III.
INTERCULTURALITÉ – ALTÉRITÉ – CRÉATIVITÉ

EMIL CIORAN – METAPHYSICS OF TRANSYLVANIAN MELANCHOLY

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The basis of this study is the philosophy of Emil Cioran[1], of whose works I will refer to The Twilight of Thoughts, *his last book written in Romanian[2]. The reason for such a choice is that virtually all the most important philosophical motifs, constantly present even in his later French publications that deal more thoroughly with the specific issues and from differing standpoints, are to be found in it. A second reason is its linguistic status: the book under discussion allows us directly to examine Cioran's original text written in Romanian; considering that Romanian has a notably more flexible word order than French, the philosopher's individual style is more evident in his native tongue. Because of the necessary limitations of space, the study is founded primarily upon this work, though as a supplement the Romanian translation of* A Short History of Decay *(originally written in French) is cited.*

[1] Emil Cioran (1911 – 1995) – famous French philosopher of Romanian origin, born in the Transylvanian village of Răsinări (near Sibiu).
[2] Romanian title: *Amurgul gândurilor*, first issued in 1940 by the publishing house *„Dacia Traiana"*, Sibiu. Because this book has not been translated into English, the quotations cited in English in this study are the author's own translation. The same is true for the other works cited – all the quotations are translated by the author for the purpose of this study.

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The style of philosophical ideas

Cioran's The Twilight of Thoughts *consequently presents an early synthesis of his philosophical work, which at first seems to cover all major philosophical ideas, apparently ceaselessly emerging and alternating in the text, hence creating a powerful impression of free association. Even though none of the fourteen chapters of the book announces any specific orientation through a title, and the philosophical text seems to be divided only for form's sake, there are undoubtedly certain thematically intended chapters, with discernable relations between them.*

This uniform (if vague) structure of the main ideas' sequence is systematically and efficiently undermined by the interpolation of minor motifs, especially by affirmations concentrated on a singular topic, for example in the form of a sudden exclamation, a method in principle aphoristic. A certain nebulousness is often imputed to Cioran, because this apparent thematic nebulousness creates troubles in reading. Whether intentional or not, it forms quite a strong attack on the common Cartesian way of thinking, in which concepts of clarity and distinction form the basis of Western philosophy.

However, through this underlined nebulousness it can be clearly seen that these isolated philosophical motifs not only reappear (or are presented in a different light), but merge together into a larger thematical whole, or at least tend to enter into relations with these wholes. What is particularly interesting in this method is that these isolated motifs are intentionally allowed to bond together outside the written text, most frequently in the consciousness of the reader. Gradually, the reader creates the structure of Cioran's work to a considerable degree by himself, at the moment when he arrives at such thematical wholes as for instance: time – evil – ecstasy, simple people – a sensitive man, individuality – loneliness, melancholy – boredom etc. At first glance Cioran's 'aphorisms' refer to subjects rather unusual for philosophy, for example the sea, parks, cafes. The gradual confluence of subjects, though, allows us to notice that it is quite the opposite: these very elements help in the book to define (very slowly and unawares) the relations between fundamental issues such as: health – illness, life – death, pain – cognition, cynicism – compassion, theology – poetry, ideas – philosophers – philosophy or void – despair – music.

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Before we set off in search of important philosophical ideas, let us recall here as an illustration a couple of typical statements of Cioran's altogether, as they are often gathered together with no obvious relation one to another in the text: *World... universal nowhere, you have no place to go.*[3] *Truth is a mistake expelled to eternity.*[4] *Man is the shortest path between life and death.*[5] *Illness: the lyrical state of matter.*[6] *Melancholy: time that became emotion.*[7]

A Short History of Decay – nihilism or mythology?

Our first question is then: how are we to analyse Cioran's uniquely disintegrated philosophical text? To jot down all the aphorisms? Of course not. Cioran's later French works can be a very good thematic guide, as the same philosophical motifs are examined thoroughly and are moreover arranged systematically.

