

E. M. Cioran: The Book of Delusions

Trans with an intro by Camelia Elias

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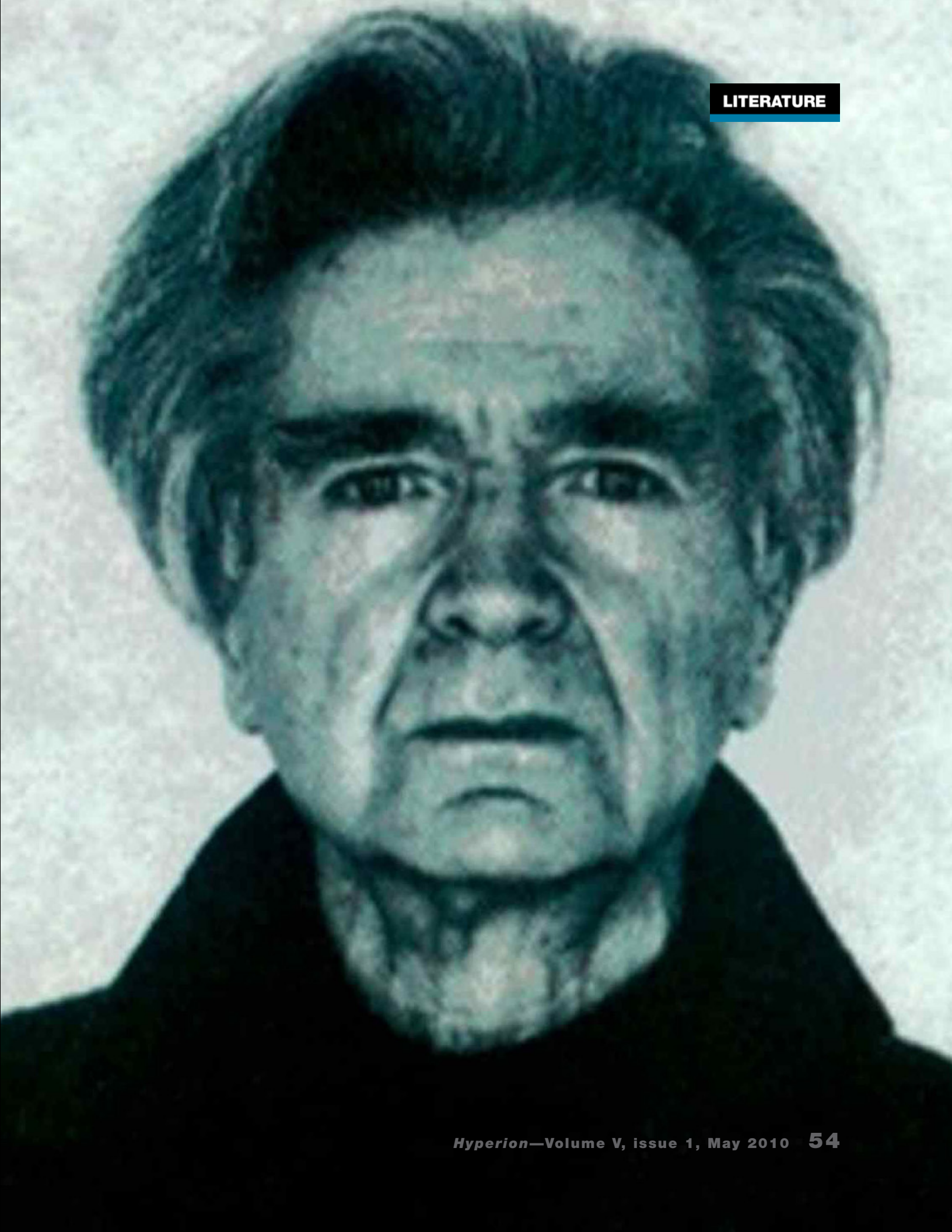
On the future of aesthetics

Cioran

The Book of Delusions



Cartea Amagirilor, chapter five, trans with an intro by Camelia Elias



The Book of Delusions

E.M. Cioran



“All are lunatics, but he who can analyze his **delusions** is called a philosopher.”

