

THE DECAY OF DESCARTES: A POSTMODERN SEARCH FOR AN
ALTERNATE REALITY

A Thesis
by
DAVID ROBLEDO

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
MASTER OF ARTS

December 1996

Major Subject: English

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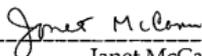
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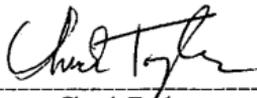
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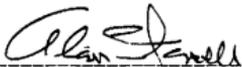
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ABSTRACT

The Decay of Descartes: A Postmodern Search for an Alternate Reality.

(December 1996)

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In the postmodern dialogue there is a strong trend toward the reclamation of older conceptions of reality (as in Monica Sjoo's and Barbara Mor's The Great Cosmic Mother, Carlos Castaneda's The Teachings of Don Juan, and Marcel Griaule's Conversations with Ogotemelli) in an attempt to shift both personal and social consciousness from the perspective of scientific materialism--which is characterized largely by the tenet that the universe is a chance occurrence in a series of purely mechanical reactions--toward a consciousness which recognizes both motive and spirit in matter. This thesis project is an attempt to illustrate this postmodern position by briefly surveying the philosophical and psychological origins of this position and by presenting a collection of poems which embody the basic premises of this position, namely, 1) that matter is ensouled, and 2) that it is ensouled by a variety of archetypes.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this endeavor to Venus. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank her for her dedication to growth, nature, life, and love, and ask that she remain with me and continue to influence and guide me with her green light.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I cannot thank Janet McCann enough. Without her help, advice, and guidance, there is a good chance I would have abandoned this project long ago. I also thank Chuck Taylor and Alan Stacell for allowing me such freedom in this endeavor, and of course my gratitude also extends to Mary Aldridge who steered me through the beurocratic maelstrom.

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INTRODUCTION

It was Friedrich Nietzsche who first called on the philosopher to attempt to understand life as art and live life as art. Nietzsche's clarion is a call to release the imagination from the moribund throes of daily life and allow it to blossom in the everyday and commonplace. This thesis project follows Nietzsche's vision. It attempts to find the eternal--the archetypal--in the temporal, physical world, all the more difficult in exactly this time and place, when the West has all but unanimously accepted the tenets of scientific materialism and its severing of matter from spirit. This thesis, however, is not a criticism proper of materialism, but rather an attempt to grasp a perspective which scientific materialism tends to hide.

This is a creative thesis, an artistic thesis, and I've chosen the poem as the medium through which I will express my dissatisfaction with scientific materialism and my attempt to develop a perspective which allows the image to speak--a vital, archaic image, not the image which the artist creates but which gives life and breath to the artist, which comes before the artist and which is the artist's psychic compost. I will also present a short introduction to these poems to help ground my poetry in a theoretical framework, using two aspects of the postmodern dialogue, concentrating on the work of Morris Berman and James Hillman.

In the postmodern dialogue there is a strong trend toward the reclamation of older conceptions of reality (as in Monica Sjoo's and Barbara Mor's The Great Cosmic Mother, Carlos Castaneda's The Teachings of Don Juan, and Marcel Griaule's Conversations with Ogotemelli to name but a few) in an

I will be using the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers as a style manual for this thesis project.

attempt to shift both personal and social consciousness from the perspective of scientific materialism--which is characterized largely by the tenet that the world is composed merely of matter and that the universe is the result of a chance occurrence of purely material, mechanical reactions--toward a consciousness which recognizes both spirit and motive in matter. This introduction could be approached from various theoretical angles using a host of postmodern authors; my bibliography includes those which pertain closest to my work and which, in some way, have influenced my writing. I focus on Morris Berman's Reenchantment of the World and Jame's Hillman's Anima: Anatomy of a Personified Notion, however, because I see these books as cornerstones to the two aspects of the postmodern dialogue which have most informed my poetry, namely, 1) the postmodern rejection of scientific materialism's definition of what is real (Berman), and 2) the postmodern attempt to substitute the reality of scientific materialism with a reality that acknowledges psyche--the imaginative aspect of man, or, more precisely, that which allows man to imagine--as man's primary reality (Hillman).

In the first section of this thesis, which serves as an introduction to about forty original poems, I will trace the development of Western consciousness. I will begin by examining the philosophical premises which lie behind the work of Rene Descartes, using Morris Berman's The Reenchantment of the World as a guide for my metaphysical hunt. Berman will show us where we've come from and where we are and why scientific materialism doesn't work. Once we trace the roots of our materialist consciousness, we will briefly trace the development of psychology's conception of what the image is and can mean, going back to Freud, the father of modern psychology, and ending with James Hillman, a post-Jungian psychologist. With Hillman we will continue our

exploration with a discussion of psyche and its components--anima and animus--to help construct a bridge between theory and my poetry, to help explain why psyche is important and how it can help us see what scientific materialism has veiled.

