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Jim Morrison:
The Articulation of the Shaman-Poet in the Poetic Tradition

por

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Dedicated to Lelio, Leila,
Bruno, Bela, and Luiza,
for their unrestrained love.

And to Irene,
whose spiritual guidance
was the pervading essence
of my work.

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ABSTRACT

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This dissertation aims at the articulation of the shaman-poet in the poetic tradition. It presents American poet Jim Morrison as the shaman artist whose life and poetry are analyzed as belonging to the tradition of poets Plato called possessed by *furor poeticus.* This tradition, which is to find its prime in the writings of the Romantic poets, states that poetry is a secret language, based on feeling and imagination, that speaks to the heart of men about the sacred and universal, i. e., natural, quality of the human soul. The shaman-poet, thus, belongs to a tradition that goes back thousands of years to a time when the primitive man used to be in touch with a magical understanding of his environment on a regular basis, in contrast to the extremely rational perception of the world by modern man. The poetry of Jim Morrison is presented here as a representative of this sacred language that tells of this magical perception, long-forgotten, though never completely erased from the human mind. Hence, it is to be seen not only as a bridge to the spiritual realm of feeling and imagination, but also as a technique for ecological survival in this current rational and secular era.

RESUMO

Esta dissertação objetiva a articulação do poeta-xamã na tradição poética. Ela apresenta o poeta americano Jim Morrison como o artista xamã cuja vida e poesia são analisadas como pertencentes à tradição de poetas, considerados, por Platão, possuidos pelo *furor poeticus*. Essa tradição, que encontra seu ápice nos escritos dos poetas românticos, afirma ser a poesia uma linguagem secreta, baseada no sentimento e na imaginação, que fala ao coração dos homens sobre a qualidade sagrada e universal, i. e., natural, da alma humana. O poeta-xamã, portanto, pertence a uma tradição de milhares de anos, quando do tempo em que o homem primitivo percebia seu habitat de uma forma mágica, em contraste com a percepção extremamente racional do mundo, pelo atual, e no entanto igual, ser humano. A poesia de Jim Morrison é apresentada aqui como representante dessa linguagem sagrada, que fala da esquecida, embora não totalmente apagada da mente humana, percepção mágica. Assim sendo, ela deve ser vista não somente como uma ponte para o reino espiritual do sentimento e da imaginação, mas também como uma técnica de sobrevivência ecológica nesta era tão racional e dessacralizada.

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Is everybody in?
Is everybody in?
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He who does not imagine
in stronger and better lineaments,
and in stronger and better light
than his perishing and mortal eye can see,
does not imagine at all.

William Blake

Introduction: A reappraisal of James Douglas Morrison; a theoretical prospect of the poet and the choice of shamanism as a contrastive method to the expressive theory.

James Douglas Morrison is an American poet of the second half of the 20th century. Having died in 1971, he is perhaps better known as the lead singer and lyricist of the sixties' rock and roll band "The Doors" than as a poet. In spite of his struggle to establish himself as a poet (he published a book of his early poetry), things did not turn out exactly the way he intended. Jim Morrison had left America and gone to Paris, hoping to flee the stardom of a pop artist in order to devote himself exclusively to his writing, but three months later he was found dead.

The image left by Jim Morrison was that of a typical representative of the sixties, a young man who, despite his talent, was swallowed by the turmoil of an era of intense freedom and madness. All in all, "The Doors" were somehow forgotten for about ten years before things started to change. In 1980, Jim Morrison's biography, *No One Here Gets Out Alive*, written by Jerry Hopkins and Danny Sugerman, was published, triggering what would become a sort of resurrection of Morrison that is felt up to now. From the cover of "Rolling Stone" magazine ("He is hot, he is sexy, and he is dead") to Oliver Stone's movie "The Doors," not to mention the explosion of records' sales and the amount of publications concerning "The Doors" and Morrison, it seems that all his dormant phoenix needed was a decade before resuming its magical flight.

Among all the perspectives generated by the phenomenon of Morrison -- a man who was known as the Lizard King, the Prince of Darkness, the living Dionysus, etc., and who behaved in the belief of Blake's concept of wisdom coming from the palaces of excesses – there are two which constitute the basis of this study. The first is Morrison the poet, belonging to the tradition of visionary bards possessed by what Plato called *furor poeticus,* such as occurs in the romantic expressive theory of Wordsworth, as evident in both the poetic quality of his lyrics, and also for his two posthumously published books of poetry, *Wilderness* (1989) and *The American Night* (1990). The

second is Morrison's relation to shamanism, the sacred archaic conditions and technique of ecstasy, wherein he will be presented as a 20th century shaman.

Morrison has always been compared to this mythic healer, either by himself or by what has been written about him, as it shall be seen throughout this study. It is the fusion of both aspects, shaman and poet, that comes to justify my intention of studying Morrison's poetry. The new perspective I envision in this study is the articulation of the shaman-poet. It is a fusion that regards poetry as a magical ritual of words, in which both the poet and the reader meet to perform in an ancient, though updated, rite in which poetry is one of today's last sacred grounds of words. Hence, poetry assumes, in this present secular era, the role of venting the nature of the sacred, functioning, as Gary Snyder intends, even as an ecological survival technique.

This study is divided into three sections. In the first part, there is a presentation of the shamanic complex in general, with an explanation of the basic concepts of shamanism. The shaman is shown in his myriad facets (healer, priest, hunter, poet), with an emphasis on his poetic abilities. Then, Morrison is linked to the shamanic figure, as the shaman-poet, and he is portrayed as a 20th century shaman artist. From then on, Morrison's verse will evidence this study's contention to reveal poetry's sacredness of expression. It is my opinion that poetry is like a mirror that reflects the reader's soul, and therefore I have chosen to examine as many poems as possible without offering detailed analyses of individual poems, since my aim here is to place the poet in a specific tradition. Hence, Morrison's poetry functions as a bridge between the ideas presented throughout this study, i. e., it illustrates, like all poetry, that condensed feeling which crosses from the realm of imagination to the more recognizable world of verbal language.

In the second part, Morrison's visionary poetry is inserted into the poetic tradition of the possessed bard. Like the shaman, who has to enter into an ecstatic trance to perform his healing ceremony, the visionary poet also has to undergo a trance-like experience so that he can translate into words the overflow of feelings of poetic inspiration. This magic conceiving moment will be explained in the light of Nietzsche's

"dionysian" i as on artistic creation. The possessed poet is then portrayed as the hexed creature ban d from Plato's Republic for not following the precepts of the virtuous man, found philosophy's rational thought only, conveying, instead, the "lying" voice of myth an magination. The poetic expressive theory, wherein the poet lets his depth of feeling d imagination surface in artistic expression, is then presented in the second section; f n Sidney to Blake, Wordsworth and Shelley, the visionary bard is shown as the mes enger of this dionysian mythic thought, which stands not as an opposed understanding to rational thought, but as an independent system that has, contrary to the scientific-philosophical perspective, an order of its own.

The third section is devoted to the articulation of the contrast between both modes of acquiring knowledge, namely science and magic. Philosophical thought, through Chatêlet, will be unmasked to reveal its own roots stemming precisely from what it tries to avoid from by all means: sorcery, or magical thought. A book that plays a central role in the Morrisonian world, Huxley's *The Doors of Perception*, will be analyzed in order to provide a broader understanding of magical thought's action concerning the direct perception of the world. Then comes the final articulation of the shaman and the poet, revealing the magical power of shamanic healing through the poetic word.

The choice of Morrison as the poet to convey such a concept relates to his message, at the end of this millennium, which is by itself a time of change, wherein traditional values are questioned and the need of (re)creating ancient myths is regarded as one of poetry's purposes. After all, as poetry is not committed to finding the truth of matter, it can turn its revealing eyes to that mythical world of the intangible substance of feeling and imagination, and unfold, if not the truth, at least the essence of what it gazes upon.

CHAPTER I

Morrison and the Shamanic Concept

O aya nic-yacahuaz yectli ya xochitl,
aya nic-yatemohuiz quenomamican, huiya.
O anca cihui zan achic, zan tictotlanehuia
yectl on cuicatl. Ohuaya, ohuaya. [1]

I.1) Backgrounds of Shamanism

It has not been very long since shamans appeared to the so-called civilized human beings. After the early travels of missionaries of centuries ago, only around the 19th century did anthropologists begin to study the practice of these primitive healers under a new perspective. Having till then been regarded as a devious and devilish primitive religious practice, with almost nothing to say to any civilized society, shamanism was little by little unveiled as a deeply rooted religious belief and practice that had, and perhaps still has, much to say not only to primitive but to other cultures as well.

The phenomenon of shamanism is ultimately a religious experience. Yet, it is a very different, even strange, sort of religion to Western man, who has become used to regarding religious practices as primarily a feeling of faith rather than an experience of the senses. Shamans are persons who can get away from the earthly daily life and dive into other layers of consciousness by means of magical flight. In contrast to mediums, shamans do this consciously. That means they can shift from the rational common-sense world to a magical realm of supernatural recognition, which conveys to the shaman messages that the usual layer of consciousness fails to provide.

Shamanism is evidently one of the most ancient forms of religious vocation, dating from the prehistoric cultures of Siberian hunters, wherein the shaman, who is also a magician, medicine-man, and poet, awakes for his journey towards wisdom,

healing, and clairvoyance. The manifestation of this vocation occurs by way of a crisis. As Mircea Eliade puts it, through a rupture of the shaman's psychic balance, shamanism is the archaic technique of ecstasy. [2]

The word shaman comes through Russian, from the Tungusic *šaman*, and refers to the gifted man who practices shamanism, a religious phenomenon originally described by early travelers as having its roots in Siberia and Central Asia. It was to be known in the 19th century as a widespread practice in America, Africa, Oceania, i.e., anywhere the so-called primitive societies, such as indians, aborigines, etc., were to be found.

Shamanism is typical among the tribes that belong to a nomadic hunting tradition rather than a settled planting one,[3] in which the community would be constantly wandering in search of food. The world changed deeply since the time of abundant wild life, and as sedentariness took over and social functions were more and more differentiated, the shamanic tradition underwent some mutation as well. Nevertheless, the nomadic experience has always been part of the shaman's; indeed, not only the shaman's but the whole human race "walking." It has been only ten thousand years since men learned agricultural techniques and started living in villages, apart from a nomadic way of life. Yet, the first traces of human activity date from the Paleolithic period (ca. one million years ago). That means we have spent 99% of our entire existence as nomads, something that can not be easily erased either from the collective memory or from our genetic heritage. The evidences of shamanic elements in the religion of Paleolithic hunters have been provided, as Eliade points out, by recent researches such as Horst Kirchner's interpretation "of the celebrated relief at Lascaux as a representation of a shamanic trance." [4] Following this conception, Eliade concludes, that, should it be accepted, "the prehistoric sorcerers would already have used drums comparable to those of Siberian shamans."

Every culture has a different term to designate the shaman, so that among the Yakut it is *oyuna*, for the Mongolian it is *bögä*, whereas the Maya call the sorcerer *náhuatl*,[5] and so on. Since this study will deal with an American poet, it shall privilege

the Mayan word, not only because it is originally from America but also due to its particularly significant other meanings, namely the Mayan language itself and its harmonious and melodic sound. Therefore, the shaman will be sometimes referred to as the nahuatl, which also denominates the language, in allusion to this study's main objective concerning the healer: his poetic abilities.

The nahuatl is a man of power and knowledge whose trance conveys his soul either to the heights of heaven or to the depths of hell. In any case, he does not flee his body for personal pleasure; the healer travels in order to help his patient, often someone who has lost contact with his guardian-spirit for a long time. This guardian-spirit is a basic source of power for the shaman. As Michael Harner states,[6] the guardian-spirit is an animal power that not only protects and serves the shaman, but also becomes his other identity, his other self.

Shamanism is an extraordinarily powerful experience, requiring a great mental and spiritual balance, where both healer and patient undergo an emotional adventure as they step into the threshold of a parallel world to penetrate a mythical domain of dream-like matter. This is how Joan Halifax describes the nahuatl:

> The shaman, a mystical, priestly, and political figure emerging during the Upper Paleolithic and perhaps going back to Neanderthal times, can be described not only as a specialist in the human soul but also a generalist whose sacred and social functions can cover an extraordinarily wide range of activities. Shamans are healers, seers, and visionaries who have mastered death.[7]

Shamans relate to death as if it were their ally rather than the absolute unknown realm, since they have to step into the spirit's world, that is, the land of the dead. Therefore, one can say that the shaman is not a prisoner of one of man's ultimate paradoxes of existence, namely to be sure that he knows absolutely nothing about his only certainty in life: death.

I.2) The shaman initiation

Cualtzin ma ehcocan uan quitocah cuahli ohtli. [8]

There are two main ways of becoming one who links man's world to the spirit's realm. One is to inherit magic powers as member of a shamanic lineage in which a vocation is passed on from generation to generation; the other is to be chosen by the power itself, by means of some birth signs that indicate special characteristics of a future shaman. There are also cases wherein the calling comes through a vision, a possession and/or a metamorphosis. In any of cases, however, the shaman will emerge out of a profound life crisis, a religious experience in contact with death and rebirth.

Joan Halifax posits a pre-historical experience: "The initiatory crisis of the shaman must therefore be designated as a religious experience, one that has persisted since at least Paleolithic times and is probably as old as human consciousness, when the first feelings of awe and wonder were awakened in primates."[9] Halifax's assertion places the initiatory crisis on a transcendental plane that goes beyond the grasp of history. It deals with ontological matters that belong to the human experience since primitive times as well as with the interaction between men and both the natural and supernatural worlds.

During the neophyte's apprenticeship, there is a period of preparation for his first contact with the supernatural. It consists of preparing the future shaman's mind for a decisive moment in his search for power. Usually the new convert learns a series of shamanic teachings and techniques, and undergoes the ingesting of mind-altering substances and a long fasting sojourn. After that period, in which he is often left alone in the wilderness, the apprentice is ready to receive his first vision of power.

Many a time, the shaman will encounter his vision as he climbs up the "Cosmic Mountain," or "World Tree," which is the point of contact between heaven and earth. Also known as Center of the World, or *Axis Mundi,* the World Tree is "the threshold place between space and spacelessness, between multiplicity and unity, between mortality and immortality."[10] It is then that the shaman's inner voices awake into songs

of wisdom, songs that will tell of the realm of death, a place where the shaman will learn how to merge into a whole the experiences of sickness and dying with that of rebirth.

I.3) The shaman as poet

As it can be witnessed in Native American tribes even today, the nahuatl lives in separation from his own community, often moving from one place to another, to which he comes on special occasions in order to perform rituals of healing, hunting ceremonies, and other shamanic activities like the recital of myths. As it was previously pointed out, the shaman has multiple functions in the community. Not only is he the link between the natural and the spiritual realm, but also healer, artist, dancer, and poet. As a poet, the shaman tells traditional out-of-time-and-space stories, mythical narratives. As Nicolau Sevcenko shows,[11] the poetic vocabulary of a Tartar shaman, for instance, contains 12,000 words, in contrast to the 4,000-word range of an ordinary man of his community. The shaman does not only tell his listeners magical stories by means of the power of words alone, he actually makes them feel the original rhythm through his drums and rattles. He dances and performs in ecstasy, recreating the ancient form of understanding of direct perception. Sevcenko puts it this way:

> ... the narrative is not the exposing of a subject, it is the supreme form of the experience of life. Through this, the myth becomes rite, and the ceremony a suspension of time, evasion of space, and liberation of the frail limits of a mortal and needy body. [12]

The words professed by the shaman are not therefore valued for their meaning *per se*, but in and through rhythm and cadence. Thus, he conveys his wisdom through music. The shaman brings a complete vision of society as he explores the thresholds of both natural and supernatural domains.

In order to achieve the required altered states of mind, the shaman has to undergo a ritual. The ritual is a magical performance, as defined by Sir James George Frazer, wherein the shaman "mimicks the doings of divine beings in order to arrogate to

himself the divine functions and to exercise them."[13] By doing so the shaman performs a sacred drama that was originally carried out by mythical personages who controlled the operations of nature in order to "wield all their powers." Therefore, the shaman becomes a living link between the magical reality of the mythical beings and the course of nature. Frazer contrasts the myth as figurative language with its magical correlate in the ceremony of mimicry:

> We shall probably not err in assuming that many myths, which we know now only as myths, had once their counterpart in magic; in other words that they used to be acted as a means of producing in fact the events which they describe in figurative language. ... The principle of mimicry is implanted so deep in human nature and has exerted so far-reaching an influence on the development of religion as well as of the arts. [14]

That is why the ritual is often regarded as something barbarous and coarse by outsiders. Behind the brutality and the bloody sacrifices performed in a rite lies a meaningful purpose perceived only by those who know the mysteries. The magical flight comes about through a ceremonial performance in which the shaman acts as an artist of ecstasy, who performs like a madman in a trance. Usually, a shamanic ritual involves artistic expressions such as dance, theater, music, and poetry as a means to help alter the shaman's state of mind. Therefore, one can see the shaman both as a healer or medicine-man and as an artist.

In fact, as Halifax declares, the multifarious roles of the shamanic figure have also gone under some transformations as a means to adapt the archaic technique to the world's changing cultural practices:

> The lifeway of the shaman is nearly as old as human consciousness itself, predating the earliest recorded civilizations by thousands of years. Through the ages, the practice of shamanism has remained vital, adapting itself to the ways of all the world's cultures. Today the role of the shaman takes many forms – healer, ceremonialist, judge, sacred politician, and artist, to name a few.[15]

It is argued here that special kinds of artists may also express themselves in shamanic forms, i.e., they bring to art a sacred meaning, often entering themselves into other layers of consciousness in their search for artistic expression. As explained by Ruth-Inge Heinze, "these individuals bring problems to the surface so that they can be dealt with, and they translate ineffable messages of the sacred into secular language."[16] Thus, one can understand certain artistic expressions through a shamanic perspective.

Claude Lévi-Strauss makes the connection between art and the primitive, giving it a shelter-like capacity that is present even today: "whether one deplores or rejoices in the fact, there are still zones in which savage thought, like savage species, is relatively protected. This is the case of art, to which our civilization accords the status of a national park."[17] And of all the artistic expressions sharing primitive roots poetry arises as one of the closest forms to the venting of man's primal utterance.

Poetry is a very independent form of art as it needs nothing more than the poet's own voice and mind to convey its mysteries. According to Gary Snyder, "poetry must sing or speak from authentic experience. (...) Poets must live close to the world that primitive men are in: the world, in its nakedness, which is fundamental for all of us -- birth, love, death; the sheer fact of being alive."[18] Such an understanding of poetry gives it a sacred meaning; something to convey long-forgotten values that tell men of their primal needs. The visionary poet speaks of the basic states of both the world and his own for the sake of both his and the world's survival at a time when mankind has been persistently destroying the natural environment of the planet for the perceived progress and comforts of civilization. Sharing the traditional Romantic view of the poet as a complete artist, Snyder believes in the poet's pursuit of such values: "As a poet I hold the most archaic values on earth. They go back to the Paleolithic: the fertility of the soil, the magic of animals. The power-vision in solitude, the terrifying initiation and rebirth, the love and ecstasy of the damned, the common work of the tribe"(117). The ever-growing power of technology, with its cold hunger for speeding the world, has been framing an artificial environment wherein mankind does not belong. The magic of natural creatures, human beings included, is fading away as man starts suffering from

the sickness of the collective anxiety of technology and scientism. The vision of poetry as visionary art renders it the possibility of bringing both the world and mankind a sacred healing. Such is the view of the artist whose work is intentionally directed to the exploration of dormant regions of consciousness. A work of art, in the service of the mystery of voice, born out of the relentless search of an ecstatic artist: the shaman-poet.

I.4) Morrison as shaman-poet

This study is concerned with the work of a shaman-artist, the American poet Jim Morrison. His poetry will be approached as belonging to the poetic tradition Plato called *furor poeticus* that goes back to the Upper Paleolithic, the presumed time of the drawing nigh of shamanism. It is this study's contention that Morrison was a shaman himself and he will be presented as such:

> "He was not a performer, he was not an entertainer, he was not a showman; he was a shaman, he was possessed. The guy was possessed by a vision, by a madness, by a rage to live, by an all consuming fire to make art."[19]

James Douglas Morrison was born on December 8, 1943 in the small town of Melbourne, Florida, the eldest son of a man who would eventually become a rear admiral in the U. S. Navy. His father had been transferred from the Pacific for a brief period before having to go back to the Japanese islands. It was the time of the Second World War and instability ruled not only Morrison's nomadic family but the whole world. In a recent biography of Morrison, *Break on Through*,[20] James Riordan tells of the constant shifting of the family:

> Throughout Jim's childhood mobility and separation characterized the Morrison family. They lived in Pensacola, Melbourne, and Clearwater, Florida, twice in both Washington, DC, and Albuquerque, New Mexico, and once each in Los Altos, Claremont, and Alameda, California, by the time Jim attended high school in Alexandria, Virginia. The moves often

> came with little warning, and such a nomadlike existence provided no consistency, but inconsistency in Morrison's life.[21]

If nothing else in the shamanic tradition, Morrison inherited from his family a nomadic way of life. It would have been difficult, to say the least, for Jim Morrison to inherit some kind of magical or healing powers from a rear admiral. Indeed, Mr. Morrison did bequeath his son an urge for transformation, although it became in practice less of a real metamorphic change than of a rebellious attitude against any constituted power represented by Jim's father's military strictness:

Men who go out in ships
To escape the sin & the mire of cities
watch the placenta of evening stars
from the deck, on their backs
& cross the equator
& perform rituals to exhume the dead
dangerous initiations
To mark passage to new levels

To feel on the verge of an exorcism
a rite of passage
To wait, or seek manhood
enlightenment in a gun

To kill childhood, innocence
in an instant. [22]

It seems that the nomad kind of living, present in the shamanic tradition of hunters, accompanied Morrison until the day of his mysterious death in Paris, twenty-seven years after his birth. He would in due time become the lyricist and lead singer of the internationally known rock band *The Doors* and one of the most controversial figures of his time.