Another question follows: why is this thematic disintegration so pervasive in *The Twilight of Thoughts*? We shall possibly find the answer in Cioran's text itself: *Philosophy is too bearable. This is its great deficiency. It lacks pathos, alcohol, love. What is an artist? A man that knows all – even without being conscious of it. And then a philosopher? A man that is conscious, but knows nothing.*[8] Even if the sentiment is only a form of textual stylization, what seems to emerge from it is a certain kind of mythology. Robert D. Kaplan in his work *Balkan Ghosts* quotes Stephen of Byzantium, the sixth-century philosopher: *Mythology is something that has never been, but will always be.*[9] Any work, including a philosophical one, means in fact the creation of a world which has yet to exist. We are not going to suggest that Cioran is trying to generate everlasting myths. Nevertheless, it is interesting to watch how untypically he creates the text through which he has decided slowly to approach the very question of facts themselves.

"Humanitas", *the publishing house from Bucharest in its promotional strategy terms Cioran the only Romanian nihilist. He iss widely*

[3] Emil Cioran, *Amurgul gândurilor* (Bucureşti, 2001), 9
[4] Cioran, *Amurgul gândurilor*, 61
[5] Cioran, *Amurgul gândurilor*, 67
[6] Cioran, *Amurgul gândurilor*, 89
[7] Cioran, *Amurgul gândurilor*, 141
[8] Cioran, *Amurgul gândurilor*, 117
[9] Robert D. Kaplan, *Fantomele Balcanilor: O călătorie în istorie* (Bucureşti, 2002), 223

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known as a "great skeptic". Since in his philosophical work The Twilight of Thought *we can unquestionably discern references to art (e.g. the quotation immediately above), it might be of interest to examine as a literary parallel the novel of Hungarian writer László Krasznahorkai* Sátántango[10] *in attempting to answer the question of what Cioran seems to be as a philosopher. Krasznahorkai's philosophical novel is an obvious parable, a symbol and at the same time a metaphysical laboratory. The novel is set in an abandoned hamlet, lost in the puszta, the Hungarian steppe:* In this limited space, in such a perfect literary laboratory, the writer can freely carry out his philosophical experiments.[11] *What actually moves the plot forward?* (...) in one sense, continous degeneration (...) in yet another, the effort to capture this 'static' process, to describe it.[12] *It should be added that one of the character, a doctor, in fact succeeds in doing so.*

Such a comparison can help us to explain Cioran's personality or demythologize it – under the condition that we do not forget what surrounded him as a philosopher and a human being. In 1940, when the first Romanian edition of The Twilight of Thoughts *appeared, the Second World War had already broken out. Interwar Romania lost a considerable part of its area, inter alia half of Transylvania including Cluj, the academic centre and the largest city of Transylvania. Nor were the earlier social expectations fulfilled. Walter Kolarz in the book* Myths and realities in Eastern Europe[13] *writes that the inhabitants of Transylvania instead of changing the Regat*[14] *'for the better', remained in continual opposition to the influence of Bucharest within the Romanian Kingdom. Kolarz calls it a* (...) triumph of the conception, the customs and the methods of the old Bucharest regime on the incorporated territory[15]. *These circumstances might be a source of Cioran's "history and utopia",meaning for him the decision to settle permanently in Paris, even though evident marks of disappointment with Western Europe are noticeable even in* The Twilight of Thoughts.