If Descartes believed that dreams are "filled with frequent self-contradictions and possess[ing] neither internal nor external coherence" (Berman 36) and are therefore unreliable to look toward for understanding, my poetry finds the dream (and the image) as the only means to a complete or whole understanding precisely because of its presentation of contradictions, since in contradiction and contrast I see an expression of a whole, a totality. I correlate my poetry very closely with the dream, partly because my method usually begins with automatic writing, partly because my poetry hinges its expression on something of a language of image rather than language proper. So using Hillman to help introduce my poetry is a rather natural act, since Hillman's work uses the image as a fundament, an *a priori*, and develops his psychological method using the image as an expression of an archetypal background. It should be noted, however, that this introduction is not merely an attempt to find a theoretical *justification* for my poetry, but rather an attempt to illustrate the attitudes which have served as a *foundation* for much of my poetry.

DESCARTES AND OUR DREAMLESS SLEEP

In The Reenchantment of the World, Morris Berman outlines the progression of scientific materialism and highlights the problems which this perspective has presented us. He begins by describing the pre-scientific world, the world before the sixteenth century, as an enchanted world. "Rocks, trees, rivers, and clouds," he writes, "were all seen as wondrous and alive. . . . The cosmos, in short, was a place of belonging" (Berman 16). Berman then proceeds to systematically reconstruct the progression of Western thought and points to this development of thinking (Western consciousness) as a sort of serpent in the Garden of Eden, that is, as being responsible for for a fall from a previously enchanted relationship with nature. Berman terms this way of thinking, this Western, industrial, scientific consciousness *Cartesianism*, and, as it would follow, he points to Rene Descartes for laying the philosophical groundwork for the social Leviathan that, ironically, with its technological "advances" and scientific discoveries, would lead us from a world-view characterized by man's participation in a cosmic drama, "a world view in which [man's] destiny was bound up in [cosmic] destiny and this relationship gave meaning . . . to life" (Berman 16), to a world view characterized by alienation and futility. According to Berman,

Scientific consciousness is alienated consciousness: there is no ecstatic merger with nature, but rather total separation from it. Subject and object are always seen in total opposition to each other. I am not my experience, and thus not really a part of the world around me. The logical endpoint of this world view is a feeling of total reification: everything is an object, alien, not-me; and I am ultimately an object too, an alienated

"thing" in a world of other meaningless things. . . . What I feel, in fact, is a sickness in the soul (Berman 17).

It is no coincidence that Berman's description of the modern psychological landscape reflects the phenomenology of Descartes's scientific method. Descartes asserted that before man can rightly know the external world he must first reason correctly. And it is in Descartes's identification of man--self--with reason that we find the assumption that mind and body, subject and object, are disparate entities. For Descartes, and since, Western man in general, the body is merely the mediator between man, who equals thought or reason, and an external other. Alienation, then, is inseparable from this scientific perspective, both alienation between man and himself (thought and body), and between man and the external world. As Berman describes this intrinsic capacity for alienation in Cartesianism,

To Descartes, this mind-body split was true of all perception and behavior, such that in the act of thinking one perceived oneself as a separate entity "in here" confronting things "out there." This schizoid duality lies at the heart of the Cartesian paradigm (Berman 34).

In fact, Berman astutely comments on the similarity between Descartes's conception of mind-body interaction with psychologist R.D. Laing's conception of the "false-self" system of schizophrenics, a system which, as Berman notes, resembles as much the psychopathology of everyday life of average people as it does that of schizophrenics. When diagramed, the two systems bear an uncanny resemblance, and it is Berman's emphasis similarity has a causal relationship.

It seems, then, that if we accept Berman's position, we must conclude that our Western psychological characteristics follow directly from the metaphysics

of Cartesian materialism, and the resulting disenchantment that Cartesianism brings with it can be traced to a shift in perspective, a shift in a vital assumption concerning the material world, which marks the end of the Middle Ages and the beginning of the Scientific Revolution.

In the Aristotelian metaphysic, which Berman uses to characterize the general perception of man in the late Middle Ages, things were endowed with a natural will, that is, objects, for example, fell to the earth because, as Aristotle posited, they sought their natural place, the earth's center, and sped up as they approached the earth's center because of their excitement to arrive home. Naturally, in Aristotle's conception, larger objects fell to the earth faster than smaller objects because there is more matter to become excited. Although this hypothesis was disproven by Galileo, Aristotle's hypothesis nonetheless reflects a world-view which acknowledges the existence of will--desire--in the material. Objects *seek* their natural place just as men seek food and shelter. Objects in the Middle Ages were alive; they were endowed with the same will and desire that man was. But with the onset of the Scientific Revolution, the nature of things literally changed. As Berman writes,

Galileo's argument, that a very large object and a very small one would make [a] drop in the same amount of time was based on an assumption . . . that falling objects are inanimate and thus have neither goals nor purposes. In Galileo's scheme of things there is no "natural place" anywhere in the universe. There is but matter and motion and we can but observe and measure it. The proper subject for the investigation of nature, in other words, is not *why* an object falls--there is no *why*--but *how*; in this case how much distance in how much time (Berman 37-38).

This Western shift from asking why to how embodies the fundamental premise of scientific materialism, that things are inanimate and part of a purely mechanistic process. This shift marks the birth of Western consciousness, and it is against this shift that my poetry finds its motivation.

Recognizing this shift is vital to understanding what my poetry attempts to react against, and Berman serves as an excellent introduction to the problem. But to fully appreciate my poetic attempt; we must leave the arena of criticism and enter the arena of creativity, or, more precisely, where creativity itself is born: the psyche. The development of the Cartesian perspective, after all, is a psychological development first and foremost: it is a change in a way of thinking. And where better to explore the psychological than in the field of psychology?