Perhaps the most mysterious event of his whole existence, something that he often referred to as the most crucial occurrence of his life, took place at the time he was living in the city of Albuquerque in 1947. The family was driving through the desert in a thunderstorm and somewhere between Albuquerque and Santa Fe they ran into a scene that would transform Morrison for the rest of his days. This is Jim's own retelling:

> Me and my mother and father and a grandmother and a grandfather were driving through the desert, at dawn, and a truck load of Indian workers had either hit another car or just - I don't know what happened - but there were indians scattered all over the highway, bleeding to death. So the car pulls up and stops. That was the first time I tasted fear. I musta'been about four - like a child is like a flower, his head is just floating in the breeze, man. The reaction I get now thinking about it, looking back, is that the souls of the ghosts of those dead indians, maybe one or two of'em, were just running around freaking out, and just leaped into my soul. *And they're still in there.*[23]

Although often referred to as a result of Jim's already dark imagination as a child, the accident really occurred, as was later confirmed by Jim's parents. The possession part of the experience is what nobody, except Morrison himself, could ever confirm. But since he wrote so much about the episode, it transcends the need for mere confirmation of what has become at least a deep symbolic mutation in the poet's life. Everything related to that experience would somehow exert a strong influence not only on his life but also on his poetic writings:

Indians scattered on dawn's highway bleeding

Ghosts crowd the young child's fragile eggshell mind.[24]

The road, for instance, can be depicted as Morrison's stream of consciousness, many a time traveled by the shaman on his journey into the spiritual domain. Another constant imagery in Morrison's poetry, as shall be seen, is that of the hitchhiker on the

road. The lonely rider on his irreversible way to freedom seems to be Morrison's metaphor for the ancient search of the nahuatl:

Welcome to the American Night
Where dogs bite
to find the voice
the face the fate the fame
to be tamed
by the night
in a quiet soft luxuriant car
Hitchhikers line in the Great Highway.[25]

The poet welcomes his reader to feel the animal within and to tame his fury in the wilderness of the American night. The metaphor of the hitchhikers in the 'Great Highway,' come to emphasize the idea of the unexpected; once on the road, that is, the river and even the poem itself, the adventure may present different experiences to the hikers. The night is frequently present in Morrison's verses as well as in the shaman's journeys as a symbol of the unknown realms to which the shaman-poet dives in his search for the animal spirit, who will open the doors of the supernatural:

The Night is young
& full of rest
I can't describe the
way she's dressed
She'll pander to some strange
requests
Anything that you suggest
Anything to please her guest.[26]

This poem is significantly called "Open" and it represents Morrison's depicting the night, a place he says he cannot describe, yet he feels its young and comforting nature. The poet invites his reader to join the night for she will do anything to please her guests. A short poem, "Open" builds an atmosphere of pleasure and freedom, as the night is

female and she is there to pander to the strangest of requests. The alliteration of sounds, mainly hissing and sibilant [s] and [sh] also help to create a reptilian nocturnal atmosphere in which the requests of the shaman-poet will be readily granted.

According to the shamanic principles, everyone is said to have had their own guardian-spirit in childhood, the aforementioned animal power; otherwise it would have become impossible to reach adulthood. A few people do not lose contact with the spirit and therefore are hardly ever ill, either physically or mentally. The majority, on the other hand, are unable to keep in touch with this protective force, and the shaman, making active use of his own and other so-called auxiliary guardian spirits, dives into his journey to seek the patient's faraway sick and lost guardian. It is an entrance into that dream-like world where the child protector waits to be awakened as if for the first time:

A wake
Shake dreams from your hair
My pretty child, my sweet one
Choose the day and choose the sign of your day
The day's divinity
First thing you see. [27]

These lines belong to one of Morrison's poems dealing with a shamanic experience. In this case it describes the magic child's first vision of power. There is a divine atmosphere created by the shaman's command in the realm of dreams. The "sweet one" has been awakened by the shaman's voice, which seems to caress the child's hair to free the dormant spirits who have been waiting for the visionary voice to be a part of the shaman-poet's reality.

Morrison once wrote "There are images I need to complete my own reality," expressing the poet's awareness of an uncompleted reality all around us (*The American Night* 118). Similar to spirits, images are not palpable, they have to be felt just like the words of poetry, words that convey images to fulfill the gaps of the ordinary perception of human consciousness, unreal images to complete the uncompletable:

A hole in the clouds

where a mind hides

Pagodas - temples

in a child's raw hope

animal in a tunnel

defined by the light

around him

These evil subsidies

these shrouds

surround (*Night* 177).

The birth of a shaman is actually a rebirth from death. During his initiation he undergoes the experience of death and is born again into a powerful man of vision:

We live, we die

& death not ends it

Journey we more into the

Nightmare (04).

The vision is therefore a more universal sight of the human experience since it portrays its other side, that of a journey into the nightmarish realm of the dead. In a way, the pupil-shaman feels a need to go back to childhood, back to where the sounds were purer and softer:

If only I

could feel

The sound

of the sparrows

& feel childhood,

pulling me

back again (187).

The shaman-poet claims he would willingly die in order to reach a long-ago lost reality:

If only I could feel

me pulling back

again

& feel embraced

by reality again

I would die

gladly die.

The repetition of the word "again" expresses the action of one's inner tide, the ebb and flow of life and death. The "reality" the poet refers to is that which he once experienced when in closer contact with the sound of the sparrows, the sound of birds pulling the shaman's soul back again to where he would gladly enter the cycle of existence.

Having died so young, Morrison became one of those rock stars whose life has been transfigured by legend. In the Sixties, nobody really knew whether those concepts of rebellion and contestation would ever lead to any real political accomplishments. Rock and roll was a very resourceful stage where these traits were given life in the flesh of both the audience and their helmsmen. The more intense the latter's urge, the more worship from the former, generating a relationship permeated by adoration and belief, similar to a religious experience. Those were mass audiences that could be reached in every corner of the world through the songs and lyrics of their living idols:

We're getting tired of hanging around,

Waiting around, with our heads to the ground.

We want the world and we want it

We want the world and we want it...NOW! (*Night* 106).

Differently from the "flower-power" voices of freedom usually associated with the Sixties, Morrison's was targeted at rebellious rather than peaceful attitudes. His impulse was a darker one, an urge to confrontation and modification that often bordered on extremist behavior. When such a voice happened to be silenced by a sudden and mysterious death it was soon to be covered by traces of legend and myth.[28] Whenever a charismatic figure dies, myth arises. Traces of myth were provided by an artist whose

stardom, though intense, did not last long, a comet that briefly casts its light before vanishing all of a sudden into the darkness of the cosmos where it belongs.

It seems that everything in Morrison's life had to be sudden and violent and astounding at the same time, something like Jack Kerouac's ecstatic depiction of the mad artist, like Dean Moriarty, a condition that pervaded not only Morrison's life but also what this study is particularly concerned with: his poetry:

> ... the mad ones, the ones who are mad to live, mad to talk, mad to be saved, desirous of everything at the same time, the ones who never yawn or say a commonplace thing, but burn, burn, burn, like fabulous yellow roman candles exploding like spiders across the stars and in the middle you see the blue center-light pop and everybody goes "Awww!" [29]

One might regard Morrison's vision as his initiatory crisis as a shaman, a crisis in which ancient shamanic voices echo their collective rhythms from the aeons in one single individual, regardless of his belonging or not to a traditional religious lineage. In his classic *Shamanism - Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, Mircea Eliade asserts that even though there is a history of religion, this is not irreversible, since no religion's history is definite. Not only can a society practice any number of religions but also a single individual can have, from the highest to the lowest, different religious experiences. "The dialectics of the sacred consents all reversibilities."[30] Thus every religious experience can repeat itself, whatever the enormous historical hiatus between its first manifestation and a later one. The spontaneity of the hierophany can never be checked by the hand of history. As a matter of fact, considering Eliade's dialectics of religion, one might understand the whole decade of the Sixties as a manifestation of the spirit of freedom and contestation present, for instance, in the Greek era. The Sixties represented a dream of liberation and exultation, much in the manner of the ancient bacchantes, wherein the people involved in that dream acted according to a belief that showed traces of religious faith. The attitudes of the hippie generation, for instance, were less a fruit of rational common-sense decisions, than that of a spiritual belief in what they represented, namely the urge for the freedom of expression.

In the mid-Sixties Morrison left his parents' home to study cinema at UCLA. After his graduation, as he did not have a regular occupation, he secluded himself in the attic of an abandoned roof top at Venice beach, in Southern California. It was a time when American youth, dissatisfied with the conformist values of their middle-class life, began to believe in a dream of freedom. It was a dream against American capitalism and the ideology of acquiescence in its dull and unfeeling materialism. At that time, youth really believed the dream would eventually come true. If nothing else, the spirit of freedom manifested itself against all odds and the Sixties became definitively a decade to remember.

There were voices calling for a different and more peaceful world to live in. Yet Morrison's ideas of a different place had to do with a different person, someone willing to explore the farthest boundaries of his self, someone in search of a new voice, a voice from within that would tell of quiescent sacred meanings waiting to be awakened. Much influenced by philosophers of existential darkness such as Nietzsche ("I would rather be a satyr than a saint") and poets of rebellion like Rimbaud ("From my ancestors I inherit: idolatry and love of sacrilege, oh! all vices: anger, lust"), Morrison believed a metamorphosis was necessary.

Jim Morrison decided to rouse those voices when he went to live alone in Venice West. This is how his biographer, James Riordan, describes it: "This was his wilderness - living in abject poverty on the roof of an abandoned building. It was symbolic because it was an emptiness in soul and a poverty in spirit that he had come to fill."[31] One of the results of his poverty was fasting, a traditional experience during the shaman's initiation that Morrison combined with heavy doses of the powerful psychedelic, LSD.

The ingestion of mind-altering substances is also part of a traditional shamanic rite of initiation. As Riordan sees it: "Though he may not have known it, his fasting, meditating, and ingestion of mind-altering drugs put him into an ideal state for contact with the supernatural"(70). During that period Morrison wrote many of his lyrics and poems. Like a shaman that receives his songs of power from the spirits of his journey,

Morrison started listening to the voices that had called to him twenty years before in the heat of the desert. They were voices from within and their song was Morrison's song, the song of the nahuatl-poet on its way to breaking on through to the other side.

The ingestion of drugs is a common phenomenon in primitive cultures. Traditionally, shamans take from plants large amounts of substances which alter their consciousness. These may vary from peyote, a cactus from the Mexican deserts, to yage, a vine from the Amazon forest, to mushrooms from around the world, etc.[32] These all constitute psychedelic substances, which enable the user to enhance his usual perception of the world by experiencing visions and insights not available to a normal conscious state. Their chemical action triggers a hallucinogenic experience from which emerges a double-meaning, a critique of ordinary reality, and a glimpse of another one.

The term "psychedelic" was coined by Humphrey Osmond, an American researcher, in 1956.[33] It comes from the Greek *psyche* (soul) and *delein* (to reveal). Osmond had been corresponding with Aldous Huxley after the latter read Osmond's paper on the mental effects of mescaline (extracted from the peyote cactus). Huxley would later ingest some mescaline sulfate provided by Osmond and describe his experience in the book that inspired Morrison's choice for naming his band "The Doors." In *The Doors of Perception*, which received much attention as he was a celebrated author, Huxley describes in awe his mystical experience. A more detailed approach to Huxley's *The Doors of Perception* will be presented in the last section of this study.

Of all the psychedelic substances, Lysergic Acid Diethylamide, LSD, is the strongest. As described in the *Psychedelics Encyclopedia*:

> It belongs to a class of substances that can be divided into two groups. One group occurs naturally, in the fungus ergot and in members of the woodrose and morning glory families. The other group is produced semi-synthetically, the most important member being LSD.[34]

It was in 1943 that Dr. Albert Hoffman, working for Sandoz Pharmaceuticals in Basel, Switzerland, became the first human to experience the effects of a substance that would

eventually generate much controversy, LSD-25. The twenty-fifth compound in the series of lysergic acids that had till then been used in the treatment of migraine headaches, as well as in obstetrics and geriatrics, turned out to affect Hoffman's mind in a way only shamans had felt before. Nothing more than a single drop (20 to 50 micrograms), probably fallen on his fingers and absorbed by the skin, was necessary to trigger an avalanche of visionary perception. This was the substance ingested so many times by Morrison in his inspirational search and under whose effect he wrote many of his lyrics and poems. A bright student (Morrison's IQ was tested 150), he spent much of his youth reading voraciously and writing scattered verses in old high school notebooks, which he eventually burnt in some sort of purifying rite of passage. Alone in the desert, he started his quest to meet the shamanic voices from within under the effect of the most potent psychedelic substance known to human beings.

Morrison's search was ultimately every shaman's search, the search for the primitive; an attempt to define what is primary beyond an ingenuous alienation from human society. When one refers to the primitive, it implies, as Stanley Diamond asserts, "a certain level of history, and a certain mode of cultural being." [35] The process of civilization has leveled this primitive mode of being to a point where the remains of a universal human nature has almost vanished. The farther man is driven from the wilderness, the less universal, that is, natural, becomes his nature. The adamant rationalizations of human culture through inflexible social scientism and inflexible scholastic determinism, for instance, have come to numb the "sense of universal human need, conflict and fulfillment which has been most adequately expressed in the past through art and religion"(62). Morrison was after that sort of expression, typical of the figure who embodies both artistic and religious utterance: the shaman-poet.

The proto-bard deals with the breakdown of a familiar consciousness of world-view and then dives into his vision where he receives his song without any cognizant effort. Apparently, this happened to Morrison as he tells it: "it was a beautiful hot summer and I just started hearing songs. This kind of mythic concert that I heard ..." [36]

The shamanic songs, though exclusive to each shaman, share some common characteristics related to the fact that they are the sound of nature:

I received an Aztec wall
of vision
& dissolved my room in
sweet derision
Closed my eyes, prepared to go
A gentle wind inform'd me so
And bathed my skin in ether glow. [37]

As Eliade affirms "during his trance the shaman is believed to understand the language of nature. (...) Even when a secret language is not directly concerned, traces of it are to be found in the incomprehensible refrains that are repeated during séances."[38] The shaman's first contact with this secret language is therefore a sacred communication between the voice of nature and himself. These songs are poetic narratives that have been whispered by the spirits since aeons. They lie at the root of all forms of narrative, either fictional or historical. They deal with the magic power of words (which shall be assessed more carefully in the third section of this study) giving poetic narrative a different perspective, that of the healing words, which echo the long-forgotten sounds of primitive poetry.

There are stages in the development of primitive narrative poetry. As C. W. Bowra states, the first is shamanistic poetry "in which the chief character is the magician, and magic is the main means of success."[39] The previous poem can be seen as part of this first stage. There are forces of nature speaking in their secret language to the poet by means of a gentle wind which whispers the vision and then the ethereal glow which bathes him, as Eliade points out, and there is also the presence of a lyric "I," receiver of ancient powers (Aztec vision) who acts as a magician (receiving a vision with eyes closed), according to Bowra's definition.

The next stage is that of a new spirit in a man-centered universe, from which heroic poetry appears, speaking of both men and Gods, either in panegyric or lament.

This second stage belongs, historically speaking, to the Classical Age of the Greeks. Heroic poetry was the one meant to be banned from Plato's Republic due to the still excessive action of Gods in a world wherein the founder of the Academy wanted man as the main character. The Platonic poetic theory will be more carefully addressed in the next section of this study.

Thus, as the hero is the center-piece in heroic poetry, the shaman/magician is the heart of shamanistic poetry and what is natural for the latter may seem supernatural for the former, who might need a new form of interpretation to enlighten the unknown secrets of earth. [40] In shamanistic poetry there is no supernatural, since the hero is a shaman, someone to whom the secrets of nature have been taught by mythical beings. [41] The nahuatl recreates the origin of the world in religious experiences through a ceremonial suspension of time and space: the shamanic séance.

Morrison wrote his own definition of the sacred rite in his only book published before his death, *The Lord and the New Creatures*, which contains his own description of the shamanic ritual:

> In the seance the shaman led. A sensuous panic, deliberately evoked through drugs, chants, dancing, hurls the shaman into trance. Changed voice, convulsive movement. He acts like a madman. These professional hysterics, chosen precisely for their psychotic leaning, were once esteemed. They mediated between man and the spirit-world. Their mental travels formed the crux of the religious life of the tribe. [42]

The presence of such a description in his book is significant, as it shows Morrison's personal concern with the shamanic figure. As the passage shows, his portrayal of the séance is quite accurate, since he had been not only practicing but studying the matter as well.

There is an enormous difference of time and space between the sacred drama carried out in the ritual and the magical events performed by the mythical beings, yet the shaman experiences a suspension of both time and space during the séance as he journeys into the atemporal realm of dreams. This can be possibly done, as in Eliade's

assertion that the dialectics of the sacred knows no bounds whatsoever, although not every anthropologist or poet will be willing to cross the border between learning it from books and experiencing it directly, lest the traditional scientific academies regard them as less seriously involved in their research/work. That is certainly not the case with poets such as Morrison or Snyder, who belong to the shamanistic tradition of poetry, since it provided the roots for what Plato called "possessed" poets, an ancient tradition that found its heyday in the English language with the Romantic poets of the 18th and 19th centuries, as it shall be argued in the second section of this study.

In the anthropological domain, things are rather more delicate. Whenever an anthropologist comes closer to his object of study to the point of experiencing himself what he has studied according to scientific procedures, he is usually regarded with contempt in his own métier. Rarely is the shaman/anthropologist respected as a man of science and learning. One exception might be Professor Michael Harner. In *The Way of the Shaman* (1980), Harner comes to defend his own precursor, and perhaps the most controversial shaman/anthropologist of the Western world: Carlos Castañeda. Harner credits the extreme professional hostility towards Castañeda to "the ethnocentrism among cultures." [43] He refers to the ordinary prejudice of those who oppose a different concept of reality, something Castañeda calls "the second attention," which is nothing but the altered state of consciousness in which the shaman finds himself whenever he enters into the spirit's realm. The difficulty in understanding the shaman's experiences lies in the fact that one can not possibly imagine things such as conscious dreaming (one of the pillars of Castañeda's work)[44] from the perspective of a normal state of consciousness.

Carlos Castañeda has certainly helped in the mythicizing of his own persona, due to his mysterious behavior since his books (nine so far) first appeared in the late Sixties. His apprenticeship under the guidance of a Yaqui shaman, Don Juan, has been translated and read all over the world, generating the most paradoxical reactions. These vary from the true believers who regard his writings as being a report of true life experiences, to the most skeptical of readers, who see his accounts as nothing but sheer

and badly written fiction. [45] Fictionalized narrative or not, Castañeda's work has come to introduce more broadly the concept of a possible and completely different reality from that of everyday life, a reality of magic that is brought to life again in the shamanic ritual. This is how Don Juan tries to explain to his pupil about such a difference in Castañeda's *The Art of Dreaming* (1993):

> There is an enormous difference between the thoughts and deeds of men of antiquity [how he refers to the old shamans] and those of modern men. (...) men of ancient times had a very realistic view of perception and awareness because their view stemmed from their observations of the universe around them. Modern men, in contrast, have an absurdly unrealistic view of perception and awareness because their view stems from their observations from the social order and from their dealings with it. [46]

There can be no doubt Castañeda is a true believer who does not hesitate to defend his creed by all means. The same thing occurs to those Plato wanted out of his Republic. Those artists the Athenian called possessed also believed their creed to be a sacred lineage. Hence poetry and shamanism share some traits as far as their sacred meaning is concerned. As Octavio Paz points out in his preface to Castañeda's first book, "he has penetrated an impervious tradition, an underground society that coexists, without living together though, with the modern Mexican society. A tradition bound to be extinct: that of the sorcerers, heirs to the pre-Columbian shamans." [47] Paz believes human beings have lost the power that unites the beholder with the object of his perception. Nevertheless, he argues, "all of us saw the world once with that previous glance, previous to the separation, to the false or true, real or illusory, fair or ugly, good or bad." [48] That is the glance of the artist, of the shaman-poet who casts an eye at the basic state of the human condition and calls on his patient-reader to come along:

Do you know the warm progress

under the stars?

Do you know we exist?

[Have you forgotten the keys

to the kingdom]

Have you been borne yet?

& are you alive?

Let's reinvent the gods, all the myths

of the ages

Celebrate symbols from deep elder forests

[Have you forgotten the lessons

of the ancient war]

We need great golden copulations

The fathers are cackling in trees of the forest

Our mother is dead in the sea. [49]

Here the poet puts himself beside his reader in the urge for a reinvention of all myths by way of a new vision of the ancient forest symbols. "We" are all orphans in this dead land and we need to be born again in "the great golden copulations," we must remember the lessons of the ancient war, i.e., we should give new meanings to our voices and awake the dormant symbols of the forest. In some shamanic traditions the forest is seen as the land of the dead wherein the neophyte is taken. Its symbols, which the poet longs for, convey the ambivalent mystery of anguish and serenity that shall be deciphered when awakened.

Like the shaman, who obtains power by means of healing his patient, the poet places himself beside his reader to whom he dedicates his words. Only through the action of his poetry on the reader will the symbols be given celebration. One can therefore envision poetic creation as a ritual of words in which there is a mutual participation of both shaman-poet and reader-patient. As it shall be explained in more detail in the last section of this study, the relationship of such ritual will also provide an eventual healing for the poet who, wounded by the very words of his expression, needs his reader's belief and imagination to make him well.

The recurrent question of "how the concept and techniques of the sacred can persist in the secular world, not as nostalgia for the archaic past but as a vehicle to ease us into the future" [50] finds its answer in the above mentioned reversibility of the sacred and also in the magic of the visionary poet's words, words that will sound like the shaman's healing song once received to cure his own illness during his apprenticeship. It has to be as powerful a song to relieve the shaman from the most painful of illnesses, that of death itself, which he shall master to become a healer. Eliade describes the shaman's contact with the basic states of humanity as the healer faces sickness:

> Like the sick man, the religious man is projected onto a vital plane that shows him the fundamental data of human existence, that is, solitude, danger, hostility of the surrounding world. But the primitive magician, the medicine man, or the shaman is not only a sick man; he is, above all, a sick man who has been cured, who has succeeded in curing himself. [51]

Perhaps one of the most intriguing phenomena of shamanism lies in the extreme control brought about by its practice. Whereas the healer appears to be involved by his hysterics and convulsions, he owes his power to the untarnished mastering of the trance, achieving "a degree of concentration beyond the capacity of the profane"(27). Nevertheless, every time the shaman goes into magical flight he experiences his healing journey as well, that is, the song of cure must give forth its strength as if facing sickness for the first time. There is a close relationship between sickness and healing, so close that they might be regarded as one; for healing stems from sickness, and the shaman "sees" them in their oneness. Therefore, all curing procedures also convey the principles of illness. It is interesting to observe how Paracelsus addresses the matter in *Pagoyum De Ente Veneni*:

> In everything man takes for his sustenance there lies constantly the venom hidden underneath the good substance. The substance is the nourishment that gives life whereas the venom destroys and obliterates it by means of illnesses, notwithstanding both principles are found universally in all nourishment and in all animals without exception. [52]

Similarly the shaman-poet's words hurt him first before prodding their healing fountain. Thus the primitive roots of shamanistic poetry conceal a complex structure, that is not always apparent, in the paradox of the healing sickness. Moreover, as Jerome Rothenberg states, "poetry, wherever you find it among the 'primitives' (literally *everywhere*), involves an extremely complicated sense of materials & structures." [53] Rothenberg is referring to the distortions that necessarily appear when one chooses a fragment of the whole poem so that it can be dealt with meaningfully. The problem lies in the difficulty of translating only a single part of a "larger total work that may go on for hours, even days, at a stretch"(70). This is so because poetry as vision and communion is part of a more complex ritual system that involves other artistic activities such as music, dance, stalking, painting, etc. There will always be the need for separation that one can not avoid. However it must be clear that primitive poetry, that is, poetry as visionary inspirational song, also carries out a collective nature "to a great degree inseparable from the amount of materials a single work may handle"(70). Thus there comes the possibility of getting in touch with the basic states of humankind's collective nature through the words of the seer:

Like our ancestors
The Indians
We share a fear of sex
excessive lamentation for the dead
& an abiding interest in dreams & visions. [54]

In this particular poem Morrison glares at that collective nature to be shared with the latent identification of the basic states of fear, pain, and intent between the ancient indians and their ancestors.

