

LUCIAN BLAGA'S POETIC WORK FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (II)

George David, PhD

Associate Professor, Faculty of Education Sciences, Communication and International Relations, University "Titu Maiorescu", Bucharest

<https://doi.org/10.66793/tituecir19proceeding6>

Abstract. *Artificial intelligence (AI), with astonishing outputs in various scientific, technological and theoretical projects, may be used as a preliminary, auxiliary asset as to the analysis of certain lyric works. Going further with a project initiated in 2024, I have chosen two poems of the Romanian poet Lucian Blaga to be analysed by ChatGPT.*

As expected, one of the poems, well-known when it comes to Blaga's poetry, benefited from a quite accurate analysis, although a little bit too general. As to the other one, a valuable poem however with little notoriety, the analysis offered a raised level of generality and ambiguity, introducing also erroneous information.

This leads to the conclusion that, at least for the moment, AI should be used cautiously in investigating poetry and literary works. Because of the lack of originality and creativity, it can be used as a secondary tool in such exegetic projects.

Keywords: *artificial intelligence (AI), chatbot, poetry, literature review.*

1. PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

In the publication *Blaga Notebooks* no. 44 of 2024 I initiated an attempt at introspection in Lucian Blaga's poetic work, introspection carried out with the help of the tools currently made available by artificial intelligence (for which I will continue to use the acronym AI). Using two such tools (ChatGPT, and Microsoft Edge Copilot), I tried to get answers to questions of great generality regarding the object of my research, from the position of a novice who knows very few details about Blaga's lyrical work: *What is the most representative volume of poems of the Romanian poet Lucian Blaga? What are three reasons why the volume in question is meant to be representative? Which poems illustrate the representativeness of the mentioned volume?*

The answers, generated in a few seconds, were more or less pertinent, and in the conclusions of the article I referred to both their pluses and minuses. The general idea was that AI can deal with even difficult topics at an acceptable level (neither Lucian Blaga, nor Romanian literature, nor Romanian language are elements that benefit from great notoriety internationally), but, at least last year, the conclusion was that the temptation to give up the human element in the analysis of a literary work must still be viewed with circumspection.

The second step of the research, which has been materialized in this article, tries to deepen the approach regarding Blaga's lyrics, subjecting two poetic texts by Lucian Blaga to AI analysis.

As a working method, I chose two poems that I submitted to ChatGPT analysis: the well-known poem *I don't crush the corolla of wonders of the world* (which opens the debut volume *Poems of Light* from 1919), but also a less familiar one to the school population, *To the readers* (which opens the volume *In the Great Passage* of 1924). In both situations, only the actual text of the poem was intentionally proposed to analysis, without specifying the title, the author, the year of publication, the volume in which it was published. I did so in order to check to what extent AI can provide those details receiving for analyse only the poem itself.

2. POEM No. 1: CHAT GPT ANALYSIS OF THE POEM *I DON'T CRUSH THE COROLLA OF WONDERS OF THE WORLD* BY LUCIAN BLAGA

ChatGPT received the text below (which I will later refer to as *Poem No. 1*), with a request to analyse it (both Romanian and English versions are available):

I don't crush the corolla of wonders of the world
and I don't kill
with my mind the mysteries, which I encounter
On my way
in flowers, in eyes, on lips or graves.
The Light of Others
strangle the spell of the hidden unfathomable
in depths of darkness,
but I,
I with my light increase the mystery of the world –
and just as with its white rays the moon not shrinking, but trembling
increase the mystery of the night even more,
The same way I enrich the dark horizon
with wide shivers of holy mystery
and everything that is incomprehensible
changes into even greater meanings
under my sight –
'cause I love
flowers and eyes and lips and graves too.

Eu nu strivesc corola de minuni a lumii
și nu ucid
cu mintea tainele, ce le-ntâlnesc
în calea mea
în flori, în ochi, pe buze ori morminte.
Lumina altora
sugrumă vraja nepătrunsului ascuns
în adâncimi de întuneric,
dar eu,
eu cu lumina mea sporesc a lumii taină
–
și-ntocmai cum cu razele ei albe luna
nu micșorează, ci tremurătoare
mărește și mai tare taina nopții,
așa îmbogățesc și eu întunecata zare
cu largi flori de sfânt mister
și tot ce-i nențeles
se schimbă-n nențelesuri și mai mari
sub ochii mei –
căci eu iubesc
și flori și ochi și buze și morminte.

