CULTURAL IDENTITY AND ALTERITY IN THE POETIC DISCOURSE OF LUCIAN BLAGA

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Abstract: *Creator of a complex poetic discourse, unique by the ontological depth of its meanings, Lucian Blaga is one of the outstanding personalities of Romanian culture and literature. Lyrical discourse analysis through the relationship cultural identity- alterity implies an overview of the poet spiritual universe- a symbiosis of indigenous, eastern and western cultural influences.*

Keywords: *identity, alterity, culture*

Creator of a complex poetic discourse, unique by the ontological depth of its meanings, Lucian Blaga is one of the outstanding personalities of Romanian culture and literature. Intellectualization of the emotion is a constant of his poetic work, along with the metaphorical capacity of suggestion of the language, the aspiration to transcendence and, not least, the vastness of its culture.

Lyrical discourse analysis through the relationship cultural identity- alterity implies an overview of the poet spiritual universe- a symbiosis of indigenous, eastern and western cultural influences. We can say that the multi-faceted personality of Lucian Blaga is the result of interaction between cultural identity - romanian culture with which the author is identical by spiritual structure given by the stylistical matrix - and cultural *alterity* - other peoples cultures with whom he interacted during his activity.

The two concepts should not be regarded in opposition relationship, but complementary, because alterity is not perceived as a factor that modifies the spiritual structure of the poet, but is shaping it, coming back into the national culture and building it differently, with a new and deeper perception:

> Take the history of romanian literary and spirituality from 1800 until to today and you will discover that at least the most important moments of return to ourselves, of searching and finding the romanian style, are due to a catalytic contact, directly or indirectly, with the german spirit (Blaga, L., 1944 : 319).

Cultural alterity

Modernism manifested in the poetry of Lucian Blaga particularly through the adherence to expressionism, a „seemingly decorative expressionism, especially of theoretical extraction ”(Mincu, M., 1998 : 22) as noted Marin Mincu. The poet came into contact with the expressionist ideas while studying in Vienna and, although we can talk of similarities with Trakl, Heym, Stramm, Werfel, Rilke, but especially with german romantic poets Goethe and Hölderin, we can not speak of a pure expressionism. Blaga did not take over mechanically the expressionist rhetorical formulas, but he filtered through his own personality offering a new vision to the expressionism. Thus the enthusiasm, self effervescence from the first poems never leads to depersonalization, while the expressionist drama takes the shape of a melancholy that propagates in the absence of the word.

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Blaga - Rainer Maria Rilke was an association that was made against the background of religiosity of the two poets who lived an ecstatic poetical experience that resulted in the search of undefined aspects of things which become symbols of being that achieved true symbiosis with.

The most present personality in the work of L. Blaga is the German writer Goethe by whom the poet is primarily linked first of all by the passion for reading which is induced by the age of 13 when he discovered in the pages of *Convorbiri Literare* a *Faust* translation. Later, Goethe concepts of the original or demonic phenomenon fueled Blaga's philosophical thinking, who found in the work of the German writer the common factors with his own philosophy.

Blaga dedicates to Goethe two of his works *Fenomenul originar* (1925) and *Daimonion* (1926), which forms an analysis and a study „prefiguring, exploratory and stages", of areas that will be the backbone of his philosophical system that will develop later. In *Fenomenul originar* Blaga highlights the method that Goethe had introduced in the field of biology and physics, in the study of the metamorphosis of plants and color theory, method based on the vivid intuition, motion, metamorphosis and organic structure in the attempt to discover an *Urphaenomen* that reveals exclusively through intuition, to the detriment of mathematical and mechanical methods involving the intellect.

