The poetic voice and the paradox of plenitude

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La voix poétique et le paradoxe de la plénitude

Biography
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Abstract
Art is nothing in itself – nothing apart from the artist's, or poet's, intention and involvement. And, at the same time, art has no aim outside itself, or it would become flatly moralistic and allegorical, (and flatly aesthetic as well), which D.H. Lawrence denounced in *Apocalypse*. Art will not promote any good, or it would mean narrowing its scope to the duality of judgement (good or bad, right or wrong) while the poet, or artist, endeavours to embrace the ambivalent depth of life, trusting what Goethe called the "demonic", or "this tricky and mysterious power" that we all feel in ourselves, but which "no philosopher can explain".

A lot of poets and artists have tackled the reality of war, the "pity of it" as Wilfred Owen would have it; art is a response to the horror. So is Homer's *Iliad*, the model of epic poetry, according to two twentieth century philosophers, Rachel Bespaloff and Simone Weil, who wrote about it at the beginning of the Second World War, a crucial moment in modern history. The former holds that with the Greeks the aesthetic catharsis, or detachment, is derived from the fact that the *Fatum* is insuperable; the latter calls the *Iliad* the "poem of force", stating that both the hero and its victim become sheer objects under its dominion.

We shall define the word "peace". The simple opposition between war and peace, peace being the absence of war, is historical and political. In the realm of art, the term needs to become infused with a deeper existential substance. In his notes on his

translation of the *Song of Songs*, Henri Meschonnic states that the Hebrew word for peace means "the plenitude of total happiness". The word, of the same root as the adjective meaning "whole", also implies the notion of integrity. We shall develop the paradox of such plenitude as poetry renders it.

Resumé
L'art n'est rien en lui-même, rien en dehors de l'intention et de l'engagement de l'artiste ou du poète. Et, en même temps, l'art n'a nul dessein en dehors de lui-même, sous peine de devenir platement moralisateur et allégorique, platement esthétique également, ce que dénonça D.H. Lawrence dans *Apocalypse*. L'art ne promeut aucun bien, à moins de limiter sa portée à la dualité du jugement (bien ou mal, juste ou faux) tandis que le poète ou l'artiste s'efforce d'étreindre l'ambivalente profondeur de la vie, se fiant à ce que Goethe nommait le « démonique », ou « cette puissance problématique et mystérieuse » que nous sentons tous en nous-mêmes, mais que « pas un philosophe n'explique ».

Nombre de poètes ou d'artistes ont abordé la réalité de la guerre, sa « pitié » comme le disait Wilfred Owen ; l'art répond à l'horreur. Il en est ainsi de l'*Iliade* d'Homère, modèle de la poésie épique, selon deux philosophes du vingtième siècle, Rachel Bespaloff et Simone Weil, qui ont écrit sur ce poème au début de la seconde guerre mondiale, moment crucial de l'histoire moderne. La première pense que la catharsis esthétique, ou détachement, chez les Grecs tient au fait que le *Fatum* ne se peut surmonter ; la seconde nomme l'*Iliade* le « poème de la force », affirmant que le héros et sa victime se soumettent à elle en tant qu'objets.

Nous définirons le mot « paix ». La simple opposition entre la guerre et la paix, l'une étant le contraire de l'autre, est historique et politique. Dans le domaine artistique, le terme doit s'imprégner d'une profondeur existentielle substantielle. Dans ses notes à sa traduction du *Chant des Chants*, Henri Meschonnic indique que le mot hébreu pour paix signifie « la plénitude, le bonheur complet ». Le mot, de même racine que l'adjectif signifiant « entier », implique également la notion d'intégrité. Nous développerons ce paradoxe de la plénitude – ambivalence de l'existence en son intégrité – tel que le rendent les poètes.

Keywords
Robert Graves, Wilfred Owen, T.S. Eliot, D.H. Lawrence, Henri Meschonnic, Simon Weil, D.H. Lawrence, Jon Silkin, Walter Benjamin, William Blake, Ivor Gurney, Experiences at the Front, Boredom.

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Art is nothing in itself – nothing apart from the artist's, or poet's, intention and involvement. And, at the same time, art has no aim outside itself, or it would become flatly moralistic and allegorical, (and flatly aesthetic as well), which D.H. Lawrence denounced in *Apocalypse*: "Now a book lives as long as it is unfathomed. Once it is

fathomed, it dies at once. [...] Once a book is fathomed, once it is *known*, and its meaning is fixed or established, it is dead."[1] Art will not promote any good, or it would mean narrowing its scope to the duality of judgement (good or bad, right or wrong) while the poet, or artist, endeavours to embrace the ambivalent depth of life, trusting what Goethe called the "demonic"[2], or "this tricky and mysterious power" that we all feel in ourselves, but which "no philosopher can explain".

