THE MYSTERY OF LIGHT IN LUCIAN BLAGA'S POETRY

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Abstract*: The present paper is intended to make some coherent comments on the mystery of light in Lucian Blaga's poetry, with special attention paid both to its associations (the presence of the woman, the mystery of sleep, the mystery of the Great Passage, the silence, the secret melancholy, the mystery of the Great Anonymous)and to the plurality of symbols incorporated by light in Blaga's lyrics.*
Key words*: light, mystery, dark.*

Poetry implies the participation in the world's mystery and the initiation of a mystery, which means an attitude of *doomed greatness*, as Blaga defines the state of luciferical knowledge. Thus, poetry represents a way of perceiving and knowing of the world by means of participating in its mystery.

The gift of the poet is that he can extract from reality the essence of holiness which he then transposes into his creation and the role of the poet resides in decomposing from the real world virtual worlds, whose stability is given by their indisputable existence under the beautiful sign of the mystery.

The poet is a filter, he transposes the reality, he re-edits it, but without abruptness; he nourishes his creation with elements from reality, elements which he does not harm in any way, his role being to enhance the mystery, thus, straining and destrainig simultaneously the reality, since we are in a space where certainties play hide-and-sick and the only certainty that we have proves to be that of the mystery.

Poetry represents, with Blaga, one of the ways of revelation of the mysteries, and the role of the poet-creator is that of protecting and magnifying the mysteries of the world. The aim of art, as Nichifor Crainic showed, "is revelation in sensible forms of the mysteries above." (Nichifor CRAINIC, 1999: 236.)

In Blaga's poetry the effect of totality derives from the idea of mistery, established within the system as a centre of the organisation of the significance in poetical images. Blaga's creation revolves around the idea of cultivating the mystery as a mystery, as it appears in the poem *I Will Not Crush the World's Corolla of Wonders*. The mystery is simultaneously transcendence (man's will of knowledge bounces against the 'censure' of the Great Anonymous) and immanence (the mysteries are woven into the intimate architecture of nature, the entire clod being "filled with the whirr of the mysteries").

The mystery appears associated with the presence of the woman ("De-atunci femeia ascunde sub pleoape o taină" – *Eva*) and of the ancestors ("Închis în cercul aceleiaşi vetre/ fac schimb de taine cu strămoşii" – *Biography*); it is consolidated by means of love, poetry, sleep, silence, and protected through the agency of the village and of childhood. "Eu am crescut hrănit de taina lumii", Blaga asserts in *But the Mountains – Where Are They?*

One can notice in Blaga's lyrics a series of aspects of the mystery, such as: the mystery of light, the mystery of sleep, the mystery of the Great Passage, the silence, the secret melancholy, the mystery of the Great Anonymous. All these bring forward

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Blaga's conception as regards the base of luciferical knowledge, knowledge whose aim is deepening and not explanation of the mystery.

Desertion of the primary world and entering the light in order to confront the "demons of the day" means the first of the wonders disclosed to the poet, he himself growing in wonder, under the new signs of existence: "Unde şi când m-am ivit în lumină nu ştiu" (*Biography*).

Before a component of the dark, immobile eternity, the self "sent into light" becomes, in its turn, emanative of a proper light ("my light"). Getting out of the repose and existing into light generate simultaneously other wonder, too, this time a negative one, that is conformity to the regimen of becoming. The joy of being into light proves to be shattered by the melancholy of extinction.

The mystery of light is perceived in Blaga's poetry in all its manifestations, in the manner of a Heraclitean vision, the object having in itself its contrary. The light manifests itself as a reality of the cosmos as well as a man's reality, but in the latter case it behaves as a 'monument' of duration, with precedents in contrary forms, the forms of darkness and with a 'future' destined inexorably to death.

