Italian Hermeticism and Romanian Oneirism: An Ideological Approach

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The aim of this article is to draw a parallel between two totalitarian ideologies – fascist and communist – which reflect in the lives and works of two poets: Giuseppe Ungaretti and Daniel Turcea. The better to explore these issues, I want to set out two distinct objectives. The first is to describe, by comparing and contrasting, the two ideologies, in order to set the scene for a discussion on Italy's fascist and Romania's communist cultural policies, mainly in relation to literary culture. The second is to establish a connection between the two cultural policies and the lives of the discussed poets. By way of conclusion I will focus upon the influences and effects of the two ideologies in Ungaretti's and Turcea's literary works.

Keywords: Fascism, Communism, Hermeticism, Oneirism, Giuseppe Ungaretti, Daniel Turcea.

"A single dominant logic"

"All totalitarian regimes are born out of exclusivity and oppression administered – often with the best intention – by a single dominant logic".[1]

It is a principle which does not apply only to communism, but also to fascism; in the ideological discourse of both forms of totalitarianism, real logic is replaced by utopian logic, generated through the rationalizing of political imaginary. Communist mythology will found this utopian logic on the Promethean myth, which affirms the creative power of human beings, establishing a new religion, that of the new man who will gravitate "around his own sun, around himself".[2] The illusion of human deification and omnipotence is carefully built by propaganda, although it intersects, within the totalitarian doctrine, with millennial modern mythology, preaching the decadence of the present world and the descent (or rather, building) of the millennial kingdom.

Totalitarian ideology that develops from the intersection of these two myths (the Promethean and the millennial) relies, on the one hand, on the deification of the chosen one, the hero-saviour, the leader, and, on the other hand, on the utopia of a world to come, that justifies any means and sacrifice. Messianic millennialism is, therefore, the point from which all totalitarian myths radiate and to which they equally converge. They form the complex dictatorial philosophy which homogenizes seducible minds or, on the contrary, which legitimates individual abuse, as a condition for the achievement of collective utopia.

Seen in the unifying light of totalitarianism, without ideological differences, both right and left extremes are based on a similar mythology – the conspiracy myth, the myth of the savior, the golden age myth and the unity myth.[3] Their doctrines have not only obviously divergent points, but also very important correspondences. Both communism and fascism violently attack democracy and the idea of democracy. Then, communists and fascists have a plan of redemption, achievable through revolution and the emergence of the New Man. The left extreme teaches salvation for the proletariat through economic, social

and political cleansing. Fascists strive for national salvation, as well, but in their vision, this can be attained through ethnic cleansing, and the first targeted are the Jews. This is an important difference between the two doctrines: erasing racial and ethnic differences on the one hand, and xenophobia and anti-Semitism, on the other hand. But even if, officially, communism is internationalist and fascism - nationalist, in Romania, "ideological inflection of the early '70s led to the adoption of an autarchic nationalism".[4] Revolutionary messianism, which belongs both to right and left extremes' ideologies, originates more from the European atmosphere of the 20th century, animated by a revolutionary wind, than from the core of the two doctrines.

Fascism and communism can also be considered in terms of their relation between politics and religion: if communism exalted socialist atheism, Catholicism is revived through Fascism; however, the most important religion is the cult of personality. In fascist Italy, as well as in communist Romania, the political leader was glorified as the nation's saviour. In public and in propaganda, both the fascist and the communist regimes attempted to make their leaders omnipresent in society.

From programmatic similarities, the parallel can extend to similar political tactics. For example, both communists and fascists require discipline from their members: individual and organizational discipline; and both parties try to keep their adherents by denying them the right to establish contacts with the members of other parties.

Although the communist doctrine seemed to be of far more permissive and humanitarian appearance, the violence during the Soviet occupation and the terror which remained during Ceaușescu's regime, exceeded fascist dictatorship's effects on the cultural plan and the best proof is Italy's literary production, as opposed to Romania's, during the totalitarian era.

Fascist censorship

In Mussolini's Italy, the intrusion, in the cultural field, of political ideology (along with an entire totalitarian mythology), serves as a propaganda mechanism, although less brutal than in Nazi Germany or, to extend the discussion, than in Bolshevik Romania[5]. During the rise of fascism, a part of the intellectual community was rallied to the regime through the Manifesto published by Gentile in 1925 and signed among others by Ungaretti, Pirandello, Corradini, Marinetti, Soffici and Malaparte. Croce responded with the Manifesto of the Anti-Fascist Intellectuals, signed by eminent cultural personalities, claiming the necessary autonomy of arts and sciences from politics. Such a reaction would have been unimaginable (without severe repercussions) in communist Romania. It was only at the beginning of the third decade that the government started to put more serious pressure on culture, including universities: "In 1930 the Grand Council required faculty deans and rectors to have been party members for at least five years, and in 1931, an oath of loyalty to the regime was instituted for all university professors. [...] This was a huge propaganda coup for Mussolini, even though many of the jurors probably heeded Croce's advice to swear in order to prevent the universities being taken over by party placemen".[6]

After the fourth attempt on Mussolini's life, in October 1926, actions became more radical, but censorship was aimed more at the press than at literary productions. As opposed to the situation in Romania, political neutrality guaranteed Italian writers tranquillity and freedom of creation, but the intellectuals sharing different political views and members of other parties were subject to savage blackshirts reprisals. „All parties except the Fascist were suppressed and the last remnants of an opposition press disappeared. All the communist leaders then in Italy were arrested and the badly disrupted party went underground. Gramsci disappeared into prison, to emerge eleven years later only to die".[7]