The paradox of plenitude

A lot of poets and artists have tackled the reality of war, the "pity of it"[3] as Wilfred Owen would have it; I am thinking of Jacques Callot and *Les grandes misères de la guerre* (1633), about the horrors of the Thirty Years War; of Goya, with his *Disasters of War* (1810-1814) and his two famous paintings about the Napoleonic wars in Spain, *Dos de Mayo* and *Tres de Mayo* (1808), painted in 1814; of Otto Dix depicting "the devil's work"[4] during the Great War; of Henry Moore sketching the people sleeping in the London underground during the Second World War air raids (*The Shelter Sketchbook*, 1941), and, of course, of the work of the appointed war painters such as, among others, Paul Nash, during the First and Second World Wars, and his paintings entitled *We Are Making a New World* (1918), and *Totes Meer* (1941), or Graham Sutherland and his rendering of the London Blitz, such as *Devastation: An East End Street* (1941). In all those examples, art is a response to the horror. So is Homer's *Iliad*, the model of epic poetry, according to two twentieth century philosophers, Rachel Bespaloff and Simone Weil, who wrote about it at the beginning of the Second World War, a crucial moment in modern history. The former holds that with the Greeks the aesthetic catharsis, or detachment, is derived from the fact that the *Fatum* is insuperable[5]; the latter calls the *Iliad* the "poem of force"[6], stating that both the hero and its victim become sheer objects under its dominion.

Now let us consider the word "peace". The simple opposition between war and peace, peace being the absence of war, is historical and political. In the realm of art, the term needs to become infused with a deeper existential substance. In his notes on his translation of the *Song of Songs*, Henri Meschonnic states that the Hebrew word for peace means "the plenitude of total happiness".[7] The word, of the same root as the adjective meaning "whole", also implies the notion of integrity.[8] Moreover Henri Meschonnic explains that both names, Salomon and Shulamite, come from the word *shalom*; from that we may infer that such plenitude may be reached at times through the I and Thou relationship of terrestrial love. Robert Graves, who, after experiencing the trauma of the Great War, developed the idea that poetry found its root in extreme original violence, thought that the poet had to achieve a love-relationship with the Muse as the Goddess of birth, love and death, alternately "you" and "she" in his poems as God is alternately "thou" and "he" in the *Psalms*. Through the war trauma, through the pressure of history, Graves discovered the tragic feature of what Goethe called the "demonic":

> Poetry began in the matriarchal age, and derives its magic from the moon, not from the sun. No poet can hope to understand the nature of poetry unless he has had a vision of the Naked King crucified to the lopped oak, and watched the dancers, red-eyed from the acrid smoke of the sacrificial fires, stamping out the measure of the dance, their bodies bent

> uncouthly forward, with a monotonous chant of: 'Kill! kill! kill! and 'Blood! blood! blood!"[9]

The passage is famous and rather expressive in its rejection of the simple moralistic approach to art and life. The poet deliberately dismisses the principle of contradiction on behalf of the "principle of manifold identification"[10] as Emile Benveniste remarks in his notes on Baudelaire, quoting "*je suis la plaie et le couteau*!"[11] Graves thought that poetry had to descend to those regions to which irony "does not descend"[12] as Rilke wrote in 1903. And he made a difference between the satirist and the poet, the latter cultivating his I and Thou relationship with the Muse as the substance of life. "The poet is in love with the White Goddess, with truth: his heart breaks with longing and love for her."[13] But that truth is not abstract and simplistically opposed to what Blake would call *Negation*; it involves life's *Contraries*, not denying its overwhelming energy. It is the poet's task to express it through the "cool web of language"[14]:

> But if we let our tongues lose self-possession,
> Throwing off language and its watery clasp
> Before our death, instead of when death comes,
> Facing the wide glare of the children's day,
> Facing the rose, the dark sky and the drums,
> We shall go mad no doubt and die that way.

