

The Teachings of Don Juan: A Yaqui Way of Knowledge Study Guide

The Teachings of Don Juan: A Yaqui Way of Knowledge by Carlos Castaneda

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Plot Summary

The Teachings of Don Juan: A Yaqui Way of Knowledge describes the effects of three hallucinogenic drugs taken by a graduate student under the supervision of a Yaqui Indian shaman, first as a narrative of the experiences and then as a systematic, scholarly analysis.

Seeking information about peyote, Carlos Castaneda meets an expert Yaqui shaman, Don Juan Matus. After a year of growing friendship and a test that shows he has the backbone to meet "Mescalito", the anthropomorphism of the hallucinations caused by ingesting peyote buttons, face-to-face, Castaneda begins a "long and arduous" apprenticeship. During his first peyote experience, Castaneda convulses and feels suffocated, but cavorts with a glowing black dog, whom Matus assures him is Mescalito in a rare display of playfulness. Matus advises him to concentrate on his calling, rather than on his fear, and to see the marvels around him.

Gradually, following his benefactor's methodology, Matus introduces Castaneda to allies. They are neither guardians nor spirits, but aids in doing great things. Precise steps are needed to acquire allies. Although he dislikes his benefactor's ally, devil's weed, Matus introduces him to it first, showing how to pick and prepare the four "heads," and gives him a potion to drink. Despite its painful side effects, Matus is convinced that the Datura ally likes him. Matus next introduces his own "most marvelous ally," the "smoke of diviners."

Castaneda learns how to cultivate Datura and how to prepare the smoke mixture. Matus tells him that learning is a hardship that all can undertake, but that few achieve. To become a "man of knowledge" one must defeat four "natural enemies:" fear, clarity of mind, power, and old age. The outcome cannot be foreseen, and the state lasts only an instant after defeating the fourth. Matus teaches about Datura's "second portion," where real learning begins. It allows one to soar through the air. Castaneda experiences it twice, carrying out an elaborate ritual involving lizards, and the second time feels at home, soaring in serene darkness. He rates the night "truly magnificent," and does not think the headache will impede him from trying the weed again.

Castaneda next smokes for the first time and is terrified by the sensations. Solid surfaces feel spongy and terrifying. He balks at trying it again, declaring it is like losing one's mind. Castaneda's final encounter with Mescalito comes in a four-day peyote ceremony for *peyoteros* and their apprentices. Mescalito teaches him a song (which he memorizes), shows him talking intimately to his father, and reveals a secret name for Castaneda's use only. Matus declares this means Mescalito approves of him and has given him a clear lesson about the only one path and one "world of happiness" for him.

Castaneda performs the lizard ritual on his own, absentmindedly anointing his forehead, which is forbidden. Datura, however, spares his life. He still prefers devil's weed to smoke, because smoke is so frightening. Matus says that he is free to choose his path, but should realize that both blind: smoke by fear and devil's weed by ambition. He

smokes again and feels himself turn into a crow in a process that is difficult, but not painful. The next time, it takes Matus three days to bring him back. He learns that his destiny, one day, is to die and fully become a crow.

Castaneda experiences dissociation, diagnoses a "loss of soul" and true bewitching. Matus prescribes specific bodily positions for Castaneda to perform on his "beneficial spot" while he finds the culprit and tries to get his soul back. During a horrendous night, a *diablera* imitates Matus, trying to lure him off his spot. In the morning, Matus informs him that, had he not learned all he has, he would not have survived. When Castaneda cannot shake profound distress, Matus declares this is common among those who lack "unbending intent." Thereafter, Castaneda refrains from seeking lessons, and months later, struggles to organize his field notes to show the "internal cohesion" of Matus' methodology.

Introduction

Introduction Summary and Analysis

The Teachings of Don Juan: A Yaqui Way of Knowledge describes the effects of three hallucinogenic drugs taken by a graduate student under the supervision of a Yaqui Indian shaman, first as a narrative of the experiences and then as a systematic, scholarly analysis.

Author Carlos Castaneda first meets Don Juan Matus in the summer of 1960 at a border bus stop. Castaneda is gathering information on medicinal plants as part of his studies in anthropology at the University of California, Los Angeles. His guide/helper arranges a meeting with this "*brujo*" or medicine man, who avoids the question both then, and during several visits over the course of a year. Nevertheless, they become friends. Finally, Matus announces he has chosen Castaneda for a "long and arduous" apprenticeship like the one Matus endured decades before under a "benefactor" (teacher) whom he calls a "*diablero*" (shape-shifter). Matus reveals little about his benefactor or his own personal life, other than being born in 1891 in the Southwest and spending 1900-40 in central and southern Mexico, where wide travels contribute to his knowledge.

The apprenticeship begins in June 1961. They work in Arizona and Sonora for a few days at a time, more frequently and for longer stretches during the summers of 1961-64. This periodicity prevents Castaneda from becoming a full-fledged sorcerer, but affords scientific detachment. He voluntarily ends the apprenticeship in September 1965. Months later, he struggles to organize his field notes to show the "internal cohesion" of Matus' methodology, which focuses on the Indians' pre-contact use of hallucinogenic plants - peyote, Jimson weed, and mushrooms - for pleasure, curing, and witchcraft. Matus uses the last two to acquire "allies" as well as peyote to acquire wisdom and knowledge of how to live right. They unfold and validate "states of non-ordinary reality." While anything can be a "power object," these are childish toys needed only while one lacks an "ally." The book first recaptures the author's day-to-day experiences, as preserved in his field notes, and then analyzes what these data say about Matus' system.

Part 1: Chapter 1

Part 1: Chapter 1 Summary and Analysis

"The Teachings," opens on Friday, Jun. 23, 1961 when, after a year of sidestepping the topic of peyote, Matus announces he has "smoked." Matus, knows Castaneda's good intentions, and tests whether his would-be apprentice dares to meet "Mescalito" by having him find the particular "spot" on the 12 X 8-foot porch where he can feel "naturally happy and strong." Castaneda has no idea how to solve the riddle, and Matus offers no clues. Left alone, Castaneda paces, sits in various places, and finally rolls around until 2 AM. When he admits defeat, Matus laughs and tells him to feel with his eyes. Castaneda is startled to find that his peripheral vision changes from greenish-yellow to purple when he inches to a particular place, which he marks with his jacket. Elsewhere, Castaneda marks with a shoe a shift from chartreuse to other hues. At the jacket position, he feels a force repulsing and frightening him, but by his shoe he falls asleep, exhausted. Matus calls this his "*sitio*," where energy is replenished; the other is "the enemy," which weakens and can kill. Castaneda suspects Matus is humoring him; but the Indian assures him that he has passed the test, which shows he has the backbone to meet Mescalito face-to-face.

Part 1: Chapter 2

Part 1: Chapter 2 Summary and Analysis

At 7:00 PM, Friday, Aug. 4, 1961, Castaneda arrives at Matus' Arizona home and joins six Indians sitting silently on the porch, before piling into a pick-up truck for a drive to the dingy, dirty house of a friend, John. Castaneda must receive his first seven mescalitos from someone other than Matus. For if "he" does not find Castaneda "agreeable," their friendship would be lost. A fearful Castaneda chews dry buttons and his mouth goes numb. Matus tells him to rinse with tequila, but not swallow, and to eat the dried fruit and meat that is passed around. By the sixth cycle, Castaneda hears the Indians speaking Italian, wants to throw up, and is unbearably thirsty. He enjoys sweeping the ground with vision narrowed to a pinpoint, when a black dog approaches. As it drinks, it grows transparent. Castaneda convulses and feels suffocated in a narrowing tunnel. The dog reappears, now glowing intensely after drinking; Castaneda drinks and is afire. They play and wrestle. Awakening to "sober consciousness" is shockingly difficult. Next evening, Matus declares all is well, for Mescalito never plays in this fashion.

On Sunday, the Indians describe how Castaneda pukes 60 times before starting the convulsions, shivering, and whining. He awakens them screaming, leaping, and swimming in a puddle of water. As he strips, drinks water, and stares into space, they fall asleep; but Castaneda jumps again, howls, and takes after the dog. They circle the house 20 times, barking and howling. John is surprised to see his unplayful dog acting this way. When the shivering and convulsing resume, followed by motionlessness, Matus announces it is over. They leave Castaneda to sleep. Gleefully, the witnesses tell how Castaneda and the dog piss on one another. Matus grows angry when Castaneda cannot realize the dog is really Mescalito. Eleven days later, master and apprentice review the experience, which Castaneda wants never to repeat. Matus warns him not to exaggerate or concentrate only on negative points. Peyote baffles everyone who tries it - and Mescalito's playfulness has baffled Matus, but shows that Castaneda is the apprentice for whom he has been waiting. Castaneda should concentrate on his calling, rather than on his fear, and see the marvels around him.

On Aug. 20, Matus quotes his benefactor about how a man should approach knowledge as one does war: wakefully, fearlessly, respectfully, and assuredly. Following his benefactor's methodology, Matus carefully repeats four times: "An ally will make you see and understand things about which no human being could possibly enlighten you." Allies are neither guardians nor spirits, but aids. Mescalito is quite different: an untamable power, protector, and teacher, who reveals himself in any form he wishes, whenever he wishes and to whomever he wishes. He shows how to live, wordlessly speaking to each man in a unique way. By contrast, precise steps are needed to acquire allies that carry people beyond their normal boundaries and give them power. Matus laughingly reminds him of the exercise of finding his "good spot": one must work to attain confidence and power in what is learned. Some knowledge is too strong for Castaneda and could harm

him. The apprentice says this is more than he desires, but Matus assures him fear is natural, and having an ally will lessen this fear - more than knowledge alone could.

Part 1: Chapter 3

Part 1: Chapter 3 Summary and Analysis

Two years after accepting an apprentice, Matus prepares to initiate him to ally powers. On Aug. 23, 1961, he introduces his benefactor's ally, devil's weed (Jimson weed). Matus dislikes how it "distorts men" by "giving them a taste of power too soon without fortifying their hearts," makes them "domineering and unpredictable" and "weak in the middle of their great power." It has four "heads": 1) the roots, through which power is conquered; 2) the stem and flowers, which cure maladies; 3) the flowers, which make people crazy or obedient - or kill; and 4) the mighty seeds, which "fortify the heart." Devil's weed often kills off its proteges before they can unravel a "sober head." Matus' benefactor never achieves this.

