CEZAR BALTAG. A LYRICISM OF ESSENCES

A representative poet of his generation, Cezar Baltag exploits to the full the themes used in the 60s. Such a theme, circumscribed in the volute of a hermetic and hieratical verse is that of time. Moments lapsing, the becoming, the metamorphoses of beings and things in a universe with mystic senses have been the reference points of a poetic radiography of the world of unmistaken originality. Nevertheless, it is true that the time topos suffered a mutation, if not in terms of substance, then at least in terms of the tonality of lyrical phrasing. If at the beginning the tone was one of celebration, effusion and perceptive euphoria, it then acquires a melancholic and pensive turn, reflexivity is insinuated more often in the poem's space, and the gravity gradually makes room for an estrangement, alienation feeling and guilty rupture caused by the acute awareness of the fall into the world and time. This sensitivity mutation is justly spotted by Al. Cistelecan: "Instead of a euphoria of perception leading to reflexive incantations, in a rhetoric that counted on splendour and euphony and to the same extent on rigour and scholasticism, a dramatic gravity is now spotted, bearing a reflexive pathos submerged in the text and a nostalgia of the intellect. The speech itself has changed to a considerable level its structure and from effervescent and incantatory it has become one of tragic blurred solemnity. Its rhythm is not jubilant but melancholic and the vibration space between words has grown and deepened. Instead of the imagistic sheaf, Cezar Baltag uses the word "lead" attracted from the depths by the gravity of existential elegy".

It is nearly a truism that Cezar Baltag's lyricism is introverted and sublimated, with senses reflected in the depths and with a diffuse musicality, of quasi-magic incantation. The quest for own identity transposes into the poems of Cezar Baltag with an illuminating frequency. Multiplied both in the world's and poem's mirrors, the lyrical self wants to find its true face, its authentic posture that would identify to the deepest extent possible, its organic and the lyrical being. Among the world's representations, with their disconcerting multiplicity and the profound ego correspondences, filiations, harmonies and subtle connections are searched: "Aici este soarele meu,/ aici sunt prietenii mei/ şi fântânile,/ aici orizontul este pe rând/ roată,/ deal,/ inimă,/ aici, din părinţii părinţilor mei,/ au zburat treptat zilele/ şi s-au rostit cuvinte/ şi s-au desfrunzit aşteptări/ şi au căzut

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ploi/ şi au luminat patimi,/ ... inima mea/ atunci era Mâine,/ sângele meu/ încălzea un timp nenăscut,/ glasul meu netrezit/ clătina în miezul seminţelor/ netrezitele ramuri,/ ... Văzul meu e o trecere,/ auzul meu e o trecere,/ sângele meu e cea mai frumoasă călătorie/ spre inima dulcelui Mâine,/ pe care îl voi numi fiul meu/ şi îi voi da cuvintele mele/ şi ochii/ şi soarele meu şi râurile,/ şi îl voi pune stăpân peste numele meu/ şi amintirea mea/ şi izbânzile,/ aici, pe aceste coline,/ unde eu voi fi mai departe/ roată,/ deal,/ inimă".

Cezar Baltag's exegetes have justly formulated the idea of a quarrel between issues and elocution, between the strictness of interiority and meditation and expressive ecstasy. The preeminence of the questionable substance upon form is, for this poet, a sign of vision's maturity and progressive spiritualization of the speech. Not randomly, the beatitude and solemnity register is the most productive for a certain part of Cezar Baltag's poetry. The existential tantalization, the drama of the human being torn by opposites, facing an infinitely multiplied universe, the voracious, tentacular time, all of these are transposed in the fragile, nearly calophile pen of a scholar who sees beyond the daily scarcities, a sublime, transcendent horizon, caught between the braces of the lyrical hierophany: "Toate secundele/ sunt de la o vreme săgeţi/ cineva încordează un arc otrăvit/ şi săgeţile spintecă aerul pline de ură/ nu se liniştesc decât, surd,/ când îşi află odihna în tine// Una câte una/ călătorul îşi smulge din trup/ zilele orbitoare/ ca nişte făclii ce numai/ de la rănile sale adânci/ se pot aprinde/ şi le implântă la marginea/ drumului său/ aici o rană de foc aici alta/ în dreapta în stânga departe la nesfârşit pietre kilometrice făclii ce ard/ drum sângerat/ fosfor zăpadă soare răni de lumină// Vine seara/ şi săgeţile se îndesesc/ se lasă noaptea şi drumul se învăpăiază mai tare/ *vulnerant omnes, ultima necat*/ - toate rănesc, ultima răpune/ dar câtă lumină!".