That truth should make your hair stand on end since the emotion involved is so powerful. The poetic trance transcends madness but does not suppress it. The poetic voice grasps the paradox of plenitude: to reach the genuine substance of life the poet, or artist, has to come to grips with its distressing ambivalence. I am here using the verb "grasp" thinking of D.H. Lawrence's "The Blind Man" and the moment when Bertie and Maurice, alone in the stable, are confronted, – the duality of the intellectual approach (and denial) of life (Bertie) being opposed to the powerful force of original life (Maurice). "The hand of the blind man grasped the shoulder, the arm, the hand of the other man. He seemed to take him, in the soft, travelling grasp."[15] The word "grasp" is used four times in the whole paragraph. The eyesight is opposed to the touch; so is the intellect to the depth of being, and distant, or cathartic, isolation within the self to empathy.

Now that our perspective is delineated, I wish to show how art and poetry are involved with the plenitude of being – with the fullness of ambivalent life and the fullness of the individual subject. First I shall oppose catharsis and empathy; and then tackle the question of the integrity of being before dealing with what Kierkegaard called the "fullness of time" in *Fear and Trembling*:

> ... for it is great to give up one's desire, but it is greater to hold fast to it after giving it up; it is great to lay hold of the eternal, but it is greater to hold fast to the temporal after giving it up.
>
> Then came the fullness of time.[16]

The phrase alludes to *Galatians* 4, 4 and therefore to messianic times, which need not be interpreted as the end of times but as time appropriated as the substance of subjective achievement, of radiating plenitude.

Empathy vs catharsis

In his anthology of First World War Poetry (1979), Jon Silkin, who was a poet himself, questioned the notion of catharsis,[17] defined by Aristotle as the purgation of the emotions of pity and fear, that is as a cure, as a means of "escape from emotion,"[18] as T.S. Eliot puts it in "Tradition and the Individual Talent". Silkin wrote: "There is in this poetry [of the war poets] something so profoundly *real* that I find myself questioning the idea of catharsis. And this is because I think, as the war poets did, that we must not dispel others' suffering, but, on the contrary, absorb it."[19] In his book entitled *Out of Battle*, the same poet quotes Yeats justifying his dismissal of war poetry in the *Oxford Book of Modern Verse* in 1936 on the ground that "passive suffering is not a theme for poetry. In all great tragedies, tragedy is a joy to the man who dies. [...] If war is necessary, or necessary in our time and place, it is best to forget its suffering as we do the discomfort of fever."[20] In the same way, T.S. Eliot advocates impersonality in poetry: "Poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion; it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality."[21] Although he also states that "the artist keeps them [his intense feelings in excess] alive by his ability to intensify the world to his emotions,"[22] his "objective correlative" implies a detachment from emotion; as "a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that *particular* emotion," it is a sign which prevents the development of emotional excess. The process is cathartic and belongs to the finite world of tragedy: "What happens is a continual surrender of himself as he is at the moment to something which is more valuable. The progress of an artist is a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality."[23] Hegel's idealism and his conception of the symbol as emancipated from sensitive life come across. In his *Four Quartets,* Eliot speaks of "A symbol perfected in death."[24] Affirming that "in this depersonalization [...] art may be said to approach the condition of science,"[25] he likens poetry to a theory of knowledge under the dualistic mode of the subject/object relationship. The traditional antagonism between the mind and the passions endures: "... the more perfect the artist, the more completely separate in him will be the man who suffers and the mind which creates; the more perfectly will the mind digest and transmute the passions which are its material."[26]

Who could speak of plenitude if the personality is split? It is not sure at all that such idealism seeks for fullness of being. The aim is certainty of the mind as a shelter from the madness Graves told about in "The Cool Web". For such minds, the world of peace is "a world grown old and cold and weary"[27]. God is a God of war:

> Now, God be thanked Who has matched us with His hour,
> And caught our youth, and wakened us from sleeping[28]

Asserting that the "Poetry is in the pity,"[29] Wilfred Owen seeks no escape from suffering but wishes to restore the prerogatives of the individual subject as opposed to the object, the sign reducing the emotion to a disembodied symbol, or the hero and his victim as the objects of force.

Rachel Bespaloff[30] sets an accurate distinction between finite force as the willpower which man deifies and the infinite force which is God himself. In the Bible, God is the master of becoming while in the Greek world Necessity rules over the gods. The aesthetic catharsis responds to the absolute dominion of fate while ethics itself is a moment of resurrection, an insurrection of finite force against its own decay.

Ethics is based upon the I and Thou relationship which induces empathy. "If we share another's suffering deeply, the enjoyment as such lies, I believe, in the transmission of sympathy."[31] Through empathy, which means our recognition of human suffering as if it could be ours, the individual is restored to his due status of subject, which implies a choice of life rather than death.

