

Iuliu Marius Morariu: *Virgil Gheorghiu on Communism, Capitalism, and National Socialism*, Peterlang, 2022, 260 p.

Iuliu Marius Morariu's book called *Virgil Gheorghiu on Communism, Capitalism, and National Socialism* (2022) provides readers with interesting elaborations and explorations regarding the ideas put forward by Virgil Gheorghiu, a Romanian writer best known for his critical reflections concerned with twentieth century political movements. Morariu's work dives into the perspective of Gheorghiu on three major ideologies: communism, capitalism, and national socialism, as the title indicates. This review aims to analyze the key arguments which Morariu initiates, the historical context of Gheorghiu's writings, and the relevance of his critiques in contemporary discussions concerning political ideologies. Virgil Gheorghiu lived from 1916 to 1992, and he was a significant figure in Romanian literature, especially noted is his work called the *25th Hour*, which rather vividly depicts the chaos that was World War II and the totalitarian regimes which followed. Born in a tumultuous era, Gheorghiu experienced firsthand the absolute brutalities that were fascism, communism, and the socio-economic upheavals that made up interwar Europe. The author Morariu situates the works of Gheorghiu within this broader historical narrative and illustrates exactly how his personal experiences informed his views on the ideological battles of his time. Morariu also emphasizes Gheorghiu's unique position as both an observer and participant in the political landscape. The author outlines how Gheorghiu's interactions with different political movements, particularly during and after the tragic event of World War II, shaped his understanding of their implications for individual freedom and societal developments as well.

Additionally, in the book, Morariu articulates Gheorghiu's profound skepticism aimed toward communism. Drawing from Gheorghiu's own critiques, he presents communism as not only a political system, but also as a totalizing ideology that seeks to reshape human nature and the structures that shape society. The works of Gheorghiu reflect his belief that communism does in fact undermine individuality and moral agency, hence reducing humans to mere cogs within a state apparatus. Morariu highlights specific passages from Gheorghiu's writings that illustrate the oppressive nature of communist regimes, specifically the vanishing of personal freedoms and the harassing surveillance that characterized life under such systems. The insights of Gheorghiu resonate with contemporary critiques of authoritarianism, making Morariu's analysis both timely and relevant for readers of our time. The first section of Morariu's analysis concentrates on the rather passionate criticisms of Gheorghiu concerning communism. Gheorghiu views communism as a totalitarian ideology that ambitiously pursues to subdue individuality in the name of collective goodness. Morariu highlights Gheorghiu's declaration that living under the rule of communism, personal freedoms were indeed sacrificed for the sake of state control. He raises the argument that communism dehumanizes people, reducing them to only tools or instruments of the state.

Contrasting with his critique of communism, Gheorghiu's perspective on capitalism is nuanced. Morariu portrays Gheorghiu as acknowledging the flaws of capitalism, particularly its propensity for inequality and exploitation. However, Gheorghiu also views capitalism as a system that, despite its shortcomings, allows for individual freedom and creative expression. Morariu's exploration reveals Gheorghiu's ambivalence: while he critiques the materialism and moral vacuity that can accompany capitalist societies, he also recognizes the potential for personal agency that capitalism affords. Morariu's analysis invites readers to consider the complexities of capitalism beyond simplistic portrayals. He illustrates how Gheorghiu navigates the tension between economic freedom and ethical responsibility, a discussion that remains pertinent in today's debates over global capitalism. Gheorghiu's critique of capitalism serves as a reminder that economic systems must be evaluated not only for their efficiency but also for their impact on human dignity and individual rights. This theme

becomes increasingly relevant in discussions about corporate power, consumerism, and the ethical responsibilities of economic systems in today's globalized world.

