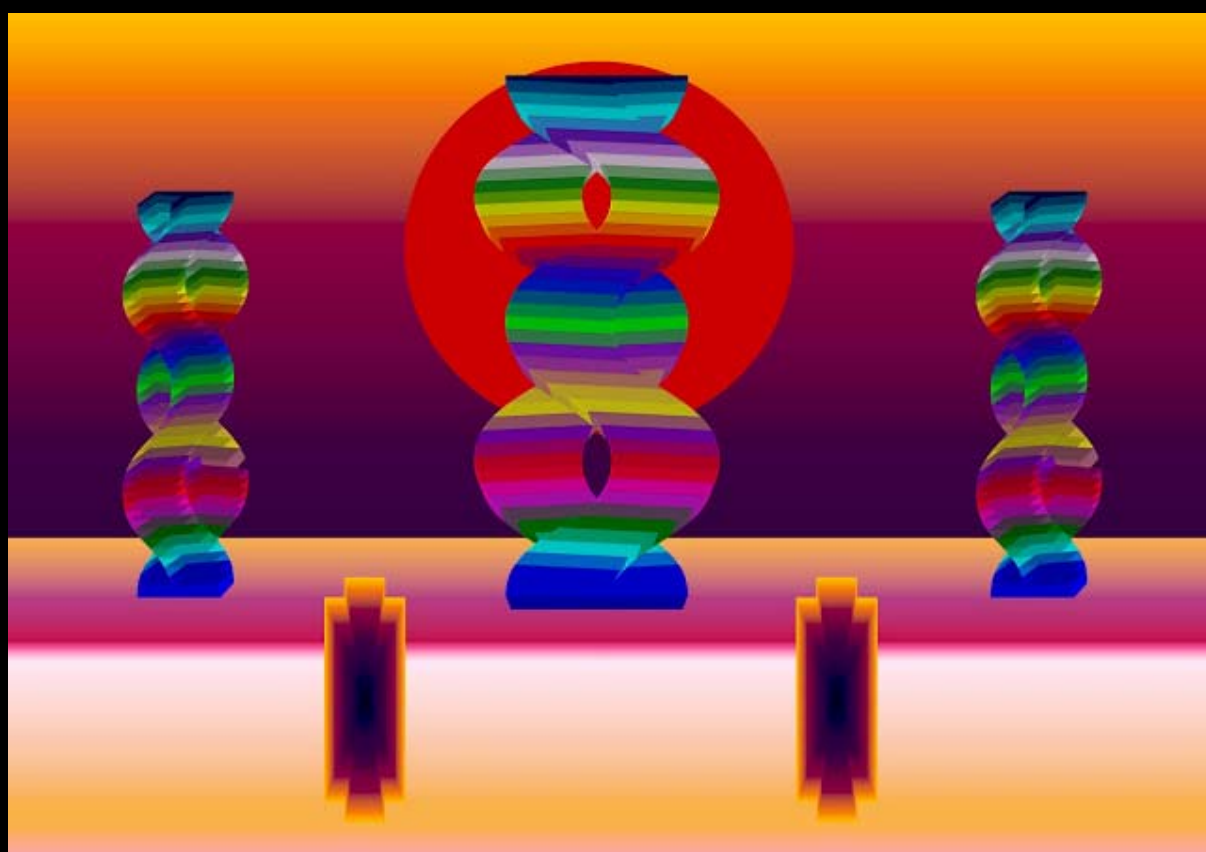


Lucid Dreaming and Lucid Art



Art, Awareness and the 'Second Lineage' of Carlos Castaneda

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1. Art as Sorcery

Art is a form of mesmerism - of magic or sorcery. In the language of [Carlos Castaneda and his books](#), this means that its aim is “the fixation of awareness”. Not a fixation of the sort induced by marketing men and their advertising images - whose manipulative intent we are all too familiar with. Nor the sort of fixation that dulls and entraps people’s awareness by hooking it to their smartphone or computer screens – one that has only do to with their outer gaze or “first attention”.