The poet gives the object of interest an "abiding" pattern that is not always evident in the eyes of the descendants who appear to be increasingly losing contact with the inward journeys of the soul. The visionary explorations, "dreams and visions", will only be possible once traditional limits, mainly personal constraints, are rejected along with the opposing and restrictive concrete realities of life.

In the late Sixties, as Tony Magistrale says, "as America's tragic involvement in Vietnam became impossible to ignore, Morrison produced his most political writing."[55] Morrison's awareness of the need for change in what he saw as an oppressive political reality reflected not only the poet's critical view but also a belief in an imminent new order to be achieved as soon as one started to let loose natural instincts and impulses:

All our lives we sweat & save
Building for a shallow grave
There must be something else we say
Somehow to defend this place. [56]

Morrison himself once stated, "I offer images, I conjure memories of freedom", trying to explain the role of the visionary poet. But he also made clear that "we can only open doors, we can't drag people through." [57] Morrison's call for defending this place transcended the frontiers of time (the turbulent Sixties) and space (America) towards a more universal consciousness of change whose grasp contained the whole planet. In the lyrics to "When the Music is Over," one finds an ecological concern in which, as Magistrale says,[58] Morrison "was one of the first American musicians to elicit a radical response to environmental degradation":

What have they done to the earth?
What have they done to our fair sister?
Ravaged and plundered
and ripped her and bit her,
Stuck her with knives
in the side of the dawn,
And tied her with fences,
and dragged her down. [59]

Morrison's verse follows the concept of what Snyder calls technique for an ecological survival. The visionary poet must therefore express, as Snyder asserts referring to the American landscape, "the knowledge of what we have done to our continent, and to the American Indian."[60] Above all the poet's search for the primitive reflects his

commitment to Rousseau's ideal. The author of *The Social Contract* set out the theory, embraced by the shaman-poet, that people turn away from the natural wilderness to look for the shelter of civilization. Yet man is an animal who seems to have forgotten his need for the sheltering of nature as well. The primitives, on the other hand, never lost that basic and essential connection between human and the wild. The hunting tradition of primitive peoples deals with the killing through the notion of communion rather than sheer destruction. Snyder refers to it as "hunting magic" which is "not only meant at bringing beasts to their death but to assist in their birth, to promote fertility"(92). The shaman sings to the animal and is answered by the creature who "out of compassion comes within range." That connection is thought too fantastic a dream to be true by the civilized society which can no longer conceive such harmonious approach to nature. Nevertheless, the shaman-poet's function is to sing about that dream before it is vanished:

Bird of prey, Bird of prey
flying high, flying high
In the summer sky
Bird of prey, Bird of prey
flying high, flying high
Gently pass on by
Bird of prey, Bird of prey
flying high, flying high
Am I going to die
Bird of prey, Bird of prey
flying high, flying high
Take me on your flight. [61]

Morrison brings the bond a transcendental perspective as he is taken on the bird's magical flight into the wilderness. The poet gives the dream its sacred song when he goes beyond the individual egos which class-structured civilized society consists of, as

Snyder says. Therefore to transcend such an ego is to enter the unconscious, to penetrate the wilderness in the search for the primitive.

As it has been argued, that search as an attempt to settle a primary human nature, visionary poetry reaches out into the preservation of both the ecological survival and the art of healing. The latter is to find also in poetry that which Stanley Diamond intended to be within the grasp of an "anthropology of the primitive." According to Diamond, "healing flows from insight into primary, pre-civilized human processes; it presumes a knowledge of the primitive, of what is essential to the condition of being human." [62] That is precisely what the shaman-poet deals with, the healing of the human soul through the sacred songs that give voice to a dream of a long lost "totality and immediacy of human experience." In other words, assuming the need for survival in this "age of abstract horror", as Diamond asserts, people shall learn, in order to understand their sickness and to heal its present manifestation, about the origins of the self, about their primal being. Diamond recalls Hegel's vision that "when we contemplate the past, that is, history, the first thing we see is nothing but ruins"(99). Yet it has been the aim of every major thinker since the industrial revolution to "out of those ruins of civilization win through to a whole but concrete vision of man." That whole vision can only be reached by means of the constant search for the unity of man, that is, the search for ways out of the withering process of civilized automatism, different ways of being human, primitive ways of understanding the human experience.

The concept of Western civilization might find its birth place in Plato's utopia of civilized man and society in *The Republic*. However the Greek philosopher also revered the purer life, which he intended to be replaced by the rule of reason: "and beauty, the effluence of fair works, shall flow into the eye and ear, like a health-giving breeze from a purer region, and insensibly draw the soul from earliest years into likeness and sympathy with the beauty of reason." [63] Plato acknowledged that even in civilization one can not know what has been gained until learning what has been lost.

The bucolic venerator is present only at the beginning of *The Republic*. In the last Dialogues, Plato is far more repressive and pragmatic. In the words of Professor

Diamond, "in *The Laws* human nature has become the enemy, and we recognize civilization." [64] Plato was not able to pervade the primitive in-depth as long as he did not concede the pristine appeal of ritualistic *poiesis* its primeval essentiality. The possessed poet's song should be banned in favor of the virtue and truth of reason. The voices of the primitive should thereupon be excluded from the ideal state of civilization.

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[1] Nahuatl poem, "Ephemeral life": Alas, I shall leave the fairest of flowers, I shall go down in search for the far beyond! Alas, for a moment it felt weary: we can borrow but the beautiful songs!

[2] Mircea Eliade, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1964) 04. Hereafter, quotes that are not followed by a reference number belong to the one previously numbered and have their page number in brackets.

[3] Joseph Campbell, *The Masks of God: Primitive Mythology* (New York: Penguin, 1991) 229. In chapter 6, Campbell deals with shamanism and points out the emphasis in the individual fast to acquire visions among the hunters. Accordingly, one could state that the very power of the shaman would be determined by such early visions.

[4] Eliade also mentions the "Kommandostäbe" which are mysterious objects, found in pre-historic sites, that could be regarded as shamanic drumsticks. Eliade then summarizes Karl J. Narr's study on the origins of shamanism, "Bärenzeremoniell und Shamanismus in der Älteren Steinzeit Europas" as follows: "Animal skulls and bones found in the sites of the European-Paleolithic (before 50,000-ca. 30,000 BC) can be interpreted as ritual offerings... Soon afterward, probably about 25,000, Europe offers evidence for the earliest forms of shamanism (Lascaux) with the plastic representations of the bird, the tutelary spirit, and ecstasy." Op. cit. 503.

[5] Remi Simeon, *Diccionario de la lengua Nahuatl* (Mexico: Siglo Veintiuno, 1977) 305.

[6] Michael Harner, *The Way of the Shaman: A Guide to Power and Healing* (New York: Harper and Row, 1980) 79.

[7] Joan Halifax, *Shamanic Voices* (New York: Arkana, 1979) 03.

[8] Ancient Mayan salute: "Welcome are those who follow through these paths."

[9] Halifax 04.

[10] Joan Halifax, *Shaman, The Wounded Healer* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1982) 84.

[11] Nicolau Sevcenko, "No principio era o ritmo: as raizes xamanicas da narrativa," *Narrativa, Ficcao e Historia*, ed. Dirce Cortes Riedel (Rio de Janeiro: Imago, 1988) 134.

[12] Sevcenko 126.

[13] Sir James George Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion* Pt. VI (New York: Macmillan, 1951) 374.

[14] Frazer, *The Golden Bough* Pt. VI, 374.

[15] Halifax, *The Wounded Healer* 05.

[16] Ruth-Inge Heinze, foreword, *Technicians of Ecstasy - Shamanism and the Modern Artist*, by Mark Levy (Connecticut: Bramble, 1993) ix.

[17] Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* (Chicago: The U of Chicago P, 1966) 219.

[18] Gary Snyder "Poetry and the Primitive, Notes on Poetry as an Ecological Survival Technique," *Symposium of the Whole*, ed. Jerome Rothenberg (Berkeley: U of California P, 1983) 117.

[19] *The Doors: A Tribute to Jim Morrison*, dir. Gordon Forbes, Warner Home Video, 1981. These are the words *Doors*' keyboard player Ray Manzarek chose to describe Morrison's shamanic persona.

[20] The biography mostly referred to is *No One Here Gets Out Alive* (New York: Warner, 1980) by Danny Sugerman and Jerry Hopkins. However, this study will be using *Break on Through* due to two reasons. On the one hand, it was written later and has a more contemporary view of the subject; on the other hand, it is somewhat less partial than Sugerman's concerning Morrison's mythicizing. Danny Sugerman was too close a character of *The Doors* saga to avoid it (he was some sort of mascot). In the very second paragraph of his foreword to *No One Here* he writes: "This book neither propels nor dispels the Morrison myth. (...) My personal belief is that Jim Morrison was a god." Despite all such involvement, one has to acknowledge the even historical importance of the book by Sugerman and Hopkins (author of *Elvis: A Biography*) as it was responsible for the awakening of the ten-year slumber of Morrison's phoenix.

[21] James Riordan, and Jerry Prochnicky, *Break on Through: The Life and Death of Jim Morrison* (London: Plexus, 1991) 30.

[22] James Douglas Morrison, *Wilderness* (New York: Vintage, 1989) 25.

[23] James Douglas Morrison, *An American Prayer*, Elektra, 61812-2, 1995. (italics added)

[24] Morrison, *Wilderness* 180.

[25] James Douglas Morrison, *The American Night* (New York: Villard, 1990) 27.

[26] Morrison, *Wilderness* 54.

[27] Morrison, *The American* Night 62.

[28] In his memoir, *Riders on the Storm* (New York: Delta, 1990), John Densmore ("The Doors" drummer) provides some interesting descriptions on Morrison's extremely controversial personality and behavior: "As Paul Rothchild [musical producer] would say years later, 'You never knew whether Jim would show up as the erudite, poetic scholar or the kamikaze drunk." (p. 130); "I told Paul Rothchild I was quitting. He sat me down and told me I was in one of the most envied and respected groups in the world. I kept thinking of what Paul had said about Jim a few nights before, after one of his binges. He told Ray, Robby and me that we were witnessing a special psychological experience, and we should get as much tape on Jim as fast as possible because he didn't think he was going to be around long." (p.163)

[29] Jack Kerouac, *On the Road* (London: Penguin, 1991) 08.

[30] Eliade, *Shamanism* xviii.

[31] Riordan 70.

[32] For more information on these substances, see Michael Harner's *Hallucinogens and Shamanism* (London: Oxford UP, 1973), in which Harner compiles different articles on the subject; and R. Gordon Wasson's *The Wondrous Mushroom-Mycolatry in Mesoamerica* (1980), in which Wasson studies the functions of the magic mushrooms in the history of primitive societies.

[33] Peter Stafford, *Psychedelics Encyclopedia* (Berkeley: Ronin, 1992) 05.

[34] Stafford 35.

[35] Stanley Diamond, "The Search for the Primitive," *Man's Image in Medicine and Anthropology*, ed. Iago Galdston (N.p: International UP, 1963) 62.

[36] Riordan 72.

[37] Morrison, *Wilderness* 77.

[38] Eliade, *Shamanism* 96.

[39] C. M. Bowra, *Heroic Poetry* (London: Macmillan, 1961) 25.

[40] Bowra 79.

[41] Mircea Eliade, *Myth and Reality* (New York: Harper and Row, 1963) 22.

[42] James Douglas Morrison, *The Lords and the New Creatures* (London: Omnibus, 1985) 71.

[43] Harner, *The Way of the Shaman* 17.

[44] Castañeda divides his apprenticeship into three stages: stalking, wherein the nahuatl learns the techniques of metamorphosis, changing his human form, for instance, from an innocent child to an old beggar, and even shifting to other life forms such as birds or felines; seeing, wherein he is taught how to perceive the world in its energetic appearance rather than the material one; and dreaming, wherein the nahuatl eventually builds the bridge between the ordinary world and the second attention by way of the conscious dreaming technique.

[45] One of the most consistent attacks suffered by Castañeda is perhaps the one by Richard de Mille in his book *Castañeda's Journey*. By the time de Mille's book was published Castañeda had only written four of his narratives. Nevertheless, Mille certainly could somewhat prove his theory that Don Juan was nothing but a product of fictive text and should not therefore be regarded as serious. Perhaps he missed the literary value of such a mysterious work. Indeed, if Don Juan is real he represents the defeat of the anthropologist by the sorcerer, something hard to be accepted in the scientific field. Yet, Castañeda's concern is not whether he writes fiction or science; he writes about his own conversion (from anthropologist to sorcerer) in order to shift the scientific pattern into a religious and magical one. Instead of the anthropologist who longs for getting to know the other, he becomes the neophyte longing for converting himself into the other. And the other represents a reality different from the ordinary, a separate reality that shelters a knowledge long neglected by Western scientism: the secret knowledge of freedom of soul and power of mind in the magic reality of the pre-Columbian civilizations which is likely to be recreated at any time.

[46] Carlos Castañeda, *The Art of Dreaming* (New York: Harper Collins, 1993) 172.

[47] Octavio Paz, preface, *Las Ensenanzas de Don Juan*, by Carlos Castañeda (Mexico: FCE, 1974) 13.

[48] Paz 22.

[49] Morrison, *The American Night* 03.

[50] Jerome Rothenberg, *Prefaces and Other Writings* (New York: New Directions, 1981) 189.

[51] Eliade, *Shamanism* 27.

[52] Aureolus Philippus Paracelso, *Obras Completas* (Barcelona: Edicomunicacion, 1989) 66.

[53] Rothenberg 70.

[54] Morrison, *Wilderness* 71.

[55] Tony Magistrale, "Wild Child: Jim Morrison's Poetic Journeys," *Journal of Popular Culture* V 26-3 (1992): 141.

[56] Morrison, *The American Night* 50.

[57] David Dalton, *Mr. Mojo Risin': Jim Morrison, The Last Holy Fool* (New York: St. Martin's, 1991) 28. Dalton is one strong critic who portrays Morrison's dark side as the popular stereotype of the nihilist impulses of the sixties. His book depicts the fool rather than the holy Jim Morrison. He poses a lot of questions whose answers his book fails to provide; that is, one can not find in *The Last Holy Fool* the light Dalton denied Morrison's lyrics and verse.

[58] Magistrale 141.

[59] Morrison, *The American Night* 106.

[60] Snyder 92.

[61] Morrison, *Wilderness* 139.

[62] Diamond 99.

[63] Scott Buchanan, Ed., *The Portable Plato* (New York: Viking, 1976) 389.

[64] Diamond 102.

CHAPTER II

The Poetic Tradition and Morrison

"You look round on your Mother Earth,
As if she for no purpose bore you;
As if you were her first-born birth,
And none had lived before you!" [1]

II.1) Nietzsche's Apollo & Dionysus: the mysterious union

"Let us anticipate a century; let us assume the success of my onslaught on two thousand years of opposition to Nature, of the degradation of humanity." [2] These words belong to Nietzsche's ontological work, *Ecce Homo*, and refer to his belief in the strength of his onslaught, in *The Birth of Tragedy*, on "the whole of idealism in its typical form"(867). Nietzsche attacks the opposition to nature in favor of the affirmation of "all that is questionable and strange in existence" by means of the understanding of the wonderful phenomenon of the Dyonisian in contrast to the Apollonian. One of his attacks is against the Platonic philosophy's negligent treatment of art in favor of science. By opposing Socrates' voice of reason and logic, to the Dionysian voice of forgetfulness and collapse, Plato created a new anti-thesis. Dionysus, however, was not to be overcome easily being already used to contention. Before becoming Socrates' nemesis the God of wine, the satyr, had already faced the son of Zeus, Apollo. The two art-deities of the Greeks, Apollo and Dionysus, existed in sharp opposition of artistic tendencies (Apollo being the God of sculpture and Dionysus of music) before they "appear coupled with each other, and through this coupling eventually generate the art-product, equally Dionysian and Apollonian, of Attic tragedy"(951). Nietzsche describes their worlds as the separate domains of Apollonian dream and Dionysian drunkenness.

The world of Apollo embraces the human necessity of the dream-experience, a world where the beautiful appearance of forms and shapes is of utmost importance. As

Nietzsche recalls: "It was in dreams, says Lucretius, that the glorious divine figures first appeared to the souls of men; in dreams the great shaper beheld the splendid corporeal structure of superhuman beings"(952). Thus one might assert that human beings have a strong connection to the Apollonian world, stage of subconscious experiences, wherein not only pleasant images are portrayed but the dismal encounter of forgetfulness as well. Yet one is never to be found prisoner of the dangers of dream-life as one is under the protection of Apollo, the deity of light, constantly reminding the dreamer that it is only a world of fantasy. Apollo's beauty is never shaken; even under the influence of anger "the sacredness of his beautiful appearance must still be there"(952). The reason for Apollo's undisturbed nature lies in his solid faith in what Schopenhauer calls his *principium individuationis*, that is, the belief in human ability to account for the cognitive forms of any phenomenon under the light of reason. This belief brings the joy and wisdom of the beautiful appearance of the *principium individuationis.*

Yet, there are occasions when man seems to lose such absolute control of the faculty of reason, generating the collapse of the *principium.* At the very moment of such collapse one is invaded by a "blissful ecstasy which rises from the innermost depths of man, aye, of nature"(955). Only then can one be granted an insight into the world of Dionysus. The analogy of drunkenness helps to understand the effect of Dionysus' emotions because they are awakened in order to lead the reasonable believer into the torpor of self-forgetfulness. Dionysus breaks man's individual cell and, as "the potent coming of spring penetrating all nature with joy," celebrates festively the reunion between man and nature, with the corollary of a better understanding among men as well. Dionysus is therefore the constant reminder of the primitive force which is present in all things, although often estranged, underlying the veil of reason. A force much stronger than that of the beautiful appearance, since the latter is shattered by the action of oblivion so that the musical voice of the mysterious Primordial Unity can be heard in the heart of man:

The Things of Kindness

& unsporting brow

Forget & allow.[3]

Similarly, the shaman-poet conveys the Dionysian awe since he is a man in touch with the world beyond reason. Shamanistic poetry celebrates, as it were, the coming of Dionysus and his feast of friends. This is how Nietzsche describes the coming of Dionysus: "In song and in dance man expresses himself as a member of a higher community; he has forgotten how to walk and to speak; he is about to take a dancing flight into the air." [4] Morrison expresses the same Dionysian awakening in his visionary poetry:

A vast radiant beach & a cool jeweled moon.
Couples naked raced down by its quiet side
And we laugh like soft, mad children
Smug in the woolly cotton brains of infancy.

The scene evokes the parallel between the naked couples and the mad children. The couples under the jeweled moon, the Muse of all inspiration, run and laugh madly in search of the child within, as in a shamanic trance, oblivious of all as if waiting for Dionysus to embrace them:

The music and voices are all around us.
Choose, they croon the Ancient Ones
The time has come again.

The God of music is now present and he urges them to choose the Ancient Ones, to sing along in the festival of music that has come into existence once again:

Choose now, they croon,
Beneath the moon
Beside an ancient lake.
Enter again the sweet forest,
Enter the hot dream,
Come with us.
Everything is broken up and dances. [5]

As Nietzsche suggests, everything is now broken up under the charm of music and "the artistic power of all nature reveals itself to the highest gratification of the Primordial Unity."[6]The soft dream of Apollo has been heated and the images seem to disintegrate in the sweet forest of the unconscious. Time has come again for the Dionysian under-current and the manifestation of the unexpected, though latent, artistic ecstasy. Nietzsche sees the coming of the Dionysian, in contrast to the vanishing of the Apollonian, as an artistic celebration: "It is with them [Dionysian artistic expressions] that nature for the first time attains her artistic jubilee; it is with them that the destruction of the *principium individuationis* for the first time becomes an artistic phenomenon"(959). If the Dionysian phenomenon brings forth such exuberance, why then was it to be suppressed in favor of the Apollonian culture by the Greeks, namely Plato and his utopian Republic?

The answer for such question may lie in the episode of King Midas and Silenus, when Midas, after chasing the companion of Dionysus in the forest, asked him about the best and most desirable thing for man. Nietzsche retells the story:

> Fixed and immovable, the demigod said not a word; till at last, urged by the king, he gave a shrill laugh and broke out into these words: 'Oh, wretched ephemeral race, children of chance and misery, why de ye compel me to tell what it were most expedient for you not to hear? What is best of all is beyond your reach forever: not to be born, not to *be*, to be *nothing*. But the second best for you - is quickly to die'(962).

The Greeks understood the painful horror of existence and thought the pathos should be overcome, or at least veiled from sight, by the radiant dream-birth of the Olympians, Apollo included. The titanic powers of nature revealed by Silenus gave them room to "the Apollonian impulse towards beauty." The wisdom of Silenus was reversed and the Greeks sought shelter from the ultimate suffering of existence "under the bright sunshine of Olympian gods"(962). The complete absorption in the beauty of appearance would find its most sublime epitome in Homer's naïve art.[7] The wisdom of suffering is thereafter defeated by the Apollonian illusion of will.

Yet, Apollo's beauty and moderation are necessarily dependent on the underlying Dionysian layer of suffering and knowledge.[8] The essence of music pervades the surface of appearance and "Apollo could not live without Dionysus. (...) The individual, with all his restraint and proportion, succumbed to the self-oblivion of the Dionysian state, forgetting the precepts of Apollo."[9] When Plato banned the poets from his Republic he aimed at the Apollonian artist because he knew of such a mysterious union, that is, the interdependence between the naïve art of Homer and the wise sufferer's primitive voice of music: "The poems of the lyrist can express nothing which did not already lie hidden in the vast universality and absoluteness of the music which compelled him to figurative speech"(978). Plato was aware of the presence of the primordial pain inside the redeemable appearance of the symbolical dream-picture and such a presence was not welcome in the Platonic civilized society. Nevertheless, the pervasive flux of Dionysus neutralized the illusory will of the civilized man to overcome his primordial unity, that is, his ever latent union with the heart of nature: "the satyr chorus, the chorus of the natural beings, who as it were live ineradicably behind every civilization, despite the ceaseless change of generations and the history of nations, remain the same to all eternity"(983). The Dionysian reality assumes therefore the hidden form of substratum; it is separated from the world of everyday reality by "a gulf of oblivion in which all past personal experiences are submerged"(983). After having penetrated into the true nature of things and returned to the world of everyday reality, the Dionysian artist feels it "as nauseating and repulsive." This is so because he senses it would be ridiculous to be asked to set it right once he knows he can not change "the eternal nature of things." The poet then tries to express his feelings through his art. In spite of the resident mockery of the illusive action, the ecstatic poet seeks in art salvation from the nauseating and repulsive existence of everyday reality:

Resident mockery
give us an hour for magic
We of the purple glove
We of the starling flight

& velvet hour

We of arabic pleasure's breed

We of sundome & the night. [10]

The poet's awareness of the mockery pervading the sublime illusion of the cultured man gives his art the vision to portray what Nietzsche calls the "contrast between the intrinsic truth of nature and the falsehood of culture." [11] Only if able to penetrate the depths of natural phenomena does one become a poet. The Dionysian shaman-poet reaches his moment of magic in the velvet hour of the atemporal reality and embraces both "sundome & the night" in his universal communion with the primal forces of Nature. As Nietzsche puts it: "the poet is a poet only in so far as he sees himself surrounded by forms which live and act before him, and into whose innermost beings he penetrates"(988). The eye of the shaman-poet is therefore constantly fixed on the Dionysian abysses, whereto he goes in search of a wisdom different from that of the ordinary perception:

We have assembled inside this ancient

& insane theatre

To propagate our lust for life

& flee the swarming wisdom

of the streets [12]

Morrison refers to the ancient and insane theatre of Dionysus, a place beyond the "swarming wisdom of the streets" where both the poet and his reader have assembled to celebrate their lust for life. As the poem evolves, the sacred stage reveals its actors to be divine Dionysian words of music:

The barns are stormed

The windows kept

& only one of all the rest

To dance & save us

W/ the divine mockery

of words

Music inflames temperament.

