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The American New Spirituality of Carlos Castaneda's Tensegrity – its Commercialization and Medialization

Abstract: The culmination of the popularity of American anthropologist Carlos Castaneda literary, who led phenomenological research among Mexican “seers” for 13 years, took place in 70s. and 80s. In the article, the author intended to show what was and is still the fate of the literary legacy of C. Castaneda, and how the organization being the his teachings has commercialized and medialized his spiritual heritage.

Keywords: New spirituality, Carlos Castaneda, Tensegrity, marketing

Introduction

During the inauguration of the 5th International Congress of Religious Studies in Torun the following message was conveyed: “At the congress we are looking for not only what divides us, but also what unites us (...). Religions introduce a great potential for dialogue in contemporary society (...), indicating a specific sensitivity of human beings directed at otherness (...) it is (dialogue, L. K.) in its essence only or as much as cognition, understanding, acceptance or rejection¹”. Also Marek Szulakiewicz indicated such a macro project of public life, which means “learning from each other as well as showing each other respect and sympathy”². This article will describe one of many manifestations of the American new spirituality, while preserving harmony with the main message of the Congress.

¹ J. Kojkoł, *Idea Kongresu*, in: *Religie w dialogu kultur*, M. Szulakiewicz (ed.), Toruń 2017, p. 13.

² M. Szulakiewicz, *Od postmodernizmu do epoki neoreligijnej: trudne i łatwe powroty religii*, in: *Religie w dialogu kultur*, M. Szulakiewicz (ed.), op. cit., p. 23.

Carlos Castaneda was an American anthropologist regarded as the guru of the generation of “flower children”, a graduate and lecturer of the University of California, who for a dozen or so years conducted phenomenological research among Mexican “videntes” (“clairvoyants”). The height of popularity of his literary output falls to the 1970s and 1980s in the United States of America. In other countries, e.g. in Poland, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Russia, due to a certain “delay” in the translation of his books, the height of his popularity fell to the 1990s. Castaneda was a very prolific writer. His books appeared every couple of years (12 in total) and sold in several million copies in 17 world languages (*inter alia* in English, Spanish, French, Italian, Russian, Polish, Czech and Bulgarian). The writer himself avoided publicity. It is difficult to say explicitly what this phenomenon of the popularity of his output results from. Definitely, a multi-determinism of various factors occurs in this case.

This article aims to present the fate of Castaneda’s literary legacy, how Cleargreen, an organization founded by him, has brought about the commercialization and medialization – mainly in new media – of his spiritual heritage. The article was written on the basis of long-term literary research, Internet website research, press interviews with the anthropologist’s apprentices, feedback from Internet users as well as the observation of the author – participating in workshops organized by Cleargreen in Spain, France and Germany.

Why Castaneda? The justification for the article is the fact that there is no extensive source literature on Castaneda in Poland, especially within the scope of the assessment of his organization in the context of commercialization and medialization of its activities. The outline of the article will be as follows: the first part will be dedicated to the discussion of Carlos Castaneda’s output and teaching, while the second part will focus the reader’s attention on the Cleargreen organization, set up by him in the mid-1990s, on the commercialization and medialization of its activity.

Carlos Castaneda: life, literary output, main concepts, criticism

The notion of spirituality and the new spirituality are not easy to define. The term “spirituality” is usually associated with religions, but for some time it has also appeared in the extra-religious context, e.g. in the context of art, literature as well as business and management³. Thus spirituality may have religious or extra-religious context. New spirituality is often associated with the so-called New Age. Carlos Castaneda’s books are usually included in literature from this field.

³ Cf. W. Gasparski, *Wykłady z etyki biznesu. Nowa edycja uzupełniona*, Wydawnictwo WSPiZ, Warszawa 2007, p. 337; cf. also J. Sójka, *Duchowy wymiar zarządzania*, in: A. Grzegorzczak, J. Sójka, R. Koschany (ed.), *Fenomen duchowości*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, Poznań 2006, p. 121.