Instead we are speaking of a fixation of our outer *gaze* that also accomplishes the feat of freeing our ‘inner gaze’. Art is successful as magic or sorcery when it accomplishes the feat of fixating our gaze on an outer object in such a way that it prompts our gaze to turn *inward* at the same time. It becomes even more magical when by fixating the focus of our outer gaze it succeeds also in shifting the inner point of origin or *locus* of that gaze – its “assemblage” point” – moving it to a new position and fixing it there. For in this way it alters the nature of both our inner and outer perception (“the second attention”). When our gaze is turned inward through its outer fixation, our inner gaze can itself be turned outwards – not only towards a new outer focus or fixation point of awareness but *from* a new inner fixation point or locus of awareness. The same type of movement of the fixation point of our awareness occurs in the course of what is called ‘lucid dreaming’ – which results from the dreamer becoming *aware* of being in the dream state and thus in a certain way “dreaming awake”. This has two main results. Firstly, dream images literally become less fleeting and mobile and instead more vivid, stable and lucid. Secondly, the aware or ‘lucid’ dreamer can intensify this experience of lucidity by quite consciously *fixating* their gaze on a particular dream image and fixing it in their gaze.

My ‘[Lucid Art](#)’ is drawn from long experience of ‘lucid dreaming’, but starts from its end-point. This is the fixation of our gaze on perceptual images so unusual or dreamlike - and yet so clear, translucent and ‘lucid’ in their colour and form - that they themselves work to fixate and vivify the awareness of the waking perceiver. In this way they render our *seeing* itself, and not just the object seen, more translucently lucid. The aim of Lucid Art then, like that of lucid dreaming, is lucid “seeing”. Another word for this is ‘clear-seeing’ or ‘clairvoyance’ - hence the intrinsic connection of lucid art with the magical or ‘esoteric arts’.

Many are impressed by the luminous intensity or ‘energy’ of ‘Lucid Art’. In this context it is useful to recall the root meaning of the word ‘energy’ itself, i.e. to ‘work upon’ or ‘set into work’. For whether hung on a brightly lit wall or displayed on a digital photo-frame, meditating Lucid Art works, even just for a few moments or minutes, allows them to work upon us – to set our awareness into work in new ways. Like all forms of visual art with a similarly lucid character, they do so by temporarily removing us from the space of our ordinary self and world and transporting us to a new place, both within ourselves and beyond our ordinary world.

The more often we allow them to do so, the more our perceptual awareness is shifted to a new, more lucid inner fixation point or “assemblage point”. And whilst my form of Lucid Art is computer-created, it works to bring about an intensification of awareness – the very opposite of the dulling and diminution of awareness brought about through blindly staring at screens. That is because of the inner place or locus of awareness *from* which it is created, which is not located in either our ordinary waking or dream consciousness.

Quotations from Carlos Castaneda:

“The old sorcerers called the result of fixing the assemblage point on new positions the second attention. Sorcerers really have two complete areas for their endeavours: a small one, called the first attention or the awareness of our daily world or the fixation of the assemblage point on its habitual position; and a much larger area, the second attention or the awareness of other worlds or the fixation of the assemblage point on each of an enormous number of new positions.”

“The *dreaming* attention is the control one acquires over one's dreams upon fixating the assemblage point on any new position to which it has been displaced during dreams.”

“Out of all the marvellous things the old sorcerers learned exploring those thousands of positions, only the art of *dreaming* and the art of *stalking* remain. The art of *dreaming* is concerned with the displacement of the assemblage point. *Stalking* is the art that deals with the fixation of the assemblage point on any location to which it is displaced.”

“We know we are maintaining cohesion by the clarity of our perception. The clearer the view of our dreams, the greater our cohesion.”

