

Consciousness and Being

By Geo Savulescu

I am here to speak about my point of view on philosophy. Because my philosophical roots are deep-seated in Lucian Blaga's philosophy I would like to present the important points of his philosophy (I am not going to refer to the large part of his *Theory of knowledge*, which needs a special attempt), followed by a few words about his work *Consciousness and Being*, and last but not least I will explain my interest in Blaga's philosophy.

Blaga's main concepts, his important pillars are **Mystery** and **Style**.

Mystery. Mystery is the first feeling of man as a man on Earth.

Animal life and human life: What could be the difference?

The animal has its *existence in the immediate and for its own protection*. Animals can change, have changed, only by biological mutation, by biological changes.

Once upon a time, a being was surprised, maybe frightened, by thunder or a flood. He did not keep going, he stopped and felt that the thunder or flood was a mystery he needed to understand. He tried to understand that mystery because something pushed him to do so. And so he began to reveal mysteries, to be a man, to be a creative man. Man has appeared! From that very old time until today man has revealed and understood a lot of mysteries through science or the arts. He is a creative animal, the only one on Earth.

Blaga said: "The human destiny is to be creative, this is his *ontological mutation*"; man "*exists through mystery and for its revelation*".

Blaga is not alone in thinking that mystery is everywhere, even in philosophy. I shall quote Kant from his *Kritik der Reinen Vernunft*, introduction V, first edition: "Here is hidden a certain mystery..." relating to the a priori propositions, the a priori. For Immanuel Kant, in the beginning, the idea of a priori was a mystery, and really it stayed that way for him until the end, but he made very good use of it.

Style. Blaga laid out a new theory of style looking for philosophical understanding.

Style is a human element. Each human has his or her personal style of living, working, speaking, etc., each writer has his/her style of writing, each composer has his/her personal music, impossible to mistake for another composer. Is there a mystery here? No. Because style is an unconscious mark, an individual mark.

Personance. Blaga takes this word from the Italian *personare*, something that resonates from the unconscious and our conscious state is able to listen to, to understand. There is a communication between the unconscious and conscious states.

Stylistical categories: We all know the Kantian table of categories: Quantity, quality, relations, and modalities. Generally there are pairs of categories.

Blaga proposes *Stylistical categories*, categories of human spontaneity.

The first pair is Space and Time (we shall return to that subject ... pure forms of our sensible intuition- Kant).

Blaga proposes horizons of space and horizons of time.

The feeling of an *infinite three-dimensional space*, a *waved space* or a *cell space*.

But there are also other possible feelings of spaces:

The feeling of a *flowing fountain horizon*, for those who are looking in the future. A *waterfall time* for the feeling of the lost golden age. And the *stream time* for those who give valuable importance only to the present.

Other categories are:

The attitude about the horizons, attitude that may describe our destiny.

The *Anabasical attitude*: we go forward. Alexander the Great, Cesar, Napoleon, Coulomb.

The *Catabasical attitude*: going backward. Gandhi.

Aspirations: These could be formative aspirations.

The individual- be yourself in another's world.

The typical- the ruler- be like the boss.

The elemental, *Stoikeion*, - it is like a flood or a tsunami.

The individual may have only one category for each type. One by one the categories are gathered in a bunch of abyssal categories, which create a *Stylistical Matrix*, a stylistical womb, a stylistical origin, of the unconscious.

The characteristic of these stylistical matrixes, of these stylistical categories, is that they may be in use without being in a conscious state. These stylistical matrixes, categories, describe our personality, they are our personality, our destiny.

A second important characteristic of that proposed about Stylistical Matrix is only a frame, a skech, each of us may change a little one or onother categories and at the end all of us we have a Stylistical Matrix but each has its own Stylistical Matrix.

Blaga called it *Abyssal Noos*, *Abyssal Noology*, because the unconscious has spirit- *Geist*, it has not only a shadow, a dark part; it has a bright part too.

Blaga emphasized that man became a man (the anthropogenesis) when he understood that he lives in a world of mysteries and felt the necessity to reveal these mysteries; he began his *existence through mystery and for its revelation*. Man became a creative being and this is our main task, to fight for creativity. Only when being creative does man have the feeling that he is not living for nothing.

For the purpose of our conversations today the last important quotation is "The stylistical matrix, the abyssal categories, are transcendent brakes."

Consciousness and Being.

Consciousness as a whole is our individual existence, we are persons, I am conscious, I am living, *I am*, it is not another person, I am myself, the unique being.

