Atavistic Perpetuity in Lucian Blaga and Arturo Onofri

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The present study, which adopts a comparative perspective, aims to illustrate, through the mythocritical methodology, the circuit of symbolic correspondences between an early poem by Lucian Blaga, *Linişte* (1919), and a late sonnet by the Italian poet Arturo Onofri, *Ogni notte, nel sonno, mi riporti* (1930). Although no personal or intellectual contact between these two European poets is proved, they both create a ultimate poetry, which may look for the utmost sense of the universe and reintegrate the individual in it. The first part of the study stresses the nyctomorphic symbolic constellation evoked both by Blaga and by Onofri. In *Linişte*, the moon reveals the "eternal return" and leads the return of the ancestors' song in the hearts of the descendants; in *Ogni notte*, instead, one finds a more explicit symbolism of the "Cosmic Night", i.e. the primordial Totality in which the individual, during the sleeping state, temporarily reintegrates in order to regenerate himself. The second part of the study illustrates how Onofri's "Original Soul" is the realm of the uranic Mother, to which the individual soul ascends, spiritualizing itself. Finally, this study shows that the perpetuation of the forefathers' melancholic song of *Linişte* undergoes an inversion of perspective in Onofri's sonnet, whose adult main character, in the "eternal instant" of the Cosmic Night, is reborn as a "human child": *Linişte*'s central event is a case of reincarnation, while in *Ogni notte* a "mystical rebirth" occurs, that – with specific reference to Onofri's theoretical speculations – results in an ascent to the supernal kingdom of the Spirit. Through the comparison between these two poems, which are ideally complementary, one recognizes that, as Jung asserted, only by living with a myth – i.e. rediscovering the archetypical images through symbolic experience –, can man gain access to the

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mystery which dwells in the utmost core of universal harmony, of which individual existence is nothing but a transient emanation.

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Unsatisfied by Freudian personalism, Carl Gustav Jung, in one of the prefaces to his volume *Transformations and Symbols of Libido*, recognized the fundamental role that myth plays in preserving the awareness of the existence of a primeval *Seele*, in which all humanity partakes:

> The man who thinks he can live without myth, or outside it […] is like one uprooted, having no true link with the past, or with the ancestral life which continues within him, or yet with contemporary human society. […] The *Seele* is not of today; its ancestry goes back many millions of years. Individual consciousness is only the flower and the fruit of a season, sprung from the perennial rhizome beneath the earth; and it would find itself in better accord with the truth if it took the existence of the rhizome in its calculations. For the root matter is the mother of all things (Jung 2001: 9)[2].

This lesson appears to have been not only assimilated, but even taken as a principle by two eminent personalities in twentieth century European literary landscape, who are unique in their complexity: Lucian Blaga (1895–1961) and Arturo Onofri (1885–1928). The present article, which adopts a comparatistic perspective, aims to illustrate, through the mythocritical methodology, the circuit of symbolic correspondences and the relation of ideal complementarity

[2] The German noun *Seele* has been maintained here. Indeed, in this case, the English term "psyche", chosen by Jung's translator – whose version is quoted faithfully except for *Seele* (cf. Jung 1976: XXIV) – is believed to obfuscate the non-personalistic and collective-archetypal meaning of this term, from which this study and its reflections proceed. This meaning is more clearly preserved in *Seele*, and even more in *Anima* – two terms which Jung uses "interchangeably" (Hillman 1985: 51) in several passages. As Jung's translator elsewhere remarks, "there is no consistent equivalent of *Seele* in English" (Jung 1975: 300). For further reading concerning the Jungian problematic terminology on this subject, cf. Hillman 1985: 51 sqq.

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between an early poem by Blaga, *Liniște* (*Silence*, 1919), and a late sonnet by Onofri, *Ogni notte, nel sonno, mi riporti* (*Every Night, During Slumber, You Bring Me Back*, 1930).

Although these two poets had almost certainly no personal or intellectual contact with each other, despite their being contemporaries, a reference to their thematic analogies can be found in Romanian Literary Criticism. George Călinescu, in his essay *Magie şi alchimie* (*Magic and Alchemy*, 1943), recognized that Onofri vaguely reminded one of Blaga and his "metaphysical sorrow", the latter reformulated by the Italian poet as "exile's terrestrity" (Călinescu 1972: 258). Both Blaga's and Onofri's works are imbued with a thirst for the Absolute: for this reason, far from being expressions of a "poetry which begins and ends in itself, as «creation» or «fantasy»" (Evola 1930: 180), they are anchored to coherent networks of philosophical-religious notions[3].