I specify that I intentionally did not formulate any kind of analysis criteria, in order to detect to what extent ChatGPT can establish an interpretation grid on its own. The answer provided was as follows:

This poem, considered to be a true manifesto of Lucian Blaga's thought, opens the volume *Poems of Light* (1919) and synthesizes the essence of his philosophy about knowledge, mystery and human being's relationship with the universe.

1. Theme and meaning

The poem illustrates the opposition between two types of knowledge:

- **Rational knowledge** (symbolized by the "light of others"), which crushes mysteries through logical explanations, thus reducing the charm and depth of the world.
- **Poetic and intuitive knowledge** (represented by "my light"), which does not destroy mysteries, but amplifies and enriches them.

Blaga proposes a personal vision of knowledge: he does not want to dissect and demystify the world, but to preserve and cultivate the mystery of existence, which he considers essential.

2. Structure and style

The poem consists of a single ample stanza, with free verses, without fixed rhyme, which gives an inner rhythm specific to philosophical meditation.

- **The parallel with the moon:** "just as with its white rays the moon / does not shrink, but trembles / magnifies even more the mystery of the night". The moon, instead of destroying the mystery of the night, intensifies it. Through this metaphor, Blaga outlines his own vision of the creative act: it "illuminates" without destroying, preserving the charm of the unknown.
- **The symbolic enumeration:** "flowers, eyes, lips, graves". Symbols of beauty, love, life and death, all accepted and harmoniously integrated into the poet's vision of the world.

3. Message and impact

Blaga states that the act of knowledge should not be destructive, but creative, preserving the charm of mystery. This way of looking at the world becomes a defining mark of his work and his philosophical thought, being consistent with the "Luciferic knowledge" that he would develop in his later philosophical works.

In conclusion, *I don't crush the corolla of wonders of the world* is a manifesto-poem by Lucian Blaga, through which the poet defines his conception of knowledge and creation. The metaphorical language, the free structure and the depth of ideas make it one of the most representative texts of Romanian literature.

To verify to what extent the above statements are pertinent, I requested the clarification of the sources that ChatGPT has integrated. The answer was as follows:

The analysis I have provided is based on my accumulated knowledge of Romanian literature, especially the work of Lucian Blaga, without using external sources directly. The interpretation of the poem *I Do Not Crush the Corolla of Wonders of the World* is the result of a synthesis of the general critical perspective on Blaga's poetry, of his philosophical influence and of the analyses carried out over time by literary critics such as **Tudor Vianu**, **George Călinescu**, **Dumitru Micu** and **Nicolae Manolescu**.

If you need specific references from established critical works, I recommend:

1. Tudor Vianu – *The Art of Romanian Prose Writers* (analyses Blaga's style and expressiveness).
2. George Călinescu – *The History of Romanian Literature from the Origins to the Present* (provides a general framework on Blaga's place in Romanian literature).
3. Dumitru Micu – *Lucian Blaga. Poetry and mythical-symbolic thinking* (presents the connection between myth, symbol and poetry in Blaga's creation).
4. Nicolae Manolescu – *The Critical History of Romanian Literature* (offers a modern perspective on Blaga's work).

40

3. POEM No. 2: CHAT GPT ANALYSIS OF THE POEM *TO READERS* BY LUCIAN BLAGA

ChatGPT received the text below (which I will refer to as *Poem No. 2* below), with the request to analyse it in circumstances identical to those in the case of Poem No. 1:

This is my home. Beyond the sun and the garden

Aici e casa mea. Dincolo soarele și grădina cu stupi.

44

with beehives.
 You all pass by on the road, look through
 the gate bars
 and wait for me to speak. – Where do I
 start?
 Believe me, believe me,
 one can talk about anything as much as you
 want:
 about fate and about the serpent of good,
 about the archangels who ploughed the
 plow
 the gardens of man,
 about the heaven we grow towards,
 about hatred and fall, sadness and
 crucifixion
 and first of all, about the Great Passage.
 But words are the tears of those who would
 have wanted
 so much to cry and they couldn't.
 Very bitter are all the words,
 therefore – leave me
 to walk mutely among you,
 to come your way with my eyes closed.