Similar to communist propaganda, fascist ideology based its notions of nation and nationalism on the militarism of Italy's "new man", who would be deprived of individualism and autonomy, therefore willing to sacrifice his life (or literature) for the state[8]. However, atrocities against Italian people did not reach the level of those taking place under Bolshevism; Pauley identifies and describes the third phase in Italian fascist era, between 1929 and 1934, as one marked by "less activism". It is only after 1934 that we can speak of semi-Nazification.[9] At that time, books containing Marxist, socialist or anarchist like ideologies were forbidden, but they could be collected in public libraries and could be read under authorization for scientific or cultural purposes, with a permission that was quite easy to obtain. In 1938 there were public bonfires of forbidden books (works containing themes about Jewish culture, freemasonry, communist, socialist ideas). As fascism entered its last phase, censorship increased and aimed at aligning the book production with fascist ideology: the law of 18 January 1943, called "Disciplina della produzione libraria e degli stampati per il tempo di guerra" clarified "which books were to be subject to preventive censorship: publications related to propaganda, the war effort, international relations, and religious/racial issues of political importance. Scientific and 'entertaining' literature ('letteratura amena') were to be excluded unless – a significant exception – their content related to the war or to politics. ... A form also needed to be attached in which, among other things,

the author's racial status had to be specified".[10]

Nevertheless, as Bosworth shows, fascism in Italy was tempered by the continuing influence of the family and other nonparty institutions such as the Church, the army, the diplomatic corps and the universities. "Programmed to 'believe, obey and fight', Fascist Italians ...should have become Mussolini's willing executioners, automatic adepts of a new 'civil religion' and, therefore, crusaders [...]. First and foremost, they should have looked to impose a final solution on the 'Jewish problem'. In fact, however..., being Italian between 1922 and 1945 was not like that. Even Fascism's deplorable racism was, for the most part, as focused on Arabs, blacks, 'Slavs' and fellow Italians as it was on Jews. [...] During Mussolini's ascendancy..., his dictatorship was not a place where ideas and rhetoric meshed neatly or inexorably with practice".[11]

Though it was meant to legitimate the fascist propaganda, the literary production was not necessarily seen as a means of gaining political power, even if, in the third decade, Mussolini assumed the role of mentor for writers, in his discourse, held at the Society of Authors and Editors, on the 1st of August 1926.[12] His speech was short and did not include specific guidance on how the writers had to embrace fascist ideology in their work. Therefore, we cannot talk in terms of aesthetical "dictatorship" where Italian literature is concerned: there is no "monolithic, specifically Fascist aesthetics", neither an aesthetic ideology, supported by a repressive apparatus and designed to "enforce coherent Fascist principles as the Reich Chamber of the Arts did in Hitler's Germany".[13] Moreover, censorship did not impose heavy limits on foreign literature, and many of the foreigner authors were freely readable. This was not the situation in communist Romania, where publishing foreign literature was under strict surveillance and Romanian writers were forbidden to publish non-communist literature abroad, especially in Western countries. Besides, if foreign authors could freely frequent Italy and even write about it, with no reported troubles, and Italian writers could also go abroad with no restraints, in Romania things were quite the opposite and the Secret Police controlled every contact writers had in the West, in order to prevent any unfavourable propaganda against the communist regime.

Communist viruses and literature's antibodies

If we look at the Romanian context of the '60s, we notice that the communist ideology had already replaced the aesthetic criterion, substituting it with a political mythology; this is what would generate and legitimate the (re)pression methods and measures designed to enshrine the ideology in literary works. "Under the pressure of opposing force fields, the environment couldn't be but an infected one, although interesting, from the point of view of a totalitarian «aesthetics»" that "became an aggressive virus against which real literature was always compelled to produce antibodies, to provide responses and to defend in its own way, groping after free corridors".[14] In this morbid atmosphere, the oneiric group feverishly took part in what Eugen Negrici calls the "antibodies production". Far from being concerned about anything other than his art, Turcea remained one of the few writers who would accept neither a pact nor a compromise with the system. "In the East, literature acquires the function of a «combat weapon» both ideological and political, a function of education, propaganda and legitimation".[15] Ideas such as "there is no neutrality for the artists" or "the literate is an ideologist"[16] represented the new aesthetical criteria that the creators had to follow and thus contribute through art to the strengthening of communist myths. Despite the air of freedom, "Ceaușescu asks from literature in 1971 when he adopts the model of the Chinese cultural revolution, [...] to convert into a culture with and for the working class, with characters and themes inspired by it, written accessibly and in its language".[17] It is a ruling principle, comprising "an iconography (the visage of the activist and of the worker, the industrial landscape, the red flag etc.), artistic practices (involving the amateurs and those outside the artistic world), political behaviors (loyalty towards the party and public displays of it), and last, a plastic expression, socialist realism, which had become in the 1930's the only tolerated form of art by the communist parties.[18]

These are the specific criteria that Ceaușescu, unlike Mussolini, will impose to literature, the artistic strategy being very precise: "We cannot accept in Romanian literature any other concept except the dialectical materialism, the dialectical-materialism philosophy about the world and society"; "there is no press without a party as there is no literature without a party".[19] His speeches in front of the writers are ample and, even in shorthand, span over hundreds of pages. His requests are carefully repeated every time, and Ceaușescu does not omit to give subtle or even direct threats towards the nonconformists: "sometimes even in a garden a flower arises and spoils the ambiance and the perfume, and one is forced to cut it off".[20] This discordant note in the conformist literary landscape is the oneiric group, which Ceaușescu targets directly: "Some oneirics say: 'Why would I take things from everyday life? I sit there, in the café, and dream about how the world is, I imagine and write how I think the world is, and I write a sort of image, why would I learn things from reality'...".[21] Then, comparing the literary community with a beehive, Ceaușescu mentions that "the bees kill the drones", suggesting the elimination of the ideologically incongruous writers.