Matus and Castaneda spend the afternoon of Sep. 3, 1961, collecting *Datura* plants in the canyons. Matus shows how to reveal the large, tuberous root and determine the plant's sex: females are taller, tree-like, and have a forked root, while males spread out, bush-like, and have a single root. Castaneda may not participate in the digging and cutting. Back home, Matus carefully scrubs the roots, stems, and leaves, then separates the plant parts into heaps, which he carefully wraps in burlap. Next afternoon, Matus explains his actions, so that next time Castaneda can do it himself. Castaneda receives a first portion of root to mash and soak overnight in the night air. Matus, at intervals the next day, works to distill a teaspoon's worth of a gummy substance that he boils into a milky liquid that he demands Castaneda drink. It makes him sweat and causes stomach cramps, chills, and nervousness. It makes him see a red spot, which Matus says is proof "she" (the *Datura* ally) likes him. Castaneda awakens two days later with various pains, and hears that they will know *Datura* likes him only when he has planted it and it comes to seed. In his youth, Matus quits using it after killing a man with a single blow, tossing huge boulders, and chopping leaves from the top of tall trees. Those are days when people change form and fly; such power is unnecessary for Indians today.

On Thursday, Nov. 23, Castaneda finds it odd not to see Matus on his porch. Matus' daughter-in-law explains that he has dislocated an ankle and set it himself. Matus explains that a woman, "La Catalina," has caused the trauma while trying to kill him. She flies into the house in the form of a blackbird and takes him by surprise. La Catalina is a "fiendish witch" with whom Matus has long battled and must now kill before she kills him. Peevishly, he explains that "silly" witchcraft will not suffice for this, and that Mescalito is "not a power to be used for personal reasons." Matus' "most marvelous ally," the "smoke of diviners," however, can do anything. It gives, not only knowledge, but also the means to accomplish tasks.

Where devil's weed is for attaining power, smoke is for those who "watch and see." It puts every power into a person's hands, but takes a lifetime to master. It has two parts: pipe and smoke mixture. His pipe is bequeathed to him by his benefactor and becomes his in the course of years of fondling. Pipes are sensitive and destroy themselves if they



do not like new hands - and kill those involved. The ingredients in the smoke mixture are lethal for non-proteges. One learns to use it by leading a "hard, quiet life." Using it causes terror and confusion at first, but later opens the world to the smoker and resolves all questions by letting the smoker "enter into inconceivable worlds."

Matus fetches a plain, sleek pipe, which he keeps sheathed in green canvas, and allows Castaneda to touch it briefly, without letting go. The bonding process must be gradual. If Castaneda learns to like the pipe, it will keep him from being afraid when he smokes it. Matus shows him the mixture he smokes, kept in a small bag hung from his neck under his shirt. It contains many ingredients difficult to collect, including little mushrooms that grow only at certain times and in certain places. No one may see pipe or ingredients unless one intends to hand them over. Breaking or losing a pipe brings death. Castaneda feels his questions may be angering Matus; but the teacher says he no longer has the makings of anger within himself.

On Dec. 26, 1961, the time comes to replant Castaneda's "shoot." First Matus fixes "a protection," a figurine of a man carved from a female *Datura* root, holding an agave thorn like a spear. After dinner, he shows how to prepare the rest of the plant. Chanting monotonously and unintelligibly, he pounds equal parts of flowers, seedpods, and stems. Castaneda is stunned and angered when Matus seizes his left hand and cuts the fourth finger, and then proceeds to boil the mash with water and carpenter's glue. The odor nauseates Castaneda, who is told to immerse the figurine. The pot remains on the firestones overnight. In the morning, Castaneda removes the carving and hangs it from the roof. By noon it is stiff and has taken on a "glossy, eerie finish." Matus avoids watching as Castaneda puts it in a pouch and hangs it in his car. They circle the house three times and sit on the porch, allowing Matus to "forget" the shoot. He then "remembers" and they fetch the root, which has put out leaves. Matus tells Castaneda to plant it in a place where he can care for it and attain "her" power. Each must personally tend his *Datura*. If anyone -Matus included - sees where Castaneda replants his *Datura*, it will run away and cause harm. Castaneda must follow complex instructions precisely, including pricking and piercing the shoot with the needle. Matus from a distance recites the required words.

Next day, Matus shows how to prepare the smoke mixture. Deep in a canyon, they find a bright green bush whose leaves and flowers they pick. Matus demonstrates how to hang them to dry, and then collects other flowers in lidded clay pots. They sweeten the smoke. They arrive home late and sit in Matus' own room (a rare occurrence). Matus talks about the final ingredient, mushrooms, which are difficult to differentiate from deadly ones that grow side-by-side. They must be shredded and stuffed into a gourd. All of the ingredients are sealed separately for a year, ground to fine powder, and mixed in equal amounts, against four parts of mushroom. They are placed in a bag and hung from the neck under one's shirt. Castaneda must have "an intent and a will beyond reproach" before smoking the first time, in order to come back from the experience and remember what he has seen.

Castaneda asks Matus about his often-used phrase "man of knowledge." Learning is a hardship that all can undertake, but that few achieve. It means defeating four "natural

enemies." The outcome cannot be foreseen, and the state lasts only an instant after defeating the fourth. Learning is never what one expects and is accompanied by intense fear, the first enemy. It is terrible, treacherous, and everywhere. Flight causes the craving to learn to vanish. When fear is met and defied, it gives way to assurance, is suddenly vanquished, and disappears for life.

Clarity of mind erases fear and facilitates learning, until it becomes the second enemy by making the learner too courageous and impatient. If he fumbles, he loses the ability to learn, but remains free from darkness and fear. Clarity is defeated through patience and skepticism. At that point, the learner perceives true power, which he can use as he wishes. Power, in turn, becomes the third and strongest of enemies. Giving in to invincibility, taking calculated risks, and making rules can turn the learner cruel and capricious. Never learning to control himself, he finds power a burden, and his fate is irreversible.

Defeat comes only when one abandons the quest. Only by realizing that power is never one's own can one defy it, hold it in check, and defeat it. Without warning, the learner then comes on the final enemy: old age. It is the cruelest, because it must be fought with no hope of victory. Give in to the temptation to rest and one becomes a feeble old creature in which clarity, power, and knowledge are overruled. The true man of knowledge "sloughs off" tiredness and "lives his fate," albeit for a brief moment.

Part 1: Chapter 4

Part 1: Chapter 4 Summary and Analysis

Matus seldom speaks openly about Mescalito, but creates a clear anthropomorphic image of a male protector and teacher. On Dec. 24, 1961, he observes that "he" is "gentle, like a baby." Until they have an ally, many keep Mescalito in a bag fastened around their arm or neck in order to ward off evil. Mescalito teaches how to live properly, showing things and telling "what is what." On Jan. 10, 1962, Castaneda asks what one sees when Mescalito takes him; but Matus refuses to answer this question, inappropriate to "ordinary conversations." He warns that Mescalito is horrible toward those who make fun of him, but agrees to make allowances for this non-Indian. Matus only confirms there is another world to which Mescalito takes people; but it is not the Christian heaven and he is not the Christian God nor one of the gods. He is a power outside oneself, and is not the same for everyone. For days, Matus insists he has told Castaneda all he can about Mescalito. The opinions of those willing to talk about him are worth little. Since Castaneda has played with Mescalito, he knows more about him than Matus, but experienced it while deaf and blind. Some day he will understand all Mescalito has told him that first time. Mescalito takes any form he wishes and none is more common than others. Once one knows him well, his form becomes a constant, sometimes as a man and sometimes as light.

On Jun. 23, Castaneda and Matus start a hard, five-day trip, hunting *honguitos* (mushrooms) in Chihuahua, Mexico. After spending the night with Matus' friends in a mining town, they are outfitted with water and sweet rolls and head for the hills. Even on steep inclines, Matus sets an exhausting pace. Cacti surround them, but Castaneda cannot distinguish peyote among them. When finally he spies some and points to them excitedly, Matus ignores him, and Castaneda knows he has committed a faux pas. As night falls, Matus announces they will spend the night on a ledge at the end of a valley. In the morning they will pick those plants that find them, not vice versa. Matus must do the picking, but Castaneda may carry the bags. He must not point as he did, unknowingly, today. Answering curious questions, Matus says he has learned about Mescalito, not from his benefactor, but from Mescalito directly - as Castaneda would have, had he listened while they played. Castaneda should ask his questions of Mescalito next time they meet.

Disgusted, Matus walks to a small creek to fill his canteen. Castaneda follows and is warned not to drink, just rinse his mouth. Back at the ledge, Matus seems aghast at the suggestion they build a fire, here, as Mescalito's guests. After dark, Matus tosses Castaneda a thin blanket and sits motionless, facing the peyote field. Twilight, Matus declares, is "the crack between the worlds." Castaneda knows better than ask his meaning, finds a comfortable position, and falls asleep.

Matus awakens Castaneda while it is still dark and leads him down the rock wall. At the bottom, he produces several dried peyote buttons, selects one, rubs it, chanting, and

gives a weird, unexpected "tremendous cry" before consuming it. Castaneda is embarrassed to cry out, but suddenly feels a shriek emerge as though from someone else, and chews his button. They repeat the cycle five times. Matus warns Castaneda that drinking water will make him vomit. He cannot resist the temptation. The vomiting this time is brief but very real - not the illusory flow he experienced the first time on peyote. They resume the cycle until they have consumed fourteen buttons apiece. Discomfort gives way to an "unfamiliar sense of warmth and excitement." Buzzing in his ears grows into a terrifying roar before resolving into lucidity. Castaneda laughs at the remembrance of huge radiated bees in science fiction movies, and then the terror returns. Matus' eyes are bee-like and Castaneda jumps, panting and whining. Matus orders him to stand up and move around. Castaneda offers to fetch water from the creek.

At the creek, clarity returns but Castaneda perceives he has lost track of time. He revels at being able to see clearly in the dark. Darkness and brightness alternate in time with the pumping of his heart. Matus, who has followed him, roars "Anuhctal" again, and the creek swells into a great lake glittering gold and black. Terrible buzzing jolts Castaneda and he sees that Matus has left him alone. He hears music timed to his heart rhythms whenever he squats; both music and pulse cease when he stands. He jumps when the earth quakes and finds himself riding a clump of soil like a raft in the river. The swirling water is cold, heavy, and somehow seems alive. There are no shores or landmarks. After hours of drifting, the "raft" turns and rams something, throwing Castaneda ashore and he watches the water rapidly recede.