In particular, the sensitivities and the mystical inclinations of both Blaga and Onofri converge in their common purpose of creating an ultimate poetry, which may look for the utmost sense of the universe and reintegrate the individual in it. Indeed, Onofri:

> intuitively understands the fundamental unity of reality, which he is inclined to rejoin in an original and primeval whole, whereof it

[3] While Blaga "rises to a personal philosophical system in its own right, with learned weaponry *(The Trilogy of Knowledge*, *The Trilogy of Culture*, *The Trilogy of Values)*" (Ciopraga 1975: 37–38), Onofri, founder of a "pseudo-philosophical system" (Ramat 1997: 236; cf. Vecchio 1978: 23 sqq.), extrapolates his main metaphysical certainties from Rudolf Steiner's anthroposophical doctrine, to which he adhered during the last years of his life. From anthroposophy, which Onofri "approaches not in a generic sense, but with the resolute and specific adhesion of the initiate" (Benco 1931: 99), derive both his speculations in his "theoretical epos" *Nuovo Rinascimento come arte dell'io* (*New Renaissance as I's Art*; cf. Onofri 1925; for its description, cf. Fittoni 1967: 44–59) and the monumental final stage of his poetical *iter*, *Ciclo lirico della terrestrità del sole* (*Lyrical Cycle of Sun's Terrestrity*; for the more recent and unified edition, cf. Onofri 2015). This is made up of the collections *Terrestrità del sole* (*Sun's Terrestrity*; cf. Onofri 1927), *Vincere il drago!* (*Win the Dragon!*; cf. Onofri 1928), *Zolla ritorna cosmo* (*Clod Returns Cosmos*; cf. Onofri 1930), *Suoni del Gral* (*Graal's Sounds*; cf. Onofri 1932), *Aprirsi Fiore* (*To Unfold as Flower*; cf. Onofri 1935), and finally *Simili a melodie rapprese in mondo* (*Similar to Melodies Brought Together in the World*; cf. Onofri 1929) – the anticipation of *Aprirsi Fiore* –, which consists of his last thirty-three poems (cf. Fittoni 1967: 59–60; Lanza 1973: 156). The forty-sixth poem of *Zolla ritorna cosmo* – the first of his collections which was published posthumously – has been chosen for the present comparatistic study.

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> preserves, in its plurality, the common denominator, so that, from inferior beings to man, all nature partakes of the same substance although to a different degree (Salucci 1987: 18–21).

In this way, the Italian poet "discovers unforeseen analogies [...], secret correspondences [...] among the aspects of the most various things" (Titta Rosa 1930: 130). His thought has a marked affinity with Blaga's cosmic vision. Indeed, Blaga feels that:

> each thing partakes, through its existence, in an ontological consubstantiality, sealing the world in an identical and universal fate. [...] From the perspective of cosmic harmony, this notion [of nature] enhances especially the ontological equivalence of things, the intuition of their ontological sameness (Livadă 1974: 41–42).

The present study will now focus on the two selected poems in order to examine the modulations that this "subconscience of unity among the most different creatures" (Flora 1930: 143) assumes – to which the intimate harmony binding man to man is ascribed, since they all possess a common root. In this mythocritical *excursus*, one will recognize that which emerges from Jung's assertion: only by living with a myth – i.e. rediscovering the archetypical images through symbolic experience –, can man access the mystery which dwells in the "perennial rhizome", of which his single existence is nothing but a transient emanation.

Return to the Cosmic Night

The young Blaga, in *Liniştе* (*Silence*) – which is part of his first collection *Poemele luminii* (*Poems of Light*), published in 1919 –, thematizes an experience which transcends his own individuality. He perceives, within himself, a "strange voice", which starts singing a song he does not know ("not mine"). This voice belongs to one of his grandfathers, who are "dead before their time":

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> Atâta liniște-i în jur de-mi pare că aud/ cum se izbesc de geamuri razele de lună.// În piept/ mi s-a trezit un glas străin/ și-un cântec cântă-n mine-un dor, ce nu-i al meu.// Se spune, că strămoșii, cari au murit fără de vreme,/ cu sânge tânăr încă-n vine,/ cu patimi mari în sânge,/ cu soare viu în patimi,/ vin,/ vin să-și trăiască mai departe/ în noi/ viața netrăită.// Atâta liniște-i în jur de-mi pare că aud/ cum se izbesc de geamuri razele de lună.// O, cine știe – suflete-n ce piept îți vei cânta/ și tu odată peste veacuri/ pe coardele dulci de liniște,/ pe harfă de-ntuneric – dorul sugrumat/ și frânta bucurie de viață? Cine știe? Cine știe? (Blaga 2012: 18)[4].