Under the motto "who is not with us is against us", the state of neutrality was almost impossible and required a very fine ideological-aesthetic balance, and the Secret Police archives and files from that time reflect the high degree of intolerance towards apolitical literature. The Secret Police made use of the full range of means: „pressure was put according to the psychological profile of each, but the method was definitely efficient in the case of those for whom fear had become, during that time, an implacable mechanism".[22] The Secret Police surveillance files are strong evidence of that.[23]

Communist language "formed of a preset vocabulary and immutable concepts" was not intended to reflect reality; it was "entirely at the disposal of the authority which uses it to qualify this reality". [24] Critical voices become uniform and the literary critique, "entirely theoretical", uses a language made of a "never ending series (on the contrary, this series, poor in combinatory possibilities, is a stereotype n.n.) of pseudo-concepts meant to patch the hiatus between the totalitarian ideology and literature".[25] Quoting Boris Eikhenbaum, Cristina Vatulescu describes also the ungrateful state of the so called literary critique: "As for our reviewers – critics we do not have anymore, since no difference of opinions is permissible – they are certain to be infinitely superior to, and more important than, the writer in the same way in which the judge is always superior to, and more important than, the defendant".[26] ()

The liberalization period did not bring essential changes, although the appearance of freedom was created; "any innovation was drastically censured, so that all initial affinities which had led to the formation of small communities of writers could not crystallize and be able to affirm group identity through a different aesthetic program. For this would have meant denying the official program and sovereign ideology".[27]

The activity of the oneiric group seemed even more subversive since, first openly then clandestinely, they maintained relations with the West, remonstrated against the regime and their protest became louder abroad, tried (successfully at times) to publish their works outside Romania etc. Despite the air of freedom, socialist realist critique, more attenuated than proletcultist militancy, retained its revolutionary spirit but disguised its rigid dogmas: enemies never sleep, they plot secretly and attack insidiously with subtle, subversive messages. This is how oneirism would be perceived by the watchful eye of the communist power.

Ungaretti and fascism

Ungaretti joined the National Fascist Party, signing, in 1925, the pro-fascist *Manifesto of the Italian Writers* after having worked, in 1919, as a correspondent



Giuseppe Ungaretti
Sursă foto: http://www.pantani.net/Ferrarese/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/medium_110329-184334_to270509sto_0007-1.jpg

from Paris for Mussolini's daily newspaper, *Il Popolo d'Italia*. However, it is hard to suspect Ungaretti of opportunism, despite his adherence to fascism, as Piccioni states: "being acquainted with Mussolini helped Ungaretti rather to support certain antifascist persecuted friends (or to keep himself out of jail in those two or three occasions when he was arrested for his fiery speeches: defending the Jews, for example, defending liberty) than to gain personal practical advantages. Forced to find teaching work in Brazil again in '36! And note that the foreword [Mussolini's, n.n.] from '23 (strange to say!) does not appear again in any of the following editions of the *Allegria*, neither in '31, nor '36, nor '43".[28]

But Mussolini prefacing the 1923 edition of *Il porto sepolto* and politicizing thus the poetic insight into the horrors of the war, remembers that Ungaretti "was not a political correspondent". Commenting upon this foreword, Piccioni remarks: "Ungaretti, anarchist but interventionist, and Mussolini, socialist, director of *Avanti!*, but also an interventionist, met, thus, in the proximity of war. Mussolini does not remember him already in '23. [...] In the seldom reports that they subsequently had, strange to say, Mussolini rather tolerated Ungaretti, fascinated perhaps by his lack of interest.[29]

But was Ungaretti really permeated by fascism?

He might have been, as long as fascism had still meant *totalitarian pluralism*, as Roger Griffin (1998: 20) characterized it. It is only within this form of totalitarianism that Ungaretti could have felt protected from any necessity to compromise, as Ruth Ben-Ghiat[30] underlined, arguing that the novel, rather than Ungaretti's modern poetry, would have represented the literary label and choice of Fascist intellectuals. Moreover, as Luti observes, fascism, at least during its first years, was tolerant with a movement that seemed easy to isolate (as opposed to "Solaria", for instance), and the works of the hermetic poets did not arouse "the opposition of the fascist censorship since they were considered not dangerous, providing also an advantage in order to prove the "liberality", even if purely embryonic, of fascism".[31]

Apart from that, it is the question of literary freedom which could be raised here, in particular, as it could be in relation to any totalitarian regime; in a private letter to a mistrustful French critic, Ungaretti claimed that fascist rule did not imply censorship: "Dear Cremieux, Orthodox fascists who cannot tolerate freedom of thought and criticism exist only in your imagination".[32] Besides, as far as fascist censorship is concerned, George Talbot (2006:138) identifies its origins in racism, a cause which did not affect Ungaretti but then, which could not be farther from his spirit, as Lucia Re remarks upon: "The racism implicit in fascist imperialism was particularly aberrant in Ungaretti's eyes. *Il deserto* not only reiterates Ungaretti's old admiration for the Jews but provides [...] an evenhanded assessment of the new Muslim solidarity and of Arab-Egyptian nationalism. [...] Ungaretti opposes any form of intolerance, violence, and fanaticism".[33]

As Ungaretti himself mentions: "It was a habit I developed in childhood, namely to value one's own nationality, of course, but also to reject the prejudice that I couldn't consider my brother the person belonging to a different one ... It is in my nature to know nothing about repugnance for another race or nation".[34]