Body aching and freezing in the wind, Castaneda tries to collect his thoughts about what he has seen. Somewhat stabilized, he walks toward human voices coming from a sheer mountainside footed by boulders. A green man whose head resembles a peyote plant sits before him and presses on his chest with his stare until Castaneda chokes and falls. The man talks softly and melodiously, asking what he wants. Kneeling, Castaneda talks about his life. In a hole in the green man's hand, Castaneda sees himself, old and feeble, running with bright sparks all around him.

The figure stands up and disappears. Castaneda realizes the man is Mescalito, his eyes bringing him peace. Mescalito then hops away like a cricket and vanishes. Castaneda begins to walk, recognizing landmarks, and realizing it is 8:00 AM. He reaches the ledge by 10 o'clock and finds Matus asleep. Matus does not want to hear Castaneda's narrative, but only to know whether he has seen Mescalito and from what distance. At noon, they set off to "cut Mescalito loose." Walking out of the valley, they cut every peyote plant that crosses their straight path, two heavy sacks' worth, yielding 100 buttons. Matus tells Castaneda they are heavy because Mescalito wants to return to the ground; he must not let the bags touch the ground. The straps of the knapsack dig into Castaneda's shoulders until they exit "Mescalito's abode."

On Jul. 3, 1962, Matus declares, "Mescalito has almost accepted you" - since he has not harmed, killed, or even badly terrified him. Matus has kept the danger of Mescalito's wrath secret, fearing Castaneda would lack the courage to face him otherwise. Castaneda replies he nearly died of fright. The scene had been a lesson, but Castaneda

had been too frightened to know just what he had asked; he remembers only falling on his knees and confessing his sins. Matus loses interest in the story, so Castaneda asks to learn the songs Matus chanted. Matus cannot, since Mescalito taught him them and are now his own. Talking about songs is taboo. Neither can Matus talk about the name he called out; it can be voiced only when calling for him. Some day Mescalito may give Castaneda a name for his exclusive use. Castaneda again asks how to differentiate Mescalito from ally powers. Matus replies that only brujos can use allies, but anyone can "partake of Mescalito." Those who seek Mescalito without preparation find him horrifying. Once Mescalito accepts someone completely, he appears to him as a man or as light. He becomes constant. Sometimes he takes the person flying and reveals all his secrets. One must only be strong and truthful in life for this to happen.

Part 1: Chapter 5

Part 1: Chapter 5 Summary and Analysis

In January of 1963, Matus begins teaching about Datura's "second portion," where real learning begins. It must be taken at least twenty times before one masters soaring through the air, seeing where he wishes, and doing "unimaginable things to gain more power." Matus can show only one step beyond this, because he quit this path when the weed nearly killed him. There are millions of paths and one must follow only the one that has a "heart." All paths lead nowhere, but those with heart are good and joyful, making one strong. Others weaken and should be abandoned.

On Apr. 21, Matus and Castaneda go into the hills where Matus spends three hours alone with his Datura and returns with his "last gift" to Castaneda, who in Matus' room, learns laboriously to grind seeds to powder, add other ingredients, and cook in a greenish water. They mash and leach the root as for the first portion. Matus holds two lizards in Castaneda's face, one with its mouth sewn shut and the other its eyelids. Matus orders his nauseated protygy to hold them and laughs at his discomfort. Matus advises him that many things can drive a person mad if he is not resolved to learn.

Matus hands him the lizards again, instructing him how to rub them gently against his temples while asking them anything he wants to know. He should avoid personal matters the first time. Castaneda asks the identity of a book thief he has heard about. Returning the lizards to their sacks, Matus declares that they are the secret of the second portion's sorcery. They must come from the vicinity of one's Datura plants and be carefully befriended before capture, late afternoon, after the paste (which lasts only one day) is prepared. Before sewing, one must apologize for the pain. Both are smeared with paste and the muted one released, hopefully to see what the sorcerer desires. If so, she communicates it to her sister, who passes it to the sorcerer. The blind lizard must then be set free without noting where it goes, and all the implements must be buried in a deep hole.

In the evening, Matus prepares a hot drink for Castaneda from the root extract. It sets his heart racing briefly. Castaneda performs the lizard rituals, promising to be kind to all lizards. Before releasing the muted lizard, Castaneda holds it against the scar on his finger and performs precisely the dance done while replanting the Datura root. After releasing the lizard, which luckily disappears eastward, Castaneda sits on the ground, sad and feeling strangely like a lizard on a strange journey. He recalls that twilight is a crack between worlds. He then anoints his temples, as instructed, with the pungent oatmeal-like paste; but he has no idea what sensation to expect. Suddenly, Castaneda finds himself sitting on his heels in an arched stone cloister in a vision less clear and real than those induced by peyote. He sees a friend, H., glaring and laughing at the base of some stairs and hides from her, recalling she laughs before "cracking up." The scene abruptly loses its dreamlike nature; everything seems rational and sober; but Castaneda knows that this is "not an ordinary state." The scene shifts again to

nighttime, as Castaneda sees a young man carrying a large knapsack; another shift and the man is defacing books. The scene grows foggy and Castaneda spins. Matus awakens him, telling him that his ten-minute vision has lasted three and a half hours. Castaneda is hungry and sleepy, but suffers no ill effects.

Matus is eager to debrief Castaneda, but it is impossible the first night. He laughs that his protygy is always careless and has failed to listen to the lizard on his shoulder as she tells what her sister is seeing. Visions must be *listened* to rather than viewed. Matus had wanted to coach him beforehand, but refrained because his benefactor had not done so with him. Matus' own hellish devil's weed journey had nearly been fatal. The lizards are never wrong, so Castaneda must have been thinking about H. when asking his question. If one interrupts the lizard, she stops talking and the sorcery is broken. The lizards doubtless have told Castaneda many things to which he has not listened attentively.

Matus explains that the paste is made of equal portions of Datura seeds and the weevils that live off them. Diverging from the formula antagonizes both the weed and the lizards. The day after the sorcery, one must return to the planting and ask the two participating lizards to come out again. If both do, they must be eaten immediately; this bestows on the sorcerer the ability to see the unknown without needing to catch lizards. If only one is caught, she must be released, lest the friendship be spoiled. If neither is caught - the best thing for Castaneda - he is free of a power that dominates, possesses, and cuts one off from everything else. If one or both lizards are found dead, Castaneda must lay off this sorcery for a while. The important thing to remember is that the steps must be followed precisely and nothing eaten or drunk until the sorcery is finished.

Part 1: Chapter 6

Part 1: Chapter 6 Summary and Analysis

On Jun. 27, 1963, Matus advises that, since devil's weed tests Castaneda all the time, it is only fair to test her again too. Matus sends him out with meticulous instructions how to collect male and female plants down the rain furrows from Castaneda's original plant. He must remember the order in which he stacks the parts, as this will have to be repeated going forward. Castaneda follows up on Jul. 1, delivering them to Matus next day. Matus provides seeds and weevils for Castaneda to mash, along with the cut-up pieces of his plants and a cup of boiling water. He stirs it until it thickens. Good weather at wake-up time again convinces Matus that the weed likes his protygy. Matus follows his benefactor in mixing lard with the plant parts - although the fat of wild boar intestines is best. Castaneda mixes by hand for three hours before Matus is satisfied. The gray jelly is left hanging from the roof for two days while a second portion is prepared. They may drink water but eat nothing.

On Jul. 4, Castaneda leeches the root and Matus prepares from it a drink. Unable to breath and with heart racing, Castaneda slumps to the porch. Matus orders him to strip so he can rub his feet, legs, and genitalia with paste. Castaneda's legs feel long and rubbery before he feels himself soaring fast, using his head as a "directional unit." He feels at home in the serene darkness. Suddenly he realizes it is time to land and floats down like a feather. This motion makes him nauseous and makes his head throb. He awakens in his own bed, sits up, and finds himself ill in a field near Matus' house. He obsesses about being seen naked and is hiding in the bushes when Matus calls his name and hands him his clothing. That afternoon, Matus explains how the root causes flight; and the more he flies the clearer he will see unimaginable things. It is different for every person, and Matus has never done it. Next time Castaneda will do it with his own plants and land among them. Castaneda rates the night "truly magnificent," although the headache is excruciating. Still, he does not think it will impede him from trying the weed again.

Castaneda waits all day for Matus to mention flying, in order to ask if he has truly flown - like birds do - or only in his imagination. Matus chides him for always understanding things "only one way." Brujos can strike enemies thousands of miles away: do they fly? Castaneda asks what one of his Western colleagues would have observed; Matus declares it useless talk unless they, too, are taking the second portion. Then he might or might not have seen Castaneda flying - it "depends on the man." Castaneda presses: when they both see a bird fly, they agree it is flying. Matus says people agree on birds flying because it is ordinary behavior for them; they might not agree about other common things that birds do. His friends might agree men can fly using devil's weed. When Castaneda asks if he were tethered to a large rock, would he still have flown? Matus replies that flying with a rock and chain is tiring.

Part 1: Chapter 7

Part 1: Chapter 7 Summary and Analysis

In December of 1963, having learned the procedure for collecting and preparing smoke mixture and performed it under supervision a year earlier, Castaneda learns to combine the ingredients. He has been getting familiar with Matus' pipe at every meeting. As they collect ingredients for a third year, Matus begins talking about smoke as an ally. Smoke is not "moody or petty," so the order of collection is unimportant; but the mixture must be "accurate and exact." The mixture previously collected and entrusted to Castaneda is his and must be used as soon as possible, because each mixture should be used within a year. Matus rarely needs to smoke any more. Since smoke is an ally, he can call anytime and anyplace. Still, he makes a new mixture every year.

On Dec. 26, Castaneda has his first experience with the smoke, after a day of driving and chores. Only by experience can he appreciate its importance as an ally. Matus fills and lights his pipe for Castaneda before the protygy can summon a valid objection. Having no alternative, Castaneda inhales the heavy smoke and enjoys a refreshing sensation. As the smoking grows mechanical, Matus takes the pipe, cleans it, and returns it to its sheath. Castaneda feels "numb, mentholated." His mouth is dry but he is not thirsty. His hands are heavy and his arms sag. When he wipes his nose and face, the flesh pulls loose. He jumps up in terror and tries to keep from falling. Breathing is painful and he cannot control his movement to lean against a pole; he circles it to determine its position, but still cannot avoid passing through it. Rising, he cannot control his bones and muscles, but merely thinks about rising and does so in a reflex motion. He yells to Matus for help, but gets no answer. He staggers, trying to reach Matus, but falls lightly against the wall. The wall feels spongy and he sinks in deeper and deeper, his terror rising.

