting to read, I had unknowingly stumbled upon a treasure trove of mystic lore and esoteric knowledge. After a few weeks of studying don Juan's teachings I became mesmerized by the wise old Indian's words. I slowly began to discover that don Juan was a magnificent *warrior* and *man of knowledge*. His mysterious teachings revealed a path to the mastery of awareness. I had been completely unaware that man had access to higher states of consciousness or that a path through the mastery of awareness to enlightened being existed. Having had little or no interest in the subject of altered states of awareness, it seemed unlikely that my personal world and interests were about to profoundly change. During the next few years as I studied don Juan's teachings, as brilliantly expounded in the writings of his disciple Carlos Castaneda, a number of exceptional experiences in non-ordinary reality occurred.

The first of these events involved a radical shift and permanent change in my perception of the nature of time. The significance of this had far reaching effects, and was an incredible impetus for the metamorphosis in consciousness that was about to occur. For if time was not the regular linear expansion that I had always taken for granted, then belief in the absolute nature of my perceived world and personal self was in jeopardy. My experience can best be described as an implosion of awareness wherein the *world had stopped*. As my awareness came to an absolute standstill I noticed that as long as my focus did not move off of absolute center that time had no duration, memory was barely a sliver, and that the universe was arising solely and uniquely as a function of my perception. A tiny shift in the *assemblage*

point of awareness brought with it an expansion of both a perceived historical world and personal self, as well as a heightened realization that the unfolding of these worlds were synchronous with movements away from the absolute center of awareness. The world and self could be *seen* to be arising as modifications in consciousness. Once this *witness-position* is attained in meditative absorption, or *heightened awareness*, these movements of the *assemblage point* of awareness are *seen* to be non-binding modifications in consciousness, and without duration or lasting relationship to the "I" at the center of perception. A seer, or don Juan would *see* this as being the *time of the double*.

Once it has learned to dream the double, the self arrives at this weird crossroad and a moment comes when he realizes that it is the double who dreams the self.

Tales Of Power, Carlos Castaneda

Later, I learned that this event was a glimpse at the first of the four yogas, the one-pointed yoga or cosmic consciousness. This was followed during subsequent years by a series of alterations and expansions running through the range of all of my senses, and a journey in consciousness through each of the four yogas and the psychological formation and integration of the self. My internship in the meditative exploration of time, self, and the very nature of reality itself had begun in earnest.

The various teachings presented in this book have been accessed and assimilated while in meditative absorption, or in don Juan's terminology *heightened awareness*. Learning to *stop the world*, bringing cohesiveness to movements of the assemblage point through *discerning wisdom*, and specifically the transformation from *egoic-self* to *enlightened Being* through the mastery of nondual awareness are the dominant themes of The Four Yogas Of Enlightenment.

"What happens to the persons whose assemblage points loses rigidity?" I asked. "If they're not warriors, they think they're losing their minds."

The Fire From Within, Carlos Castaneda

Meditative Synergies

Meditating on the teachings of different masters and traditions can synergistically enhance *heightened awareness*. With understanding achieved in more than one tradition, cross verification of terms and states of consciousness can be correlated. Without correlation, progress is exceedingly difficult because there is no contrasting point of view with which one can glean the intended meaning, nor a deeper understanding. The Four Yogas Of Enlightenment guides the reader along the meditative path to enlightenment through transcendence of the ego, spiritual awakening, and the stabilization and mastery of transcendental awareness. This book explores enlightenment, the spiritual path to radical sanity and infinite love, in an informal but informed and accessible manner.

While every effort has been made to make The Four Yogas both introductory and progressive, these teachings can be best accessed by average to advanced students of consciousness exploration and expansion. Adi Da, a supremely enlightened Western born avatar, discusses the issue of exercising the discriminative mind in order to realize the transcendental position of awareness in the introduction to *Self-Realization Of Noble Wisdom: The Lankavatara Sutra*:

It is a kind of "Catch 22" literature. You know that the Truth is ultimate transcendence of the discriminative mind, but in order to realize the transcendence of the discriminative mind, you must already have realized the transcendence of the discriminative mind!

Nevertheless, let us assume that we have experienced sufficient transcendence and continue our quest. The undertaking of the transcendence of egoic mind is an awesome but not impossible task. The beginning of enlightenment and the end of self-inflicted neurotic thinking is within the grasp of anyone willing to learn how to still the discursive mind and then study the resultant state with full awareness. In fact, it is not until one has gained sufficient meditative distance from the verbal dimensions of consciousness through meditative silence that one can begin to gauge the neurotic dimensions of egoic mind.

The ideal state to study consciousness is found at the juncture of meditative absorption and discerning awareness, the equivalent to don Juan's *heightened awareness*. The journey towards the mastery of awareness begins by stilling the mind, while single-pointedly stabilizing the assemblage point in *heightened awareness*, thereby *stopping the world*. At this position in awareness consciousness studies consciousness itself, revealing the hidden and ultimate nature of time, self, and reality. The apprentice sorcerer while in *heightened awareness* and having *stopped the world* clearly *sees* the inner luminous path to becoming a seer and man or woman of knowledge.