Blaga takes the original phenomenon method, develops and adapts it to his philosophical system of thinking. In Goethe original phenomenon, Blaga establishes three key points that will transpires in the substance of methodology and in the depth of the poetic ideas: the method of analysis of the original phenomenon is based on the analogy, the archetypal phenomenon is intuitive in nature and within the original phenomenon exists a polarity. Recognition of using the philosophy of Goethe *Urphaenomen* method determines Blaga to betray his „angle of approaching the reality in his theoretical writings", and, „using in philosophy a method that himself is calling it *intuitive*, likening to the myth sugestivity, his position to the reality is not done in a rigurous scientifically way, but subjective and poetic". (Vaida, M., 1975 : 160).

Being particularly concerned for man's creative ability, Blaga is attracted to the idea of demonic, thus his work *Daimonion* presents itself as a foray into *philosophical interpretation of Goethe's ideas* on the occasion of the 100th memorial of his death. In Goethe's conception demonic is, „a magical power, a positive spirit of creation, productivity, deed" that can manifest in art, philosophy, science, the concept beeing completely different from that of Socrates, probably borrowed from him. „Socrates demonic is a sneaking voice that dissuade you and occasionally refrain from stumble."(Blaga, L., 1968 : 224 – 225).

Lucian Blaga and Goethe meet on the ground of mythical thinking and the analysis of the goethean concept of Daimonion is important first of all for the understanding of the entire romanian author's works.

As noted Mircea Vaida, „Blaga felt drawn to Goethe, to the mythical charm and to the poetry of his theoretical method, discovering mythical and authentic lyrical resources in the ideas about *Daimonion* and especially in *Urphaenomen-e*" (Vaida, M., *op. Cit.* : 178); however there are significant differences between the two poets concerning the temperament. Thus, Blaga is naturally an antidemonic goethean, contemplative withdrawing themselves as witnesses: „I am not a son of deed"; „Blaga is not a goethean demonic at all, his demons, radiated by the power of spell of shadow, of mystery and *Rausch* is rather a variant of classical, socratic type". (*Ibidem* : 176).

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What brings closer Blaga with Hölderin is primarily the metaphysical structure pesonality, as Hölderin beeing the poet-philosopher, whose lyrics deeply metaphorical echoes the „spiritualized melancholy, suffering and sublimated wisdom of the poet" (Blaga, L., 1944) and in which the aspiration to the absolute and the orphic vision of an elementary nature is found. Although the two poets are on the common ground of Christian mythology, their approach is different, spiritualized in Hölderin work and closer to the folk eres in Blaga. (Todoran, E., 1981: 128).

Cultural identity

Another aspect of the Blaga poetic work was its traditionalism, the return to folklore, the mioritic mythical land withdrawal, in a horizon of beginnings, where the poet can contemplate the beauty of native mythology. The orientation to folklore derives from his being as a poet-philosopher who is spiritually enriched after the contact with foreign literature and culture, and poured his entire conception of the world and life into the form of folk poetry.

The poet spoke about this symbiosis of modern and traditional in an interview with I. Valerian, „the poetry which suits me, though ultramodern, I believe it to be in some aspects more traditionalist than the usual traditionalism because renews a connection with our spiritual primitive soul, unalterated by romantism, or naturalism."

Mircea Vaida sensed the interference and contribution to the encyclopedic development of the great poet and philosopher personality of the two aspects of culture: *identity* and *alterity* when he said that Blaga is not tributary to some figures such as Goethe, Nietzsche or Splenger because the sources of native inspiration native can not be ignored, recalling folklore, eminescian works and some studies of researchers such as Haşdeu and Pārvan, as he said, all these sources of inspiration are nothing but „some cardinal points melted into the shadow Blaga creator personality, under whose temple the disparate elements become a new zenith in the romanian poetic space."

What succeeds Lucian Blaga through his work is to exploit the vein of a traditional literature, of a minor culture, as he himself expressed, which he would to join into the universality, what is called major culture.

In conclusion we can affirm that the whole lyrical works of Lucian Blaga evolves between two paradigms, tradition and modernity, as a result of the synthesis between cultural identity and alterity, the impact of a minor and a major culture.

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