By now we should at least suspect that my poetry is anti-rational, or at least not traditionally--Cartesianally--rational, but searching for and trying to express a new (or old) way of knowing. Where Descartes's devotion to critical reason led him to dismiss dreams as unreliable, "filled with frequent self-contradictions and possess[ing] neither internal nor external coherence" (Berman 36), my poetry attempts to find coherence in exactly this incoherence, or rather, my poetry finds coherence--unity--in contrasting images as dual (and often multiple) expressions born or cleft from a whole.

Ironically, Berman's investigation is tinged with the color of the Cartesian method, addressing the issue of the problems of Cartesianism with a description of *how* Cartesianism was born and a survey of its philosophical/metaphysical heritage rather than attempting an inquiry into what Cartesianism isn't. Berman is nonetheless essential before we can begin such an inquiry, since he helps show us who we are and how our general sense

of what it is to be conscious came to be. Now we can proceed to ask who we are--both collectively and individually--behind the veil of our materialist consciousness.

FROM FREUD TO JUNG TO HILLMAN: A TORCH OF IMAGES

In a vital way my poetry is highly existential. That is, my use of image bears little resemblance to myth, which uses image as an explication of history and futurity. I have no myth, partly because the myth of America is also so highly existential. As a people, we arrived here to begin anew and forget the past. Perhaps unavoidably, I find it very difficult to ground my work since I, as a member of a new and changing culture, am in the midst of a developing myth. Curiously, the field of psychology seems to be (or at least has been until very recently) in the exact position that my poetry is. For example, if we look toward the beginnings of modern psychology and examine the way that Sigmund Freud treated the image, we can see this existentialism clearly. Freud saw the dream as an expression of *personal* neurosis. Images for Freud are caused by the individual's conscious attitude and refer back to this attitude. Even much of Jung's work has the quality of individuality attributed to the image, although he was highly aware of the collective aspect of the image. Jung's goal nonetheless was individuation, and as part of that process, the anima--which among other things is *the* collective, *the* archetype of life from which the image springs (Collected Works v. 9. 66)--is to be integrated into the conscious attitude, making therefore what is universal and eternal personal and temporal--in other words, making the image existential. Psychology, however, at least the field of archetypal psychology, is changing, trying to shed our attempts to possess image and rather attempting to allow image to possess us, to define us as it will, thereby re-initiating man into archetypal order. I have turned to James Hillman, post-Jungian psychologist, to help introduce my poetic endeavor because I have come across no one, in any field, who has more respect for the image or seems to understand the nature of the image

more clearly than he.

In Hillman's psychology, the image has a direct relationship with soul; it is both the expression of soul and way toward knowing soul. Our culture, however, has depotentiated the image, and as a consequence has lost its connection with soul. Hillman traces this depotentiation of the image far back in history. He writes,

Long ago and far away . . . there took place in Byzantium, in the city of Constantinople, in the year 869, a council of the Principals of the Holy Catholic Church. . . . At that Council in Constantinople, the soul lost its dominion. Our anthropology, our idea of human nature, devolved from a tripartite cosmos of spirit, soul, and body (or matter), to a dualism of spirit (or mind) and body (or matter). And this [took place] because at a previous council . . . in Nicea in 787, images were deprived of their primary authenticity. . . . The three hundred bishops assembled at Nicea . . . upheld the importance of images against the enemies of images. . . . [But] at Nicea a subtle and devastating differentiation took place. . . . [A] distinction was drawn between the *adoration* of images and the free formulation of them on the one hand, and the *veneration* of images and the authorized control over them on the other. Church Councils split hairs, but the roots of these hairs are in our heads, and the split goes deep indeed. At Nicea a distinction was made between the image as such, its power, its full divine or archetypal reality, and what the image represents, points to, means. Thus images became allegories (Giles 54-55).

The effects of this depotentiation bloomed quickly--religion became imageless, unimaginative, dry, sterile and dogmatic. God became a faceless God which we

should fear (not adore as an image). The Judeo-Christian God, after all, *is* light, and in psychological and artistic terms, light is a representation of consciousness. Even near a thousand years after 787, the (dream) image became for the Freud a sign, a signifier, of if not neurosis, then at least a psychic tension which was not only a result of the conscious attitude (some real world occurrence), but which the conscious attitude should attempt to eliminate (depotentiate) so that the conscious attitude should function smoothly and properly (which by the way *is* smoothly, opposed to the often erratic and disjointed movement of the dream). As Melvin Lansky writes in his essay "The Interpretation of Dreams," which is a summation of and commentary on Freud's seminal Interpretation of Dreams,

[The Interpretation of Dreams] is based on the metapsychological . . . presumption that the motive of the dream is invariably to decrease disruption. Put metapsychologically . . . that means that a dream deals with a wish fulfilled, that is, a source of disturbance as removed (Lansky 17).

Freud goes as far as to assert that the dream image is based on a latent thought, that is, a once-conscious thought now repressed, or a thought not allowed by the conscious attitude to be thought. As Freud writes in his essay "Revision of Dream Theory,"

Our first step is to establish two new concepts and names. What has been called the dream we shall describe as the text of the dream or the *manifest* dream, and what we are looking for, what we suspect, so to say, of lying behind the dream, we shall describe as the latent dream-thoughts (Lansky 35).