—Ambrose Bierce

Cioran was 25 in 1936 when he wrote his second book, *The Book of Delusions* (*Cartea Amăgirilor*). If one looks at the grown body of criticism on Cioran, or early or subsequent reviews of his work, one notices that one of the things that critics emphasize is the fact that Cioran, in his youth, although as pessimistic as he ever remained, was more of a mystic, or an existential philosopher, than he was a writer of fragments as such. These comments are often made almost as a way of making up excuses for Cioran’s early writings, which, in places, can border on the non-sensical. What critics seem to suggest almost rhetorically is that Cioran, who has now almost become a cult figure and one of the finest Romanian/French canonized writers, cannot possibly talk nonsense, can he? (Moraru, 2006; Rogozanu, 2002)

First off, Cioran himself would dislike the very idea of being called a philosopher, and as to his interest in mysticism, or the suggestion that he was a mystical writer, he would have laughed. Second off, regardless of how Cioran saw himself or his own writings, I would suggest that the value of his early works—in terms of their literary contribution to the genre of fragmentary writing and the aphorism, which he later refined unambiguously—consists of putting a constant spin precisely on the divide between sense and nonsense, reality and prophetic vision in a space that is more dense than deep.

What critics have missed so far is the fact that, whether one reads the young Cioran or the old Cioran, one is always confronted with the same type of question. How to escape time? Whereas, speaking of realism, the recurrent claim in Cioran is this one: “we are going to die,” prophetically he is more

interested in how one does it. The modality of death, as that which can be perceived as taken out of time, or rather that should be the aim of everyone—vanquish death out of time, as it were—is clearly a topic that is for Cioran not only much more fascinating than stating the obvious, but also one that borders on an attempt to write for and on the surface of things, not their depth. Space, in other words, is the big thing. It unfolds more authentically than time because it is not bound to any linear experience. Considering this subtle framework, and then logically speaking, it does not make much sense to accuse a writer of being naively, idealistically, and youthfully pessimistic—simply because one assumes that that’s what immature people in their 20s are like. In space, you are neither old, nor young, neither inexperienced, nor experienced.

If Cioran prioritizes space over time, it is because he is interested in the experience of space, rather than what we do with our time, how we think it, how we get rid of it, and how we forget it. Here, then, I would like to suggest that what makes Cioran’s writings fascinating in the extreme is that he manages to make the careful reader forget about age. You just relate. In this relation of relating there is a constant that makes both Cioran and the reader appreciate a reading experience that transcends the boundary of the dichotomy sense/nonsense. Faced with the constant question: “what is the point?”—not only the point of writing, but also the point of living—the reader can do nothing other than appreciate the proposition that “the point”—when the writer insists on offering one nonetheless—one writes and one lives after all—is to be found in the interstice between continuity and gap. In the face of “there is no point in writing” Cioran’s scribbling endeavor can be said to be completely disinterested, and hence more authentic. If a writer always thinks, as Cioran has done, that writing is a process of delusion—as writing is arrogant, presumptuous, self-aggrandizing, and useless—if one does write nonetheless against the background of such negative creativity, then one does it not because one is interested in proving a point but because one likes more the idea of situating oneself in a position that grants the writer, if not a sense of continuity, then at least its illusion. In other words, Cioran is not into counting points, but in experiencing being one himself. This is ultimately Cioran’s strategy of taking himself ironically all the way through and thus bypassing what critics see as his necessary and unavoidable transformation, say from a young, tormented artist into a cynical master and philosopher. Here something should be mentioned that has long since become common knowledge, at least for the avid readers of Cioran. Namely, that although he often suggests the benefits of suicide in all of his writings, he never did it himself, nor did he stop “slandering the universe” with his words—a desire expressed already in his youth—until he was in his 80s.