What is giving me that feeling, what part of my body gives me the confidence that I am, I exist? Neurophysiologists give a clear answer: the brain. Which part of it? No part! The brain as a whole! Instinct, sensibility, feelings, reason, hopes, sensibility, understanding, all is there, in the brain. The links in the brain, which start very early, even in the intrauterine life, make dynamic connections between the old parts and the new parts of our brain. Dynamic links exist between the frontal lobes (our intelligent function is there) and the cerebral tonsil (generally the old brain where we have instincts) with other parts of the brain such as the motor, optical, and olfactory areas, our thoughts, our reason, our spiritual life.

Really, these brain links are formed in early life, in the baby stage at a specific time of the brain evolution. By the way, in teenagers the emotional function of the brain is mostly related to the cerebral tonsil and not to the frontal areas, as in adult life. That is a big difference and it is a possible explanation for the fact that there are misunderstandings between generations. It's an anatomical and functional explanation.

Neurophysiological knowledge tells us that anatomically we don't have many changes in our brain in the ontogenesis but that there are great possibilities for functional links. The dynamic, the rearrangements in learning could be very important, especially at the child and teenage level. This is why learning is easier when we are young. There is another important consideration: if we don't use some links they can disappear!

After all, what is consciousness? Does it have a specific structure?

If we go deeper and we agree that consciousness is a global function of our brain, as we have seen, we may find that consciousness has a *conscious* part and another *unconscious* one.

Why is this important? It is important because too often the conscious and unconscious are taken as two syntagmas without real difference, they talk about the same conscious state, our conscious life. It is not so. There are many activities, such as walking, speaking, driving, e.g., which have an important unconscious part. Blega tells us that the unconscious is in a constant relationship with the conscious life by *personance*, the tune of our unconscious. It is like a little ghost, Pinocchio's cricket, an elf who is telling us what to do, and what not to do. There is Socrates' *daimon*. Constant communication between the unconscious and conscious states. I think this link is not only from the unconscious to the consciousness, to Blega's *personance*, but is a biunivocal function.

We have not only a shadow in our unconscious, but also a large part of an intelligent unconscious – a bright part, and I name it the *eumeros*, the good part, and this good part has an important role in our life, in our existence.

C.G.Jung described a world of *archetypes*; the archetype is a very old unconscious structure kept in memory, it is something we earn and is useful for our life. It is a good

part of our unconscious. But Jung did not describe it more. Freud talked about *sublimation*. Our complexes could have a creative function, but they remain complexes. Psychoanalysis, except for Jungian archetypes, has no interest in a good part of our unconscious; it has interest in the shadow, the psychical complexes, in the conditions of the ill mind.

The good part of our unconscious constitutes a large part that helps us live in a healthy mental state by helping our conscious life at each moment. I cannot know its limits but I can speak about some parts of it. Neuro-physiologists speak about a symphony of brain functions, a symphony in which each note, each tone, each instrument's job is to make a good existence for our being, which could be in real harmony, harmony for a lifetime. It is our hope, although it does not usually happen so. Dissonance could appear, one instrument might need to be repaired, a scream might take place! That is the stress, these are the human relationships, and this is what could happen. It depends on our brain's anatomy, on the connections we have inside the brain; it depends on a lot of variables, whether we are able to overlap a shock, a tragedy, a psychical aggression, whether we fall ill, it is about our psychical resistance, our psychical force. Throughout this fight our mind has the help of the unconscious.

We have a memory. We know that the short-term memory is located in the frontal part of the brain and the long-term memory can be located in several parts of the brain. We keep our conscious perceptions, and our unconscious (under-minimal perceptions), in the short-term memory and we need to reorganize them and to send them to the long-term memory, to be kept as long as we need them. All this rearrangement, all this brain discharge, the frontal brain discharge, happens during sleep, during sleep with rapid eye movement. This is why we need to sleep and why we may be killed if we are deprived of sleep (this is the Chinese drop torture).

I am driving home and I am thinking of something. I don't need to be aware of my driving because my unconscious is like an automatic pilot. It is the same when I am working. I don't need to think, to watch my every step. It is something I do automatically.

I am writing my paper and I am confused about something, I cannot solve it. I go to sleep and in the morning I awake with the solution. There was a logical solution; I continued to think in my sleep. This is unconscious thinking.

I believe in God but I do not have the possibility to have a proof of His existence from somebody. I feel that God exist, He is present near me but that is only my feeling.

Maybe it is important that we understand that the brain functions as a whole, it has a unity between our conscious and unconscious states; that unity is our consciousness, it is our being. From my point of view, neither the conscious state nor the unconscious are in first place. We are unique and unitary, each of us.

About Blaga's Abyssal Noology and the Transcendent Brakes

Our first impression is that we are in a psychological area. Yes, we are at the edge of a psychological area but with a philosophical approach. Blaga has a good instrument in understanding the possibility of knowledge, and he uses it in explaining the knowledge.