Voi treceți pe drum, vă uitați printre
 gratii de poartă
 și așteptați să vorbesc. – De unde să-
 ncep?
 Credeți-mă, credeți-mă,
 despre orișice poți să vorbești cât
 vrei:
 despre soartă și despre șarpele
 binelui,
 despre arhanghelii cari ară cu plugul
 grădinile omului,
 despre cerul spre care creștem,
 despre ură și cădere, tristețe și
 răstigniri
 și înainte de toate despre marea
 trecere.
 Dar cuvintele sunt lacrimile celor ce
 ar fi voit
 așa de mult să plângă și n-au putut.
 Amare foarte sunt toate cuvintele,
 de-aceea – lăsați-mă
 să umblu mut printre voi,
 să vă ies în cale cu ochii închiși.

This time, the answer provided by the AI was as follows:

Analysis of the poem *The Great Passage* by Lucian Blaga [In the Great Passage, n.m.]

This poem is part of the volume *La curțile dorului* (1938), but it reflects the fundamental themes and motifs of the volume *The Great Passage* (1924) [the poem analysed, entitled *To the Readers*, opened the volume *In the Great Passage*, published in 1924, n.m.]. In this text, Blaga explores the human condition, the ephemerality of existence and the limit of knowledge, resorting to a deeply symbolic and expressionist language.

1. Theme and meaning

The poem addresses the theme of the **existential passage** and the **limits of the word** in the face of life's great questions. The title *The Great Passage* suggests human being's irreversible journey through life, an initiatory journey marked by trials, introspection and mystery.

- **The distance between the poet and the others:**
 - The first lines create a clear separation between "my house" (the inner, intimate space of poetic thought) and the outer world "you pass on the way" (symbol of those who look superficially, waiting for answers).
 - The question "Where should I start?" marks the difficulty of expressing a deep reality, difficult to translate into words.
- **The theme of knowledge and the limits of language:**
 - The enumeration of the universal elements "fate", "serpent of good", "archangels", "heaven", "hatred and fall" outlines the complete spectrum of human existence, from mythical and religious to tragic and philosophical.

- Words become insufficient: "words are the tears of those who would have wanted / so much to cry and couldn't". The poet suggests that, in the face of great truths, any attempt at expression is limited and painful.
- **Refusal to utter:**
- Finally, the poet expresses his desire for silence: "let me / walk mutely among you". This attitude is reminiscent of Blaga's conception of metaphysical silence, the idea that the mystery must be respected and not dissected by rational knowledge.

2. Artistic style and expressiveness

- **Expressionist Imagery:**
- The grandiose symbols ("the archangels ploughing / the gardens of man") suggest divine intervention in human destiny.
- Cosmic metaphors and mystical elements reflect Blagian's vision of man's relationship with the universe.

41

- **Free verse:**
- The lack of rhymes and a fixed rhythm create a meditative tone, appropriate to the poetic confession.
- **The antithesis of utterance/silence:**
- Although the poem begins with an opening to dialogue, it ends with a refusal of the latter: the poet chooses silence over great truths.

3. Final Message and Interpretation

The poem *The Great Passage* is a reflection on the **limits of human knowledge** and **ephemerality**. Blaga emphasizes that profound truths cannot be spoken but only lived. The poet refuses rational explanations and chooses silence as a form of superior understanding of existence.

This idea is closely related to his philosophy of **Luciferic knowledge**, according to which man must preserve the mystery of the world, not crush it by rational explanations. In this sense, the end of the poem becomes a natural conclusion: true understanding comes not through words, but through silence and introspection.

Conclusion: *The Great Passage* is a defining poem for Blaga's thought, combining expressionist, philosophical and mystical elements to express the idea that the ultimate truths of existence cannot be spoken, but only felt.

When asked to provide the sources on which the analysis is based, the answer was as follows:

The analysis of the poem *The Great Passage* by Lucian Blaga that I have previously provided is based on my general knowledge of the poet's work and the critical interpretations available. To provide a more detailed and up-to-date perspective, we consulted the following sources:

1. "**Lucian Blaga. The Poet's Personal Myths**" – This article highlights how Blaga constructs a personal mythology in his poems, reflecting on existential and metaphysical themes.
2. "**In the Great Passage**" – **Commentary** – A detailed analysis of the poem *In the Great Passage*, emphasizing the themes of alienation and childhood longing, as well as the use of symbols and metaphors to express the break from the cosmic totality. (source: Liceunet.ro website).
3. "**The legacy that Lucian Blaga left us 'In the Great Passage'**" – The article explores the depth and contemplation of poetry, highlighting

46

Blaga's concern for the passage of time and the search for immortality. (source: ZiarulPozitiv.ro website).

