Time according to Lucian Blaga: eternity

Dan Verejanu

Dan Verejanu - The Institute of Philology of the Academy of Science of Moldova, Chișinău

In the night, somewhere, there is everything that was and is no longer, what has moved away, what has been lost from the living time, from the mute time.

Lucian Blaga

ABSTRACT

Creators of values and time – Eminescu, Blaga, Stănescu – shared between them the eternity of their own time: time according to Eminescu was highly used by Blaga, time according to Blaga was a source of inspiration for Stănescu, who, on his turn, passed it on to the future creators to prevent deterioration of time. Lucian Blaga is of the opinion that time is an “ascending ladder for the idea in its historical embodiments” or even the “path of Divinity towards itself”. With a correct intuition and visionary spirit, Lucian Blaga transforms time without homeland into transcendental time. Being part of the first Romanian generation unconditioned by a previous historical objective that had to be fulfilled, the thinker from Lancram tried to make the best of the short historical peace after the Great Union in Romania and created the philosophical system of the time of Romanian culture. These “possible perspectives” of time according to Blaga represent that beneficent suffering experienced by Blaga in his way towards another century, towards immortality.

KEY WORDS:

Creators of time, river-time, waterfall-time, Blaga’s self, living time, mute time, the horizon of mystery, immortality

From the perspective of creating his own time, acknowledged by itself in its light (Poem), having the meaning of eternity or immortality, Lucian Blaga unfolds his philosophical program regarding not the abstract time, but time in all its dimensions: the time of yesterday, the time of today, the time of tomorrow. Involved in the moving image of eternity (Plato), the time that was the focus of Blaga was not so much the time of his life, but the time of his immortality. In fact, this is target of every man of culture
throughout his whole life: he creates his time of immortality, which lasts according to his talent, his perseverance, his chosen objectives, being based on the importance of his message to the future generations, where, although the author does not belong, his work (that is the author’s actions) already lives.

Understood as an interval of the universe or as an interval of all things, as it was defined by the Pythagorean Archytas de Tarentum (Lucretius, De rerum natura, 1, 459), the eternal time of a culture is a space with no beginning and no end, where the time of one or several creators of values, creators of time, belong. The time created by the lyrical philosopher and diplomat has the value of his work, being either the time flowing through decades, even though centuries, or the time stunned in the admiration of Blaga’s monumental work.

Creators of values, and of time – Eminescu, Blaga, Stanescu – shared between them the eternity of their time: time according to Eminescu was greatly used by Blaga, time according to Blaga was a source of inspiration for Stanescu, who at his turn, passed it to the future creators in order to stop the deterioration of time. Couldn’t it be preparation, anticipation, intention of eternity? In this way a collective soul, a nation is created. Even if he was excluded from public life, Lucian Blaga was aware that he was present in the culture of the nation, sensing the space and time in which his philosophical messages and his metaphors would have to travel.

Using metaphors like “water fall”, “artesian fountain”, “river”, the philosopher speaks about the time in which “he can breathe, he can live and hope”. Time according to Blaga is “a horizon open to far away experiences directed mainly to the future”[1,p.73]. It is in this context, the “artesian-fountain-time” that the soul, described by the author, has the “definite and straightforward essence placed in the dimension of future”. And, it has “the significance of a continuous departure in relation to an initial point, which has been endowed with a supreme value”, which, in Blaga’s opinion, “neither the present nor the past can enjoy” because this type of time “is lived and understood by itself”. The soul that experiences it will find out that time “has the gift to continuously raise the level of existence”, being a creator of higher and higher values [1, p.74]. Could Blaga have spoken about immortality? Evolutionism and Hegel, understanding the evolution as being “a progress from chaos to a more organized cosmos”, which means that they considered it to be a transition from “a lower level of equilibrium to a superior one”. Therefore, it would mean that the world is “the more heterogeneously organized in established and balanced systems the more advanced in time it is”[1,p.76]. In other words, the Romanian philosopher ascertained that time is given creative virtues.

