

THE LONGING PARADIGM IN ENESCU'S WORK

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Abstract: *Longing, this untranslatable word, so Romanian in essence, was interpreted into many cult compositions of our creators; but the one who succeeded in valuing its sublime meanings, in an Orphic sound context with multiple resonances, was George Enescu, which permanently returned home to feed his imagination, merging organically with the ethos and the spirituality of the generating stylistic matrix, his thought being an expression of the longing. Enescu's longing is shaped through the modal melos with rich colouring, in which even the microtonal music reveals something sweet, delicate, something connected to the confessional tone, by using melancholy rhythms or dance paces, which have something special.*

Key words: *longing, Enescu's work, ethos, stylistic matrix.*

1. Introduction

Longing, a word specific to the Romanian culture, this ineffable feeling of our style matrix, has attracted the attention of literary scholars and philosophers who have formulated various definitions of this spiritual experience. Thus, it is defined as "a Romanian's second soul" [1] or "a tyrannical yet ambiguous feeling, surpassing all obstacles" [2] or "a name with a unique resonance for the undefined aspirations towards this adventure of our distant being" [3]; in Eminescu's poetry, longing has the following meanings: strong desire to see someone, nostalgia, love, pain of love, craving, aspiration, desire, lust.

Constantin Noica demonstrates the prototype or the archetype feature of the word longing, seeking its etymology, formation and meaning, which is able to hide "a history, a drama and a richness of

thought that surprise us." Mircea Eliade has also meditated on the term longing, having published a study on this with references to Eminescu's poem "One wish alone have I".

Emil Cioran states about longing, alluding to Blaga's conception: "Longing expresses a negative relationship with the world; it is a lazy and horizontal slip or a minor ripple on the moving surface of life. Heroism is the rising of the spiral, the variation in height. By longing, we express nothing more than the uncertainty in the fluctuation of the moments and a call towards the vague. Why do we long for something? Ask any Romanian and they will not give an explanation to the infinite aspect of their soul" [4]. A person, when won over by longing, sings and "neither word nor song can help them. Only the song can help in removing the heat from their heart. They sing outdoors, woman or

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man, in a loud and weeping voice, which resounds over the valleys and the hills, they forget about themselves and they are only thinking of those whose lack hurts them" [5].

Longing is infiltrated in the organization of the depth stylistic factors, as well as in the spiritual constitution of each of us and, as there is a "longing area" for the Romanian words, there is also an emanation of longing in all our abyssal structures, generating creativity. This ineffable binder - longing – is involved in setting up a Romanian metaphysical temporality and it is in fact the axiological principle of the Romanian, revealing a certain formative craving specific to them.

2. The ineffable longing, aspect of the stylistic matrix

Poet and philosopher of great vocation, essayist, thinker, writer, faithful lover of folklore, Lucian Blaga is one of the most important artists in the history of the national culture; he had a clear contribution to the development of the Romanian poetry and in defining the self-consciousness of our people, founding the philosophy of the cultural styles, crowned with a genuine metaphysical vision.

According to Blaga, the stylistic matrix of the originality of a culture can be set in the archaic anonymous creation, untrained in the too high circulation of the aesthetic values and it is composed of a number of determinants belonging to the unconscious mind, whose action influence the style:

- the spatial horizon (the infinite space, the vault space, the surface, the labyrinthine space, the mioritic space and the alveolar space)
- the temporal horizon (the time fountain, the time waterfall, the time river)
- the axiological emphasis (affirmative or negative)

- the anabasic (advance in the horizon), catabasic (retreat from the horizon) and neutral attitude
- the formative longing (the individual, the typical, the spontaneity)

These "abyssal coordinates" are associated in the unconscious mind to an unlimited number of secondary stylistic factors, such as love for the picturesque or the preference for sobriety, the inclination towards greatness or towards the fragile, towards static or dynamic, and by the convergence of all these the stylistic matrix is made up. The common and defining characteristic of the stylistic matrix determinants is precisely that they all have their roots in the unconscious and "*they are unconsciously printed on all human creations*" [6], which is called by Blaga "apriorism" of the human spontaneity in general.

The stylistic structure of the creations of an individual or a community - noted Blaga - bears the imprint of the determinant complex of the stylistic matrix, thus ensuring the vision unity of a people or a nation, when they occur at this level: "*the stylistic matrix can be, at least through the essential factors, similar or even equivalent to more individuals, to an entire nation or even to a part of humanity in the same era. Only the existence of an unconscious stylistic matrix explains so impressive a fact as the stylistic consistency of these creations undoubtedly is*" [7].