Moreover, Ungaretti is not willingly engaged in warfare, whether fascist or not; he is not a revolutionary advocate of violent solutions. On the contrary, as Noto[35] observes, in his first poems he exclusively captures and illustrates the atrocities of war, not finding anything appealing in the idea of armed conflict. *L'Allegria* is predominantly an anti-war collection (as Baroni, Papi, Ossola, Cambon and others have agreed upon) and the harmless, enthusiastic pro-fascist articles he wrote derive from the fact that Ungaretti was, as Papi[36] noticed, more a friend than a supporter of Mussolini, admiring less his political ideology, but rather his fiery spirit. However, there are many voices denouncing Ungaretti's pro-fascist adhesion, such as Cristophe Mileschi's, who tends to ignore important aspects related to the historical and personal context which made Ungaretti susceptible to such political influences: the origins of Ungaretti's membership in militant fascism should not be sought within the naïve fault of a politically-ignorant and immature young man, but within the necessary and logical consequence of a literary work that requires the author's commitment.[37] But to what extent can we talk about politically engaged poetry as far as Ungaretti is concerned? Apart from the subtle patriotic verses of *Popolo*, which can be interpreted as the poet's embracing *un vento nuovo*, his formal adhesion to Fascism is not reflected in his literary work, appearing quite in opposition to the warmly human sensibility of his poems. He is not a victim, he is not a beneficiary of the regime, although he might seem to take undeniable advantages from his personal relation with Mussolini. Commenting upon Ossola's introduction to *Ungaretti Giuseppe: Filosofia fantastica. Prose di meditazione e d'intervento 1926-1929,* Giorgio De Rienzo agrees with the critic in this respect: "Despite Ungaretti's fervent adhesion to Fascism, he remained naïve in his passion, benevolent in his generous offer, and, maybe, particularly for that matter – suspect to the regime. For this is the truth: not only did he not become an indispensable intellectual for the fascism, but neither did he get a place in the Academy which he had desired".[38]

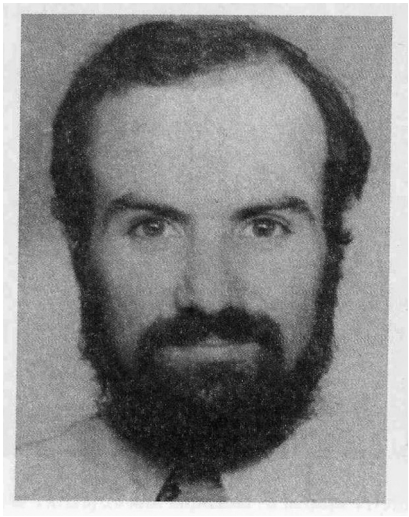
Mileschi gives another interpretation to Ungaretti's fascism and its relation to his verse, identifying a profound need for order that goes beyond dictatorial discipline: "it seems almost impossible not to notice the presence of a living and moving faith in *Il Dolore*, but, as literary critique has shown commenting upon his poems, the supposedly atheist Ungaretti from the first period was a believer ignoring himself." He further refers to Ungaretti's first poems, "those texts whose placement in the work (of Ungaretti) follows an *internal* necessity, poems with religious symbolic function: to echo, to connect, to re-connect the order of this world, as the Duce wants and does, with the sovereign harmony we feel nostalgic for".[39] The illustration of this self-ignored faith that requires harmony comes from the same text interpreted as a pro-fascist declaration of Ungaretti: "for the first time in many centuries, imposing military and religious harmony upon the Italian community, a leader feels the supernatural character of the impetus which the Providence has dictated him to impress on history".[40]

Turcea and oneirism vs. communism

Oneirism could not develop into a coherent literary movement like Hermeticism did in Italy, lacking both favourable time and space, and being prohibited by the regime; but contributed significantly

to the definitively aestheticizing process which began in the '60s, with the liberalization trend. Unlike the more combative, impetuous spirit of his oneiric "peers", Turcea undertook this aesthetic battle by adopting an attitude of rebellion through silence (or at least, through a less articulated opposition).

"The contextual analysis of the oneiric poetry and prose as well as of the theory of the structural or aesthetic oneirism highlights mostly an aesthetical motivation and purpose which are alternatively political".[41] Rather than engaging himself in debates and rhetorical combats, Daniel Turcea tried to resist the communist creed, to dissociate himself from the leftist patterns and to avoid any ideological influence, expressing himself exclusively through an aesthetic demarche. Therefore he is not so visible on the literary scene, neither employed by a publishing house, nor occupying a certain position (in fact, he doesn't even try to attain one and even remains unemployed for years, which was inconceivable at that time), just because taking literature seriously and being a writer meant for him avoiding any compromise that such positions might have required.[42] He felt – and proved – that poetry is not light industry producing consumer goods, but an abysmal descent into Maelstrom, on one's own. This is how one can find him over time in the few testimonials: alone and often lonely, writing without being published (not at any price), with an eight years intermission between the first and the second poetry book, without moral or aesthetic compromise. All these aspects, presented in a simple array, are revealed with difficulty and only after a thorough research that Romanian literary historians and critics have just started to make after 30 years of silence.



Daniel Turcea
Sursă foto: http://jurnalul.ro/thumbs/big/2013/12/14/poetul-daniel-turcea-urme-in-vesnicie-18469299.JPG

Daniel Turcea was a very discreet person and this accounts for the lack of testimonials related to his life. Paradoxically, I searched the poet's Secret Police surveillance file, but this document containing only 30 pages, provides very little information about him. In this report, he is accused of having a hostile attitude towards the communist regime and "suspect relations". But what was hostile in his behaviour? In a note, dated 14th of January 1974, an informer gives an account of a meeting held at the Writers' House, where Turcea seemed reluctant to the communist opinions of a certain "S. Diter". But the problem should be considered in a larger context: on the 17th of January, the same year, a new file is opened by the Secret Police, regarding "the hostile activities of the persons working in the artistic-cultural environment".[43] "Hostile activities" meant nothing but simple comments lacking communist enthusiasm, listening to foreign radio stations (such as *Free Europe*), contacts with foreign citizens, publishing abroad or any other action that could have been slightly interpreted as a protest. From this point of view, Daniel Turcea's bohemian, apolitical life seemed quite suspect to the authorities. Moreover, he remained unemployed, because he refused any job outside Bucharest, as he wanted to build a writing career (he was an architect). He had very few friends and his neighbours declared that he was "an introvert, distant and arrogant person, at least in his relations with the other locators in the building".[44]