Integrity of being

In "The *Iliad*, or the poem of force," Simone Weil[32] wonders how the soul can survive in a world reified by force. She insists on how strange it is for a soul to inhabit an object. War means that the only future of men is death, which is unnatural. (Considering man in his relation to death rather than life means therefore that one contemplates life from the outer point of view of tragedy, subjected to unconquerable necessity.) The war poets display such helpless distress but their poems give evidence of their ethical response to force and its reifying process. On Rupert Brooke's attitude, Charles Sorley made a relevant comment in a letter to his mother in April 1915, speaking of the poem I quoted above and saying it was "overpraised":

> I saw Rupert Brooke's death in *The Morning Post*. *The Morning Post*, which had always hitherto disapproved of him, is now loud in his praises because he has conformed to their stupid axiom of literary criticism that the only stuff of poetry is violent physical experience, by dying on active service. [...] He is far too obsessed with his own sacrifice, regarding the going to war of himself (and others) as a highly intense, remarkable and sacrificial exploit, whereas it is merely the conduct demanded of him (and others) by the turn of circumstances, where non-compliance with this demand would have made life intolerable. It was not that 'they' gave up anything of that list he gives in one sonnet: but that the essence of these things had been endangered by circumstances over which he had no control, and he must fight to recapture them. He has clothed his attitude in fine words: but he has taken the sentimental attitude...[33]

The son of a Professor of Moral Philosophy in Cambridge, Charles Sorley does not approve of the aesthetic attitude as regards war and violence. He aptly shows how this apparently disinterested idealism is narcissistic and suggests that we should consider such longing for sacrifice as "eccentric". The adjective is used by Kierkegaard to qualify the individual of the aesthetic phase; as he has not chosen himself through the ethical choice, he has no centre in himself and is the prey to such feelings as despair and boredom. The man of the aesthetic phase is ruled by the immediate life – an object, to a certain extent. In an essay about his experience of the Front, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin[34] admitted that he had enjoyed those moments when his individual being surrendered to a higher task and he was able to forget about himself as an individual. He speaks of plenitude of being.

The poets who expose the soldiers' suffering are those who consider the war through the values of life, and peace, not through the idealism of death. We should also say that such idealism is based on Heraclitus' view of life as ruled by the principle of discord, Polemos. Jan Patočka[35] affirms that submitting to force the warrior transcends it. Such triumph of death is based upon the divorce between the mind and sensitive life. Such ideas have lost their carnal roots within the individual subject; the unity of being is broken. William Blake opposed Negations to Contraries, saying that the latter, as the products of the separate intellect, negated life itself:

> "Negations are not Contraries: Contraries mutually exist;
> But negations Exist Not."[36]

Negations cannot engender life while Contraries are the principle of vital energy. "Without Contraries is no progression," he asserted in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*. "Attraction and Repulsion, Reason and Energy, Love and Hate, are necessary to Human existence."[37] He also faces the ambivalence of life, or the paradox of plenitude in his famous poem, "The Tyger", in which God is seen as a blacksmith, some sort of Vulcan, creating through deploying tremendous energy. "Did he who made the lamb make thee?"[38] Under the title "The Voice of the Devil," he shows how morals has narrowed that original generosity and he affirms:

> 1. Man has no Body distinct from his Soul; for that call'd Body is a portion of Soul discern'd 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.[39]

Life in its full scope denies the principle of contradiction and is the source for the poet's work, as Benveniste aptly remarked when considering Baudelaire's poems (see above). This is also Léon Chestov's point that life is denied when Reason imposes its negations on its original plenitude.[40]

> It is the Reasoning Power,
> An Abstract objecting power that Negatives every thing.[41]

Therefore, drawing from the vision of Ezekiel and the Book of Revelation, Blake creates a modern epic of the individual longing to restore his personal integrity of being.