For Freud, then, the thought precedes the image; the image itself is something

that seems almost irrelevant, a formality, merely serving to point the way toward a *thought*. The depotentiation of the image is evident. Freud's influence on the popular conception of what dreams are can be seen clearly in our predilection to *understand* dreams. The common question of "What does this dream mean," which seems to follow almost any dream exposition, accurately conveys our general insensitivity to the image.

Psychology, however, did not adhere to Freud's tendencies to overlook the image. In the work of Jung, in fact, quite the opposite took place. In an excerpt from his Collected Works Jung writes,

. . . only an insignificant minority regards the psychic phenomenon [image] as a category of existence *per se* and draws the necessary conclusions. It is indeed paradoxical that *the* category of existence, the indispensable *sina qua non* of all existence, namely the psyche, should be treated as if it were only semi-existent. Psychic existence is the only category of existence of which we have *immediate* knowledge, since nothing can be known unless it first appears as a psychic image (Collected Works v. 11. 769).

Jung sounds as if he could be responding directly to Freud's *latent dream-thought* theory, and he *is*, in the sense that he is responding to a popular psychological conception whose roots are nestled no doubt in Freud's work.

For Jung, "Every psychic process is an image and an 'imagining', otherwise no consciousness could exist . . ." (Collected Works v. 11. 889), (quite the contrary of Freud's conception of the psychic process as a result and product of the conscious attitude). Jung also tells us that the image is "a concept derived from poetic usage, namely a figure of fancy or *fantasy image*" (Collected Works v. 6. 743). Hillman then expands by saying that images are

“‘inner,’ ‘archaic,’ ‘primordial,’; there ultimate source is in the archetypes . . .” (Hillman 95). What has arisen from this exchange (Freud to Jung to Hillman) is a new vision (new at least to the Cartesian perspective) of consciousness. We *know*, we *are*, we *become*, because of the image, whose roots are in the archaic, the archetypes. Can we draw a swift correlation between America’s philosophical roots in Lockean philosophy and his theory of *tabula rasa* with our imageless style of consciousness?

The Cartesian propensity for isolation and detachment--alienation--can then be explained by its inability to identify itself with the images, which are consciousness’s psychic roots. It should be remembered, though, that this new vision of consciousness is a different sort of consciousness than the Cartesian consciousness altogether, Hillman refers to it as a different *style of* consciousness than ego (Cartesian) consciousness (Hillman 92). It does not feel or act the same; it does not have the same priorities. When I say, then, that we know, are, and become because of the image, my emphasis is on the *image*, not the *self*, thereby rendering unto the God’s (the archetypes) what was already theirs--the image.

SOUL AND SPIRIT, EARTH AND SKY

If images are our way of knowing soul--our tie to soul--then generally our culture has precluded this possibility. The West is largely a product of a flight from the image. The signs that the individual in our culture seeks to express him or her self are signs most often of affluence, less often (and still closely associated with affluence) signs of discrimination (which tend to fall into a Victorian expression of a "high" cultural appreciation), and almost never a truly artistic or psychological expression. Our religions, Protestant for the most part, have completely eliminated the image from worship, and even Catholicism is tinged with the *venerating* quality: the images are fixed, the story is, was, and will be told. Collectively we are Icarus, and the sea is the soul.

Drawing a strict correlation with images and the soul, however, may be a bit misleading. Hillman's psychology does point to the image as an expression of soul, or what Jung termed *anima*, but it remains nonetheless an expression, a something-else also. What I am leading to, and what my poetry attempts to convey, is that there is an imagination which precedes images, from which images spring, and it is from this imagination, this being--*not* "latent dream-thoughts"--that images draw their psychic charge, which make them meaningful both aesthetically and psychologically.

Before we continue our discussion of soul and its relation to the image, though, perhaps we should first clarify Hillman's terms. In the metaphysical order of Hillman's psychology, there are basically three components: anima, animus, and psyche.

In Hillman's psychology, which he derives from Jung, anima and animus are a divine pair, a direct correlative with the Chinese yin (feminine) and yang (masculine) or any symbolism where the basic whole is also intrinsically a

masculine and feminine duality. Anima characteristics are associated with the feminine, animus with the masculine. In Jungian psychology, anima and animus are presented in contrasexual terms, that is, for Jung, a man's wholeness is achieved through his integration of anima, a woman through her integration of animus, and men and women are seen as embodiments of anima and animus respectively. As Jung writes ". . . I have reserved the term "animus" strictly for women. . . . Feminine psychology exhibits an element that is the counterpart of a man's anima" (Collected Works v. 13. 60). He also writes, ". . . a man in trying to attain his ideal of manhood represses all feminine traits--which are really part of him, just as masculine traits are part of a woman's psychology. . . . If we carefully examine the uncontrolled emotions of a man, . . . we soon arrive at a feminine figure which I call . . . the anima" (Collected Works, v. 10. 79). Hillman however widens this conception by emphasizing that anima and animus are archetypes and as such men and women cannot simply hold all the repressed psychic traits of anima or animus in the unconscious. For Hillman, anima and animus are the psychic factors which motivate both man and woman equally, or equally unequally, that is, a man can easily be more influenced by the anima archetype than a woman or vice-versa, and neither man or woman can thoroughly integrate anima or animus because anima and animus are the *a priori*. The archetypes approach us from behind--consciousness's backdrop. All we can do is respond to them more intimately and less selectively. The possibility of union then becomes the possibility that they may influence consciousness equally, but this only after recognizing that heretofore, in our personal and collective histories, we have been dominated by animus. Some compensation (regression, reconstruction, resurrection) is first in order.