In the eyes of the Secret Police, the poet must have seemed particularly dangerous because of his (harmless) relations abroad. On October 22nd, 1974, informer "Vasilica" reports that, meeting in June with Daniel Turcea, "he said he had made a request to go to France where a friend had made preparations for the publishing of one of Turcea's books".[45] Maj. Oprișor Onițiu concludes that this friend can be no other than Țepeneag, persona *non grata* in Romania, manifestly hostile towards communism, dangerous because of the anti-communist statements made at Radio Free Europe. A month before, on May 24th, 1974, in a holographic handwritten note, it was recorded: "An agent of our unit informed us that the following message was sent to Daniel Turcea from Flammarion bookstore in France, Paris: 'I would be very happy to meet you as soon as you come to France. We could talk about your poetry. I hope you will consider this an invitation. I would be happy to meet you.'"[46]

On January 25th, 1975, informer "Fălticeanu" reports that "a journal published in Canada and edited by a certain Toma Pavel included also some poems written by Romanian authors. Among these oneiric authors are Daniel Turcea, Leonid Dimov, Virgil Mazilescu, Vera Lungu".[47] All these aspects must have looked like real crimes, compared to the Secret Police's objectives "to identify those elements preoccupied with

writing literary works with a hostile or interpretable content, in order to publish them abroad",[48] although Turcea's poetry was as neutral as it could be, politically or ideologically.

As everything was subject to interpretation, every gesture was weighed and commented upon (often maliciously, by the zealous informers – colleagues of the "defendants"), Turcea could not avoid value judgments. On June 29th, 1974, informer "Bratu" writes about a recent meeting held with the young members of the Romanian Writers' Union: "Among the issues raised in particular by Daniel Turcea ... can be mentioned: difficulties in working with the publishing houses, small editorial spaces reserved to fiction, implying that the young writers´ works can be published with a reduced frequency. ... He said that 'we are the young generation, but we are prevented from enjoying our rights, we are professionals without profession' (an allusion to the fact that he is an unemployed architect).... He spoke in a very arrogant manner and denied the artistic possibilities of future generations, saying that 'the generations to come won´t have the same talent and education as we do'."[49]

Like any totalitarian ideology, communism "tried to absolutize its own imaginary, decrying all alternative forms".[50] The autonomous literary imaginary domain was to realist-socialist critique nothing but immanency, irrationalism, impossible to prove scientifically, therefore forgery to be avoided. Even the "minimalist" realism, while risking an "ideology dilution" by expanding its "palette, paid attention to the new tolerated concepts - 'distinctive timbre', 'subjectivity', 'diversity of styles' etc. – still considered dangerous and subversive".[51] The canonical socialist realism was particularly meant to regulate the poet's attachment to the socialist ideology and the poet's alienation from any decadent influence; thusly tamed, the artist's interiority was also monopolized. This was another antagonism with the oneiric literature, with its hidden mechanics, since the oneiric text "self-proclaimed its quality and right to have access to all reality, including the impenetrable interiority".[52] Daniel Turcea renders an almost mathematical application of the reality inserted, converted into poetry: "We perceive reality axiomatically. And as far as the immediate reality is Euclidean, based on axioms, the dream becomes the postulate and not the reality. But the dream of the oneiric art is a logical construction and not a hazard, although it is built on a mobile axiom, meaning that it is not working as an immobile axiom, it is not geometry built on a rigid postulate but on a variety of postulates".[53]

What is worth stressing in Daniel Turcea's case is a matter that sheds light on the poet's moral character. During the 60´s, along with the ideological relaxation, a more subtle way to compromise began to operate, which led to censorship´s approval: "young poets who then published their first books (Ana Blandiana, Nichita Stănescu, George Tomozei etc.) observed that this recipe based on blending pure poetry and ideological verse was accepted by the cultural activists of the Communist party and, eventually, they started to recommend it as a way of political-literary compromise that could satisfy everybody.[54]

Regardless of their works and of the differences in quality, the strategy was successful; yet, Turcea rejects this way to "satisfy everyone", keeps his verticality and prefers not to publish at all. This explains the long period of silence between the releases of his two books.[55]

Naturally, in the eyes of the communist regime, the oneiric poetry is firstly faulting by inaccessibility, thus decoding the poetic message impossible to "ordinary" readers, and, secondly, by abdicating from the realistic representation of immediacy, of the utopian communist world which does not need poetic adjustments in order to reflect utopia. Moreover, in contrast with the requirements of the political party and the poetry shaped at the lathe of patriotism, Daniel Turcea exploits imaginary places to enhance the aesthetic effect, areas full of meanings and symbols, full of mythology and archetypal images. There is no folk thrill crossing his verse, no nationalist cliché looming in some exclamation, because Daniel Turcea is far from using the rhetoric of his time. His poetry has no effusions. It is cold, intellectualized, and ironical sometimes, calculatingly hermetic, in disagreement with the infantilism shielded by the regime. Like Ungaretti in *Sentimento del tempo,* Turcea writes about Christian happiness, in his second volume; there is a pure joy of creation, an analogy game; a graciously geometrical poetry, with a rigor and conceptualization deeply spiritualized.

A rapprochement between Turcea's and Ungaretti's poetry might seem strained, as their works belong, apparently, to different periods. But the so-called modern Romanian poetry didn't have the time to evolve and was "sentenced" to anachronism by the brutal intervention of the party's aesthetical doctrine. As Eugen Negrici[56] observes, "the concept – incongruously called modernism – applied solely to what is new, has no philosophical ground". Modernism was recovered only in the 60s, during the period of slight liberalization, with the development of the so-called "new modernism". But, as the same critic states, "the new modernist writers are, in fact, modernist!"

I should mention first their exceptional cultural background and its preeminent French nucleus, which aroused and maintained their interest in the aesthetical field of European poetry. Daniel Turcea brought to Romanian poetry the finesse and delicacy of his verses

crayoned to an infinitesimal degree. In *Entropy*, his poetry has – *mutatis mutandi* – the eurhythmy and cleverly constructed meticulousness of Rimbaud's verse, alternating with wide and sinuous volutes. The writer is a virtuoso in producing hermetical images, through which, programmatically, he sees the opportunity and meaning of writing. On the other hand, Giuseppe Ungaretti considers that writing means, more or less, subliming one's personal diary. That is why his poetry, especially in the volume *Porto Sepolto*, will bear the mark of his immediate experiences. His ideas follow one another in an unforeseeable zigzag, which ultimately define a spiritual evolution. It is exactly this high temperature of ideas, of intellectual feelings, that converts the intimate diary into authentic poetry.