My own point here then is to suggest that Cioran at 25 is no more naïve, innocent, immature, or refined a writer than he was at 80, at least where theme and theology is concerned. Cioran is Cioran. And the main themes in

his works, whether early or late, are the same: infinity, life on a continuous line or surface, and death in the ground as the main structural divider between thought and action. These never left Cioran. Nor did he ever renounce being a theologian *par excellence*, in spite of his utter disgust of religion and institutionalized religious thought. On the other hand, if one insists on talking about conceptual or stylistic transformations in the man's *oeuvre*, then one would have to say that what keeps Cioran's energy going is his desire to be precise. Almost mathematically precise.

Against this background, what is delectable in Cioran's writings, particularly in *The Book of Delusions*, is the fact that alongside precision there is a desire to perform also and precisely the illusion of precision. If Cioran had been more versed in mathematics, especially set theory, he would have liked the way in which mathematicians such as Georg Cantor challenged universal beliefs of dimension theory. For Cantor, the interval between 0 and 1 is so densely populated with what he called transfinite numbers (numbers that don't have recurrent patterns, but are infinitely unpredictably uncountable (pi is such a number)) that it is virtually impossible to ever get from 0 to 1 if one were to take the time to count on the linear line 1, 2, 3, and so on (Cantor, 1874). I find what Cioran does in his writing similar to the idea of density in mathematical analysis. Leaving, however, the mathematical argument out of this discussion, my point is that when you perform density in space, as it were, it doesn't matter how old you are anymore. Nor does it matter how successful you are in getting a precise message across that has its roots in a mystical experience. When Cioran goes from prophetic rambling *à la*, "lo, and evil shall kick a pregnant woman in her belly" to offering slogan-like guidance on how to avoid being melancholic, in formulations such as these: "think the world politically," "become a margin to yourself," one gets the impression that one is invited within a space where reading for the plot is not an option anymore. There, one starts reading for the ax. While one would like to know what happens to the dead babies, one ends up constricting one's desire to reach the end of that story to experiencing its essential extraction in the dense form of the killer aphorism: "Only Eros makes sense; knowledge is empty infinity."

Some readers may consider the passages that go mystical as writing in poor taste, and may be grateful for the well wrought bottom line that keeps reminding us that, whatever we do, there is no point to anything whatsoever. But nothing is written accidentally, or is devoid of a conscious aesthetic awareness in Cioran. So there must be a point to the pointless. In the *Book of Delusions* the constant tension between reading for the plot and reading for the ax, which is yet not rendered in any binary or structural way, is mediated by the density of experiencing the letter in its subjunctive mode. Which is to say that delusion is rendered as a form of failed anthropodicy, a failed justification of man to himself. It is as if what Cioran says, by literally employing the subjunctive mode—the kind of writing which is often hard to

translate as it is always interrupted by interjections and modal expressions such as lo, let there be, if only, would there be—is that he who has not tried being ‘continuously’ sad has not read anything that is ‘truly’ dense. Cioran targets this density with the clearest of his arrows. But insofar as the experience of a continuous space is punctured by interruptions that mark some degree of skepticism and uncertainty as to one’s state of mind—am I sad or am I not?—the role of the subjunctive is nonetheless to reestablish a relation to the continuous dimension. In Cioran’s theology of disillusionment, the reader is invited to join his private musical offering in this chant: who does not find the words, “and let there be light,” comforting? Let there then be dense light on reading.

Thus, I give you here a fragment from this as yet untranslated book into English of Cioran—the whole of chapter 5 (out of 7). As I have tried to translate Cioran *à la lettre*—nothing else would cut it in my opinion—there is only one poetic license that I would like to take, namely name the nameless chapter five “Densiture.” On the surface of delusion, the literature of the pointless and dense experience gives us *one* Cioran who deserves to have all of his works available in as many languages as possible. For the only justification we can make to ourselves for creating distinctions between and preferences for certain types of literatures that we choose to read, translate, or invent must be this: we like to be hit by an armor-piercing yet mysterious point: namely, that one never finishes with counting one’s blessings where inspired words that go right through us, and words that take an infinite flight in our gut are concerned. If he were still alive, Cioran would call this point in the anatomical space cosmic catachresis.

