Volume 17 Issue 37
Originally issued as A6



Global Journal of human-social science: A
Arts & Humanities - Psychology
Volume 17 Issue 6 Version 1.0 Year 2017
Type: Double Blind Peer Reviewed International Research Journal
Publisher: Global Journals Inc. (USA)
Online ISSN: 2249-460X & Print ISSN: 0975-587X

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By Otto Doerr-Zegers

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GJHSS-A Classification: FOR Code: 190499



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The Question of the Technique in Rainer Maria Rilke's (1875-1926) "Sonnets to Orpheus" (1922)

Otto Doerr-Zegers

I. Introduction

All the cycle of the 55 *Sonnets to Orpheus* was written by Rainer Maria Rilke in a rapture of inspiration in February, 1922, some days after having finished his famous *Duino Elegies*. What stimulated him to do it was the death in 1919 of a young and beautiful dancer, Wera Ouckama-Knoop, for whom he felt great admiration. In a letter to Margot Sizzo of April 12, 1923, the poet speaks of her in the following terms: "This beautiful girl, who began first to dance and draw the attention of all who saw her by her innate art of movement and transformation, declared one day to her mother that she could or would not dance anymore (…). Her body changed in a very peculiar way: without losing its beautiful Asiatic features, it became strangely heavy and solid … (which already signaled at the beginning of her mysterious glandular disease, which so soon led to her death). In the time that remained to her, Wera dedicated herself to music and, finally, only to drawing, as if dance were to be cut off from her more and more gently and discretely, but never outright."

In January, 1922, Rilke was dedicated to writing notes about Wera's disease, so that a necessary nexus was established for him between the orphic thematic- which had always interested him – and the figure of the prematurely dead girl, and thus, in a letter to his editor Hulewicz, from November 13, 1925, he writes: "(She), whose immaturity and innocence keep open the door of the grave, so that, having crossed it, passes to pertain to those powers which maintain fresh one half of life and they open themselves toward the other half, sensitive as a wound". Few mythological figures impressed the poet so much as Orpheus and apparently, already before the death of the dancing girl, he had nourished the idea of writing a cycle of poems in her honor. The legend, beautiful and sad, reads as follows:

Orpheus, son of Eagro, king of Thrace and loyal worshiper of Apollo, was, like his idol, a big musician, and in addition a theologian and poet. All the nymphs admired his talent and wished to be married to him, but only the modest Eurydice seemed to him worthy of his love. The same day of their wedding the shepherd Aristeo, former suitor of Eurydice, tried to kidnap her. In her flight through the woods, she stepped on a viper, whose poison caused her death. Orpheus, without consolation, prayed to all the gods to get his wife back. Eros finally took pity on him and allowed him to descend to the underworld to look for Eurydice, but with the condition of not looking at her until he arrived to earth. The long way back, with Hermes' surveillance, was arriving at its end when Orpheus, fired by love and impatience, forgot his promise and looked back at his wife. Eurydice was snatched from him for the second time, sinking Orpheus in an infinite pain. Ignoring the mermaid songs of the Maenads, priestesses of Dionysius, who on one side felt an uncontrolled passion for him and on the other, they hated him for having despised the cult to their god, Orpheus took refuge in the mountains, where he dedicated himself to enchant nature with his music (Gebhardt, 1951). This process is described by the poet in Sonnet I of the first part, which begins with the verses:

A tree sprang up. O sheer transcendence!
O Orpheus sings! O tall tree in the ear!
And all was still. But even in that silence a new beginning, hint, and change appeared.

The last sonnet – the 26 – of the first part describes his terrible death in hands of the Maenads, but also the deep sense of his sacrifice: having bequeathed to humanity the words and the music. This is how in the last tercet he says:

"Oh you lost god! You everlasting clue!
Because hate finally dismembered, scattered you, now we're merely nature's mouth and ears".