Castaneda remembers no more. He is in another room with Matus. He cannot move his eyes or feel any part of his body. His breathing is undetectable but his mind is lucid. Matus approaches and the clarity vanishes. Castaneda hates him and wants to tear him apart, but he cannot move. Matus speaks soothingly and sings a Spanish lullaby. The words bring back lost memories of childhood. Castaneda now feels "joyous affection" for his mentor, who extends his arms and invites him to come inside them. Matus is spongy like the wall, and they blend. After seeing flashes of red, Castaneda sees a "fast barrage of images." Feeling happy, he is lifted and swims like an eel, contorting and twisting at will, before floating to earth like a feather.

Castaneda sleeps for two days, awakens with a headache, drinks water, vomits, and goes back to sleep. On the third day, he awakens relaxed. Matus requires no description of the experience, because Castaneda has not traveled anywhere or "gotten into anything." Matus cannot answer how he behaves the first time he smoked, because they are different characters. It is like asking a fisherman how he feels the first time he fishes. Smoke is a unique ally. It cannot be spoken to like Mescalito; it transforms a

person internally and is sensed by making the body light as air. It gives one powers to accomplish the unimaginable. Castaneda has, indeed, lost his body during the trance; and how it appears to Matus is unimportant. What he feels is reality. Pushed for details, Matus grows angry and snaps, "The little smoke took your body." No rational explanation is possible. The little smoke will not cause him to lose anything.

On Jan. 28, 1964, Castaneda broaches the question of sharing smoke with others. Matus is indignant: without a guide, the experimenter will die. Matus has talked Castaneda back and restored his body. Castaneda will learn this later and should quit wasting time asking "stupid questions." It may not be Castaneda's destiny to learn about the little smoke. Smoke must be taken as often as possible to learn its lessons. Castaneda balks, declaring it the most frightening hallucinogenic experience he has endured - smoke is like losing one's mind. Matus retorts that smoke is so strong that the smoker must be strong. Smoke always produces a transformation, but not an identical one for each smoker.

Castaneda pushes to know how he had appeared during the trance, and Matus confesses he had not looked; he has never seen anyone smoke, including his benefactor. The idea of watching oneself in a mirror baffles Matus, who figures it would frighten the smoker to death. If he ever masters smoke, Castaneda can watch a protygy smoke. Smoke will probably turn on him if he tries to photograph a session; it is not something to play with. Making the mixture, how to move, and how to return are secrets never to be revealed. Other matters about the little smoke are unimportant.

Part 1: Chapter 8

Part 1: Chapter 8 Summary and Analysis

Castaneda's final encounter with Mescalito comes in a four-day *mitote* (peyote ceremony) for *peyoter*os and apprentices in Chihuahua September of 1964. The first night, Castaneda consumes eight buttons with slight effect. He finds it best to keep his eyes shut but does not sleep; and during the "extraordinary" singing at the ceremony, feels uplifted and wants to weep. The second night, Castaneda again consumes eight buttons. He alone lacks a song and feels embarrassed. He sees Mescalito in the distance; but he vanishes when Castaneda tries to ask what he is doing wrong. An earth tremor strikes and Castaneda hides, knowing Mescalito is there - but he is not. On the third night, Castaneda chews only one button and ignores the songs. Mescalito teaches him a Spanish song, which he memorizes and sings to the group, feeling "renewed, fortified."

The group takes a long, strenuous afternoon walk into the hills, gathering peyote, before the final night's session. Castaneda finds his first fresh button sharper and bitterer than dried ones. He ingests fourteen buttons, hears Mescalito's approach over the frantic singing, and feels a "surge of wisdom." Singing feverishly, he walks out into the peyote field, where the plants shine. As he sings *his* song to one of them euphorically, Mescalito emerges and, as asked, shows Castaneda saying to his father in his childhood home things he has never been able to utter. The old man listens silently and vanishes, leaving Castaneda remorseful and in tears. Castaneda calls the name Mescalito has given him and sees blinding light from a man-sized object.

Mescalito tells him to eat one more button and his body is filled with "warmth and directness." He sees in "exquisite and intricate detail" and is everywhere simultaneously. The feeling in an instant gives way to oppressive terror, which yields to the sounds of something enormous hunting him. Castaneda hides from sea kelp secreting digestive acids to dissolve him, turns vaporous, and rises toward a light that resolves into the sun above the mountains. The light gives him strength and he runs back to the group. As they are leaving, the young men embrace him and hope he will return.

Castaneda tries to recall for Matus the details of his encounter with Mescalito; but once he sees that his protygy knows Mescalito's name, Matus declares he can be of little use to him and warns him against sharing the name with anyone. Whatever the songs mean is for "the protector" to clarify. Mescalito will probably teach him additional songs for purposes other than summoning him. Appearing to him twice as light makes it clear Mescalito approves of him. Matus cannot understand why the juxtaposition of acceptance and terror is a mystery and advises thinking about Mescalito's lessons until they become clear. It is difficult to explain Mescalito to someone all at once; his lessons are mysterious and he is unpredictable. Mescalito has shown a full, unmistakable picture of what is wrong with Castaneda, as asked. It is better not to voice questions,

but to ask them inwardly. Mescalito has given a clear lesson: there is only one path and one "world of happiness" for Castaneda. The protector has shown him "how a man thinks and fights." It is vanity to think there are two worlds.

Part 1: Chapter 9

Part 1: Chapter 9 Summary and Analysis

Matus urges Castaneda to learn more about Datura's power before smoking again, and in December of 1964, the protygy performs another lizard sorcery. Referring to his notes, he performs the rituals on his own plants, and searches 90 minutes for lizards before recalling that he must speak to them first. The sewing is difficult, but he does not want to abandon the path. He anoints the lizards, releases one, puts the other on his shoulder, drinks the potion, and anoints his cheeks. Absentmindedly, he spreads paste on his forehead and, recalling Matus' warning, feels doomed. Thoughts fly through his mind in uncharacteristic ways. Note the subtlety of the reference to Alfred Kroeber and Georg Simmel; one is an anthropologist and the other a sociologist, making their work difficult to confuse. Feeling like he has taken sleeping pills, Castaneda falls asleep beside his plant. He awakens to see a young man hurry by, carrying a stack of papers. An alien voice in Castaneda's head is creating detailed scenes by describing them; and each time he turns to see the source, the vision grows blurry. It tells him to return to the canyon and think about his plan to escape. As usual, Matus listens to his protygy's narration without interruption before telling him in astonishment that devil's weed must like him very much for him to survive paste on his forehead. Normally, only great brujos return from such journeys.

Two days later, Castaneda reports that he cannot find the lizards, and Matus tells him about the bad omen of their dying: they have withdrawn their friendship. If it is the muted one, he must give up the sorcery for years, but if it is the blind one, he lacks a guide and must stop forever. If she dies on his shoulder, the weed is trying to get rid of him and drives him crazy by showing "nonsensical things." This has happened to Matus. The weed like a woman flatters men, setting traps - like making him rub paste on his forehead. She is not the only path, and Castaneda must ask if her path has heart before wasting a lifetime on it. A path without a heart is never enjoyable. Following it takes hard work, while paths with heart are easy. Matus shifts topics, asking whether Castaneda prefers devil's weed to his ally, smoke. He does, because smoke is so frightening.

Matus says that he is free to choose his path, but should realize that *both* blind: smoke by fear and devil's weed by ambition. Castaneda does not accept the premise that one needs ambition to learn. Matus warns that the weed, which has already "hooked" Castaneda, gives men a sense of extraordinary power and it is easy for the heartless path to kill them. "To seek death is to seek nothing."

Part 1: Chapter 10

Part 1: Chapter 10 Summary and Analysis

During their fourth cycle of collecting ingredients for the smoking mixture in December of 1964, Matus merely supervises. He wants Castaneda to "meet with his ally again" to "evaluate it with justice" vis-a-vis devil's weed. The weed flatters and makes one feel good, while the smoke deals in "noble power" and requires purity and strength of heart that few possess. Smoke is constant and "reinforces the heart." Matus shakes with laughter, watching his protygy's awkward actions lighting the pipe. Sweating, Castaneda hears Matus tell him not to fear and to do what he says. The room tumbles and blurs, and Castaneda cannot follow instructions, but is not afraid. He awakens next day. Matus remarks only that Castaneda falls asleep too soon to follow instructions and learn to move freely, rather than being "glued to the ground."

Castaneda tries again on Jan. 31, 1965, and awakens next evening able to recollect everything Matus says during the experience. His body numbs as he ingests fine powder along with the smoke. His experiences seem "juxtaposed" with those of the previous attempt. Castaneda recalls clearly hearing that his body is disappearing and only his head remains, as well as the order to stay awake while his head turns into a crow. He must blink many times as crow's legs form in his human chin, a tail sprouts from his neck, and long, beautiful wings unfold from his cheekbones. He must wink repeatedly to shrink the size of his skull until the crow can fly. Finally, he must learn to see like a crow, straight to the side around a large beak, shifting the focus eye-to-eye. The process is difficult, but not painful. Matus appears "big and glowy."

Castaneda smokes next on Mar. 31, consuming the last of his mixture. He experiences profound numbness and heaviness. He awakens in an irrigation ditch with Matus supporting his head above fluorescing green water that clears his mind, lapping coldly against his body. Matus wants to know what has happened, for it has taken three days to bring him back. The protygy cannot concentrate until evening and then recalls a series of isolated dreamlike scenes in which he participates. They are clear, but with a clarity "unrelated to ordinary seeing," which makes them at first seem vague.

Castaneda faintly recalls Matus tossing him in the air, to cut painfully through the air, feeling tired rather than exhilarated. He is dazzled by a field of flickering bright lights and pelted with glowing pink forms before flying happily with three silvery birds. Matus refrains from commenting until the next day, when he observes that having become a crow, Castaneda will always remain one. Crows see one another, not as black, but as silvery. Matus is angered when Castaneda cannot recall whether he joins them in the air or on the ground; failure to recollect details renders the experience merely a "mad dream." He would remember more if he were less rigid.