The wistful echo of the departed resounds within the living when, in the middle of the night, the "moonrays" seem to strike at the windows[5]. The lines depicting the lunar scenario will also be repeated later in the text, immediately preceding the final question of the poetic *I* regarding the fate of his soul in the centuries to come. More precisely, the question regards the identity of the posterity in which his melancholic chant will continue. The reiteration of this couple of lines aims to emphasize the cyclical nature of reincarnatory fate. As Mircea Eliade theorizes, indeed, the moon symbolizes the eternal return:

> If the moon [...] serves to "measure" time [...] the moon at the same time reveals the "eternal return". The phases of the moon – appearance, increase, wane, disappearance, followed by reappearance

[4] An English translation of the poem is found in Blaga 1975: 87–89: "There is such silence here that I seem to hear/ the moonrays striking at the windows.// In my chest/ a strange voice wakes/ it sings a song of longing not mine.// They say, grandfathers dead before their time,/ with young blood in their veins,/ great passions in their blood,/ living sun in their passions,/ come now,/ come now to live on/ in us/ the life they did not live.// There is such silence here that I seem to hear/ the moonrays striking at the windows.// Oh, who knows – my soul, in what body singing to yourself/ you will play after ages/ on strings, sweet chords of silence/ on harps of darkness, your strangled longing/ and broken lust of life? Who knows? Who knows?". For a more recent translation of the collection *Poems of Light*, cf. Blaga 2002. For an overview of the translations of Blaga's literary work into English, cf. Dralyuk 2012.

[5] In a later poem by Blaga, *Biografie* (*Biography*) – which is part of the collection *Lauda somnului* (*In Praise of Sleep*, 1929) – the contact with the ancestors is not associated to the nocturnal hour, but to the evening one, equally under the sign of the moon: "Fac schimb de taine cu strămoșii, [...]/ Seara se-ntâmplă mulcom s-ascult/ în mine cum se tot revarsă/ poveștile sângelui uitat de mult./ Binecuvânt pânea și lună" (Blaga 2012: 127); "I exchange mysteries with my grandfathers, [...]/ In the evening I accept and silently listen,/ how into myself pour/ stories of the long-forgotten blood./ I bless the bread and the moon" (Blaga 1975: 203).

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> after three nights of darkness – have played an immense part in the elaboration of cyclical concepts. [...] This assimilation is important not only because it shows us the "lunar" structure of universal becoming but also because of its optimistic consequences: for, just as the disappearance of the moon is never final, since it is necessarily followed by a new moon, the disappearance of man is not final either (Eliade 1959: 86–87).

In addition, Eliade asserts that the cyclical-lunar modality of death and rebirth includes a dark phase, necessary for regeneration. This middle phase is classified as reintegration in the "primordial unity" – that *selfsame* primordial unity eulogized in Blaga's and Onofri's speculations as the pulsating core of universal harmony, which corresponds to the Jungian rhizome:

> In the "lunar perspective" [...] any form whatever, by the mere fact that it exists as such and endures, necessarily loses vigor and becomes worn; to recover vigor, it must be reabsorbed into the formless if only for an instant; it must be restored to the primordial unity from which it issued; in other words, it must return to "chaos" (on the cosmic plane) (Eliade 1959: 88).

This provisional reabsorption in the primordial unity, which is a prelude to rebirth, is thematized in Onofri's sonnet *Ogni notte, nel sonno, mi riporti* (*Every Night, During Slumber, You Bring Me Back*) – which is part of the collection *Zolla ritorna cosmo* (*Clod Returns Cosmos*), published posthumously in 1930. Here the poetic *I* is indeed brought back, during his nocturnal rest, to a mysterious "Original Soul", through which he is reborn as a "human child":

> Ogni notte, nel sonno, mi riporti,/ Anima originaria, a quel momento/ sublime, in cui dal regno dei tuoi morti/ io discesi nel mio concepimento.// Risalgo a volo il tempo, i danni, i torti/ della mia vita, fra un cercarti, ahi lento,/ nel groviglio intricato di più sorti,/ onde mi liberai, ma quanto a stento!// Così, nel sonno faticoso, io giungo/ alla divina infanzia, ancora viva/ nel mortal corso, che da lei prolungo.// E in quell'attimo eterno, entro l'arcano/ del mio dormire, un uomo è in me, che arriva/ teco a rinascer fanciulletto umano (Onofri 1930: 63)[6].