Daniel Turcea's poetry holds its extremes within: on one side we have *The Entropy*, a volume of a mathematical hermeticism, with astrophysics and alchemy references as well as oriental inflexions, with scholastic content in which the "logical luxuries" combine with the "geometrical extravagance"; and on the other side – *The Epiphany*, in which the author transposes a religious experience in verses of the most suave quality. The leap from the baroque-geometrizing, oneiric poetry, to the intensely spiritualized, unobtrusively orthodox verse of his last years (*Epiphany* and the posthumous volume *Love Poems*) unveil an incandescent inner adventure, impressive through its authenticity, transposed in a work in which the heavens of stars and geometry and the heavens of sacred letters are one and the same. Ungaretti is a poet whose pages anticipate their exegesis. A writer possessing an acute self-consciousness, he has the time and space dedicated to entire pages of genuine essay, of memoirs and literary critique *en miettes*, which facilitate the interpretation of his lyrics. Finally, their common traits can also be revealed, not without nuances, in the spiritual structure of their writings which bears the imprint of the sacred.

The thematic analysis of their poetry will lead to the wide-spread motifs, built on similar visions. The poets' association with this mythical universality, in contrast with the totalitarian ideology, will not serve an ethnical purpose, but a purely aesthetical one, which will encompass universal mythologies accessible to him through reverie: an extension of archetypal thinking in the present time and space and/or ahistorical. But even considered in the light of the primordial immanent thinking, originating from "the deeper layers of human emotion", the modern myth "cannot be considered to be pure emotion, as it is the expression of the emotion. The expression of a sentiment is not the sentiment itself – it is the emotion turned into an image".[57] For Turcea, as well as for Ungaretti, the symbolism-rationalism incongruity that the myth represents will find its own poetical solution through the hermeticism that encapsulates the dream and the fantasy, on the one hand, and on the other hand, the mathematical rigor.

Conclusion

Never-ending debate could be continued on the subject, but to summarize the main aspects discussed in this essay, I would limit myself to notice the obvious: where Ungaretti is concerned, we can only speak of approximate commitment to fascist ideology, an ideology which appeared far more permissive than communism in Romania. We could speak, at most, of a problematic adhesion, which does not intervene in the creative freedom. One would not find, in the Italian cultural landscape of that time, the obligation to insert ideological "special effects", zealous patriotic slogans in the literary productions, as it happened to Romanian writers affiliated or not to communism, because fascist propaganda did not require such distortions. But despite the powerful ideology, the actions taken in fascist Italy were not as drastic or repressive as the efforts of other totalitarian states to create a new culture. In comparison to the situation in Romania, art and literature in Fascist Italy were not strictly controlled, and were only censored if they were blatantly against the state.[58] Thus, we cannot speak of a fundamental difference (and not even a subtle one) between the ideological content of Ungaretti's and Turcea's works. The two poets shouldn't be considered at opposite poles in terms of their adhesion to a totalitarian ideology. The oneiric writers clearly withstood communist ideology, trying not only to distance themselves from it, but also to take action; nevertheless they were eventually scattered by the interventions of the Secret Police. Yet, as Ungaretti's poems will not reflect his fascist adhesion, neither did the actions of the oneiric writers show in their literature.

Notes:

1. Gilbert Durand, *Introducere in mitodologie*, Dacia, Cluj-Napoca, 2004, p. 131.
2. Jean-Paul Sironneau, *Le communisme lénino-stalinien*, Mouton Editeur, La Haye-Paris-New York 1982, p. 382.
3. Raoul Girardet, *Mituri şi mitologii politice*, Institutul European, Iaşi, 1997.
4. Irina Gridan, *Du communisme national au national-communisme. Réactions à la soviétisation dans la Roumanie des années 1960*, in *Vingtième siècle*, no. 109, Jan.-Mar. 2011, p. 126 ["L'inflexion idéologique du début des années 1970 entraîne une évolution vers un nationalisme ethnicisé et autarcique. Le « folklorisme d'Etat » se manifeste à travers une mise en scène", trad.n.].
5. see, for instance, R.J. Bosworth, *The Italian Dictatorship:*

Problems and Perspectives in the Interpretation of Mussolini and Fascism, Arnold, London, 1998 cf. Katherine Verdery *National Ideology Under Socialism. Identity and Cultural Politics in Ceaușescu's Romania*, University of California Press, Los Angeles, 1991, Cristina Vatulescu, *Police Aesthetics: Literature, Film, and the Secret Police in Soviet Times*, Stanford University Press, 2010 or Ana Selejan, *Reeducare și prigoană*, 2nd ed., Bucharest, Cartea Românească, 2005.

6. Cristopher Duggan, *The Force of Destiny: A History of Italy Since 1796*, Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 2008, p. 462.

7. Christopher Seton-Watson, *From Liberalism to Fascism,* Methuen&Co, Ney York, 1981, p. 665.

8. Gentile Emilio, *The Struggle For Modernity Nationalism Futurism and Fascism*, Praeger, Westport, CT 2003, p. 87.

9. Bruce F. Pauley, *Hitler, Stalin, and Mussolini: Totalitarianism in the Twentieth Century*. Harlan Davidson, Wheeling, 2003, p. 212.

10. Guido Bonsaver, *Censorship and literature in fascist Italy*, University of Toronto Press Inc., Toronto, 2007, p. 215

11. Richard JB Bosworth, *Mussolini's Italy: Life Under the Fascist Dictatorship*, *1915-1945*, Penguin Books, New York, 2006, p. 561.