Inner silence works from the moment you begin to accrue it. The desired result is what the old sorcerers called stopping the world, the moment when everything around us ceases to be what it's been.

It is this moment when man the slave becomes man the free being, capable of feats of perception that defy our linear imagination.

The Active Side Of Infinity, Carlos Castaneda

Reconstructing Enlightenment

The Four Yogas Of Enlightenment presents a reconstruction of the stages of awareness leading to enlightenment and leads the reader progressively away from neurotic self-construction through the union of meditative absorption and discerning awareness. The union of meditative absorption and discerning awareness is a special state of heightened awareness that is explored and clarified in the pages of this book and can be viewed as an achievement in consciousness arrived at and stabilized through continued practice in meditative absorption and simultaneous study of the teachings of master seers.

Although the terminology of various masters may be difficult to access at first, with continued practice clarity is enhanced, and discerning awareness flowers. Many of the passages mentioned herein at first seemed to me to be impenetrable. However, when assimilated over time, magnificent teachings and wondrous states of awareness arced across the sky of mind, and my progress was immeasurably enhanced.

Perhaps those who do not meditate, or have never experienced altered states of reality, may find it difficult to believe that extraordinary states of awareness and the seed of transformative growth are available within consciousness. However not believing, or never having had the experience does not alter the hidden truth. For example, if you do not speak French you would have to study for some time before you could assimilate unfamiliar sounds. However, prior to your understanding, it would not be accurate to deny the existence of meaning within the French language simply because it was not within your current understanding. There are newfound states of consciousness to be grasped, practiced and finally mastered in meditative absorption, and their existence can only be discovered and mastered through our own effort.

I've said that the new seers believed that the assemblage point can be moved from within. They went one step further and maintained that impeccable men need no one to guide them, that by themselves, through saving their energy, they can do everything seers do.

The Fire From Within, Carlos Castaneda

Transcending the Dust of Time and Knowledge

One of the major difficulties the student of *heightened awareness* has is to bring a degree of cohe-

siveness to the newly found factors in consciousness. For the skilled meditator the requisite cohesiveness can be provided by means of consciousness studying consciousness from the perspective of a variety of meditation languages. The next stage is completed when the tonal and the nagual, or the egoic and transcendental aspects of awareness are brought into balance and harmony. Unbending intent coupled with an open and flexible approach to acquiring and assimilating seemingly disparate teachings are key factors in maintaining progress along the inner path to transcendental wisdom.

It is in the final stages of yogic awareness that the egoic mind continues to function and serve the needs of the self in the world, however the egoic mind is no longer in absolute control. The emergent man or woman of knowledge establishes a new way of being as the giver of knowledge, not the keeper; the source of love, not the seeker. The inconceivable transformation-death of old mind, with its endless labyrinth-like soliloquies and false projections, is replaced by transcendental mind. The seed from within has flowered and the path to Self mastery is in view. The guru within, obscured until now by egoic mind, can proceed along the stages of yogic awareness and development.

My recognition of the necessity of a book organizing and clarifying these teachings came about as I wrestled with understanding yogic knowledge and altered states of awareness. However, it soon became apparent that not only is progress slow and difficult to achieve, it is perhaps even more difficult to speak or write about states of consciousness that are beyond the ordinary realms of language. I realized that I required either a personal guru or a means of enhancing my understanding through expanded effort. A relationship with a guru never materialized and other and perhaps more powerful means of continuing my education appeared. In retrospect it seems that when each stage of my development in consciousness exploration stabilized a new and more powerful teaching became available.

During the mid-eighties the exiled Tibetans began to disseminate the written teachings of the great sages of Tibetan Buddhism. The translation of these extraordinary teachings into English was another serendipitous occurrence for me. Just as I had reached some major impasses in my studies of don Juan's lessons many marvelous Tibetan Buddhist teachings texts became available. Of particular interest were texts illuminating both the gradual and instantaneous path instructions of realized sages. These teachings revealed a cohesive knowledge and systematic path leading to the attainment of a radically quiescent mind, and instructive guidance for *seeing* and analyzing the true and apparent nature of consciousness and reality. I could *see* striking parallels with the teachings of don Juan, and realized that I had once again found lessons in the way of the warrior embodying Self-realized qualities such as fearlessness, serenity, wisdom, and compassion.

Contemplate the three planes of existence [past, present, and future] as being of mental origin, since they are designated by the mind. By analyzing the mind, the meditator examines the essence of things.

The first Bhavanakrama

"Was it something I will see in the future?" I asked. "There's no future!" he exclaimed cuttingly. "The future is only a way of talking. For a sorcerer there is only the here and now."

Tales Of Power, Carlos Castaneda

The Mastery of Transcendental Awareness

The Four Yogas Of Enlightenment illuminates the sublimely transcendental stages of awareness of Tibetan Buddhism. In contrast with Buddhism, I examine the way of the warrior, and the mastery of luminous awareness as elaborated in the writings of Carlos Castaneda. I have also drawn upon and revealed the mystic teachings of the nondual awareness school of Kashmir Shaivism. In my final

chapters I correlate the most advanced, esoteric, and incomparable states of samadhic awareness of the Western avatar and living Buddhist master, Adi Da, with the quintessence of don Juan's Nagualism and Chinese and Tibetan Buddhism.