In the rest of the sonnets Rilke tries, with an insuperable verse, the most diverse matters, among which some orphic themes outline, such as the celebration, the song and the offer, and others such as the relation between immanence and transcendence, the bond of love with pain, the wonderful world opened to us by taste and smell and, finally, the dangers enclosed in the empire of the technique. The second part develops themes such as respiration, the mirror, the flowers, the Unicorn and death, but he also comes back to technique. Today we will only refer to this theme, given its enormous transcendence in the configuration of the time we are living, Post modernity, but also

Author: Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Chile and Director of Centre of Studies on Phenomenology and Psychiatry at Diego Prtales University in Santiago. e-mail: odoerrz@gmail.com

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because it has become a danger for the survival of our species on earth. It is interesting, any case, the insistence with which Rilke refers – already in 1922, three decades before Heidegger did so – to the dangers harbored by technique. And this in a time where the most absolute optimism prevailed with respect to the progresses of natural sciences and the consequences they would have for the development of more and more sophisticated technologies, which would make of the human being a real "super-man".

Rilke treats explicitly the theme of the technique in four of the 55 Sonnets to Orpheus. Now then, he also touches the subject in Duino Elegies and we will refer to it in the framework of the comments we are going to make about the sonnets in question.

Sonnet 18 of the First Part

Do you hear the New, Master, droning and throbbing?
Its prophesying promoters are advancing.

No hearing's truly keen in all this noise; still, now each machine part wills its praise.

See, the Machine: how it spins and wreaks revenge, deforms and demeans us.

Since its power comes from us, let it do its work and serve, serene.

In this sonnet Rilke touches for the first time the theme of technique, to which he referred with so much concern in the Seventh and in the Ninth Duino Elegies, theme he treats further this time. It is important to remember that his vision of the technique had much influence on Heidegger, who, in his well- known article *Die Frage nach der Technik* (The question of technique), makes statements so impressive and coincident with Rilke's apprehensions as the following: "(For the man of technical time) nature has become a unique and gigantic 'gas station', in a mere source of energy for modern industry" (p. 18).

The sonnet begins with a question asked by the poet to Orpheus: "Do you hear the New, Master, / droning and throbbing?" The "new" is certainly the technological revolution, with all the machines and instruments it has invented and whose riskiness for the man's future is already intuited by Rilke in 1922. We must not forget that in that time the ideology of the indefinite progress absolutely reigned and Heisenberg had not yet issued his "uncertainty principle" (1927), first physical discovery which made tremble the foundations of that ideology. Up to that moment everything was praise for natural science and its technological applications ("Its prophesying promoters/are advancing"). This world of machines and their limitless power appears essentially linked to noise, to the absence of silence and, consequently, of peace. In the first strophe the poet defines "the new" as that which "drones and throbs" and in the second he reminds us that nobody is "keen on all this noise". The noise of the cities is produced by transport vehicles; the noise of the factories and their outskirts, by industrial machines; that of airports, by aircraft engines; that of houses, by multiple domestic machines; etc. Man has nowhere to hide from noise in the modern world, because even closed environments such as hotels and supermarkets inundate our ears with "elevator music", probably the worst music man has ever invented.

In the first tercet the poet warns us and with harsh words, about the danger that technique means for man: the machine will end up "getting revenge" on us, because it "deforms and demeans us". With respect to the first consequence of this revenge, it would be enough to think of the worrying deformation of the minds of young persons and children produced by television and computing (M. Spitzer, 2012). The "demeaning" which the poet predictedfor us could be perfectly identified with the notable increase of depressive illnesses during the last fifty years, which reach prevalence rates which in a cross-section oscillate – depending on the definitions and on the inclusion criteria – between 10% and 25% of the population (Ríoseco et al 1994, Weissman et al 1978). In the last tercet the poet accepts the fact that machines have been freely invented by man ("their power comes from us") and that they have made life easier for us in many ways ("let them do their work and serve"), but at the same time he asks us not to forget that they work "serenely", that is, that by lacking feelings both the machines and the world they represent, it is not unlikely that they are transformed into instruments of destruction and depredation. It is enough to think of atomic weapons, the destruction of the native forest and the rain forest, the increase in the earth's temperature- clearly related with industry and transport CO_2 emissions and finally, the almost daily rupture of new ecological balances, everything a result of technical progress, as to find Rilke's reason in his prophetic apprehensions.