However, Cezar Baltag is above all a poet fascinated by the limits aporias, by the luminescence of those passage spaces which connect the existent to non-existent, the daily appearances to their encoded essence, the perishable and coincidental to the perennial, timeless representations. This particularity of the vision is highlighted by Ion Pop, who states that many of Cezar Baltag's poems from the volume *Dialog la mal* "gravitate around the lyrical motif of the *limit*, of the *threshold* between existence and non-existence, between substance and spirit - the movement being made in both senses and eventually turning into a circular figure. *The river bank* and the

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isomorphic spatial figures – *the river, the valley, the bridge, the gate,* «the blind end of the path» of Oedipus led to light, «the last station», «the fire trampoline» etc. make a sympathetic constellation of the imaginary, suggesting the moment of *initiation*, the placement around the final *revelation*".

Sometimes Barbian, by the tendency of encoding senses, by the essentialized visions and by the spiritualization of expression, Cezar Baltag is a poet attracted by the world of essences, by the fragile boundary between the created and the non-created, the promised and the refused to the same extent. Thus, birth means "crucifixion", sacrifice of infinite virtues before the creation, maculation of the human being by undertaking some determinations which lessen, mutilate the field of possible, of non-created completion: "Cine se răstigneşte pe sine/ în naşterea sa?... Mă dau spre lumină/ lumilor/ şi voi avea umbră/ şi ochiul va arde văzând/ şi urechea va fi vinovată de sunete./.../ Durere din durere Nicăieri adevărat,/ din nicăieri adevărat/ Născut, iar nu făcut. Şi ca un orb de mână/ în lume petrecut./ Totul e moară a totului, totul e capcană a totului,/ ca şarpele încolăcit pe coasă,/ astfel vin eu din tânărul/ meu mormânt.// Zei foame, primiţi-mă. Jertfa supremă/ sunt eu/ în trupul acesta". In its depths, the poetry of Cezar Baltag has a dramatic aura, a tragic pallor, fed by the pulse of the impetus of the soul towards the limits which predetermine it. Most of the times, the verse betrays a re-set tonality, a fervor of redemption and a spiritualized musicality, sign of introspection of the inspiration and of the initiation script suggested by the author almost every time. The ritual tone, the formal gesticulation, the contemplative attitude of the lyrical self are all main features of Cezar Baltag's poetry, found in almost all of his poems.

The images of ascending movement are again, listed in this lyrical universe; *the stair, the steps, the rope* – are metaphors for the ascent, the relation between earth and sky, between phenomenality and essentiality, for aspiring to the top: "Ci creşte de-alaltăieri seară/ departe, pe-un deal auster/ din vertebre şi tibii o scară/ nesfârşită, ce urcă la cer" sau „Sui de atâta vreme/ pe această funie fierbinte/ care trece/ printre palmele mele/ însângerate// Urcă, îmi spui, prinde-te cât poţi/ de liana pe care o ţin/ pentru tine,/ continuă să vii chiar dacă/ ţi se va şopti: nu mai există/ Pământul// caţără-te, chiar dacă/ se întunecă// Totul". Cezar Baltag's lyricism is a search for the "absolute lyricism" that Ion Barbu was talking about, but to an equal extent, it is also a search for his own identity, for his deep inside

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voice. In the poetry of Cezar Baltag the signs of time elapse and those of death are significant in terms of presence, frequency and ideational component. The poet, introverted and secluded into a space of liminal contemplation, acutely feels the time lapse, the state of the being subject to finiteness, the universal decay ("Ci ei îmi tot spun că mai e timp/ chiar dacă / pereţii aceşti au început să plece // Ci ei tot îmi spun: mai este vreme/ chiar dacă/ Pământul a început să se îndepărteze// mai e timp/ cu toate că/ pasărea din geam a plecat şi acum va zbura şi fereastra/ în schimb vor ieşi stelele/ şi despre umbra mea/ nu vorbesc// Nu e nimic, timp mai este,/ şi nu mai vorbesc/ despre nimic// şi eu voi sta acum în prag/ şi pragul strigă: întoarce-te/ şi deschid uşa încet/ şi uşa dispare// dar nu e nimic/ timp mai este").

