

**“BABES-BOLYAI” UNIVERSITY OF CLUJ-NAPOCA
FACULTY OF HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY
DOCTORAL SCHOOL OF PHILOSOPHY**

***Idea of Destiny in the Romanian Philosophy of the
First Half of the 20th Century***

ABSTRACT OF THE PH.D. DISSERTATION

**Doctoral Advisor:
Prof. RODICA MARTA VARTIC (PETREU), Ph.D.**

Ph.D. Student: Aurel Daniel BUMBAS

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ABSTRACT

Keywords: Romanian philosophy, Lucian Blaga, mystery, abyssal stylistic factors, ethics of creation, originary intuition.

In our dissertation, *Idea of Destiny in the Romanian Philosophy of the First Half of the 20th Century* we analyzed the idea of destiny in the philosophical-metaphysical works of Lucian Blaga. If we initially aimed to conduct a comparative analysis of the idea of destiny within the Romanian philosophy of the first half of the 20th century, which meant that we had to examine a large number of philosophical writings that included the idea of destiny explicitly or implicitly, by integration, as a corollary element or as an adversely correlated element, we finally limited our research to the philosophical works of Lucian Blaga. We took this decision because an analysis that had included such diversity of works would have inevitably failed to capture the context of the thinking of every philosopher, and it would have been an inevitably inhomogeneous approach, because it would have failed to capture the intension of the relationship between the idea of destiny and the essential concepts of the researched philosophical conceptions, especially that the critical editions, bibliographies and monographs of the works of Romanian philosophers cannot yet constitute, at times, a sufficient instrument. We chose to limit our research to the philosophical works of Lucian Blaga because *i.*) we had discovered that the tragic creative destiny is a central, transversal and focal concept of his works, and, together with the concept of mystery and the concept of abyssal stylistic factors, is part of a conceptual structure that helps us found both a coherent understanding of his works as a whole, and an understanding of the genesis of the elements of the philosophical works; *ii.*) the complexity of and developments determined by the theme of destiny in Lucian Blaga's works compelled us to expand our approach to analyze all the essential philosophical concepts in Blaga's works; *iii.*) the original profile of the concept of tragic creative destiny required an exclusive approach. We consider that the restriction of the research field does not constitute a disadvantage as compared to the initial intention, but, furthermore, it constitutes an advantage from the perspective of the representation of the idea of destiny within the Romanian philosophy of the first half of the 20th century.

In the dissertation we showed that the idea of tragic creative destiny in the works of Lucian Blaga gradually builds its profile, together with the concept of mystery and the concept of abyssal stylistic factors, factors which explain the “internal” conditioning of the acts of creation. The mystery and the abyssal stylistic factors constitute a polar structure around which creative tension is born. Following Bergson’s propositions in the essay *Philosophical Intuition*, we considered that these poles and the tension between them constitute the structure of some originary intuition, and we checked for the presence of such intuition and its mediating image – the tragic creative destiny – within all the philosophical texts we analyzed. We considered destiny as a mediating image of the originary intuition because mystery can never be completely revealed, and because, through the internal conditioning of the human being, through stylistic factors, the revelations are relative to such conditioning. Therefore, the originary intuition is a reason for the tragic creative destiny. We emphasized the progressive definition – throughout Blaga’s philosophical-metaphysical works – of this originary intuition, through the gradual revelation of the configuration of the two polarities and the relationship between them, on one hand, and on the other hand, we showed that man’s tragic creative destiny manifests itself as permanence that allows us to understand the presence of the essential philosophical concepts. The concept of tragic creative destiny proves to be the point of convergence of Blaga’s philosophical efforts in *Fiinta istorica (Historical Being)*. Here a man who authentically lives his tragic creative destiny creates history and appears as a complete historical being. In other words, man’s authentic manner of living through history, of realizing his historicity, takes place within the existence in mystery and for revelation, where man as creative being is integrated in the tragic creative destiny. As a consequence of this situation, since the authentic living of the tragic creative destiny has become an object of reflection, it can found an ethics of creation, or it can participate in the birth or expansion of philosophical consciousness.

As far as the elements of research methodology are concerned, we established some limits of the field of the philosophical works, in order to specify the characteristics of the tragic creative destiny, and we used two methods: the analytic-constructive method and the method of interpretation of a philosophical system starting from an originary intuition, suggested by Henri Bergson. The limits established within the field of the works led to the identification of three major periods. The boundary of the first period is the publication of the volume *Pietre pentru templul meu (Stones for My Temple)* (1919); the source texts of this period include the part of the *Hronicul și cântecul vârstelor (The Chronicle and Song of*

Ages) that describes the period prior to the writing of the first philosophy article, in 1914; the eleven philosophy articles written between 1914 and 1916; and the volume *Pietre pentru templul meu (Stones for My Temple)*. The second period includes the philosophical writings between 1922 and 1930. The third period includes the philosophical writings between 1931 and 1960. In this last period the analyses we conducted follow the structure of the *Trilogii (Trilogies)*.