Until The Ajna Door Is Fully Opened (or Otherwise Fully Transcended By Native Identification With The Witness-Position Of Consciousness), It Is Truly, the Ajna Knot.

The Dawn Horse Testament, Adi Da

The Discipline In the First Stage Of Perfect Practice Is To Stand As Witness-Consciousness. Second Deep Contemplation Consciousness and Identification With Itself.

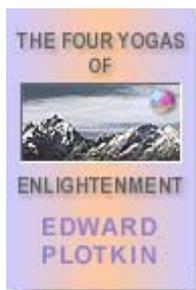
The Dawn Horse Testament, Adi Da

That which we in the West consider to be completed adult development, is considered by both Eastern and Western masters in consciousness to be a state of arrested development. This samadhi in four yogas illuminates the stages of awareness leading to enlightenment through comparative analysis and progressive meditative exploration. The transformation in consciousness which occurs is nothing less than a mystical encounter with the spirit, relinquishment of the traditional egoic self, and metamorphosis into a flexible, highly adapted man or woman of knowledge and numinous being. In the final part of Carlos Castaneda's *Tales Of Power*, don Juan, just prior to revealing the *sorcerers' explanation* to his disciple Carlos, prefaces his discussion with these sage comments:

Personal power decides who can or cannot profit by a revelation; my experiences with my fellow men have proven to me that very, very few of them would be willing to listen; and of those few who listen even fewer would be willing to act on what they have listened to; and of those who are willing to act even fewer have enough personal power to profit by their acts.

Seize your cubic centimeter of chance with The Four Yogas Of Enlightenment. Continue the journey towards incomparable knowledge and Self mastery.

Begin the journey towards enlightenment



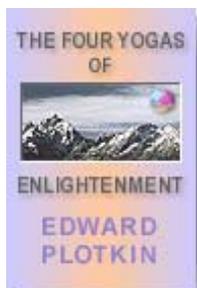
The Four Yogas Of Enlightenment, the next step in learning to stop the world. Begin the journey towards incredible knowledge and Self mastery with the Guide To don Juan's Nagualism & Esoteric Buddhism

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THE FOUR YOGAS OF ENLIGHTENMENT®

*guide to
don juan's nagualism & esoteric buddhism*
EDWARD PLOTKIN

The Four Yogas Reader Reviews

Students of Adi Da Samraj, Hubert Benoit, Tibetan Buddhism (Dzogchen and Mahamudra), Zen Buddhism, Carlos Castaneda, Lama Surya Das, Paramahansa Hariharananda, Carl Jung, Bokar Rinpoche, Jigme Rinpoche, Kalu Rinpoche, Don Agustin Rivas, Scientology, Chögyam Trungpa, Ken Wilber, Siddha Yoga (nondual Shaivism), Tensegrity

I am thoroughly enjoying the book you have written, particularly those aspects dealing directly with the sorcery techniques of don Juan and their correlation to other esoteric methods. It is of course the techniques of don Juan I am interested in.

I have flirted with other esoteric methods, but it was the force, directness, beauty and profound simplicity of Castaneda's works which 'hooked' me if you will. There is a muscularity and manliness to don Juan's way of life which I have never sensed in the eastern esoteric methods (the obvious exception of course being the martial arts).

For many years now I have tried to integrate don Juan's teachings into my life, but your work has been expanding my intellectual appreciation of these teachings in relation to other esoteric methods.

Thank you.

George B. Shaw <istr1655@fox.nstn.ca>
Toronto, Canada

Extract from East Meets West - Towards a Global Mysticism, by Judy Kennedy.

Dion Fortune: Some day there will come an American who will pick up the ancient Maya contacts, adapt them to modern needs, and express their forces in an initiatory ritual which shall be valid for the civilization to which he belongs.

Judy Kennedy: I've thought long and hard about what she says there, and the first thing that immediately came to mind was the works of Carlos Castaneda. In the past few decades, much research and analysis has gone into his books; perhaps the most revealing being the work of Edward Plotkin, who has documented the similarities between the complex teachings of the Yaqui sorcerer, Don Juan, and the more esoteric tenets of Tibetan Buddhism, such as Tantra and Dzogchen.

Judy Kennedy <waywardmuse@waywardmuse.com>
Mesa, Arizona

I enjoyed visiting your website and found what you had to say in your book about Carlos Castaneda, Buddhism, and Adi Da to be fascinating and perceptive.

I have attended the public workshops now being given by Carlos Castaneda himself under the auspices of Cleargreen Inc. of Santa Monica, California, and what he teaches there works well together with your book to prove what you have accomplished.

Leigh Goldstein
Los Angeles, California

Thank you for the great work that you put into The Four Yogas. I'm halfway through, taking it slowly.