[10] László Krasznahorkai – contemporary Hungarian writer; his novel *Sátántangó* (Devil's Tango) published in 1985 in Hungary won huge renown.
[11] Tomáš Vašut, „Kniha zjevení László Krasznahorkaiho – Satanské tango", *Literární noviny* 42, (Praha 2003): 8
[12] Simona Kolmanová, Metafyzika všednosti a vizionářský realismus, the afterword to: László Krasznahorkai, *Satanské tango* (Brno 2003), 254
[13] Walter Kolarz, *Mituri şi realităţi în Europa de Est* (Iaşi, 2003)
[14] The "Regat" is the term for the old Romanian Kingdom between 1877 – 1918
[15] Kolarz, *Mituri şi realităţi în Europa de Est*, 146

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Later on he was unable to return to Romania under Communist rule. The sequence of historical events clearly influences the range of questions to be asked, the questions for which the thinker seeks the answers. A civilization falls in front of us and the philosopher with the soul of a poet calls: Abandon all hope!

Time according to Cioran

We needed to recall the historical circumstances in which Cioran's text appeared to arrive at one of the most important elements of Cioran's philosophy, in other words time. The word itself even appeares in the title of one of Cioran's later books: The Fall into Time *(La chute dans le temps). Here, in* The Twilight of Thoughts, *Cioran refers to the category of time only indirectly:* Evil – took Time as its pseudonym... Boredom reveals eternity, which is not the defeat of time, but it is its ruin.[16]

Time passing in parallel with eternity is, in general, the same terrible blind entity as in Krasznahorkai's *Devil's Tango*, where the described hamlet becomes extinct. Nevertheles, there is a significant difference between both authors. Time in Krasznahorkai's book is absolutely endless and cyclical. Cioran, by contrast, in his way of thinking uses the standard Western concept of linear time, according to which history means endless evolution, an eternal vector. Time according to Cioran is linear, yet it is also absolutely finite.

In this respect, Cioran's conclusion comes to the parallel of human life, where the central and the ultimate point is death. Obviously such a conception of time is as well the main reason why Cioran is called a nihilist. But one further aspect requires underlining: this concept of the finiteness of time does not mean the final conclusion, and first of all is the starting point for Cioran's philosophy.

For Krasznahorkai, linear time is an impossible utopia. His time goes nowhere, *(...) in no case do we deal with the traditional rural or religious concept of time; there is no place for springtime and the Resurrection*[17]. In his novel we find a vision of the blind, continually repeated permanent destruction. Being born, then, is more or less only a mistake. Cioran thinks of time similarly: it is the same senseless, cruel, blind

[16] Cioran, *Amurgul gândurilor*, 15
[17] Vašut, „Kniha zjevení László Krasznahorkaiho", 8

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Chronos. Evil, which is a pseudonym of Time, is however finite here, as Time aims at disappearance as well.

At this point, it is worth recalling the doctor from the novel mentioned.. He acts as a writer who becomes conscious of the irreversibility of the hamlet's destruction, but *(...) he is unable to stand up to this destruction... it would be pointless to try to oppose such a scurvy attack against humanity.*[18] Nevertheless he decides to stay and resist by the means of memory: *he prepared a vantage point and started to organize the single basic elements of a system which would be considered, from a certain point of view, as insane.*[19] Cioran as a philosopher opposes the distruction as well, but he adopts a different strategy. Instead of Memory, he takes as his basis the theoretical work able to deal completely with such a hopeless point as a permanent and irreversible destruction in time by the means of philosopy.

The idea of time occupies Cioran thoroughly in the subsequent book[20]. We should recall at this point that Cioran even in *The Twilight of Thoughts* underlines that there is a general human *(...) need of time deprived of evolution, which as well would not be an eternity*.[21] Or, in other words, the point is to *dive into boundless time... that our heart is able to turn back.*[22] In this way, such a concept of time passing becomes acceptable for human consciousness. It is about a deliberate creating of a "*ritual time*"[23], as we know for example from the traditional Church calendar or the rural one. Becouse these recurring events serve the community, not a single individual, the "repeat of boundless time" assumes the shape of a cyclical ritual repeated in the framework of the calendar year, in Europe in accordance with the sequence of seasons. Myths, fables, music (often mentioned by Cioran) and poetry, collectively known under the term "art" – these activities might be another form of creating such a ritual time.

