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THE AUTONOMY OF METAPHOR: COGNITION AND METHOD IN LUCIAN BLAGA'S PHILOSOPHICAL DISCOURSE

Abstract: The metaphor as a convergence space of linguistics and ontology might as well turn into a trap into which Lucian Blaga's speculative discourse falls sacrificing to the overstrung sphere of metaphorical language the necessary minimum dose of unambiguity of the idea to be transmitted. In consequence, the metaphor becomes the attraction force between the two big spheres that generate it – a force that, at a certain point determines their collision. An osmotic dangerous process is thus produced, coherent only at the transmitter's level, because as far as the receiver is concerned, the metaphoric discourse doesn't include the concomitant disclosure of Blaga's theory of metaphor. The risk seems not to be entirely perceived by our philosopher and is represented by the mise en abyme of the global message by a tautological definition of the terms (based on metaphor). At this point the autonomy of metaphor is ascertained by the multiplication/ multiplicity of meanings, so that the metaphor becomes linguistically and concerning the speculative discourse what is transcendental censorship on the ontological level. We will consequently speak about the censorship of metaphor. Therefore the place of the Great Anonymous will be taken by the philosopher who doesn't adjust his discourse to the intention of the content.

Keywords: metaphorical and philosophical discourse, the autonomy of metaphor, metaphor and hypothesis, multiplicity of meanings, concepts, absolute metaphors.

Lucian Blaga's theory on "the genesis of metaphor" opens new horizons in "the coherent analysis and conceptualization of the huge domain…of methaphorology"[1], representing itself one of the strengths of Blaga's philosophy for it connects the linguistic sphere with the sphere of spiritual creation from a nuclear perspective. Subsequent research on this matter – which, if he didn't directly influence, one can surely say that he preceded – supports the validity of Blaga's intuition on the subject. Related to it, we also mention Eugenio Coşeriu's contribution who assigns to the metaphorical phenomenon neither more nor less than "the fundamental character of creation inherent to the cognitive essence of language"[2], and we also recall Gilbert Durand's position who sees in "the fantastic function", "the primary function of the spirit" which "takes part in the development of the theoretical consciousness", thus "imaginary" appearing "as a brand of ontological vocation" [3]. His view also coincides with Hans Blumenberg's regarding the existence of "absolute metaphors"[4] which cannot be and won't be reduced at and translated into concepts.

If in the Romanian philosopher's acceptance plasticizing metaphor translates at the poetic level by the essentiality of expression, potentiation of expressiveness and a realization of abstractions, in the spiritual-ontological sphere the impetus to metaphorise becomes along with the stylistic matrix an abysmal category, an a priori given bearing the very basic feature

[1] Mircea Borcilă, *Bazele metaforicii în gândirea lui Blaga*, Limbă şi literatură, vol. I, 1996
[2] Eugenio Coşeriu, *Lecţii de lingvistică generală*, Cluj-Napoca, Echinox, 1999
[3] Cornel Mihai Ionescu, *Structura "organon" sau "pleromă*", postfeţă la Gilbert Durand, *Structurile antropologice ale imaginarului*, Bucureşti, Univers Enciclopedic, 2000, p.441
[4] Hans Blumenberg, *Paradigms for a Metaphorology*, New York, Cornell University Press, 2010

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of the definition of man in the world – namely to place himself in the horizon of mystery to decrypt (reveal) it without exhausting it. In comparison with Durand who "considers that general archetypology approximates what he calls "total knowledge or gnosis"[5], in Blaga's thinking appears an additional minus that is the inexhaustible mystery kept that way by the luciferic cognition. The metaphor, in this context of revolt, backs up the fight against the transcendental censorship, and its "style" springs from the abysmal categories. But we will find out how – precisely because this concept is, alongside the other categories of cognition, an inborn, instinctive reflex – it falls a prey to the same censorship it had previously had the pretension and intention to abolish.

From plus to minus cognition the final meaning and truth are concentrated in a mandala-like metaphor of Lucian Blaga's philosophy. The latter, by postulating the mystery as the utmost limit and "foreign intimate background" (in Gabriel Liiceanu's terms[6]), turns against the elementary definition of philosophy itself, which definition gives it the possibility to propose and draw doubtless conclusions.