Sonnet 22 of the First Part

We're the drivers. But take time's stride as trivial beside what remains forever.

Everything hurrying will already be over; for only the lasting is our initiator.

Boys, oh don't waste your courage on being fast or on risking flight.

All these are at rest: darkness and light, flower and text.

We the humans are vagabonds on this earth. The poet already said it in the Fifth Elegy, when he refers to the acrobats as "these troupers, even more transient than us" (p. 33) and also in the Ninth Elegy, when he says "because all that's here, vanishing so quickly, seems to need us and strangely concern us. Us, the first to vanish." (p. 61). At the end of that same elegy Rilke

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speaks to us of the fugacity both of things and of humans: "Perishing, they turn to us, the most perishable, for help" (p. 65). But immediately after having affirmed our wandering and brief condition he advises us not to pay so much attention to the passage of time, but to "what endures". Not everything is devoured by time and in our life we must learn to discover "permanence", since that is the only thing that can "consecrate us" to God, to eternal life. We must also remember that in that other dimension all the constraints will be "already past" and consequently its urgency and meaning will be lost.

In the first tercet and in a case of almost incredible premonition, the poet calls on youth to not let themselves be seduced by speed, that which reigns in all modern life through the generalized facilitation allowed by technique. He also refers concretely to the speed of automobiles, which so much fascinates young people, but which has been transformed – via car accidents – into the first cause of death in the persons younger than 40 years old. In our opinion, with the image of "flight", so valued by youth, the poet is not referring so much to the airplane as sports vehicle, of war or of transport, but to that certain annulment of space which these machines have signified in the last decades. We know that today and with the greatest facility one can be in a few hours in anyplace onthe planet. Is that so good? Will it not contribute rather to alienate the human being, by withdrawing him from peace and from himself? The alternative ("all these are at rest") offered by the poet to that world in which space and time have almost disappeared, world which searches simultaneity and ubiquity – to be everywhere and therefore nowhere – is the return to nature ("darkness and light" and further "flower") and to the retreat of reading (the "book").

Sonnet 24 of the First Part

Shall we reject oldest friendship, the great undemanding gods, because the tough steel we trained so hard does not know them; or suddenly week them on a map?

Although they take the dead from us, these powerful friends never brush against our wheels. We've moved out baths and banquets far away, and, for years too slow for us, we always outrun their messengers. More lonely now, wholly dependent on each other, not knowing each other, no longer do we build those lovely paths rambling, but straight. Now only in boilers do former fires burn, heaving hammers always growing bigger. But we, we grow weaker, like swimmers.

The initial thought of this sonnet is that the gods have abandoned us when we repudiated the friendship with them. This image had been already stated by Hölderlin in his famous elegy "*Brod und Wein*" and then developed by Heidegger in the already mentioned booklet "*Wozu Dichter…"* (For what poets…). According to this author "the night of the world extends its shadows: the present era is determined by the withdrawal from God, by 'God's lack'. This God's lack experienced by Hölderlin does not deny, however, the continuation of the Christian relation with God in singular individuals and in the churches, as well as it does not either pejoratively judge such relation with God. God's absence only means that no god keeps gathering around him, in a visible and manifest form, men and things, starting from that gather which structures the history of the world and the stay of men in it." (p. 265). Now then, these gods were kind and did not demand too much from us, at least in the West ("the great undemanding gods"), since some Eastern gods and not to mention pre-Columbians demanded many human sacrifices.