The writer's life

According to emigration documents, Carlos Castaneda was born in Cajamarca in Peru in 1925, while his ancestors both on the side of his father and mother were to come from Spain⁴. He graduated from the School of Fine Arts in Lima, while in 1949 he emigrated to the United States of America, where he took on different jobs, he was *inter alia* a taxi driver. In 1959 he was granted American citizenship and commenced ethnographic and anthropological studies, during which he undertook research on the culture of the Yaqui Indians. On the basis of this research he published a book⁵, and subsequently he obtained his doctorate on the same subject. Then the period of his popularity began; he had many readers and admirers. He was even offered a substantial sum of money for his participation in an advertisement of one of the credit cards, but he rejected this proposal. Later he came under criticism, which he could have expected – for his stubbornness in claiming that what he had written in subsequent books was not fiction. As a result of the ensuing criticism in 1973 he retired from public life. In the following years he travelled a lot around the world (he was *inter alia* in India) and he gave many public lectures in the United States of America, in South America – in Brazil, Mexico, Spain, Germany and in other countries. He also held free Sunday sessions for apprentices chosen by himself, including UCLA students. He was interested in different martial arts and practiced some of them. He had a substantial collection of more than 3,000 books. In the mid-1990s he founded the Cleargreen organization, although he was not its shareholder. He died in 1997 in Los Angeles.

Literary output

The literary legacy of C. Castaneda includes 12 books⁶ and a magazine "The Readers of Infinity"⁷. The writer's book copyright is owned by Simon and Schuster, publishing house. Castaneda wrote vividly and evocatively. The readers waited for his subsequent books. Each of them was different from the previous one, thus surprising the readers. According to some of them they put faith in greater possibilities of a human being, the chance for a long life in the best of health, they opened new cognitive opportunities, inspired to creative undertakings, provoked deeper reflection on life

⁴ Cf. R. Warszawski, *Ukryta twarz. An interview with Carlos Castaneda*, Wydawnictwo KOS, Katowice 2005, p. 105.

⁵ Cf. the Polish translation of his book published in 1968. C. Castaneda, *Nauki Don Juana. Wiedza Indian z plemienia Yaqui*, translated into Polish by. A. Szostkiewicz, Rebis, ed. II, Poznań 2000, p. 299.

⁶ His first book is the aforementioned title *The Teachings of Don Juan*, and the last one *The Wheel of Time*. All books, apart from the last one, were published in Poland by REBIS Publishing House.

⁷ There was a certain about-turn in Castaneda's concepts – from the concept of a "hunter" lurking for power to the concept of a "warrior", then "a man of knowledge", and finally to "a reader of infinity".

and being fascinated by it. According to Castaneda, these books were to be created in dreams, in different states of consciousness. Writing these books was to be his magical task, assigned to him as part of his self-development by his teacher – Don Juan Matus, an Indian shaman from the Yaqui Tribe⁸.

The fact that also other publications appeared written by persons claiming to be Don Juan's apprentices is an interesting phenomenon. With time they became Castaneda's associates. They were Taisza Abelar⁹ and Florinda Donner – Grau¹⁰. Castaneda wrote preface to their books. In the following years also other authors appeared, who referred to Castaneda, e.g. Armando Torres¹¹, Viktor Sanchez¹², Merylin Tunneshende¹³. A Polish reader could get acquainted with fragments of Castaneda's texts already in the 1970s and 1980s, thanks to private translations as well as publications in various journals¹⁴. In later years also books on the subject of Castaneda appeared penned by Łukasz Krzywoń¹⁵ as well as Roman Warszawski's interview with the writer¹⁶. In Poland also an Internet website dedicated to the practices and teachings of Castaneda¹⁷ was created as well as classes modelled on Castaneda's practices were held, but not affiliated to Cleargreen¹⁸.

The main concepts of the writer concerning the world, life and development of an entity

It poses some difficulties to capture Castaneda's concepts included in his 12 books in a dozen or so sentences without their oversimplification. Castaneda was fairly

⁸ Cf. C. Castaneda, *Potęga milczenia*, translated into Polish by P. Turski, Rebis, Poznań 1997, p. 10.

⁹ T. Abelar, *Magiczna podróż. Droga kobiety wojownika z grupy naguala Carlosa Castanedy*, translated into Polish by P. Karpowicz, Horus, Warszawa 2000, p. 215.