What I most appreciate about the work that you have offered is your broad spectrum exposure to vantage from. Although I have been a student of the works of Carlos Castaneda for about 10 years now, having read and re-read the series several times, I am more involved with it in mind than in actual transformative practice.

Your writings and exposure to other masters is now spurring me into action, into practice of meditation, into realizing what I mostly know about only intellectually, what I have been longing for but not sober enough to do.

Thank you again,
Paul Huff
Rainier, Washington

I'm the editor at the Hans-Nietsch-Verlag and just read your book, The Four Yogas Of Enlightenment. To say the least I'm impressed.

Norbert Classen
Editor in Chief
Hans-Nietsch-Verlag, Germany

Norbert Classen is the author of Carlos Castaneda und Das Vermächtnis des Don Juan (Carlos Castaneda and The Legacy of Juan).

Hans-Nietsch-Verlag is the publisher of the German edition of The Five Books Of The Adidam Revelation by Adi Da Samraj.

Edward Plotkin

First of all I just want to congratulate you on a superb book, beautifully written. Such a refreshing change, writing that is specific and truthful, as opposed to some of those nebulous books out there that never really do it for me!

In the last couple of days, I have noticed a change in my meditation. My mind is making less effort to interfere with my focus, and I have reached a point of consciousness yesterday that I don't think I have ever been to. I was very calm and did not have to make an effort to concentrate.

Your wonderful book provides me with inspiration everyday. Thank you so much.

Peter Apps
Sao Paulo, Brazil (April 2000)

It happened for the first time today, that experience that it says in your book when you are in a state of complete clarity...like a bird flying across the sky¹. It felt like I was on the crest of a wave, perfectly balanced not needing to affirm that things are arising, but just knowing in an effortless way. It is so simple! Why does it take so long to get to this place of natural mind?

It is like each feeling or sensation, or thought that arrives gets dissolved by the emptiness. I am amazed at how incredible it feels to be in that place, I am afraid that I won't get there again!! Is this the beginning of the one pointed yoga, and it is just a question of continuing and practice?

Many, many thanks for your replies.

Peter Apps
Sao Paulo, Brazil (February 2002)

¹ Maintain trackless consciousness, like a bird flying across the sky.¹ Meditation by the great Tibetan sage and teacher Gampopa for maintaining the unmodulated, natural state of mind.

The purpose of this meditation is to maintain undistracted mindfulness while remaining aware of the non-dual nature of consciousness. By stabilizing the mind in tranquil absorption, while simultaneously studying the abiding nature of mind, we can embark upon the path of self-realization.

Direct experience of this state will lead to the first or one-pointed yoga, which is designated as a single pointed awareness of the mind's essential nature. The meditator will have gained insight into the simplicity of consciousness, which while manifesting itself uninterruptedly is detached from transitory thoughts.

Edward Plotkin

¹ The Four Yogas, Ch. 11, p. 127. Gampopa (1079-1153), Tibetan Kagyü lineage

I feel a deep sense of gratitude. Because of your book, which I'm reading again, and through our email conversations, I am experiencing such an exciting desire to get on with it, to engage the true work that opens through meditation. I find myself taking moments otherwise engaged in thinking or reading to get still and observe.

I have read so many books about the transcendental and have experimented with some power plants that cause a shift in the assemblage point, and through that have been in this place of wonderful timeless stillness that I have called Ground Zero¹; where even my breathing stops and everything is just suspended, just present awareness. My soul has longed for something that I could never quite put my finger on. I've gone to different gurus, teachers and channels and stayed with these only for brief periods because the people and the rituals, the dogma that surround these for the most part seem counter productive.

So my gratitude is that something is now Clear. It is for your straight talk. For your courage to walk this path and then talk about it to us. Again, for your willingness to be in communication and the sense of you as a real person in real time, knowing the freedom to break the bonds of person and time.

In Love - Respect & Gratitude,
Paul Huff
Rainier, Washington

¹ The shift in the assemblage point experienced with entheogens (psychoactive power plants, i.e. marijuana, peyote, etc.) is awesome and temporary. It may awaken the soul to an unspecified longing, the place where 'everything is just suspended'.

This is the position of the assemblage point where don Juan noted the world stops. Over time, as the apprentice becomes more proficient in meditative absorption, attention stabilizes at center, Paul Huff's Ground Zero. Eventually, without relying on entheogens, the awakened meditator effortlessly resides in

meditative absorption, the samadhi of the nonmeditation yoga.

Don Juan instructed his apprentices from a position of the assemblage point he referred to as heightened awareness, the equivalent to meditative absorption. In one of the most delightful of Castaneda's books, *La Gorda* and Carlos Castaneda consider seeing the luminous mold of man:

“Did you ever see the mold, Gorda?” I asked. “Sure, when I became complete again.The Nagual (don Juan) said that sometimes if we have enough personal power we can catch a glimpse of the mold even though we are not sorcerers; when that happens we say that we have seen God. He said that if we call it God it is the truth. The mold is God.”