Inflamed by the song of Dionysus the shaman-poet's words dance to reveal their divine mockery at the swarming wisdom of the streets. The eye of the Dionysian poet stares at the heart of the abyss and becomes the very antithesis of the Socratic eye, "an eye in which the fine frenzy of artistic enthusiasm had never glowed."[13] The Socratic laws depicted in the dialogues of Plato commanded that to be beautiful everything must be intelligible. The very beauty of art should be regarded differently from its original impulses, that is, Apollonian intuitions replaced by thoughts, and Dionysian ecstasies by passions, "thoughts and passions copied very realistically and in no sense suffused with the atmosphere of art"(1014). In fact, the Platonic rule was that knowledge is virtue and the former is to be found not in artistic expression but in philosophical thought. As stated by Nietzsche: "the virtuous hero must now be a dialectician; there must now be a necessary, visible connection between virtue and knowledge, between belief and morality"(1024).

The mythical figures that used to guide every culture's creative natural power had to be destroyed in favor of the man of virtue, a man whose culture "has no fixed and sacred primitive seat." Instead of understanding the myth, "the concentrated picture of the world", the never satisfied consuming desire for knowledge was to drive the Platonic virtuous man into "the loss of the mythical home." The timeless understanding of every single experience as *sub specie aeternitatis* embraced by the concept of mythical significance, that is, the "conviction of the relativity of time and the true" in life was to be forsaken as a means to reach the historical comprehension of the virtuous man. Being a constant reminder of the powerful understanding of man in the light of the wilderness of the mythical atemporal grasp, poetry, Nietzsche argues, was thereafter seen as *ancilla* to say the least.

II.2) Plato's unpoetic Republic

In classical Greece, collective religious ceremonies such as the Bacchantes were repressed as subversive.[14] Instead of the wild and luxuriant Dionysian festivals of the

past, the State began to control religion through pythonesses who used to perform at official temples. The Greek poet, a true heir of the essential Dionysian shamanism (where inspiration is concerned), was regarded as a possessed man who spoke only according to a god's will. If one ever wanted to know truth and justice, one should never listen to such bards; on the contrary, the answer lay in the teaching of the philosopher. The poets were, like the shaman, possessed by something out of this world, something Plato called *furor poeticus*.

Poetic inspiration was not to be regarded as art as long as it derived from the divine rather than from man. In the dialogue between Socrates, the philosopher, and Ion, the rhapsode, Plato states the new truth as Socrates explains to Ion the possessed nature of poetic inspiration: "For all good poets, epic as well as lyric, compose their beautiful poems not by art, but because they are inspired and possessed."[15] Socrates wants Ion to realize that the poets do not profess the voice of learning since their compositions are fruit of an altered state of mind:

> The lyric poets are not in their right mind when they are composing their beautiful strains: but when falling under the power of music and metre they are inspired and possessed; like Bacchic maidens who draw milk and honey from the rivers when they are under the influence of Dionysus but not when they are in their right mind.[16]

Although he is considered a noble person the poet can not be called an artist since art, for the Socratic mind, belongs to the grasp of men and poetry to that of the Muse, that is, the divine power of God: "Many are the noble words in which poets speak concerning the actions of men; (...) but they do not speak of them by any rules of art: they are simply inspired to utter that to which the Muse impels them, and that only"(144). Whenever Socrates refers to the poet's words, he means mostly those by Homer, "who is the best and most divine of them"(142). Yet Homer is not that much of a Dionysian poet. As suggested in the previous section, his verse embraces much more of the Apollonian features bringing forth what was called naïve poetry. All the same, the author of *The Odyssey* is taken as the paragon of a possessed poet because of the

mysterious union between Apollo and Dionysus, that is, their necessary interdependence in all artistic expressions. The Dionysian under-current makes itself present even in the foremost naïve poet, but what is hidden in the Apollonian poet becomes explicit in the shaman-poet's words. The next lines may well suggest Morrison's feelings about the bards:

The earth needs them
soft dogs on the snow
Nestled in Spring
When sun makes wine
& blood dances dangerous in the veins or vine. [17]

Morrison considers the poets essential beings, needed by the earth. The vision of the shaman-poet embraces not only men but the whole universe in which men are part of the infinite realm rather than its sovereign. The sun stands for the creator who will heat the vine where its wine dances dangerously, symbolizing the possessed bard whose blood runs wild through his veins. It is the voice of Dionysus spoken by the inspired and frantic poet, who is needed as the utterer of poetry as an ecological survival technique.

Socrates then tells Ion of the chain of voices which the non-human songs of poets are to follow: "The rhapsode like yourself and the actor are intermediate links, and the poet himself is the first of them. Through all these the God sways the souls of men in any direction which he pleases, and makes one man hang down from another."[18] Each and every one of such links is used by the Gods and therefore none of them profess words of truth and knowledge nor express their feelings by art, as Socrates reminds the rhapsode: "for not by art or knowledge about Homer do you say what you say, but by divine inspiration and possession"(145). Through the words of his master, Plato, who had to burn his own poems to flee from unphilosophical temptations and become a disciple,[19] set about his utopian dream of a civilized society where men of reason only were to achieve the virtue of knowledge and truth, a society that had no place for those deprived of their right minds by the influence of the Muse. The time had come for Plato's unpoetic Republic.

Plato wanted his Republic to be a place of virtue and wisdom which were to be achieved by the action of reason and therefore by the true source of knowledge, that of philosophy: "is not the love of learning the love of wisdom, which is philosophy?" asserts Socrates in Plato's *The Republic*, BK II.[20] Poetry was relegated to a secondary position as it praised the deeds of Gods, and the Greek Republic required man to face his own destiny from then on. The legendary feats were then seen as mythical dream-like stories. Learning was out of the bounds of poetry for the Greeks. It was the time of the *polis*, where a political elite ruled society in terms of its culture, religion, and education; men no longer lived in the wilderness, and the musical wisdom of the Dionysian primordial pain was veiled by the artificial light of reason and civilization.

Poetry, being a true reminder of the wild, could not be of any value for the one who wanted to be a keeper of the Platonic State; the noble spirit should care for the truth of philosophy instead: "he who is to be a really good and noble guardian of the State will require to unite in himself philosophy and spirit and swiftness and strength?" asks Socrates before being promptly answered by Adeimantus: "Undoubtedly"(320).

The education of the young was of particular interest for Socrates. After having explained to Adeimantus about literature's being either true or false, the elenctic mind expresses his concern for beginners: "You know also that the beginning is the most important part of any work, especially in the case of a young and tender thing; for that is the time at which the character is being formed and the desired impression is more readily taken"(321). In order to achieve such an impression, it was necessary to mold the young minds into the shape of virtue and one of the first things to be done would be "to establish a censorship of the writers of fiction, and let the censors receive any tales of fiction which is good, and reject the bad"(321). What could be so terribly conveyed by these writers that aroused such fear in the Socratic mind? Why not merely ignoring them since they were not worthy of the virtue of knowledge? The answer might lie in the awareness that the poets, being possessed by divine power, professed words that were imbued with the knowledge of the painful existence revealed by Silenus and ever since disowned by the Greeks in favor of the Apollonian symbolic world of

enlightenment as the ultimate reality. Socrates finds the stories of the poets to bear "erroneous representations" of the true nature of things, as he replies to the inquisitive disciple: "A: But which stories do you mean; and what fault do you find with them? S: A fault which is most serious; the fault of telling a lie, and, what is more, a bad lie"(321).

In spite of his strong opposition to lies, Socrates does not mind omitting the battles and quarrels either of gods or of mortal citizens:

> No, we shall never mention the battles of the giants, or let them be embroidered on garments; and we shall be silent about the innumerable other quarrels of gods and heroes with their friends and relatives. If they would only believe us we would tell them that quarrelling is unholy, and that never up to this time has there been any quarrel between citizens (321).

In his establishing the foundations of his Republic, Plato allows his master to suppress the quarrels, in effect, to lie (in this case maybe a "good lie") to the very ones he wishes to keep from lying. Battles and quarrels tell of loss and pain and these do not belong in the Platonic State. The poet, possessed by the primordial cry, was too primitive a creature to be welcome: "all the battles of the gods in Homer -- these tales must not be admitted into our State, whether they are supposed to have an allegorical meaning or not"(321). Socrates reserved for the literal a special place, in contrast to the allegorical, lest the latter might exert too deep an influence on the inexperienced mind: "therefore it is most important that the tales which the young first hear should be models of virtuous thoughts"(321).

True representation was very highly regarded by Plato, so that God "is always to be represented as he truly is, whatever be the sort of poetry, epic, lyric, or tragic"(322). Having God as the representative of good only, any evil deed ever portrayed by poets can never be credited to the divine power. Whatever is not good cannot be born of God and must be forsaken so as not to cause unwanted disorder:

> That God being good is the author of evil to any one is to be strenuously denied, and not to be said or sung or heard in verse or prose by any one whether old or young in any well-ordered commonwealth. Such a fiction is suicidal, ruinous, impious. (...) God is not the author of all things, but of good only (322).

That God could ever change into something evil was out of question since "being, as is supposed, the fairest and best that is conceivable, every God remains absolutely and for ever in his own form"(322). Therefore, evil deeds belong solely to the poet's verses which contain mostly lies. What began as mere lies in words becomes the true lie in the "highest part of men," which is the soul, because lies bring nothing but ignorance to the soul, since they veil the truth from the mind of those deceived: "this ignorance in the soul of him who is deceived may be called the true lie, for the lie in words is only a kind of imitation and shadowy image of a previous affection of the soul"(322). By no means could the conveyers of such sentiments be allowed freedom of speech in the Platonic State and Socrates makes it very clear as he addresses Adeimantus at the end of Book II:

> These are the kind of sentiments about the gods which will arouse our anger; and he who utters them shall be refused a chorus; neither shall we allow teachers to make use of them in the instruction of the young, meaning, as we do, that our guardians, as far as men can be, should be true worshippers of the gods and like them (324).

Despite his wish to place man in the center of the stage where the gods used to be, Plato cannot help comparing his guardians to divine creatures. But he would rather have his guardian face only half his image and, he therefore denies him the very truth he defends so carefully: the truth that lies in the heart of nature and that speaks to man about not only the outward beauty of Apollo but the suffering essence of Dionysus; the truth whose concealment will always keep man from approaching whatever is beyond the binary dichotomies of good and evil, preserved in one of the last and only sacred shelters still to echo it: the art of poetry.

II.3) Apologetically yours: Sidney's rewriting of Platonic theory

"Perhaps what is not intelligible to me is not therefore unintelligible? Perhaps there is a realm of wisdom from which the logician is shut out? Perhaps art is even a necessary correlative of, and supplement to, science?"[21] These are the thoughts Nietzsche imagines Socrates might have had after being visited by a dream-apparition during his last days in prison. The philosopher who did not write often heard whispered the words "Socrates, practice music" in his dreams: probably a visit paid by a deity who brought some good advice to the dialectician at the end of his days, for, as Nietzsche asserts, "that despotic logician had now and then with respect to art the feeling of a gap, a void, a feeling of misgiving, of a possibly neglected duty"(1026). Indeed, Socrates did heed that dream-vision voice and composed a poem on Apollo as well as verses from a few Æsopian fables.

Even through the most "despotic logician," the musical words of poetry found their way to reveal "the only sign of doubt as to the limits of logic." Like a shadow that never fades but only dims before the vanishing light, no matter how much one tries to keep the voice of Dionysus from expressing its primal rhythm it, will still get through even if under the whisperings of a deity in dream. One might declare, with Sir Philip Sidney, that even "the philosophers of Greece durst not a long time appear to the world but under the masks of poets." [22]

Sidney, a man of Renaissance, offers a clear picture of the critical theory of his time. Writing in the light of the Greek and Latin classics, he responds to the attack on poetry made by the Puritan Stephen Gosson's *School of Abuse*. In his *Defense of Poesie*, Sidney faces the traditional objections that poetry is a waste of time, as well as the mother of lies and a source of abuse and corruption of the soul, all together, the reasons why Plato banished the poets from his Republic.

A true defender of poets from all nations, Sidney states that even Plato could not help writing poetically against poets:

> For all standeth upon dialogues, wherein he [Plato] feigneth many honest burgesses of Athens to speak of such matters, that if they had been set on

> the rack they would never have confessed them, besides his poetical describing the circumstances of their meetings, as the well ordering of a banquet, the delicacy of a walk, with interlacing mere tales, as Gyges' Ring and others, which who knoweth not to be flowers of poetry did never walk into Apollo's garden (637).

Following the principle of the ever and original presence of the union between verbal shape and music, which is poetry, whenever the wordy warfare is needed, Sidney avows the concept that only by taking "a great passport of poetry" could the philosophers have "entered into the gates of popular judgments."

Sidney then comes to compare the two supreme creations of God, nature and man. He does not aim at ordinary men but rather at the one "with the force of a divine breath," namely the poet. According to him, the poets are ahead in such a comparison, for they can make the already beautiful world of nature even more lovely and sublime:

> Nature never set forth the earth in so rich tapestry as divers poets have done - neither with pleasant rivers, fruitful trees, sweet-smelling flowers, nor whatsoever makes the too much loved earth more lovely. Her world is brazen, the poets only deliver a golden (638).

Sidney places the poets "beyond and over all the works of that second nature [the efficacy of God's creation]"(639), because man's wit only can deliver it a golden enamel. The passage seems to suggest that the poet brings to completion that which nature is always in the process of trying to complete. Nevertheless, he establishes the intrinsic relationship between poetry and nature, in which the former may transcend the ordinary solely under the light of the latter's perfection, bringing forth, through particular images, the vision of a higher level of reality, as one can observe in the following poem by Morrison:

Did you know freedom exists
in a school book
Did you know madmen are
running our prison

w/in a jail, w/in a gaol

w/in a white free protestant

Maelstrom.

This first section has a political tone typical of the poet who instructs and urges to action through his verse. The image of a maelstrom conveys, in alliteration and repetition, the idea of social chaos left behind by the violence of the metaphorical whirlpool, wherein freedom seems to be jailed in school books. The poem evolves to an even more pessimistic view of the lethargic state of the man in the white "free" protestant gaol:

We're perched headlong

on the edge of boredom

We're reaching for death

on the end of a candle

We're trying for something

that's already found us

Morrison's imagery suggests, as Sidney intends, that the poet is in contact with a higher level of reality. In the case of the shaman-poet one might call it a separate reality which embraces the ordinary one, in all its boredom, and delivers it the symbolic candle that gives off the light "we're trying for." And thus the poet entices his reader to flee from the edge of boredom and erect a different kingdom:

We can invent Kingdoms of our own

grand purple thrones, those chairs of lust

& love we must, in beds of rust. [23]

The power of visionary poetry lies therefore in the realm of imagination, where even under the grip of "death on the end of a candle" the poet sees his way through. And even upon "beds of rust" love is to find room for those who still believe in the poet's delivering it a golden.

Yet, man is, unfortunately, not only wit but also will and "our erected wit maketh us know what perfection is, and yet our infected will keepeth us from reaching

unto it."[24] Since poetry is the manifestation of man's wit before the efficacy of nature, Sidney declares it, after Aristotle, to be "an art of imitation, (...) to speak metaphorically, a speaking picture"(639). Yet, he points out some different features in regard to the imitators.

Sidney divides poets into three categories: the ones who "imitate the inconceivable excellencies of God," among whom he puts the writers of the Scriptures, David, Salomon, Moses, and others along with, "though in a full wrong divinity," Orpheus and Homer; the philosophical poets, Plato included; and the third kind, those who "merely make to imitate, and imitate both to delight and to teach," the so-called *Vates*. Sidney then agrees with Aristotle when he declares poetry to be a closer a subject to philosophy, since it deals with *Katholou*, the universal consideration, than to history, which deals with *Kathekaston*, the particular. Sidney intends to give poetry a supremacy over history, because although poetry makes use of historical material it operates more satisfactorily since it does not only instruct but also urges the reader into action after he is instructed:

> Now therein of all sciences ... is our poet the monarch. For he doth not only show the way, but giveth so sweet a prospect into the way, as will entice any man to enter into it. (...) he cometh to you with words set in delightful proportion , either accompanied with or prepared for, the well-enchanting skill of music (642).

Morrison would find room in Sidney's third kind of poet, for to enter a higher level of reality is also what the shaman urges his patient to do, invoking those who are eager to dive into their own river of thought :

Children
The river contains specimens
The voices of singing women
call us on the far shore
& they are saying
"Forget the Night

live w/ us in Forests

of azure " (meager food for

souls forgot) [25]

Here the poet/shaman speaks to the children about the river and the singing voices calling from the far shore. This is so because the shaman, when he goes after his patient's ill spirit, looks for the child from within, the far lost guardian angel whose hushed voice calls for soothing, and this voice will be given its power back by the shaman through the magic of poetry.

Had Morrison had the author of *Defence* as his attorney at the time he was facing felony charges for public lascivious behavior, he might have been acquitted,[26] for "the poets' persons and things are but pictures what should be, and not stories what have been."[27] Sidney continues his defending of poetry as he enumerates the accusations against the poets made by the *Mysomousoi*, that is, the poet-haters:

> Now then go we to the most important imputations laid to the poor poets. For aught I can yet learn, they are these. First, there being many more fruitful knowledges, a man might better spend his time in them than in this. Secondly, that it is the mother of lies. Thirdly, that it is the nurse of abuse, infecting us with many pestilent desires (643).

One by one Sidney overcomes the accusations: that a man might spend his time doing something other than reading poetry is to be unwilling to move to virtue, for "none can both teach and move thereto so much as poetry"(643); as to not telling the truth, Sidney asserts that "of all writers under the sun, the poet is the least liar, and, though he would, as a poet can scarcely be a liar"(643), and proves Plato's concept to be wrong, because the poet "nothing affirms, and therefore never lies"(644). Thus, unlike other writers, such as the historian and the philosopher, the poet abuses nobody for he "never maketh any circles about your imagination, to conjure you to believe for true what he writes"(644). The poet, embracing fiction instead of truth, grants his reader "an imaginative ground-plot of a profitable invention."

When Sidney eventually comes to answer the Platonic objection to poetry, he not only proves the art of poets not to corrupt, but to edify and improve, and he also inverts the accusation since Plato is to be seen as a poet himself: "But indeed my burden is great; now Plato's name is laid upon me, whom, I must confess, of all philosophers, I have ever esteemed most worthy of reverence, and with great reason, since of all philosophers he is the most poetical"(645).

According to Sidney, Plato's intention was to censor rather than to banish all poets: "Plato therefore (whose authority I had much rather justly construe than unjustly resist) meant not in general of poets, but only meant to drive out those wrong opinions of the Deity , perchance (as he thought) nourished by the then esteemed poets"(646). Had the Vates praised the gods properly they would always be welcome in Plato's commonwealth for his concern was with the youth not receiving the wrong image of the divine. Being a religious man, Sidney tends to agree with the philosopher as he comments on the poets' task of observing the Deity: " ... and truly (since they [poets] had not the light of Christ) did much better in it than the philosophers, who, shaking off superstition, brought in atheism"(646). Holding Plato in the highest regard, Sidney sees the philosopher as an ally to the poets rather than the foe: "So as Plato, banishing the abuse, not the thing, not banishing it, but giving due honor to it, shall be our patron and not our adversary"(646).

Thus, Sidney, without having a modern theory of language, renders the poet the somewhat modern notion of "pseudo-statements," as he states that the poet can not lie since he never affirms.[28] However, it is even more interesting, in what this study is concerned, to notice Sidney's remarks on the poet's creative imagination, which might be seen as an anticipation of the Romantic concept:

> Only the poet, disdaining to be tied to any such subjection, lifted up with the vigor of his own invention, doth grow in effect another nature, in making things either better than nature bringeth forth, or, quite anew, forms such as never were in nature. (...) so as he goes hand in hand with

> nature, not enclosed within the narrow warrant of her gifts, but freely ranging only within the zodiac of his own wit. [29]

Through "the vigor of his own invention," which is poetry, the poet only can bring forth that other nature and, as Morrison suggests, "invent Kingdoms of our own." The creative imagination that would flourish as a poetical concept in Romanticism was therefore already present, though slightly, in the words of Sir Philip Sidney.

II.4) Blake and the primitive backgrounds of Romanticism

Among all the literary theories of poetry, the one that expatiates on "the compulsion of the 'creative' imagination", to use M. H. Abrams' words,[30] has the closest affinity to visionary shamanistic poetry. Abrams named such way of thinking, which has its prime expression with Wordsworth's Romantic view of poetry, the expressive theory of art for "a work of art is essentially the internal made external, resulting from a creative process operating under the impulse of feeling, and embodying the combined product of the poet's perceptions, thoughts, and feelings"(22).

Abrams developed this idea from Wordsworth's Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads*,[31] where the Romantic poet discourses on the relationship between poet and poem, in which the latter is the result of the former's creative activity born out of immediate intuitions of nature. Before entering more deeply into Wordsworth's theory, it should be interesting to glance at an earlier poet who both anticipated interests of Romantic critics, such as Friedrich von Schiller, and had a more direct influence on Morrison: William Blake.

Blake was a visionary poet who believed in his following a "divine vision," even though it were to lead him into a life of poverty and misunderstanding.[32] Similarly to Morrison's previously described mystical vision of childhood, the legend has it that Blake's mother, having heard a frightful scream coming from her son's room, rushed to find four-year old Blake about to hurl himself from the window. She managed to stop him and when asked about the event, the boy said he had seen the face of God calling on him from the other side.