[18] Krasznahorkai, *Satanské tango*, 55
[19] Krasznahorkai, *Satanské tango*, 56
[20] Emil Cioran, *Tratat de descompunere* (A Short History of Decay), (Bucureşti 2002), the chapter: „Dezarticularea timpului", 18-20
[21] Cioran, *Amurgul gândurilor*, 36
[22] Cioran, *Amurgul gândurilor*, 18
[23] I use this term after etnograhical works, e.g. for the description of the folk customs; it is also used by the historian of religion Mircea Eliade in his works.

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Cioran's variable God

From all that has been mentioned so far, it ensues that the crucial point of Cioran's philosophy is that of a finite Time which aims at disappearance. Using the words of Irimiás, the main character of Krasznahorkai's novel: It is a trap, and we fall into it time and again. [24] *Cioran adds to it that we can escape this danger through the creation of another, what we can term ritual time. Yet the question remains: are we really able to achieve such an escape from time?*

Cioran starts with the assumption of the necessity of such an escape and finds its aim – God. This is a transcendent concept, usually restricted to the domain of theology or religion. Cioran refers to religious ideas loosely, treating them as more of an inspiration and studying God's existence from the philosophical point of view only. Let us recall at this point that the idea of God is nothing new for philosophy. Lucian Blaga, for example in the treatise on mythical and magical elements in philosophy[25], reveals the presence of transcendent elements in the works of Spinoza and Leibnitz as follows: *In both systems that belong to the most rational ones (...) there are still magical and mystical elements (...), they are by no means decorative or marginal, but of essential importance*.[26]

Consequently, Cioran's method of the philosophical study of God appears at first more than a little unusual. Cioran does not strive towards a clear method to arrive at the understanding of God's existence. Quite the opposite, he starts with popular human beliefs and gathers together the attributes by which people describe God in their religious notions: almighty, omniscient, suffering for people's sins etc. *It is impossible to build up a more inconsistent image*[27] – says Cioran in reference to this conception of God, presenting at the same time how he intends to get to his concept of God: *A philosopher thinks of divinity, believers – of God.*[28] According to Cioran there is a significant difference whether we think of a substance or a being. And as it is enough for a philosopher to begin with, he is free to

[24] Krasznahorkai, *Satanské tango*, 203
[25] Lucian Blaga, *Despre conştiinţa filozofică* (Bucureşti, 2003), chapter: „Magicul şi miticul în filozofie"
[26] Blaga, *Despre conştiinţa filozofică*, 111
[27] Cioran, *Amurgul gândurilor*, 48
[28] Cioran, *Amurgul gândurilor*, 48

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declare: *Such a man is religious who can stand without faith, but never – without God.*[29]

Later on Cioran verges closer to the essential description of God in his reflections upon the finiteness of time. Because the ultimate decline permanently penetrates every instant of life, Cioran comes to a conclusion that we experience in time an *(...) eternal autumn of the creator*[30]. Let us recall here that such an idea of an endless autumn is also present in Krasznahorkai's novel, where it directs the course of the main narrative. As mentioned above, in *Devil's Tango* the time of this incessant autumn is endless. Krasznahorkai considers time as boundless, circulating, endless Hopelessness with no space for God. However, Cioran's linear time is finite and as such, absolute attributes can be due to God only. In such a way God can be called a *(...) primal end, an absolute autumn*[31].

And the philosopher steps forward. If God means the central point, the very centre where Time and History find their aim and they end in which they disappeare, Cioran comes to the conclusion that finite time had to be torn away in the beginning from the eternal divine substance and that already *(...) in the beginning there was twilight*[32]. God is that "twilight of thoughts' then, the substance of what this philosophical book strives towards. For Cioran, God is a primal and finite "catastrophe".