[6] Since an edited English version of this sonnet does not exist, here is our translation: "Every night, during slumber, you bring me back,/ Original Soul, to that sublime/ moment

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In these lines by Onofri, the perpetuation of the forefathers' melancholic song of *Linişte* undergoes an inversion of perspective. Here, indeed, the poetic *I* is the equivalent of the Blagian ancestor: he is an adult who narrates, in first person, his own *Regressus ad Originem*, which anticipates his rebirth. The stage of the *Regressus* instead is missing from *Linişte*, where the ancestor's reincarnation is told from the point of view of the young person, who already perceives the atavistic song rising inside him.

The return to the sublime moment of the Beginnings occurs, for the Italian poet, "every night". The selection of the nyctomorphic constellation is a common point with *Linişte*. Nevertheless, whereas Blaga, without mentioning directly the night, combines the lunar cycle and the reincarnation cycle, Onofri – to whom the night theme is very dear (cf. Maggiari 1998: 17 sqq.; Salucci 1972: 20 sq.; D'Alessio 1991: *passim*) – in a more explicit way focuses on the symbolism of the "Cosmic Night", receptacle of the primeval unity in which the individual reintegrates, temporarily, in order to regenerate himself:

> The Darkness symbolizes the Cosmic Night, the undifferentiated totality, the virtual, the latencies. From a certain point of view, the Darkness is comparable to Chaos, because no form is distinguishable in it, no structure emerges from it; it is the pre-formal modality. [...] The Darkness symbolizes in the end the universal *Urgrund*, the primordial Totality [...]. A provisional regression into Darkness is equivalent to an immersion in the unquenchable source in which all existence modalities already *in potentia* can be found (Eliade 1960: 19–26).

The undifferentiated totality designed by Eliade is reminiscent of the "tangled twist of more fates", in which Onofri's poetic *I* gropes around once it is brought back, during

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when I from the kingdom of your dead/ descended during my conception.// Flying, I retrace the time, the pains, the wrongs/ of my life, while I am searching for you, alas, slowly,/ in the tangled twist of more fates,/ from which I released myself, but what a struggle!// So, in my strenuous slumber, I reach/ the divine childhood, still alive/ in the mortal path, that I continue.// And in that eternal instant, in the arcane/ of my slumber, a man is inside me, ending up/ being reborn with you as a human child".

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his slumber, to the primeval darkness. Already Massimo Maggiari recognized, in Onofri's work, the archetypical identity between the Night and the pre-formal Totality of beings – i.e., the kingdom of the Original Soul in *Ogni notte* –, not without grasping its resemblances with Jung's thought, in particular with the notion of collective unconscious:

> The poet defines the night as the receptacle of an original collective soul (a concept which makes his thought strikingly similar to the emerging psychoanalysis and especially to Jung), of a cosmic infinite, of the great Chaos in which all originates and to which all returns (Maggiari 1998: 23)[7].

Indeed, Onofri's Original Soul corresponds, *mutatis mutandis*, to the notion of *Anima Mundi*, sometimes identified by Jung with that of "collective unconscious" (Jung 1980: 188). According to the definition of William Butler Yeats (1865–1939) – an Irish mystical metaphysical poet comparable with Blaga and Onofri for his depth –, the *Anima Mundi* (or *Spiritus Mundi*) is "a general storehouse of images which have ceased to be a property of any personality or spirit" (Smith 1990: 104), to which one may access during sleep, or during the interval between death and rebirth (cf. Mills Harper, Kelly Hood 1978: 244–245). This liminal context strongly reminds us of the two poems chosen as object of the present analysis[8]. Furthermore, the contents of the *Anima Mundi* are at times recognized as the so-called "race memory" (Smith 1990: 104); this identification would explain why the remembrances and emotions of one of his forefathers, and not of *any* man, re-echo within *Linişte*'s protagonist: the "collective" field is limited by a bond of blood.

In *Ogni notte*, the contact with the Original Soul is explicitly ascribed within the sleeping state; thereafter, the rebirth of the

[7] For an in-depth analysis of the relation between Onofri's oeuvre and the collective unconscious, cf. Maggiari 1999: *passim*.

[8] Already Carlo D'Alessio, a scholar of Onofri, has used the syntagm – rather that the notion of – "*Anima Mundi*". He has compared Yeats to Onofri for their common purpose of "guaranteeing an ontological consistency to the creative fact" (D'Alessio 1999: 193) and has recognized that the ultimate aim of Onofri's poetic *I* is "to coincide again with the primordial *Anima Mundi*" (D'Alessio 1999: 191).