“...in *dreaming* , once you are able to hold the view of any item, you are really holding the *dreaming position* of your assemblage point. So then, an apprentice gazes at the leaves of a tree as if he is in a dream, but with a slight yet most meaningful variation: he holds his *dreaming* attention on the leaves of the tree in the awareness of our daily world.”

Links:

<http://www.prismagems.com/castaneda/donjuan1.html>

www.lucidart.co.uk

2. Putting the Castaneda ‘controversy’ to rest

Did he ‘dream it all up’ or did it all ‘actually’ happen, i.e. were the accounts in Carlos’s Castaneda’s books of the extraordinary encounters and events he experiences pure ‘fiction’ or ‘verifiable’ fact? The problem is that in the entire history of this so-called ‘controversy’ it does not seem to have occurred to any would be Castaneda critic or debunker – or even most Castaneda fans or followers - *that the question itself runs directly counter* to what is perhaps *the* most essential and important message of the teachings he imparts. This message is that so-called ordinary ‘objective’, ‘factual’ or ‘waking life’ events, which I will term here ‘outer events’, are - *just like dream events themselves* - nothing but *surface expressions and symbols* of what can be called ‘inner events’, i.e. events occurring at a deeper level of awareness than *either* the waking *or* dream state.

Just as dream events may soon fade in our recollection without our ever having recalled them in full – let alone learned from all their inner dimensions of meaning – so too can waking life events.

Indeed a principal reason *why we dream at all* is precisely to gain a deeper awareness of the inner meaning of even the most apparently mundane or insignificant elements of *waking life events*.

In other words, it is precisely through dreaming that we gain access to those *inner* events, experiences and dimensions of reality of which so-called 'real life' waking events are *also* an expression – albeit a far more superficial and perceptually restricted one. The most important 'fact' pointed to by the teachings communicated by Carlos Castaneda therefore, is that except in states of what he calls "heightened awareness" we are for the most part not awake at all but rather entirely *asleep* to the inner dimensions of meaning and reality expressed in so-called 'real life' or 'waking life' events. That is why we *need* great philosophers and mystics, great sorcerers or 'seers' – and not least great artists, musicians and writers – in short, great 'men of wisdom' ('Toltecs') who perceive and conceive from a state of heightened awareness. They are needed precisely to help us to more fully *recollect* the true nature of reality and the true meaning of everyday encounters, events and experiences.

That is also why 'recollection' becomes such a central word, concept - and practice - in the Castaneda books. For in his books themselves, Castaneda admits to it having taken him years just to fully *recollect* the enormous and mysterious *inner dimensions* of his first brief and seemingly casual bus-station encounter with the Yacqui-Indian-Toltec 'sorcerer' called 'Don Juan' or 'Juan Matus'.

From this perspective it makes *not a whit of difference* whether Castaneda can or cannot be 'proved', for example, to not 'actually' have 'been' in Mexico at the time of some of his reported meetings with the shaman or 'nagual' Juan Matus and those belonging to his party of apprentice sorcerers. For as Castaneda himself writes in the preface to his book 'The Fire Within':

"...an inherent quality of heightened awareness is that it is not susceptible to normal recall. What transpires in such a state becomes part of the sorcerer's everyday awareness only through a staggering effort of recovery."

"My interaction with the nagual's party was an example of this difficulty of recall. With the exception of don Genaro, I had contact with them only when I was in a state of heightened awareness; hence in my normal everyday life I could not remember them, not even as vague characters in dreams."

He goes on to write that:

"The manner in which I met with them every time was almost a ritual. I would drive to don Genaro's house in a small town in the southern part of Mexico. Don Juan would join us immediately ... make me change levels of awareness and then we would drive to a larger nearby town where he and the other fifteen seers were living."

