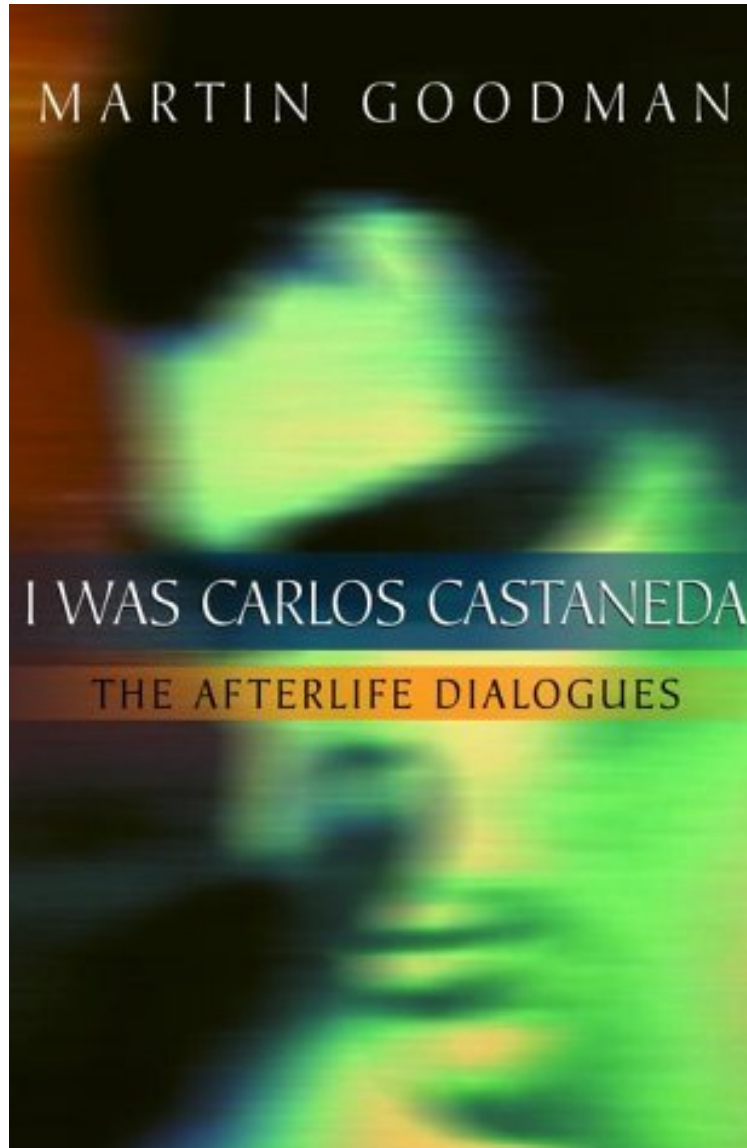


(Get free) I Was Carlos Castaneda: The Afterlife Dialogues

I Was Carlos Castaneda: The Afterlife Dialogues

Martin Goodman

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Martin Goodman : I Was Carlos Castaneda: The Afterlife Dialogues before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised I Was Carlos Castaneda: The Afterlife Dialogues:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. OvercookedBy Geoffrey NellyattuIt wouldn't be "unreasonable" to claim that Castaneda came back from the dead, as this book does. It goes with the premises of Castaneda's teachings, doesn't it? Armando Torres, in his recent book Secret of the Plumed Serpent, for example, claims to know of seers who have been in touch with Castaneda in the "other world". Goodman's Castaneda doesn't sound like the Casaneda of

the don Juan books, that's true, although we can give Goodman the benefit of doubt. Castaneda became the nagual after don Juan's passing, and Goodman makes him sound like a nagual, not like the fumbling, note-taking student of anthropology of Castaneda's own books. And this is how Castaneda sounds in other reports from the time he was alive and doing his talks and workshops. The fact that Castaneda's ideas aren't discussed isn't too much of an issue either, although that was what I was looking forward to. What I found truly unforgivable about this book was Goodman's overwrought prose. As it turns out, Goodman teaches creative writing at a British university. Early on, we have Castaneda admonishing Goodman, "A tiny cup. A bitter liquid. A Peruvian shaman. Throw in an adjective and be done with it... Be a man... Life is in the details." And so, nearly every sentence, and the book as a whole, strains under the load of excess detail and retouching. The story interested me, but I had to fight my way through it, continually distracted by the style. On the positive side, there are some novel insights (or speculation) here: there's the bit about Jesus which opens the book (excerpted on the book's product page). There's something about the God(s) of Abraham, Moses, Mohammed, etc., being really the spirits of the mountains where those prophets received their revelations (which I guess is the subject of another of Goodman's books, *On Sacred Mountains*). And there's something about the paleo-, meso-, and neo-cortex (reptile, animal, and human brain), which was thought-provoking. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Catch the AbstractsBy Gwen23This story remains true to the sorcerer stories which Carlos Castaneda shared with us. We can get caught in what is presented by physical-world occurrences or we can see past those presentations and endeavor to grasp the concept behind them. In this story, Carlos, himself, speaks to the abstracts which should have been our focus all along. Many thanks to the author for enduring the breakdown of the social self in order to see the magical self and bring this book to the world, too. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Four StarsBy Dennis F. Good read

