SUMMARY INTRO FROM https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carlos_Castaneda

Carlos Castaneda (December 25, 1925[nb 1]–April 27, 1998) was an American author with a Ph.D. in anthropology. Starting with The Teachings of Don Juan in 1968, Castaneda wrote a series of books that describe his training in shamanism, particularly a group that he called the Toltecs. The books, narrated in the first person, relate his experiences under the tutelage of a Yaqui "Man of Knowledge" named Don Juan Matus. His 12 books have sold more than 28 million copies in 17 languages. Critics have suggested that they are works of fiction; supporters claim the books are either true or at least valuable works of philosophy and descriptions of practices which enable an increased awareness.

Castaneda's first three books – The Teachings of Don Juan: A Yaqui Way of Knowledge; A Separate Reality; and Journey to Ixtlan – were written while he was an anthropology student at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). He wrote these books as his research log describing his apprenticeship with a traditional "Man of Knowledge" identified as don Juan Matus, a Yaqui Indian from northern Mexico. Castaneda was awarded his bachelor's and doctoral degrees based on the work described in these books. In 1974 his fourth book, Tales of Power, was published and chronicled the end of his apprenticeship under the tutelage of Matus. Castaneda continued to be popular with the reading public with subsequent publications. In his books, Castaneda narrates in first person the events leading to his 1960 introduction to Matus, a half-Yaqui "Man of Knowledge". Castaneda's experiences with Matus inspired the works for which he is known. He also says the sorcerer bequeathed him the position of nagual, or leader of a party of seers. Matus also used the term nagual to signify that part of perception which is in the realm of the unknown yet still reachable by man, implying that, for his party of seers, Don Juan was a connection in some way to that unknown. Castaneda often referred to this unknown realm as nonordinary reality.

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ALTERNATE REALITIES AND UNLIMITED POSSIBILITIES

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The theme of this discussion is that Don Juan Matus (DJM) was training Carlos Casteneda (CC) to become a “Man [Person] of Knowledge (POK).” A POK can “see” and experience multiple realities (“worlds upon worlds”). To accomplish this, it was first necessary for CC to see and experience one other particular reality from the “world of ordinary reality.” That “Separate Reality,” was the world of sorcery. This required a teacher, DJM, and other collaborating POKs to guide CC to see another set of perceptions, out of limitless non-ordinary perceptions, that have a separate logical consistency, that together constitute a separate reality, known as the world of sorcery. In the beginning stages of this teaching it was necessary to use psychotropic substances, such as peyote, mushroom and other plants. Later these were no longer necessary. After seeing and experiencing said other alternative reality, it became possible to know that there are many alternative realities, and to be able to see and ultimately experience them. This could also lead one to believe and know that literally anything is possible.

PERSONAL POWER

“Personal power” (PP) is something that everyone has, in varying degrees and types. It is something that can be sought after, obtained and accumulated. The meaning of “PP” was vague in the books, because it was beyond words in ordinary language. PP and its accumulation was necessary for someone to seek DJM’s knowledge.

PARAPHRASES AND QUOTES ABOUT PP AND ALT REALITY IN BOOKS 1-3²

All the types of learning Carlos underwent, were incidental to the acquisition of power, at least in the early stages. T p21.

It was necessary for CC to believe that PP could be hunted and stored. JTI p167.

Early on, DJM offered as proof of his own personal power that he was able to call many things to his aid, which accounted for all the strange things that happened to Carlos when around DJM. JTI p178.

The various “power plants” used were the only pragmatic form of learning to obtain [large amounts of] power at the beginning of the apprenticeship.

Although the teachings taught to “live like a warrior,” and the term PP seems to imply physical strength, the accumulation of seemingly superhuman physical strength was said to no longer be of any use. T p64.

Generally speaking, power is not seen though one can witness its effects. It is

² Book 1, The Teachings of Don Juan: A Yaqui Way of Knowledge (TDJ); A Separate Reality (SR); and Journey to Ixtlan (JTI).
something one can hunt, collect and own.

“Power is a very peculiar affair. It is impossible to pin it down and say what it really is. It is a feeling that one has about certain things. Power is personal. It belongs to oneself alone.” A hunter of power entraps it and then stores it away as their personal finding. Thus, personal power grows, and you may have the case of a warrior who has so much personal power that they become a POK. JTI p122.

Power is very important to every person, and it is the determining factor in terms of one’s capabilities. "It doesn't matter how one was brought up. What determines the way one does anything is personal power. Personal power is a feeling. Or one may call it a mood. Everything that a person does is dependant on their PP. JTI p157.

CC was storing power little by little by living the way DJM had recommended (losing self-importance, living like a warrior, erasing personal history, being inaccessible and etc.)(also witnessing events outside of ordinary reality and maintaining calm, poise, equanimity)(and as more detailed in later books, dealing with “petty tyrants” and gaining greater control in one’s dreams). By acting in the prescribed ways he was slowly plugging up his points of drainage through which power might escape. One didn't have to be deliberate about it, power had the peculiarity of being unnoticeable while being stored and power always found a way. JTI p177.

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comment (includes information gleaned from subsequent books)

Power has to do with one’s ability to access and maintain a reality view, that has an effect on experience, either by taking self and others to that other reality view, or by bringing aspects into this reality such that it alters facts, circumstances or conditions.

If one is so certain of another reality, beyond belief to knowledge, and their mind is so strong and firm on this, they can use this knowledge and sight to take another person to this place with them and/or bring aspects of it into the experience of the other person.

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“Gait of power” is ability to let go of conscious mind control and run through desert at night without knowing where one is going. Once power takes over there is no chance for a slip up. JTI 169.

A person has to be very serious when it comes to power. It is unnoticeable, but when it comes it comes. Marvels appear before one’s eyes. It controls one’s acts yet obeys one’s commands. JTI p97.

Power is something one must live with in order to have it. JTI p132. In order to have it
and command it, one must have power to begin with. The beginning steps are slow as one must slowly accumulate power by little bits until one has enough to sustain oneself in a battle of power. JTI p135.

A “battle of power” might be described as an experience that defies logic, reason, commonly understood views of what is possible, scientific explanation, etc. Another way of saying this might be, experience within another reality that would be (thought to be) impossible in ordinary reality, or an experience in this reality that would ordinarily be (thought to be) impossible.

The crowning achievement of Don Juan's knowledge is to become POK. The basics of being a POK is to understand that the world of ordinary [people] is just one world of an infinite number of possible worlds that can be lived and experienced. To become a member of the world of sorcery as well as the ordinary world, was a means to becoming a person of knowledge, rather than an end in itself. See JTI p158 and SR p18.

But this kind of thing ought not be embarked upon lightly, because things seen cannot be unseen. After seeing other realities, maintaining this one, as though knowledge of other than does not exists could be difficult. Many people might wish they had not looked.

A man goes to knowledge as he goes to war, wide-awake with fear, with respect, and with absolute assurance. Going to knowledge or going to war in any other manner is a mistake, and whoever makes it will live to regret his steps.

TDJ p51.

This leads to construction or reformation of one’s experiences to be, or one’s world or reality. DJM said that it really did not matter what one chooses, but it ought to be about love, or one will end up cold, void, empty. The actual words used were more like, one can choose any path, and all are ultimately equal, but one ought to choose a path with a heart, if one wanted to be happy. Paths with a heart make you enjoy life and strengthen you, while those without heart do the opposite. To know whether or not a path has a heart, simply ask the question of whether a choice or course has a heart and one will know the answer. See TDJ p106.

Presented by Ronald Ryan (see footnote 1)
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