The stylistic matrix ensures creation, makes it possible, but at the same time, it is also a means of decreasing the creative impulses, maintains the creative destiny of man and thereby determines the ontological uniqueness of the human being in the universe. Without it, "*the human mind would produce only shapeless stereotypes, undifferentiated platitudes, and therefore would not be able to distinguish from the animal mind*" [8].

In the Romanian culture, the analysis in terms of the philosophy of style is rooted in a wider cultural matrix than the national territory, but where the Romanian specific differences are striking. In South - East Europe and particularly in the Balkans, the culture pilasters formed and developed throughout history are, fundamentally speaking, sufficiently similar, but the matrices formed within this space, depending on the various historical territories and psychological and spiritual ethnies, are characterized by their own terms. Once established, a cultural matrix retains its categories in the form of a stylistic unit for a long time. As comprehensive as the "mioritic space" formula might be, it must be supplemented by the spatial implication that the notion of longing contains, a fundamental feature of the Romanian feeling, the most often sung in our folklore poetry, and which Lucian Blaga analyzes in the volume "The mioritic space", dedicating one chapter to it; the longing "would reveal itself as the Romanian aspect of human existence" [9], illustrating the inclination towards nuance and discretion of the Romanian people, which has its counterpart in the folklore song: *"In the Romanian folklore song, in the melancholy song, in the dance music, in lamentations, the sound substance consists mostly of intermediate, imprecise tones, with a strong "shading" of moods. Our folklore song moves with an amazing certainty on the line of these intermediate tones which are so unstable by themselves, and which the ear would disintegrate so gladly, pushing them towards the unequivocal positions of the staves. What a variety of shades in this apparent monotony of the folklore song"* [10]. Along with the existential archetypes and symbols of our folklore - the myth of the water (the Danube being the ideal prototype), the myth of the mountain, of the forest, the restless sheep, the earth - lies also longing.

3. Longing in Enescu's work

There are no data to confirm that between the philosopher Lucian Blaga and the composer George Enescu was a direct contact. However, we can say that there are very close invisible links, materialized by the inexhaustible creative sources used by both personalities, which result (at least in the case of Enescu) in the crystallization of the language by taking some of the characteristics of the Romanian folklore (modalism, the parlando rubato pace, etc): *"For not by borrowing the expression and essential features of folklore music was Enescu able to get a proper view of nature and life corresponding to the people among which he rose, but rather the similarity of vision, made up even during the first period of his childhood and certainly much deepened over the years, determined him to select the particularities of the folklore melos as the most authentic and personal means of expression"* [11].

Living at the same time (the two world wars), Enescu and Blaga also resort to the return to the original space as a form of spiritual resistance, as an inexhaustible source of energy, of rebirth; the original space is represented, on the one hand, by the microcosm of the origin space, the native places (for Enescu – "The Village Suite, Impressions from childhood", for Blaga "The chronicle and the song of the ages"), and on the other hand, the macrocosm of the primordial elements (for Enescu – "Vox Maris, Symphony no. 5", for Blaga the "Culture Trilogy, the Values Trilogy").

Longing, this untranslatable word, so Romanian in essence, was interpreted into many cult compositions of our creators; but the one who succeeded in valuing its sublime meanings, in an Orphic sound context with multiple resonances, was George Enescu, the lyric par excellence, which permanently returned home to feed

his imagination, merging organically with the ethos and the spirituality of the generating stylistic matrix, his thought being an expression of the longing. The Moldavian Orpheus enriched the world's sound art by specific means of expression, such as microtonal music, its heterophony, avoiding the traditional patterns in the sound architecture, the use of the parlando rubato system, specific to our millennial melancholy songs, the bold timbre joints, etc.

Enescu's work brings up the richest and most nuanced world of the longing. However, to Lucian Blaga, philosopher of culture, longing is defined by the trinomial road-longing-traveller, constantly generating hope and love. The sensuality driven by the desire to live fully acquires cosmic features by means of the lyrical evolution of Blaga's poetry. Nobody except him has ever aspired so intensely to the wonderful inner space of the longing territory (realms of light and mystery in cosmogonic deciphering) Indeed, the poet is the one who knocks at the great bronze and mystery gates of the world, from here and there.

The fundamental themes found in Enescu's work are: the return to childhood, remembering it, evoking its lost happiness, the nostalgia and sadness of being far away, longing for the country, the alienation and the loneliness etc, and their main substrate is contained in some mioritic and Orphic symbols or myths, with distant origins, leading to Thracian myths that have shaped the legend of Oedipus" [12].