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poetic *I* too, i.e. the coincidence between "man" and "child", occurs "in the arcane/ of my slumber". Moreover, an isotopy between sleep and death can be deduced, to the extent that the sleeping one is brought back to the "kingdom of the dead". Combining sleep, death and *Regressus* to pre-formal Totality, the Italian poet shows that tendency, "intrinsic in every man, even in the more «logic» one", to proceed backwards towards that "original indifferentiation, unity of man and world [...] to which we daily go back during our sleep", which one knows only before birth – the "embryonic sleep" – and after death (van der Leeuw 1961: 128).

In *Linişte*, instead, it is not specified if the poetic *I* feels the resurrection of the ancestor in himself *while* sleeping; rather, he is surrounded by a total silence, almost sacred. The sleeping state and the silence state are symbolically contiguous, so much so that George Gană, in one of his studies of Blaga, deals consecutively with them (cf. Gană 1976: 239–250). In *Linişte*, silence brings about a lunar hierophany, paving the way for the return of the forefathers. Indeed, silence, the "condition for the revelation of the immortal part of being", allows the individual soul, "fragment of the absolute substance of the universe", to live through generations throughout the centuries (Gană 1976: 241). Silence thus contributes, no less than sleep, to the reimmersion in the primordial Totality. It is a "germinative silence", in which "the *I* communicates in profundity with the universe, becoming he himself an element among the elements" (Pop 1981: 233): thus, it is able to establish those same cosmic contacts that Onofri's sleep causes[9].

[9] Though absent in *Linişte*, elsewhere in the poetic oeuvre of Blaga – who consecrates to it an entire collection of poems, *Lauda somnului* (*In Praise of Sleep*) – sleep fulfills the same function that Onofri assigns to it in *Ogni notte*: indeed, it causes the "complete annulment of individuality" (Gană 1976: 245). In the poem titled *Somn* (*Sleep*), Blaga, during the sleeping state, makes contact with the immediately previous generation: "În somn sângele meu ca un val/ se trage din mine/ înapoi în părinţi" (Blaga 2012: 128); "In sleep my blood wavelike/ draws back from me/ into my parents" (Blaga 1975: 207).

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The Uranic-Lunar Mother

In *Liniște*, the poetic *I* is aware that someday, in another breast, he will sing his "strangled longing/ and broken lust of life": his resurrection in the heart of a descendant will take place under the sign of torment. In *Ogni notte*, the poetic *I* affirms that, during his mystic slumber, he undergoes again "the pains, the wrongs/ of my life": his *Regressus ad Originem* is, therefore, characterized by a similar state – but it rather assumes, during the nocturnal passage towards life, the contours of a fetal labour ("strenuous slumber")[10]. This is explained by the principle according to which the Mother Archetype underlies the realm of the Cosmic Night, which Onofri denominates "Original Soul": indeed, as Jung highlights, "the image of the «soul» somehow coincides with the mother-imago" (Jung 1976: 266).

As the scholar Marco Albertazzi writes in his preface to *Zolla ritorna cosmo*, for Onofri "to return to the cosmos means to proceed backward, to the maternal uterus" (Albertazzi 1998: II)[11]. It is crucially important, though, to stress that this uterus does not belong to a telluric Mother; only two components of the archetypical "constellation linking the mother, earth and night", theorized by Gilbert Durand (Durand 1999: 224), are followed: the mother and the night. On the contrary, Onofri deals with a celestial and uranic Mother: the "sky-mother axis" (Maggiari 1998: 62) gradually takes shape throughout his poetic *iter* (cf. Maggiari 1998: 99–100), as he, by virtue of his philosophical maturation, cultivates a more and more intense

[10] As Susetta Salucci, scholar of Onofri, underlines, he often emphasizes "the effort and struggle by means of which the becoming of things is fulfilled: for Onofri, birth is always an agonizing process, birth turns into joy only when it is fulfilled, while it is not so until it is not accomplished" (Salucci 1972: 148).

[11] This specific *Regressus ad Uterum*, in which the poet "melts his own microcosmic world in the collective matrix of the cosmos" (Maggiari 1998: 43), could already be glimpsed in a poem by Onofri which is much earlier than the one investigated here: *Per confondersi con la natura* (*To dissolve into nature*) – which is part of the collection *Canti delle oasi* (*Songs of the Oases*), published in 1909. Its opening lines indeed are: "Madre, ch'io mi dimentichi della mia forma umana/ per confondermi in te, nella tua vita immensa" (Onofri, *apud* Maggiari 1998: 43). Here is our translation: "Mother, may I forget my human form/ to dissolve into you, into your immense life".