“River-time” is focused on perpetual present. “The present of yesterday, of today and of tomorrow is ever considered as existing for itself, self-sufficient”, as Blaga stated in the Trilogy of Culture, being “neither a step towards something higher that is to come, nor a stage of dissolution of something higher that was already”. In other words, this time is wholly included in the present moment, but, at the same time, in everything that was or can become a present moment”. And “no moment exists only as a transition towards the next moment, but it is an aim in itself and for itself” [1,p.74] An aim in itself and for itself may be the immortality of a personality, which has become a cultural patrimony of a nation, why not even the immortality of this nation conceived as a people.
The “water-fall time”, a horizon of “some feelings whose supreme values based on the dimension of the past”, is given by the philosopher “the significance of a continuous departure from an initial point, endowed with the highest value”[1,p.75]. In this short and vain flight through life, man can discover himself, understand himself, and to create and the chosen ones, to be able to return into the cosmos, becoming by their immortality a song, “penetrated by eternity calls”, which could remain in the patrimony of the nation where it was born:

“Hallelujah, my eyes can see the birds and the wind,
I do not owe a single thought to life,
But I owe it my whole life”

……………………
From the leaves of the village I come out
As from a biblical tent.
Hallelujah, today, as never before,
I am the tired brother
Of the sky below
And of the smoke coming down from the hearth.
(Fallen smoke)

Accepting Hegel’s theory, according to which time creates the conditions for ideas and for Divinity to reach the dialectical achievement in the historical context, Lucian Blaga asserts that time is “an ascending ladder of the idea in its historical embodiments” or even “Divinity’s path to itself” [1,p.76]. As no moment is an end in itself, any second being dominated by the following one, the lyrical philosopher ascertains that the past and the present are only stages, fulfillment will be achieved in the future. By definition, time means a growing enhancement, a continuous amplification of values. It goes without saying that this “artesian –fountain time” is also the unconscious substratum of all progressive ideas [1,p.77].

Exegetes move from an objective silence regarding the universe to a subjective silence, the poet’s personal, inner silence. It is also to be noted” the existence of a mute quietness and a musical quietness” [2, p. 125]. Being “a person of departures and interrogations” [3, p.90], man in Blaga’s view adapts himself to the abyss of sleep because he experiences all the nuances of the abyss, passes through all the stages created by the philosopher in his research and in his essays gathered in trilogies. Unlike Jung, Blaga considers the abyss from the height or from depth of the creative power, which is in itself an endless abyss of ideas, preoccupations, boldness and essence of a well delineated aim, an achievement leading to a fertile posterity. Blaga’s ego goes along “this path from the solitude of restlessness to the solitude of his human being confronted with destiny”:“In my solitude, I, the earthly being in tears./ I stay awake close to my hearth of passions./ A soul fallen in loam like between pillows-/ no tidings –can give me rest./ (Close to the Hearth)

This is proof that Blaga, making the Ego of the creating power, was creating the time of the future, the time of immortality means that despair is not found in his poems (neither in dramaturgy: Zamolxe enjoys his death, Master-Builder Manole buries Ana in the wall). Blaga’s ego cannot be perplexed - it builds itself, it rises, creates itself having all the most powerful possible qualities “whatever cannot burn, cannot be destroyed, it is the self” [2,p.104] – or even more obvious: self consciousness of absolute power: in the night, somewhere, there is everything that was and is no longer/ that has moved away, that is lost/from the living time,/ (In the night, somewhere, it is). While a piece of work by Blaga “has been taken away by the wind” [4. P.14], as the poet’s daughter remarks with sadness,
because in the literary world “Blaga played a role model [4, p. 19], his monumental work was carefully taken care of, with responsibility to protect it from that “wind” of hard times. While “all the dead go away/ somewhere, each of them / . Going away with close eyes / They turn off their light/ (Their Path).

Having the talent to penetrate the most remote cosmic depths, the least known soul corners, Lucian Blaga (the man and scholar) is aware that: ” each and every corner of our soul has so much resonance of everything going on in ourselves, that, quite often it seems to me that each idea has its heart beating for something – and every feeling has a mind to think” [1. P.38]. Pointing out several important relationships, the philosopher, in fact, finds what he has already discovered for a long time. The poet picks up an idea, the philosopher only gives it a name, he puts into light relationships which he, later on, admires: an intensified mystery. Being placed between the “horizon of mystery” and the “idea that comes back with a changed role”, opposing the “metaphorical nebulosity”, by limitation defeating limitation, the philosopher opens up towards what is universal, the Mioritic space being the work by which “ this Romanian man has fallen at great honour”, says Constantin Noica, adding “in Blaga’s vision”. Mioritic: Romanian geographic space with mountains and valleys, good for shepherding; a spiritual Romanian universe whose matrix is represented by the Romanian geographic space. The mioritic space, a term created by Lucian Blaga, refers to the Romanian soul connected to a deep spatial horizon looking like a wavy plan alternating between hills and valleys)

