

**DUMITRU-MIRCEA BUDA***Petru Maior University of Targu-Mures****Ways of Reception Regarding the Works of Lucian Blaga. The Issue of Mystery***

*The paper attempts to draw some of the significant lines of Lucian Blaga's critical reception regarding the problem of mystery, showing the major trends recorded since the publication of his first books and suggesting that his creative personality should be defined in the convergence of poetical, theatrical and philosophical writing.*

A major area of philosophical exploration, a structural obsession in the universe of the poems (at least referring to the most privileged section of his work by critics), a dramatic archetype, operating in the plays, not only regarding the hyper-symbolic characters but also the scenarios worked directly from the native mythological "clay" - *these are the fields in which the major roles are played by* mystery and its explicit poetry, famous and mythologized already, probably representing a sort of an axiomatic criterion with the same basic substance as all the metamorphosis of the creative personality of the Lančrăm writer. Those metamorphoses which the criticism has abusively and dogmatically separated – as had already happened in the first two decades of Communism, when Blaga was manicheically read, as a first rate poet and play-writer yet negligible philosopher; in fact, his philosophy was seen as a taboo by the official Marxist-Leninist ideology which transformed the reception of his work into an easy- didactic one, without any real hermeneutical contribution - Blaga being behold either as the "poet-philosopher" or as the " philosopher-poet", because of the fact that some sets of metaphors had the same semantic structure as some philosophical concepts and vice-versa, just as other ideas, that have poetic structure regarding the typology of knowledge, its limits, the ontological meaning of the mystery itself or the approximation of the transcendence - were to be recognized inside the language and the imagery of the poems.

Not just about this consubstantiality, but about the convergence, "*convergence between the poet and philosopher*", wrote, perhaps the most proficiently, taking into consideration his double formation, Cornel Moraru in his newest monograph of Blaga published in our country. The latest traditional- aesthetic monograph, so to say, because in the meantime, Blaga began to be studied by the poststructuralist critique, by semio- stylistic experts, and there are some published PhDs theses which dealt with this monographic perspective, that had been approved and authorized from the 70's of the last century by Alexandra Indrieș or Maria Carpov. Cornel Moraru disclaims, using strong arguments, the already mentioned excesses, being himself a partisan of balance and an referee of tempered comment, giving, as an example of this kind of abuse, the readings of some poems through the autognostic, pseudo- positivistic key (first named so by Vasile Băncilă), regarding the Blagian philosophic concepts, a method that ignores, in the first place, the diachronic ways of the creation - the separation of the concepts and their wording being subsequently realized after their initial establishment in the poems. The solution advanced by Cornel Moraru is a hermeneutical convergence - it refers in fact to a consubstantial reading of Blaga's philosophy, poetry and theatre promoting the philosophy and theatre - all those

metamorphoses that were disadvantaged by the previous contexts and in which the critic sees the update potential, the possibility of making Blaga's work more contemporary.

From a more personal point of view, there are some reluctances regarding the chances of a massive rediscovery in the present day, and there is but a slightly breakthrough in the Western culture, a European rehabilitation of Blaga's philosophy being a part of the so called "philosophy of existence" at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (*Lebensphilosophie*). There are two counterarguments that can immediately be seen: on the one hand there is his conceptual language, highly poetic and thereby not sufficiently stable (hence untranslatable), although expressive, and on the other hand there is the interest of many literary critics regarding the Blagian philosophy, despite the fact that this segment of Blaga's work should have been studied by the actual philosophers. A literary philosophy, or paraliterary, the term should be acknowledged without derogatory connotations, as the philosophy of Blaga is advantaged and doomed at the same time because of its condition. This consubstantiality that we are talking about (with reference to all his literature) prevents his philosophy to expand itself into a strong thinking system. But this is not a tragic thing, on the contrary. We believe that a multidisciplinary reading, where there are no rigid or complex boundaries between an hermeneutical, philosophical or dramatic approach, may prove the most updated and beneficial way of understanding the work of Lucian Blaga either as a whole or divided into separate sections, being able to finally reveal an original creative archetype from which emerges, one by one or simultaneously, the poetic imagery, dramatic vision and the philosophical system. Thus, there may be highlighted some ways of investigation proposed by Corin Braga, in his work entitled *Lucian Blaga- The genesis of the inner worlds (Lucian Blaga- Geneza lumilor interioare)* a truly remarkable psycho-critical essay, but also older approaches, with more convincing results as those of Eugen Todoran; *Lucian Blaga- the poetic myth* and *Lucian Blaga- the dramatic myth*, the former being resumed and revised in the most recent volume of this critic *Lucian Blaga. Myth. Poetry, Poetic Myth*.