We used the two above-mentioned methods to approach the concept of tragic creative destiny: we interpreted Lucian Blaga's philosophical-metaphysical system in relation to man's tragic creative destiny and the originary intuition. As far as the analytic-constructive method is concerned, we considered that, should it help us capture, in Blaga's different philosophical texts; *i.*) the relationship between man's originary condition and the concept of mystery; *ii.*) the fact that man is transcendently conditioned, through structures that are found beyond consciousness; and *iii.*) the relative and preventive character of his creations in relation to mystery, man's tragic creative destiny is assumed by Blaga as an essential element of his philosophy, although it only appears as such beginning with *Geneza metaforei și sensul culturii (The Genesis of Metaphor and the Meaning of Culture)*. As far as the interpretation method developed by Bergson is concerned, we considered that the emphasis on the elements of the originary intuition and the clearer definition of the discrete structure of such elements, throughout the works, entitle us to consider that the idea of man's tragic creative destiny is a concept that can help us explain the necessity of the presence and structure of the essential elements of Lucian Blaga's philosophical-metaphysical system. We especially used such a complete and detailed approach, which efficiently combines the two research methods, in the analysis of *Ființa istorică (The Historical Being)*. The considerations of the used methods are given in the **first chapter**, called *Preamble*.

In the **second chapter**, *About Method in Blaga's Philosophy*, we discussed the meanings assigned by Blaga to the philosophical method in different periods of his creation, and we showed that two methods are used in his system, one which we called *philosophical* and another one which we called *metaphysical*. Through the metaphysical method, or the dogmatic method, Blaga builds his concepts of negative knowledge, the Great Anonymous, etc. The philosophical method – whose algorithm we established, starting from a typical phenomenon – reveals a series of essential elements of Blaga's work, which we called irreducibles, irreducibles which weave the structure of his philosophical system, and which help us understand as exactly as possible the morphology of the elements of the originary

intuition and the presence of the idea of tragic creative destiny. When we analyzed Lucian Blaga's philosophical method, we showed that the structure of the method includes elements of Goethe's method of the originary phenomenon, which Blaga discusses in *Fenomenul originar (The Originary Phenomenon)*, where he demonstrates that the method was then used as an interpretation method of the cultural phenomenon by different philosophers of the time. The philosophical method is individualized as his own method beginning with his Ph.D. dissertation, *Cultura și cunoștință (Culture and Knowledge)* (1921), and comprises a series of steps. In our analysis of the *Trilogies* we showed how this method worked. The two methods prove to be complementary, since both assume the existence of a basic polarity. The philosophical method starts from an originary phenomenon that contains a polarity; then a certain dynamic of the phenomenal material is identified for one of these poles; then a certain direction of development is established; and finally the presence of a consequence of its development becomes apparent, consequence which we called irreducible, and which, in its turn, proves to have an effect on the initial phenomenon. Alternatively, the metaphysical or dogmatic method uses a paradoxical synthesis of polarities that has a solution in transcendence. The two are in a relationship of resonance with the originary intuition of Blaga's philosophical system.

In the **third chapter**, *Joining the Philosophy Circle*, we discussed the texts that refer to or were written in the period that ended with the publication of the volume *Pietre pentru templul meu (Stones for My Temple)*. We pointed out the presence and structure of the originary intuition. Since 1915, when the article *Mister... (Mystery...)* was published, Blaga has understood mystery as “that which we cannot know completely”, and it is in this article that the idea of deepening the mystery also appeared for the first time. The “internal conditioning” of knowledge, of understanding and explaining the world, created by the presence of some dominant ideas or by the presence of a conception of the world, is a constant element of the first articles. The “internal conditioning”, on which we build our perceptive-reflexive efforts, also proves that, from the perspective of the spirit, the basis for the interpretation of phenomena is a creative process, even when we talk about science. Therefore, the elements of the originary intuition prove to be present extremely early; to them the principle of the “conservation of enigmas” – through an aphorism in *Pietre pentru templul meu (Stones for My Temple)* – is added. Although the concept of tragic creative destiny is not present explicitly in this period, it can be deduced from the elements of the originary intuition, and also from the fact that the texts of the period suggest that man's

spiritual efforts are defeated, because they do not win any final victories in any field of culture. An essential factor, which nuances the “internal conditioning” of spiritual creation, supported by a part of the volume *Pietre pentru templul meu (Stones for My Temple)*, which emphasizes the formative tendency of three cultures – under the name of “light and shade attitude towards life and the world” or “spiritual attitude”. Consequently, the elements of the originary intuition have been present since this period, and the image that synthesizes them is the minimally determined tragic creative destiny.