If there *is* a deep and genuine question left to us by the legacy of Castaneda's literature and lineage it has the nature of a fundamental and seemingly insurmountable paradox which not even Castaneda himself is able to entirely escape from in his writings. The paradox is that if waking life events are no more essentially 'real' than dream events, but merely a specific type of 'dream within a dream', then even the seemingly everyday side of Castaneda's accounts (for example driving to don Genaro's house in southern Mexico at certain times) can no more be 'factually' proven or disproven than can a dream – or any experienced or recalled event. For all experiencing is, by its

nature, essentially subjective - and therefore not subject to proof or disproof by another individual's experiencing.

Thus even Castaneda's own apparent distinction between everyday events and those occurring in states of "heightened awareness" serves essentially and principally to distinguish two basic modes or states of awareness - only one of which however (everyday waking consciousness) is taken as the standard or measure (Latin *ratio*) for what constitutes reality as such or *per se* – this being seen, for example as more fundamentally 'real' than dreaming consciousness. All the more interesting then, that in Castaneda's definition of 'sorcery' as "the mastery of awareness", a key practice is called "the art of dreaming" or "dreaming awake". This is what is generally referred to as 'lucid dreaming' – the aim of which is to come awake within one's dreams in the sense of coming to a full *awareness* that one is dreaming - and thus also far greater freedom to influence the course of one's dreams. And yet what most essentially characterises the 'lucidity' of a 'dream' is not only its vivid intensity or even the freedom of action it facilitates but something that this 'art of dreaming' shares with our experience of *all* that we call 'art'. For whether we choose to view a painting or sculpture in the space of a gallery, to listen to music in the space of a concert hall, to participate in a religious ritual in a sacred space - or simply and consciously *take time* - even in the space of our own rooms or houses, to immerse ourselves in any form of aesthetic experiencing – one thing is shared in common by all these forms of intentional activity and experiencing. This is that we do not simply 'lose ourselves' in whatever we may choose to experience, as we may lose ourselves in more mundane activities. Instead, and by virtue of allotting the experience a specific time and space, we remain both strongly *aware* of experiencing and at the same time able to consciously immerse ourselves more deeply in whatever it is we choose to turn into a fixation point of awareness.

I would suggest that this combination of experiencing something on the one hand and, on the other hand, being in a state of heightened *awareness* of experiencing it - is central to what we call 'art' or 'aesthetic' experiencing in general. It is like the difference between anything going on or present within a given space and that space *as such*. For just as space is both absolutely inseparable from everything within it and the same time absolutely *distinct* from it, so also is awareness *per se* both absolutely inseparable and absolutely distinct from everything we experience or are aware 'of'. Indeed we experience awareness *per se* or 'as such' *as* space – which is essentially nothing 'objective' and no 'thing' but a spacious field *of* awareness surrounding and pervading everything we experience within it. That is why, in the course of lucid or 'aware' dreaming, space as such attains a heightened significance – whether through broad spatial vistas and the lucid visions beheld within them, or through the experience of flying dreams.

Note: Awareness, as emphasised in Castaneda's books, embraces many worlds and dimensions beyond what we take as 'the' world. It is in these other dimensions of awareness that he now dwells. Long after his 'death' however I myself entered a mode of awareness allowing me to enter into a type of trance communication with his living soul and the dimension of awareness in which he continues his journey. In the course of this wordless communication he revealed to me that the very 'controversy' around his books, which continued after his death, was - even before his birth – anticipated and even pre- *intended* to offer a riddle to his readers, one which actually held the key to the *inner message and inner truth* of his life and works.

Links: www.theawarenessprinciple.com

3. Did Juan Matus actually exist?

“The body is an awareness.”