Apologist for suffering, boredom and melancholy

Described in such a way, God might seem too cynical. As a consequence, it is cognition itself that Cioran belabours as the next issue: (...) the loss of naivety causes irony[33] *and irony in its substance thus means cynicism. That is how Cioran reasons in his first French book on Diogenes, whom he dubs "the first great cynic". Considering how at present Cioran is perceived, as a philospher and a person, in much the same way by many, we should pose the question as to whether Cioran is not somehow referring to his ancient predecessor to talk in fact about himself. By no means is this true, and Cioran immediately declares to what extent he considers himself a cynic:* The scorn humiliated everything.... with the exception of the Sun and the Hope, two living conditions: the star of light and the star of heart... Man

[29] Cioran, *Amurgul gândurilor*, 117
[30] Cioran, *Amurgul gândurilor*, 50
[31] Cioran, *Amurgul gândurilor*, 50
[32] Cioran, *Amurgul gândurilor*, 50
[33] Cioran, *Tratat de descompunere*, str. 57

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has profaned everything that is born under the sun, but not the sun itself... If a cynic claims that he is consistent, these are empty words only (...) no one would be able to live further after having killed superstitions.[34] *This declaration is poetic to a certain extent, but at this point, the congruent sense is: the philosopher stands determined for cognition, even if its results would be very painful, although as a human being he keeps a glimmer of Hope in his heart.*

Thus it is this "catastrophic" God that remains, the God in which all of us aim irreversably together with Time. Without religion, we are left with the human vertical predetermined by the falling of time. Asked if there is any other possibility of rising toward God, Cioran answers that apart from religion the ascension is impossible. This conclusion becomes the starting point for the reflection that there is always a ritual possibility to step out of Time and be closer to God another way: *Vulgarity is the way of purification equal to ecstasy – under the condition that it is at the same time a suffering.*[35]; *If you know no measure, you match God*.[36] The philosopher observes that we can come closer to God as well by means of an excess that brings with it suffering. And at the end, he comes to the conclusion that every such excess has in fact a *religious meaning*. We should recall here what Cioran says about the people of the Old Testament: *The mortal had a religious instinct then, today they have only faith if at all*.[37] It should be added that he generally talks with such indirectness not about human rational presumptions, but about those mental ones present at the birth of religion, which later on in the form of Christianity became the basic element of European civilisation. Cioran's contemporary should, though, lose that mental attitude and as we are talking about an instinct, hence the domain of the subconscious, the modern individual is no longer able in principle to intensify that mental attitude. Which means he is incapable of elevation to God.

That is the point from which Cioran sets out in the chapter *Genealogy of Fanaticism: (...) every idea is neutral, it is man that gives it life* [38], and at the instinct's intensification *(...) we think of the transition from*

[34] Cioran, *Tratat de descompunere*, 57
[35] Cioran, *Tratat de descompunere*, 38
[36] Cioran, *Tratat de descompunere*, 34
[37] Cioran, *Tratat de descompunere*, 74
[38] Cioran, *Tratat de descompunere*, 7

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logic to epilepsy.[39] An event, indeed, that often happens, as the only recently ended world war proves. Cioran continues as follows: *Even if man walks away from religion, he remains under the influence of it... His ability to worship is responsible for all human crimes. We will never kill without a name of some god (...)* [40] and he specifies what he understands under such excesses: *crimes commited in the name of the god of Reason, in the name of the national idea.* [41]

We are obliged to stress at this point that Cioran comes to such a comprehensive conclusion only after the cessation of the second world war, when he can already watch earlier historical events from a distant perspective and reevaluate them from the philosophical point of view. In such a context his "plea" for corruption sounds particularly interesting: *The corrupted epochs' catastrophes are not as serious as the calamities caused by the tumultuous epochs, a bog is always more pleasant than blood. The corrupted epochs have merits in discovering life's substance, they show us that everything is mere extravagance and bitterness... To know means to see, to believe in nothing nor undertake anything.* [42]