In the **fourth chapter**, *Glimpses and Stages*, we analyzed the unitary philosophical texts published between 1922 and 1930. Within these texts we especially discussed the concept of “imperative idea” and the concept of “nisus formativus” (“formative tendency”). We analyzed the method of the originary phenomenon and the idea of the demonic from the perspective of the mentioned concepts. We consider that, in this period, the elements of the originary intuition are outlined by the mentioned concepts, especially the pole that concerns the internal conditioning of spiritual creation. The author reinforces the idea that the access to the world is mediated by some internal conditioning; and therefore the world may be understood as a series of mysteries for which the only means available to man is spiritual creation, and not an adequate mirroring mechanism or a universal intellect; by such creation any interpretation proves relative to a set of determinates that manifest themselves during the development over time of spiritual creations as regularities, regularities which Blaga calls cultural styles. Styles entail a spiritual attitude and imprint their characteristics on all of man’s cultural spiritual creations. According to these considerations, man seems caught in a creative destiny he cannot escape. But, since man’s creations are only born in relation with a certain formative tendency, and his knowledge depends on a certain “imperative idea”, man’s spiritual creations prove to be relative. Consequently, man has a tragic creative destiny, because his spiritual efforts from an integral perspective seem stylistically conditioned creative remakes. In this creative period Blaga continues to emphasize the elements of originary intuition and creative destiny.

In the **fifth chapter**, *Destiny and Knowledge*, we analyzed *Trilogia cunoașterii (The Trilogy of Knowledge)*, and we pointed out: *i.*) the manner in which the philosophical method or the metaphysical method is used; *ii.*) the profile acquired by mystery – object of knowledge and negative idea – in the context of knowledge; *iii.*) the relationship between the theoretical idea and mystery as object of knowledge; *iv.*) the consequences of the assumption of mystery as object of knowledge; *v.*) the manner in which the transcendent censorship is established, and

the effects on the concept of rationality. As far as the definition of the profile of the originary intuition is concerned, we proved that: *i.) Eonul dogmatic (The Dogmatic Aeon)* is structured as an argumentative approach that finds mystery as object of knowledge; *ii.) Cunoașterea luciferică (Luciferian Knowledge)* is a complex discourse that legitimizes the fact that in knowledge mystery cannot be completely revealed due to reasons pertaining to the structure of the act of knowledge; *iii.) Cenzura transcendentă (Transcendent Censorship)* shows that man is a transcendentally conditioned being in all the forms of his knowledge, who is prevented from knowing positively and adequately the mystery, since the idea of mystery – a negative idea – is the only manner in which man can transcend towards it. Therefore, man's knowledge is relative and preserves the mystery, because it is transcendentally conditioned, and the originary horizon of knowledge is the mystery. We highlighted the existence of the tragic creative destiny in knowledge, and we proved the existence and structure of the three essential characteristics of destiny.

In the final part of the chapter we postulated the similarity between the tragic creative destiny and Oedipus' destiny, showing that, in both cases, man actively participates, through his intelligence, in his destiny, and we specified that destiny is the fruit of some initial spatial-relational structures that cannot be disrupted.

In the **sixth chapter**, *Destiny and Culture*, we analyzed the essential concepts of *Orizont și stil (Horizon and Style)* and *Geneza metaforei și sensul culturii (The Genesis of Metaphor and the Meaning of Culture)* in order to describe the manner in which the profile of the originary intuition and of man's tragic creative destiny is defined. We showed that the elements that participate in the definition of the profile may be deduced from the concept of style and from the concept of mystery. We examined the relationship between Luciferian knowledge and the process of revealing metaphorization, adding to Blaga's analytic approach; we also examined the special character of the relationship between mystery, abyssal stylistic factors and tragic creative destiny, and we established that these three elements constitute an essential structure of man's ontology, due to their correlative character, and due to the fact that they manifest themselves concomitantly and are inseparable. We pointed out that trans-significant myths have the role to mediate man's understanding of the fact that he integrates, originally, in a tragic creative destiny. We showed that, starting from the impasses of the creative destiny, mentioned by Blaga, we can infer that man's ontology constitutes a foundation for an ethics of creations, ethics whose principle is the preservation of man's tragic creative destiny.