Carlos Castaneda

For those familiar with the Castaneda books, philosophical arguments may nevertheless appear unsatisfactory as an answer to such a ‘simple’ question as ‘Did Juan Matus actually exist?’. Here again however, this seemingly simple question itself is riddled with deeper questions about what it means for anything or anyone to ‘exist’. Certainly the figure of Don Juan/Juan Matus – became as *real*, not only for Castaneda but for his readers – no less say, than the figure of Sherlock Holmes was for both Conan Doyle and his readers. What the question seems to really want to ask however, is whether Juan Matus was ‘real’ in the sense of being a flesh-and-blood individual. The deeper question hidden here however – and one also central to the deeper philosophical teachings conveyed by the Castaneda books – has to do with our conception of the nature of ‘bodyhood’ itself. In his own accounts of learning the arts of sorcery, Castaneda describes himself as having been taught to see human bodies, not in the everyday manner, but in the form of ‘luminous eggs’. This is neither a new way of ‘seeing’ the human body in terms of the history of esoteric literature (the ‘auric egg’) nor is it any more outrageous a proposition than recognising - as did the biologist [Jakob von Uexküll](#) - that most other species would be quite incapable of seeing ‘flesh and blood’ human bodies in anything like the way that human beings themselves do. Thus for human beings, a man, sheep or dog is a ‘flesh and blood’ reality, whereas the term ‘mammal’ is a mere generic category, whilst for the tick it is the other way round – their sense organs being such as to only register those features of a body which distinguish hairy mammals from cold-blooded creatures. What for us is an abstract category is, for the tick, a concrete perceptual reality – and vice versa. Then again, how are we to know how sharks or bats for example, despite being virtually blind but with their hyper-acute chemical and electrical or sonar modes of perceptual awareness would perceive the bodies of human beings?

In [another essay](#) of mine I have argued that all species – indeed all things - are essentially *species of consciousness*. A species of consciousness is a particular *field-pattern of awareness*, one which in turn gives perceptual shape and form to that *patterned field of awareness* – that which constitutes the perceptual world or environment (German *Umwelt*) of any species. In other words, there are as many worlds as there are species - understood as species of consciousness – each of which in turn perceives both the bodily form their own species and *that of all other species* of consciousness in their environment in a unique and highly *species-specific* way.

Albeit an important one, this is only *one* answer however to the deceptively simple question of whether or not Juan Matus actually ‘existed’. For another question lurking within this question is what it means for any thing or being to ‘exist’ or ‘be’? Before even asking “Did or did not Juan Matus actually ‘exist’?” therefore, the more fundamental question is “Who or what *is* ‘Juan Matus’?”. In other words, what does it essentially mean for any human being - including you and me - or indeed any thing or being whatsoever, to ‘be’ or ‘exist’?”

This was the fundamental or basic ‘ontological’ question raised by the 20th century German thinker Martin Heidegger, who himself concluded that the essence of the human being is nothing essentially human. Even for Castaneda himself however, the question of who or what Don Juan/Juan Matus essentially *was*, was itself a question - suspecting as he did early on, that Don Juan was ‘pretending’ to be someone else – or that someone else was ‘pretending’ to be Don Juan. I see his suspicion itself as the surface of yet deeper questions, each pregnant with yet deeper insights or ‘seeings’. One such insight is that we are all essentially eternal ‘spiritual’ or ‘trans-human’ beings in human bodily form. Another is the insight that our perceptual awareness of each other’s ‘flesh and blood’ bodies is what Seth calls a “secondary construction” i.e. a “materialised body image” or hallucinated perception of their own inwardly lived and experienced body or “primary construction”. This lived body however, is *not* essentially a body of flesh and blood we are merely and simply aware of - being made up not of atoms, cells, molecules and organs but of specific tones, qualities, shapes, patterns, flows and filaments of awareness. Indeed what we perceive and conceive as atoms, molecules, cells and organs are themselves but the *outwardly perceived form* taken by patterns and units of *awareness*. Essentially then, how any body is perceived from the outside or ‘exteroceptively’ - whether by members of its own or other species of consciousness - may bear little or no relation to how it is experienced by them from the inside or ‘interoceptively’, which means also ‘proprioceptively’ and ‘kinaesthetically’.