A marvelous book with rich teachings that particularly touch the heart of death -- and, thus, life itself.--Thom Hartmann, author of *The Last Hours of Ancient Sunlight* Carlos Castaneda comes back from the dead in a true-life spiritual adventure story set in the French Pyrenees, Machu Picchu, the Peruvian Amazon, and the American Southwest. Four months after his death, the world-renowned writer, anthropologist, and mystic Carlos Castaneda turns up in the French Pyrenees. He meets with writer Martin Goodman. His purpose? To lead Martin beyond the fear of death and the confusions of mortality, and to offer a clearer understanding of the ultimate wisdom -- the wisdom to live the rest of our days in full and conscious harmony with the living earth. Martin Goodman is a gifted storyteller who has infused *I Was Carlos Castaneda* with literary verve and humor. When, at their first encounter, an incredulous Goodman confronts Castaneda with reports of his recent death, Castaneda replies wryly, "Details. . . mere details." And so the story begins.

From the Inside Flap "A marvelous book with rich teachings that particularly touch the heart of death -- and, thus, life itself."--Thom Hartmann, author of *The Last Hours of Ancient Sunlight* Carlos Castaneda comes back from the dead in a true-life spiritual adventure story set in the French Pyrenees, Machu Picchu, the Peruvian , and the American Southwest. Four months after his death, the world-renowned writer, anthropologist, and mystic Carlos Castaneda turns up in the French Pyrenees. He meets with writer Martin Goodman. His purpose? To lead Martin beyond the fear of death and the confusions of mortality, and to offer a clearer understanding of the ultimate wisdom -- the wisdom to live the rest of our days in full and conscious harmony with the living earth. Martin Goodman is a gifted storyteller who has infused *I Was Carlos Castaneda* with literary verve and humor. When, at their first encounter, an incredulous Goodman confronts Castaneda with reports of his recent death, Castaneda replies wryly, "Details. . . mere details." And so the story begins. Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. THE MEETING Lightning jags above the Pyrenean mountains, thunder roars, and death takes on new meaning. It is appropriate that the first time I see the man he stands at the foot of the full-size crucifix that borders the road just outside the village. But then everything he does is appropriate. Do I recognize him, this man who fought shy of cameras all his life? Of course not. His book jackets carry no image of him. I found his first book so disturbing I never read another. Millions bought his every book, but not me. Then he died. On April 27, 1998. It was some two months before the death was reported, and about two months after then that we meet. August 21, to be precise. I'm jumping ahead of myself, but then I'm excited. It's not that he came back from the dead. That's wild enough, but he'll explain it. It's that he chose to come back to me. The first drops of rain fall. They bounce off his head, and give an extra sheen to the silver hair with its curls drawn back across his scalp. I stop on my walk -- not because he looks at me, because he doesn't. He has never seen me before, yet he yells my name out loud against the thunderclaps as he looks up at the naked body of the crucified Christ. "Martin!" It's a cry for help. I do nothing but remain where I am as the rain falls. "Come here and look at this!" I step up to his side, and we both raise our heads toward the face of Jesus. "Tell me what's wrong about this, and what's right." "Is this a riddle?" I ask. "The only riddle is why I am asking you, and not telling you." "It's wrong that Jesus was killed?" I suggest. "You have a simple mind. Maybe that's a virtue in you. Can you absorb all that I am going to tell you? We'll see. First I will tell you what is wrong about this statue. It is pathetic that this crucifix is here. People paid good money to have this piece of wood carved, painted, and erected. What purpose does it serve? Every time they

