

Emil Cioran and Bruno Taut: Utopia as a Flight from Progress?

Andrea FRANCESCHINI, Paolo VANINI

Dipartimento di Lettere e Filosofia, Università degli Studi di Trento,
Trento, Italy

andrea.franceschini@unitn.it

paolovanini86@gmail.com

Abstract

Emil Cioran (1911-1995) and Bruno Taut (1880-1938) are two very different intellectual figures not only as for their primary occupation, but also as for their worldview. However, in their theoretical reflections, both the authors addressed the question of utopia. In fact, according to them, the most important contradictions and challenges of modernity converge around this thorny issue. On the one hand, Taut was a German expressionist architect who, in the first half of the twentieth century, imagined the utopian city as a meeting place of the requirements of the industrialized society (functionality, productivity, efficiency) and the inescapable anthropological need for beauty and harmony. On the other hand, Cioran refused to work his whole life and settled in Paris in 1937 as a stateless person of Romanian origin. Such rejection of any formal employment accounts for his sharp criticism of utopia, which he conceives as the place where the diabolical ideal of a humanity constrained by the symmetries of work and the ugliness of fatigue is realized. This paper aims to show that Cioran's and Taut's conclusions are only apparently in contrast: indeed, in dealing with utopian hopes and impossibilities, both authors are forced to distance themselves from the modern idea of *progress* - conceived as a symbol of a "dogmatic" and "enlightened" historical inertia towards the moral, political and scientific perfection of humanity.

Keywords: Cioran; Taut; Utopia; Glass architecture.