Such understandings, however radical they may first appear, should come as no surprise to us – given that in our dreams we regularly create “secondary constructions” or “hallucinate” images of people and things, whether known or unknown to us in our waking life and world. This does not imply however that what we perceive in our dreams is merely a set of ‘constructed’ or ‘projected’ images that ‘we’ fabricate. For again, the deeper question is who are ‘we’. For if, as Seth suggests, each of us is composed of a multitude of selves or ‘fragment personalities’, then what we behold in our dreams may not *only* be a ‘fragment personality’ or ‘sub-personality’ of ours, but might alternatively – or also – be our way of picturing and perceiving an aspect of another being’s self and body that is similar to or *in resonance* with an aspect of ours. The big difference between dreaming and waking consciousness however, is that dreaming permits the innately *shape-shifting* character of our inner body and that of other beings to be experienced or perceived – though, as I have discovered myself, dreaming is not the only mode of consciousness in which this is possible.

Of course it remains perfectly valid to ask how all these insights make sense of our everyday waking world – in which we *do* appear to have the capacity to perceive both each other’s bodies and those of the things and world around us in a recognisable and largely stable way that is shared by others. This question however, is one that again is itself central to the message of Castaneda books, which raises the deeper question of (1) how and in what ways this capacity to create and sustain a seemingly shared *inter-subjective* world is exercised, and (2) is the everyday waking world we seem to share in common the *only* or *primary world* that we share in common – or can we come to share other realities, other worlds? For after all, it seems from Castaneda’s accounts that others in the party of sorcerers knew and encountered Juan Matus too, and that Castaneda himself shared *joint* experiences of other realities with them.

Links: [Subjective Biology – on the species-specific nature of environmental awareness](#)

4. Accounting for Separate Realities - Castaneda's 'Second Lineage'

"Language speaks."

Martin Heidegger

"The word in language is half someone else's."

Mikhail Bakhtin

Whilst most of us know of Don Juan/Juan Matus only through the account of him – and not least of his *words* – given by Castaneda himself, it appears to have required his fiercest critic and would-be debunker (Richard de Mille) to have begun to recognise not only these words but also some of the key practices supposedly taught to Castaneda by Juan Matus as “half someone else’s”. By far the chief ‘someone else’ (and in this sense also Castaneda’s first and principal teacher) was his academic mentor Harold Garfinkel. Garfinkel in turn was connected to an entire lineage of European thinkers that can be traced, through the phenomenological sociologist Alfred Schütz, to the German philosophers Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger. The voice of these thinkers too speaks clearly through the language of Juan Matus. For though *supposedly* a translation from Castaneda’s Spanish ‘field notes’, the language of this ‘translation’ is clearly overlaid and pervaded with language and pithy utterances a huge number of which clearly echo, speak for and deeply resonate with the thinking of *all* these ‘someone else’s’. Together I call them Castaneda’s ‘second lineage’ - the first being his account – through the voice of Juan Matus – of an ancient Amerindian lineage of Toltec seers and sorcerers. For Agehandanda Bharati “the glaring sign of don Juan’s illegitimacy is his intercontinental eclecticism” (The Don Juan Papers p. 148). To me, and I believe also to Castaneda himself, the way in which his account of an Amerindian shamanic lineage gives fresh and novel expression to a ‘second lineage’ of profound European thinkers is the most “glaring sign” of his genius. Let us begin with the last in the long chain of this second lineage, and the one with the most direct influence on Castaneda - Harold Garfinkel. De Mille’s own dim view of Garfinkel and German philosophy is evident from the following snide remarks, all remarkably similar to a description of Castaneda’s Juan Matus, as well as to the most vehement attacks on Martin Heidegger:

“Anthony F.C. Wallace said Garfinkel’s verbal compactations ought to be read as inspirational literature rather than technical prose, that they were ‘like a very bad interlinear translation of an obscure German philosopher. Serious graduate students, Wallace added, ‘may waste hours searching for the meaning of such seemingly oracular non-sentences.’ The oddest thing about Garfinkel’s style, however, is not its incomprehensible unreadability; many an obscure German philosopher can supply that. The oddest thing is that Garfinkel is quite capable of writing clear, straightforward sentences when he wants to. He just didn’t want to most of the time. Why didn’t he want to? I should guess it was because however much a thinker and teacher he may have been he was more a guru or magus, a charismatic presence that inspired, mystified, enthralled, that initiated a few worthy disciples and drove the rest away. Inscrutable scriptures were the first barrier to stop unworthy postulants. Anyone smart enough, tireless enough and obedient enough to slog through Garkinkel’s semantic swamp deserved admittance to the separate social-science reality hidden at its center, where further, more

exacting tests of devotion awaited ... Having defected long before from the One True Church, Castaneda was not about to submit to any lesser authority.” (ibid.)

The above citation is from Richard de Mille essay's entitled *Ethnomethodallegory* – the title being a swipe at the new discipline known as 'Ethnomethodology' founded and practiced by Harold Garfinkel. Richard de Mille describes [Ethnomethodology](#) as follows:

“Beginning as a critique of sociological practice, Garfinkel’s creation developed into something more or less independent of sociology, whether one would call it a discipline, a specialty, a cult, a rebellion, or a conspiracy to destroy social science from within. The central idea of ethnomethodology was that every kind of reality was a subjective, or at least ‘intersubjective’, way of talking about things ... Before completing his graduate work at Harvard, Garfinkel had visited the New School of Social Research to study with Alfred Schutz, who thereby became the conceptual grandfather of ethnomethodology. Schutz defined “intersubjective” reality as a “world of the We”, a world not private though subjective, a world constituted in face to face exchanges between people who lived in the same physical and social environment. So situated, this shared subjective world could be constantly corrected by new readings of the environment, which it kept stable and dependable. Other realities were possible if the normal assumptions were suspended ... but most people returned to and depended on the normal world of the We, the common-sense realities of everyday life.” (ibid.)

As for Garfinkel himself, his definition of ethnomethodology is in essence much simpler and more pithy. In the preface to 'Studies in Ethnomethodology' he begins by emphasising that all is taken for granted as the 'real world' or 'the objective reality of social facts' is not a given, but a reference to the "organised activities of everyday life" - and in particular of **“the methods for making those same activities visibly-rational-and-reportable-for-all-practical-purposes, i.e. “accountable” ...”**

In Chapter One he goes straight to an even more radical and central thesis, by introducing the concept of 'members' – individuals sharing a common institutional or everyday settings for their activities – and a common language through which they account for or document what is taken as 'real' within it. His key thesis reads as follows:

“... the activities whereby members produce and manage settings of organised everyday affairs are identical with members’ procedures for making those settings ‘account-able’.” [my stress]

He goes on to write that the “... recognisable sense or fact, or methodic character or impersonality of accounts are **not** independent of the **socially organised occasions of their use.**”

Instead: **“Their rational features *consist* of what members do with, what they ‘make of’ the accounts in the socially organised actual occasions of their use. Members’ accounts are reflexively and essentially tied for their rational features to the socially organised occasions of their use, for they are features of the socially organised occasions of their use.”**

What Garfinkel is claiming here is not that propositions belonging to 'rational' modes of inferences and deduction are 'invalid' in themselves, but that their meaning and 'rationale' is principally determined by the use and meaning *made of them* in organised institutional or everyday settings, rather than by their purely propositional character.