12. In his discourse, (similar to Ceaușescu's speeches to the writers and artists), Mussolini established a mission for the writers: "Bisogna che tutti gli scrittori italiani, all'interno e soprattutto all'estero, siano i portatori del nuovo tipo di civiltà italiana. Spetta agli scrittori di fare quello che si può chiamare imperialismo spirituale nei teatri, nei libri, nei trattati, nelle conferenze [...]. Bisogna ...portare all'estero la conoscenza della nuova Italia, così come l'ha fatta la guerra e come la sta facendo la rivoluzione fascista". ["At home and especially abroad, all writers must be the standard-bearers of the new kind of Italian civilization. They are expected to spread what we might call a spiritual imperialism in their plays, in their books, in their public speeches. It is their job to reveal abroad the image of the new Italy, as its past war and present fascist revolution"] – Benito Mussolini, *Scritti e discorsi*, vol. 5 [1925–26], Milan: Hoepli, 1936, pp. 374–375.

13. Walter L. Adamson, *Avant garde modernism and Italian modernism: cultural politics in the era of Mussolini*, in *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, vol. 6, no. 2, Routledge, London, 2001 p. 234.

14. Eugen Negrici, *Literatura română sub comunism*, Editura Fundației Pro, București, 2006, p. 15

15. Lucia Dragomir, *L'Union des écrivains. Un modèle international et ses limites*, in *Vingtième siècle*, no. 109, Jan.-Mar. 2011, p. 59 ["la littérature acquiert à l'Est une fonction d'«arme de lutte», idéologique et politique, une fonction éducative et de propagande, de légitimation." «Cet Etat mécène, nullement désintéressé, offre à l'artiste, à l'écrivain, une position extraordinaire: celle d'un "ingénieur des âmes", selon expression de Staline, investi d'une mission politique de la plus haute importance, changer l'ordre du monde»"].

16. Ana Selejan, *Reeducare și prigoană*, 2nd ed., Cartea Românească, București, 2005, p. 13

17. Ion Simut, *Proletcultism sau realism socialist? (II)*, in *România Literară*, no. 31, 2008, p. 11.

18. Jérôme Bazin, *Le réalisme socialiste et ses modèles internationaux*, in *Vingtième siècle*, No. 109, ian.-mar., Presses de la fondation nationale des sciences politiques, Paris 2011, p. 73 ["une iconographie (la figure du militante et de l'ouvrier, le paysage industriel, le drapeau rouge etc), des pratiques artistiques (le travail avec des amateurs et des personnes étrangères au monde de l'art), des comportements politiques (la loyauté au parti et l'affichage public de ses sympathies) et finalement une forme plastique, le réalisme, qui devient à partir des années 1930 l'unique forme défendue par les partis communistes."].

19. Liviu Malita, *Ceaușescu, critic literar*, Vremea, București, 2007, pp. 167, 173, "Stenogram of the meeting between comrade Nicolae Ceaușescu and the active members of the Union of Writers – 21st of sept. 1971."

20. Ibidem, p. 43.

21. Ibidem, p. 51.

22. Ioana Diaconescu, *Documente. Scriitori în arhivele CNSAS*, Editura Fundației Academia Civică, Bucuresti, 2012, p. 11.

23. Romania, Consiliul Național pentru Studierea Arhivelor Securității (CNSAS), Fond Documentar, Dosarele: Leonid Dimov (DUI I 208789, 6 vol.; P 013540, 2 vol.), Dumitru Țepeneag (DUI 64750, 2 vol., DP 749; SIE 4072), Virgil Mazilescu (DUI 160190, 3 vol.), Vintilă Ivănceanu (I 263546 and SIE 14099); Daniel Turcea (I 260674). These files reveal the complex strategy and action plan designed for the dispersion and annihilation of the oneiric group.

24. Jean-Paul Sirroneau, Op.Cit., p. 454 [„fabriqué à partir d'un vocabulaire tout fait et de concepts immuables, ne cherche pas à épouser le réel ... ; il est entièrement à la discrétion du pouvoir qui s'en sert pour qualifier ce réel."]

25. Alex Goldis, *Critica în tranșee. De la realismul socialist la autonomia esteticului*, Cartea Românească, București, 2011, p. 18.

26. Cristina Vatulescu, *Police Aesthetics: Literature, Film, and the Secret Police in Soviet Times*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 2010, p. 7.

27. Mircea Braga, *Insurgența onirică*, in *Steaua*, no. 10-11 (732-733), Oct.-Nov. 2009, p. 7.

28. Leone Piccioni, *Vita di un poeta. Giuseppe Ungaretti*, Rizzoli Editore, Milan 1970, p. 97 ["E la conoscenza con Mussolini servi ad Ungaretti piuttosto per aiutare qualche amico perseguitato antifascista (o per farsi tirar fuori dal carcere lui stesso quelle due o tre volte che fu arrestato per i suoi discorsi focosi: in difesa degli ebrei, ad esempio, in difesa della liberta) che non certo per un solo pratico suo vantaggio. Costretto a cercar lavoro d'insegnamento in Brasile ancora nel '36! E si noti che quella prefazione del '23 (strano a dirsi !) non ricomparve mai in nessuna