Castaneda takes a daylong hike, thinking about crows and how they tell him they are heading south and will go the same way when they meet next day. Matus admonishes

him to think no longer as a human, but as a crow that fellow crows will inform about his approaching fate. What these "emissaries" do during their first meeting must be recalled in detail, particularly the direction and time of day when they depart. With difficulty, Castaneda recalls starting painfully to fly while it is dark and meeting the silver birds when the sky is reddish. Matus tells him that one day at dusk, his emissary crows will fly overhead appearing silvery white. Then he will die and fully become a crow. Matus' emissary crows will come in the morning. He no longer believes his benefactor's claim that crows can be "shouted back to black" if one wishes not to die. When the time comes, just fly away with them.

On Apr. 10, Castaneda experiences anxiety-inducing "brief flashes of dissociation," which he tries to end as they begin. Matus is unconcerned and advises he concentrate on what he has seen as a crow. He dismisses Castaneda's belief that he has reached a "dangerous threshold" and that the smoke produces a kind of non-ordinary reality that is different from other drugs he has tried. Matus dismisses the abnormalities as typical of novices. With practice, he will recognize everything. Matus describes how crows, as a matter of survival, distinguish when things are moving too fast or at the right speed. They admire the beauty of the myriad of wriggling things inhabiting dead flesh. Castaneda asks the "unavoidable question" of whether he actually becomes an ordinary crow and is rebuked for asking senseless questions. Smoke is about craving to see and crows are ideal for this, because humans and other predators generally ignore them. When Castaneda asks if he could have become any animal he wishes, Matus insists he misunderstands. It takes a long time to learn to be a "proper crow"; and he has not ceased to be human, but is become "something else." When fear is gone, Castaneda will perhaps understand this mystery.

Part 1: Chapter 11

Part 1: Chapter 11 Summary and Analysis

Castaneda visits Matus on Sept. 30, unable to slough off the "shallow states of non-ordinary reality," and feeling his anxiety worsening. Unusually preoccupied, Matus diagnoses a "loss of soul" and true bewitching. From a list of activities prior to hallucinations, Matus pinpoints when he loses his soul, but not who is trying to sicken or kill him. He prescribes specific bodily positions to perform on his "beneficial spot", while he finds the culprit and tries to get his soul back. In an extreme crisis, Castaneda can hurl rocks at the enemy accompanied by a loud war cry. Matus cannot provide more detail to the frightened protygy; he may sing his Mescalito songs to keep him company. Matus enters his house at 7:00 PM, leaving Castaneda in the cold.

Four hours later, Matus' voice yells, "hey boy!" summoning Castaneda indoors. Because the words do not ring true, Castaneda stays on his spot. Seeing the old man swaying and looking oddly tense, Castaneda adopts the fighting form, believing Matus is trying to create doubt in his mind about his identity. Castaneda stays glued to his spot, ready for combat, although he would rather flee. He sings his peyote songs but feels them an "impotent pacifier." At 2:45 AM, Matus staggers out of the house, gasping and holding his throat, kneels before Castaneda and whines for help. Castaneda performs the defensive moves when the old man tries to grab him. Exhausted and aching, Castaneda despairs and wants to weep over Matus' "histrionics." A cricket terrifies him and he resumes his peyote songs. He defends himself against the flash of a dog-man's shape and is numb with fear greater than any he has ever experienced.

The phenomena withdraw and Castaneda feels refreshed by dew. At 5:48 AM, Matus emerges from his house, yawning, and glances at Castaneda, who realizes this is not his mentor. He yells and hurls a rock as instructed, no longer caring whether he lives or dies. The figure shrieks and withdraws. At 11:00 AM, Matus emerges again, smiling and moving normally. Castaneda kisses his hand, certain that it had not been an act but truly someone impersonating Matus, intending to harm or kill him. They talk about the female who has stolen Castaneda's soul. The protygy then narrates in detail the night's events. Matus laughs and declares he has done an admirable job of battling for his soul. Had he not learned all he has, he would not have survived the night. The imitator is a *diablera* who has "a good helper on the other side." Helpers are spirits that cause sickness and pain and help diablos kill. They are easier to tame than allies, but Castaneda needs to learn much more before trying to get one. Matus' nature is not like his diablero/warrior benefactor; so if Castaneda wants power in a world of violence, he must learn it on his own.

The worlds of diablos and of men overlap, but a crack opens and closes between them. By "single-minded dedication," one can enter the crack without help and wander through a whirlwind for a distance that depends on one's willpower. At the end, he reaches a wind-whipped plateau and the skin that separates the two worlds. On the

other side, the man wanders, hoping to find a helper to kill and teach him. Most have little to teach and many refuse. Unless one has a great benefactor like Matus had, it is a matter of luck. Some diableros kidnap souls and push them through. One can, like Castaneda, engage the diablero in win/lose combat to obtain his soul's release. Had Castaneda moved an inch, the diablero would have hit him with a thunderbolt, kept his soul, and let him waste away.

That evening, Matus instructs Castaneda in specific fighting procedures. At one moment, left alone, Castaneda hears something approaching through the underbrush and fears the events of the previous day are going to be repeated. He sags to the ground, whining, but is rescued and comforted by Matus. He remains profoundly distressed for hours, hearing this is a common occurrence among those who lack "unbending intent." Thereafter, Castaneda refrains from seeking lessons; but Matus continues to consider him a protygy. Castaneda believes he has "succumbed to the first enemy of man of knowledge."

Part 2

Part 2 Summary and Analysis

Part 2 consists of a four-unit structural analysis based on the data narrated in Part 1. It aims at disclosing the "meaningful concepts" learned during Castaneda's apprenticeship in a way clear to Western minds. Matus lays such early emphasis on making his apprentice a "man of knowledge" that the author treats this as the "operative order". He examines seven components or themes that run throughout the teachings, whose intent is to show him how to behave throughout his "long and hazardous training." Castaneda hypothesizes that, because of his own training and experience, Matus sees the "man of knowledge" as a *diablero* (black sorcerer), without using the terms interchangeably.

Becoming a man of knowledge requires resolute effort; for it is the end of a process rather than a supernatural act of grace. Anyone can attempt it; but teachers select apprentices based on informal, covert prerequisites, such as disposition. The teacher cannot, however, control whom the impersonal powers accept and set aside from the rest of humanity, imbuing him with certain minimum powers, which thereafter grow through the learning. Throughout the "unending quest," the power judges whether the apprentice continues or is defeated, showing the decision through omens.

The man of knowledge must have "unbending intent," holding himself to 1) frugality in relation to all activities outside the extraordinary activities required by the learning, 2) soundness of judgment under the direction of an experienced guide, and 3) accepting lack of freedom to innovate. The man of knowledge must have clarity of mind to learn within a rigid, predetermined system. He must have a sense of direction to validate his course by showing he 1) has freedom to seek a given path among many, 2) knows its specific purpose, and 3) is fluid (i.e., malleable, resourceful). One matches one's path to one's inclinations and purposes. The man of knowledge must accept strenuous labor: 1) putting forth "dramatic exertion," 2) achieving efficacy, and 3) meeting challenges. Matus' dramatic exertion manifests in histrionics, which proceed from profound belief and impart a sense of finality.

Death is a constant protagonist in the drama. The man of knowledge is a warrior, 1) soberly respectful of the unknown items with which he deals; 2) fearful but able to conquer fear; 3) wide awake, cognizant both of his own intentions and the inevitable flux in events; and 4) self-confident, able to choose the "only plausible alternative." Finally, the man of knowledge is an "unceasing process." Nothing is permanent or certain. The task is never fully achieved, but requires 1) constant renewal of the quest, 2) knowledge of one's own impermanency, and 3) requirement that one follow the path with heart. Four symbolic enemies stand in the path of learning: fear, clarity, power, and old age. Following the path "with heart" provides satisfaction and fulfillment, in spite of inevitable death, which proves one's impermanency. The journey itself is sufficient.

The second unit deals with allies, which set men of knowledge apart from humanity. An ally is a thing of power, allowing the sorcerer to transcend ordinary reality. Receiving an ally is proof that a given operational goal of the teachings has been achieved. Allies are formless entities, existing outside and independent of oneself. Their formlessness sets them aside from other powers and means that only their effects on the sorcerer indicate their presence. Nevertheless, Matus anthropomorphizes them for purposes of teaching.

Datura is a woman-like "giver of superfluous power": possessive, violent, unpredictable, and deleterious. Datura enslaves her followers by making them feel strong and powerful; thus, she is best suited to fierce males. Meticulous rules for handling the plant minimize the hazard of Datura's unpredictability. The power Datura gives is unsurpassable: strength, audacity, and prowess. Matus no longer uses Datura, preferring her "antithesis" - the male-like *Psilocybe mexicana*: dispassionate, gentle, predictable, and beneficial. "Humito" is hard and just, but does not enslave. Instead, he creates emotional stability. He also puts the smoker into a state of bodilessness, making him ideal for contemplatives. Allies can be tamed and used. Sorcerers command specialized power and manipulate it to their own ends, either as a vehicle or as a helper. Datura is too unpredictable to serve as a vehicle, but Humito is stable when venturing into "non-ordinary reality."

The third unit deals with allies' rules (or laws) that are handed down verbally from teacher to apprentice. Rules are 1) inflexible, 2) non-cumulative, 3) corroborated in ordinary reality, 4) corroborated in *non*-ordinary reality, and 5) corroborated by "special consensus." Rules consist of a series of steps to be followed precisely to achieve the operational goal of the teachings, with survival hanging in the balance. An ally can intervene to prevent the death of an apprentice who makes an unintentional error; and this shows a special affinity between the two. Using the plants in conformity with the allies' rules produces "states of peculiar perception" that Matus calls "meetings with the ally." Doing so frequently verifies the rule pragmatically. For Matus, knowledge is a strictly personal matter. Non-ordinary reality is "utilizable," made up of component elements (items, actions, and events perceived). The total picture consists of ordinary and dream qualities - but is distinct from both. Its components are 1) stability, 2) singularity, and 3) "lack of ordinary consensus." Extraordinary stability allows him to halt visions and study details for indefinite periods. Details come as single items, isolated from others, appearing sequentially; one senses an imperative to amalgamate them into a composite. The most dramatic characteristic is the complete solitude in which visions are encountered, making it impossible to seek consensus.