In Hillman's terminology, *anima* and *animus* can be equated with soul (*anima*) and spirit (*animus*)--two words which in typical Western usage hold the same storehouse of intimations and implications. Hillman, however, following the alchemists dictum that what is not properly separated cannot be adequately joined (Hillman 77), draws strong lines between the two. "Animus refers to spirit, to logos, word, idea, intellect, principle, abstraction, meaning, *ratio, nous* (Hillman 59). Animus is high flying, associated with wind; it is cold and unemotional, associating here with ice; its colors are blue and white because the sky and the upper regions are its domain; it is the transcendental; it is the spirit that drives science to release man from his ties with nature; it is futurity and potential (Giles 59). Anima, however, is salty, moist, strongly emotional, associated with the earth and earthly concerns, its colors are green and brown and red--the colors of the earth (Giles 57-58). It is the spirit that drives ecology, that tries to reclaim and preserve indigenous culture. Anima broods. Anima is tied to place and time. It is history. It is non-transcendental because it needs no place to go.

In traditional psychological usage, *psyche* is equated with soul. In this sense, *psyche* is phenomenologically and terminologically indistinguishable from *anima* (Hillman 79). But often in Jung's usage, and from here Hillman tends to take his footing, *psyche* has a much broader meaning and extends beyond personal psychology. Here, *psyche* is a place of becoming and regression, of transformation, the realm of the expression of eternal, so that *anima* and *animus*, divine pairs each composed of a host of dual natures, conduct their dialogue in *psyche*--we could even say that their dialogue is *Psyche*. *Psyche*, in this sense of Jung's and Hillman's usage--and I have taken it to heart--cannot be considered to be contained in the human mind; it is not

psyche in the sense of human *psychology*. Psyche, in Hillman's sense, equally imbues what is traditionally seen as the material as what we traditionally consider the immaterial (soul) (Hillman 80). A couple of brief excerpt from Hillman's work may help show how this appreciation of psyche can draw meaningful, archetypal images from the physical, material world. The following is taken from Hillman's essay "Senex and Puer," an exploration of the senex-puer duality, two archetypal masks (youth and age) of the animus.

But let us re-consider the relation between the ego and the senex. We have just seen from our amplification that it is the senex that ingathers and hoards. It is the senex that a priori is the archetypal principle of coldness, hardness, and exile from life. As principle of coagulation and of geometric order, it dries and orders, 'builds cities,' and 'mints money, makes solid and square and profitable, overcoming the dissolving wetness of soulful emotionality (Giles 19).

Here we can see Hillman connecting an archetypal figure--senex--with the very real world phenomena of money and cities, thereby charging the real-world phenomena of cities and money with the same psychic importance that a typical dream-representation of senex--say, for example, an image of a hardened king or wise, old philosopher--would carry. My poetic conflict with cities and technology, then, can be seen as an archetypal conflict between puer (youth and its archetypal connection with the natural world or primordial, original man) and senex (characterized by age, wisdom, and the far-sighted vision of collective, or social, man).

This next excerpt is from Hillman's lecture "Peaks and Vales," a discussion and clarification of the anima-animus duality, given at a psychological symposium intended to bring the spiritual practices of the East and

psychological techniques of the West closer together.

I am aware that these lectures have been organized in order to relate East and West, religious disciplines and psychotherapy, and so I must make a contribution to an issue that I believe is not the main one (the East-West pair). For I believe the true passion is between North and South, between the upper and lower regions, whether they be the repressive Northern Protestantism of Europe and America on the one hand, and on the other, Southland, the oppressed Mediterranean, the Latin darkness below the borders, across the rivers, under the Alps; whether this division be the manic industrial North and the depressive ritualistic South, or between San Francisco and Los Angeles (Giles 69).

Here we can see Hillman giving the anima-animus duality geographic locality, again charging the physical with the archetypal and extending the realm of psyche to the material world.

With Hillman, then, the images of the physical world are as symbolically significant as those of the dream world, and it is here, where psyche is released from the personal, that my poetry works.

My frequent juxtaposition of industrial images with natural images is an attempt, then, to portray psychic images with psychic, emotive charges which convey the sense of opposites and tensions that exists in our particular state of the world, where animus, the West and its science and technology, has overpowered the anima drive (the poor, unindustrialized nations, the natural world, indigenous cultures and their arts). In my poetry, I draw equally from dream images as from real-world images: the poem for me is the point where the line between the physical and the dream is blurred, thereby unleashing the

potential of psyche and initiating my self into a world that is as ensouled and alive as a dream. In all senses, at least from the perspective of psyche, the world is a dream, which is not to say that it is irrelevant or unimportant--quite the contrary. What psyche gives to the world, to the physical, is meaning and beauty, and because it speaks with images, the images we encounter in the slums and ghettos, in the slaughterhouses as well as streams and prairies, it obviously also gives meaninglessness and ugliness, but this perhaps only because it must make a desperate statement. What is psyche saying? This question is embedded in each word that I write; it is the foundation of each of my poems. It is a brilliant, echoing question; it is a cloudy, befuddling one as well. Sometimes I see roses, sometimes aborted fetuses.