In the **seventh chapter**, *Destiny and Values*, we analyzed the volumes *Arta și valoarea (Art and Value)*, *Religie și spirit (Religion and Spirit)*, and *Știință și creație (Science and Creation)*, and we showed that Blaga demonstrates the stylistic character of any cultural creation. Due to the fact that the works of art, through their vicarious values – which appear because of the process of transcendent conversion of the stylistic factors into positive values of art – are inevitably marked stylistically and can be received in an authentic manner, such works of art only belong to human specific existence and are part of the authentic manner of manifestation of the tragic creative destiny. Because of the autonomy of the work of art and its relation to man's tragic creative destiny, the work of art – on which we reflect in an act of consciousness that starts from the intuitions founded on elastic stylistic sensitivity – appears as a privileged moment in which man can understand its ontological structure and, implicitly, the fact that he has a tragic creative destiny. Since religions, which arrogate priority in relation to mystery and the complete success in its revelation, prove to be, in their turn, stylistic creations, they become manners of relative revelation of mystery, and they are also manners of manifestation of man's tragic creative destiny. We emphasized that, through the proposal of the concept of “stylistic field” in relation to analyses of the birth of scientific theories, Blaga first expresses the relationship between mystery and the conditioning by stylistic factors, or the originary intuition, in a unitary form and thus legitimizes the identity between the process of knowledge of the mystery and the process of stylistic creation. An effect of the proposal of the concept of “stylistic field” is the classification of Luciferian knowledge as an act that takes place in a stylistic field. Therefore, both the acts of knowledge, and the acts of cultural creation are manners of authentic manifestation of man's tragic creative destiny. We conclude that, since transcendent conversion of values ensures maximum efficiency for man's creative destiny, and the stylistic field completes the unitary integration of knowledge and creation, the tragic creative destiny is integrated, together with mystery and the stylistic factors, in the structure of human ontology. Since through any stylistic creation man is integrated in his tragic creative destiny, and no difference in value can be established between the fields of culture, which include stylistic creations, from the perspective of the result of the revelation of mysteries, any imposition or prohibition of any such field, for reasons that belong to another, is excluded. We deduced that man's tragic creative destiny is a foundation of the practice and ethics of creation, because it constitutes sufficient reason to proclaim equal entitlement of different manners of revelation in a stylistic field, manners which are the manifestations of culture in space and time.

In the **eighth chapter**, *Destiny and Cosmology*, we demonstrated that man's tragic creative destiny becomes a focal center of considerations of the transcendent structures, the anthropological aspects, and man's presence throughout history. We showed that a man integrated in his creative destiny is revealed to be *i.)* the maximum level of complexity achieved by the integration of divine differentials, the only elements the Great Anonymous has generated from itself; *ii.)* a singular being in terms of creation; *iii.)* the authentic manner of living through history. When we finished the analysis of the last *Trilogy*, we gave a retrospective look at the concept of tragic creative destiny, and we showed that it is born when man appears as a mystery revealing being in a stylistic field; man constitutes the spatial-relational order that generates destiny, and manifests himself in time as a historical phenomenon, namely a phenomenon of stylistically marked creation. In the subchapter addressing *Ființa istorică (The Historical Being)* we illustrated the manner in which the philosophical method is used, and we argued the tragic creative destiny both through the analytic-constructive method, and through the method proposed by Bergson in his essay *Philosophical Intuition*. Within the analysis we explained the reasons why Blaga distances himself from certain philosophical conceptions, as in other chapters we showed the reasons why Blaga metamorphoses certain ideas from the history of philosophical thought.

In the **ninth chapter**, *About the Tragic Creative Destiny*, we considered two issues related to the idea of the tragic creative destiny, namely: *i.)* the manner in which the tragic creative destiny is individualized in the European philosophical context, and *ii.)* the ethical consequences of the tragic creative destiny.

We consider that the analyses conducted in this paper have proven the relevance of the idea of the tragic creative destiny to Lucian Blaga's philosophical-metaphysical system, by demonstrating the character of transversal concept, and the fact that, together with the concepts of mystery and abyssal stylistic factors, the concept of tragic creative destiny helps us think and explain the ontology of the human being. The consequences derived from the conclusions about the idea of tragic creative destiny prove the open character of Lucian Blaga's philosophical-metaphysical system, and the possibility of building both an ethics of creation starting from the ontology of the human being, and a set of ideas that can help us guide our practice of receiving the others' creations and our behavior in a multicultural, multireligious, and global technical and scientific space.