> Four Mighty Ones are in every Man; a perfect Unity
> Cannot Exist but from the Universal brotherhood of Eden,
> The Universal Man, to Whom be Glory
> Evermore. Amen.[42]

The four "Mighty Ones," or principles of life, are Los, or the Imagination, whose name was Urthona in Eden; Luvah, passion, also called Orc, or revolutionary energy; Tharmas, the body and instinct; Urizen, the intellect and the law. Each of them has an

Emanation in the temporal world. The integrity of Man implies the integrity of the world:

> These are the four Faces towards the Four Worlds of Humanity
> In every Man. Ezekiel saw them by Chebar's flood.
> And the Eyes are the South, and the Nostrils are the East,
> And the Tongues is the West, and the Ear is the North.[43]

The Imagination, or Los, secures the integrity of Mankind in time. The "Sublime" should not be "shut out from the pathos / In howling torment"[44]. Instead of generalising, like the philosopher or the scientist, the poet pays attention to the "minute Particulars"[45] and keeps memory of each individual being:

> All things acted on Earth are seen in the bright Sculptures of
> Los's Halls, & every Age renews its powers from these Works
> With every pathetic story possible to happen from Hate or
> Wayward Love; & every sorrow & distress is carved here,
> Every Affinity of Parents, Marriages & Friendships are here
> In all their various combinations wrought with wondrous Art,
> All that can happen to Man in his pilgrimage of seventy years.
> Such is the Divine Written Law of Horeb & Sinai,
> And such the Holy Gospel of Mount Olivet & Calvary.[46]

The poet's work aims at preserving the integrity of the individual subject, no longer the object of destructive force in the finite world of separate Reason but capable to find Infinity within his own soul:

> Then Los grew furious, raging : "Why stand we here trembling around
> "Calling on God's help, and not ourselves, in whom God dwells,
> "Stretching a hand to save the falling Man?"[47]

Man's inner creative force restores the integrity of the world in space and time.

> ... cruel Works
> Of many Wheels I view, wheel without wheel, with cogs tyrannic
> Moving by compulsion each other, not as those in Eden, which,
> Wheel within Wheel, in freedom revolve in harmony & peace.[48]

The objective world remains without while the subjective one acts within; it is a centre in itself – a generating centre comparable to God, who is the creative unity of the world. "God is within & without : he is even in the depths of Hell !"[49] He is the primeval energy of being which secures the integrity of life in each individual being.

> "Let the human Organs be kept on their perfect Integrity,
> "At will Contracting into Worms or Expanding into Gods"[50]

The Imagination, or the poet, transcends history and destructive time:

I see the Past, Present & Future existing all at once
Before me.[51]

Blake's view is Biblical since he believes that the principle of life needs the infinity of time to take shape. "Eternity is in love with the productions of time."[52] In *Milton*, he writes:

Time is the mercy of Eternity; without time's swiftness,
Which is the swiftest of all things, all were eternal torment.[53]

Life is embodied in time and space and each individual is comprehended in the analogy of being expressed by the pronoun "we":

"… for tho' we sit down within
"The plowed furrow, list'ning to the weeping clods till we
"Contract or Expand Space at will, or if we raise ourselves
"Upon the chariots of the morning, Contracting or Expanding Time,
"Every one knows we are One Family, One Man blessed for ever."[54]

"We" is a pronoun commonly used by the war poets. At the end of "Strange Meeting" by Wilfred Owen, it is used in its object case, "us" : "Let us sleep now…"[55] In the poem, "I" is the centre of consciousness; the "other" is first referred to as a third person until the moment when both soldiers talk to each other and the second person is used by "the other" who speaks of the "pity of war, the pity war distilled". Empathy implies that the status of sheer object is transcended: "I am the enemy you killed, my friend." We could say, using Blake's vocabulary, that in this line, *Negation* is dismissed and the integrity of being, within the poem, is retrieved.

One of the means of alienating men on the Front was to prevent them from "Contracting or Expanding Time". The most widespread feeling among the soldiers was the feeling of boredom.

The fullness of time

De dix heures jusqu'à minuit,
Il fait froid, je m'ennuie et je bâille.

[…]
Et dans un silence de tombe
Sans même la lune pour « calbombe »
Je m'emmerde sous la neige qui tombe.[56]

Those lines by the French libertarian poet Henri Poulaille give a good idea of the soldiers' feeling of boredom and alienation as regards the very substance of everyday life. Charles Sorley wrote: "The alarming sameness with which day passes day until this unnatural state of affairs is over is worse than any so-called atrocities; for people enjoy grief, the only unbearable thing is dullness."[57] The phenomenologist and psychiatrist

Eugène Minkowski[58] thought about the experience he had gone through and claimed that the soldier's worst enemy was boredom. Life, so governed by superimposed rules and outer constraints, became a void, the utmost of what Kierkegaard called eccentricity. For idealist poets, writers and thinkers, such as, among others, Rupert Brooke, Ernst Jünger and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, life in times of peace means boredom, that "delicate monster", as Baudelaire called it. At the opposite, for poets such as Ivor Gurney, for instance, war is some sort of exile from the substance that art gave to life.