The philosophy being "by vocation a rational science, a coherent explanation of reality, a reflection on the real experiences of human conscience, …its ultimate object is to reveal the signification of such experiences, and its ultimate goal is to discover beyond these various experiences the unity of the same function Hegel used to call "spirit", Cassier "the essence of man", and the modern phenomenology "the sense of things"[7]. And which Kant attributes to "the thing-in-itself" and Blaga to mystery, or, going further, to metaphor. Dynamiting from the beginning any possibility to exhaustively know the world on secure real bases through categories and concepts which would reveal it the way it really is, to Kant's vision – according to which the "forms of reflection that govern the intellect and the a priory nature of reality are in perfect correspondence" and "The world is the way we think about it and we think about it the way it is" – Blaga opposes "the transcendental censorship". The Romanian philosopher implicitly states that the world is a mystery and we see it and think about it from inside this mystery. Or that the world is a metaphor and we think about it metaphorically.

But this institution of metaphor as a convergence space of linguistics and ontology's edifying virtues might as well turn (as we'll find out) into a trap into which the speculative discourse falls sacrificing to the overstrung sphere of metaphorical language the necessary minimum dose of unambiguity of the idea to be transmitted.

The metaphor becomes the attraction force between the two big spheres that generate it – a force that, at a certain point determines the collision of the two. An osmotic dangerous process is thus produced, coherent only at the transmitter's level, because as far as the receiver is concerned, the metaphoric discourse doesn't include the concomitant disclosure of Blaga's theory of metaphor. The risk seems not to be entirely perceived by our philosopher and is represented by the mise en abyme of the global message by a tautological definition (based on metaphor) of the terms.

At this point the autonomy of metaphor is ascertained by the multiplication/ multiplicity of meanings, so that the metaphor becomes linguistically and concerning the speculative discourse what is transcendental censorship on the ontological level. We will consequently speak about the censorship of metaphor. Therefore the place of the Great Anonymous will be taken by the philosopher who doesn't adjust his discourse to the intention of the content.

[5] Ibid, p. 442
[6] Gabriel Liiceanu, *Despre limită*, Bucureşti, Humanitas, 2004
[7] Larousse, *Dicţionar de filosofie*, Bucureşti, Univers Enciclopedic, 1999, p.124

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A handy example can be found in the text called "About the Longing" where Blaga carries out (or at least intends to) an analysis of "the longing" as part of the stylistic matrix. By "the categories of the unconscious" – which are a mark of all "spiritual creations" and "by which man tries to reveal to himself the mysteries of existence"[8] – the stylistic matrix, alongside metaphor, flows into the consciousness the necessary substance for universal and self knowledge.

The longing appears as an inborn, a definitory state of the Romanians that enables them to place themselves on the anthropological, ontological as well as linguistic planes. If at the anthropological level – based on theory – the identification of the longing with the (revelatory) metaphor determines the cracking of mystery in order to create specificity, a transcendental originality of being in the world; at the linguistic level, Blaga observes that "The situation becomes even more complicated and nuanced when we try to express poetically these states"[9].

Further, we have the sketch of a poetical, rather irrelevant map of what our philosopher intends to do:"…the longing is sung for itself as a state without object, as a state whose object is somehow re-silenced or only discretely touched. In another words, the longing, from a subjective state, often turns into a lyrical object.", then "The longing is considered at turns a hardened state of soul as a hypostasis, an impersonal power that subjugates and devastates, a wandering spell, a cosmic disease as an invincible element of nature and an alter ego as a material emanation of the human soul."[10] Blaga lists a series of comments and metaphorical, metaphorized interpretations which, under no circumstances whatsoever will place the longing in a promising equation regarding the unknown.

The question is how (and if) the balance will be kept between the role of the core-concept of Blagas's existential Romanian philosophy represented by "the longing" (as opposed to Heidegger's "concern" defined as "reducing human existence to its lyrical substance of utmost expression"[11]), and the role of lyrical subject "hypostatized" in ballads and folk songs. For proclaiming a state as general immanence by extending it to the entire Romanian spiritual space represents the first step towards its objectivation and transforming into concept. A rather ambitious step when this concept is, in its turn, defined by poetical means of expression mainly based on metaphor.

