

mgr Monika Bergiel-Klon

Doctoral dissertation: The meaning of time in Emil Cioran's reflection

Summary

The dissertation presents the results of research on the meaning of time in the reflection of Emil Michel Cioran. The starting point of the analysis is the thesis, that time is a key issue in his philosophy, because it determines both the entirety of his considerations and the expression of his creative attitude.

The analysis of issues related to time is presented in five chapters (including *Introduction* and *Conclusion*) arranged in a brace composition. It opens, preceded by an introduction, with the issue of birth, as an experience of primal disintegration. From this starting point, various aspects of the experience of being in time (such as boredom, melancholy, horror, despair, sadness and ecstasy) and the relationship between time and death are analyzed. The culmination of the research work is the last chapter of the dissertation, presenting a comprehensive approach to the meaning of time in Cioran's work.

The analysis was carried out using an interdisciplinary comparative model, referring to: selected philosophical and psychoanalytical considerations as well as selected theological threads. The use of the comparative method was aimed at revealing the multidimensional meaning of time in Cioran's work and became a tool for interpreting the biblical metaphors used by the author. As a result of the conducted research, a model of understanding the meaning of time for the human existential situation was selected from Cioran's considerations. This model is based on the assumption that the issues of death and birth in Cioran's considerations exchange their meanings and constitute the points to which various aspects of the experience of time are related. This model, included in the topographic structure, consists of six states. Boredom, defined as the least specific, is the starting point for dread, despair, sadness, ecstasy and melancholy.

The last state was assigned special importance due to its significant and long – term impact on the attitude and way of experiencing one's own existence by man. A thesis was put forward that melancholic mourning for a non-temporal, and therefore unconscious existence, behind this object peculiarly defined in its indeterminacy – nothingness, means for Cioran a proper, authentic and non-illusory attitude towards life, which in all its splendor appears to him as evidence of the loss. Thus, it was found that the meaning of time is revealed in the author's melancholic and peculiarly ascetic writing. His creative attitude was interpreted as an

intentional and even manifest gesture of abandonment, turning away from life in recognition that everything related to time is an unsolvable problem. Sublimation in the form of writing, as well as the contemplation of death in the form of suicidal fantasies, in this context can only be a method of temporary reduction of the tension that results from the overwhelming awareness of the temporal nature of existence. It has been shown that the affirmation of the idea of suicide is the correct way of understanding the meaning of this issue, as opposed to the affirmation of the act of suicide itself. The dissertation proved that the melancholic perspective, in its various shades, always referring to the experience of loss, in Cioran's work is the most adequate ground for thinking about life and death. The presented understanding of his creative attitude in terms of a very peculiar asceticism on the one hand, and melancholy on the other hand, reveals in a new light – precisely the meaning of time the issues addressed by other authors: the embodiment of his writing, communication, chosen style of expression. Cioran's reflection on these states shows the assumption that man is unable to transcend his identity, metaphorically defined by the author of the dissertation as the identity of an "exile from paradise".

In addition, it has been proven that Cioran's work can be interpreted using the starting point of linear as well as circular or cyclical time, but ultimately it should be stated that none of these approaches is sufficient to show their essence. The proper meaning of time, in the frame of interpretation, is reflected in the term "destructive time". It refers to Cioran's view that with the "fall into time" man gained consciousness and fate, which are the source of the drama of human existence. This, due to time, begins, according to Cioran, with the destruction of the state of original unity brought with time, condemns to dependence, loneliness, the process of individuation paid for with suffering. The temporal aspect of existence also determines the insoluble problem of human determination. It remains in relation to human existence and is the principle of irreversible decomposition, through separation dooming to individuation, a process which, according to Cioran, sets the axis of the tragedy of human existence.

Domica Beyzeta Stan