Rising up by falling at great honour, Lucian Blaga was looking for the art “which was not yet foreseen by artists”, while he would enlarge the mioritic space according to the necessities of the creative power preventing it from stifling. Academician Mihai Cimpoi asserts that, in this context,” Blaga expresses his pleading”. And if expressionism was the impulse and the urge for him to Europenize, no less visible is the stylistic matrix of the diplomatic space in which Lucian Blaga lived, while he was creating his time or his immortality or the eternity of the Mioritic space. Making use of expressionism, his admiration for Goethe and Dostoevsky will not quench his longing for his country, which meant for him the most lasting material out of which the creative power emerged, beingthe foundation, even the stylistic matrix on which an edifice was rising right in the centre of the seismic zones. His philosophical search will not be an obstacle in his he career of a diplomat. Led by a formative appetite, by the high passion of becoming, the horizon is a circle which changes its centre and circumference, it is a circle that explodes. The idea in it continuously undergoes a mutation and a permutation: it is subject to all becoming avatars, so that, it cannot be equated, as Kant did, to its a priori function. In this period of time, Blaga’s great appreciation for Brancusi or Titulescu is not accidental. Lucian Blaga’s genial intuition could easily identify a personality, especially one with a creative power like his, no matter what domain of activity such a person could have, he could sense the historical personality from the space of eternity. That is because Man is the being placed in the “horizon of mystery” for revelation by means of cultural creations. (Anthropological aspects). The lyrical philosopher says that even “history does not achieve final conquests”. In the Trilogy of culture and in his poems, Blaga warns about his coming back.

“I would grasp the hand of time to feel
Its pulse with its scarce seconds.
What would be going on on the Earth now?
May the same stars fall like flocks on its forehead
And are the swarms of bees still fly
From my bee hives?"
(Thoughts of a dead man)

Engrossed in the time of his life, especially concerned with the time of his immortality, the lyrical philosopher from Lancram will seek in his philosophical essays and in his lyrical poetry to find the right place for several essential categories, which refer not so much to time, but more to the immensity of time: “Only in trees the rings of age/ are enlarging./In my body time grows slowly/weaker from one day to the next one, under the celestial vault.” (Ecce tempus)

Personally involved in the dialogue with time, the poet creates in his first books a time of transition, of dispelling … in other words, it is the time seen as the great transition towards measuring the unraveling, (The Great Transition, 1924, motto: Stop the transition. I know that where there is no death, there is no love- nevertheless, I pray: Please God, stop the clock with which you measure our unraveling). In the poems written in the second part of his life, time according to Blaga is overflowing (On the Great Water Divide) it becomes space, eternity and steps to infinity. Convinced that “never an end will be” (Clock) and time goes beyond the limits of the earth, becoming space, becoming deeds, becoming a human being … concluding, becoming living time. The lyrical work written by Blaga is most likely to produce living time.

In a number of exegeses regarding Blaga’s work up to 1989, the mute time was discussed in the most simple way, even in a simplistic manner, starting from Blaga’s silence in his early years of life. Now, in the third millennium, studying the poem from which we quote: “Lucian Blaga/in his country is/ mute like a swan”, we find out that this verse is not a confession about his early years in life, this poem is a call, the philosopher’s great sadness who conveys to the future the fact that the philosopher is banned, that he is intimidated morally and physically by the system, that he lives a mute time, he himself being the time. Even more, Blaga feels himself to be that time without homeland:

“Time without homeland: river without water,/drought in the river bed and under my eyelids.
Time without homeland: hearts defeated,/sterile ages, extinct senses.
Time without homeland: grayish story,/ roar of the black fir-tree branches over the top of mountains.
Time without homeland: un ploughed land,/ dead lights and burned souls.
Time without homeland: extinguishing the torch,/ unfriendly vault, the bell of fate.
Time without homeland: bitter love,/ rivers longing for rivers and wax.”