In the present case metaphorical expressiveness, being a plus at the linguistic level, becomes a minus at the speculative discourse level. "Hegel thought that the life of concept resides in the death of metaphor" says Ricoeur, as philosophy "shows its power in the art of arranging adjusted multiplicity" and "the speculative doesn't fulfill the semantic requests of metaphor unless it creates a rift to mark the irreducible difference between the two modes of speech."[12]

Certainly, this is a point of view which rejects the interference of speeches as being, globally, inefficient. On the other hand, Ortega y Gasset, as Vianu states, points out the difference between the poetical metaphor and the scientific one, underlining the fact that "the poetical metaphor operates from less to more, whereas the scientific metaphor operates from more to less" by essentializing and the attempt of clearing and limiting the meanings. But in this case, "the living metaphor" inserted into the speculative discourse proclaims its autonomy against the denotative meaning our philosopher intends to convey, for this kind of metaphor (in a somehow forced antithesis with the dead, worn-out metaphor) always shows simultaneously minimum two types of discourse – the transmitter's respectively the

[8] Lucian Blaga, *Fiinţa istorică*, Cluj-Napoca, Dacia, 1977, p.204
[9] Lucian Blaga, *Spaţiul mioritic*, Bucureşti, Humanitas, 1994, p. 160
[10] Ibid, p.161
[11] Ibid, p.162
[12] Paul Ricoeur, *Metafora vie*, Bucureşti, Univers, 1984, pp. 454, 458

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receiver's. Thus, the equivoque equals a censorship similar to the transcendental one, identified by Blaga, a fact that cannot be anything other than inconvenient at the level of a so called speculative discourse.

When he talks about one of the spheres of language (of spiritual creation) where (revelatory) metaphor exercises its influence, the Romanian philosopher has as well the other one permanently in view, on the principle of subtle correspondence between the two. The stake would be the finding of an efficient border line. Remarkable and to be illustrated in Blaga's case is "the oscillation" between two acceptances of the concept called "eidos" which Umberto Eco identifies talking about "Aristotle's lesson" – an oscillation between "the structural model (the intelligible bone structure) and that of a structured object". This indecision itself splits into two put into the abyss, twin "oscillations": the one between the ontological aspect ("eidos" represents a work in progress given element) and the epistemological one ("eidos" being applied to make it intelligible), and that between the concrete aspect (the structure being understood as substance) and the abstract aspect (the structure applied as a network of connections)."[13]

The text "About the Longing", deeply impregnated with the metaphor, underlines one of the minuses of Blaga's theory application by Blaga himself, and this is not a singular case. "The ambitious and generally speaking, systematic manner in which Blaga deals with the epistemological issues taken as a whole has amplified the esthetic vision to the ironic limit where the latter can join other areas of irrational discourse, in a viable alternative to man and reality communication."[14] This is one of the reasons of including Blaga's philosophy in what Virgil Nemoianu calls "a theory of the secondary", of the ubiquitous and inexhaustible mystery – both at the linguistic and onto-gnosiological levels – materialized and "caught" in action/function by the intrinsic mechanism of metaphor itself.

This metaphor draws a tautological circle on which it gravitates – it becomes itself a metaphor of the transcendental censorship (in the case of discourse inadequacy), of the mystery, of the world (by the fact that it is always evolving and revolving), that is, ultimately, a metaphor of the metaphor. Is gets to the paradox noted by Paul Ricoeur, namely that "there is no discourse on metaphor which doesn't belong to a conceptual network, metaphorically generated at its turn…The theory of metaphor aims at the metaphor of theory in a circular manner" installing "the recurrence of metaphor over itself".[15] Or, we can speak about a mise en abyme given by the autonomy of metaphor that the metaphor itself requires and that, not infrequently, is unconsciously supported by our philosopher out of inertia.

It's not by chance though that Blaga doesn't emphasize the difference between hypothesis and fiction: "we don't care about the difference…between hypothesis and fiction…that's why we will use the word "hypothesis" in the broadest sense, including in this name fictions as well." [16] In his philosophy of "as though" from which Blaga cites, but at the same time passes over the difference between "the hypothesis that tries to reveal the world and the fiction that invents it", Hans Vaihinger rises a question mark the Romanian philosopher tends to ignore maybe because it stands at the border line by the merge of the two elements above: "…a more important request is not to let ourselves be guided astray or be influenced by the contradictions between fiction and the world of experience or by its inconsistencies and thus infer from this contradictions the existence of some kind of "mystery" of the world."[17] Blaga's revelatory metaphor inscribes fictions on the same plane