CONCLUSION

I would like to emphasize that this introduction presents but a cursory exploration of the material which has informed my poetry. Even what I have discussed seems shallow, and it is, but necessarily so. The purpose of this introduction has been merely to introduce the terms and survey our immediate scientific/technological, historical situation. The terms that I have addressed--*anima*, *animus*, *psyche*, *Cartesianism*--are terms with long histories and practically countless erudite associations. One can hardly claim that this vein of discussion is postmodern. The postmodern dialogue itself has hardly touched it. In a way, though, each attempt at discovering *psyche* is complete in its own right, since *psyche* expresses itself with the image and it is at the image itself which we look toward for understanding. When the artist speaks with images, we hear *psyche's* voice being thrown--the murmurs of an ever-changing archetypal order.

More accurately, it can be said that the postmodern dialogue is the first Western academic arena in which this vein of discussion has pulsed; the postmodern dialogue has merely brought it into an arena in which various disciplines (archeology, anthropology, psychology, literature, and the visual arts) can inform one another in a mutual attempt to discover, or uncover, a new, or old, way of being. In a nutshell, this vein of the postmodern dialogue has reached two conclusions: 1) matter is ensouled, and 2) it is ensouled with various archetypes; that is, it is ensouled by various souls.

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APPENDIX
ORIGINAL POEMS

Struck

She moves of course as the arc of fine branches,
a breath of sharp ozone,

her feet do not precede her, her feet
are seamless.

But the women huddle in the square and stutter--they're
unsure--their ankles buckle on street stones
while they guess wildly at the color of flame in St. Peter's crooked church

And they know it, they can sense her breathing as an almond with a gaze
to singe icons, moving as a seamless tree in ozone they can

sense her

loading her terrorist eyes with the beat of metal swallows, packed like dimes
against a deep red sky

What can the prophets now provide with their open mouths
waiting with such buckets for wind marks?

At Length, at Last, I Will Tell You of Your Fingers

though this is not about the swill of overtures or free exchange of numbers-- your own size is small, is not complete without a top to go from the beginning to as near as you can get to the water without reaching in and finding something--anything--but an answer to a question. My own example, though, is not enough to be as large as you may think, since you may think I'm underneath a sycamore with branches and a little rain to drop from the ceiling into your only ceramic cup, the one you chose from such a wide array of colors in the sky, even an umbrella to protect you from the weather in Manhattan.

It doesn't follow, then, the way lightning strikes when things are all you can expect--a quick cigarette and bunches of red flowers scattered in your bedroom. You were there, remember, when I mentioned my concern for the way things were going and how little we know about the distance between cities. You said that the distance is all you need to know before things tend to fade and take on more than their appearance. I said that the air was clear enough to make a guess on account of 1) my professors in the greenroom by the plants so neatly potted, and 2) how much time it took to make them look as life-like as your fingers

Childbearing in the Soviet Union

"Let that disconnection with pain be called yoga"

Bhagavad Gita

\then of course\
there are no longer cows propped on forked legs of cinder

of course:

just a documentary-style hallucination:

hence the laugh\ the scream for the big screen

--the small girl wailing no longer wails,
doesn't notice the smashing sparrow smash

into what it is in this sunburnt city

The Streets are Echoed by Curbs in Mechanical Dreams

(machine and not machine

(the heart is a machine but not at all when

it

bleeds or breaks or opens

like a huge white kale at midnight

(beneath flourescent lights

buzzing like corporate flies

I'm Sending a Green Letter

I'm sending a green letter from the best open hand
I can think of.

My sentences, not arrows, stop breathing, in that you will never call me
everything you hoped for.

Under the Same Sun

Come quickly, there is rain in this suburb
and the maids walk around looking at the pastel sky

If you hold still enough, the children will unbuckle
their concrete shoes to approach you,

to offer you tiny windbursts from their fingers
while they ask pointed questions of the sun

like what about the malformed egrets,
the suicidal whales

An Heroic Leap

Adam saw the serpent. He jumped.

he jumped to the sun but the sun burned a hole thru his heart

making it a fine vehicle for wind an an excellent optic with which to view
the sky

and blue

the new color of his blood.

On the ground the serpent budded into a leaf and would not stop
budding. It budded thru mountains and lakes, thru bulldozers and shopping
malls

This Sacred Day-Beat

comes in small explosions
like the heart of a furious squirrel:

the morning:

lifts itself like a leaf
to the open sky

where a plane spreads its drone
thru the corners of unsuspecting living rooms:

it goes something like this:

sound waves, thru air, thru sure-bone cloud
it is itself, it is a plane and it has sound (which moves)
like the heart of a furious squirrel

(which is simply mid-morning on these solid paved streets

where someone turns her head

to look both ways--

her hair moves with her,
without arrows .