4. "**The Steps of Silence in Lucian Blaga's Poetry**" – The study looks at how silence and sound are used in Blaga's poetry to reflect on existential and metaphysical themes. (source: LimbaRomana.md website).

These sources contributed to deepening the understanding of the poem and to highlighting the complexity of the themes addressed by Lucian Blaga in *The Great Passage*.

Unlike the case of Poem no. 1, in this analysis the inaccuracies are flagrant, and the statements, of a greater generality, are also characterized by ambiguity: sometimes they refer to the text under analysis, other times they refer to the entire volume in which it was published, and this in the conditions in which the title of the volume is not even correctly mentioned.

4. INTERPRETATION OF THE RESULTS

As I had already anticipated in the first episode of my research, the results provided by AI still remain within the limits of a fairly high degree of generality and ambiguity. A gratifying detail is the fact that, in the case of both poems under analysis, without there being an express request in this regard, ChatGPT provided information about their philosophical support, referring to "Luciferic knowledge" and "metaphysical silence" – concepts specific to Blagian philosophy.

For Poem no. 1, the analysis was somewhat more rigorous, with references to pertinent, highly authoritative sources. It is the very result I anticipated, because this poem is practically emblematic of Blagian lyricism, being well-known to both the school population and the adult population, and not only in Romania. The result of this notoriety was a relatively broad and deep exegesis, so that AI benefited from a fairly consistent resource that could be indexed.

As for Poem no. 2, this one, less known and interpreted, has generated errors that, if not noticed, can lead the one who seeks answers regarding Lucian Blaga's poetry on the wrong path: the title of the poem is confused with the title of the volume in which it was published; confusion is also introduced regarding the volume in which the poem was published; Finally, I believe that the most flagrant error is the inaccurate mention of the title *In the Great Passage*, which is invariably mentioned in the altered form *The Great Passage*, a form that belongs to school jargon, sparing scientific rigor.

42

Moreover, critical statements in the content of the analysis refer, practically, to the volume *In the Great Passage* and not to the concrete poem submitted for analysis.

Finally, in the case of Poem no. 2, the sources that ChatGPT claims to have used are entirely of modest scientific value, in the category of "popularized science" sites, used by the middle school or high school population for their homework.

A positive aspect compared to last year is that the ChatGPT user is warned about errors that may occur. At the end of the work session, even if with a lowercase font, the mention is present: *ChatGPT can make mistakes. Check important information.*

5. CONCLUSIONS

47

Although in other spheres the results of using AI are amazing, in areas involving originality and creativity the progress is modest. As Jessica Abbadia (2023), a lawyer working in digital marketing, notes, AI

can assist researchers in literature review and knowledge synthesis by automatically scanning and extracting relevant information from a wide range of scientific papers. This not only saves time but also helps researchers stay up-to-date on the latest advancements in their field.

AI can collate unimaginable amounts of information on a given topic, extract essential information from them and, consequently, summarize the data processed in this way to an increasingly better quality. Unfortunately, however, we are still at the stage of working with existing material, and it cannot yet be original interpretations with scientific/theoretical value.

To sum up, in the field of literary exegesis, AI is extremely useful for carrying out usual, preliminary analyses, but, at least for now, we will also need to have additional tools to verify the accuracy of the information obtained in this way. Also, we cannot rely at this moment on performances in terms of creativity, both in terms of analysis of literary productions and, extrapolating, in terms of literary creation itself.

REFERENCES

Abbadia, J. (2023). Exploring the Role of AI in Academic Research. Mind the Graph, <https://mindthegraph.com/blog/ai-in-academic-research/>, 27.06.2023, visited on 3.04.2025.

Blaga, L. (2021). *Poemele luminii - I poemi della luce (antologie româno-italiană)*. (Ș. Damian, & B. Rombi, Trad.) Cluj-Napoca: Școala Ardeleană.

David, G. (2024). Opera poetică a lui Lucian Blaga din perspectiva inteligenței artificiale. In *Caietele Blaga* nr. 44, pp. 63-74.