Darkness-light-darkness in a continuous rotation would be the schematic way of aproaching the symbol if we ignored the inner drama in which these successive stages of becoming did not tend to polarize in a superimage of the twilight, or, in a 'transparent' eternity, that could find out an equivalent in the well-known semantic couple: to die life and to live death. Dispatch into light signifies such a living of death.

Life with all its components is light and it is also a passage, a road measured by "răbdarea neagră a aceluiaşi pas", between uprise and setting, between emerging light and the twilight.

The symbolic couples, more or less contrary, are always present. The emerging light and the evanescent light, the conscious light growing slightly dim, the light-love and the light-damnation, the light sent into the world and the light that rests "în caldul, nebunul septembrie", the light in the morning and the evening light, set in opposition man's light with the cosmic light ("Soare, / cum mai simţi nebuna bucurie / de-a răsări?" – *The Crib*).

The poet's light has all the attributes of the objective light, but the one of eternity; within the symbolical human light the eternal search is unexosted, the lyrism oscilates between jubilation and failure. Such a light in continuous alteration finally becomes one with life. Life proves to be a passing light, a 'road into light', in permanent slow burning, aerial form of the fire, ember at a certain moment, that of the climax, the fire itself, in all its stages, in symbolical regressive relation from flame and blaze to ember and spark, to coal and ash. At the end of the road of Blaga's light the nimbs are ashy: "Ies vârstele şi-mi pun pe cap/ aureole de cenuşă." (*Sunset*)

The morning light can announce not only a beginning of the world in elated images, but also disintegration into ashes. In several lyrical episodes the beings die in the morning "incinerate de prima auroră"; the light suddenly sinks into mystery, while the shaddow takes possesion of the world or it warns: "Umbra lumii îmi trece peste inimă" (*The Old Monk Whispers to Me from the Threshold*)

The moment of complete light, designated by the symbolical noon, creates a double signification, the poet being situated closer as well as farther from the communication with the universe.

Just like Valery in *The Marine Cemetery*, Blaga gives an ambivalent significance to this apotheotical form of light that corresponds to the moment when "soarele ţine în zenit cântarul zilei" and "nici o umbră nu găseşti". Climbed on „coasta

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soarelui" the spirit reaches the maximum degree of revelation, with the feeling of being one with eternity; in the tension of inner fire time burns ("ard în lume orele"), and the desired gates of eternity are wide open. The noon is fair and high, the place of the long sought-after ataraxis, towards which all the ways of light turn, being polarized in a centre of fire, where the passion purifies and where the tear sublimes into song. The noon signifies increased subjectivity of light, intellectualisation until fascination of the spirit, having the incisive force of the flame and the dynamism of burning.

The triumph of the man-light seems to be obvious: "toate drumurile duc/ către Joia focului/ spre amiaza locului/ unde arde patima,/ unde cântă lacrima." (*All the Roads Lead*)

The lyric consciousness ranges restless between two antinomical tentations, between light and shaddow, as a "pumn de lumină" and "pumn de pământ", between "răsăritul de soare şi apusul de soare", between "tină şi rană".

Blaga's noon transforms the joy of being light into "ecstatică boală". The comforting softness of the diurnal landscape is replaced by the devouring rhythm of burning, changing the condition of the man thirsty for light in a doomed condition: "Ce grea e pentru noi osânda de a sta în lumină!".

Memories taste like ashes; they are burnt light, depleted by life. Lost forever, yesterday's light triggers imaginary pathetic roves: "Caut, nu ştiu ce caut. Caut/ aurore ce-au fost, ţâşnitoare, aprinse/ fântâni – azi cu ape legate şi-nvinse. (…)/ Caut, nu ştiu ce caut. Subt stele de ieri,/ Subt trecutele, caut/ lumina stinsă pe care-o tot laud." (*Yesterday's Light*)

The oscillation between the already ghastly light and the dimmed light that is still waiting for him inclines towards the slow assumption of "the good darkness". The cyclic vision conquers the fear of leaving the light, the return taking place in a transparent land, a place of the mothers from where once the being started and where now he gets back in order to prepare himself for a new solar journey. The lost world heals rhythmically in this interchange of light with the darkness.