Blake's writings were somehow an answer to that visionary voice he heard in his childhood and that kept echoing, as if to tell him of the urge to transcend the fragile limits of ordinary reality no matter how difficult the path he was to follow. In fact, although Blake had but little recognition during his life time, from the very beginning, with *Poetical Sketches*, he "showed his dissatisfaction with the reigning poetic tradition and his restless quest for new forms and techniques"(19). Blake's poems were accompanied by paintings which render his poetic work an innovative dimension that can not be completely absorbed through the printed text. Similarly to the shaman's song, where a combination of artistic forms brings forth a transcendent expression, Blake's plates are a call to the dissociation of reason and imagination.

Blake believed in the Vatic theory of poetic composition which concedes to poetry the compulsive completeness of a mystical vision. As Abrams says, Blake "was himself subject to a visionary experience approaching hallucination."[33]Abrams gives an example, drawn from Blake's correspondence, that leaves few doubts on the poet's shamanic writing: "I write when commanded by the spirits, and the moment I have written I see the words fly about the room in all directions."[34]

In *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*-Plate 11, Blake addresses the ancient poets, among which the shaman-poets are the eldest, in their search for the reason and imagination dissociation:

> The ancient poets animated all sensible objects with gods or geniuses, calling them by the names and adorning them with the properties of woods, rivers, mountains, lakes, cities, nations, and whatever their enlarged and numerous senses could perceive.
>
> And particularly they studied the genius of each city and country, placing it under its mental deity,
>
> Till a system was formed, which some took advantage of, and enslaved the vulgar by attempting to realize or abstract the mental deities from their objects: thus began priesthood;
>
> Choosing forms of worship from poetic tales.

And at length they pronounced that the gods had ordered such things.
Thus men forgot that all deities reside in the human breast.[35]

Blake's depiction of the poets' perceptions as being responsible for the animation of "all sensible objects" deals with the concept of dissociation between reason and imagination, as the poets shape the world wherein forms of worship are chosen from poetry. Whereas Blake speaks of the ancient poets, in this particular plate, Morrison, in the last verses of "The Celebration of the Lizard", places himself among the Vates as they animate and give names to the things of the world:

We came down the rivers & highways
We came down from forests and falls
We came down from Carson and Springfield
We came down from Phoenix enthralled

And I can tell you the names of the Kingdom
I can tell you the things that you know
Listening for a fistful of silence
Climbing valleys into the shade.

Similarly to Blake's verse, which is part of the visual plate, Morrison's words are also accompanied by another form of artistic expression, that of music as they echo Blake's first two paragraphs. As the poem evolves in its Blakean echo, Morrison speaks of the ancient poet's (the Lizard King) system and the birth of worship to be found in the wisdom of the resident deities that were forgotten:

[Sounds of the Fire]
(whistles, rattlesnakes, castanets)
I am the Lizard King
I can do anything
I can make the earth stop in its tracks
I made the blue cars go away.
For seven years I dwelt

in the loose palace of exile,

playing strange games

w/ the girls of the island.

Now I have come again

To the land of the fair, & the strong, & the wise.

Brothers & sisters of the pale forest

O Children of Night

Who among you will run with the hunt?

Now Night arrives with her purple legion

Retire now to your tents & to your dreams.

Tomorrow we enter the town of my birth

I want to be ready.[36]

Morrison's poem springs from Blake's and then launches into a more shamanistic experience, in which the poet calls on the elements of nature to evoke a circular perception of existence. In other words, as night arrives and the "vulgar" retire to their dreams, the shaman-poet will complete his cycle when entering once again the town of his birth, that is, the town where his own mental deity is not forgotten.

Morrison's poetic tale about the Lizard King is therefore a form worship that calls, according to Schiller's view of art, for the healing of the separation between imagination and abstraction. The one who can stop the earth in its tracks symbolizes the ancient power of the artist who "is more than a match for any of nature's terrors once he knows how to give it form and convert it into an object of his contemplation."[37]

Schiller believes that the only solution for man to regain his freedom from the separation between sense and intellect lies on art. Similarly to the disconnection between Apollo and Dionysus, which swerved man from the harmonious whole of humanity as a species into the unbalanced fragmentary individual sought by the Socratic mind, the beginning of the division is to be found in the early days of civilization, as

argued by Hazard Adams in his preface to Schiller's *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man*:

> Civilization itself brought about a division in man; the intuitive and the speculative understanding withdrew from each other in defensive hostility; imagination and abstraction stood opposed. The division was fully established by the rise of the state and man's subservience to it (417).

According to Schiller, a "closer attention to the character of our age will ... reveal an astonishing contrast between contemporary forms of humanity and the earlier ones, especially the Greeks"(418). These contrasts result from the simplicity, "to which our age is a stranger", naturally found among the pre-Socratic Greeks, for they "combined the first youth of imagination with the manhood of reason in a glorious manifestation of humanity"(418). The separate domains to which sense and intellect were to be driven did not exist then, for "poetry had not as yet coquetted with wit, nor speculation prostituted itself to sophistry"(418). The ancient poets Blake alludes to tell of a time and place where the powers of the human mind and those of nature were still magically united. The purple legion in Morrison's verse is but a metaphor that tells of that realm in which the Apollonian light of reason had not yet endeavored to conquer the Dionysian night of luxury and freedom.

In the late 18th century Schiller already declared modern man to be lost, in his division of human nature, unlike the ancient ones who "rather by combining its [human nature's] aspects in different proportions, for in no single one of their deities was humanity in its entirety ever lacking. How different from us moderns!"(418). The sharper the division the farther man is from the understanding of his own identity as a species that once lived in the harmonious freedom of nature. Why did this individualistic view grow strong among modern men in contrast to the collective understanding of the ancients? Schiller answers that because it was the "all-unifying nature" of the ancients and the "all-dividing intellect" of the moderns which shaped their respective forms. He leaves no doubt as to the cause of man's painful loss: "It was

civilization itself which inflicted this wound upon modern man"(419). As the complex machinery of the state became increasingly powerful, man started to suffer the ominous consequences of his own creation.[38] Schiller describes the effects:

> ... then the inner unity of human nature was severed too, and a disastrous conflict set its harmonious powers at variance. The intuitive and the speculative understanding now withdrew in hostility to take up positions in their respective fields, whose frontiers they now began to guard with jealous mistrust (419).

Once a member of the collective organization of nature man stars his quest towards the illusion of the dominance of the Apollonian reason over the Dionysian imagination and "instead of putting the stamp of humanity upon his own nature, he becomes nothing more than the imprint of his occupation or of his specialized knowledge"(419). In so controlled a world freedom of thought becomes improbable as "the dead letter takes the place of living understanding, and a good memory is a safer guide than imagination, and feeling"(419). Nevertheless reconciliation is still possible as the very letters once dead are brought back to life in the magic wings of artistic beauty. As Schiller asserts:

> We need, then, no longer feel at a loss for a way which might lead us from our dependence upon sense towards moral freedom, since beauty offers us an instance of the latter being perfectly compatible with the former, an instance of man not needing to flee matter in order to manifest himself as spirit (431).

The long-lost freedom is once again present in the heart of man as he realizes that his search for truth out of the realm of artistic imagination is in vain, for the former is to be found, if ever, in the manifestation of the latter.

English romanticism, flourishing in the late 18th century, was in a way a look back to more primitive societies, towards a time wherein man's imagination, operating in the unconscious realm, ruled over reason's conscious illusion of ultimate truth. This backward-looking spirit was a reaction against the Augustan Age, when, in the early 18th century, reason was praised as a means to achieve a new golden age. The

"Enlightenment", as it is also known, was a period that showed a great deal of respect for "good sense, moderation, authority, tradition, and order."[39] Rationalism was therefore present in both the literary expression, as in the works of Dryden, Pope, and Dr. Johnson, and in the scientific field with the new discoveries of Newton. And yet, although those were figures of the highest of regard, there emerged, like the ever lurking shadow of Dionysus, a counter-enlightenment spirit that aimed at accepting and even celebrating man's irrational side.

Nowhere else was that celebration to be found than in primitive societies, where, as with shamanism, man shared a magical bond with the forces of nature that know nothing, though knowing it all, of the rational analytical thought. Poets like Blake and Goethe were among the ones involved in the study of primitive forces.[40] The emerging interest for what seemed to be beyond the grasp of the rational explanation of science and logical thought would eventually take the place of the Augustans' common sense. As stated by Trawick:

> The imagination, which, unlike reason, usually works unconsciously and spontaneously, and which seemed to Augustans at best a harmless source of diversion and at worst a form of madness, slowly usurped the place of reason as the most powerful and respected of the faculties.[41]

Blake was definitely among the precursors of the English romantic search for the primitive. One of the relevant aspects, when regarding the ancient tradition of primitive societies, is that of religion. Blake addresses the subject as he writes against 18th century natural religion and concedes to the Poetic Genius the capacity for imaginative vision in "All Religions Are One." As it can be witnessed from the subtitle ("The Voice of One Crying in the Wilderness"), Blake gives the ancients the power of creation as they conceive man's outward form from the Poetic Genius:

> PRINCIPLE 1st. That the Poetic Genius is the true Man, and that the body or outward form of Man is derived from the Poetic Genius. Likewise that the forms of all things are derived from their Genius, which by the Ancients was call'd an Angel & Spirit & Demon.

PRINCIPLE 4. As none by travelling over known lands can find out the unknown, So from already acquired knowledge Man could not acquire more. Therefore an universal poetic genius exists.

PRINCIPLE 7th. As all men are alike (tho' infinitely various), So all Religions & as all similars have one source.

The true Man is the source, he being the Poetic Genius. [42]

Likewise Morrison speaks of the ancient religion to be present in and beyond all things in the form of an angel:

The form is an angel of soul
from horse to man to boy
& back again. [43]

The poet who looks back to the primitive will encounter the true source some called madness in the poetic genius. In the last lines of "Very Brave" Morrison finds himself with that source and it feels metaphorically warm to be with the ones who made him:

So this is where my fine warm
poetry (pottery) has got
me,
led me
back to Madness
& the men who made me (172).

Blake, in the "Proverbs of Hell", gives his diabolic version of The Old Testament's "Book of Proverbs" and provides a vivid glance into the heart of the shaman-poet in the very first lines:

In seed time learn, in harvest teach, in winter enjoy.
Drive your cart and your plow over the bones of the dead.
The road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom.[44]

Only the one who steps into the other side of life can enjoy driving through the road of excess over the bones of the dead in winter time. Morrison, who was used to such

"drives" under the influence of alcohol, refers to Blake's statements as if in answer to those who could not understand his extremist behavior:

Why do I drink?
So that I can write poetry.
Sometimes when it's all spun out
and all that is ugly recedes
into a deep sleep
There is an awakening
and all that remains is true.
As the body is ravaged
the spirit grows stronger.
Forgive me Father for I know
what I do.
I want to hear the last Poem
of the last Poet.[45]

Morrison's graphic reference to his own vice leaves no doubt, as he ironically begs for forgiveness, of his conscious attempt to soothe the spirits whose voices used to scream inside his ravaged body. The Biblical inversion of Jesus' last words is a sign of the struggle between Morrison's and the last Poet's voice which are but one universal Poetic Genius, as stated by Blake; the one voice that speaks, through the soul of the poet, the ancient holy word:

Hear the voice of the Bard!
Who Present, Past, & Future sees;
Whose ears have heard
The Holy Word
That walk'd among the ancient trees.[46]

Blake's excerpt from "Songs of Experience" epitomizes the romantic concept of the bard as supreme being who speaks of Nature with the holy voice of God and renders it a golden to be found nowhere else but in poetry. In Morrison's metaphor for the ancient

poet, the Lizard King that can make the earth stop in its tracks typifies Blake's powerful bard:

I can make myself invisible or small.
I can become gigantic and reach the
farthest things. I can change
the course of nature.
I can place myself anywhere in
space or time.
I can summon the dead.
I can perceive events on other worlds,
in my deepest inner minds,
& in the minds of others.
I can
I am. [47]

Here the lyric "I" transcends the human condition to become the shaman-poet's personified dream of ecstasy, that is, the I that perceives everything without the constraints, either moral or geographical, of existence. And once there in that other realm, inside the palaces of freedom, the shaman-poet recreates the world out of music and something more. The next verses depict a dialogue between the shaman and someone else to be revealed only half-way through the poem. It describes the new world, re-created, that burns both in and outside the shaman-poet's heart:

What are you doing here?
What do you want?
Is it music?
We can play music.
But you want more.
You want something & someone new.
Am I right?
Of course I am.

I know what you want.

You want ecstasy

Desire and dreams.

Things not exactly what they seem.

I lead you this way, he pulls that way.

I'm not singing to an imaginary girl.

I'm talking to you, my self.

Let's recreate the world.

The palace of conception is burning.

Look. See it burn.

Bask in the warm hot coals.

You're too young to be old

You don't need to be told

You want to see things as they are.

You know exactly what I do

Everything (11).

The poet talks with his self about the things that are not exactly what they seem, things out of dreams that will help re-create the inner world of the shaman. The spirit that does not burn basks in the warmth of the new creation to see things as they really are, "to see", as Blake writes, "a World in a grain of sand, hold Infinity in the palm of your hand."[48]The shaman-poet opens the doors to the realm from within and sets free his other self. To be free means to allow his spirit to flee his narrow cavern into the infinite perception that lies beyond the chains of reason. Only when the marriage of "you" and "I"is consummated, the marriage of Apollo and Dionysus, the marriage of Heaven and Hell, will the poet rest his sight on infinity, for , as Blake heard from "the cherub with his flaming sword": "If the doors of perception were cleansed everything would appear to man as it is, infinite. For man has closed himself up, till he sees all things thro' narrow chinks of his cavern."[49] The interior dialogue of the shaman-poet is therefore but his process of artistic creation wherein, as in Abrams expressive theory, the poet's

thoughts and feelings are projected into the outer world in the form of imaginative poetry.

II.5) Wordsworth and the expressive theory

As it was stated above, Abrams developed the concept of the expressive theory from Wordsworth's Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads*, which he considers as having "something of the aspect of a romantic manifesto."[50] Despite the variety of critical methods used by the early nineteenth century romantic critics, due to "their hospitality to ideas from many sources"(100), the Preface holds a special meaning since its propositions on the nature of poetry, placing the poet's feelings as the central reference, were adopted by the English romantic movement as its major document.

The Preface was originally written to justify Wordsworth's poetic experiments. The poet was convinced that his verse needed a critical analysis because it provided a new vision of poetry as a universal feeling of mankind. In the very beginning of his Preface Wordsworth already expresses his concern with the understanding, by his peers, of the new propositions: "if the views with which they were composed were indeed realized, a class of poetry would be produced, well adapted to interest mankind permanently."[51]

Wordsworth had precise objectives when writing the Preface to his poems. His choosing "incidents and situations from common life"(143) revealed a concern with simple things which were to convey, by "throwing over them a certain colouring of imagination," the primary laws of human nature. The similarities between the romantic ideal and the shamanic phenomenon become even clearer when Wordsworth explains what he means by tracing the primary laws of our nature: "the manner in which we associate ideas in a state of excitement"(143). As in the shaman's ecstatic trance, the poet also reaches an altered state of mind in which he performs his art. And as the patient who seeks for spiritual healing in the shamanic ceremony, the reader will also find soothing for his affections as he associates his feelings to those evoked by the

poem: "if he [the reader] be in a healthful state of association, must necessarily be in some degree enlightened, and his affections ameliorated"(144).

The preference for "low and rustic life" is therefore obvious, for nowhere else is one to find a simpler human living than in that condition wherein "the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature"(144). As early as in the beginning of the 19th century, the Romantics were already worried about the drastic changes that were to occur as humans began living in cities, away from the natural environment. Thus Wordsworth believes that the language of rural men is better to express human feelings, even when compared to the language frequently substituted by poets who stray from the original manners of expression. The simple man's language, "arising out of repeated experience and regular feelings," is, according to Wordsworth, "more permanent and far more philosophical"(144) than any other. Once more, one can not help tracing a parallel between Wordsworth's assertion and shamanism's poetic tradition, which also stems from repeated experience and regular feelings found in the oral tradition of poetry. Accordingly, Morrison's writings also deal with the simple man and his magical relationship with nature:

A man rakes leaves into
a heap in his yard, a pile,
& leans on his rake &
burns them utterly.
The fragrance fills the forest
children pause & heed the
smell, which will become
nostalgia in several years.[52]

The poem deals with both Romantic and shamanic concepts as it combines the rural life and the manifestation of magic. The man who repeatedly rakes leaves in his yard also performs a ritual, as he burns them to provide the magic smell for those who will grow old. Yet the shamanic child from within, present in the heart of the peasant, will never forget those days of innocence that remain in the scent of the forest. Wordsworth's

concern for the natural world conveys but the same ideal of poetry and the primitive as an ecological survival technique present in the poetics of shamanism.

Wordsworth also asserts that a good poet should never underestimate the action of thought, which is the "representative of our past feelings," and is therefore able to modify and direct one's feelings. But above all Wordsworth praises the poet whose verse expresses the natural impulses of his sentiments, for "all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings."[53] All in all, Wordsworth gives the poet's feelings the utmost importance in his poetic theory, because "the feeling therein [in the poem] developed gives importance to the action and situation, and not the action and situation to the feeling"(144). Thus, it is precisely the poet's feelings, Wordsworth's central critical reference, that will function as a bridge between poet and reader in poetry's struggle against "a multitude of causes, unknown to former times," which, "are now acting with a combined force to blunt the discriminating powers of the mind"(145). One of the most effective causes mentioned by the author of *Lyrical Ballads* is "the increasing accumulation of men in cities," which he considers an evil to mankind's vital link to nature.

Wordsworth was concerned with the increasing transformations of the industrial revolution upon human societies in the early 19th century that were driving men towards an artificial world, "where the uniformity of their occupations produces a craving for extraordinary incident, which the rapid communication of intelligence hourly gratifies"(145). Two hundred years have passed since Wordsworth professed his judgment and his words are as suitable as ever to describe the corollaries of the world's technological revolution upon mankind's deviating from nature on the verge of the 21st century.

The poet is however eager to fight against "the magnitude of the general evil" without being oppressed by any dishonorable melancholy as he carries a "deep impression of certain inherent and indestructible qualities of the human mind, and likewise of certain powers in the great and permanent objects that act upon it which are equally inherent and indestructible"(145). The combination of poetry and the primitive

is therefore Wordsworth's answer to the blunting of the powers of the mind, wherein poetry is responsible for triggering its indestructible powers through feeling and imagination, as the primitive impresses the permanent and universal effect of nature upon the human mind. Discoursing on the powers of nature, Wordsworth's cultural primitivism, as put by Abrams,[54] longs for supplying to the reader an emotional journey through feelings and imagination: "I have wished to keep my reader in the company of flesh and blood, persuaded that by so doing I shall interest him"(Wordsworth 145). By fighting the action of the unnatural powers of living in the artificial gray world of the cities, Wordsworth tries to give back to his reader the ancient color of the natural world, that is, a blow of life for the affected human being.

Such a task could not be accomplished but by a special man whose words were to bring a more comprehensive understanding of the human soul than other human beings: the poet. Wordsworth asks himself then "what is meant by the word 'poet'?" And leaves no doubt as to his [the poet's] special gift to express his deeper feelings when he promptly answers:

> He is a man speaking to men; a man, it is true, endued with more lively sensibility, more enthusiasm and tenderness, who has a greater knowledge of human nature, and a more comprehensive soul, than are supposed to be common among mankind; a man pleased with his own passions and volitions, (...) and habitually impelled to create them where he does not find them. To these qualities he has added a disposition to be affected more than other men by absent things as if they were present (147).

The poet is therefore, in Romantic thought, never pleased with ordinary perception nor with ordinary reality; he is a visionary who often creates separate realities to please his extraordinary soul, which needs different images and sensations to survive in the ordinary world of everyday reality. His need is transformed in art as he is impelled to express such deep feelings in words. The poet's disposition to be affected by absent things he himself created is something he must struggle with through his art. And he

will find the remedy for his pain in the very cause of his suffering, that is, in his poetry. The very first words of Morrison's "Notebook Poems," quoted earlier, reveal the poet's awareness of this necessity: "There are images I need to complete my own reality."[55] Hence the poet becomes himself a slave to his own passionate creation as Wordsworth asserts: "However exalted a notion we would wish to cherish the character of a poet, it is obvious, that, while he describes and imitates passions, his situation is altogether slavish and mechanical, compared with the freedom and power of real action and suffering."[56]

Wordsworth is aware of the limited nature of language when compared to what he calls "the real action and suffering" observed by the poet in the natural world, that is, both in the outside world of nature's wonders and the inner world of man's passions. As the poet understands such limits, "as it is impossible for the poet to produce upon all occasions language as exquisitely fitted for the passion as that which the real passion itself suggests," he should work as a "translator who deems himself justified when he substitutes excellences of another kind for those which are unattainable by him"(148). All in all, Wordsworth's articulates in favor of nature's powers, which he considers superior not only to men's but to art's in general. Notwithstanding, he gives artistic expression, poetry in particular, the possibility of drawing near to the real, that is, natural, power of the universe: "Poetry is the image of man and the universe"(148).

Poetry should always produce immediate pleasure for the reader according to Wordsworth's poetic theory, and that could never be considered as "a degradation to the poet's art"(149). Wordsworth makes it clear that the art of poetry is "an acknowledgment to the beauty of the universe, ... , it is a homage paid to the native and naked dignity of man, to the grand elementary principle of pleasure"(149). Yet, Wordsworth is aware that the poet, being a man who 'rejoices more than other men in the spirit of life that is in him,' will be affected by pain as well. The primordial pathos of Dionysus is, even in the Romantic theory, intertwined with the Apollonian beauty of pleasure: "wherever we sympathize with pain it will be found that the sympathy is produced and carried on by subtle combinations with pleasure"(149). Therefore the

man with 'a greater knowledge of human nature' brings along the knowledge revealed by Silenus and cannot avoid the pain within. As Wordsworth puts it: "What then does the poet? He considers man and the objects that surround him ..., so as to produce an infinite complexity of pain and pleasure"(149).

When Wordsworth refers to the 'objects that surround him' he means nature, which is the essential part of his theory. It is only through nature that Wordsworth manages to establish validity to the idea that there is a universal nature of men. As Abrams asserts:

> This way of thinking depends on the assumption that human nature, in its passions and sensibilities no less than its reason, is everywhere fundamentally the same; and it educes the consequence that the shared opinions and feelings of mankind constitute the most reliable norm of aesthetic, as of other values.[57]

For the universal, therefore, one should understand the natural feeling, the feeling that stems from man's direct contact with the powers of nature that once was everything the first writers possessed. Those primitive poets were so close to the natural forces that they were able to "display themselves to one another without disguise, and converse and act in the uncovered simplicity of nature."[58] Wordsworth, in his primitive aesthetic pursuit wanted to recover, through poetry, those ancient universal feelings once shared by the primitives. As Dr. Johnson writes: "It is commonly observed that the early writers are in possession of nature, and their followers of art: that the first excel in strength and invention, and the latter in elegance and refinement."[59] Since art, in the Romantic cultural primitivism, derives from nature itself, poetry, through feeling and imagination, becomes a magic way to regain the universal feelings of mankind. As societies become more and more distanced from the natural environment, and men gathered in urban areas, the universal feeling became nothing but a distant and legendary idea that was little by little substituted by materialistic values.