And thus we are back again at that painful cognition. However, cognition itself is possible only due to suffering, which gives the human being an aptitude suddenly to notice things in different light. *If suffering was not the instrument of cognition, suicide would be obligatory.*[43] claims Cioran. In another place he adds that the core of the longing for cognition is exactly that human *(...) greed for suffering* [44] and as a proof among other things he mentions hell invented as a *utopia of suffering* [45]. According to Cioran even poetic creation itself originates directly from suffering: *Misery is a highly poetic state,*[46]or in stronger terms: *Man can create nothing without a secret formula of self-immolation.* [47] Since we are on the topic of poetry, it is worth adding that Cioran's concept of the direct relation

[39] Cioran, *Tratat de descompunere*, 7
[40] Cioran, *Tratat de descompunere*, 7
[41] Cioran, *Tratat de descompunere*, 7
[42] Cioran, *Tratat de descompunere*, 101
[43] Cioran, *Amurgul gândurilor*, 19
[44] Cioran, *Amurgul gândurilor*, 57
[45] Cioran, *Amurgul gândurilor*, 57
[46] Cioran, *Amurgul gândurilor*, 30
[47] Cioran, *Amurgul gândurilor*, 115

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between creating and self-immolation is actually present, surprisingly, in the motif of the Romanian folk ballad about the Master Manole.[48]

Let us examine another statement as well: *Boredom - is unreasonable suffering.* [49] If it is true, then there is also another kind of suffering, different from creation or cognition. Even though it takes the form of a presupposition, it is again just an inconspicious point of departure for further brilliant remarks. To find its resolution, we will closely follow Cioran through another problem apparently only indirectly related to cognition. *It is enough to say "farewell" to a sensitive man and you will awake the poet in him... the same word said to an ordinary man means nothing... Differences between people are measured by means of the emotional resonance caused by words.* [50] Such a conclusion could have been stated without any suspicion of haughtiness, as it is not a judgment of people but rather an illustration of what the theatre of the absurd began to proclaim approximately at the same time: ultimately, human communication is completely impossible. Hence, the torture of boredom lies in the inability to communicate.[51] Cioran stops at the unquestionable conclusion that even the communication between a human being and his inner self is actually impossible: *Man is lonely in confrontation with himself, not in relation to others.*[52]

If communication is impossible, b*oredom in its own way is a balance between the emptiness of heart and the emptiness of world... the deficiency of intensity.*[53] We assume that we should treat each other well and in a civilized manner, but Cioran points: *To curse is a religious act, to offer kindness – a moral one.*[54] And because together with linear passing time we make our way toward the finite catastrophe, which is God, *biography has to be addressed to God, not to people.*[55] So the philosopher happens to discover that civilization cannot suffice for us: *Morality is hopeless, because*

[48] The folk *Ballad about the Master Manole*, the builder of the monastery church of Argeş, is based on a typical folk motif of creation prevalent in South-Eastern Europe.
[49] Cioran, *Amurgul gândurilor*, 34
[50] Cioran, *Amurgul gândurilor*, 34
[51] That is also an issue of the works of Eugene Ionesco, the renowned French dramatist of Romanian origin.
[52] Cioran, *Amurgul gândurilor*, 48
[53] Cioran, *Amurgul gândurilor*, 59
[54] Cioran, *Amurgul gândurilor*, 54
[55] Cioran, *Amurgul gândurilor*, 43

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it lacks mystery.[56] Nonetheless, at this juncture he reaches the heart of the concept: we suffer because of an inability to communicate with God.