The Second Ring of Power, Carlos Castaneda

Having stopped the world, the apprentice studies consciousness itself, aided by the enlightened songs of master seers. As the mysteries of awareness unravel the nature of the soul's longing is resolved in the emergence of the Spirit. From the witness-position in consciousness it is *seen* that the self is a dream arising in consciousness, and that the true nature of consciousness is the Divine Self of God.

Edward Plotkin

en-theo-gen [literally - God within; God or spirit facilitating] a psychoactive sacramental substance; a plant or chemical derivative taken to effect religious experience.

I began studying Tibetan Buddhism just a few years ago. I am certain the timing is just right for your arrival on the scene to help integrate the teachings of don Juan with the teachings I have gained during the past 7 years. I left my teacher relationship in July, '99. How good it feels to have that open space filled with something really wonderful.

I like the clarity of your writing. With certain books, I have the feeling of an 'over voice' speaking. It is as if I am reading the words, yet a voice is speaking in an energy way that puts me on full alert. The 'over voice' is not saying the same as the written words. The 'over voice' carries the deeper meaning or intent of the words, and it moves into my mind/body in a very different way¹ than books that do not carry this 'over voice'. The Four Yogas carries this 'over voice'.

I am so thankful to you for your journey, and for your writing of your book.

Teresa Ramsey
Dayton, Ohio

¹ Carlos Castaneda experienced this heightened awareness when in the presence of the Nagual don Juan. The Nagual's blow to the assemblage point, and especially teachings delivered from the transcendental position of awareness have this extraordinary effect. The Four Yogas empowers this shift in awareness. The emergence of the 'double' or 'witness-consciousness' is a prelude to the development of fearlessness, serenity, wisdom, and ultimate enlightenment.

Tranquility and insight are the essential requirements. Tranquil absorption is the foundation for insight into the nature of mind and ultimate reality. When thought projections are cleared the mind becomes stable and immobile. Just as salt dissolves in water, the mind dissolves into its intrinsic nature.

Edward Plotkin

Your book is great. I really want to achieve my dream. Please, let me know if this book is available in the Russian language.

Thank you very much.

Natasha Tsibulskaya
Portland, Oregon

I have completed retreats with Bokar Rinpoche (dharma heir to Kalu Rinpoche¹) and Lama Surya Das (Western Dzogchen teacher²), and meditate in the very hierarchical, but profoundly intelligent Shambhala Dharmadhatu path³ (Chögyam Trungpa legacy and sangha⁴). Your book is an extraordinary exegesis, and series of signposts in content and meaning. Thank you for your book.

Joel Puleo
Medical College of Wisconsin
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

¹A master of meditation practice in the Nyingma Dzogchen and Kagyü Mahamudra tradition, Kalu Rinpoche (1905-1989) taught extensively in America and Europe. During his three visits to the West, Kalu Rinpoche founded teaching centers in over a dozen countries. Mahamudra is an advanced doctrine and practice of the Kagyüpa order of Tibetan Buddhism, and a foundation teaching presented in *The Four Yogas Of Enlightenment*.

²Dzogchen (The Great Perfection) is the consummate practice of the Nyingma lineage of Tibetan Buddhism, and an exceptional path towards the fully awakened state of enlightenment.

³The Shambhala tradition teaches activities that 'awaken' the meditator through mindfulness practices. The three gates of Shambhala are: Dharmadhatu, for the study of traditional Buddhism; Shambhala Training, which empowers a fully lived life through the awakening of discerning wisdom; and Nalanda, a contemplative approach and discipline that explores relating to the world as it is.

⁴ Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche (1939-1987) was a Tibetan Buddhist Kagyü meditation master. Chögyam Trungpa published six books (including *Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior*), established three meditation centres and a contemplative university, Naropa Institute.

The lineage of *The Four Yogas Of Enlightenment* book is the Nagualism of don Juan, Kashmir Shaivist nondualism, Tibetan Nyingma Dzogchen and Kagyü Mahamudra meditation, and the nondual Buddhism of Adi Da Samraj.

Edward Plotkin

I am finding *The Four Yogas* to be of considerable value, being very familiar with the concepts presented. I have practiced Vajrayana¹ at the Feet of a completely unknown western born Master (female) since 1974. I am also very well versed in the works of Adi Da and Castaneda, so for me the book is a wonderful summation and source of reference for all those aspects of my own Practice.

Joshua Rosslee <joshua@hixnet.co.za.>
Johannesburg, South Africa

¹Vajrayana or 'indestructible vehicle' training generally places emphasis on the master-student relationship. Perfected in Tibet, Vajrayana is based on transmission and empowerment.

For further thoughts on the teachings of Adi Da, see this site; Ken Wilber discusses *The Dawn Horse Testament* of Adi Da Samraj, with Edward Plotkin commentary.

Edward Plotkin

Thank you for making a significant contribution to the understanding of the Great Tradition of religion as a unified legacy of mankind.

Let me announce where my prejudices lies: as a devotee of Sri Bhagavan Adi Da, my practice is centered on Ishta-Guru-Bhakti Yoga, or devotion to my most beloved guru.

Nevertheless, I feel I can recommend your text quite highly to those not prepared for submission to a guru.