The Book of Delusions

Densiture (Chapter 5)

¹ All ellipses in this translation belong to Cioran. If mine, they appear in square brackets.

Have you ever felt the *beginning* of motion, have you ever been tormented by the first departure of the world from itself? Have you ever touched the first pure shiver of motion, the prime ecstasy of becoming, the initial vortex of time? Have you never felt that moment of the first confusion, in the iridescent fever of your body and your soul? It is as if in a moment of forgetfulness and eternity, a spark that comes out of nowhere lights fires in space and projects lights onto the dark immensity, and makes strange contours against the gray background of space. This is the feel of the first motion! Do we not, then, live as the *source* of motion, as the first bumping flip of the world? And does it not exist in our fever, that concentration of motion, the centering of becoming in our impetus? He who has not felt how the world's motion was gathering in him in a whirl, in whose bubbling unending and unknown worlds roam, will never understand why, after such moments, man becomes essentially an other, a being taken out of beings; likewise, nor will he understand how one single day containing such uninterrupted moments of lightning would be enough to consume his being completely.

—Only the angels can comfort me now. These *non*-beings, each of whom “lives” by losing itself in the other's ecstasy. A world of mutual ecstasies...¹ My memories, with images by Botticelli and harmonies by Mozart, of returning from a far away place, of the time when my tears were acts of worshiping the sun... All these melancholies awaken my angelic places of the past, solitary and silent scenery, the scenery of grand recollections and grand forgetfulness; all my melancholies bring my distances closer to one another; they ravish deeply all the springs of my childhood and bring to light the uncertainty of some distant memory or a regret about a world whose tears are like mirrors of the soul. Melancholic confessions: they are the only proof of the lost paradise.

—Just like when during daytime, when we close our eyes to immerse ourselves in the sudden darkness we discover points of light and bands of color which remind us of the other part of the world, when likewise

we descend into the vast and dark depths of our soul, when what is revealed onto us, in the margins of darkness, we find the reflections of an unsuspected golden world. Can these reflections be a calling to our soul or a regret?

—Although space resists us more greatly, more directly and more fatally, it is nonetheless a less essential problem to us than time. Space never becomes a problem of existence or personal relationship. The more we immerse ourselves within our ego, the more space loses its reality, because time persists in our consciousness, and when we have become essentials we move further and further away from time as we did from space.

Space doesn't give us an intimate feeling of relativity; it only makes us seemingly reflective, on the outside. There are people and even cultures (the Egyptian) who perceive eternity as it is bound up with space, and who do not feel time and its relation to eternity. In their consciousness non-motion and the boundlessness of space exhaust the essential content of the world.

Space overwhelms us; but it doesn't go *through us*, even though we are closer to it than we are to time. Only time goes through us, only time leaves us awash, only time do we feel as belonging to us. Time discloses music and music discloses time to us, just as space unveils plasticity to us. But between the plastic and the musical, what soul goes for the first?

What is most essential in us struggles with time. It is impossible to not accept space; it is too great a piece of evidence. But there is a moment from which you don't want to accept time. The dramatic moment of the individual existence culminates always in the struggle with time. This struggle, however, is without escape, because the being touched by temporality, once having conquered eternity, inevitably regrets time. The desire to flee from time is found only in people ill with time, people who are tied too strongly by the bonds of fleeting moments. Redemption is such an inconsistent aspiration because of the regret experienced by those who are after the joys, surprises, and tragedies that the world, which lives and dies in the meanwhile, has to offer. If there is a temporal pressure, there is also, none the smaller, an infinity pressure.