Knowledge! This is a big problem. How can knowledge be possible? This is a Plato question. Plato tried to answer it by speaking about a transcendent world, an over sensible world, the world of *ideas*. For Plato this world of ideas is the world of universals, it is the

true real world, while our world is only a sort of shadow. The reality is that only with this world of Ideas, of Universals, may we have knowledge. Bertrand Russell shows us that in each sentence we meet universals, no sentence could be build without these universals.

Bishop Berkeley stated: “esse est percipi”. We have a perception of what we have in our minds, and we have in our minds what God has in His mind. All our perceptions, which are guarantees of the existence of each thing, of each object, are ideas in our mind. The guarantee of our knowledge is in the mind of God where all ideas exist. It’s a philosophical construction not very far from that of Plato, even if it has important differences.

The real revolution was done by Immanuel Kant with his a priori knowledge. We use analytical judgments and syntactical judgments. The syntactical judgments can bring something new to our knowledge, such as mathematical judgment: $7+5=12$ is an a priori judgment, since 12 does not exist in the premise.

Where does this knowledge come from? It comes from the a priori world of things in themselves (Das Ding an sich). It is not a transcendent world as in Plato or Berkeley, it is the world around us but it is not possible to know this world as it is. But how can we know? Us, humans, we have two pure forms, two concepts of our sensibility, of our sensible intuition, of our immediate intuition: the concepts of *Space* and *Time*.

There are two words in Kant’s view, as in Plato’s and Berkeley’s, but it is a different situation. We have no way to have a correct, real knowledge of the world of *things in themselves*, but we have the possibility, in the world of our perceptions, to have knowledge mediated by *space* and *time*, of these *pure forms of our sensible intuition*. Space and time have another important function. They make possible the *categories* of our knowledge. The categories of quantity: Unity, Multiplicity, Totality; the categories of quality: Reality, Negation, Limitation; the categories of relations: Substance and Accidents, Cause and Effect, Active and Passive; the categories of modality: Possible-Impossible, Existence- Non existence, Necessity – Contingence. Space and time, together with the categories which are all in our mind, taken there by our intuition, make our knowledge possible. It is not real knowledge, it is the knowledge made possible only by our mind categories and the space-time concepts.

This is really something new. We don’t need transcendence in the field of the philosophy and we can have knowledge! God may exist, but philosophy does not claim to give proofs of His existence.

There are some words in Kant’s expression I ask you to pay attention to. Space and time are *pure forms of the sensible intuition*. Here is a problem. These forms could be pure, because he wrote a book about pure knowledge; but they are sensible intuitions, and we are not aware of them, we use them without being conscious. It is important to understand that Kant couldn’t have his philosophy without Plato, Berkeley and Hume. It’s a well-known situation.

Now back to Blaga.

I have already talked about this, and I want to repeat it: in the Abyssal Noology, Blaga insisted that the unconscious activity of the brain has a larger part than the conscious activity. It is true that on one hand the conscious activity of the brain is that which gives

us the assurance that we are alive, we are a being, but it is not alone, conscious and unconscious are working together to realize our being, to let us exist.

Blaga named *personance* the link between the unconscious and the conscious state and proposed what he named a *doublet* of categories. *Personance* is constantly helping, as we have seen, our life—what we name our conscious state. Really it is a biunivocal function because there are perceptions perceived unconsciously and because many of the ideas we have, we can't keep them constantly in our conscious state, we transfer them in our memory, short or long term.

About the categories, I shall make some observations before entering in a discussion.

First observation: Blaga has taken different kinds of space and time as categories. We have seen that Kant did the same. All, or almost all of Kant's categories are related to space and time. Blaga speaks about horizons of space and horizons of time using metaphors (he was a poet), such as an *infinite three-dimensional space*, a *waved space*, a *cell space*, a *flowing fountain time*, a *waterfall time*, a *stream time*, an *anabactical*, a *catabactical attitude* and *formative aspirations*. Gathering them all, one for each horizon or attitude, he speaks about a *Stylistical matrix*. He named it *stylistical* because the style and mystery were the starting point to enter this abyssal field.

The characteristic of the *stylistical matrix* is to be function unconsciously, but at the same time, it describes our personality, Blaga said "our destiny".

A second important observation is that these categories are useful for our *understanding* (Verstand). Blaga calls it the unconscious field, the *abyssal noos*, and the abyssal intelligence, which helps us to understand the surrounding world.