The second fundamental idea is that the machines we have invented have little or nothing to do with those gods who inhabited and ordered the world through so many millennia ("the tough steel we trained so hard does/ not know them"). The first strophe ends with the question the poet raises about the fact if perhaps we should not appeal to some of our techniques to rediscover the lost gods, as we use the maps to orient ourselves in the air, the sea or the earth. This is otherwise the attitude adopted both by the traveler and the archeologist when, with detailed maps, they search to find the footprints of the old gods in forgotten temples and sanctuaries.

The second strophe begins with a difficult to interpret statement: "Although they take the dead from us, / these powerful friends…".Does the poet refer to the fact that the gods always knew more about the death than us the mortals and that the usual was to think that the living persons moved to their reign after death? Or does it deal, as his friend Katharina Kippenberg maintains (p. 287), with the fact that the dead persons are we ourselves, the living persons of the era of technique, who are dead for the spirit and for the gods? In any case, they have nothing to do with our highly technological world ("never brush against / our wheels"). Moreover, our celebrations and purifications are not in their honor anymore ("We've moved out baths and banquets / far away"). But the most impressive example of the empire of a secularized and demystified worldview is the fact that our technologies widely overcome in speed the messages of the gods ("and, for years too slow for us, / we always outrun their messengers". Rilke got to know the telegraph, the telephone and the radio; the later development of the television, of computing and of that universal and instantaneous network of communication and of knowledge which is internet, has done nothing but prove him right.

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The third strophe, which begins with part of the previous quote, states us another transcendental theme, which is that, in spite of the speed and the ease of communications, we are now much more alone than before, when we depended on the gods. We have never needed each other more than in the modern era and this for two reasons: one, because we have made ourselves dependent on the machines invented by others for us; another, for the massively and anonymous nature of industrial work, unlike the freedom of the craftsman in the relationship with his tools and with the products of his work. In summary, we do no walk anymore through life through undulating and unknown paths, enjoying the landscape and slowly discovering the world ("no longer do we build those lovely / paths rambling, but straight"), but we always go through the straightest possible road and at the maximum speed our means of transport allow.

The machines grow in number, size and potency ("heaving hammers always growing / bigger") and only in their inside remain perhaps rests of "former fires", that is to say, of those which existed yesteryear between the mortals and the gods. How many celebrations and adorations, how many prayers and songs of praise have been directed to God (or to the gods) throughout history! And all that feeling, that fire which ascended to the skies is in the process of disappearing or is lowered to the condition of serving in the invention of new forms of energy which move the machines ("only in boilers / do former fires burn…". Meanwhile we the humans are beginning to lose (spiritual) strength and anytime we will end up being drowned, as exhausted swimmers. We cannot fail to associate this thought of the poet with respect to the future of the world of the technical era with different forms of degradation of the human which are beginning to appear in post modern society, as it is the case of drug addiction, the loss of the language and of the forms, the oblivion of the sense for history and tradition and the progressive absence of an authentic religious feeling.

Sonnet 10 of the Second Part

As long as it dares to exist as spirit instead of obeying, the machine threatens everything we've gained.

It hacks the stone starker for more determined building so we won't be drawn by the lovelier lingering of the master-hand.

Nowhere does it stand aside so we might once escape it and, oiling itself in a silent factory, become its own thing.

It is life – it believes it's all-knowing and with the same mind makes and orders and destroys. But for us existence is still enchanted. It's still beginning in a hundred places. A playing of pure powers no one can touch and not kneel to and marvel.

Faced with the unutterable, words still disintegrate … And ever new, out of the most quivering stones, music builds her divine house in useless space.