¹⁰ F. Donner Grau, *Sen czarownicy. Droga uzdraviania*, translated into Polish by A. Możdżyńska-Biała, Horis, Horus, Warszawa 2001; F. Donner-Grau, *Życie we śnie. Inicjacja w świecie szamanów*, translated into Polish by A. Możdżyńska-Biała, Horus, Warszawa 2000, p. 215.

¹¹ Cf. A. Torres, *Encounters With The Nagual. Conversations with Carlos Castaneda*, First Light Press, USA, 2004, p.139; idem, *The Secret of the Plumed Serpent*, Alba, Mexico 2013, p. 202.

¹² Cf. V. Sanchez, *Nauki Don Carlosa. Przewodnik po świecie Carlosa Castanedy*, Wydawnictwo Limbus, Bydgoszcz 1997, p. 272.

¹³ Cf. M. Tunneshende, *Don Juan and the art of sexual energy*, Bear & Company, Rochester, Vermont 2001, p. 223; M. Tunneshende, *Twilight Language of The Nagual*, Bear & Company, Rochester, Vermont 2004, p. 179.

¹⁴ Cf. R. Warszawski, *Rzeczywistość – jeszcze jeden konwenans. A conversation with Carlos Castaneda*, „Literatura”, issue 11-12, 1987; idem, *Kim jest Carlos Castaneda? Zapiski na marginesach*, „Literatura”, 11-12, 1987; idem, *Wewnętrzny głos. A conversation with Carlos Castaneda*, „Nieznany świat”, 6, 1996.

¹⁵ Ł. Krzywoń, *Świat Carlosa Castanedy. Ukryty blask*, Wydawnictwo KOS, Katowice 2005, p. 154.

¹⁶ R. Warszawski, *Ukryta twarz wywiad z Carlosem Castaneda*, Wydawnictwo KOS, Katowice 2005, p. 111.

¹⁷ <http://spacernp.w.interiowo.pl/zapiski.html> [retrieved on 15.07.2017]. A description of Tensegrity seminars from 1998-2002. About 5,000 entries in the period 2002-2004. The webpage has not been updated from that time.

¹⁸ <http://centrumkulturswiata.pl/wydarzenia/tensegrity-w-lutym-2015> [retrieved on 8.10.2017].

familiar with different philosophical concepts, although he did not name them literally anywhere.

The essence of the writer's aspirations was a "revolution" of perception, liberating it from the social side, proposing a new cognitive system, reaching another system of interpretation or outside of the systems of interpretation, through the right practices consisting in a different way of distributing the life energy available to a human being¹⁹. Another way of distributing energy was to take place through a series of practices held in teaching groups of a dozen or so members under the management of Nagual²⁰ (the leader of the group), including physical exercises, the so-called magical passes²¹, as well as practicing the so-called "path of the warrior-traveller" ("a man of knowledge", "a reader of infinity"). This path was to include the following imperatives: getting rid of the feeling of self-importance, erasing your personal history, using the concept of death as the best advisor and witness of our deeds, serenity (instead of feeling sorry for yourself or getting upset), breaking routines, accepting full responsibility for your life, being inaccessible (e.g. to worries), the ability to act without expecting rewards, different kinds of practices of non-action²², the practice of lucid dreaming²³, the recapitulation of life²⁴. The described practices were to lead to a state defined as seeing energy as it flows in the universe, seeing in a way not affected by senses and the linear mind. This mind, which we consider to be our own, is neither completely ours, nor is it a human mind, but an alien installation implanted to people, according to Castaneda²⁵, by other forms of existence, feeding on human energy (emotions, overconceptualization, thinking of the past or anticipating).

Castaneda's eschatological issues might be defined as striving for the survival of consciousness after death, its persistence and further development in an undetermined space in a very long period of time²⁶. In this concept there is the assumption that we are the one-time, unique incarnation of the Spirit. Working in

¹⁹ Cf. C. Castaneda, *Magiczne kroki*, translated into Polish by S. Musielak, Rebis, Poznań 1999 p. 13.