Man aspires to infinity, but loves time more. As this life that we live and consume is the only value that we are given, it is impossible not to conceive of eternity as a loss, which we nonetheless respect. The only thing one can love is life itself, which I detest. It is absolutely impossible to get rid of time, without getting rid of life at the same time. Wherever you position yourself, time is the biggest temptation: a greater temptation than life itself, because if death is

not in time, then time will become the *occasion* of death. This is why the pure ecstasy of time reveals to us such bizarre mysteries and it introduces us to the secrets that bind the two worlds.

When man wouldn't know the access to eternity through absolute living in the moment, when he wouldn't be able to leap through eternity already living in the temporal whirlpool and would be forced to choose one of the two for eternity, would he then not hesitate to prefer time? Or when, also for ever, he would have to choose between Cleopatra and Saint Therese, would he hide his predilection for the first?

—For the one for whom life is a supreme reality, without it being a piece of evidence, what question can torment him other than the one pertaining to this dilemma: can we or can we not love life? This uncertainty is unclear and delicious; but nonetheless it demands an answer. It is both charming and bitter not to know whether you love or don't love life. You would like not to say either a *yes* or a *no*, if only for the pleasure of not clearing a pleasant uneasiness. A *yes* means a renunciation to imagining and feeling an *other* life; a *no* is fear of the illusion of other worlds. —Nietzsche got it wrong when, caught in the revelation of life, he discovered in the will to power the central problem and the essential modality to being. Man facing life wants to know if life gives him his last approval. The will to power is not man's essential problem; he can be strong also when he has nothing. The will to power originates many times over in people who don't love life. Who knows if the will to power is not a *necessity* vis-à-vis life! The first question facing life coincides with an appeal to our sincerity. Because afterwards, if we want power or not becomes redundant. People seek power to play the last card of life.

No one is genuine in his love of life, just like no one is genuine in his love of death. What is certain is that life is granted more approval from us: no one can hate life; but there are so many who have a brutish hatred of death. All of us are more sincere and categorical about death, so that in the doubts that life awakens in us we can allow ourselves to sense and foresee the unsuspected.

But then again, it is strange that the one who looked death in its face is ashamed to admit that he loves life and is thus condemned for the rest of his life to avoid life. As there exists in the final moments of everyone's existence an explosion of sincerity, can man, then, stop the avalanche of tears of gratitude, unknown to life until that moment? It's not written anywhere that the last tears are also the most bitter, but it is written on all the gates and the walls of the universe, both visible and invisible, that the most intimate regret and the most hidden is not to have loved life.

—All philosophers should end their days at Pythia's feet. There is only one philosophy, that of unique moments.

—The desire to embrace the stars! Why are truths so cold? When rationality was born, the sun was long since shining. And rationality is not born out of the sun.

—To suffer is the supreme modality of taking the world seriously. Thus is born the conflict between the feeling of suffering, which confers an absolute value on the outside causes and the world, and theoretical perspective, arisen out of suffering, for which the world is nothing. Out of this paradox of suffering there is no escape.

—There is a region of ultimate alternatives, which ends in the simultaneous temptation of sainthood and of crime. Why is it that humanity produced more criminals than saints? If man really looked for happiness as insistently as they say, why is it that he chooses with such violent passion the downwards paths? Man respects happiness and goodness more, but is even more attracted to unhappiness and evil. Three quarters of humanity could have become sacred, if it wanted. But one cannot know, alas, who revealed it to people that there is no other *life* than the one in hell...

—Sainthood is the victorious struggle with time. The way in which the saint manages to kill time within himself is mind-boggling and beyond everything. To be in time means living in this *everything*. Time is the frame around this everything, and works *as everything*. Sainthood: to be beyond everything, but in and with love. How monotonous the life of saints, because they can *only* be saints. Sainthood: existence lived in one single absolute dimension. Saints can also hear the voices of the world; but they only speak of the pains that have become love; these are the voices of a single world. Let me turn to the music in which the worlds speak, the other worlds...