The theme of technique and its dangers appears here again. The poet begins harshly stating that the machine constitutes a direct threat for"everything we've gained", that is to say, for our culture, that which the man has added to nature. This danger could only be conjured if the machine is subjected to the spirit and not inversely. Then he goes on to describe the characteristics of this "machine". Rilke speaks of three features associated with technique and which make it dangerous for the future of man. In the first place, its perfection when "hacking the stone" is such that it prevents "us from being drawn by the lovelier lingering of the master-hand" in its natural hesitations, in its advances and retrogressions in the consummation of work. The poet opposes the doubts of the "master-hand" (of the craftsman) with the decision of the machine in the construction of buildings, for example ("it hacks the stone starker for more determined building"). In the second place, it does not stay behind in anything, since in everything it overcomes us the humans, its creators: in speed, in strength, in precision, etc., so that once the machine is invented, we cannot manage without it. And by knowing this that we have no escape, it stays calm in the factory, resting by itself and "oiling". With this last image the poet wants to indicate the fact that the machine needs very few things to work and one of them is oil; but at the same time he is alluding to its oily and heavy existence, which comes to be exactly the contrary of the lightness of the spiritual, of that revelation which produced God for us in the soul in Sonnet 9. The third feature that Rilke describes as characteristic of the machine is that little by little it has tried to replace life ("It is life – it believes it's all-knowing"). And that is how it "makes" new forms, "orders" human life (let us think on the computer, also called "ordenador" in Spanish), but also "destructs": it destructs the woods and the landscape; it dirties the air, the water and the earth.

But the poet visualizes a salvation, since in spite of this progressive dominion of technique, the human existence still remains "enchanted" and "it's still / Beginning in a hundred places". This last means that fortunately there are many untouched places (of original nature) and many others, such as the temples and the pilgrimage sites, which are sacred and where technique either has not arrived or does not play any role. But then he specifies the characteristics of that which still enchants human nature: "A playing / of pure powers no one can touch and not kneel to and marvel". These "powers" cannot be but those which emanate from the artwork and from its creator. As in the elegies, this appears as what gives sense to human existence. Thus, in the Seventh the poet says:

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Angel, I'll show it to you yet. There! At last it shall stand straight, finally redeemed in your eyes.

Pillars, pylons, the Sphinx, the cathedral's striving gray thrust out of its crumbling or alien city.

Wasn't it a miracle? Oh, angel, marvel. That's us, us, O great one. Tell them *that's* what we could do…

But there are two other forms of artistic expression, besides architecture and sculpture, which also save us from the threat of technique: literature, more precisely poetry, and music. The first is alluded in the verse that reads: "Faced with the unutterable, words still disintegrate". What a beautiful definition of what is poetry! To bring the word up to the limits of the unspeakable, of the ineffable. The last two verses refer to music, product of human imagination and intelligence, art which always surprised Rilke and which he considered as the true bridge between the men and and the gods. The music is "ever new", because each time we hear it is as if it was the first time. Its house is "divine", because in no realm of the human can the gods dwell better that in it. And this "divine" mansion is constructed by music from some "quivering stones" and in a "useless space". It is evident the connection between the last verse of this sonnet and the First Duino Elegy, in which the music arises in a space "dominated by terror" (cosmic space, "useless space") and as a product of vibration in "the vacuum itself" provoked by the death of the young semi-god Linus, son of Apollo and inventor of music.

I could not end this essay without referring to the last of the sonnets, the 29 of the Second Part, because even when it does not touch the theme of technique in an explicit form, such is the depth with which it approaches the sense of human and of the whole reality, that in some way it illuminates and gives sense to all the rest of the cycle, certainly the sonnets dedicated to the technique. Here is the last sonnet:

Sonnet 29 of the Second Part

Silent friend of many distances, feel how your breath is still expanding space.

Let yourself peal among the beams of dark belfries. Whatever preys on your will grow strong from this nourishment.

Know transformation through and through.

What experience has been most painful to you?

If the drinking's bitter, turn to wine.

In this vast night, be the magic power at your senses' intersection, the meaning of their strange encounter.

And if the earthly has forgotten you, say to the still earth: I flow.