> Watching the dark my spirit rose in flood
> On that most dearest Prelude of my delight.
> The low-lying mist lifted its hood,
> The October stars showed nobly in clear night.
>
> When I return, and to real music-making,
> And play the prelude, how will it happen then?
> Shall I feel as I felt, a sentry hardly waking,
> With a dull sense of No Man's Land again?[59]

And this is true also of Robert Graves, who went to the Front with poems of Keats and Nietzsche in his pocket, or of Isaac Rosenberg, Charles Sorley or Edmund Blunden.[60] In "Daughters of War", Isaac Rosenberg perceives the significance of the historical disaster ("Again the great king dies", he wrote in "The Burning of the Temple"[61]) and shows how the world is abandoned to wild violence:

> Space beats the ruddy freedom of their limbs –
> Their naked dances with man's spirit naked
> By the root side of the tree of life
> (The underside of things
> And shut from earth's profoundest eyes).[62]

In "Tickets, Please", D.H. Lawrence too associates the war with Dionysian wildness. "Outside was the darkness and lawlessness of wartime."[63] Benjamin Fondane affirmed, in *Baudelaire et l'expérience du gouffre* (1942): "*La cruauté est fille de l'Ennui.*" (Cruelty is the daughter of Boredom.)[64] As William Blake understood, the integrity of being and of life is peace. And this integrity involves the conversion of destructive time into the time of achievement, which Gerschom Scholem, and Walter Benjamin, called "messianic time".[65] The process is akin to Kierkegaard's *repetition*, meaning that the past is retrieved and projected into the future of the work of art. Scholem likened such subjective appropriation of time to the characteristics of the convertive *vav* of Biblical Hebrew, which transforms a past tense into a future tense and *vice versa*. Subjective time is the time of life's experience and individual achievement. It is time as we shape it within while chronological time is only an impersonal outer representation of duration. The individual subject transcends the time he has appropriated through his work and discovers in himself the possibility of the infinite, and therefore the plenitude of being, or the *fullness of time*.

The realization of peace, meaning plenitude and integrity of being, is the poet's everlasting quest, which links the origins to the future. Such plenitude can be achieved in some particular moments of bliss. The full experience of time is an alternation of rest and creative impulse, – of expectation and inspiration for the poet or artist. Graves was sure he could not possess the Muse permanently. Katherine Mansfield's epiphanies of being in "Bliss" or "Prelude" are syntheses of the existential epic. The aloe in "Prelude" takes the appearance of a ship sailing the sea. The poet wishes to give shape to time. The poem is a subjective conquest, and poetry, although it may express "passive suffering", is therefore highly active. The poem, or the work of art, restores the integrity of the individual subject, especially if he has become the object of history and force. Reviewing a book edited by Ernst Jünger in 1930, Walter Benjamin wondered why the values of war and death were so highly praised while the values of life and peace were so difficult to enforce. "And what do you know of peace?"[66], he asked the authors of that collection, entitled *War and Warriors*.

What do we know of peace? Some works of art give an individual answer, which means freedom as Blake understood (see above). Yet, if peace is plenitude and integrity of being, it is paradoxical as Robert Graves noticed as well as Blake did, in a poem called "In the Green Woods of Unrest". I am quoting the last lines:

> By the love that we contest
> In the green woods of unrest.
> You, love, are Beauty's self indeed,
> Never the harsh pride of need.[67]

The poet's paradise is achieved at some particular moments of poetic energy and it is founded on the intimate relationship with the Muse, or life in its cruel ambivalence.

> But we are gifted, even in November
> Rawest of seasons, with so huge a sense
> Of her nakedly worn magnificence
> We forget cruelty and past betrayal,
> Heedless of where the next bright bolt may fall.[68]

Plenitude stems from the existential rhythm of the heart ("The bleeding to death of time in slow heart beats"[69]) and its I and You counterpart :

> Where shall we be,
> (She whispers) where shall we be,
> When death strikes home, o where then shall we be
> Who were you and I?
>
> Not there but here,
> (He whispers) only here,
> As we are, here, together, now and here,
> Always you and I.

Integrity of being means naked awareness of man's existential plight and implies avoiding the idealistic duality of the cathartic sign – "a symbol perfected in death,"[70] or T.S. Eliot's "objective correlative" (see above) – and of the separate intellect; it is no escape from personality but its blossoming into the infinite of becoming. Peace means taking the risk of life and opening the present moment to the future – the true freedom of the subject's soul, not its maiming in a corpse-like object however heroic it may be. "It was fear, the ultimate fear of death, that made men mad," D.H. Lawrence wrote in *The Man Who Died*. And he added: "For men and women alike were mad with the egoistic fear of their own nothingness."[71] Art strives to transcend the tragic confinement to achieve integrity and freedom.