Rules also ensure that dreams serve a utilitarian goal: the ally is manipulated as a vehicle, and then as a helper, for a specific purpose. Manipulatory techniques are the means by which a sorcerer commands his ally "with efficacy." Matus uses a potion of Datura root to induce a shallow state of non-ordinary reality in the author, in order to test him as a prospective apprentice. A feeling of well-being provides a sign of affinity. He also uses Datura for divination, through an ingestion-absorption process that transports the author to a "particular compartment of non-ordinary reality." He also uses lizards as instruments of movement and hearing what happens at a distance. Another purpose,

also involving ingestion-absorption and intended to bring on flight over vast distances, cannot be "corroborated in depth."

A fourth specific purpose of the rule is testing; and smoke from a mixture of dried mushrooms and five other non-hallucinogenic plants is used to determine whether there is affinity with this ally. Following Castaneda's first experience with humito, Matus mentions a fifth specific purpose: moving into inanimate objects and animate beings. The discussion is too brief, however, to discuss here. A sixth specific purpose, also using humito and involving movement, has the sorcerer adopt an alternative form. Matus uses hypnotic suggestion to augment the drug, but does not reveal the complete technique to Castaneda. Adopting alternate forms takes a lifetime to master and is neither free-form nor spur-of-the-moment. It always involves a preconceived form - a crow in Matus' and in Castaneda's case - but any animal's form can serve the purpose.

The fourth unit declares that the rule is corroborated most significantly by "special consensus." Allies are not bestowed, but rather manipulated, by corroborating their rule, pragmatically and experimentally. Because trances are solitary and idiosyncratic, they cannot be proven to be more than illusions unless one accepts the experienced teacher's right to bear valid, systemic witness to "special consensus." An apprentice's success or failure in achieving the operational goal of the teaching depends on this unit. Two individuals interplay. The sorcerer/benefactor prepares the background for, and guides the apprentice into. He corroborates the special consensus of non-ordinary reality for him. Matus prepares Castaneda by having him experience non-ordinary states, participates with him in them, and recapitulates each experience in detail. The non-ordinary reality induced is 1) believed to be the produced by an entity ("Mescalito"); 2) utilizable; and 3) has component elements.

Mescalito is claimed to have a unique power, similar to an ally's, but different in that he and the plant are one and are worthy of "profound veneration." Because Mescalito has no rule, he is not an ally and cannot be manipulated; but he can be available without long training and is potentially anyone's protector - provided Mescalito feels compatible with the individual. Incompatibility comes when one's character does not jibe with Mescalito's "unbending morality." Mescalito is also a teacher and director, bringing his intimates to simplified behavior (rather than moral righteousness). Mescalito is an entity with a definite, but inconstant and unpredictable form. He is perceived differently by different people, and by the same person on different occasions. He can adopt any conceivable form; but after several years of compatibility with a devotee, he settles on a single form. Mescalito is as utilizable as any ally; and the states of non-ordinary reality he induces are like those of an ally. The component parts are stability, singularity, and lack of consensus.

Matus also prepares the background for special consensus by participating with Castaneda in "special states of ordinary reality." Matus manipulates clues about the environment and behavior to test Castaneda's intentions early on and, more dramatically, changes his usual persona to test his reception of the teachings in totality. Both occasions mark transitions or "points of articulation" in the teaching. The second also marks "more direct co-participation" in arriving at special consensus. Matus' third

means of preparing special consensus is making Castaneda recapitulate every experience and then providing feedback on specific elements, drawing attention to areas in the verbal reports that correspond to what he wants to teach and dismissing other matters completely.

Matus' second task as teacher is to guide the outcome of Castaneda's experiences by manipulating the levels of ordinary and non-ordinary reality. The *extrinsic* level consists of 1) the preparatory period, 2) the transitional stages, and 3) the teacher's supervision. Preparatory time refers to the intervals between two states of non-ordinary reality. The time before events is generally under 24 hours, while the time after is generally long, on the order of months. This allows for adequate debriefing, explanation, and teaching. The transitional stages represent the slipping into and out of non-ordinary reality, where experience overlaps ordinary reality and is blurred. They are perceived as either slow or abrupt. Using peyote, the transitions are particularly noticeable. Matus' supervision of his apprentice's experiences varies with the agent. *Datura* requires little after the initial preparation, while *Psilocybe mexicana* requires extensive guidance and help. Matus must verbally guide him through the transition from his normal form to another through commands and suggestions. Finally, Matus must bring him back to ordinary reality.

Realities also have an *intrinsic* order, which Castaneda assumes is subject to three processes that Matus guides to help him see more minute detail and increasingly unfamiliar forms during each encounter, until finally Castaneda cannot relate them to anything in ordinary reality. Gradually his results come to coincide more closely with those of Matus. With each experience, Castaneda expands the area in which he can focus attention. His "range of appraisal" consists of two ranges, dependent and independent. The former draws on previous experiences, while the latter is entirely new. Matus makes clear that all three agents are capable of inducing both forms of perception, but Castaneda feels that *Datura* has the greatest potential for independent range; because of the sensation of flight. *Psilocybe mexicana* produces a dependent state, and *Lophophora williamsii* produces both. Finally, Castaneda perceives progression each time he enters non-ordinary reality; each event marks a more complex, more inclusive, and pragmatic stage of learning.

The apprentice is the final unit of the "conceptual order." He brings focus to and validates Matus' teachings by accepting "the totality of the special consensus." Accepting Matus' "matrix of meaning," Castaneda has two alternatives: fail in his efforts to adopt the "order of conceptualization," or succeed.

Failure is explained in terms of the four symbolic enemies and consists in abandoning the quest to become a man of knowledge. Fear and clarity are the cause of defeat at the apprentice level, signifying that one is too shallow to learn how to command an ally. A defeated apprentice retains knowledge of techniques he has mastered and memories of non-ordinary reality, but cannot identify with them in any meaningful way. Thus, he must develop his own explanations, which are probably false. Even after obtaining an ally, a sorcerer can fall to the two other enemies, power and old age, again by "a shallow or fallacious adoption of the conceptual order." Success, by contrast, means that a person achieves his operational goal and adopts the conceptional order

completely and truly; thus he ceases to be an apprentice. Commanding an ally, he has no need for a teacher's guidance.

Until he discontinues his apprenticeship, Castaneda must accept that the reality of special consensus and that of "ordinary, everyday-life consensus" are equal. Matus stresses that the use of three hallucinogens induces states of non-ordinary reality, employs them for specific reasons, and speaks of their individual powers. He exploits these and explains to Castaneda the reality of a realm separate from everyday life as they progress. It is possible that the different properties result from Matus' suggestion that each produces a different state of non-reality; but they do seem to compartmentalize, producing independent and dependent ranges of experience. Matus demands that his apprentice practice what he learns to obtain sufficient first-hand knowledge that the categories of "ordinary" and "non-ordinary" can grow meaningless, as well as that the "reality of special consensus" is unordinary, separate, and real. Meetings with allies or Mescalito are not illusory. Castaneda realizes that special consensus is practical and usable. The sorcerer can shift between realms, utilizing elements in both for specific purposes. Matus leads Castaneda to believe that, at a level higher than he has achieved, the two realities become a single continuum; and a sorcerer has only to learn the "mechanics of movement."

Castaneda briefly summarizes the issues of his analysis in six points before stating that six years after beginning his apprenticeship, he sees Matus' knowledge as a "coherent whole for the first time." He quits because he is unable to "undergo the rigors" of training, yet he feels obliged to understand the teachings, proving at least to himself that they are not "an oddity." The structural scheme omits much superfluous data and achieves an "internal cohesion" and "logical sequence" in such a way that any notion of bizarreness is dispelled. He realizes he has experienced only a fragment of what drives Matus' everyday life and exalts in the experience.



Characters

Carlos Castaneda

Don Juan Matus

Mescalito

La Catalina

Choy

Genaro

John

Dosa Luz

Matus' Benefactor

S—

Objects/Places

Brujos

The Spanish term for a medicine man/curer/witch/sorcerer, *brujo* is how Juan Matus is described to Carlos Castaneda. Full brujos control and ally, while lesser ones rely on power objects as tools of death.

Crows

Crows are Don Juan Matus' species of choice into which to change form under the influence of smoking *psilocybe mexicana*. Crows are ideal for this because humans and other predators generally ignore them. As a matter of survival, crows distinguish when things are moving too fast or at the right speed. They admire the beauty of the myriad of wriggling things inhabiting dead flesh. It takes a long time to learn to be a "proper crow;" and one does not cease to be human, but becomes "something else." Twice Matus guides Castaneda in turning into a crow, an experience he finds difficult but not painful. He soars happily with three silvery birds. This, Matus explains, is how crows see one another, rather than as black. Matus admonishes him to think no longer as a human, but as a crow that fellow crows will inform about his approaching fate. What these "emissaries" do during their first meeting must be recalled in detail, particularly the direction and time of day when they depart. One day at dusk, his emissary crows will fly overhead appearing silvery white, whereupon he will die and fully become a crow. Matus' emissary crows will come in the morning. When the time comes, just fly away with them.

Diableros

A term used only by Sonora Indians to designate a practitioner of black sorcery, able to change into the form of animals. Matus refers to his "benefactor" or teacher by this term. Castaneda questions many people about this phenomenon and presents three verbatims from folks reticent to discuss it. Young male, Choy, insists only old people believe in the "pure bull" of a brujo changing into other forms. Middle-aged Dosa Luz admits to having known one diablero as a young girl. He is killed stealing cheese from a white man in the guise of a dog. Finally, old Genaro talks of the last diablero, S—, hanged by the tribe in 1942.

The worlds of diableros and of men overlap; but a crack opens and closes between them. By "single-minded dedication," one can enter the crack without help and wander through a whirlwind for a distance that depends on one's willpower. Some diableros kidnap souls and push them through. One can, like Castaneda, engage the diablero in win/lose combat to obtain his soul's release. Had Castaneda moved an inch, the diablero would have hit him with a thunderbolt, kept his soul, and let him waste away.

Helpers

Helpers are spirits that cause sickness and pain to help diableros kill. They are easier to tame than allies, but require much learning. Helpers inhabit the other world. One must enter this world and search to find a helper to serve as a teacher. Most have little to teach, and many refuse. Unless one has a great benefactor like Matus had, it is a matter of luck.