²⁰ According to Castaneda, Nagual is both the leader of the group bestowed with a specific energetic configuration, as well as the term describing something transcendent towards Tonal – our everyday world, including also our personality. Cf. C. Castaneda, *Opowieści o mocy*, translated into Polish by Z. Zagajewski, M. Pilarska, Rebis, Poznań 1996, pp 119 - 240.

²¹ Cf. C. Castaneda, *Magiczne kroki*, translated into Polish by S. Musielak, Rebis, Poznań 1999, p. 274.

²² Cf. C. Castaneda, *Podróż do Ixtlan*, translated into Polish by Z. Zagajewski, M. Pilarska, Wydawnictwo Rebis, Poznań 1996, p. 318.

²³ Cf. C. Castaneda, *Sztuka śnienia*, Rebis, Poznań 1998; tenże, *Dar Orła*, translated into Polish by A. Patkowska, Rebis, Poznań 1997, pp. 268-288.

²⁴ Cf. C. Castaneda, *Dar orła*, op. cit., pp. 289-321.

²⁵ Cf. C. Castaneda, *Aktywna strona nieskończoności*, translated into Polish by S. Musielak, Rebis, Poznań 2000, pp. 238-258. According to Castaneda's apprentices, this concept has probably been borrowed from Castaneda by the creators of the film *The Matrix*.

²⁶ Cf. C. Castaneda, *Aktywna strona nieskończoności*, op. cit., p. 12. This concept was in a way closer to Christianity, but far from the idea of reincarnation in Hinduism and Buddhism.

teaching groups is followed by clearing the link connecting a human being with the Spirit, with the Abstract, with the part of the Creator, which is in the human being's favor, also referred to as the active side of infinity. Castaneda emphasizes the significance of focusing on vital values, as fundamental and strategic to complete the valuable aims of a human being – the survival and journey of the consciousness into the unknown, but also on esthetic and ethical values, not restricting to violence, a specific environmentalism – cherishing the Earth²⁷, as a sentient creature as well as emphasizing with other beings, also non-human.

Castaneda's Cosmology encompasses a multitude of beings – several hundred of layers of another reality²⁸, and in addition each layer is real, true, you can reach it, live in it and die in it. Reaching those new spheres of perception requires two factors: intention as well as energy, thanks to which there is the possibility to manipulate the mysterious point outside of the physical body, but not far from it, enabling a human being various ways of perception – the so-called assemblage point²⁹.

Castaneda's critics

The writer was criticized from all sides. He came under criticism from his ex-wife, Margaret Runyan Castaneda³⁰, with whom he had spent 13 years. In her autobiographical book, dedicated also to Castaneda, she claimed that he was a wonderful man, but he never met any Don Juan and he was a talented manipulator, capable of wielding influence, especially on women. Also some of the participants of the elite seminars, organized free of charge to a chosen group of people, criticized him. He was accused of a compilation of various Eastern and Western philosophies, Native American teachings, confabulation, commercialization of the knowledge of the ancient Toltecs, first through his books, then workshops. He was also accused of making his apprentices too dependent on him³¹.

²⁷ Cf. C. Castaneda, *Opowieści o mocy*, translated into Polish by Z. Zagajewski, M. Pilarska, Rebis, Poznań 1996, pp. 316-333. "Only if one loves this earth with unbending passion can one release one's sadness (...). A warrior is always joyful because his love is unalterable and his beloved, the earth, embraces him and bestows upon him unconceivable gifts. The sadness belongs only to those who hate the very thing that gives shelter to their beings". C. Castaneda, *Tales of Power*, Simon & Schuster, New York 1974, p. 293

²⁸ Cf. C. Castaneda, *Magiczne kroki*, op. cit., p. 149.

²⁹ Ibidem, p. 150.

³⁰ Cf. M. Runyan Castaneda, *A Magical Journey with Carlos Castañeda*, iUniverse.com, Inc., Lincoln, NE, USA 2001, p.232.

³¹ According to his critics, the fact of making some persons dependent on him resulted in taking their own life after the death of Castaneda, as they wanted to join him. However, it is difficult to verify the authenticity of these allegations. Cf. <http://infra.org.pl/wiat-tajemnic/niezwyke-postaci/822-mroczne-dziedzictwo-castenedy> [retrieved on 10.09.2017].