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longing to free himself from the terrestrial prison of matter[12]. Indeed, if Onofri's early poetry was dominated by the image of a "mother-earth" (cf. Maggiari 1998: 41), in *Zolla ritorna cosmo* the author "develops the opposite emblem to that of terrestrity, showing us the earth [...] ready to re-become Spirit" (Lanza 1974: 89) and "celebrates the ascension to the sky of the earth element" (Maggiari 1998: 119). Here, the Mother abandons the chthonic constellation, leaving his archetypical "relationship to the earth and to matter" (Jung 1990c: 112), in order to become a "spiritual" Mother.

It is interesting to note in this regard that – as the Jungian scholar Erich Neumann asserts – "the favored spiritual symbol of the matriarchal sphere is the moon in its relation to the night and to the Great Mother of the night sky" (Neumann 1974: 55). Thus one may deduce that the moon, which in Blaga's *Linişte* announces and leads the cyclical return of the ancestors' souls, reveals itself to be – as "receiver and regenerator of souls" (Eliade 1958: 172) – a hypostasis of the Mother as Celestial Uterus. The Great Mother, realm of the Primeval to which all returns, is thus implicitly present in both poems[13]: in *Ogni notte*, she is the Original Soul which receives the sleeping and the dead; in *Linişte*, she is the moon which re-begets the forefathers' spirits.

That the maternal Original Soul of *Ogni notte* is uranic, and not chthonic, is proved by the ascensional movement that Onofri's poetic *I* experiences. In the present context, flight inserts itself in the same symbolic constellation which includes the night: indeed, Gaston Bachelard recognizes that "the dream of flight […] is a reality of the night, an autonomous nighttime

[12] Concerning this theme, cf. Maggiari 1994: 198–200; Solmi 1992: 115; Marotti 1930: 152. On the link between tellurism and materiality in Onofri, cf. Salucci 1972: 124 sq., 159 sq. In the later poetry of Onofri, there is no lack of cases of co-presence of an earth-mother and a sky-mother (cf. Maggiari 1998: 61–63; Dolfi 1982: 43).

[13] Magda Vigilante's words confirm the association here proposed between the Mother and the realm of the Origin: the scholar explains that the deep bond between Onofri and the Maternal Archetype "will be evoked more than once in the new lyric phase, showing the inseparable correspondence between the world's original harmony and the childhood sensations of complete fusion and beatitude felt in relation to the maternal figure" (Vigilante 1989: 9).

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reality" (Bachelard 2011: 35). Once asleep, as he retraces by "flying" his own memories, he tells that he reaches the dimension *from which* he descended during his "conception". This *ante-mortem* (and *post-mortem*) Beyond corresponds precisely to that "spiritual world whence we have descended through birth" (Onofri 1924: XIV) which Onofri himself designed in his introduction to Steiner's *Occult Science* – the theoretical cornerstone of his last poetic production. The kingdom of the Original Soul coincides, therefore, with the kingdom of the Spirit; and this, in its turn, situated in an unequivocally supernal position – since one must descend from it in order to come into the world –, coincides with the kingdom of the Sky, diametrically opposed to the Earth, kingdom of the Matter[14]. The archetypical equivalence between Spirit and Heaven is confirmed by Neumann:

> The archetype of Heaven is closely connected with the symbolism of the Spirit, in fact it seems at first as though Heaven and the Spirit are archetypically identical terms (Neumann 1994: 180).

If the Original Soul's and primordial Totality's birthplace is celestial, therefore the *Regressus ad Originem* cannot be actualized but through an etheric flight, able to "transmute the corporeal modality of man into a spiritual modality" (Eliade 1956: 9)[15]. The ascension through flight thus allows one to overcome the "common and material mode of existence, i.e. the gravitational one" (Turi 1977: 30): such a liberation from gravity corresponds to a liberation from the "earth" as matter – a principle exposed above – and hence to a "spiritualization" of man, which is the purpose underlying the whole collection *Zolla ritorna cosmo*.

[14] This statement disagrees with Salucci's recognition, in the present sonnet, of an Orphic "purifying descent to the Underworld" (Salucci 1972: 144). *Ogni notte*'s ascensional journey presents itself rather as a "reversed katabasis" (Culianu 1982: 281; for further reading, cf. Kroll 1932: *passim*); as Culianu himself observes, it is in such a context that "the chthonic Great Mother turns into a celestial Queen" (Culianu 1982: 284).

[15] This conception is proved by the frequent perception of "the spirits or souls of the dead" as "volatile" essences (Jung 1990c: 209).