Wordsworth emphasizes the need of the fundamental bond between the bard and nature so as not to lose forever what was once uttered in the purest of forms by the

ancient writers: "[the poet] considers man and nature as essentially adapted to each other, and the mind of man as naturally the mirror of the fairest and most interesting qualities of nature."[60] He considers the poets as essential beings in that they hold the ancient universal traces that used to be present in every man, and their art as the means to accomplish such a task.

Wordsworth believes in the existence of those universal feelings and in the possibility of displaying them through artistic expression, for "poetry, which is the child of imagination, is frequently most glowing and animated in the first ages of society."[61] Similarly, Morrison writes on the primal necessity of listening to the words of the poets, who are responsible for reasserting the ancient ceremonial needs of men, now forgotten but once esteemed as fundamental:

People need Connectors
writers, heroes, stars,
leaders
To give life form.
A child's sand boat facing
the sun.
Plastic soldiers in the miniature
dirt war. Forts.
Garage Rocket Ships

Ceremonies, theatre, dances
To reassert Tribal needs & memories
a call to worship, uniting
above all, a reversion,
a longing for family & the
safety magic of childhood. [62]

The poem portrays the connectors who give life form through imagination and feeling, and who are the preservers of worship and union. The images recall the easily forgotten

moments of childhood, when all men seem to share the universal sentiments of innocence and freedom. As the shaman who journeys in search of his patient's ill guardian angel, the poet calls to worship as he reasserts the need to remember those mysterious moments when the world used to become the "plastic soldiers in the fort" and builds the imaginary bridge to "the safety magic of childhood." Every single human being once experienced those years veiled by the absolute spirit of freedom and pleasure which is infancy, and the poet sings in order to keep that light from extinguishing its magic.

Differently from the man of science, whose truth lies in the personal and individual acquisition of knowledge, the poet's truth is the truth of all human beings, that is, the knowledge of relationship and love. As Wordsworth states:

> The man of science seeks truth as a remote and unknown benefactor; he cherishes and loves it in his solitude: the poet, singing a song in which all human beings join with him, rejoices in the presence of truth as our visible friend and hourly companion. Poetry is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge; it is the impassioned expression which is the countenance of all science... [The poet] is the rock of defence of human nature; an upholder and preserver, carrying everywhere with him relationship and love. [63]

By opposing poetry to science, Wordsworth alters the usual move of contrasting poetry and history, since poetry was believed to imitate the universal whereas history looked for the actual event. As Abrams asserts: "The usual procedure of romantic critics was to substitute science for history as the opposite of poetry, and to ground the distinction on the difference between expression and description." [64] The poet's concern is with the fostering of feelings in his reader. Hence, he makes use of emotional language to convey the power of its words instead of the cognitive language of science. And to be able to express his own feelings so as to move those of his reader, "though the eyes and senses of men are his favorite guides, yet he will follow wherever he can find an atmosphere of sensation in which to move his wings."[65] The last quote comes to

somehow give Wordsworth an anticipation of the symbolists' derangement of the senses, also found in the oral tradition of primitive poets, which would eventually have its prime in the stereotype of the *poète maudit*, mainly in the figure of Rimbaud.

The author of *Le Bateau Ivre* is perhaps one of the poets whose life and poetry is closest to Jim Morrison's romantic search within the human experience. The young French rebel who lived a season in hell also pursued a vision to give life its finest expression in the art of poetry. In his book *Rimbaud and Jim Morrison* (1993), Wallace Fowlie speaks of both poets: "those men whose numerous departures in life, whose instability and restlessness, have immobilized them from us." [66] Both poets lived less in time than in a deep experiencing of life's drama. Fowlie comments on their lives and poetry:

> In spite of the brevity of the lives of these poets, they have been disguised by all colors of legend. It is possible we lack the most significant facts to understand their drama. Their poetry is only the vestige of some vaster drama of man. In poetry, we are offered the reflection of fires (123).

Fowlie could not have possibly chosen better words to explain the visionary poet's obsession to understand his own drama; his lyrical fire reflects but the vestiges of the inner realms wherein the shaman-poet scavenges.[67] As Tony Magistrale puts it:

> Morrison is as much a product of the Romantic poetic vein as Blake, Whitman, Poe, Dickinson and the French Symbolists were a century before him. Indeed, Morrison shares much in common with his poetic predecessors -most similarly, he remained obsessed with "breaking through to the other side," to discover what possible realms existed beyond the immediate and the material. [68]

The shaman-poet's pursue of these other possible realms of perception is ultimately a constant attempt at bridging them, much like the primitive sorcerers, with the ordinary reality.

One of Wordsworth's main gifts to the literary theory lies precisely in his "elaborating and qualifying the doctrines of earlier enthusiasts for the primitive so as to convert them into a reputable and rewarding, if not in itself a wholly adequate, contribution to our critical tradition."[69] Far from conceiving of the poet "as a thoughtless and instinctive child of nature," Wordsworth's expressive theory refined aesthetic primitivism, as he combines the poet's spontaneity of feelings with hard-won skills. Hence, poetry is the "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings," which recalls the primitive poet's imaginative creation, combined with the thoughtful mind of the disciplined poet, in order to express what is universal, that is, natural, in mankind.

II.6) A Shelleyean reappraisal

In spite of being considered the major literary figure of English Romanticism, Wordsworth was not praised unanimously. In 1820, Thomas Love Peacock published "Four Ages of Poetry," an article in which he openly criticized Wordsworth's primitivistic theory. In Abrams'words,[70] Peacock's article "may be read as a shrewd and caustic parody of Wordsworth's poetic tenets." Peacock's view of poetry is quite different from Wordsworth's in that he believes the art of musical words is a "useless anachronism in this era of reason, science, metaphysics, and political economy."[71] Peacock's talent was that of a born parodist, "before which everything pretentious writhes into caricature" (Abrams 126). And nothing could display more grandiose than Wordsworth's belief in the strength of the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings, about which Peacock's derisive mind spares no ironies: "The highest inspirations of poetry are resolvable into three ingredients: the rant of unregulated passion, the whine of exaggerated feeling, and the cant of factitious sentiment"(Peacock 180).

Peacock's essay was of course seen as a piece of parody, but it also expressed some of the opinions held by Utilitarian philosophers who, along with material-minded laymen, "either attacked or contemptuously ignored the imaginative faculty and its achievements."[72] Hence, Peacock's ideas were opposed by Shelley, who, despite being a friend of his, felt it necessary to defend his poetic father's concepts of the imaginative

poetry. Shelley then good-humoredly promised his friend "to break a lance... in honor of my mistress Urania," though his position was merely that of "the knight of the shield of shadow and the lance of gossamere."[73]

The result of Shelley's opposition was his "A Defence of Poetry." In his essay, one is to find, as put by Abrams, "two planes of thought in Shelley's aesthetics - one Platonist and mimetic, the other psychological and expressive."[74] Shelley typically divides two classes of mental action between reason and imagination, wherein the imagination is "*to poien*, or the principle of synthesis, and has for its objects those forms which are common to universal nature and existence itself," and reason is "*to logizein*, or principle of analysis, and its action regards the relations of things, simply as relations."[75] Shelley then establishes the relation between both classes of mental action: "Reason is to imagination as the instrument to the agent, as the body to the spirit, as the shadow to the substance." Only then does he define poetry to be "the expression of the imagination: and poetry is connate with the origin of man"(753).

Shelley's romantic platonism lies in his proposing a mimetic theory of the origin of art, poetry in particular, as he says:

> In the youth of the world, men dance and sing and imitate natural objects, observing in these actions a certain rhythm or order... For there is a certain rhythm or order belonging to these classes of mimetic representation, from which the hearer and the spectator receive an intenser and purer pleasure than from any other... Every man in the infancy of art, observes an order which approximates more or less closely to that from which this highest delight results... Those in whom it [the rhythm] exists in excess are poets, in the most universal sense of the word (754).

Shelley therefore follows the platonic theory in which poets imitate objects that are a reflection of the eternal forms. That imitation is possible only as the poets make use of metaphorical language to express the original rhythm because "it [metaphor] marks the before unapprehended relations of things, and perpetuates their apprehension, until the

words which represent them, become through time signs for portions or classes of thought instead of pictures of integral thoughts"(755). That is to say, the poets are responsible for giving language new life since they create "afresh the associations which have been thus disorganized"(755). But Shelley's definition of poetry as being "the expression of the imagination," can not be seen merely as a mimetic platonism. Shelley depicts poetry as a combination of the external impression and an internal adjustment; to be a poet, as he says, is "to apprehend the true and the beautiful," and to express it through language and music.

But Shelley's vision is to portray poetry as an all-embracing category of the most important human activities, as one can see in his portraying the poets, whom "were called in the earlier epochs of the world legislators or prophets":

> But poets, or those who imagine and express this indestructible order, are not only the authors of language and of music, of the dance and architecture and statuary and painting: they are the institutors of laws, and the founders of civil society and the inventors of the arts of life and the teachers, who draw into a certain propinquity with the beautiful and the true that partial apprehension of the agencies of the invisible world which is called religion (755).

Shelley's enlarging of the scope of the functions of the poet approximates the bard to the shaman artist, who, as portrayed in the first section of this study, exercises not only artistic but also political and religious activities. As if dressing in the ancients' vestments, the poet shall profess poetic words, for, as Shelley says, "in the infancy of society every author is necessarily a poet, because language itself is poetry"(755). In the next poem, Morrison shows his respect for the old poets, keepers of the secrets of the ancient rituals, whose voices still echo the eternal:

Worship w/ words, w/ sounds,
hands, all joyful playful & obscene --
in the insane infant.
Old men worship w/ long noses,

old soulful eyes

Better to be

cool in our worship &

gain the respect of the

ancient & wise wearing

those robes. They know

the secret of mind-change

reality.[76]

Morrison's advice is to care for worshipping the wisdom of those who wear the ancient robes, for they are the keepers of the secret of the word, the secret of poetry's oneness, as in Shelley's concept of poetry being one, that is, of all the great poems being but parts of a universal artistic expression which is poetry: "A poet participates in the eternal, the infinite, and the one; as far as relates to his conceptions, time and place and number are not."[77] This passage confirms Shelley's platonic aesthetic of canceling the differences, as Abrams says, "by reducing everything to a single class."[78] But Shelley goes beyond Plato, since he considers poetry itself as an atemporal manifestation of the One. For Shelley, all the poems should lose their particular identities of time and place to be seen, as Adams puts it, as "fundamentally simultaneous and inter-convertible"(127). This is so because the poems are but expressions of that ancient and atemporal rhythm still imagined and sung by the poets: "A poem is the very image of life expressed in its eternal truth."[79] Shelley then compares the idea of a poem to that of a story to better explain his concepts:

> The one [story] is partial, and applies only to a definite period of time, and a certain combination of events which can never again recur; the other [poem] is universal, and contains the germ of a relation to whatever motives or actions have place in the possible varieties of human nature. Time, which destroys the beauty and the use of the story of particular facts, stript of the poetry that should invest them, augments that of

> poetry, and for ever develops new and wonderful applications of the eternal truth which it contains (757).

Therefore, poetry speaks of atemporal events, that is, of myths, which are beyond the grasp of time's evanescent nature. Myths that shall tell not only of the Platonic Ideas but also of human passions, since they provide the poetic material for the "nightingale who sits in darkness and sings to cheer its own solitude with sweet sounds"(758).

The poet's inspiration is also present in Shelley's *Defence*: "Poetry is indeed something divine"(761). He makes clear that poetry arises from within and there can not be a logical explanation for the creative mind when composing a poem, for "the mind in creation is as a fading coal which some invisible influence, like an inconstant wind, awakens to transitory brightness"(761). The transitory inconstancy of inspiration thus shows the feeble nature of the original conception of the poet, that is, when composition actually begins it is but a shadow of that divine inspirational brightness. And where does this force come from? Shelley answers by referring to Milton, "who conceived the Paradise Lost as a whole before he executed it in portions. We have his own authority also for the Muse having dictated to him the unpremeditated song"(762). Thus, one might consider poetry a divine message delivered by the Muse, as "the interpenetration of a diviner nature through our own"(762). An interesting parallel could be traced between Shelley's reference to the Muse and that portrayed by Robert Graves in his book *The White Goddess* (1948). Graves also comes to consider poetry as a magical language that has its roots on legends and myths. He sustains that :

> The language of poetic myth anciently current in the Mediterranean and Northern Europe was a magical language bound up with popular religious ceremonies in honor of the Moon-goddess, or Muse, some of them dating from the Old Stone Age, and that this remains the language of true poetry - 'true' in the nostalgic modern sense of 'the unimprovable original, not a synthetic substitute'. [80]

Graves believes in the power and the need of (re)creating ancient myths through poetry in order to achieve the purest form of art, as long as the poet himself is interested

enough in pursuing inspirational myths. When puzzled by an ancient Welsh myth of Cad Goddeu ("the Battle of the Trees"), Graves makes his point that "my profession is poetry, and I agree with the Welsh minstrels that the poet's first enrichment is a knowledge and understanding of myths"(30). Shelley makes a brief lunar allusion when discoursing on poetry's immortal function of depicting the human experience:

> Poetry thus makes immortal all that is best and beautiful in the world; it arrests the vanishing apparitions which haunt the *interlunations* of life... because there is no portal of expression from the caverns of the spirit which they inhabit into the universe of things. Poetry redeems from decay the visitations of the divinity in man.[81]

Shelley sees in poetry the transcendental nature of the words that soothe man's affections. The mere presence of the poetic expression is enough to bring forth the healing power of words, for, as the poet puts it, "it transmutes all that it touches, and every form moving within the radiance of its presence is changed by wondrous sympathy to an incarnation of the spirit which it breathes"(763). Thus, poetry belongs to the spiritual realm, and, as the shaman who travels to the land of the dead to fetch the healing matter, it conveys the divine spirit of the supernatural world. Hence, as poetry has access to that other world, which embraces the world of matter, it can bridge both realms and reveal that which is secret to the material plane, that is, it awakes that which is beyond the grasp of reason and portrays the healing beauty of the spiritual forms in the alchemy of its words:

> its secret alchemy turns to potable gold the poisonous waters which flow from death through life; it strips the veil of familiarity from the world, and lays bare the naked and sleeping beauty which is the spirit of its form (763).

Thus, it is poetry's function to guide man's subjective mind, which wanders as if tied to the external world that encircles it. Shelley then asserts that "all things exist as they are perceived: at least in relation to the percipient," but such existence, whose nature subjects man's perception to its domain, is overcome by poetry, which "defeats

the curse which binds us to be subjected to the accident of surrounding impressions" as it creates "a being within our being"(763), and therefore transforms the familiar into a magical and miraculous world. Interesting to notice, poetry arises, in the inspirational theory, from a material object which is the moon, as Shelley writes, addressing the silver lady:

Art thou pale for weariness
Of climbing heaven and gazing on the earth,
Wandering companionless
Among the stars that have a different birth -
And ever changing, like a joyless eye
That finds no object worth its constancy?

Thou chosen sister of the Spirit,
That gazes on thee till in thee it pities...[82]

However, such "materiality" is transformed into a magic spiritual message at the moment of the poet's inspiration. And, it is precisely at that particular magical instant that poetry "redeems from decay the visitations of the divinity in man,"[83] giving him the gift of existence as he becomes a worthy candidate for the moon's constancy. Even the moon itself will no longer be a cause for the Spirit's sorrow as she becomes the inspirational Muse for the poet, who, himself a divine creature, has the power to transform the moon's apparently material nature into the spiritual source of his own inspiration.

Similarly, Morrison expresses belief in the divine Muse, whose moonlight inspires the possessed poet's creative imagination:

Well I'll tell you a story of whiskey
& mystics and men
And about the believers, & how the
whole thing began
First there were women & children obeying

the moon

then daylight brought wisdom & fever

& sickness too soon.[84]

Morrison's poem reinforces the idea of a mythical reality which makes itself present through poetry. The different world that arises from poetic creation is the product of the transforming power of poetry, which, as Shelley says,

> reproduces the common universe... and purges from our inward sight the film of familiarity which obscures from us the wonder of our being... It creates anew the universe after it has been annihilated in our minds by the recurrence of impressions blunted by reiteration.[85]

As to Morrison's allusion to poetic creation as a 'story of whiskey and mystics,' there is also an interesting parallel with Shelley's defending the poets against calumnies and unfair judgments:

> Let us assume that Homer was a drunkard, that Virgil was a flatterer..., that Tasso was a madman..., that Raphael was a libertine... Their errors have been weighed and found to have been dust in the balance; ... they have been washed in the blood of the mediator and the redeemer Time (764).

In the last part of his *Defence*, Shelley once again insists on the difference between poetry and logic, declaring the artistic expression not to be "subject to the controul of the active powers of the mind, and that its birth and recurrence has no necessary connection with consciousness or will"(764). Speaking in favor of the imagination in the early 19th century, a time when rationalism, Puritanism and order were to be highly respected, Shelley was expelled from Oxford after having been accused of religious incredulity. In fact, the poet thought of the church as an institution rather than the principle of religious faith. His greatest belief lay, however, in his own artistic abilities, the fruit of those who are "the mirrors of the gigantic shadows which futurity casts upon the present," and whose words, fighting in the logical battle, "express what they understand not"(765).

[1] William Wordsworth, "Expostulation and Reply" *The Norton Anthology of English Literature* V. 2, ed. M. H. Abrams (New York: Norton, 1988) 134.

[2] Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Philosophy of Nietzsche*, Ed. William Huntington Wright (New York: The Modern Library, 1927) 869. Hereafter, quotes that are not followed by a reference number belong to the one previously numbered, and have their page number in brackets.

[3] James Douglas Morrison, *The American Night* (New York: Villard, 1990) 07.

[4] Nietzsche 956.

[5] James Douglas Morrison, *Wilderness* (New York: Vintage, 1989) 136.

[6] Nietzsche 956.

[7] That is to say, legendary, in Plato's terms, philosophically naïve. Poetically, of course, Homer is highly sophisticated.

[8] Accordingly, John Densmore describes the mysterious union between Morrison's Dionysian sorcerer and the other band's members' Apollonian support while playing together in one ritual-like performance by "The Doors:" "He surrendered so totally some nights that we released the sorcerer inside him. We were caught in a ritual. Control seemed to be exchanged among the four of us until the ceremony was completed - three Apollos balanced by one intense Dionysus." Densmore 196.

[9] Nietzsche 967.

[10] Morrison, *The American Night* 06.

[11] Nietzsche 986.

[12] Morrison, *The American Night* 05.

[13] Nietzsche 1021.

[14] Dionysus's devotees used to worship their god by means of a wild and frantic cult. Every two years, in winter, a group of scarcely dressed barefooted women would climb the snowed mountains, and then they would run and dance under the sound of the tamboura. After that, in the climax of delirium, they would slaughter a wild beast and eat it raw. Thus, they would acquire the god's vitality and achieve the Dionysian ecstasy, in which their personalities were, for a while, substituted by the god's.

[15] Plato, "Ion, *Great Books of the Western World*, ed. Robert Maynard Hutchins (Chicago: The U of Chicago, 1971) 144.

[16] Plato 144.

[17] Morrison, *Wilderness* 187.

[18] Plato 145.

[19] As stated by Nietzsche in *The Birth of Tragedy* (p.1022) concerning the strong influence of the Socratic mind upon his most eminent disciple and the banning of poetry from the Greek ideal State: "the youthful tragic poet Plato first of all burned his poems that he might become a student of Socrates. (...) the Socratic maxims, together with the momentum of his mighty character, was still enough to force poetry itself into new and hitherto unknown channels."

[20] Plato 320.

[21] Nietzsche 1026.

[22] Sir Philip Sidney, *The Oxford Anthology of English Literature* V. I, ed. Frank Kermode (New York: Oxford UP, 1973) 636.

[23] Morrison, *The American Night* 08.

[24] Sidney 639.

[25] Morrison, *The American Night* 125.

[26] Morrison was eventually released on bail, after being found guilty of obscene behavior, of fifty thousand dollars.

[27] Sidney 644.

[28] As coined by I. A. Richards in *Science and Poetry* (1926), the term pseudo-statement refers to the string of words, particularly in poetry, that is not a statement, hence neither true nor false in the usual sense, in *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, ed. Alex Preminger (New Jersey: Princeton UP, 1974) 680.

[29] Sidney 638.

[30] M. H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp* (London: Oxford UP, 1953) 22.

[31] In 1798, Wordsworth published *Lyrical Ballads* jointly with Coleridge, but it was not until the two-volume edition of 1800 that he expanded the previous Advertisement (foreword to the first edition) into a Preface, in order to set forth the principles of all good poetry.

[32] *The Norton Anthology of English Literature* V.2, ed. M. H. Abrams (New York: Norton, 1993) 18.

[33] Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp* 214.

[34] H. C. Robinson, *Diary, Reminiscences, and Correspondence*, ed. Thomas Sadler (Boston, 1989), II, 35.

[35] William Blake, *The Norton Anthology* 59.

[36] Morrison, *The American Night* 44.

[37] Friedrich von Schiller, *Critical Theory Since Plato*, ed. Hazard Adams (San Diego: HBJ, 1971) 430.

[38] Interesting enough, the same idea of the "cost" of civilization appears in Freud's *Civilization and its Discontents*.

[39] Leonard M. Trawick, *Backgrounds of Romanticism* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1967) viii.

[40] Goethe had a specific relation with shamanism and studied it deeply, as one can see in Gloria Flaherty's "Goethe and Shamanism" (MLN. 104:3 April 1989, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP) 591: "Knowledge about shamans had proliferated to such a degree in the late 18th century ... also inevitable was that Goethe, the humanist and the scientist, became involved with the shamanistic research of his times. Everything Goethe consciously or, perhaps, even unconsciously, absorbed from that research, he very definitely incorporated into his own poetic corpus. The sheer amount of evidence precludes the possibility

of an occasional coincidence. Goethe knew about shamanism and regularly availed himself of that knowledge.

[41] Trawick ix.

[42] Blake, *The Norton Anthology* 26.

[43] Morrison, *The American Night* 34.

[44] Blake, *The Norton Anthology* 57.

[45] Morrison, *Wilderness* 119.

[46] Blake, *The Norton Anthology* 33.

[47] Morrison, *Wilderness* 13.

[48] William Blake, *Poesia e Prosa Selecionadas*, ed. Paulo Vizioli (Sao Paulo: Nova Alexandria, 1993) 76.

[49] Blake, *The Norton Anthology* 60. These are the last lines of Plate 14 and were chosen by Aldous Huxley to name his book *The Doors of Perception*. Morrison named his band (The Doors)after Huxley's book, which will receive a closer look in the last section of this study.

[50] Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp* 100.

[51] William Wordsworth, *The Norton Anthology of English Literature* ed. M.H. Abrams (New York: Norton, 1993) V.II 141.

[52] Morrison, *Wilderness* 17.

[53] Wordsworth 143.