Cleargreen³² – the commercialization and medialization of Carlos Castaneda's output

Founding the organization

Cleargreen Incorporated is a profit-oriented corporation, founded by Carlos Castaneda in 1995 in order to promote Tensegrity³³. Cleargreen organizes seminars and workshops dedicated to Carlos Castaneda's Tensegrity. The constitutional documents of the organization were rectified in 1999, two years after the writer's death. After 2000 occurred a partial split between the Cleargreen instructors – former Castaneda's apprentices. Doctor of medical science, Miles Reid, and his wife, Aerin Alexander, founded their own organization Energy Life Sciences Institute and they have been promoting modified Castaneda's classes under a different name³⁴. On 5th October 2011 Miles Reid and Aerin Alexander filed a lawsuit against Cleargreen Incorporated arising out of the right to teach and the copyright in their own exercises, based on Castaneda's exercises.

Commercialization and medialization of Castaneda's "teachings"

Tensegrity exercises are advertised mainly by the Internet website of the Cleargreen organization. The advertising was also posted on the webpages of the American magazine dedicated to yoga – Yoga Journal.

The Cleargreen website has been running in several languages: English, Russian, Italian, French, Spanish, German and Dutch. As early as a few years ago the website had also a Bulgarian version. Websites in other languages than English are maintained by the participants from the respective countries. The website of the organization includes *inter alia* 16 interviews with the Cleargreen Director – Renata Murez (a biochemist by education, graduate of the UCLA) and Co-Director – Nyei Murez (an English graduate). It also features interviews with Carlos Castaneda published in 1997 in the *Uno Mismo* magazine.

According to the Cleargreen website, there are around 80 active groups around the world. They are most numerous in Germany – 17, in the United States of America – 12 groups, in Russia – 10 of them, in Mexico 9, in Spain 6, in Italy 4,

³² Cf. www.cleargreen.com [retrieved on 12.10.2017].

³³ Tensegrity is the name of the exercises promoted by Castaneda and the organization founded by him. The very name of the exercises, which according to Castaneda and its organization are to be a modern form of exercises discovered in higher states of consciousness by ancient Mexican shamans, comes from architecture. Cf. C. Castaneda, *Magiczne kroki*, op. cit., pp. 33-41.

³⁴ Cf. Honoring Dr. Carlos Castaneda by: Aerin Alexander & Dr. Miles Reid Director John-Roger & Jsu Garcia <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bXNToxWeXvY> [retrieved on 10.08.2017], <http://energylifesciences.com/beingenergy> [retrieved on 10.08.2017].

similarly in France, 2 each in Portugal and Brazil. Several other countries have one group each. A number of groups exist, which declared their willingness to join in and are in the course of being formed. It is difficult to assess why Castaneda's exercises enjoy popularity exactly in the indicated countries. On the one hand, this fact might be explained by the substantial number of the inhabitants of the countries. However, other countries, which are as numerous or even more so, where Castaneda was published, have no followers who would exercise. In the case of Mexico a large number of groups is obvious – Castaneda referred in his books to the cultural traditions of this country. Similarly in the United States of America – Castaneda worked, published and lectured most frequently in this very country. In Germany Castaneda also led his open seminars, and in addition, the Germans' spiritual quests after the Second World War might also contribute, and especially after the unification – some of the participants come from the lands of the former German Democratic Republic. In the case of Russia the reason for this might lie in the fact that the new spirituality has reached there in Western facade. It might also be connected with the spiritual quests of the Russians, striving to fill the ideological void, which appeared after the period of transformation. These quests are turned to the Orthodox faith, but also other directions of those quests appear, such as the Slavdom (yazychestvo), oriental philosophies and religions (yoga, Buddhism) or quasi Siberian shamanism³⁵. Searching for the magic of life or magic in life has also been the cause of the great popularity of works of fantasy by J. R. R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis (e.g. *The Chronicles of Narnia* – 120 million copies sold), or J. K. Rowling (400 million copies sold). Therefore, the issues connected with searching for Castaneda's popularity probably require further thorough research among the participants of the Tensegrity seminars.