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[1] D.H. Lawrence, *Apocalypse* (1931). Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1981, p. 4.
[2] *Conversations de Goethe avec Eckermann*. Translated by Jean Chuzeville. Preface by Claude Roëls. Paris: Gallimard, 1988, p. 392.
[3] *The Poems of Wilfred Owen*. Edited by Jon Stallworthy. London: Chatto & Windus, 2004, p. 192.
[4] See Lionel Richard's entry on Otto Dix in the encyclopedia Universalis.
[5] Rachel Bespaloff, *De l'Iliade* (1943). Presented by Monique Jutrin. Paris: Allia, 2004, p. 77.
[6] Simone Weil, "L'Iliade, ou le poème de la force" (1940-41), *Œuvres*. Edited by Florence de Lussy. Paris : Gallimard Quarto, 1999, p. 529.
[7] Henri Meschonnic, *Les Cinq rouleaux* (1970). Paris: Gallimard, 1986, p. 51.
[8] I owe this point to Claude Vigée.
[9] Robert Graves, *The White Goddess* (1948). London: Faber, 1957, p. 448.
[10] Emile Benveniste, *Baudelaire*. Presented by Chloé Laplantine. Limoges: Lambert-Lucas, 2011, p. 198.
[11] Charles Baudelaire, "L'héautontimorouménos," *Les Fleurs du Mal* (1857). Paris : Le Livre de Poche, 1967, p. 92.
[12] R.M. Rilke, 5 avril 1903. *Lettres à un jeune poète, Œuvres I, prose*. Paris: Seuil, 1966, p. 320.
[13] Robert Graves, *The White Goddess, op. cit.*, p. 448.
[14] Robert Graves, "The Cool Web" (1927), *Complete Poems*, volume 1. Edited by Beryl Graves and Dunstan Ward. Manchester: Carcanet, 1995, p. 323.
[15] D.H. Lawrence, "The Blind Man," *England, My England* (1922). London: Penguin, 1960, p. 73.
[16] Søren Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling* (1843). Edited and Translated by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1983, p. 18.
[17] On the issue of catharsis, see Anne Mounic, *Monde terrible où naître : La voix singulière face à l'Histoire*. Paris: Champion, 2011, p. 284 and *L'Esprit du récit ou La chaire du devenir : Ethique et création littéraire*. Paris: Champion, 2013, pp. 50 et 218.
[18] T.S. Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (1919), *Selected Prose*. Edited by Frank Kermode, 1984, p. 43.
[19] *The Penguin Book of First World War Poetry*. Edited by Jon Silkin. London: Penguin, 1979, p. 46.