[54] Abrams regards Wordsworth's theory as a form of cultural primitivism as he writes in *The Mirror and the Lamp*, p.105: "The critical theory he held during those early years of the nineteenth century, when he formulated his most important literary pronouncements, may in all fairness be classified as a form - though a highly refined and developed form - of cultural primitivism. Wordsworth's cardinal standard of poetic value is 'nature,' and nature, in his usage, is given a triple and primitivistic connotation: (...) human nature; men living in a culturally simple and rural environment; and an elemental simplicity of thought and feeling and a spontaneous and 'unartificial' mode of expressing feeling in words."

[55] Morrison, *The American Night* 118.

[56] Wordsworth 148.

[57] Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp* 104.

[58] As quoted by Abrams from *The Poems of Ossian* (New York, n.d.), pp. 89-90.

[59] *The Works of Samuel Johnson*, ed. Arthur Murphy (London: 1824) III, 327.

[60] Wordsworth 149.

[61] As quoted by Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp* 105, from *The Poems of Ossian* op. cit.

[62] Morrison, *Wilderness* 14.

[63] Wordsworth 149.

[64] Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp* 101.

[65] Wordsworth 150.

[66] Wallace Fowlie, *Rimbaud and Jim Morrison* (Durham: Duke UP, 1993) 123.

[67] As to this study's specific subject, that is, Morrison as shaman-poet, Fowlie wrote the following encouraging words: "Your article on Morrison as healing poet is excellent. You have enough material there on shamanism to make a fine thesis, your Morrison quotations are very suitable and I like the passages from Graves and Shelley [next topic]" (12 March/1995); and "as I said in my letter, you have collected good material for your dissertation on Jim Morrison as shaman-poet. It is an important subject. I think your thesis director will be pleased" (12 April/1995), from private correspondence.

[68] Magistrale, op. cit. 134.

[69] Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp* 113.

[70] Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp* 125.

[71] *The Works of Thomas Love Peacock*, ed. H. F. B. Brett-Smith and C. E. Jones (London, 1934) II, 24.

[72] As asserted in the foreword to *A Defence of Poetry* in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature* op. cit. 752.

[73] As in Letter of 15 Feb. 1821 addressed to Peacock, in *Shelley's Literary and Philosophical Criticism*, ed. John Shawcross (Oxford, 1937) 213.

[74] Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp* 126.

[75] Percy Bysshe Shelley, *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, ed. M. H. Abrams (New York: Norton, 1993) V. II 753.

[76] Morrison, *Wilderness* 31.

[77] Shelley, *Anthology* 755.

[78] Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp* 127.

[79] Shelley, *Anthology* 757.

[80] Robert Graves, *The White Goddess* (London: Faber and Faber, 1961) 9.

[81] Shelley, *Anthology* 762. Italics added.

[82] Percy Bysshe Shelley, *Selected Poems* (New York: Gramercy, 1994) 54.

[83] Shelley, *Anthology* 763.

[84] Morrison, *Wilderness* 144.

[85] Shelley, *Anthology* 763.

CHAPTER III

The Magic Power of the Word in the Logical Battle

O mytho é o nada que é tudo.
O mesmo sol que abre os céus
É um mytho brilhante e mudo -
O corpo morto de Deus
Vivo e desnudo.

Assim a lenda se escorre
A entrar na realidade.
E a fecundal-a decorre.
Em baixo, a vida, metade
De nada, morre. [1]

III.1) Chatêlet and the myth of rational thought

It has been argued throughout this study that man has somehow lost the magic contact he once shared with nature, when he once expressed himself by means of mythological constructions, to favor the intellectual adventure grounded in scientific investigations and philosophical speculations. What could have possibly led man, at a certain historical moment, to make such choice, that is, to substitute the early mythic perception for the rational order?

One can hardly avoid thinking of the Greek era, namely Plato and the Academy, as that historical moment wherein a dividing line was eventually drawn between the mytho-poetic mentality and the theoretical conjecture. But the "Greek miracle" did neither occur overnight, nor represent a complete rupture with the mythic imagination. François Chatêlet tells the tale, as if it were an apologue, in his *The History of Philosophy* (1972):

> The modern history of the philosophy of Antiquity re-establishes an order which is intellectually satisfactory for those who elaborated it. In the beginning, there is religion, myth, poetry: from Homer to Pindar; ... it follows with a transition: the pre-socratics. In the same "bag" are the

> physicists - Thales, for instance - the atomists, the physicians, the historians, Heraclitus, Parmenides, Anaxagoras, Empedocles, the sophists. Then comes Socrates: everything changes, but still not radically. With Plato, and the foundation of the Academy, in 387, the order of rationality is eventually instituted; precarious, incapable, this order, which will be bound to multiple modifications, has already set its principles. The thought which obeys to the legendary demand is substituted for a new logic in order to regulate, grounded on a strict discipline of discourse, the issue of the right to a word that is *true,* i. e., efficient. [2]

Differently from the religious, mythical, and poetic words from Homer to Pindar, and even different from the wise and prophetic words of Socrates, the new thought, relying on the strictness of a so-called true narrative, put an end to the legendary obedience to myth and ritual.

There can be no doubt that the Greek conception of man and the world progressively set men's actions apart from the gods' universe. As Chatêlet points out, the cultural genres changed their sense and style: "the tragedy, instead of fundamentally religious, becomes a civic ceremony; the comedy moves from the burlesque game to the political critique"(18). Legendary and mythic descriptions gave place to precise and accurate analysis of landscapes and costumes; other genres arose such as "physics, which moves little by little from magical speculations to the study of phenomena relations, ... and philosophy, which, instead of being a mysterious and exulting declaration, claims its *right* to define in all fields the supreme jurisdiction"(18). All in all, as Chatêlet states after Condorcet, slowly the "lights" take place. And as it was pointed in the first section, since these changes could never have taken place in the wilderness, man started to gather in cities after a long nomadic experience.

Of all the cities of antiquity, Athens comes to be considered exemplary in matters of evolution. In a first stage, this new order of evolution becomes satisfactory as

it institutes the order of citizenship, in which "everyone's destiny is defined neither by the proximity of the gods, nor by the loyal obedience to a chief, but rather by the relation to the abstract principle which is the law"(19). The second stage is the eventual establishment, in Athens, of democracy, in which a new order is set:

> A rational organization, in accordance to man's place in the cosmic disposition, is opposed to the disorders of the distant barbarians, as well as to the absurd order of those who are too close: the Persian Empire. There lies a new thought, which rejects in the distant horizons of archaism the excessive interest for the gods, and consequently marks the exclusive interest for men (19).

Thinking about the origin of such new thought, the philosophical discourse, Chatêlet addresses the issue proposed in the first paragraph: "Where is the cut between the myth and the rational thought?"(19) Could it be present in Thales and the interrogation of natural phenomena? Is it not only with Heraclitus' referring to metaphysical matters? Or would it not be but with Plato and his explicit mention of the matter of reason in the legitimate discourse? As it can be seen, there is no linear progression, leading from pre-reason to realized reason, to be taken for granted.

All in all, Chatêlet chooses, in an attempt to trace the genesis of this realized philosophy, Plato and his defining of a new order as logical: "the novelty is evident: it is no longer the apparent force of habits or the pseudo-real power of the keepers of this order that imposes itself, but rather the order of the controlled word"(20). However, this novelty is to be dominated by the philosopher, who, instead of establishing a real new pattern for his position, acts according to the very attitudes he intends to reverse, that is, he becomes a sage, very much like "the shaman - the sorcerer - who is in connivance with mysterious dynamics"(20). But unlike the shaman, who, in spite of being in contact with the mysterious and secret forces of nature does not claim for himself the status of truth holder, the philosopher not only proclaims his knowledge to be the virtuous one but censors those whom he considers for some reason noxious to the

society under his rule. In fact, as previously shown, the shaman does not even live in society; he is an outcast to whom the members of the community come whenever in need of his magic skills. Very much like the poet, who writes to instruct without vindicatory prerogatives, the shaman performs to heal with no pretentious attitude, since his very power depends on the mastery of his quest.

Thus, the acclaimed new thought, which is philosophy, although managing to delimit the originality of its discourse, can not help integrating some of the old premises. Hence, as Chatêlet points out, "it is better to refuse the image of a linear progression ... certainly the analysis of the texts reveals some 'beginnings' or 'ruptures.' But what begins maintains, in part, that against which it begins"(20).

If it becomes improbable to trace the origins of philosophical thought, it will be as difficult to delimit the imaginary line between the mythical reality and the rational order. Nevertheless, one should at least question philosophy's pretension to be the supreme jurisdiction, and, as Chatêlet suggests, make it "confess its impurity." The very horizon philosophy wants to be free from in order to overcome and judge determines it completely:

> Thus, the thought, around the fifth century BC, passes from the reign of myth to the empire of philosophical logic: but this passage means precisely that there were already on one hand a "logic" of myth, and on the other hand the power of the legendary is still inside the philosophical reality. From myth to rational thought? Certainly. But that is not pure disordered imagination, and this tends to impose itself as a new myth (21).

It is argued here that the imaginary line was effaced from man's perception by the relentless action of reason in order to maintain its domineering, though feeble and precarious, position. The logic of reason has imposed itself against the direct perception of the world by means of division, that is, separating reality from illusion, good from evil, true from false, in behalf of protecting the dignity of the virtuous man against

madness. But as it was shown in the second section, no matter how efficiently Apollo tries to portray the apparent reasonable and beautiful nature of his, he can never hide completely from his own shadow; Dionysus' essential nature will always appear, and the harder one tries to avoid it the stronger it will strike, for, as Octavio Paz asserts, "all of us saw the world with that previous glance, previous to the separation." [3] And it is precisely that previous glance the shaman-poet is a keeper of: the glance once present in the glittering eye of the first years of childhood, when reason is still on its way to erase more direct perceptions of the human mind. Yet, the very tool utilized by the order of the rational thought to dominate man's perception, namely the controlled word, also holds the secret mystery of Dionysus, for the word is the raw matter of poetry and it brings forth not only its apparently controllable surface, which is meaning, but also its mystical never-to-be-regulated depth, which is music.

III.2) The atemporal revolving doors of perception

But there's a Tree, of many, one,
A single Field which I have looked upon,
Both of them speak of something that is gone:
The Pansy at my feet
Doth the same tale repeat:
Whither is fled the visionary gleam?
Where is it now, the glory and the dream?[4]

The power of literature has been the matter of intense debate since man started telling of his adventure. And one of its acclaimed abilities is that of playing tricks with one of man's most severe and relentless captors: time. There are a few other ways of stepping out of time's shadow but literature is definitely one of them. A simple story, told by a naïve narrator, can stop the track of time as the listener's attention is caught,

let alone when the story is told by an artist. One can spend a brief moment reading a book and then realize it has been hours since the words started their quest in the reader's mind. But what is that region where time can no longer rule? Where is the reader transported to under the influence of the suspension of time and space? Once out of chronological reality, he steps onto a different ground where logical voices lose their meaning. It is the opening of a new reality which not only opposes itself to the chronological world but also dismystifies its being the ultimate condition of human kind. It is the chronological reality giving way to the mythic magical (un)reality.

The contrast between magical and scientific thought has lain in the premise that the former lacks the order so laboriously achieved by the latter. But as it was pointed in III.1, according to Chatêlet's analysis, magic also has a logic of its own, on which science itself has based many of its parameters. As put by Lévi-Strauss, in *The Savage Mind* (1966), "scientists do tolerate uncertainty and frustration, because they must. The one thing they do not and must not tolerate is disorder," [5] for theoretical science is ultimately based on the reduction of chaos toward the most possible rational order.

Yet, primitive thought is also based on this demand for order, perhaps even more strictly so, although operating under different circumstances. Thinking of the ritual, for instance, as the "scientific experiment" of primitive thought, one is to find the highest of concerns for order, so that the sacredness remains untarnished, both in relation to the arrangement of objects and in the succession of the refinements of the séance. As explained by Lévi-Strauss: "it could even be said that being in their place is what makes them [ceremonial objects] sacred for if they were taken out of their place, even in thought, the entire order of the universe would be destroyed"(10). An order that cannot be broken "even in thought" reveals the subtlety of the magical perception, in contrast with the often violent procedures of scientific trial and error, which follows the same exhaustive preoccupations with systematic observation of the phenomena in evidence, generating what, in science, would lead to scientifically valid results. Lévi-

Strauss exemplifies the rigorous ritualistic demand for order with the ceremony of the Hako among the Pawnee indians:

> The invocation which accompanies the crossing of a stream of water is divided into several parts, which correspond, respectively, to the moment when the travellers put their feet in the water, the moment when they move them and the moment when the water completely covers their feet. The invocation to the wind separates the moment when only the wet parts of the body feel cool: 'Now, we are ready to move forward in safety ... We must address with song every object we meet, because Tira'wa (the supreme spirit) is in all things, everything we come to as we travel can give us help'(10).

Seen from the scientific point of view, this all-embracing determinism of primitive sorcery becomes unreasonable, since science is based on a distinction between levels, wherein only some will allow forms of determinism, whereas others will not be suitable. But Lévi-Strauss goes further, asserting that "the rigorous precision of magical thought and ritual practices" can be seen "as an expression of the unconscious apprehension of the *truth of determinism*, the mode in which scientific phenomena exist"(11). That occurs because magic's deterministic operations are divined even before they are put to use, that is, magic's procedures "appear as so many expressions of an act of faith in a science yet to be born"(11). Therefore, what takes science an advanced stage of development to incorporate is anticipated by magic's intuitive and divining nature.

Hence, instead of regarding magic and science under a contrasting perspective, it might be better to see them "as two parallel modes of acquiring knowledge"(13). For both of them require somehow the same forms of mental operations, namely observation and systematizing, although differing in the sort of phenomena to be approached. Nor should one try to understand magical thought by reducing it to a rudimentary beginning of a yet-to-materialize scientific procedure. Magic is, of course,

older than science, but it is an independent and intricate system that could be depicted, to use Lévi-Strauss' beautiful metaphor, "like a shadow moving ahead of its owner it is in a sense complete in itself, and as finished and coherent in its immateriality as the substantial being which it precedes"(13).

Once again, the visionary words of Blake describe with poignant precision the existing order of the visions of magical thought, in contrast to their supposed nothingness proclaimed by science:

> The prophets describe what they saw in Vision as real and existing men, whom they saw with their imaginative and immortal organs; the Apostles the same; the clearer the organ the more distinct the object. A Spirit and a Vision are not, as the modern philosophy supposes, a cloudy vapour, or a nothing: they are organized and minutely articulated beyond all that the mortal and perishing nature can produce ... Spirits are organized men.[6]

All in all, the shaman-poet's intention is to provide for his reader a glimpse into the realm of magic, where the latter is to find a complete different world should he be eager enough to experiment the immateriality of the spiritual quest. But even those who believe they do not possess the required skills to perceive that other world might be surprised to find out that the wonders of the visionary experience can be as real as the so-called material world. That was the case of Aldous Huxley, as introduced in I.1, when he decided to cross the invisible dividing line between both worlds. Having obvious connections to Morrison's visionary poetry, Huxley's journey is described in his *The Doors of Perception* (1954), and a closer look on it will provide a better understanding of the action of magical thought's direct perception.

Huxley named his visionary narrative after one of Blake's verses taken from plate14 of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*,[7] and used it also as his book's epigraph: *If the doors of perception were cleansed everything would appear to man as it is, infinite.* As it was explained in the first section, Huxley was given some mescaline by Humphrey Osmond so that he could experience the visionary wonders he had so much read about,

mainly in Blake's poetry. Huxley describes his willingness: "I was on the spot and willing, indeed eager, to be a guinea pig. Thus ... one bright May morning, I swallowed four-tenths of a gramme of mescalin dissolved in half a glass of water and sat down to wait for the results."[8]Huxley's experience was assisted by an investigator who kept asking him questions and recording their conversation. At first, the awaited results seemed to disappoint Huxley who "was convinced that the drug would admit [him] into the kind of inner world described by Blake and Æ," for, as he confessed, he had "always been a poor visualizer. Words, even the pregnant words of poets, do not evoke pictures in my mind"(05). Huxley was expecting to see beautiful colored images with his eyes closed, since he hoped to dive into the inner world, but to his surprise it was an object, a three-flower vase, that triggered his visionary insight:

> I was not looking now at an unusual flower arrangement. I was seeing what Adam had seen on the morning of his creation - the miracle, moment by moment, of naked existence (07).

And as he was asked: "Is it agreeable?" Huxley answered, "Neither agreeable nor disagreeable, it just *is*." Huxley's sensation was that of experiencing "is-ness," or "The Being of Platonic philosophy," but without separating, as Huxley considers Plato to have done, being from becoming. In other words, Huxley was for the first time able to relate to the world and its objects without the "pressure of the significance with which they were charged"(07). And even the words that came to his mind as he stared, dazzled, at the flowers, like Grace and Transfiguration, were understood, "not on the verbal level, not by inchoate hints or at a distance, but precisely and completely"(08). Huxley was then entering the realm of magical thought's direct perception, which operates far beyond the hold of verbal understanding. He was transported to the region where time and space can no longer rule over man's perception, and when asked how he felt about time, Huxley said:

> There seems to be plenty of it ... but exactly how much was entirely irrelevant. I could, of course, have looked at my watch; but my watch, I

> knew, was in another universe. My actual experience had been, was still, of an indefinite duration or alternatively of a perpetual present made up of one continually changing apocalypse (10).

Huxley had then entered that region beyond the grasp of time, wherein the human mind perceives the world without any cognizant effort, or rather the world perceives the mind, depriving the latter of its usual dichotomic reasoning between body and soul, or good and evil. And as the usual logical separation between the material and spiritual substances was dissolved, Huxley's perception was granted an insight into the eternal substance, the "is-ness" Blake calls "Energy" in his *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*'s Plate 4:

> All Bibles or sacred codes have been the causes of the following Errors:
>
> 1. That man has two real existing principles; Viz: a Body and a Soul.
>
> 2. That Energy, calld Evil, is alone from the Body, & that Reason, calld Good is alone from the Soul.
>
> 3. That God will torment man for following his Energies.
>
> But the following Contraries to these are True:
>
> 1. Man has no Body distinct from his Soul; for that calld Body is a portion of Soul discernd by the five Senses, the chief inlets of Soul in this age.
>
> 2. Energy is the only life, and is from the Body; and Reason is the bound or outward circumference of Energy.
>
> 3. Energy is Eternal Delight.[9]

Huxley then started looking at a simple chair and was taken aback even more intensely as he realized that it also belonged to that new world, "where everything shone with the Inner Light, and was infinite in its significance."[10] At that particular moment, he left even farther the rational perception of the world and intermingled even further with the already magically perceived object to a point where, as he describes, he was "not merely gazing at those bamboo legs, but actually *being* them - or rather being myself in them ... being my Not-self in the Not-self which was the chair"(11).

Reflecting on his experience, Huxley found himself agreeing with Bergson's theory of memory and perception, wherein the brain, along with the nervous system and the sensory organs, functions in an eliminatory way rather than a productive one. According to Bergson, each person is "at each moment capable of remembering all that has ever happened to him and of perceiving everything that is happening everywhere in the universe"(11). Therefore, the function of the brain would be to select small and specific amounts of that huge potential memory, so that we are not "overwhelmed and confused by this mass of largely useless and irrelevant knowledge"(11). Huxley calls such potential "Mind at Large," and in order to make our biological survival possible, Mind at Large has to "be funneled through the reducing valve of the brain and nervous system"(12). And in order to express this reduced awareness that comes out of such funneling, man has carefully wrought "those symbol-systems and implicit philosophies which we call languages." Hence, every individual is, as Huxley asserts, both the beneficiary and the victim of his linguistic tradition -- beneficiary since one is able to interact with other people's experiences, and victim because language is but the expression of the reduced awareness, that is, it restricts man's perception to the so-called 'this world' and shuts all the other infinite possibilities of perception belonging to Mind at Large, the so-called 'other worlds.'

As a means to contact those other regions of Mind at Large, that is, to visualize the wonders of magical thought, Huxley mentions two possibilities: one is for only a certain number of persons, who "seem to be born with a kind of by-pass that circumvents the reducing valve," and the other is to acquire temporary by-passes, "either spontaneously or as a result of deliberate spiritual exercises, or through hypnosis, or by means of drugs"(12). Of course these "by-passes" would not allow one's mind to perceive everything in the universe, but they would certainly provide "something more than, and above all, something different from, the carefully selected utilitarian material which our narrowed, individual minds regard as a complete, or at least sufficient, picture of reality"(13).

Among those who seem to be born with the gift for the visionary experience is the artist whose "perception is not limited to what is biologically or socially useful," to use Huxley's definition (20). The shaman-poet, who is a visionary artist, is therefore one of those beings whose consciousness receives "a little of the knowledge belonging to Mind at Large ... a knowledge of the intrinsic significance of every existent"(20). At that moment of his experience, Huxley, feeling he was a "Not-self" rather than a self, besides "perceiving and being the Not-self of the things around"(21), was shown a self-portrait by Cézanne that triggered an ontological insight related not to the picture itself but to mankind in general:

> I started to laugh. And when they asked me why, 'What pretensions! I kept repeating. 'Who on earth does he think he is?' The question was not addressed to Cézanne in particular, but to the human species at large. Who did they all think they were? (22).

Huxley's feeling toward humans was the same feeling experienced by those in contact with the magical thought for the first time, namely the somehow strange sensation of perceiving things out of the usual human grasp, which pretentiously encircles all of man's abilities to perceive into one single world, once one is driven into the 'Not-self-ness' layer of perception. Huxley's sensation would find a suitable metaphor in Wordsworth's verse used as my second section's epigraph, where the Romantic poet addresses this pretentious being who believes he is Nature's only child. Huxley was of course overwhelmed by the significance of his vision, and he could not help repeating time after time: "This is how one ought to see ... these are the sort of things one ought to look at. Things without pretensions, satisfied to be merely themselves ... not trying, insanely, to go it alone"(23).

Feeling bad at his own human condition, and at the same time amazed by his new human awareness, Huxley then asked himself a way out of that dilemma, that is, "how was this cleansed perception to be reconciled with a proper concern with human relations, with the necessary chores and duties, to say nothing of charity and practical

compassion?"(23). Huxley's concern was then soothed as he realized that mescalin, or any other door of perception, could never "solve that problem: it can only pose it, apocalyptically, for those to whom it had never before presented itself"(23). And here Huxley seems to follow the shamanic teaching of the impeccable warrior, whose contact with the supernatural renders him a superb control over his own actions in the natural world:

> The full and final solution can be found only by those who are prepared to implement the right kind of *Weltanschauung* by means of the right kind of behaviour and the right kind of constant and unstrained alertness (26).

And there are those who, like the shaman, do implement the right action and even more than that, they are able to express, in art, their vision more beautifully than any one else. For Huxley, one man epitomizes such artistic power: Blake, whose uniqueness "consists in his ability to render, in words or in line or colour, some hint at least of a not excessively uncommon experience"(29). But that does not mean, as Huxley makes it clear, that the visionary artist belongs to a time that has passed away: "the mental species to which Blake belonged is fairly widely distributed even in the urban-industrial societies of the present day"(29). Huxley's assertion thus confirms this study's contention of the reversibility of the sacred, as put by Eliade,[11] that is, the possibility of the manifestation of magical thought even in such an extremely secular and rational era as the late 20th century.