Jimson Weed

A hallucinogenic plant (*Datura innoxia* syn. *D. meteloides*), also known as "Devil's Weed," Jimson weed is used by Don Juan Matus to help author Carlos Castaneda to acquire an "ally" (power). Devil's weed has other names, to be used only when calling for help. A small plant with dark-green leaves, large, white, bell-shaped flowers, and a tuberous root, it had been Matus' anonymous teacher's drug of choice. However Matus never likes it because it "distorts men" by "giving them a taste of power too soon without fortifying their hearts"; it makes them "domineering and unpredictable" and "weak in the middle of their great power." It has four "heads": root, stem and leaves, flowers, and seeds - each different, and to be learned in that order. The power is conquered through the roots; the stem and flowers cure maladies; the flowers make people crazy or obedient - or kill; and the powerful seeds "fortify the heart." Devil's weed often kills off proteges before they can unravel "sober head." Devil's weed has other names, to be used only when calling for help. Female *Daturas* are taller, tree-like, and have a forked root, while males spread out, bush-like, and have a single root. In his youth, Matus quits using *Datura* after killing a man with a single blow, tossing huge boulders, and chopping leaves from the top of tall trees.

Lizards

The secret of the second portion of *Datura* plants' sorcery, lizards are used in pairs to learn whatever the sorcerer wishes at a distance. They must come from the vicinity of one's own and be carefully befriended with food and conversation. They allow themselves to be captured only after they know a man. They should be caught, late afternoon, after the *Datura* paste, which lasts only one day, is prepared. The sorcerer must apologize to the lizards for the pain he is about to cause, and then sew shut one's mouth to keep it from talking to strangers as it goes out to see whatever the sorcerer asks to know. It is covered in *Datura* paste and set on the ground to determine if the sorcery will work. If it approaches, that means good luck; but if it moves away, it is time to quit lizard sorcery, for death could be imminent. The other lizard's eyelids are sewn shut and its head is covered with paste. It is used to anoint both sides of sorcerer's head. Eventually the mute lizard returns and tells its story to the blind one, which in turn tells the sorcerer. The blind lizard must then be set free without noting where it goes, and all the implements of the sorcery buried in a deep hole.



Mitote

A four-day ceremony in which experienced *peyoteros* and apprentices each night consume peyote buttons and sing individual songs, Mitote provides Carlos Castaneda's final encounter with Mescalito, in Chihuahua, Mexico, in September of 1964. Castaneda encounters Mescalito on the third night and learns a Spanish song, which leaves him "renewed, fortified."

The Other World

Don Juan Matus stresses to Carlos Castaneda that there exists another world to which peyote buttons (anthropomorphized as "Mescalito") takes people. It is not the Christian heaven and Mescalito is neither the Christian God nor one of the gods. He is a power outside oneself and is not the same for everyone. Twilight is "the crack between the worlds." After Castaneda experiences a harrowing night in which a diablera imitates Matus and tries to steal his soul, Castaneda is told that the worlds of diableros and of men overlap; but a crack opens and closes between them. By "single-minded dedication," one can enter the crack without help and wander through a whirlwind for a distance that depends on one's willpower. At the end, he reaches a wind-whipped plateau and the skin that separates the two worlds. On the other side, the man wanders, hoping to find a helper to kill and teach him. Most have little to teach, and many refuse. Unless one has a great benefactor like Matus had, it is a matter of luck. Some diableros kidnap souls and push them through. One can, like Castaneda, engage the diablero in win/lose combat to obtain his soul's release. Had Castaneda moved an inch, the diablera would have hit him with a thunderbolt, kept his soul and let him waste away.

Peyote

A hallucinogenic plant (*Lophophora williamsii*) is used by Don Juan Matus to help author Carlos Castaneda to acquire wisdom and knowledge of how to live right. Matus insists that Castaneda refer to the plant deferentially as "Mescalito." The young scholar's interest is strictly peyote, and he seeks out Matus as a renowned expert. After a year of sidestepping the topic, Matus announces that he has chosen him for a "long and arduous" apprenticeship. After Castaneda's first experience ingesting dry peyote buttons, Matus explains that peyote baffles everyone who tries it and urges him to concentrate on his calling, rather than on his fear, and to see the marvels around him. Drinking water after ingesting peyote causes vomiting, but discomfort gives way to "warmth and excitement;" and one's faculties resolve into lucidity. The transitions to and from the non-ordinary state are particularly noticeable with peyote.

Psilocybe mexicana

Without chemical tests, Carlos Castaneda can only assume that the third of the hallucinogenics to which Don Juan Matus introduces him is *Psilocybe mexicana*. Matus



refers to it as "Humito" (little smoke). It is male-like: dispassionate, gentle, predictable, and beneficial; hard and just, but not enslaving. Smoke creates emotional stability and puts the smoker into a state of bodilessness, making him ideal for contemplatives. Like Jimson weed, it is used to acquire an "ally" (power). Matus speaks with reverence of the "smoke of diviners" as a "most marvelous ally," but warns it is not for everyone. It gives, not only knowledge, but also provides a means to proceed in problems like killing off a witch who is out to kill Matus. The mushrooms, which are difficult to differentiate from potentially lethal ones among which they grow, are dried, shredded, and mixed with a variety of "sweeteners." The gathering and preparation must be repeated annually and smoked within the year. Smoke is for those who "watch and see." It puts every power into a person's hands, but takes a lifetime to master. It has two parts: pipe and smoke mixture. One learns to smoke by leading a "hard, quiet life." Using it causes terror and confusion at first, but later opens the world to the smoker and resolves all questions by letting the smoker "enter into inconceivable worlds."

Smoke always produces a transformation, but not an identical one for each smoker. For Castaneda, it produces first a "numb, mentholated" feeling, anger and euphoria, as well as a sense that solid objects and Matus are spongy and his body sinks into theirs. Castaneda prefers devil's weed to smoke because the latter is so frightening; but Matus presses him to give it another try. Smoke deals in "noble power" and requires purity and strength of heart that few possess. Smoke is constant and "reinforces the heart." In a second attempt, Castaneda feels his body disappear until only his head remains, which turns into a crow, with difficulty but no pain.

Themes

Attentiveness

The Teachings of Don Juan deals with the dynamic of apprenticeship, in which master teacher and protygy must exercise the highest degree of attentiveness. The teacher, Don Juan Matus, is the heir to a spiritual tradition going back generations. He must evaluate everyone he meets to see if he is capable of carrying on the tradition. In the case of Carlos Castaneda, who first appears to him as a rather brash academician seeking information about peyote, Matus must overlook eagerness and curiosity to discern whether he has the "backbone" to stand up to Mescalito, the anthropomorphic persona of peyote. If not, the fearsome entity will harm or even kill one or both of them. The same danger exists with the various "allies" to which Matus can introduce him in an effort to form him into a "man of learning." At each step in the teaching, Matus must discern what the novice needs to learn, screening out areas too advanced for his skills, and help him discern the important parts from the massive amount of dross in which the trances surround him.

The apprentice must be constantly alert as he follows the complex series of instructions and ritual behaviors that capture an ally and utilize him towards specific purposes. Castaneda learns that he must hear the messages contained in vivid and confusing visions; seeing is not sufficient. He must keep his head during the transitions between everyday and "non-ordinary" reality, and remember the specific details upon which further learning depends. Castaneda's closest brush with disaster comes when he inadvertently smears Datura paste on his forehead while anointing his face for the lizard ceremony. The fearsome ally apparently takes pity on him (perhaps because he is not an Indian) and spares him for this major oversight. Such mercy is not to be expected.

Castaneda, who is constantly upbraided about being attentive, draws his master's anger when, having turned into a crow and flown with a flock of "emissary" crows, is unable to remember such salient features as the direction of flight, whether they meet in the air or on the ground, and the precise time of day. Failure to recollect details renders the experience merely a "mad dream." One day at dusk, his emissary crows will fly overhead appearing silvery white, whereupon he will die and fully become a crow, so it is vital he be attentive at all times.

Fear

The Teachings of Don Juan teaches that the first step in becoming a "man of learning" is to overcome a specific, terrible, treacherous, and insidious enemy: fear. Learning is never what one expects, and is always accompanied by intense fear. Matus quotes his benefactor, saying one should approach the quest for knowledge as one does war: wakefully, fearlessly, respectfully, and assuredly. Fear is natural, and having an ally will



lessen fear, although each ally in its own way is a potential source of fear for the initiate. Any false step can lead to physical suffering and potential death.

When fear is met and defied, however, it gives way to assurance. Fear is suddenly vanquished and disappears for life. Clarity of mind erases fear and facilitates learning, until it becomes the second enemy by making the learner excessively courageous and impatient. If an apprentice fumbles, he loses the ability to learn, but remains free from darkness and fear. Because fear can be debilitating, Matus keeps secret the danger of Mescalito's terrible wrath, lest Castaneda lack the courage to face him. Castaneda admits that he nearly died of fright during the encounter and is too frightened to learn all that Mescalito offers him.

The smoke ally also fills him with fear. As Castaneda tries the three hallucinogenic drugs, Matus reminds him not to fear; and in time he finds this possible. The most fearful incident occurs without use of drugs, but solely through Matus' powers of suggestion. He places Castaneda on a specific spot and warns him not to move while Matus goes in search of his lost soul. Matus (or some entity impersonating Matus) haunts him all night; and by morning, the mere sound of a cricket strikes terror. Reassured that all is well, Castaneda nevertheless is convinced that a repetition of the horrors is at hand. He sags to the ground, whining, and discontinues his apprenticeship. Castaneda believes he has "succumbed to the first enemy of man of knowledge."

Reality

The Teachings of Don Juan deals with multiple realities coexisting and overlapping. Apprentice Carlos Castaneda, as a good Westerner, demands to know how it looks when he flies or transforms into a crow; but his master, Don Juan Matus, declares this is unimportant. What he feels is reality as he visits the allies or Mescalito. No rational explanations are possible. In "non-ordinary reality" visions can be halted and studied for indefinite periods. Details come as single items, isolated from one another, and appear sequentially. Each time he enters non-ordinary reality, Castaneda perceives events becoming more complex, more inclusive, and pragmatic. The transitional stages represent the slipping into and out of non-ordinary reality, where experience overlaps ordinary reality and is blurred. They are perceived as either slow or abrupt. Using peyote, the transitions are particularly noticeable. *Psilocybe mexicana* requires that Matus verbally guide Castaneda through the transition from his normal form to that of a crow through commands and suggestions. He must also bring the apprentice back to ordinary reality. Matus demands that his apprentice practice what he learns to obtain sufficient first-hand knowledge that the categories of "ordinary" and "non-ordinary" can grow meaningless, and that the "reality of special consensus" is unordinary, separate, and real. Meetings with allies or Mescalito are not illusory.

