

Review of: "Ungaretti: the Soldier and the Poet"

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The figure of a poet is often seen only in the setting of the produced writing. Thus, poetry is appreciated as something separated from the context, in such a way that it is analyzed and understood as a pure text. On other occasions, we have sought to find connections, or even explanations, of the work in the environment that surrounds the poetic experience. However, in this text about Ungaretti a double layer is located regarding the poet: what he considers about his poems and what actually happens through his participation in the war.

With full relevant documentation, the paper locates the relationship between the poem and the war event, but also locates the contradictions—and the impossible—that occur between what the poet says about the poems and what he declared about the war.

In the analysis involved here, details related to Ungaretti's interventionist ideology are presented, and his links with an imperialist vision of Italy. In particular, the poet's idea that colonialist actions would lead to the unification of a kind of Italian national spirit. In view of several letters to personalities of the Italian cultural community such as Carrà or Papini, situations are observed that, when compared with the poems, allow the discrepancy to arise. This is possible because the poet creates a guide of dates and places of his poems different from that shown in the military log of his participation. This contradiction is seen also in the order and references the poet makes when formally publishing the works.

This research makes an in-depth comparison of the historical sources against the literary work and reconstructs the military conditions, displacements, battles, dates and other elements, to note that Ungaretti evades the issue of killing the enemy in battles, despite he accepts that he has been recognized for his ferocity in combat. It is as if his conquering ideal for Italy should not be tainted by the death that war produces.

With the analysis of each year of the war between 1914 and 1919, this article is based on the evidence of military history and reveals the ideological positions and psychological character that determine the themes and scope of the poems, with the defense of war that Ungaretti made "until the very last man."

The paper concludes that, instructed in his native Egypt and educated in France, Ungaretti turns towards the exaltation of Italy as his own identity, making a very radical transition.

Due to its focus, rigor and scope, this research is undoubtedly already an obligatory reference to delve deeper into the relationship between war and poetry in Ungaretti's work.