Romeo Ghircoiaşiu suggests the gathering of the affective coordinates based on two coordinates, which range from minus to plus infinity: the horizontal one, of colour and brightness and the vertical one, of intensity. At the heart of this system lies the affective area specific to Enescu's ethos, which he defines as a lyricism specific to the creative thinking and to the spatial and temporal affection

dominant of our folklore melos: the concept of longing.

Enescu's longing is shaped through the modal melos with rich colouring, in which even the microtonal music reveals something sweet, delicate, something connected to the confessional tone, by using melancholy rhythms or dance paces, which have something special, or, as Lucian Blaga would say: "Our dance is the slow dance of a man, which ascends and descends even when he is standing still, or of a man permanently connected to the rhythmic infinite made up of hills and valleys, the waving infinite". Moreover, Enescu's longing also involves – beyond the classical euphony - a "certain deliberate monotony, specific to the language, without violent contrasts, without bright *allegros*, without an artificial pathos, without „breaking the forms", as in the case of Bartok or Stravinski".

The richness of content and the plasticity of image from the slow part of The Sonata no. 3 for piano and violin with a "Romanian folklore feature", makes a strong impression on the listeners, creating an image of Enescu's longing, represented by a chromatic modal melos, full of mobile and unsteady steps, with gentle microtonal melodies, with a polychromy of expression shades not seen in any other composer before him, as well as with infinite timbral aspects, starting with the operation of the sound harmonies, continuing by enhancing the fiddlers' practice, at a high level of craftsmanship and ending with onomatopoeic effects – such as the beginning of the writing for piano. Starting from the accompaniment of the folklore song and from the Byzantine music, he preferred the heterophony and obtained descriptive elements by imitating the whistle, the bagpipes, the bird song etc, which lose their appearance and become an integrated part of the musical substance, describing the Romanian field with an endless love.

In the second part of The Sonata no. 3 for piano the feelings are revealed with great clarity – as in all the work – and although the folklore element is not so acute, but much more transparent due to the expression means, the melismas, the appoggiaturas and the specific intervals, the longing, dreaming and contemplation feelings are strongly internalised.

In Suite no. 1 for orchestra with The prelude in unison, *"the symphonic apotheosis of the ancient melancholy song"* [13], melancholy and meditation attain a high level of simplicity and purity, the melody flows *"from an intense feeling in the expressive substance of the folklore song, by remodelling its themes and units"* [14], the unison becoming here a sort of connection between the human and the cosmic universe.

In the programmatic Suite „Impressions from childhood” op. 28, mainly in the middle part – Andante sostenuto – longing and nostalgia for the childhood experiences give voice to memories kept at the depth of the unconscious mind, becoming *„consubstantial to the nostalgia for existence"* [15], according to Gilbert Durand, causing *„the formation of some truly unique moments"* [16], both instruments – piano and violin – being treated with a maximum level of virtuosity, which has probably never been reached, resulting in an extraordinary unitary construction.

Using in Oedipus a diatonic and modal language from which a serene attitude towards the fateful destiny is expressed, as well as the resignation of the hero with his exciting dignity in front of tragedy and his reconciliation with the world of good, truth and beauty, he reveals the eternal longing.

We can continue with “Symphony no. 1”, “Symphony no. 3 with choir op.21”, “The Village Suite no. 3”, The Opera “Oedipus”, “The Romanian Poem”, “The Romanian Rhapsodies”, in which there are

moments full of meditation and melancholy in the enchanting atmosphere of the melancholy song melos, or, in other words of the longing song.

4. Conclusions

Romania folklore music cannot be created by the superficial analysis of some intonations, but *"only after generations of artists will be inspired by our nature, by our sparkling nights, by the shepherds who haul or by our barking dogs"* [17]. The feeling that gives this unique colour to our Romanian folklore music *„is inspired by our valleys and hills, by the special colour of our sky, by the thoughts that weigh us and at the same time determine the creation of longing within us"* [18]. Certain suggestive titles of some of Enescu's autobiographical pages testify the invisible strings that connect the composer to the mysterious nature, to the inanimate elements which have left an indelible mark on the soul of the creator.

Enescu was a lyric par excellence, his lyricism meaning – most often – *the Romanian longing reduced to its essence*, and from his work, perhaps the most complete pages are carried out in slow pace, in which, by using the melancholy song pace, it merges until it becomes identical with longing.

And since the space to which the Romanian feel organically connected has the configuration of the field, of the rhythmic undulation between hill and valley, all the Romanian art creations – folklore or cult – are the expression of a regular rhythm of gentle ascent and descent, as opposed both to the endless ascent of the Gothic, and the boundless extension of the soul and of the Russian music, so George Enescu's musical speech is also an *"infinite undulation"*, *"the spiritual space of the song"*.

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