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In Onofri's thought, the realm of the Spirit also represents the abode of the plural "Cosmic Original Humanity" (Onofri 1925: 186): indeed, according to Onofri, there existed once an "I which was originally Unique", and which "has multiplied his unitary entirety in many Unities" (Onofri 1925: 191). The individual *I* resumes its participation in the cosmic I every time it sinks into the sleeping state[16]:

> We do not remember, upon earth, whence we have descended by being born, just as we do not remember where we return when in the morning we wake up from sleep, because in that moment our conscience regains the separate form of our single body, with its limited senses and its narrow brain (Onofri 1925: 165).

Onofri thus illustrates the merging of individual men into the plural original Humanity. In this rite of passage, they regain awareness of their spiritual common matrix:

> Every night the spiritual man temporarily abandons his own earthly body in bed […] to cosmically dive into the great surge of spiritual beings […]. The memory of this cosmic nocturnal existence affects only the depths of man's *subconscience* (Onofri 1925: 176–177).

Flight fulfills this specific form of *Regressus ad Originem*, in so far as, according to Eliade, it constitutes an "integral part of man's becoming conscious of his specific situation in the Cosmos" (Eliade 1956: 5), providing the "understanding of secret things or metaphysical truths" (Eliade 1956: 7).

In *Liniște*, this intermediate stage is entirely missing. Nevertheless, the concurrence of a lunar irruption and an

[16] In another poem by Onofri – which is part of the collection *Vincere il drago*! –, set in the same context of *Ogni notte* (as already pointed out in D'Alessio 1991: 335), the equivalence between the realm of the Cosmic Night and the abode of the plural original Humanity emerges more clearly: "Nel più profondo sonno, ove ogni notte/ ritorna ai suoi miracoli di luci/ e di musiche il piccolo fanciullo/ ch'io fui nascendo, s'apre in improvvisi/ fiori d'azzurrità melodiosa/ il plurale degli uomini, presenti/ nella pienezza unanime in cui dormo" (Onofri 1928: 32). Here is our translation: "In the deepest slumber, where every night/ returns to his miracles of lights/ and of music the little child/ that I was when I was born, opens up in sudden/ flowers of melodious azureness/ the plurality of men, who find themselves/ in the unanimous whole in which I sleep".

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ancestral resurrection might allow us to suppose that – within the purview of the "spiritual Mother" in the form of moon – the atavistic song, which re-emerges in the heart of the poetic *I*, also originates in the superior regions. In this sense, *Linişte* might be compared to another poem by Onofri, in which some otherworldly beings – presumably, some exalted dead – upset the sleep of a living man, descending from the supernal realm and introducing themselves into him: "Qualcuno stanotte m'ha scosso/ ad occhi socchiusi, nel buio, come pian piano tornando/ alla terra da altezze celesti,/ mi sentivo discendere e svegliare./ Ed esseri-luce uscivano intanto da me, dileguando/ finché ho ritrovato me stesso, occhi aperti, nel letto" (Onofri, *apud* Evola 1930: 197)[17].

Reincarnation or Mystical Rebirth?

Onofri's *Regressus ad Originem* is followed by a palingenesis: his main character, in *Ogni notte*'s conclusion, is reborn as a "human child". This action is analogous to the ancestor's reincarnation in Blaga's *Linişte*. In both poems it is possible to identify a coincidence between man and child: in *Ogni notte*, the man is contained within the new born ("a man is inside me")[18], just as, in *Linişte*, the ancestor's spirit is contained in the heart of the young person hearing his song inside him.

In Onofri's lines, this identification occurs in an "eternal instant", i.e. outside time, so that "by making past and future paradoxically coincide, the cancellation of the temporal illusion is fulfilled" (Maggiari 1998: 119). Indeed, as Neumann affirms, the "time that does not pass in the threefold succession of past, present and future belongs to the child", who "lives in the still

[17] Here is our translation: "Someone upset me last night/ with half-closed eyes, in darkness, as coming back little by little/ to earth from celestial heights,/ I felt myself descending and waking up./ And meanwhile light-beings went out of me, dispersing/ until I found myself, with open eyes, in my bed".

[18] Onofri's entire later poetry, whose "tension towards superior worlds" is aimed at a palingenesis, aspires to the realization of the "I-Self axis" (cf. Maggiari 1999: 44–45), in which the Self is "the total personality" (Jung 1990d: 357).

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undivided world" (Neumann 1994: 224). This world "is the same one that modern man reaches momentarily in the process of transformation and permanently on the highest level" (Neumann 1994: 225). After all, the exit from time is, as Eliade explains, a typical trait of the return to nocturnal-cosmic primordial Totality:

> In the symbolism of Darkness, one finds the note of atemporality, of «eternity», of the suspension of becoming. Time begins with the emergence of forms, that is, with Light. […] The Return to Darkness therefore implies the immersion in the pre-formal, the contact with that which has not undergone the wear of time (Eliade 1960: 27).