Each of the training groups is usually made up of 5-25 persons, sometimes more. If we suppose on average 15 exercising persons in each group, in total it amounts to about 1,200 persons practicing around the world in an organized way under the patronage of Cleargreen. Therefore, Tensegrity might be regarded as an elite and marginal movement due to the number of its participants... Many years of observations by the author indicate that formerly there were many more of these groups. Some of them might have lost interest in the exercises because of many reasons. Moreover, the new rules imposed by Cleargreen concerning the organization of classes by these groups around 2005 resulted in either disbanding these groups or practicing on their own without the patronage of the organization, as they did not agree to these rules³⁶. In Poland initially, i.e. at the end of the 1990s and the

³⁵ In Russia novels by Vladimir Megre entitled *Anastasia* are very popular. Their interesting ramification is the concept of the so-called kin's homesteads, which are put into practice especially in Siberia, but not only there – also in Belarus and Ukraine. Cf. e.g. <http://www.anastazja.org> [retrieved on 10.07.2017].

³⁶ New rules required reporting the fact of teaching classes to Cleargreen every time and making donations to the organization. They also required giving the number of persons participating in the practice.

beginning of the 21st century, there were several, at least five practicing groups, *inter alia* in Zielona Gora and Krakow, whereas currently there is only one registered group. You cannot determine where this group is functioning as the access to this kind of information requires logging on and in order to do that you need to register your own group earlier.

Who exercises? 15-20 years ago these were mainly young people about 35 years old, the majority of whom had earlier directly contacted Castaneda during his lectures and workshops led around the world. Back then Tensegrity might have been regarded as a teenage movement. At present these are mainly persons above the age of 50, who come from middle class and can afford the participation in seminars. The workshops led by Cleargreen do not belong to cheap ones. The first workshops, which lasted several days, cost about 1,200 dollars per person. You need to add the cost of air travel, accommodation and meals at your own expense. During the first years about 600 persons participated in these meetings on a one-off basis. They were held in specially rented great sports halls, e.g. in post-Olympic facilities in Barcelona. Currently these workshops attract a significantly smaller number of participants, not exceeding 150 persons.

Who teaches Tensegrity? The "magical" passes and other techniques are taught mainly by Renata Murez and Nyei Murez. They use the help of other 7 apprentices trained directly by Castaneda: a businessman – developer from Belarus, a businessman from Argentina, a French woman, an American manager, a Mexican woman, an American musician and polyglot, a Yoga instructor and an architect from Algeria. Since 2013 also an institution of the so-called facilitators has appeared, that is persons who are to ensure that other participants exercise in the right way. There are 150 of them altogether. A person who organizes the local group of practicing Tensegrity and undergoes intensive training in the practical side of these exercises might become a facilitator.

The products sold by the Cleargreen organization are Tensegrity exercises and the so-called Theater of Infinity (physical exercises and dance combined with music, collective music-making), workshops, training felicitators, private sessions, which are held in the United States of America, Mexico, South America, Europe, Russia and seminars held via the Internet. For example, in December 2017 global exercises online were organized by Tensegrity and the Theater of Infinity entitled turning the wheel of time, which cost 40 USD. You can also subscribe to the library of Tensegrity exercises, which costs 49 USD per month.

The following are the participants' statements posted on blogs, the participants' feedback and conversations with them led by the author of the article: "One of the best decisions I have made in life was reading Carlos Castaneda's book in 1980 and another one was participating in the Tensegrity workshop in 1997". "More than twenty years ago I decided on a Tensegrity workshop in Westwood, where I met Carlos Castaneda, Carol Tiggs, Florinda Donner-Grau, Taisha Abelar and their apprentices.

Thanks to that my life has changed in many different ways and I will always be grateful for everything, which I have received from those amazing teachings". "Tensegrity is in my heart. It is a part of my life". "Tensegrity has helped me in almost all aspects of my life, it has made my life better in terms of quality and more joyful". "To me Tensegrity is the art of cognition, developing yourself and this world. What could be more interesting?". "Tensegrity exercises help me when I need energetic and emotional stimulation. There is a way to discover secrets in yourself and in the world". "I am really grateful to Cleargreen co-workers for their great enthusiasm while sharing the exercises live or on the Internet". "Perfect your Spirit and Body, and open the door to the universe!!!!". "Thanks to the exercises I am more frequently aware that I am dreaming. It is an amazing feeling, which gives me an additional dose of energy, joy and fascination with life". "Now I can fulfill many more intentions in my life than before".