Located on this premise, which touch the issue of the access at the consubstantiality of Blagian work, the discussion about the poetic mystery and the poetic universe encountered in the *Light Poem's* author work turns out to be inevitable. As I was saying, the mystery could be that consubstantial criterion, being, as a literary theme and concept, the result of what Ov. S. Crohmălniceanu called "*the taste of this naïve, tale figment like, primitiveness, having as a reverse the aversion that he (the writer) feels against the cold, judicious and mechanical civilization.*" All this considered, after the author of the famous work "Romanian literature and expressionism" declares himself assured that "*Blaga's literary and philosophical work grew up together in a perfect osmosis.*" This sympathy for mystery can be seen probably as a compensatory reflex of Blaga, in his way to adhere to the philosophical trend that foreshadowed, in those times, the declension of the assertive Western society and the crisis of reason's authority, not only referring to Nietzsche, with whom Blaga's thought and expressionist sensibility shares so many common points but also Oswald Spengler or Ludwig Klages.

It is not at all adventitious; the mystery being the central point of his writing even from his double debut in 1919, when the *Light Poems* are accompanied, even at the Academy awards with the Adamachi prize, by some reflections that can be found in another volume - *Stones for my temple*. Both books were, in fact, to be re-edited in 1920 at Romanian Book

Publishing house. The thematization of mystery becomes even more significant in 1921, the next year in which two more volumes appeared, where the new Arcadia, marked by the individual consciousness and the exclusion from the initial paradise, as remarked by Ion Pop in the poems that compose the volume *Pasii profetului / Prophet's steps*, is doubled by the poetic drama regarding the pre-Christian saintliness of Dacians illustrated in *Zamolxe. Mister păgând / Zamolxe. Heathen mystery*. Besides, Ion Pop suggests that the mystery is the original point of Blaga's mythological geography, both in poetry, where the evolution starts from the "*metaphysical gloominess of the problematic human being that has been alienated from the secrets of the universe and is now striving to retrieve the original balance, under the symbol of a reintegration myth*", and in theatre - the critic seeing the plays as dramatic poems and being interested in "*the powers that are hidden in the night and in the ethnos sleep with which the characters identify themselves*"- and we could also add *mystery- characters by themselves*. Ion Pop calls them "*stylized generics*."

Paradoxically, the reception, which was truly enthusiastic in the year of his debut 1919, is significantly restrained in 1921, primarily because now Blaga seems to be in some sort of contrast with the new trends of the epoch (Transylvania is still mainly traditional-sămănătoristă) because of the fact that he adopted the modern expressionist *formula/way of writing* (Iorga - "the poet prophesies meaningless things"). It takes about a decade until the reception of Blaga begins to follow a normal path and this mystery issue is now, for the first time acknowledged as being a fundamental element in his writing, in a special number of *Gândirea* in December 1934, from which he has not quit yet due to the doctrine incompatibility. Here, Emil Cioran's article on "*Blaga's interior style*" stands out talking about "*a serenity in chiaroscuro*", "*the key for the man and work*", opening "*the hidden rooms of the soul*" and revealing "*the fear under the quietude, the eternity under the shape, the mystery under the transparency*". Or, Cioran adds more poignant "*Blaga would not have reached the issue of ecstatic knowledge if he had not had the intimate experience of mystery*" and, moreover, "*the intensity of the rupture increases with the extent of mystery*." Cioran practically supported our previous statement regarding the compensatory nature of mystery for the agony of the modern world- "*to the devitalizing force of the spirit (Geist), in the terminology of Klages, Cioran says, Blaga opposes the metaphysic of mystery because precisely the presence of the mystery in the world is the one that limits the destructive action of the intellect and also exposes the logo- centric illusions*." We could add that, inside the poetic universe, the metaphysic of the mystery functions as a reflex of vitalism, a Dionysian experience of the world.