However, since "nimic nu vrea să fie altfel decât este" (*In the Great Passage*), the passage of light, dimmer and dimmer, goes on changing into inner heat, shared "tâmplă fierbinte lângă tâmplă".

In this apotheosis stance, sharing the final light impregnated into bodies, the human couple awaits for the destiny that is suposed to bring new heat, from the other land, the land of death. "Privind la hora flacării/ întâmpinăm solstiţiul cald, / ce se revarsă peste noi/ de pe tărâmul celălalt.// Ne pierdem ca să ne-mplinim./ Mergând în foc, mergând în spini,/ ca aurul ne rotunjim/ şi ca ispita prin grădini." (*Gardens' Solstice*)

At the origin of Blaga's world light meets water, both of them – symbols of transcendence: "O înviere e pretutindeni, pe drum/ şi-n lumina deşteaptă." (*Everyday Resurection*), symbols of "celuilalt tărâm", which opens with the key of „dorului": „La obârşie, la izvor/ nici o apă nu se-ntoarce,/ decât în chip de nor./ La obârşie, la izvor/ nici un drum nu se întoarce/ decât în chip de dor./ O, drum şi ape, nor şi dor,/ ce voi fi, când m-oi întoarce/ la obârşie, la izvor?/ Fi-voi dor atunci, fi-voi nor?" (*Origin's Song*).

The former light, a sign of the loved one ("Aşa-s de negri ochii tăi,/ lumina mea" –*The Spring of the Night* or "Iar eu încet, nespus de-ncet/ pleoapele-mi închid,/ îmbrăţişând cu ele tainic/ icoana ta din ochii mei,/ surâsul tău, iubirea şi lumina ta" – *Night*) by means of which the poet opened his arms towards the phenomenal world, finds complemantarity in the sensual and spiritual heat shed by the smile „cu care o femeie de lumină poate/ să-ntimpine o inimă în noapte" (*Thalatta! Thalatta!*),

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symbolical image of the fusion between poetry and feeling: „Iubind – ne-ncredinţăm că suntem./ Când iubim, oricât de-adâncă noapte ar fi,/ suntem în zi…" (*Psalm*)
The light, expression of some uranian forces of 'fecundation', appears also as a primary elemental image, cosmic generator of life, symbol of knowledge, of salvation, spiritual elevation, symbol of life given by God who is Light and moreover a symbol of luciferical knowledge and even immortality: *I Will Not Crush the World's Corolla of Wonders, The Light, I Want to Dance!, The Tears, Can't You Feel It? Heaven's Light, The Heart, The Stalactite, Pax Magna, Garden's Providence, etc. (*NICOLESCU, 1997: 98.

With Blaga, the mystery of light is enhanced by love and the Great Anonymous: "Lumina ce-o simt năvălindu-mi/ în piept când te văd – minunato,/ e poate că ultimul strop/ din lumina creată în ziua dintâi." (*The Light*)

By means of light the being is regenerated, resurected to another level of understanding and existence. And, above all, love is the binding. Love is the one that propels the being beyond nature's limits, to the 'first day'. The sanctity of the feeling of love affiliates to the sanctity of the creation of the existential universe. By living within love, we live within holiness, within light, within mistery.

In the poem *The Light* and not only here, light means an intense burning. An intense burning for the soul lost in the passionate arms of love. Lost, therefore, in the arms of God. Thus, the light becomes a key for holiness, for the good and homely eternity. It outdoes time, allowing, in this way, the reverse travel, removing human laws and empirical embroidery.

The mystery of light is also revealed in the poem *Heaven's Light*. We are undoubtedly under the eternal sign of the mystery, where everything interpenetrates, and the luciferical light belongs to some incongruous worlds, it is divided between minus and plus, between heaven and hell.