Businessmen, writers, British and American filmmakers participated in Cleargreen seminars and workshops, searching for inspiration for their creativity; e.g. *The Matrix* was said to have been inspired by Castaneda's works. One may also assume that Ken Russell's film *Altered States* from 1980, could also have been inspired by descriptions from Castaneda's books.

Summary

If you attempt to analyze Castaneda's output from the literary viewpoint and that of certain universal values, which were promoted by the writer, including cross-cultural and inter-religious dialogue, as well as a similar analysis of the Cleargreen organization founded by him from the perspective of the efficiency and ethicality of its activity, it could be presented in the following, enumerative way, without ascribing a hierarchy of values to the following points of analysis:

1. Castaneda's output is undoubtedly a literary phenomenon similar to the works of Lewis, Tolkien or Rowling, a phenomenon which has filled a niche of not fully satisfied human needs or longings for the immortality of the human soul, but also magic in everyday life, for something exceeding ordinary human cognitive abilities, for the "force" (going beyond your own borders so far) here and now, in this life, life which is a miracle in its own right. The possibility to fulfill those needs exists in traditional religions, but maybe some of the organizations promoting traditional religions have not measured up to the expectations of individuals disappointed with them. Maybe these individuals also await for a "new packaging" for their dreams – it is difficult to explicitly answer this question and it is probably worth undertaking such research among the Tensegrity participants.

2. The edition of several millions of copies of books published in seventeen world languages and still sold around the world also in subsequent editions proves

Castaneda's popularity. His literature was or could have been the inspiration for other aforementioned writers and artists, filmmakers (e.g. *The Matrix*). In some countries, e.g. in the Czech Republic these were written on the output of Castaneda.

3. There is no denying Castaneda's precision and plasticity of his language, wit, suggestiveness, creativity and imagination in the descriptions of everyday human life in its various manifestations, as well as in the portrayal of altered states of consciousness and mystical experiences³⁷. One can regret that his literary works have not been adapted for the screen in the form of a feature film or entire TV series, as in the case of the aforementioned writers, e.g. Tolkien or Rowling. The film would probably have been financially successful and it would be an undoubted feast for the soul of many cinemagoers, encouraging them to self-improvement and deeper spiritual quests, maybe also within their own religion. Even if what Castaneda wrote was a compilation of teachings of various philosophers and beliefs of the native inhabitants of North and Middle America (which is highly probable), it is a new quality, new value added both to literature and to the intellectual and spiritual heritage of humankind. Castaneda wrote really interestingly, he fired the imagination, gave hope and faith in vast, so far unused possibilities of a human being as an entity and species.

4. Tadeusz Margul once called the Indian thinker Jiddu Krishnamurti the spiritual revolutionary³⁸. Also Carlos Castaneda could probably be called the same. Castaneda believed in the possibility of revolution, the revolution of human perception, breaking free from social dependence and the influence of the syntax of a language. To this effect Castaneda proposed an interesting path of development, integrated development or a well-balanced self-development, including the energizing physical exercises (the so-called magical passes), the attitude of a human-warrior (a man of knowledge, a reader of infinity), which contains certain esthetic-ethical-praxeological rules such as: love for the Earth as a living being, the devout part for the Spirit and the imperative of clearing the links connecting the Spirit with a human being, death as an advisor and witness of our deeds, the responsibility for others and for your own decisions, the ability to act without expecting rewards (similarly to karma yoga in India), the love for knowledge under all forms³⁹, the development of deep self-reflection (recapitulation of the day, life, using dreams for self-development), different kinds of non-action (similar to Laozi's⁴⁰ deactivation).

³⁷ Cf. e.g. the description of "stopping the world" C. Castaneda, *Podróż do Ixtlan*, op. cit., pp. 293-300; the portrayal of the consciousness wandering around other areas of existence cf. C. Castaneda, *Sztuka śnienia*, op. cit., pp. 109-112, 133-143; the depiction of the transformation of shamans into clouds and animals c.f. C. Castaneda, *Aktywna strona nieskończoności*, op. cit., pp. 48-49.