To the rushing water speak: I am.

In his admittedly scarce notes about the sonnets, Rilke says with respect to this simply the following: "To a Wera's friend". In the Critical Edition (1996) it is maintained that this sonnet could constitute a new development of the final verses of the previous one, in which the poet imagines himself being guided by the dancer toward "that unheard-of center" of Sonnet 28. K. Kippenberg, for her part, thinks that the poem is directed to that Wera's friend mentioned by Rilke in the note and whom the poet would be calling to overcome the pain for the loss and to recognize, instead, the infinite gifts life offers us. I should have to say that I am in complete disagreement with both interpretations, because I think that the alluded here is Orpheus himself, to whom the poet directs himself, treating him as "silent friend of so many distances". This is deduced from each one of the verses – as we will see when analyzing them- but in particular from the second strophe, where he says: "Know transformation through and through", since it is precisely this characteristic which the poet employs for defining god at the beginning of the cycle: "Because it's Orpheus. His metamorphosis / is in this, and this." (Sonnet 5, I).In the second place, because I think that by being the last sonnet of a cycle of fifty five – in which the fundamental themes of the human being have been stated – it seems a miss that the poet has limited himself in it to console Wera's friend for her death. Neither can I be in agreement with the interpretation of the same Kippenberg in the sense that the final message of the sonnet and therefore, of all the cycle, be that of the superiority of the man over nature, since in the rest of the sonnets he postulates again and again the contrary: the man as integrant part of the nature and even very close to animals. We find this last clearly expressed at least in two of the sonnets: 1 and 16 of the First Part. In the first the orphic transformation compromises both the animals and primitive man; in 16 the poet asks God to allow the full access of the dog to the human condition, in order that this way it is incorporated to the world of the "needs and joys of the man", as Rilke himself says in the respective note.

Before proceeding to analyze the poem verse by verse I would like to advance a brief general impression, which is that here the poet radically changes his attitude before Orpheus. In most of the previous sonnets it is a matter of a praise directed to this god who gave us music and the word, who overcame his pain spiritualizing the world, who manifests himself in a thousand different ways, who defends us from the passing of time and from death, who will save us from the destruction which technique is causing, etc. In this last sonnet, instead, it is the poet who consoles, comforts and advises this god forgotten by men. This attitude is absolutely explicit in the last tercet, which begins with the verse: "And if the earthly has forgotten/ you…", but we find it already in the second verse of the first quartet, when the poet remembers Orpheus that "your breath is still expanding space", which means that in spite of its distance, his "breath", that is, his soul, his voice, are still capable of creating spaces, of

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constructing worlds in the confluence of nature and spirit.

Let us analyze now the first verse. The treatment of "friend" seems to us a way to approach the distant god, but it is also the appellative which allows the poet to change from the attitude of worshiper to that of consoler. In relation with the "so many distances", I think that they do not refer only to the oblivion in which Orpheus has fallen among humans, but to a more universal problem, which is the distance and silence of God in general, something repeatedly expressed by the mystics, but also suffered by ordinary people in some moments of pain and darkness. I think impossible to express in a most beautiful and brief way this semantic richness than how Rilke does it in these two first verses of the last sonnet: "Silent friend of many distances, / feel how your breath is still expanding space". In the third verse of this first quartet the poet employs a very adventurous image, but not for that less beautiful: he asks Orpheus that he transform himself in the sound "of dark belfries", that is, that he become one with the bells of little and forgotten churches, in places where their ringing invades and in a way directs the life of the whole village, in churches that, as the Romanesque chapels of Old Castile, preserve the atmosphere of the sacred and one feels in them, as in no other space of modern world, the presence of the gods.