Future opponent, Nichifor Crainic has, in the same anniversary number of *Gândirea* in 1934, an interesting intervention, because of the same point of view regarding the "religious mystery" which he believes to be, along with the "folklore myth", a form of art and thinking. Naturally for Crainic, "mystery, if it cannot be divided using rational means, it can be ecstatically lived through religion or embodied in a mythical formula through art." Because any approach, be it thematic or conceptual, of Blaga's work, can only be an implicit opening to his reception (a section in the history of his reception, so to say), it cannot be ignored that there is an overwhelming difference between the 1934 moment and the later minimizing and trivialized attacks of his theoretical concepts, that began in the latest years of the inter-war

period and would eventually grow to a full extent during the “obsessive decade” because of the official ideology promoted in those times. The issue of mystery is no exception- from this derives the overused appellation “mystic”, on the one hand, by his contemporaries, in the well-known condemnation made by theologians, respectable ones like D. Stăniloae, and, on the other hand by the *proletcult* propaganda, later on. Fortunately, there are some notable exceptions among these two extremes- for example N. Bagdasar, talking, in 1937 about the centrality of the mystery idea in Blaga’s gnoseology and about his so called “estatic rationalism.” There are two more critical approaches- having a monographic perspective, even though slightly different, they are still important and notable- *Lucian Blaga, Romanian energy* written by Vaile Băncilă (the first monograph), being a much more mimetic writing and up to Ovidiu Drimba’s *The philosophy of Lucian Blaga*, where there are no distinct limits between Blaga as a writer and Blaga as a critic (this work was somehow written by two hands, because Blaga, being a very close friend to Drimba, read his writing and personally subedited it.) In any case, this concept of mystery lays at the foundation of his knowledge theory and poetic sensibility. As conclusive, regarding the imposing of the idea of mystery as an essential axis, is the third monograph belonging to Constantin Fântâneru, *The poetry of Lucian Blaga and the mystic thinking*, where there are two chapters about the influence of Blaga over the poetry written by the young generation of the time. The poet of mysteries is seen as an ultra-modernist: “*the expression of poetic configuration of a new meaning*” and maybe, the fact that Blaga was seen for a while as an “vanguard”, is not just a simple detail because, being interested, as Crohmălniceanu says, in Edvard Munch, Van Gogh, Brâncuși, Barlach or Arhipenko, he had been conquered, in fact, by the European expressionism during his studies at Vienna. The comprehension point up to which the writer brings the mystery may be due to that atmosphere of indecision that governed in that period, because of the fact that the cultural innovations came from those modernists prepared inside traditional circles and vice-versa.

For a man that has been “hypnotized by the mystery”, and continually pertaining to it “*not as an unattainable threshold of knowledge or as a mere metaphysical hypothesis,*” because “*the cognitive structures are also shaped by this original ontological framework*” as he is memorably described by Cornel Moraru, Blaga is, however, a zealous when referring to the thinking method used in connection with mystery. Or, at least, referring to the *persuasive approximation of his concepts*. The poems, previous to the philosophical trilogy thematization, comprise, as the same critic suggests, the mystery pictured as a “germ cell”. A concept, that has already been regarded as a cliché and which the poems vitally and obstinately proclaim as a counterpart for depleting the miracles of the world, of its *uncharming* effect (using the original meaning of the word proposed by Max Weber). Mysteries require protection and enhancement, *the paradoxical revelation by deepening them more and more into the abyss of the unknown*, by the “minus- knowledge” or, luciferical knowledge” and although the lyrics are full of “light” the mystery is not revealed but it happens quite the opposite, the secret is expended. This concept is not just highly visible but is also encrypted (almost explicitly) in the imagery of the famous *Ars poetica* entitled *Eu nu strivesc corola de minuni a lumii / I do not crush the wonders corolla of the world*, but it is supplying, in fact, implicitly, most of the poems from the beginning volume and it is shaped in the form of the poetic of vision even after the “end of the Eden age” announced by Ion Pop,