come and go along this road, they are faced with death. Christ is not about dying. He is about eternal life. Not death, but resurrection. If people want a symbol by the side of the road, then let them build an empty tomb. At least such a structure could shelter passersby from the rain. Come on, Martin. We will go to your home and get dry." He shakes his head to sling water from his hair into my face, then starts off down the road into the village. I am impressed by his language. His voice is gentle, with a slight trace of an accent to give it distinction; I presume the accent comes from nearby Spain, and the flow of his words is beautiful. There is no pause, but softness of delivery gives polish to every word. His skin is tanned in depth, it has the color and texture of a local's, but his whole air of being is cosmopolitan. "How do you know my name?" "Is that what is important? How somebody knows your name? I use your name because I am talking to you. It is important that you listen to what I have to say rather than waste time wondering why I say it. We are speaking of Christ. There is time to consider you later. You now know what is bad about hanging this dead body beside the road for all to see. This morbid fascination with death kills the spirit. But tell me, what is good about it?" "The craftsmanship?" "Nonsense. You go past this statue on your walk every day. Do you ever stop and stare at it as I was doing?" "Sometimes. Not for so long." "That's fine, as it happens. There is not so much to see. I am a sculptor myself, trained in Italy, so you can take my word for the quality of the piece. But you can never know this much for yourself, not about sculpture or anything, any work of man or nature, unless you spend time staring into it. Tune yourself to where you're looking, Martin. Open wide and see if there is a message for you there. If there is, you will know it from your eyes. They will vibrate. You will take in the energy of its creator. If you stare at a tree or a flower, you take in the energy of the universe. Stare at a statue, and you take in the energy of the sculptor. The devotion in that sculptor was slight. There is little that is universal there. But there was some care as he formed this image of the male human body. The male nude. You can see he ran his hands over the wooden skin. What value there is in this sculpture is in the surface alone. The statue has painted flesh but no heart, no guts. Still it's a body, nonetheless. That's our goodness, Martin." "The body is our goodness?" "Perfect. You're learning. My time may not be wasted. Yes, the joy of being human is living in a body. It's fine to have a body as an emblem of religion, even if it is a dead one. Do you eat meat, Martin?" "Sometimes." "Dead meat?" "Of course." "You're wrong. Meat isn't dead. You'd run a mile if offered dead meat on a plate. It would stink to high heaven. No, the meat you eat has the life of the animal still inside it. That's why it gives life to you. You think Christ rose from the dead? You're a simpleton. Christ dies and the light goes out of the universe, the big bang gets sucked back in a big whimper. Christ never died. He picked up his body and took it for a stroll. The Romans had one agenda, and he had his own. He had work still to do. There's some work you can't do outside of a body. If people could just get a hint of that, they'd thrill to being alive." We reach the steps that lead up to my house and he trots up them, as though leading me to his own home. The door is unlocked. He kicks off his shoes in the entryway and steps inside. "Welcome," he says, and spreads his arms wide to hug me as I step inside to join him. The hug squeezes my arms to my sides and leaves me breathless. He holds me longer than is right. It feels like he is taking an impression of my body into the flesh of his own. "You know me?" I shake my head. "But you do. You know me as well as I know you. I come like this, like this storm in your life, but it is necessary. I blow in, I make things fresh and clear for you, then I blow out again. Things can grow after a storm like the one I bring. You need new growth, yes, Martin?" "I'm too numb to nod my head, so I just stare at him." "It is so. You were dead, and now you are alive. You have many years ahead of you. Me, I have this short reprieve. Just a brief while longer to jump around in my own body. I share what I can with you before I go. And now I give you what makes my body still work as it does. I give you my name." He holds out his hand. I take it in mine and we shake. "Carlos," he says. "Carlos Castaneda." "???" There was a power in the handshake, like a whiteout that left my mind blank. I don't know how it worked. I can only say I felt more drained than charged as a result. "The Carlos Castaneda?" I ask at last. He grins, lifts his hands in the air, and spins around on his right foot before clicking his heels at a standstill again to present himself. "But you can't be." "Why not? I'm a writer. You're a writer. We both find ourselves in this ancient French village. It's natural that we should meet." "But you're dead." The smile goes from his face and he flashes into anger. "Who told you so?" "It was reported. I read your obituary. Your body was burned and the ashes spread over the Arizona desert." "Details," he says. "Mere details." He steps further into the room and slumps into one of the armchairs. "They kept your death secret for a time." "Why a time? Why not forever?" "Your son --" "I have no son." "Stepson then. Your wife's son. He got an attorney's letter and released the news." He says nothing. Simply leans back his head, opens his mouth, and lets out a long sound. It's a moan first of all, then the vocal cords stop vibrating and the sound is different. It's a death rattle. I step closer to examine him. Saliva drools from a corner of his mouth and his pupils have rolled back behind his eyelids to leave only the whites of the eyes and the veins. There is silence, then his tongue sticks out, pink rather than gray, and remarkably juicy. It starts at the corner of his mouth and licks all the way round his lips. As I watch the tongue I feel myself watched in return. The right eyeball has swiveled back into place. One eye fixed on me, the other still white, it's like a hideous wink. Then both eyes shut tight, stay closed awhile, and snap open. He stares up at me, opens wide his mouth, and laughs. It's a honking laugh, which seems to stem from spasms in his chest, and I feel the gusts of stale breath against my face. I sit on the sofa to face him, with the window behind me, and wait for an explanation. "So, dear boy." As he speaks he shifts his body to sit upright. "You think that death is the end?" "No." "Of course not. But look at you. See how much work you still have to do. It seems even my

death freaks you out. Makes you too stupid to speak. How are you going to cope with your own death when it comes?" "Did you really die?" "That's good. It's good you can ask the question. It means you can accept the possibility that I'll say yes. Well, poor Martin, that is my answer. Yes. Yes, Carlos Castaneda did die." "So you're not him?" "If I'm not, then who am I?" "You tell me." "OK. Let's stop playing games. You're locked inside a temporal frame, closed into your own worldview, so I will answer in your own language. I'll ...