[20] W.B. Yeats, *The Oxford Book of Modern Verse* (1936), pp. xxxiv-xxxv, quoted by Jon Silkin, *Out of Battle* (1972). Second Edition. London: Macmillan, 1998, p. 177.
[21] T.S. Eliot, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' (1919), *Selected Prose*, *op. cit.,* p. 43.
[22] T.S. Eliot, "Hamlet" (1919), *ibid.*, p. 49.
[23] T.S. Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (1919), *ibid.*, p. 40.
[24] T.S. Eliot, "Little Gidding" (1942), *Collected Poems*. London : Faber, 1975, p. 220.
[25] T.S. Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (1919), *Selected Prose*, *op. cit.,* p. 40.
[26] *Ibid.*, p. 41.
[27] Rupert Brooke, "Peace" (1914), *Up the Line to Death*. Edited by Brian Gardner. London: Methuen, 1976, p. 11.
[28] *Ibid.*, p. 10.
[29] *The Poems of Wilfred Owen*, *op. cit*., p. 192.
[30] Rachel Bespaloff, *De l'Iliade* (1943), *op. cit*., pp. 76-77.
[31] Jon Silkin, *The Penguin Book of First World War Poetry*, *op. cit.,* p. 46.
[32] Simone Weil, "L'Iliade, ou le poème de la force" (1940-41), *Œuvres*, *op. cit.,* pp. 530 and 542.
[33] *The Poems and Selected Letters of Charles Hamilton Sorley*. Edited with an Introduction by Hilda D. Spear. Dundee: Blackness Press, 1978, pp. 97-98.
[34] Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *Ecrits du temps de la guerre (1916-1919)*. Paris: Grasset, 1996, pp. 171-172. On those questions, see *Monde terrible où naître : la voix singulière face à l'Histoire, op. cit.*
[35] Jan Patočka, *Essais hérétiques* (1975). Translated from Czech by Erika Abrams. Preface by Paul Ricœur. Afterward by Roman Jakobson. Lagrasse: Verdier, 2007.
[36] William Blake, *Jerusalem* (1808-1818)*, Complete Writings*. Edited by Geoffrey Keynes. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989, p. 639.
[37] William Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1793), *ibid.*, p. 149.
[38] William Blake, *Songs of Experience* (1794)*, ibid.*, p. 214. On a detailed analysis of this poem, see *L'Esprit du récit ou La chair du devenir : Ethique et création littéraire, op. cit.*, p. 107 and ff.
[39] William Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, ibid.*, p. 149.
[40] See Léon Chestov, *Sur la balance de Job* (1929). Translation by Boris de Schloezer. Paris: Flammarion, 1971.
[41] William Blake, *Jerusalem* (1808-1818)*, Complete Writings*, *op. cit*., p. 629.
[42] William Blake, *Vala or The Four Zoas* (1795-1804), *ibid.*, p. 264.
[43] William Blake, *Jerusalem* (1808-1818)*, ibid.*, p. 632.
[44] *Ibid.*, p. 736.
[45] *Ibid.*, p. 734.
[46] *Ibid.*, p. 638.
[47] *Ibid.*, p. 672.
[48] *Ibid.*, p. 636.
[49] *Ibid.*, p. 631.
[50] *Ibid.*, p. 686.
[51] *Ibid.*, p. 635.
[52] William Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, ibid.*, p. 151.
[53] William Blake, *Milton* (1808), *ibid.*, p. 510.
[54] William Blake, *Jerusalem* (1808-1818)*, ibid.*, p. 687.

[55] *The Poems of Wilfred Owen*, *op. cit*., p. 126.
[56] *Les Poètes de la Grande Guerre*, edited by Jacques Béal. Paris: Le Cherche-Midi, 1992, p. 54.
[57] *The Poems and Selected Letters of Charles Hamilton Sorley*, *op. cit*., p. 95.
[58] Eugène Minkowski, *Le Temps vécu* (1933). Brionne: Gérard Monfort, 1988.
[59] Ivor Gurney, "Bach and the Sentry," *Collected Poems*. Edited with an Introduction by P.J. Kavannagh. Manchester: Carcanet, 2004, p. 6.
[60] See *Monde terrible où naître : La voix singulière face à l'Histoire, op. cit.*
[61] *The Poems and Plays of Isaac Rosenberg*. Edited by Vivien Noakes. Oxford: O.U.P., 2004, p. 147.
[62] *Ibid.*, p. 142.
[63] D.H. Lawrence, "Tickets, Please," *England, My England, op. cit.*, p. 48.
[64] Benjamin Fondane, *Baudelaire ou l'expérience du gouffre* (1942). Bruxelles : Editions Complexe, 1994, p. 373.
[65] *Gerschom Scholem Zwischen die Disziplinen*. Francfort-sur-le Main: Suhrkamp, 1995, quoted by Giorgio Agamben, *Le temps qui reste : Un commentaire de l'*Epître aux Romains (2000), Translated by Judith Revel. Paris: Rivages poche, 2004, p. 126.
[66] Walter Benjamin, "Théories du fascisme allemand," *Œuvres II*. Translated from German by Maurice de Gandillac, Pierre Rusch and Rainer Rochlitz. Paris: Gallimard Folio, 2002, p. 207.
[67] Robert Graves, "In the Green Woods of Unrest" (1975), *Complete Poems*, Volume 3. Edited by Beryl Graves and Dunstan Ward. Manchester: Carcanet, 1999, p. 296.
[68] Robert Graves, "The White Goddess" (1948, 1951), *Complete Poems*, Volume 2. Edited by Beryl Graves and Dunstan Ward. Manchester: Carcanet, 1999, p. 179.
[69] Robert Graves, "Counting the Beats," *ibid.*, p. 180.
[70] T.S. Eliot, "Little Gidding" (1942-44), *Four Quartets, Collected Poems* 1909-1962. London: Faber, 1975, p. 220.
[71] D.H. Lawrence, *The Man Who Died* (1929)*, Love Among the Haystacks*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986, p. 146.