She walks

in the distance between seconds, distance between colors,
she is stopping slowly with the colors, shades of color, she is fading like a
certain purple flower\ closing gracefully

at midnight

(suddenly the flower will burst:

this is not our concern here

Flowers with a Man, a Self Portrait

They hang unnatural, so his feet seem like a goat's
spliced on a madonna's legs,
his knees convey the sense of gravity
that his head can't stop filling itself with sky-bound designs
while both ankles cluster like iron shavings to a magnet:

he is having a terrible time with his position in history,
his fingers mark etchings for ancient pottery while his stomach acts like a sick
cow

Ignition

The rocks dismantle in a child's
green pagoda

I'm left standing by the statue of a black and white promise,
spectator to

a small rain

That's My Barber with a Rose

That's my barber with a rose,
he folded it open and whispered
early this morning
with no guarantee
that he was still himself
this clear October day

Confession

The six-o'clock news-man spotted me with my pants down

I admitted my poems were ultimately ecologically irrelevant and that my images were often tortured, the result of something like a self-induced vomit.

This got me going and I puked this on the asphalt:

a bearded man in the gutter, struggling, stuck in Saturn's rings,
dumbfounded by Madonna fondling her father's breasts,
both nestled in the crotch of Venus wearing an electric-pink robe sponsored by
Duracell, the copper top, and obviously effective by the glazed look in the
father's left eye

a horse moved among the scene impatiently, the force of the hurl apparently
igniting his hips, like rain

then there were the miniature children eating small stones by the stop sign,
shitting them quickly out shimmering like jewels

Instamatic

For the colors

In the living room with lights on
bright for us--the people who dream of
maroon: there is a projecton and a product
but our voices, our voices--the patchwork of
the ages:

all the heavy buildings hiding the dark earth

W/ Her Small Stolen Flowers

I

She approaches morning like a white and lucid owl--

perched.

(I watch closely from this atomic garden

II

wind thrashes trees into song and blue sky
behind her

the earth does not move
altho a plane collapses

III

then the open air

all sounds huddle as if to be birthed

there is a great ache in the center of a stone

an orange tree unravels slowly,

revealing three suns

Burning in a Timeless Sea but the Fences

the birds warble, their sound buds like a seed
towards birth and it becomes
as an ocean

w/ the sway and crash of waves and all

but w/ fences

Territories

Tho I have a slingshot and an avalanche--

the wind constructs my fingers vivid
and if no wind then the stillness

with an avalanche perched on my shoulders it is
the avalanche of a head collapsing stone

and a slingshot fitted for sparrows to split suns

Her Hips Not for Resale

and the hum of the forgotten,
not a blooming lotus in immaculate garden
but her hips, not for resale, for the purpose of a first relationship with sun--

grass of my grass, roots of her
roots, her lips,
tremble

she is waiting

Fill

or breathe, first, since there are various
trees which intersect with the airwaves

(ultimately the rhythm of color itself
will prove this,
perhaps as much as the sureness
of your foot

as it lands on this sunlit concrete.

(you have brought these things to a point:

sun/body/stone

and left them for me to kneel before
and worship

like sturdy salmon
fleshing thru nuclear rivers

Around These Trembling Branches

shoot explosive doves

Robledo Will Do Some Things

I will return from long vacations, I will think of you
at work--
in the summers I may think of planting flowers
in the city,
I will burn a truck

The Frontispiece and the Slip: A Get-away

The frontispiece is the sign, the signifier of

as a woman crafts her hair it becomes self-evident
like the pistil which points outward
then what's left is an eye that can't quite close
because the pupils are embedded in billboards

so if it takes one to know one, then the ones
that don't

are left with the twitch:
their imbecil throats loaded with coarse grunts,
like hysterical deer pushed past the limit of farce
waiting like young tendrils for the slip

Nature Poem: 3 Scenes

1.

It was quick hello from bluejay
paused to drop

on unexpected fingers--
color

2.

green, yellow then

green--

white rocks scattered

--downhill--

to form veins

3.

(a deep rain
leads to branch,

sun breaks light brown underneath and patch of green rises,

stops short of today's hazed sun

And So She Sits

and thinks about summer

in her office

she thinks about a breeze

--she thinks--

she thinks and thinks

A Brief Intro to Artaud

for example,

the peasant men in their white cotton outfits
walk along the road on the upper mountain
watching their feet closely to make sure they don't
somehow separate from the yuca

one man bends to dust and draws a beaded circle with 1) a hand glowing from
within/ perhaps an atomic stone--2) a black form of bird--3) reversal of time
signified by clock with hands extending in all directions--4) other images beside
each bead along the circle and the π symbol between each bead

his head begins to feel like rain in the Mexican tropics,
he thinks about Maria she sounds like a bird,

he thinks about a horse in Chicago,

he would like to go there

Scene for a Votive of the Virgen de Guadalupe Hidalgo

In a green *dharma kardia*,
her corn hands outstretch to cover
each flat point of sorrow

and a gaze, two blown-out eyes, because her heart is a baboon's

Because We Are Equal with Angels

then we are equal with horses which are equal with clouds
altho there are some really strong horses
like Greek clouds emblazoned by the sun's heat

in our best moments then we will pray that our prayer ends
so that there can be the wind and the sun and the street

There will be you in a sweater

I will be watching you like a plant,

just wondering

The Foot That Put the Cleft in Michaelangelo's Chin

It is my fair foot.