Blaga understood that Kant's point of view—the a priori knowledge—was the best. He lived and wrote at the beginning and middle of the XXth century, he was impressed by Freud's theory of the unconscious and he understood that *sensibility* and *intuition* in Kant's papers are the unconscious of our times. In opposition to Freud, and the other big psychoanalysts, he wrote about an intelligent unconscious, a large area of our brain function. He had the help of style, that the unconscious has not only a psychological and psychiatric importance in brain function disorders, but also a philosophical one.

It was a hard task to achieve, first because he was aggressed in Romania as a non-specialist in psychoanalysis. He was aggressed, secondly, in the time of the Second World War, by an important Romanian orthodox priest because he used metaphorical names as *paradise knowledge*, the *Lucifer knowledge* and instead of God he was speaking of the Great Anonymous. He defended himself that *luce* means light, not only devil. This is not the time to have a broader discussion of this theory of knowledge but I want to tell you that these two types of knowledge (he named them in further papers; type I of knowledge and type II of knowledge) are closely related to the analytical and syntactical judgments, and in this situation the *Luciferian knowledge* is the knowledge that brings the new, it is the important knowledge, the creative knowledge, it brings light.

Man is creative and that is a big difference from other animals. Our course, our gladness, our happiness, our bliss, is to create, to make something, a chair, a table, a house, a child,

a painting, music, or anything else! Even wars, crime, robbery, are creative actions, bad creative actions, but creative still.

What are the transcendent brakes of our knowledge?

Again, in the first place: what is transcendent for Blaga? For him the unconscious has a transcendent value. The stylistical matrix, the categories of understanding and the abyssal categories, are universals, just the same as Plato's ideas and Russell's statements. Through our categories, through our *matrix of knowledge*, of understanding, we are in possession of those universals, which do not belong only to us. They belong to humanity, to a human, to a nation, to a team, or to a family. We are in possession of the transcendent, the transcendent is in us, and we possess it. This is another big problem.

It is in some ways similar to our genome. It is ours, but it belongs to many others. With the genome we have the universal. With the matrix of understanding we understand the world, but it is at the same time a brake in the knowledge. We may only know what is allowed by our categories, by our matrix of knowledge.

The *transcendent brakes* of our knowledge are inside us; they are our categories, our stylistical matrix, and through our matrix we understand the world. We can't know the real world, we may only know what we have the possibility to know, and we don't know if it is the real world.

It is another aspect of that universal we are bearing with us.

Am I a free man or am I not a free man? If I don't know I am dependent on the universals I have, therefore I am not a free man?

I shall say yes! You are not a free man if you do nothing to escape. What can you do for? For humans there is only one, not simple, possibility to be free: we can understand that we are dependent on the universals; to know that is the first step toward freedom, and to be a creative man is the second step. The first step is to know and the second is to act,

If you are living without making efforts to escape from your dependence on the universals, you are carrying them with you, you are a bound man, you are under your universal destiny even you are free to run between your proper limits, categorical constellation.

From the point of view of freedom, which seems to characterize us, humans, you can only be free as an individual if you are creative. Through your creativity as an individual you build, you model your own destiny! Through the universality, the generality which we carry with us in our *matrix of knowledge*—matrix that we need, as we have seen, because we cannot live, we cannot *understand* the world without the categories of our conscious and unconscious—through this generality we also have a direction in life, a determination that we cannot get rid of.

That's why we are free as individual beings in spite of this formidable determinism which saves for us but subjugates as at the same time. Our stylistic matrix, the knowledge matrix, the matrix of the understanding, holds us in its determination, but we can be free as individuals only by actualizing our individuality as creative beings.

This way and only this way, if we are creative beings, individuality may get to rule the generality, and man may escape, in a way, from determination, and become free! That's why it is worth making any kind of effort in order to be creative! And let's not forget that this creativity is possible only in individuals, only in persons.

Life means to be determined, the determination that the animal world can't escape. The creativity inside each of us can make us free!

St. Augustine stated: love and do what ever you want! If you believe in love, maybe in God and you are a creative person nobody can put you in chains. As you are living you are a free man. That rise the problem of the good and the evil- another problem.

This freedom theory is not in Blaga but it is out of Blaga.

I consider my exposition closed, but I will ask permission to say a few more words related to what I call, in the book I published in Romania on my website, the *Language of the Unconscious*.

We humans communicate with each other through words. In addition to this form of communication there is also a non-verbal one (through posture, mimic, gestures), and also a direct communication. People communicate directly with each other through feelings, through emotional states.

I am talking about something else, a communication through art, through music, painting, novels, poetry, sculpture, dance, and others. This communication through art takes place especially at the unconscious level. The words used are more of a support that is at the same time conscious and unconscious (through tone, accent, etc.). Art is the unconscious language,

I just wanted mention to you this idea, which is currently my main preoccupation now.