Best wishes, and keep me informed of your future works.

Louis Nelson <Lnelson@Op.net>
Paoli, Pennsylvania

I want you to know that your book has moved me forward significantly, it is in line with my own work and personal growth. I thank you from the depth of my heart. If ever I may be of service to you let me know.

Garry Isenstadt <eaglesgift@aol.com>
La Jolla, California

Your work is extraordinary. I am astounded by its clarity. I found you because of Hubert Benoit (The Supreme Doctrine: Psychological encounters in Zen thought). He has long been a 'mentor' of mine. I had been floundering in my own process, trying to organize the profusion of material and processes.

'You don't have to reinvent the wheel' the inner voice said. Then, I got a 'hit' that I was supposed to look up Benoit's name on the internet...and there you were. I cannot begin to tell you what a pleasure your book is bringing me. It is the next step I very much needed...a map of the myriad things I had accumulated and confirmation of much of the process.

I feel very privileged to have the opportunity to study The Four Yogas...and to make it part of my own process.

Judith Timmons
Pensacola, Florida

A few weeks ago I bought a copy of The Four Yogas. Prior to stumbling onto this I had over the past few years read parts of books on Buddhism and a few articles on Zen in particular. By chance I also came across three of Castaneda's books - A Yaqui Way of Knowledge, A Separate Reality, and Journey to Ixtlan. Buddhism, which has become my religion, I could understand at least superficially, but don Juan's teachings seemed like an impossible riddle, and I never saw the connection between these two philosophies.

When reading Castaneda I thought I was either too stupid to comprehend it, or this was a load of bullshit from a whacked out hippie spacehead. Thanks to you I now realize that it wasn't like that at all. I'm not stupid and don Juan was simply brilliant. I have now arrived at chapter five of The Four Yogas (I try to read it slowly and carefully, and I don't have much time for it because of university studies) and I have been served one revelation after another. I realize now that my reason for not being able to comprehend don Juan's cryptic lectures, was that his apparatus of terms differs so fundamentally from that of both eastern and western philosophy.

Furthermore, I have found several links to western philosophers in your text. Among others I see Kant, Hegel and Husserl's thoughts between the lines. The difference of course being that they lacked the knowledge of meditation (or not-doing). You're probably aware of these similarities, but I thought I'd mention it just in case. I'm running short of time here, so I'll cut the rest short: Thanks a lot for opening my eyes, The Four Yogas book has been worth every penny.

Yours with gratitude,
 Christer Dehlin <christer.dehlin@hfstud.uio.no>
 University of Oslo, Norway

Ed- I've finished reading The Four Yogas of Enlightenment. I want to take a moment and express my gratitude.

Little bit of history. Over the past 5 - 6 years (maybe even longer), I have been unable to embrace the union of emptiness with physical reality. I could not explain this to anyone! I was beginning to think I was dysfunctional in relationships. Every time I would get close to someone, my projection onto them, of my 'stain of emptiness' frightened me tremendously. It was my sure death! I could not explain what was going on. I finally gave up!

I understood 'nothingness' conceptually and intellectually. I am a Ken Wilber fan. But this fear was overwhelming, unbearable and stuffed deep down into my subconscious. I really didn't want to face its reality. Well, anyway, I really connected with your description of this deep terror. It has been a very frustrating and gradual process in releasing and understanding this intense emotion.

I stumbled onto your book at the right time. I don't think I could have consciously integrated what was happening to me without your book. Your book allowed me to step into a process of understanding the void with appreciation.

Once again, thank you.

Elijah DeRoche
 Boise, Idaho

I am actively engrossed in exploring consciousness, and my projections within. I have been a student of Ken Wilber's The Spectrum Of Consciousness¹ since it's publication. I have already learned from your book, just from reading from a different angle/perspective, which is exactly what you stated in the very beginning of your book.² I look forward to the continued study of the knowledge that your book contains.

Michael Wheaton
 Kopolei, Hawaii

¹ Ken Wilber's book presents a synthesis of Eastern and Western paths to enlightenment, a tour de force in the mapping of transcendental awareness.

² Meditative awareness is synergistically enhanced through exploration of the teachings of different masters and traditions. With an understanding achieved in more than one tradition, cross verification of terms and states of consciousness can be correlated. Without correlation, progress is exceedingly difficult because there is no contrasting point of view with which one can glean an intended meaning nor a deeper understanding.

Edward Plotkin

I have just opened your book and I have already found it more than I expected it to be. I had noticed the similarity between the teachings of Tibetan Yoga/Buddhism and Nagualism and was searching for Tibetan Buddhist information on the net when I came upon your site. I was first impressed with your site design: elegant and to the point. Now I see that your book is very valuable, or can be, to anyone who decides to take awareness seriously.

Thank you.

Charles deWinter <dewinter@montrose.net>
Telluride, Colorado

I am on the spiritual path for more than 30 years now. I started with an initiation into Kriya yoga by Paramahansa Hariharananda, went on with 10 years work of Bagwan (Osho), then Tibetan Buddhism (Kagyü lineage by Jigme Rinpoche), followed by an initiation into shamanism by Don Agustin Rivas from Peru, who works with ayahuasca. The energy I got contact with on the latter was so strong that my assemblage point broke loose, and it took me 3 month to stabilize a new cohesion of my world perception. I feel near to formlessness, but have not manifested it in total until now.