Recalling one of Cioran's remarks about the people of Old Testament: *previously, the mortals screamed, today they are bored... But the spiritual tension demands a portion of barbarity.*[57] Yet as we already mentioned above, any attempt to return to such a state would be impossible, because it is a question of the loss of the instinct, by no means the loss of the consciousness. That is where Cioran's melancholy lies: in the knowledge that it is impossible, that we cannot succeed in the attempt to be wonderful children and Old-Testament barbarians. However, he finds a surprising solution to this sorrow: *Melancholy is religiosity that needs no absolute.*[58]

Emil Cioran in the world of thoughts

The gloomy myth about the philosopher Cioran was disturbed to an extent after his death by the correspondence between Emil Cioran and his friend, Friedgarda Thoma[59] published by the latter. Olga Pavlíčková in her article remarks (...) that Cioran, the apologist for loneliness and melancholy, was actually a man who loved laughter and life in its all aspects. It has been a cause for anxiety that the book could harm Cioran's myth...[60]

The subject "Cioran and women" *could obviously prove sufficiently extensive for a separate chapter; at this point, all that we shall note is what has substance for philosophy.* You do not venerate woman, but what you become through her[61] *Cioran writes in* The Twilight of Thoughts. *The statement has more than a slight patriarchal ring, returning us again to the issue of the inability to communicate or the return to a primal barbarism. The main issue of Cioran's statements, though, is not woman as such, but the love that she embodies for him.* In love man is both happy and unhappy.[62] *says the philosopher and offers an explanation of this fact too:*

[56] Cioran, *Amurgul gândurilor*, 55
[57] Cioran, *Amurgul gândurilor*, 57
[58] Cioran, *Amurgul gândurilor*, 57
[59] Olga Pavlíčková, „Cioran, Zajímavosti ze světa rumunské literatury", www.iliteratura.cz (2001)
[60] Pavlíčková, „Cioran, Zajímavosti ze světa rumunské literatury"
[61] Cioran, *Amurgul gândurilor*, 72
[62] Cioran, *Amurgul gândurilor*, 69

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since it is both the highest level of life and death.[63] *Diogenes had to lose Love itself to become a cynic, as Cioran says. As such, what is revealed for the philosopher is a new, important perspective:* Cognition kills the life-giving mistake of love and Reason builds life on the heart's ruins.[64] *If one regards such ideas as a bit reactionary, it is enough to realize that they show very precisely the old patriarchal societies' notions of permanent decline and the vanities brought about by blind history. As much as we locate inside the "old patriarchal" world the region of Central-European Transylvania,* (...) where in its historical evolution a very strong Byzantinism survived[65]*, we can describe Cioran's solution in the words of Václav Bělohradský in his recent interview for the literary quarterly "Texty" making reference to* (...) an inventive diversifying language[66]. *Emil Cioran undoubtedly belongs to those who* (...) make us sink into the common world behind the contemporary universe.[67]

Lucian Blaga, pondering on the reception of philosophy, introduces the notion of a "philosophical critic"[68] who should put questions like a literary critic: *to what extent is a thinker authentic, to what extent does an author belong to one world, what dimensions does his philosophical vision have?*[69] According to such criteria, *The Twilight of Thoughts* fits well into Blaga's formulation. Ostensibly resembling a philosophical outpouring, this book is in fact a great unique coherent vision of the world, and is one in precisely the sense of Jan Patočka's words: *(...) to think an aim out of reason, and not reason out of the aim*.[70] To read Cioran is surely such an exciting intellectual adventure. And thus, even though individual truths might hurt, t*he universe isn't serious, one has to take it tragically in fun.*[71]

[63] Cioran, *Amurgul gândurilor*, 70
[64] Cioran, *Amurgul gândurilor*, 94
[65] Dan Sabadâș, „Bizantinismul satului ardelean", International Seminar „Pro střední Evropu – Maďarsko a sousedé" (Praha, 2002), unpublished
[66] Václav Bělohradský, „Filozofické otázky", *Texty* 30 (Vsetín, 2003), 11
[67] Bělohradský, „Filozofické otázky", 11
[68] Blaga, *Despre conştiinţa filozofică*, 198
[69] Blaga, *Despre conştiinţa filozofică*, 198
[70] in: Bělohradský, „Filozofické otázky", 9
[71] Cioran, *Amurgul gândurilor*, 161

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