(Time without homeland)

With a correct intuition and a proving to himself his visionary spirit, Lucian Blaga transforms the time without homeland into transcendental time, moving into another century in which, he, the creative essence, as “an anvil acquires with time all the strength of all hammers that has knocked it”[5,p.161]. Merging into the endless history-time, into the time of immortality of the next century: “Of all things, time makes us think the most”, the philosopher discovers that the “Time”, the fairy tale element of reality, being after Blaga “one of the greatest secrets of time (relativity)”, which he discovered from fairy tales before discovering it from Einstein” [5,p.226].

Endless time, the logical dimension which can be immortality or even eternity itself, this
“immense world”, with everything that has been going on in a lifetime “with its autumn and its evening”, presented by the poet, we find that it is life itself with its past, its present and its future “grafted on my being” – this is the time according to Lucian Blaga. Time according to Blaga, present in each of his poems, has the most various spaces, “unlimited” in the shortest or endless span of time, during an autumn or during an evening and all this time is grafted upon the human being of the creative power:

“...and grafted upon my being the immense world/ with its autumn and its evening Hurts me like a wound. Clouds with full udders go towards mountains. And it’s raining.”

(Melancholy)

Assessing the “spiritual dimension” of the creative power as being the absolute power, Lucian Blaga also found the dimension of time, and the dimension of metaphorical space and the dimension of communication between conscious and unconscious and the dimension of the eternal moment for the necessity of the dimension of transcendence which cuts across “limitless space” because “the centre of the universe is in each Self” [2, p.34]. Belonging to the first Romanian generation not previously conditioned to achieve a historical objective (Mircea Eliade), the lyrical philosopher from Lancram makes ample use of the short historical respite after the Great Union and creates the philosophical system of the time of the Romanian culture. As the collective memory points out, time distributes everything in the right place.

“We find ourselves contemporary with those from the future”, prophesies the young Lucian Blaga as a 120 year old wise man would have said. This vibrant and lucid conscience “in a permanent dialogue with his epoch and the spirit of his time”, Lucian Blaga started to make himself a creative power from his first poems and philosophical pamphlets, then, with his articles and essays even with his trilogies, which quite often are called philosophical essays. The accountable negligence of the “river-time” regarding a great Man of culture, statesman, diplomat, philosopher, poet, publicist, Ambassador of the Great Romania, justifies us, who do not come from the domain of letters, to contribute to capitalize the immense amount of the cultural and philosophical patrimony of the greatest value. By this research we express the truth that we consider ourselves to be contemporary with Lucian Blaga, not only because we have a past times to unearth, but also because we see ourselves to be contemporary with those belonging to the future.

Those aspects which “will be connected with the plastic elements of the substance of the soul are also linked to the unconscious horizon of the creator” as the philosopher asserts in Horizon and Style. And no matter “how abstract the metaphysical conception may be, it is always penetrated by the veins of lyricism proper to the human soul”. Lyricism and metaphysical spirit, each having its own paths, “sometimes are closely connected due to the unconscious horizons of the soul”. Speaking about the difference existing between lyricism in a metaphysical conception in the perspective of “waterfall-time” and the metaphysical conception from the “artesian-fountain-time” perspective, Lucian Blaga exclaims: “What a latent, troubled, underground melancholy resides in one; what explosions possible of trust and joy,
what a seed of light in the other one”[1, p. 85].

To trust Time is the “most mysterious extension of our being” (Patience from the “Island’s Elan”) These “possible perspectives”[1, p. 84] of Time according to Blaga are that “beneficial suffering experienced by Blaga in his progress towards another century, towards eternity.

Conclusion

We live the time of Blaga’s immortality. Starting from beyond the time in which the young man from Lancram experiences a “violent intellectual curiosity”, satisfied through “the most amazing passion for reading”, reaching the time in which his creative power builds its posterity, we can see how the philosopher of today created his immortality. Eternity was born in the countryside as Blaga says and he, the creator, creates his way in life. He expresses his world, he “subdues the world” and skillfully transforms it into “the image of his soul” by which he expresses himself even today. Being a creative power of life, of the “praise of existence”, Lucian Blaga has chosen to create a work which can maintain his immortality. Even the idea of the “devouring time” is unbearable for the lyrical philosopher and he will “restore” the direction of time creating by his lyrical and philosophical work a perpetual recovery of his time, eternity.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND DISCLOSURES

The authors’ state that they are not declared conflicts of interest regarding this paper.

REFERENCES