The thesis is grounded in Garfinkel's emphasis on the fundamentally *context-bound* use or 'indexical' character of *all* utterances, proposition or 'accounts' of reality. Yet since no complete or total account can ever be given of the context or setting in which an assertion or judgement is made or an account constructed, this context is instead simply 'glossed over' and tacitly assumed. In other words, no 'text' – whether in the form of a statement or proposition, utterance or judgement, document, account or report – can ever give full expression to its context of use, but serves purely pragmatic or illocutionary purposes within that context. An example is the investigation of suicides by coroners, who will tend to focus on the most common forms of evidence in disregard of specific contexts and the other possible conclusions they may lead to. The resulting *document* claiming a specific cause of death will then be taken as 'fact' and be ranked as more 'objective' evidence in other contexts (for example a court of law) and settings than any evidence ignored for *the practical purposes* of producing the document itself (Cuff et al., 1990, 179). In general, all that "for practical purposes" tends to be *glossed over* in the socially organised production of oral or documentary accounts of reality in particular settings is tacitly assumed, and 'reality' comes instead to be *identified* with accounts of it. Ethnomethodology then, was not so much an independent scientific method applied to sociology but an explication of the *unspoken methods* by which 'ordinary realities' are accounted for - not only inter-subjectively created but also given a seemingly 'objective' or 'factual' nature. The method is paradoxical – for its secret lies in the ways by which 'facts' and 'reality' are reduced to accounts constructed of them – to ways of speaking about and documenting them. Garfinkel's insight into how not only our understanding of 'ordinary reality' but that very reality itself is shaped by accounts constructed of it plays a huge and decisive role in the Castaneda literature, in which he describes how a tacitly agreed understanding of reality is the result of an 'ordinary consensus':

"By ordinary consensus I mean the tacit or implicit agreement on the component elements of everyday life which fellow men give to one another in various ways."

"In Don Juan's teachings, special consensus meant tacit or implicit agreement on the component elements of non-ordinary reality, which he, in his capacity as teacher, gave me as the apprentice of his knowledge."

These teaching were above all to do with a different type of 'ethnomethodology' – specifically with methods of *undermining* ordinary accounts of reality and this "ordinary consensus" to such a degree that not only does an entirely new conception of reality result – aided and reinforced by an alternate language or 'inventory' of terms – but also an entirely new *perception* of reality. This goes together with a capacity not just to metaphysically postulate but to actually perceive what Castaneda calls "non-ordinary realities" – and this in a way that is no less capable of being inter-subjectively shared and validated than ordinary ones.

"This room is a gloss."

Castaneda

For Castaneda 'ordinary reality' is essentially a 'gloss' - both in the ethnomethodological sense and more - being a *perceptual* gloss and not just a linguistic one. I understand this as meaning that our ordinary consciousness of a room – or of any space or place – is not one that allows each and every

individual component of it to stand out to the same degree and with the same vividness as every other. Instead our awareness shifts from one focus or 'foreground' component to another – each time rendering invisible or peripheral the larger background field or luminous space of awareness within which all things stand out or 'ex-ist'. In contrast, seeing or 'beholding' non-ordinary realities involved identifying with that illuminating spacious field itself – thus allowing us to perceive all 'component realities' within it in its vivifying and translucent light. This would explain why, for Castaneda, what characterised non-ordinary realities was the way in which not only their every component, but every detail of their every component, constituted a 'singularity' that stood out in a most stable, intense and 'lucid' way - allowing one to come to a halt and literally fix or 'be-hold' them in awareness for "what appeared to be an indefinite length of time" – like a most *lucid* and transfixing work of *art*.

Further quotations from Castaneda:

"The aim of sorcerers is to reach a state of total awareness in order to experience all the possibilities of perception available to man. This state of awareness even implies an alternative way of dying."

"The first truth about awareness is that the world out there is not really as we think it is. We think it is a world of objects and it's not."

"Human awareness is like an immense haunted house. The awareness of everyday life is like being sealed in one room of that immense house for life. We enter the room through a magical opening: birth. And we exit through another such magical opening: death. Sorcerers, however, are capable of finding still another opening and can leave that sealed room while still alive. A superb attainment. But their astounding accomplishment is that when they escape from that sealed room they choose freedom. They choose to leave that immense, haunted house entirely instead of getting lost in other parts of it."

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