The foot sits still and sometimes moves, that is
sometimes it is still-life in the tradition of the porcelain vase,
the apple and orange,
the woman spread velvet against a black background
as if she were a comet without a tail

hence come all the people to admire,
to gape and gawk at my foot without a tail

Cherries and the Hawk
will be the title of the painting
if there is some proof that my foot walks

or that it burns and makes all colors true:

the foot that put the cleft in Michaelangelo's chin:

my foot rustles

Descartes Slumbers in Madonna's Blond Hair

with a depth of breath
reminiscent

of men beneath the mullberry--

someone noticed that the leaves were once wise
and thought

at the right occasion the leaf should be a clock
and no longer be of the mullberry:

let it be a clock

so that a woman can take hold of it
and examine it closely
and turn to someone near
and whisper

This is a nice clock

At this point the sky's blaze should heighten
and three sparrows chirp

again and again

the small child then enters to take hold of a handfull of grass
and will not let go

three wise men approach him to sever his hand with a cattle
dehorner

they remove the grass and give the child the loose hand

the men return to the toothpaste factory

the child crawls home with his hand between his teeth

sky

Crow Shriek Cracks Early Morning

She Sells Seashells to the Shoreman

Her infinite fingers compete with the wave

altho no atom sticks from hand to sea
to bring a great lock
and falling down of ocean

(fine sprig, with bent to sky,
grace of curved air
in your thirty-seven roots

come quickly, hey, its cloudy and
well, the shift from night to morning (daily)
becomes less and less distinct

it's like you used to have this best friend, see,
and his voice rang with the scent of early morning grass
and small designs of the forest, his hands were often in the ground--they were
there to move things and get dirty

but then you saw her--

she was tying her hair in minute rhythms to the beat of seashells
in their coffins--

she was all alone

Fuck Basho

because--

my ear is in your leaden pocket, you are dancing
with hysterical mutes among stale blue colors

and, though on Sunday morning you breathe primrose
the rest are left to satellites
along an American wasteland:

here--this is what you mumbled in your half-sleep:

I've been dreaming again, and this time the solitary petunia in the desert is
hidden by a golden shower which is rain which is the sunlight from the corner
of your glowing eye, and it waits of course since it of course is patient unlike
me--I've now learned that this is the long turn of events we must run to, as
slumbering twigs, before our hands touch in a garden, digging around some
roots:

poetry:

fuck Basho

It Holds in Guanajuato

staccato wing-beat
from small herd of swallows

grass

rustle

and color\

(her heart is the heart that allows for

a long breath

from a city with stone moons

which I look towards now and say: Guanajuato

with all the deep colors hanging over it like honey

and it doesn't drip--

it just holds

William Blake

It is an unpackaged leaf
left without contention

someone will inspect it and find:

veins, multi-color, form and content

they will find youg yonder hill
where they may lie and inspect it further:

O

all the six diamonds will curl up
and begin to grow

he or she will sit on the mountain slowly
with all the six diamonds and marvel,
the air stained with dead machines and roses--

the headache broken up by someone

weeping for a silver penny:

here begins the slow movement, unasked for, and the fingers don't tremble,
they sit stil to become the pure colors of the desert:

Then:

I am body, I am blood and stone coursing thru pure mountain river on the
boring corner of the blue city of ice

An Innate Thorn Prefigures Green

Begin:

from progression of garden and characteristic flowering,

heretofore this will be evil,

but,

conversely,

or a stone of sand weathered by sun and
water, weathered by the wind to weather, weathering specifically to weather

(this will be a leaf

bent to winter

the death of a mallard

this will be a screwdriver born atop a lily

as a mirror plucked from an eye with tired frenzy and a thorn, inviolate,
to emerge

(it is the metaphorically real,

the metaphorically real thorn,

prefiguring the occasional appearance of green

With Thy Young Skiey Blossoms

which are the underside of your breasts

this grey November morning--

(sky sweeps surely thru her hair and dark parking lot,

surely,

lifting dust,

making things come out allright

in the end

which is just a feeling

that things are about to take off

as your standing still

like hard buds breaking into blossom

bringing some stars into position,

making the cars ok

The Way the Streets Fill with Business

is something comparable to rivulets
filled with shiny beginnings and trinkets--a hand dips in and pulls out
something cheap and plastic--then a condominium--
whatever happens to stick . . .

(you said you were on the subway when she showed you her pretty teeth
(which you enjoyed) but the thing was that the finches were there in place
of other birds

averted to the grind

the streets, then, seem to flutter

or Ecuador is falling

each moment no longer for breathing,
the air electric and positioned

Phone Call from a Man with Chickens

Some other man,
not the quick-witted surgeon who severed my libido,
but some other man used his telephone Tuesday
to speak with a sinner,
unfortunately me--

he said there were chickens running up and down his yard
it is a gorgeous sight and the sun is just as striking

so why don't you take a good look?

Too Bad Kurt Cobain

no longer holds the sky
in his pupil.

I think he's become rain
which we should pray for

as if to beckon the sky
and its husks of stars
into our fingers

all at once

VITA

The author, David Robledo, was born in Las Vegas New Mexico on May 29th, 1969. He currently resides in McAllen, Texas where he works as a cook in an Italian restaurant for six dollars an hour. He acquired his bachelor's degree in English from Southwest Texas State University in 1987. His plans are to continue his current job for a few months before deciding whether to resume his travels and writings in Mexico or whether to continue his education. He can be reached at the following address and phone number:

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