This symbolism satisfies one of the main aims of Onofri, i.e. "to project out of the individual his spirit, thus rejoining it with the cosmic, atemporal life" (Mussapi 1985: 39). Onofri's poetic *I* reaches a childhood which is defined "divine", since, according to the Italian poet, man's very origin is divine: so, the ascending path leads to the "awareness of the divine-in-us, and of the we-in-God" (Onofri 1924: XIII). Here one may recognize the archetypical model of the "Divine Child", who represents "the possibility of a new beginning" (Leeming 2010: 245). The divine childhood, the ultimate goal of the ascending path (cf. Lanza 1973: 166), which Onofri's poetic *I* affirms to reach, is "still alive/ in the mortal path, that I continue": it is, therefore, the closure of a circular, descent-ascent path; it strongly reminds one the description offered by Steiner, Onofri's inspirer, of the *post-mortem* purification, from which emerges the vision of a cycle resulting in a progress (cf. Steiner 2005: 78).

The rebirth of the Onofrian *I*, indeed, paves the way for the attainment of a superior level of being. Onofri's divine childhood, similarly to his Original Soul, appears to be a superindividual reality, including all men's primordial substance: then, once they have acceded to a new level of existence, it restores them to life by renewing them. Instead, in Blaga's *Linişte*, the ancestor's cyclical path simply ends in the body of the young poetic *I*, according to a process which will repeat itself, from ancestor to descendant, ages after ages.

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The return to the world of the living, for Blaga's ancestor and for Onofri's poetic *I* respectively, follows two utterly different modalities. The case of *Liniştе*'s ancestor is that of "reincarnation": according to Jung's definition, this type of rebirth "implies the continuity of personality", and is, at least potentially, "accessible to memory" (Jung 1990b: 113). Indeed, Blaga's poetic *I* expects that he himself someday will regret, in the heart of one of his descendants, his own broken longings and his own unexperienced joys. On the other hand, in *Ogni notte*, the individual who is born again is the same, but his regeneration is rather comparable to the Jungian notion of "*renovatio*", that envisages a "transmutation", and more precisely a "transformation [...] of a corporeal [being] into a spiritual being" (Jung 1990b: 113). The present notion corresponds to that which Eliade defines a "*mystical re-birth*, spiritual in nature, in other words, an access to a new mode of existence [...] superior to the simple biological existence" – which in some cases consists in the "opening to the spirit" (Eliade 1960: 28). In Onofri, indeed, the child "emerges as a mysterious vehicle of the spirit" (Lanza 1973: 165): he becomes the emblem not of a simple resurrection, but of a "metamorphosis of the life of the soul" (Fittoni 1967: 45), for the purpose of refining himself, "in the constant effort of developing, elevating, universalizing his own spirit" (Fittoni 1967: 45) and in the "infallible certainty of being born again to a pure, benevolent, eternal life" (Marotti 1930: 166). Thus, although presenting profound symbolic convergences, the poetic itineraries proposed by Blaga and Onofri turn out to be radically different: the former, "unable to project himself on a fantastic voyage into the future, at the level of the subconscious […] practices an *éternel retour*" (Ciopraga 1975: 48); the latter, instead, elaborates "a bright vision of a future world, in which man will eventually find himself, a powerful and bright reality" (Evola, Onofri 2001: 16–17).

In *Liniştе*'s lines one may recognize the first part of the Jungian reflection which opened the present work: the ancestral life continues within every man, who may perceive in depth this

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inheritance only by thinking "mythically". *Ogni notte*'s lines, instead, reveal themselves to be a poetical transposition of the second part of his reflection: Onofri's "Original Soul" coincides with Jung's "*Seele*" of "many millions of years", as the abode of a plural and primordial Humanity, from which individuals are generated and to which they return in order to regenerate themselves.

Jung affirmed that the intuition of the intimate bond uniting humanity may occur only through "myth", i.e. through symbolic experience – the same experience lived and preached by the two poets selected for the present study (cf. Del Conte 1971: 14; Bàrberi Squarotti 1987: 169). Indeed, only the symbol, as Eliade asserts, "reveals the solidarity among the structures of human existence and cosmic structures", proving thus that man is not "«isolated» in the Cosmos" (Eliade 1960: 27). As regards the comparison between the two poems, one might establish that Onofri's *Ogni notte*, in a way, completes and illuminates the "mystery" lingering over *Liniște*, which Blaga wished to preserve as it was: indeed, it reveals the stage of the One-All – which coincides with the ultimate core of cosmic harmony – through which every soul, before rising again, is destined to go through.

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