My chakras are floating free, except a block of energy over my head. I am solo auditing on OT 2, but I am not in the Scientology church, but the technique to handle stuck flows is incredible. I also do Tensegrity, since I have studied Castaneda for about 25 years now. I have had some glimpses about the totality of self (Tonal-Nagual, Samsara-Nirvana, the physical universe - the beyond) but I have the sharp realization, that I have not yet reached it.

Ingo
Vienna, Austria

Until one can effortlessly attain and maintain the witness-position in consciousness (the non-meditation yoga or moksha-bhava samadhi), it will seem to the meditator that there is something left to be reached.

Ayahuasca, marijuana, peyote, and other mind altering substances, shift the assemblage point away from its customary position, the self or ego. Once the shift away from self is accomplished, awareness often feels ecstatic in its newfound liberation. Of course, when the effect of the substance wears off the meditator is once again confronted with the self. If the meditator is unable to attain the witness position in meditative awareness, he/she will remain entrained in whatever state arises. Substituting one illusory state, the ego, for another, the mind altered drug induced state, will not be resolved into the freedom of awareness of enlightenment. The cycle of drug induced apparent liberation may result in habituation unless shamanic or yogic intervention takes place.

Once the warrior has sufficient personal power to stop the world (savakalpa samadhi) in yogic or meditative awareness, the self is seen as a nondual, illusory, nonbinding projection in consciousness, and entrainment in the 'self' is severed. With further practice a turning about in the seat of consciousness occurs, and enlightenment is permanent.

From the fourth yoga, the nonmeditation yoga, or moksha-bhava samadhi, it is seen that there is nothing to attain or reach. Consciousness configures the dream of being in a field of appearance and emptiness. Ultimately and eternally consciousness precedes matter. There is no 'out there' beyond consciousness. You are Always and Already.....the One

1.
Jesus said to them,
 "When you make the two into one,
 when you make the inner like the outer
 and the outer like the inner,
 and the upper like the lower,
 when you make male into female into a single one,
 so that the male will not be male
 and the female will not be female,
 when you make eyes replacing an eye,
 a hand replacing a hand,
 and an image replacing an image,
 then you will enter the kingdom."

The Secret Teachings Of Jesus:
 Four Gnostic Gospels, Marvin Meyer

2.
Jesus said:
 On that day you will realize,
 that I am in my Father,
 and you are in me,
 and I am in you.

John 14:20

3.
 By perfecting this nonmeditation stage
 The meditator attains naked, unsupported
 awareness.
 This nondiscriminatory awareness is the
 meditation!
 By transcending the duality of meditation and
 meditator,
 External and internal realities,
 The meditating awareness dissolves itself
 Into luminous clarity.
 Transcending the intellect,
 It is without the duality of equipoise and
 postequipoise.
 Such is the quintessence of mind.

Phagdru Dorje Gyalpo,
 Tibetan Kagyü lineage

4.
 I Am The Secret Of The Heart
 I Am The Heart Itself, Revealed.
 What You Must Realize Is This: I Am You!
 I Am The Heart Itself, Revealed To You,
 and To Be As You.

The Dawn Horse Testament: The Testament
 of Secrets of the Divine World-Teacher and
 True Heart-Master,
 Avatar Adi Da Samraj

I highly recommend Ed's technique's and writing. He is as concise as possible for the topics, and there is much there directly or tangentially related to what we are involved in/with/near/around...

Ed posts on and off, but his balance and content is so sublime and welcome. :)

....he is quite knowledgeable about energy flow from more than one discipline.

Ed has balance without truncation, a rare act, indeed. :)

don Pequeño, Houston, Texas
 donpequeno@aol.com to alt.dreams.castaneda newsgroup

I love the book, and that's a real compliment because I'm a writer and picky, picky, picky. Very clear and mysterious at the same time. Lovely. You've been a great help already. Synthesis is one of my favorite things.

Patricia Donovan <pdonovan@buffalo.edu>
Senior Editor/Humanities, Architecture, Education
University at Buffalo

I have just begun to read your book, and I just find it wonderful. I will keep you informed about the result.

Gilberto F. Bicalho <gilbert@rio.com.br>
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

.....posted in honor of Ed Plotkin, whose insight and guidance in matters of perception have been invaluable to me, and in the true spirit of nagualism.

Carlos Grau
matus1@concentric.net to alt.dreams.castaneda newsgroup

This is one of the best books I've read in years. It clearly transpires both your academic research work, and what is more important even your personal involvement and experience. In the past I have worked hard on Castaneda's books and I entirely agree with your treatment of his work and your cross-correlation of terms.

Piero.Cinguino@cse.lt.stet.it
Torino, Italy

I have been a student of Siddha Yoga for 10 years. In my early college experience I was an anthropology student and studied Carlos Castaneda works. As a therapist for 13 years, I resonate with Jungian theory in many ways.