The poem *Monodie I* is built under the form of a monologue in which the fundamental idea is that of searching the senses and meanings of one's own condition, through a pathetic invocation addressed to Divinity. Otherwise, as a literary species, the monody (gr. *monos* "alone", *ode* "song") was a lyrical monologue in the Greek tragedy, especially particular of the theatre plays of Euripides. The monody was always played on a single voice and in general it had funerary implications, expressing the death mourning. The thanatic signs are also seen in the poetry of Cezar Baltag, but in this case they acquire some reflexive sonorities and a pensive side much firmer and at the same time a liturgical tonality of litany. On a thorough reading of the poetry, some reminiscences may be spotted from Arghezi's *Psalmi*, especially in the lyrical vision, the set up attitude and tonality. The poet's invocation is headed towards a *Deus absconditus*, a God, who after having created the world draws away to inaccessible heights, to an unapproachable silence.

The images of absence, of the emptiness, of the lack of communication between the earth and the welkin are very eloquent and expressive. A hard, metaphysical silence corresponds to the pathetic calling of the poet, to his appeal to light: "...şi ţi-am zis, Doamne, ţi-am zis/ şi cu moarte şi cu vis/ şi cu cer şi cu pământ/ şi cu toate câte sunt// Zorii când s-au înălţat/ tu erai demult plecat/ amiaza când s-a suit/ te-am chemat şi n-ai venit/ noaptea când m-a fost ascuns/ te-am strigat şi n-ai răspuns/ pe unde-ai trecut a nume/ paşii tăi s-au făcut Lume...// dacă-ai fi tăcere-n unde/ şi tăcerea mi-ar răspunde/ în genune de-ai fi fost/ îi găseam genunii rost/ arşiţă de te ştiam/ luam foc şi înviam". In this case the expression acuity

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comes from a need of the lyrical self to transcribe its own destiny, to identify its own being, by inserting it into the spectacle of universal existence, a disconcerting spectacle, in which the good and the bad, the tragic and the comic, the sublime and the ridicule are mixed up to indistinction ("Soarta mea am căutat-o/ şi-am pierdut-o şi-am aflat-o/ şi-am aflat că lumea este/ şi-ntuneric şi poveste"). The dominant feeling in this poem is existential anxiety, restlessness caused by the lack of firm ontological signs, by the destiny's aporia, in which the spiritual condition faces a perishable condition, the daily plan, with all its tribulations. The insinuation of the thanatic thrill, the slow anticipation of the end provide the verses with a melancholic and meditative tone and also a type of asceticism of contemplation of the last implications of the world: "Tot mai des întinde mâna/ să mă mângâie ţărâna/ picioarele mi le leagă/ ba de frunze, ba de iarbă/ ba de pietre, ba de soare/ ba de apa-înşelătoare".

The quest for origins and ontic identification acquires disturbing accents in the poetry of Cezar Baltag, charged with a contemplative flow which has the imprint of an abstracted melancholia. Therefore, the poetic stress originates in the withheld vibration of the experience, as opposed to the ample respiration theme staged and transcribed in the register of discreet hieratism and of essentialized drawing.

The poet' s interrogations remain unanswered, the stress does not relieve in the existence and utterance bow and the verse pathos remains intact, as in a reserved, suppressed lamentation: "M-ai trimis, Doamne, trimis/ şi la stele şi la vis,/ Steaua întreabă: - Eu te caut/ sau mă chemi tu şi eu n-aud?/ Visu-spune: Eu sunt lume./ Lumii rostul nu-l pot spune". Shaping a utopian and encoded world, Cezar Baltag basically renders the cry of the creature which cannot find its origins, which cannot completely identify itself, which does not find the echo to its questions in a world in which Divinity is missing. Ultimately, Cezar Baltag's poetry, as Ion Pop noticed is "a lyricism about essences, in a nearly emaciated language, but to which the thrill and the shake of the creature which unveils its fragility give the indispensable relativity percentage, the dramatic note, disturbing the Anthem's certainties with fertile interrogations". In Cezar Baltag's lyricism the expression's expiation and resignation are related to abstract melancholy, in summary images, barely sketched and in a liturgical, solemn and critical tone.

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