in the series of *Moartea lui Pan / The Death of Pann*, as the volumes are beginning to be more and more occluded because of this inability to decipher the thing's transcendence or the heartbreaking nostalgia of a beyond thing, or of a beginning that in the real life turns out to be irrecoverable and unrecognizable. In the next volumes *Marea trecere / The great transition* and especially in *Lauda somnului / The Praise of Sleep*, the mystery is illustrated as a fatal thing, the product of the rupture from the cosmic All and it enters in the composition of the heart rending lamentation regarding the alienation of the human being. Only during the night or while sleeping, the *night* and *sleep* being updated romantic sites, as it also happens with the uprooting element that has an obvious Transylvanian lineage, as it is above mentioned, this are the only sites in which Blaga's poetry can still fascinatingly relate with mystery, being under the guilt-ridden isolation (the murderer of mysteries) and away from the dark forces that disturb the initial order of the universe. Finally, the golden age of mystery is restored in the poems belonging to the volume "At the court of longing", and even more decidedly in the volume "Unsuspected steps" where the lost harmony is retrieved and the entire blagian poetry changes in the end. The semi-Eden like age of the world is restored and the being is reintegrated into the cosmos, being now in an indestructible solidarity with it. Along with the reinvestment with meaning of the eros - a somehow secondary theme in Blaga's poetry and with the reiteration of the primordial mystery theme, the volume *Patria Mumelor / The Land of the Mothers*, highlights other poetic motifs such as the cycle of the phenomenal world or the native places; this is the last point of Blagian poetry that also coincides with the grate concluding remarks. Between these volumes, the issue of mystery, acts like an operating vehicle and a catalyst for the vision that can be found in all Blagian spaces and times, and is now more fertile than ever: the security of the world's secrets, as an essential condition for their sustainability, is fulfilled and along with it, there is also the complete Blagian poetic myth that all the exegetes talk about.

But the same fruitful fulfillment is obvious for the philosophical and drama myth also, to take over Eugen Todoran's terminology. The poetic pattern of mystery is practically solved in all Blaga's creative books, the solving itself being as a kind of pattern too, a mold that can be easily seen by psycho-critics. Along with its more or less objective predeterminations with Blaga's philosophy and destiny, it seems worthy to pursue, at least from a multidisciplinary perspective approach, the effects of its visionary inside the poem, concurrent with its conceptual definition in Blaga's philosophy. It is impressive how the entire poetic universe of Blaga lodges, as Cornel Moraru says "*under the magical power of mystery*", that is not different, regarding the exerted hypnotic power, from the cosmic elements. The mystery has the same status as the light, earth, sky or water, and is undoubtedly an expression, a demonic temptation – an element that cannot be separated from the whole imagery of the mystery. As each item, it is a part of the Great All, which tends to its original fragment, to "*the source of all things*", sensing it, heartbreakingly reclaiming it, as it is in one of the most beautiful poems ever written in Romanian literature – *Marea trecere / The Great Transition*, where there is the echo of an overwhelming call that crosses the geography of a fairy forest, trying, without success, to engage a response from the entire disappeared human race and, through regression, to capture something of the original moment's resonance. Blaga acts here through a filter, creating an imaginary populated by totemic figures such as the stag and its "lost in

death" hind, the symbolic originally couple from ancient world, whose recovery is denied because of the modern time, that has an eschatological orientation, and has already replaced the initial, mythical one. The forest, with its springs' murmur that imperceptibly rhyme is the silent announce that there is "the great transition", and this forest can neither be "the garden from the other world", nor "the lost paradise". It is perhaps the most dramatic of all the hypostases regarding the relationship with mystery, because here mystery refuses to inexhaustibly devote itself in meaning, precisely because it is brought under the attention of modern, desecrated knowledge.

Moreover, the mystery can strictly be revealed in terms of life, not in some abstract ones because, that goes without saying, the right path is the creation itself, be it cultural, artistic, or seen as a the reflection of cosmic creation. The mystery that is still hiding from the thought, being beyond the limits of human knowledge, but for which the art can still serve, reshaping it, keeping it, reiterating its fullness, is therefore tangible only if we are speaking about its poetic or metaphysical sense, remaining, deep inside, a more philosophic equivalent to the Platonic "idea", Kantian "thing in itself", or the "absolute spirit" of Hegel. Blaga's philosophy reclaims the mystery giving it a new meaning (it was assimilated, by the Greeks, with chaos, or with sin by the Christians) in such a persuasive and centrality degree that becomes a creative obsession. In fact, Blaga himself stated, and not just once: "We theorize in this way because we are under the influence of mystery", and it can be said that this confession like statement, may be extended, with amazing results regarding Blaga's exegesis, an all his work and destiny.

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