edizione poetica successiva dell'*Allegria,* né del '31 né del '36, né del '43."]
29. Ibidem: 96 ["Ungaretti, anarchico ma interventista, e Mussolini, socialista, direttore dell'A*vanti!,* ma interventista anche lui, si conobbero, dunque, in prossimità della guerra. Mussolini non lo ricorda già più nel '23 [...] Nei rari rapporti che ebbero in seguito, strano a dirsi, Mussolini subiva piuttosto Ungaretti, affascinato, forse, dal suo disinteresse."]
30. Ruth Ben-Ghiat *Fascist Modernities*, University of California Press, Berkeley 2001, p. 48.
31. Giorgio Luti, *Introduzione alla letteratura italiana del Novecento*, La Nuova Italia Scientifca, Roma 1985, p. 33 ["l'opposizione della censura fascista, poiché sono considerati non pericolosi, ed anzi utilizzabili alla dimostrazione di una sia pur embrionale 'liberalità' del fascismo."]
32. Giorgio De Rienzo, *Ungaretti: Serve un Duce alla guida della cultura*, in "Corriere della Sera", 12th of Dec., 1996, p. 35 ["Caro Cremieux, non esistono che nella vostra fantasia fascisti ortodossi che non tollerano la libertà' di pensiero e di critica"]. However, in this article, the author quotes Ossola, who explains also that Ungaretti cannot be seen as a common Fascist intellectual; as evidence, he refers to the fact that the poet was not admitted, for many political reasons, in the Fascist Academy.
33. Lucia Re, *Alexandria Revisited*, in *A Place in the Sun. Africa in Italian colonial culture from post-unification to the present*, (ed. by) Patrizia Palumbo, University of California Press, California, London 2003, p. 187.
34. Giuseppe Ungaretti, *Vita d'un uomo: Tutte le poesie*, (ed. by) Leone Picioni, Mondadori, Milano 1969, p. 504.
35. Nila Noto, *La spazialità poetica nell'opera di Ungaretti*, Celebes, Trapani 1976, p. 114.
36. Giampaolo Papi, *Il primo Ungaretti*, Lacaita, Manduria, 1988, p. 154.
37. Cristophe Mileschi, *Le secret de l'histoire s'appelle poésie»: Ungaretti, la poésie, l'histoire*, in *Révue des études italiennes. Giuseppe Ungaretti : culture et poésie*, No. 49, no. 1-2, Jan.-Jun. 2003, p. 183.
38. Giorgio De Rienzo, Op.Cit., p. 35 ["Sara' pur fervida l' adesione di Ungaretti al fascismo, ma resta ingenua nella sua passione, gratuita nella propria generosa offerta, e forse apppunto per cio' sospetta al regime. Tanto e' vero che il poeta non solo non diventera' un intellettuale organico al fascismo, ma non trovera' neppure posto in quell' Accademia da lui auspicata."]
39. Chistophe Mileschi, Op.Cit., p. 183 ["Il paraît à peu près impossible de ne pas en apercevoir la présence vivante et motrice à partir de *Il Dolore*, mais la critique a pu montrer, poèmes en main, que l'Ungaretti supposément athée des premiers temps était un croyant qui s'ignore". [...] "des textes dont le placement dans l'œuvre obéit à une nécessité *interne*, des poèmes ayant fonction de signes religieux : mettre en écho, en lien, en «re-liement», l'ordre d'ici-bas, tel que le Duce le veut et l'accomplit, et l'harmonie souveraine dont nous avons la nostalgie"]
40. Giuseppe Ungaretti, *Vita d'un Uomo, Saggi e interventi,* (ed. by) M. Diacono e L. Rebay, Mondadori, Milan, 1974, p. 153 ["per la prima volta dopo tanti secoli, dando un'armonia militare e religiosa alla comunità italiana, un capo sente il carattere soprannaturale dell'impeto che la Provvidenza gli ha dettato di imprimere alla storia"].
41. Laura Pavel, *Onirismul – între istoria literară şi istoria politică*, in *Vatra*, No. 10-11, 2007, p. 39 [„Analiza contextuală a poeziei şi prozei onirice, ca şi a teoriei onirismului structural sau estetic, pune în evidenţă o motivaţie şi un scop preponderent estetice, dar care sunt în subsidiar şi politice"].
42. Ecaterina Pavel, *Daniel Turcea în arhiva CNSAS*, in *România literară*, no. 5, 3rd of Feb. 2012, pp. 12-13.
43. *CNSAS*, Fond Documentar, File no. 118, vol. 1, p. 1bis.
44. CNSAS, Fond Documentar, File no. I 260674, p. 6.
45. Ibidem, p. 18.
46. Ibidem, p. 24.
47. Ibidem, p. 17.
48. *CNSAS*, Fond Documentar, File no. 118, vol. 1, p. 8.
49. CNSAS: I 260674: 20
50. Lucian Boia, *Pentru o istorie a imaginarului*, Humanitas, Bucureşti, 2000, p. 9.
51. Alex Goldis, Op.Cit, pp. 50-51.
52. Mircea Braga, Op.Cit, p. 8.
53. *O modalitate artistică. Discuţie la masa rotundă cu: Leonid Dimov, Dumitru Ţepeneag, Daniel Turcea, Laurenţiu Ulici*, in *Amfiteatru*, apud. *Momentul oniric*, ed. by Corin Braga, Cartea Românească, Bucharest 1997, p. 71, [„Realitatea o percepem axiomatic. Şi în măsura în care realitatea imediată e euclidiană, bazată pe axiome, visul e postulatul şi nu realitatea. Dar visul artei onirice e o construcţie logică şi nu un hazard, deşi se sprijină pe o axiomă mobilă; adică nu lucrează sub imperiul unei axiome neclintite; nu e geometrie construită pe un postulat închistat, ci funcţie de *n* postulate"].
54. Eugen Negrici, Op.Cit., p. 40 [„tinerii poeţi care îşi publicau atunci primele cărţi (Ana Blandiana, Nichita Stănescu, Gheorghe Tomozei ş.a.) au observat că reţeta aceasta bazată pe un melanj de poezie lirică şi de versificare pe teme ideologice a fost acceptată de activiştii culturali ai partidului şi că, până la urmă, aceştia au început s-o recomande ca pe o cale a compromisului politico-literar care putea mulţumi pe toată lumea"]
55. The second book, *Epifania* (*The Epiphany*) was published only due to Archbishop Bartolomeu Valeriu Anania´s intervention who, at that time, was the director of the Bible Missionary Institute of the Romanian Orthodox Church.
56. Eugen Negrici, Op. Cit., p. 40.
57. Ernst Cassirer, *Mitul statului,* Institutul European, Bucureşti, 2001, p. 218.
58. Bruce F. Pauley, Op.Cit., p. 108.

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