³⁸ Cf. T. Margul, *Jiddu Krishnamurti rewolucjonista ducha*, „*Studia Filozoficzne*”, 1974, no 2, pp. 125-138.

³⁹ Castaneda defined it as having a "romance with knowledge". He believed that any knowledge can be of use in life one day.

⁴⁰ Cf. Lao Tse, *Wielka księga Tao*, Hachete, Warszawa 2009, pp. 67, 105, 121.

5. It is difficult to state what influence Castaneda had on his readers. The vast majority of Internet users, who expressed their opinion on the writer, seem to support the thesis that this influence was positive. However, there are also critical opinions. His adversaries claim that he gave people vain hope for the immortality of the soul and departure from this world without leaving their mark behind – disappearance, the change of all matter into energy and moving to other dimensions of perception and existence. Illusory hope, as he himself did not depart in this way⁴¹, whereas on hearing about his death several women who co-operated with him disappeared without a trace, probably to join his guru – Nagual⁴².

6. From the cross-cultural and inter-religious viewpoint, Castaneda's output and Cleargreen activity serve a rather positive role. Some workshops were organized in a Buddhist center Shambhala in the United States of America. The workshops are usually held in places or towns, where sacred buildings important for ancient beliefs and contemporary religions are located, e.g. in 2017 in Chartres in France. The very fact of such a significant internationalization of meetings might favor cross-cultural dialogue. During the workshops no issues concerning the religious or cultural differences are emphasized.

7. When it comes to the analysis of the Cleargreen organization paying special attention to the efficiency and ethicality of its activity, it might be concluded that Cleargreen does not use aggressive marketing. One could say that it is the marketing of relations and marketing of recommendation. Of course, certain marketing strategies are used by the organization, which are meant to encourage participation in workshops or online seminars. It makes use of e.g. the rule of social proof⁴³, namely Cleargreen shows the map of the world on its website with training groups, as well as groups applying for registration, it also posts positive feedback from the participants of seminars, while it lacks self-criticism – there are no critical opinions from Internet users. The organization website is carefully designed, it contains attractive photos, showing always smiling people, exercising, dancing or collectively making music. By promoting the art of dreaming it refers to scientific research as well as to scientists who used dreams and imagination in order to make discoveries.

8. The controversy over Castaneda and Cleargreen on the Internet concern *inter alia* the high fees for seminars, which cost several hundreds of dollars or even more than a thousand dollars, fees for Internet sessions, sending the head office compulsory notification of the group classes. The objections also concern newer and newer exercises, which have appeared after Castaneda's death, which could

⁴¹ Among the participants of Tensegrity there are „legends“ that Castaneda burned in his inner fire, as befits a Nagual, he disappeared from this world – reportedly his family could not fully recognize Castaneda's body after his death.

⁴² So far it has been possible to identify one of them – probably she threw herself off a rock believing that in this way she would join Castaneda spiritually.

⁴³ Cf. R. Cialdini, *Wywieranie wpływu na ludzi. Teoria i praktyka*, GWP, Gdańsk 1999, p. 112.

not have been designed by Castaneda himself, although they are sold as created by him. Reservations are voiced about the fact that traditionally the leader of the group – Nagual – chose his apprentices, you could not become an apprentice voluntarily, by mere willingness to become one. However, nowadays everyone who intends to do exercises and pay a substantial sum of money becomes an apprentice. Attention is paid to the potential dependence of participants on the organization, on the classes held by it, on the instructors, who might approach the subject completely commercially.

9. The assessment of Cleargreen from the viewpoint of commercialization and medialization as well as praxeological and ethical dimension of its activity should actually be held only in comparison with other groups of similar nature, e.g. the contemporary schools of yoga, small Neo-Buddhist or Neo-Hindu groups. This comparison might be the subject of interesting research in the future. Although the prices of participation in seminars are high, they seem to be quite affordable when compared with fees for the teachings of e.g. the Indian guru Nityananda⁴⁴ from Bangalore, who has its own private television at his disposal for missionary and commercial purposes.

⁴⁴ <http://www.nithyananda.org> [retrieved on 8.10.2017].