Moreover, Morariu dedicates significant attention to Gheorghiu's views on national socialism, emphasizing the writer's strong opposition to its totalitarian and xenophobic aspects. Gheorghiu's critique of national socialism is grounded in his experiences during the war, where he witnessed the destructive consequences of extreme nationalism and racial ideology. Morariu analyzes how Gheorghiu articulates the dangers of national socialism not only for individual rights but also for societal cohesion. The author underscores Gheorghiu's belief that national socialism, like communism, reduces individuals to their identities as members of a collective, thereby stifling personal freedom and diversity. Morariu identifies several key themes in Gheorghiu's writings that traverse these ideologies. One prominent theme is the tension between individualism and collectivism. Gheorghiu's work consistently advocates for the primacy of the individual against the encroachments of state power, whether under communism, capitalism, or national socialism. Another significant theme is the moral dimension of political systems. Morariu emphasizes Gheorghiu's insistence that any ideology must be judged not solely by its economic outcomes but by its ethical implications for human dignity and freedom. This moral framework offers a valuable lens through which to evaluate contemporary political ideologies, prompting readers to reflect on the ethical dimensions of their own political beliefs. Morariu skillfully navigates Gheorghiu's ambivalence toward capitalism, illustrating that while Gheorghiu critiques its materialism and moral vacuity, he simultaneously appreciates the space it creates for personal agency. This duality invites readers to reflect on the complexities of capitalism, prompting discussions about the balance between economic freedom and ethical responsibility. In his examination of national socialism, Gheorghiu draws parallels with communism, identifying both as ideologies that prioritize the collective over the individual. Morariu's comparative analysis highlights Gheorghiu's consistent advocacy for individual rights, showcasing his commitment to human dignity in the face of oppressive systems.

A prominent theme in Gheorghiu's writings, as elucidated by Morariu, is the tension between individualism and collectivism. Gheorghiu consistently advocates for the primacy of the individual against the encroachments of state power, a position that resonates strongly in the current climate of political polarization. Morariu underscores the importance of this theme, suggesting that Gheorghiu's insistence on individual rights serves as a critical counterpoint to the ideological pressures of the 20th century. Another significant theme is the moral dimension of political ideologies. Morariu argues that Gheorghiu's critiques are not merely economic or political; they are fundamentally ethical. Gheorghiu posits that any ideology must be evaluated based on its impact on human dignity and freedom. This perspective invites readers to engage with contemporary political ideologies through a moral lens, urging a reevaluation of the ethical implications of their beliefs and practices. Another crucial theme identified in the book is the moral dimension of political ideologies. Morariu argues that Gheorghiu's critiques extend beyond political and economic analyses; they are fundamentally ethical. Gheorghiu posits that any ideology must be evaluated based on its impact on human dignity and the preservation of individual rights. This moral framework encourages contemporary readers to engage with political ideologies through an ethical lens, urging a reflection on the implications of their beliefs and practices. Morariu's work is not only an exploration of Gheorghiu's critiques but also a timely reflection on the current political climate. The resurgence of authoritarianism, nationalism, and populism in various parts of the world makes Gheorghiu's insights increasingly relevant. Morariu effectively connects Gheorghiu's warnings to contemporary issues, encouraging readers to reflect on the implications of unchecked state power and the erosion of civil liberties. The book serves as a clarion call to remain vigilant against ideologies that threaten individual freedoms. Morariu's analysis urges readers to consider the ethical dimensions of their political beliefs and the importance of safeguarding human dignity in the face of ideological extremism.

In conclusion, Iuliu-Marius Morariu's *Virgil Gheorghiu on Communism, Capitalism, and National Socialism* is a profound exploration of a complex writer's engagement with the ideologies that shaped the 20th century. Through a detailed analysis of Gheorghiu's critiques, Morariu not only illuminates the historical context in which these ideologies emerged but also emphasizes their ongoing relevance in contemporary society. The book serves as a vital reminder of the importance of individual rights and ethical governance in the face of oppressive political systems. As contemporary societies navigate the legacies of totalitarianism, nationalism, and economic inequality, Gheorghiu's insights continue to resonate, urging a critical examination of the political ideologies that shape our world. Morariu's work not only enriches the understanding of Gheorghiu's legacy but also stimulates ongoing discourse about freedom, morality, and the individual's role in society. This book is a significant contribution to the fields of political philosophy and literary criticism, and it encourages readers to reflect deeply on the political ideologies that govern their lives. Through Morariu's exploration, readers are encouraged to engage critically with the ideologies that govern their lives, fostering a deeper appreciation for the complexities of political thought. The book is an essential read for anyone interested in the intersections of literature, politics, and ethics, offering timeless insights into the human condition in the face of oppressive systems. Morariu successfully illuminates Gheorghiu's legacy, making this work a vital addition to contemporary discussions about freedom, morality, and the role of the individual in society.

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