Twice Matus participates with Castaneda in "special states of ordinary reality," manipulating clues about the environment and behavior to test Castaneda's intentions early on, and more dramatically changes his usual persona to test his reception of the teachings in totality. Both occasions mark transitions in the teaching. Castaneda

realizes that special consensus is practical and usable. The sorcerer can shift between realms, utilizing elements in both for specific purposes. Matus leads Castaneda to believe that, at a level higher than he has achieved, the two realities become a single continuum, and a sorcerer has only to learn the "mechanics of movement."

Style

Perspective

The Teachings of Don Juan is ostensibly the result of anthropological research by Carlos Castaneda in Arizona and Sonora, Mexico, as part of his course of graduate studies in the Anthropology Department at the University of California at Los Angeles. There is no indication in the book, reissued as a 30th anniversary edition with a new commentary by the author, of the controversy that surrounds it and subsequent works by Castaneda. The reader would do well to consult the Wikipedia article about Castaneda to learn the broader context. The book purports to be an account of Castaneda's indoctrination into the drug culture of the Yaqui Indians after meeting a shaman named Juan Matus. It consists of narratives about his experiences and a scholarly analysis of Matus' teachings. The new commentary states that most of Castaneda's professors try to dissuade him. However, two urge him to proceed before the Yaqui oral culture is lost forever and supply an "extraordinary ethnomethodological paradigm" to apply to Matus' "practical actions." Matus helps him escape the confines of Western thought to achieve *cognition* of and internalize the life of shamans in ancient Mexico. He struggles to drop the boundaries of the "civilized" world to accept that the cosmos is composed of opposite, complementary forces: animate and inanimate energy.

Tone

The Teachings of Don Juan is written in the first person past tense. Part 1 consists of selections from Carlos Castaneda's field notes with the addition of "incidental details" that are intended to "recapture the total setting" of his experiences being initiated into the drug culture of ancient Mexico. It largely succeeds in recreating the emotional impact the experiences have on him. It is, thus, completely subjective. Part 2 is a structural analysis of Part 1's data, intended to demonstrate that 1) Matus puts forth a system of logical thought, 2) the system makes sense only if examined "in the light of its structural units," and 3) the system is designed to bring an apprentice to a "level of conceptualization which explained the order of the phenomena he had experienced." The language is turgidly academic and dense, but helps to summarize Castaneda's experiences. For most readers, the "meat" of the book is in Part 1 and could either tempt one to experiment with peyote, Jimson weed, and mushrooms, or be repulsed by the horrific visions they induce. Matus' warning that they should not be used without experienced guidance and supervision, should doubtless be heeded. In the end, despite having an experienced guide, Castaneda discontinues his training.

Structure

The Teachings of Don Juan consists of two parts: "The Teachings" and "A Structural Analysis." These are preceded by Carlos Castaneda's commentaries on the occasion of the thirtieth year of the book's original publication (pgs. xi-xix), a Foreword by eminent anthropologist Walter Goldschmidt, (pgs. xxi-xxii), and an Introduction, which describes how Castaneda comes to be Don Juan Matus' apprentice.

Part 1, which is broken into eleven sections, consists of selections from his field notes, arranged chronologically. Castaneda notes that he writes his experiences several days after experiencing each "state of non-ordinary reality," after he has returned to a state of calm and objectivity and has discussed matters with his mentor. It includes verbatims of conversations with Matus, who insists on a "complete and faithful recollection" of every experience.

Part 2 consists of a four-unit structural analysis based on the data narrated in Part 1. It aims at disclosing the "meaningful concepts" learned during Castaneda's apprenticeship in a way clear to Western minds. It is written as homage to a teacher whom the author can no longer follow, but whose teachings have left a major impact on his life. He feels obliged to make sense of the teachings in a systematic way. The academic tone of Part 2 may put off some readers, but it offers a useful recapitulation of Castaneda's experiences.

Quotes

"Don Juan alluded to our similarity as beginners through incidental comments about his incapacity to understand his teacher during his own apprenticeship. Such remarks led me to believe that to any beginner, Indian or non-Indian, the knowledge of sorcery was rendered incomprehensible by the outlandish characteristics of the phenomena he experienced. Personally, as a Western man, I found these characteristics so bizarre that it was virtually impossible to explain them in terms of my own everyday life, and I was forced to the conclusion that any attempt to classify my field data in my own terms would be futile" Introduction, pg. 7.

"It was not clear to me whether or not I had solved the problem, and in fact I was not even convinced that there had been a problem; I could not avoid feeling that the whole experience was forced and arbitrary. I was certain that Don Juan had watched me all night and then proceeded to humor me by saying that wherever I had fallen asleep was the place I was looking for. Yet I failed to see a logical reason for such an act, and when he challenged me to sit on the other spot I could not do it. There was a strange cleavage between my pragmatic experience of fearing the 'other spot' and my rational deliberations about the total event. "Don Juan, on the other hand, was very sure I had succeeded, and, acting in accordance with my success, let me know he was going to teach me about peyote." Part 1, Chapter 1, pg. 21.

"This statement was apparently utterly funny because they all roared with laughter, including Don Juan. When they had quieted down, I asked in all earnestness, 'Is it really true? This is what really happened?' "Still laughing, John replied: 'I swear my dog really pissed on you.' "Driving back to Don Juan's place I asked him: 'Did all that really happen, don Juan?' "'Yes,' he said, 'but they don't know what you saw. They don't realize you were playing with "him." That is why I did not disturb you.' "'But is this business of the dog and me pissing on each other true?' "'It was not a dog! How many times do I have to tell you that? This is the only way to understand it. It's the only way! It was "he" who played with you.'" Part 1, Chapter 2, pg. 32.

"My benefactor used to say that the devil's weed keeps men who want power, and gets rid of those who can't handle it. But power was more common then; it was sought more avidly. My benefactor was a powerful man, and according to what he told me, his benefactor, in turn, was even more given to the pursuit of power. But in those days there was good reason to be powerful.' "'Do you think there is no reason for power nowadays?' "'Power is alright for you now. You are young. You are not an Indian. Perhaps the devil's weed would be good in your hands. You seem to have liked it. It made you feel strong. I felt all that myself. And yet I didn't like it.'" Part 2, Chapter 3, pg. 47.

"He hesitated a while, but then began to talk. "'When a man starts to learn, he is never clear about his objectives. His purpose is faulty; his intent is vague. He hopes for rewards that will never materialize, for he knows nothing of the hardships of learning. "'He slowly begins to learn - bit by bit at first, then in big chunks. And his thoughts soon

clash. What he learns is never what he pictured, or imagined, and so he begins to be afraid. Learning is never what one expects. Every step of learning is a new task, and the fear the man is experiencing begins to mount mercilessly, unyieldingly. His purpose becomes a battlefield." Part 1, Chapter 3, pg. 62.

"You always ask me questions I cannot answer. You flew. That is what the second portion of the devil's weed is for. As you take more of it, you will learn how to fly perfectly. It is not a simple matter. A man *flies* with the help of the second portion of the devil's weed. That is all I can tell you. What you want to know makes no sense. Birds fly like birds and a man who has taken the devils weed flies as such [*el enyerbado vuela asñ*]." Part 1, Chapter 6, pg. 101.

"Stretching out my arms to protect my head, I charged with all my strength. The sensation was the same - I went through the pole. This time I went all the way to the floor. I stood up again. And standing up was perhaps the most unusual of all the acts I performed that night. I thought myself up! In order to get up I did not use my muscles and skeletal frame in the way I am accustomed to doing, because I no longer had control over them. I knew it the instant I hit the ground. But my curiosity about the pole was so strong I 'thought myself up' in a kind of reflex action. And before I fully realized I could not move, I was up." Part 1, Chapter 7, pg. 107.

"Then he talked about the crow's wings, and said they would come out of my cheekbones. He said it was hard and painful. He commanded me to unfold them. he said they had to be extremely long, as long as I could stretch them, otherwise I would not be able to fly. He told me the wings were coming out and were long and beautiful, and that I had to flap them until they were real wings. "He talked about the top of my head next and said it was still very large and heavy and its bulk would prevent my flying. He told me that the way to reduce its size was by winking; with every wink my head would become smaller. He ordered me to wink until the top weight was gone and I could jump freely. Then he told me I had reduced my head to the size of a crow, and that I had to walk around and hop until I had lost my stiffness." Part 1, Chapter 10, pg. 132.

"In the other state of non-ordinary reality I had undergone, the forms and the patterns I had visualized were always within the confines of my visual conception of the world. But the sensation of seeing under the influence of the hallucinogenic smoke mixture was not the same. Everything I saw was in front of me in a direct line of vision; nothing was above ore below that line of vision." Part 1, Chapter 10, pg. 139.

"The arrangement of the four main units of this structural scheme is, however, a logical sequence which appears to be free from the influence of extraneous classificatory devises of my own. But, insofar as the component ideas of each main unit are concerned, it has been impossible to discard my personal influence. At certain points extraneous classificatory items are necessary in order to render the phenomena understandable. And, if such a task was to be accomplished here, it had to be done by zigzagging back and forth from the alleged meanings and classificatory scheme of the teacher to the meanings and classificatory devices of the apprentice." Part 2, pgs. 155-156

"Don Juan made it very clear that an ally was not bestowed on a sorcerer, but that a sorcerer learned to manipulate the ally through the process of corroborating its rule." Part 2, pg. 177.

"Nearly six years after I had begun the apprenticeship, don Juan's knowledge became a coherent whole for the first time. I realized that he had aimed at providing a bona fide consensus on my personal findings, and although I did not continue because I was not, nor will I ever be, prepared to undergo the rigors of such a training, my own way to meet his standards of personal exertion was my attempt to understand his teachings. I felt it was imperative to prove, if only to myself, that they were not an oddity." Part 2, pg. 194.

Topics for Discussion

Does the test of Castaneda's "backbone" on Matus' porch sound authentic, as Matus claims, or like an excuse, as Castaneda suspects?

How does Mescalito differ from allies and how does he resemble them?

What allowances do Matus, the allies, and Mescalito make for Castaneda not being an Indian?

What are the strong and weak points in Matus' pedagogy?

How would you rate Castaneda as an apprentice? What are his strengths and weaknesses?

If you were Castaneda, which ally - devil's weed or smoke - would you prefer, and why? Discuss in terms of the powers they allegedly give.

If you were Castaneda, would you have discontinued the apprenticeship? What are the pros and cons of continuing?