No matter what object or circumstance faced by Huxley during his mescalin induced travel, he kept feeling the universal attribute present in all things: "the 'is-ness' was the same, the eternal quality of their transience was the same."[12] At that point, Huxley started thinking about the desire of having a transcendent encounter, that is, of the human need for opening the doors of perception, which show the way across the wall of reduced awareness. As examples of such openings, Huxley mentions that "art and religion, carnivals and saturnalia, dancing and listening to oratory - all these have

served as Doors in the Wall"(42). And there are also those for private and even everyday use, which are the chemical intoxicants. But, as he asserts, opening such doors may become a delicate matter, since not all of the chemical substances are allowed by law:

> Most of these modifiers of consciousness cannot now be taken except under doctors orders, or else illegally and at considerable risk. For unrestricted use the West has permitted only alcohol and tobacco. All the other chemical Doors in the Wall are labelled Dope, and their unauthorized takers are Fiends (43).

Yet, as Huxley observes, "the urge to escape from selfhood and the environment is in almost everyone all the time," and therefore there will always be a demand for some way out of the stressful reality of this age: "the need for frequent chemical vacations from intolerable selfhood and repulsive surroundings will undoubtedly remain"(44). Huxley's point is that the very doors which are permitted, namely alcohol and tobacco, could not be worse concerning the problems they generate in our society: "alcohol is incompatible with safety on the roads [to say the least], and its production, like that of tobacco, condemns to virtual sterility many millions of acres of fertile soil"(44). Hence, a new drug should be created, in Huxley's opinion, to feed man's principal appetite of the soul, namely the urge to transcend self-conscious selfhood.

Huxley was writing in the mid-50's and his dream of an eventual safe door of perception is far from coming true. As a matter of fact, it seems that it will never happen, as one looks back and realizes that the answer of the Western establishment to such an appeal has been that of repression rather than comprehension. All in all, what really matters is not whether there will ever be such a door, but, as Huxley makes clear throughout his book, what can never be completely repressed is man's urge for opening the doors of perception to be in contact with the practice of magical thought. Moreover, the ingestion of mind altering substances have always been present in religious

ceremonies throughout the world, and, as Huxley quotes from Philippe de Felice's *Poisons Sacres, Ivresses Divines*:

> The employment for religious purposes of toxic substances is extraordinarily widespread ... Those practices can be observed in every region of the earth, among primitives no less than among those who have reached a high pitch of civilization. We are therefore dealing with a general human phenomenon, which cannot be disregarded by anyone who is trying to discover what religion is, and what are the deep needs which it must satisfy (46).

As far as this study is concerned, Huxley's ideas are very close to those related to the shaman-poet, that is, the visionary artist whose expression is but a link between ordinary reality and the spiritual realm, whose poetry entices the reader to open that door and recreate the magical environment that has never vanished from the human mind, albeit considered a lying myth or even sheer madness by the impositions of reason.

Huxley is aware that what happens under the influence of mescalin is not to be equated with "the realization of the end and ultimate purpose of human life: Enlightenment, the Beatific Vision"(51). The contact with magical thought is not a *sine qua non* condition for human salvation, but it does help man to understand more broadly the human experience which is life, showing him "for a few timeless hours the outer and the inner world, not as they appear to an animal obsessed with survival or to a human being obsessed with words and notions, but as they are apprehended, directed and unconditionally, by Mind at Large"(51).

An experience of inestimable value to everyone, the visionary encounter is even more precious to the intellectual, the man to whom, as Huxley quotes Goethe, "the word is essentially fruitful." And the realization that his most fruitful holding does not meet, in its rational and reduced use, the urge for the apprehension of a more satisfying perception of both outer and inner worlds, led even Goethe, a great writer, to declare:

> I personally should like to renounce speech altogether and, like organic Nature, communicate everything I have to say in sketches ... a person able to decipher their [Nature's momentous signatures] properly would soon be able to dispense with the written or the spoken word altogether.[13]

Goethe's assertion is a reminder of what Huxley had pointed out concerning man's becoming the victim as well as the beneficiary of language and the other symbol systems. Not that one is ever to dispense with them, for, as Huxley puts it, "it is by the means of them that we have raised ourselves above the brutes, to the level of human beings"(52). But in order to avoid being their victims,

> we must learn how to handle words effectively; and at the same time preserve and intensify our ability to look at the world directly and not through that half-opaque medium of concepts, which distorts every given fact into the all too familiar likeness of some generic label or explanatory abstraction (52).

Yet the word is not always burdened with the logic of systematic reasoning, for it also carries within the unexplainable musical magic of poetry. The poetic word, without having the pretense to be the ultimate truth, can therefore also lead, like all the other doors, to that other realm of direct perception beyond the wall of the reduced awareness. We cannot possibly do without systematic reasoning, but, as Huxley avers, "neither, if we are to remain sane, can we possibly do without direct perception"(54).

Magical thought, or direct perception, is a gift rendered to man by a system not his own; it is, in Huxley's words, "a transcendence belonging to another order than human, and yet it may be present to us as a felt immanence, an experienced participation"(55), it is an infinite given reality of which man was once a true member who decided to flee its domains to pursue the understanding of the universe through systematic reasoning. But is it worth receiving such a sacred gift in this secular technological era? Will it really bring some sort of enlightenment to the man who breaks on through the wall? Huxley answers:

> The man who comes back through the Door in the Wall will never be quite the same as the man who went out. He will be wiser but less cocksure, happier but less self-satisfied, humbler in acknowledging his ignorance yet better equipped to understand the relationship of words to things, of systematic reasoning to the unfathomable Mystery which it tries, forever vainly, to comprehend (56).

And the visionary poet, like the "man who comes back through the Door in the Wall," would rather remain in touch with that gift, and, expressing it by means of his art of the musical word, pass on to his reader the atemporal reality of direct perception in order to preserve, as if answering to Wordsworth's prayer, the magical transporting power and the visionary gleam of artistic enlightenment.

III.3) Articulating the shaman and the poet: the healing power of the word

> *You road I enter upon and look around, I believe you are not all that is here,*
> *I believe that much unseen is also here.* [14]

It has been too long a time since man was in touch with magic on a regular basis, maybe too long to remember. Now nothing seems to happen magically, but always logically. Yet the human mind has got the potential to make it happen once again; as a matter of fact, it has never ceased, it has always been there, - although it may appear otherwise, as one looks, for instance, at Time's powerful logical illusion, ever so hard to overcome - as if preserved in a sacred place, a holy ground, as it were.

Nevertheless, the nahuatl has access to that place, and so has the word. In fact, they (word and shaman) have the gift of belonging to both realities, albeit their performances differ stunningly depending on which state of mind they operate. So that in a magical reality the shaman can perform things that would be unthinkable in the

logical world, such as metamorphosis, flights, or conscious dreaming, whereas the word can overcome its logical abstractness towards the physicality of the abstract. It is a demonstration of the power of words not only abstractly but also physically. It is the withered soil being watered as the nahuatl whispers the magical music of meaning and gives word (or word gives him) the manifestation of the unthinkable. The art of balancing sound and silence to (re)create meaning from the void, of giving the soundless voice its cry in the dark, of the shaman-poet who dies to enter a bird's brain so that he can fly in the wings of dreaming and then return from graveland, not without injuries that tell of his struggle:

The mystery of flight
To be inside the brain of a bird
goal - the end of a goddess
to slide gracefully &
knowledgeably into graveland

The big dream vs.
Violent assassination of
Spirit & neck & skull
wounded he arrived. [15]

The art of poetry is one of today's last sacred grounds of words and Morrison conveys his shamanic wisdom not by the fancy pleasure of a colorful trip but rather by the pain and suffering of a soul that has been to the other side of joy, i.e., to where bliss fails to arrive:

Reaching your head
w/ the cold & sudden fury
of a divine messenger
Let me tell you about
    heartache & the loss of God
Wandering, wandering
in hopeless night (127).

In the previous lines the poet warns us about the perils of reaching a divine messenger, whose message can be cold and furious and can lead to pain and loss in a hopeless land.

In short, we had better carry enough spiritual strength when drinking the wine of wisdom, and pay attention to Pope's advice: "a little learning is a dangerous thing/Drink deep or taste not the Pierian spring." [16]

Morrison's combinations of words resemble an Indian riddle, a rich mandala where rhymed sounds perform a frolic dance. The poet gives the words of poetry the power to illuminate and to provide the exploration of those new realms; he invites the words to play their ludicrous game:

Here come the comedians
look at them smile
Watch them dance
an indian mile.

Then the poet invites us to feel their (words') self-possession which touches everyone. It is the shamanic trance of the words themselves:

Look at them gesture
How aplomb
So to gesture everyone.

Only now do we clearly get to know about his words' metaphor, words that will walk and grow as we look after their powerful meaning :

Words dissemble
Words be quick
Words resemble walking sticks
Plant them
They will grow
Watch them waver so. [17]

In the previous poem, Morrison makes his words dance and smile and by comparing them to an indian mile he creates a word-ritual where not only the poet takes part but also the words themselves perform in the possession seance (them gesture/how aplomb). And the audience is also there as we (readers) give them (words) life by means

of our reading/planting in our own gardens. The poet knows he is a magic-man who can ride the flight of a bird:

I'll always be a word-man

better than a birdman.

But as the shaman who can step over the threshold of the other world and stays to help his people, he decides to remain among the reign of letters. The poet is the wizard of words and he knows how to let them play their healing song of wisdom.

The mere act of pronouncing the right word can provoke the beginning of a healing treatment, as has been done even scientifically after the coming forth of Freud's psychoanalysis. However, in psychoanalytical treatment it is only the patient who is in search of some light for his pain, whereas during a shamanic trance both the healer and the patient go along in a symbolic flight over the hidden side of the human psyche.

In the poetry of Jim Morrison, there is a similar situation in which the poet heals the patient (reader), but is also dependent on the latter to find his own cure, generating the process of a mutual catharsis, as it were, by means of reading the sacred words of poetry :

Sentence upon sentence

Words are healing

Words got me the wound

& will get me well.

If you believe it (61).

The cure will find its remedy from illness itself;[18] so the shaman-poet who has been injured by his own words will find healing through the power of words only. Nevertheless, he cannot do it by himself, he needs to feel this power not in himself, but in his reader's belief in the force of his poetry.

American poet James Douglas Morrison died very young, at the age of twenty-seven, though he experienced much, as can be seen through his lines. Once asked about

the meaning of poetry, he said: "Listen, real poetry doesn't say anything, it just ticks off the possibilities. Opens all doors. You can walk through any one that suits you." [19]

By the end of his life, Morrison was looking for a peace of mind he seemed never to have found before. He exiled himself from America in Paris, trying to be more of a poet and less of a rock'n roll star. Unfortunately he walked about the streets of the city of lights for only three months before opening his last door.

The image of an ironic hitchhiker of reason, somehow aware, as in Whitman's quote, of the hidden substratum at the end of the road, of a man with no destiny but that of wandering and always journeying what could be his last quest, often present in his poems and lyrics, is found in one of his last verses written in Paris:

Tell them you came & saw
& look'd into my eyes
& saw the shadow
of the guard receding
Thoughts in time
& out of season
The hitchhiker stood
by the side of the road
& levelled his thumb
in the calm calculus
of reason. [20]

These are lines that distill the soul of a man used to cross many thresholds and to leave his readers the choice of stepping into a new realm of symbolic meaning; a meeting place where shaman and patient come to listen to the powerful words of poetry. The belief of Mircea Eliade suits in perfectly: "Poetic creation still remains an act of perfect spiritual freedom." [21] It is the secret idiom of poetry bringing language its eternal remaking.

The new born awakening that Morrison keeps referring to in his verse, so that the need to let the hidden forces of nature come to surface, is not forsaken in favor of the oppressive predominance of systematic reasoning, unveils the search and struggle for the primitive freedom of spirit, as in this epitome-poem:

& the cool fluttering rotten wind
& a child's hand-print on
picture window
& the guncocked held
on the shoulder.
& fire in the night
waiting, in a darkened house
for the cruel insane breed
from town to arrive
& come poking thru smoke
& fuel & ashes for milk
& the evil leer on their faces
barking w/ triumph
Who will not stop them?
The hollow tree, where
we three slept and dreamed
in the movement of
whirling shadows & grass
Tired rustle of leaves
An old man stirs the dancers
w/ his old dance
darkening swift shadows
lean on the meat of forests
to allow breathing
Gently they stir
Gently rise
The dead are new-born
awakening
w/ ravaged limbs
& wet souls
Gently they sigh
in rapt funeral amazement
Who called these dead to dance?
Was it the young woman
learning to play the "Ghost Song"
on her baby grand
Was it the wilderness children?
Was it the Ghost-God himself.
stuttering, cheering,
chatting blindly?
I called you up
to anoint the earth.
I called you to announce
sadness falling
like burned skin
I called you to wish you
well, to glory in self
like a new monster
& now I call on you to pray. [22]

And a free spirit means a mind that knows no ideological restraints in its exploratory journeys. As Magistrale asserts: "In Morrison's poetry and song, [the visionary

exploration] is only possible once the individual has repudiated all traditional limits - rejecting societal as well as personal constraints." [23]

The act of unfolding the essence of things brought about by the ecstatic inspiration of the religious ceremony performed by the shaman finds a parallel in the poetic recreation of language from within the universe of the poet:

Urge to come to terms with the Outside,

by absorbing, interiorizing it.

I won't come out,

you must come in to me.

Into my womb-garden where I peer out.

Where I can construct a universe

within the skull,

to rival the real. [24]

A personal and closed universe breaks through all the doors to the world of the spirits, the dead, and the gods. A world, like the fictional world of poetic language, that knows no hindrances and that provides its inhabitants the possibility of the enrichment of their minds, and, as an aftermath, the healing of their souls, as it incites them to keep on journeying its never ending vastness...

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[1] Fernando Pessoa. *Obra Poetica*. (Rio de Janeiro: Nova Aguilar, 1986) 72. These are the first and third stanzas of Pessoa's "Os Castellos:" The myth is the nothingness that is all/The same sun which opens the skies/Is a myth brilliant and dumb/The dead body of God/Alive and naked//Hence the legend drips/Into reality/And passes to fecundate it/Underneath, life, half/of nothing, dies.

[2] François Chatêlet. *Histoire de la Philosophie - Idees, Doctrines*. V. I (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1972) 17. (My own translation). Hereafter quotes that are not followed by a reference number belong to the one previously numbered.

[3] See page 26 of first section.

[4] William Wordsworth, "Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood, (4)" Op. Cit. 190.

[5] Claude Lévi-Strauss, Op. Cit. 09.

[6] William Blake, *The Writings of William Blake*, ed. Geoffrey Keynes, V.3 (1966) 108.

[7] See II.4, p.65.

[8] Aldous Huxley, *The Doors of Perception* (London: Flamingo, 1994) 03.

[9]William Blake, *The Norton Anthology* 56.

[10] Huxley 11.

[11] See first section, pp. 19, 25, 28.

[12] Huxley 42.

[13] As quoted by Huxley in p. 51.

[14] Walt Whitman, "Song of the Open Road," *Selected Poems*, ed. Stanley Appelbaum (New York: Dover, 1991) 30.

[15] James Douglas Morrison, *The American Night* 138.

[16] Alexander Pope, *Complete Poetical Works* (Boston: Cambridge Ed, 1903) 206.

[17] Morrison, *The American Night* 13.

[18]See Paracelsus' concept on the paradox of healing and sickness, p. 28.

[19] Morrison, *Wilderness* 02.

[20] Morrison, *The American Night* 204

[21] Mircea Eliade, *Shamanism* 510.

[22]Morrison, *The American Night* 56.

[23] Tony Magistrale, Op. Cit. 137.

[24] Morrison, *The Lords and the New Creatures* 42.

Conclusion: Inspirational Visionary Poetry & Magical Ecstatic Shamanism: doors to the open road of wisdom.

"Poetry remakes and prolongs language; every poetic language begins by being a secret language, that is, the creation of a personal universe, of a completely closed world."[1] Eliade's assertion seems to echo Morrison's poetic words: "I won't come out / You must come in to me,"[2] which should be read as an epigrammatic epitome of this study's general articulation. By addressing his reader in such a direct way, the poet wishes for a tripartite communion of his words, his reader, and himself. The poet deliberately invites his reader to take part in the revelation of the underlying essence of things by means of unfolding the secrets of his [the poet's] language.

Like the shaman, who is the holder of the secrets of other worlds and nevertheless shares his secret knowledge with the community as he fights against death, diseases, and sterility, to name a few nemeses, the poet also shares his magic inspiration as he entices his reader to enter the musical world of poetry. Furthermore, visionary poetry has to fight a battle of its own, since it speaks of the mythical world of dreams inhabited by gods and spirits in this secular era of logic and rationality. Fighting in the logical battle, as it praises the magic "visionary gleam" of nature, the poetic word assumes the role of en ecological survival technique.

Poetic inspiration has therefore a strong connection with shamanic ecstasy. As Eliade suggests: "it is likewise probable that the pre-ecstatic euphoria constituted one of the universal sources of lyric poetry" (510). Poetic creation can thus be seen under the ecstatic shamanic perspective, that is, visionary poetry, or Plato's *furor poeticus*, is the expression of the manifestation of supernatural forces that are apparently hidden under the reduced awareness of everyday reality; forces that have been forsaken by the ordinary man to favor the intellectual adventure of theoretical conjectures.

A true representative of those forces, the shaman-poet has never really abandoned them and remains in close contact with a separate world other than the chronological reality of reduced awareness. He intends to (re)create that separate

supernatural world, so that his patient-reader shall also be granted an insight into the sacred essence of things. As Eliade puts it: "the purest poetic act seems to re-create language from an inner experience that, like the ecstasy or the religious inspiration of 'primitives,' reveals the essence of things" (510). And as he reveals this sacred essence, the shaman-poet unfolds the secret order of magical thought, which, contrary to what is usually believed, that is, that the only order is that of logical thought, presents an extremely organized structure that becomes more and more knowable as he travels through its infinite vastness. Even the darkest of worlds, that of death, is shed the shamanic inner-light as it "assumes form, is organized in accordance with particular patterns; finally it displays a structure and, in course of time, becomes familiar and acceptable" (510).

Visionary poetry, like shamanic ecstasy, thus functions as a magic bridge that will lead into the separate and wondrous reality of magical thought, that is, it does, after Eliade's words, "stimulate and feed the imagination, demolish the barriers between dream and present reality, open windows upon worlds inhabited by the gods, the dead, and the spirits" (511). Eliade uses the metaphor of windows for which Blake had chosen doors, that is, passages into the supernatural world of magical thought, a world where things are perceived directly, wherein the "is-ness" of things described by Huxley is apprehended without the interference of Mind at Large's reducing valve of perception. In short, this is a world where imagination rules over reason, where Apollo's beautiful appearance longs for Dionysus' suffering essence, where man's separate senses are melted into one immaculate infinite perception, and the universe manifests itself in one single form, the form of "an angel of soul from horse to man to boy & back again."[3] Morrison's poetry was chosen as this study's raw matter for it conveys the complexity of magical thought by means of simple words which, however, carry the vitality and purity of expression Wordsworth finds so important and necessary in his romantic theory. Wordsworth praises the simple language of rural men, which should be also the poet's, because it represents the true expression of human feelings,

because the closer man is to nature the better he will express his own feelings, since man is part of nature's complex.[4]

It is argued here that Morrison's poetry follows the romantic concern with man's setting apart of the natural environment in favor of the artificial world of technology, since it intends to awake the dormant sages of the ancient forests, working, after Snyder's ideal, as an ecological survival technique. Morrison's visionary poetry, as explained throughout this study, aims at the healing not only of the natural environment but of man himself in this secular era, for an endangered natural world leads inevitably to a sick man, both physically and spiritually, who, in spite of the obvious destruction he has caused, keeps claiming for himself the highest position above all other natural creatures.

There is no intention, of course, of denying here the importance of man's rational understanding of the world. As it was explained above,[5] one cannot disregard science and philosophy as modes of acquiring knowledge, but, on the other hand, one should, after Chatêlet, make them confess their impurity in what they pretentiously consider a novelty, namely a new order of thought, that which, in fact, already existed in the mythic reality of magical thought. Although regarded as the chaotic imagination of possessed poets by the "virtuous" man of rational thought, magical perception not only has a logic of its own, but also pervades, against all odds, the philosophical reality that tries in vain to hide its legendary origin.

All in all, magical thought, or direct perception, or sorcery, should be seen as a parallel mode of attaining knowledge; indeed, a very independent system which, unlike science and philosophy, does not intend to claim for itself the status of truth holder. On the contrary, magical perception, like visionary poetry, is an open road that leads to the inner-light of wisdom, and the more one travels toward that which is "much unseen," the brighter becomes the road, enlightened by one's own infinite perception. As Morrison writes, "poetry doesn't say anything, it just ticks off the possibilities. Opens all doors. You can walk through any one that suits you."[6]

The sacred power of visionary poetry is manifested after opening and walking through any one of those doors; the transforming power of poetic creation which, as Shelley states, "creates anew the universe,"[7] awakens our minds from their slumber as the melodic voice of the Muse sings to the poet in trance. "Poetry is indeed something divine,"[8] a message brought to man from an order not his own, the words of visionary poetry are therefore the vivid materialization of the heavenly spiritual substance. And the one who expresses such a sacred meaning, the one "whose ears have heard the Holy Word,"[9] is also touched by that divine substance. The shaman-poet, who, in Morrison's words, "can change the course of nature,"[10] is that sensitive primitive creature that has turned away from the secular life to travel across the farthest boundaries of the universe, in his inward journey to the *mysterium*, searching for the power of mystical perception, and has come back from the realm of the dead to bring us sacred words of music, magic, and healing.

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[1] Eliade, *Shamanism* 510.

[2] See p. 109.

[3] See Morrison's verse in p. 62.

[4] See p. 67.

[5] See pp. 90, 92, 93.

[6] See p. 107.

[7] See p. 82.

[8] See p.79.

[9] See p. 63.

[10] See p. 64.

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ERRATA

pg. iv: line 03: "Departamento"

pg. 02: l. 11: "Sixties"

pg. 28: l. 06: "as powerful a song **as** to relieve the shaman"

pg. 36: l. 11: "**S**ixties"

pg. 37: l.19: "Socrates nemesis**,** the God of wine"

pg. 38: l. 24: "veil of reason. **It is** a force much"

pg. 39: l.10: "Couples naked race down"

pg. 49: l. 16: "expressing its primal rhythm**,** it will get through"

pg. 53: l. 04: "Here the **shaman-poet** speaks"

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pg. 83: l. 27: "Plato, "Ion,**"** *Great Books*"

pg. 84: l. 04: "Oxford UP, 1973) 637"

pg. 103: l. 23/25: "always been there **–** although" "to overcome **–** as if preserved"

pg. 107: l. 25: "reasoning, **and** unveils"

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