As a seeker, I have dabbled in many areas, trying on this one and that one; not unlike many modern day explorers. However, it often troubles me that there is so much information out there, it is so easy to become confused. (One of my life lessons no doubt) I have been trying to find the golden thread that ties it together.

Thank you once again,
Harriet Cianci
Terryville, Connecticut

I now have the book and it's excellent. I'm very pleased to read how you state the don Juan material in terms of the 4 yogas - it's really a new perspective for me. Especially helpful to understand 'seeing' better (and to acknowledge that I've actually had the experience of 'seeing' myself and can recognize it, even if I don't 'see' all the time.) Same for what you write re the assemblage point. I've been dazzled by the 'special effects' of the Castaneda books, and did not understand these teachings quite this way. Also interesting and new for me - how you present the ally. When all this sinks in a little more I'll write some on it and ask some questions.

I feel I'm understanding what you're saying in term of Padmasambhava's book on listening in the Bardo!... The 4 yogas are what the Dhyani Buddhas and their respective consorts are about - Vajrassattva, Ratnasambhava, Amitabha, and Amoghasiddhi. The book throws much light on this process, and I feel encouraged that I can make use of this 'map' to navigate my own crossing over...to stalk enlightenment. It's beginning to seem more doable.

Thank you for your help, and for the tremendous book. I'm glad to know I'm not the only one who sees that what Buddhism and don Juan are talking about are not completely different things.

Aida Rodriguez-Parnas <aparnas@fclass.net>
St. Louis, Missouri

The Five Dhyani (meditation) Buddhas...Vairochana, Akshobhya, Ratnasambhava, Amitabha, and Amoghasiddhi, visualized during meditation embody five transcendental wisdoms. The Bardo Thodol, known as the Tibetan Book of the Dead, and attributed to Padmasambhava, guides the aspirant towards these transcendental wisdoms, and the resultant spiritual transformation and enlightened consciousness.

Edward Plotkin

I am enjoying your book very much, and meditating on The Four Yogas everyday to deepen my insight.

Thank you and best wishes.

Klaus Wieben
Melbourne, Australia

.....a quick comment, here: I've studied The Four Yogas of Enlightenment and enjoyed it immensely! Some really hard work went into that document;this is top-rate!

Mark Seven Smith
mviismith@aol.com to alt.dreams.castaneda newsgroup

Thanks a lot for everything; The Four Yogas, and your timely correspondence. I carry a copy of the text in my book bag to work daily. I believe I told you before that many of the traditions that you have represented were a part of my own personal study, and you've seemingly lifted each of the major ones (especially don Juan's Nagualism...which is usually where other people get off the boat) and focused on them, highlighting their similarities. For this effort, I am truly grateful---if, for no other reason, only for the kinship of souls who refuse to discriminate the teaching for the teacher.

Bless you and your efforts.

Phillip Hale
Detroit, Michigan

Just a note to let you know I'm reading your book in more detail now and find it even better than I did at first. It's interesting that it begins about where my own book ends. Further, if I had your vocabulary, I'd be dangerous.

Scott Smith <kimmerjohn@aol.com>
Lewisville, Texas

Whenever I think of you, or take your book into my hands, there's a lot of power coming through. I can feel that you really made it. Will follow this path in spite of all reactions. Am slowly grasping the idea that I have to be a source instead of the seeker.

Bernd Schaefer <Cenninah@wolfsburg.de>
Velpke, Germany

I visited your site and like it very much. First let me compliment you on your page design. You've found a way to make frames work for you so that it enhances the surfing experience. Not an easy task I'd say based on some sites I've visited. I like the notebook motif.

But more importantly, I like your spiritual approach. I have enjoyed a few don Juan books, dabbled in Siddha Yoga and found something special in Buddhism without seeing any of those paths excluding the others. I agree with your valuing of cross verification. If wise men in the Mexican desert and in Tibet come up with the same truths there must be something there.

Tom Barrett
Interlude: An Internet Retreat

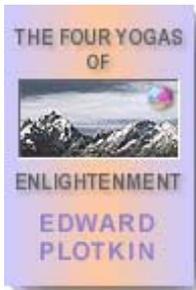
Readers are invited to contribute their reviews to The Four Yogas

Please include comments that you would like to share with other readers from around the world who have been meditating on The Four Yogas.

Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, England, France, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kuwait, Mexico, Netherlands, Netherlands Antilles, New Zealand, Norway, Puerto Rico, Romania, Scotland, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United States, and Venezuela.

I look forward to hearing from you, and thank you for your participation in raising the worldwide banner of enlightened awareness

Begin the journey towards enlightenment



The Four Yogas Of Enlightenment, the next step in learning to stop the world

Begin the journey towards incredible knowledge and Self mastery with the Guide To don Juan's Nagualism & Esoteric Buddhism

Table of contents, bibliography, recommended reading list, fully indexed.

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Guide To Don Juan's Nagualism & Esoteric Buddhism
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Edward Plotkin, Madison NJ

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