The last verse of the first strophe is connected with the first of the second and the theme is the nourishment we have received from Orpheus, "on you will grow strong from this nourishment", is the human spirit, since our greatest achievements on the evolutionary scale are without doubt the access to the conscience and having created culture, which were possible because we could count on the word and on the music – the bridge between the men and the gods- both gifts from Orpheus (Sonnet 26, I). The following verse is a sort of order the poet gives to the god: "Know transformation through and through". From the initial consolation he goes on to indicate to Orpheus what he must do to maintain his validity. And the first is to be faithful to his own essence: "Because it's Orpheus. His metamorphosis is in this, and this.", he tells us in Sonnet 5 of the First Part. And further, in Sonnet 12 of the Second, he invokes us to enter also us humans in the process of transformation: "Will transformation. Oh be crazed for the fire". And in the second quartet of the same sonnet he expresses this need of metamorphosis in an even more explicit way, through the sentence: "What wraps itself up in endurance is already the rigid…".Orpheus must be then faithful to this command and avoid every form of detention, of rigidity, of one-sidedness. And here it is then produced the connection with the second part of this quartet and all the first tercet, beginning, as far as I know, to come near to what I consider the culmination not only of this sonnet, but of the entire cycle. The poet asks the god about what is hardest for him: "What experience has been most painful to you?" And immediately after, he offers him the formula to overcome it: "If the drinking's bitter, turn to wine".

To understand these verses we should remember some essential elements of the myth: Orpheus was a faithful disciple from Apollo, the god of the intellect and of the spirit, opposed to every form of passion, rapture or excess. This other world was represented by Dionysus, the god of drunkenness, whose priestesses were precisely the Maenads or Bacchantes, who, through all possible means, tried to seduce Orpheus, without achieving it; they filled then themselves with thirst for revenge and searched, until they found it, the occasion to murder and quarter him. The Greeks, with their love for balance and moderation, accepted these two sides of the human being and in fact, they equally adored both gods, realizing magnificent festivities in honor of each one of them. What the poet is asking the god is, then, that he transforms himself in the Dionysian wine which produces rapture and drunkenness in humans; that he should not be unilaterally Apollonian, although this is beautiful and elevated and saintly, because we need to hear once in a while the call of the passions and of irrationality. This interpretation is seen corroborated by the verses of the following strophe, which say: "In this vast night, be the magic power / at your senses' intersection, / the meaning of their strange encounter". In these verses the poet already places the spiritual Orpheus in a Dionysian night and begs him to be transformed in the sense of that intersection of the superior (or Apollonian) senses, such as sight and ear, and the inferior (Dionysian),those linked to the experience of the body and consequently, of pleasure: touch, taste and smell.

In the second tercet the poet brings his call towards the universal harmony of the opposites to the maximum expression, when he asks the god that before the "still earth", namely, to the solid, to the permanent, he emphasizes the flow, the change. The permanent represents the being of Parmenides in his immutability, that whom the great pre-Socratic philosopher defines in one of his texts as "unique, he exists immobile; to be is the name of the whole". The flow, on its side, represents the being of Heraclitus – the other great pre - Socratic- that being he described in so many forms, as when in Fragment No. 49 a he says: "We do not bathe twice in the same river, both we are and we are not" or in No. 88, when he states: "What is in us is always one and the same: life and death, wake and dream, youth and old age; since for the change this is that and again for the change that is this" (p. 352). But to reach that balance and that harmony it is necessary to also be placed in the contrary position and before the fluidity and mutability of

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the water and of the temporary nature of time which devours everything and that the flow of the water represents as nothing and nobody, we need to hang on the consistence of the being (of the "I am"), of that being which in a way each of us are and that in a way we feel immortal, something nobody expressed with most strength and propriety than the great Goethe in the first verses of his famous poem *Das Vermächtnis* (The Legacy):

No being can be disintegrated toward nothing!, since the eternal lives and is prolonged in each one…" and also in one of his aphorisms: Everything that is born remains.

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Global Journal of Human-Social Science (A) Volume XVII Issue VI Version I Year 2017
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