In the poem *The Stalactite* the mystery of light rounds through the agency of the mystery of silence. Peace and light descent upon the poet's soul who has become silent, thus becoming "un ascet de piatră": "Lin,/ lin,/ lin – picuri de lumină/ şi stropi de pace – cad necontenit / din cer/ şi împietresc – în mine." The shivers of mystery come to fruition through silence under the seal of luciferical light.

The poet's birth itself, actually the being's birth is done, in the first volume of poetry, under the sign of light ("Unde şi când m-am ivit în lumină, nu ştiu" – Biography), Blaga offering us here a cosmogenesis based on the concept of light.

For Lucian Blaga, the light is the beginning and the end, cosmogenesis and descent into nothingness; the world's birth is under light: "Nimicul zăcea-n agonie, / când singur plutea-n întuneric şi dat-a/ un semn Nepătrunsul: / « Să fie lumină! »" (*The Light*).

Death itself, individual or cosmic, in this universe, will be presented later, in Blaga's poetry, as a return into light: "Apoi ca frunza cobori. Şi ţărna/ ţi-o tragi peste ochi/ ca o gravă pleoapă./ Mumele sfintele – / luminile mii,/ mume sub glii/ iţi iau în primire cuvintele./ Încă o dată te-adapă. " (*Epitaph*)

Everywhere, in the ardent search for the ideal of moral beauty, one can feel God's alluring presence, though the Great Anonymous never reveals Himself completely: "vifor… de lumină**",** "lumina creată în ziua dintâi" (*The Light*)**,** "valuri de lumină**"** (*I Want to Dance !*), "mugurii /prea lacomi de lumină**"** (*March*) **,** "picuri de lumină**"** (*The Stalactite*)**,** o "mare de lumină"(*Pax Magna*), "o rază de lumină**"** (*Autumn Sunset*)**,** "deasupra mea-i lumină**"** (*A Dead Person's Thoughts*)**,** "O înviere e pretutindeni , pe drum / şi-n lumina deşteaptă**.** *(Everyday Resurrection*)**,** "De ce m-ai

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trimis în lumină, Mamă…?**”** (*Letter*), “m-am ivit în lumină**”** (*Biography*)**,** “Ce arătare ! Ah, ce lumină ! / Setea alb-a căzut în grădină, /necăutată… **“** (*Heavenly Touch*)**,** “Duravei în noi o lumină, mare ca-ncrederea…**”** (*Birth*), “ De ce îmi e aşa de teamă-mamă-/ Să părăsesc iar lumina ?**”** (*From the Thick*)**,** “linele colinele / strâng de sus luminile**”** *(Sun’s Coast*)**,** “ Sus în lumină, ce fragil / apare muntele !**”** (*Magical Rise*)**,** olarii “sunt cercetaţi de vreo lumină şi de zâne**”** (*Potter*), “Mumele sfinte / luminile mii**”** (*Epitaph*)**,** “Ard lumini ca sorii tineri**”** (*Tusculum*)**,** “Cât e întinsul şi –naltul luminii**”** (*Fire’s Song*)**,** “trandafirul …/dorind o lumină să stea …**”** (*The Jar*)**.**

Beyond the plurality of the symbols incorporated by light in Blaga’s lyrics, we reiterate the concept of light-mystery since the light is not an evidence, it is only a suggestion, a veil on the day’s things, its root subsist on mystery; it is intangible, it can only be felt, like in the above-lines, by a waft of the heart („năvălindu-mi / în piept”).

And the mystery, through its liminality, elevates. We are neither in the night, nor in the day, but in antechamber, in limbo, on the threshold, by the window. We can catch a glimpse of something, we can vehiculate ideas, opinions, suggestions, however, we enter a floating land, which exactly because of this rock between certitude and incertitude, between empirical and imaginative, gives us the chance to progress, to excel ourselves, to climb deliriously the heights of everywhere world with open eyes and soul, careful at every little thing that can help us in our ascent.

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