[13] Umberto Eco, *La struttura assente. Introduzione alla ricerca semiologica*, Milano, Bompiani, 1968, apud. Cornel Mihai Ionescu în *Structura "organon" sau "pleromă*
[14] Virgil Nemoianu, *O teorie a secundarului*, Bucureşti, Univers, 1997, p.179, 180
[15] Paul Ricoeur, op. cit., 449
[16] Lucian Blaga, *Zări şi etape*, Bucureşti, Humanitas, 2003, p.336
[17] Hans Vaihinger, *Filosofia lui "ca şi cum*", Bucureşti, Nemira, 2001, p.161

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with the hypotheses since proclaiming its existence erases the border line between the two at the ontological level.

Within the rather disconcerting and always tense sphere of metaphor mystery suffers variations of degree, but not of substance. This tension accumulates between the sphere of "to be" and "not to be" translated by "being as" or "being as though". At the ontological level "to be as" becomes in the sphere of the revelatory metaphor "to be", a "to be" which, in Ricoeur's vision on the metaphorical truth "asks for some other concept of truth than the truth-check concept, correlative of our usual concept of reality."[18]

We have to mention here that the Aristotelic mimesis doesn't mean only imitation but also creation, poïesis, therefore "The tension belonging to the mimesis is double: on one hand, the imitation is a picture of human nature and an original composition, on the other hand, it embodies a restitution and a shift towards higher ground. This feature, combined with the previous one, brings us back to the metaphor. Rendered on the mimesis background, the metaphor drops its gratuity."[19] Within the limits of "the verisimilar and the necessary", the metaphor substitutes and institutes the necessary, like the euphemism. Giblet Durand notes that "the imaginary hasn't manifested itself only as a world transforming activity, but also as a creative imagination, but above all as a euphemistical transformation of the world, as the coordination of the individual according to a better element."[20]

Paradoxically, according to the Romanian philosopher's theory, even the revelatory metaphor is – given its subordination to the mystery – silent or silenced. Taking into consideration the impermeability of the same mystery, and combining the duality of "to be" which comprises "not to be", we approach metaphor to the euphemism, as does Blaga himself. Euphemism that, linked to the Great Anonymous transcendental censorship, is generated and descends from the pure mystery's plane to that of its variation. Determined by the censorship and the innate possibility of the individual to metaphorize, the euphemism reflects an a priory tabooisation of the ultimate truth in the human conscience.

E. Benveniste distinguishes between two opposite meanings of the euphemism, of which the first "says the opposite of what it means" or encourages "to say auspicious words" and, as a consequence, "to avoid ominous words", or "keep silent". The second meaning, "to shout in triumph", is placed at the antipodes, which would mean to "introduce a euphemism of the euphemism."[21]

We see how this game of meanings within the tense sphere of metaphor and transferred to the ontological level cannot be mastered and determines a relativistic philosophy. We identify from the beginning the tendency of Blaga's philosophy to relativize, both with reference to itself and to Kant's theory of the "transcendental categories" as opposed to the postulate of abysmal categories and that of the metaphor as a way of partial knowledge and openness to mystery. From an auxiliary component the metaphor becomes the focal point of epistemology due to the trans-linguistic function Blaga attributes to it. This dualism resizes the spheres in which the metaphor operates.

At the speculative discourse level we can say that metaphor maintains or institutes a silence, a censorship of the meaning through the amalgamation of meanings, as in the poetic discourse operates an intentional and beneficial amplification. "Whatever will be the subsequent report between the speculative and the poetic, the former doesn't extend the semantic project of the latter otherwise than by the price of a transmutation resulting from its transfer to another area of meaning."[22]

[18]Paul Ricoeur, op. cit., p.472
[19] Ibid., p.73
[20] Gilbert Durand, op. cit., p.431
[21] Emile Benveniste, *Probleme de lingvistică generală*, vol.I, Bucureşti, Teora, 2000, p. 291
[22] Paul Ricoeur, op. cit., p.458

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Therefore all the more should be consciously avoided a wrongful insertion of the metaphorical discourse in the speculative one, because there is this risk of putting each other into the abyss. Blaga doesn't resist the temptation, however, especially since he rejects the gratuity of the metaphor, equipping it with ontological coverage.

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