—Which solitude is the one in which the snake caresses us and licks our cheeks and our lips? How far have we distanced ourselves from being, when only the snake can *be* with us?

—Two things that I don't understand: nostalgia in a stupid man, and the death of a ridiculous man.

—All men must destroy their lives. And according to the way in which they do it they call themselves winners or losers.

—Music is the medium through which *time* speaks to us. Music makes us feel time's passing, and it reveals time to us as a frame for all that passes.

There are musical moments which we can *fondle*. When music talks to us about eternity, it does it as an *organ* of time. The desire for infinity in music is a fugue from time. It is neither a present eternity, the continuous actuality, nor eternity beyond time.

Time is *heavy* sometimes; imagine how heavy eternity must be!

—A decomposed corpse in its unending cells; every cell containing a sum of vibrations; all the cells whirling in a vortex; the detachment of all the organs in the tremor of individuation; the return of life to its prime material, to the first *memories*...

I only love the one who goes beyond *there is*; the one who can feel his beginnings and the things that precede them; the one who remembers the times when he was not *him*, the one who jumps in anticipation of individuation. He who has not trembled realizing the deep meaning of individuation, has understood nothing of this world, because he will never have sensed the zones of his beginnings, nor will he be able to foresee the moment of his own end. Individuation reveals our birth as an isolation and death as a return. The one who doesn't cultivate this isolation doesn't love life, nor does the one who doesn't fear return, love life. The fact that almost no one loves return proves something else, namely that this is the path towards the world in which we have no *name*. Individuation gives life a name. We all have a name; the world which precedes individuation is the life without a name, it is the life without a *shape*. Only individuation gives life a *shape*. This is why the crashing of individuation in death is a disfiguring. Man doesn't love his *face*, which is an accident, but its shape, which is a metaphysical sign. The trembling of individuation is an antecedent of disfiguring, it is the suspicion about losing our world. Man is a world within a world. —The way to re-returning goes through death, or who knows?—re-return ends in death. We make our connection to what preceded individuation by going down the spiral of our natural character, dwelling in ourselves, conquering the isolation of our shape, *trans-figuring* ourselves towards our beginnings, but not transfiguring ourselves by losing the figural sense of our individuation, in death. The life that was before we were *we*, we love through *return*; our eyes are turned towards our beginnings, towards the initial anonymity. We return to where we *haven't* been before, but where everything else was; we go towards the infinite potentiality of life, from which actuality and the inherent margin of individuation got us out. We *return* every time we love life with an infinite passion and we are dissatisfied with the barriers of individuation; every time we discover to our enthusiasm the roots beyond our figural finitude. Return is a vital transfiguration; re-return a metaphysical disfiguring. Return is a mysticism of the vital sources; re-return is a horror of final loses.

Life is behind us, because we came of it; life is the supreme memory. Individuation got us out of the world of beginnings, that is, out of potentiality, out of the infinite becoming, from a world in which the roots are trees, and not ephemeral sources of the illusionary trees, of being...

—How should I fence off my soul, what walls to erect around it so that I don't lose myself? My dreams take me too far away, too far away music and tears take me. I can't contain myself anymore, and I don't have space for myself in myself anymore; how can I contain others then, how can I make space for them? Do we love from plenitude or from poverty? When I can't contain myself anymore, can an other approach my center? Will the soul which dies from its life love? The soul full of holes fills them through love; seeks others from poverty. Love is begging, it is the terror of its own smallness. How much contempt and generosity there is in the love that comes from plenitude. Then you love to get rid of yourself, you throw away love! You worship Eros to get rid of yourself, your surpluses and excesses: you adore the liberation from your tempest.

No one can enter me, no one can siege me. Contempt, hatred, and magnanimity, I shall turn them into a love which *I* need, not one which *they* need. Why couldn't love be a weapon, an instrument, a pretext? Convinced in love shall be the naked souls, the begging souls, raised in the shadow. The one who never hated love, never loved. Any love, of people, of women, has something muddy, dirty, and slithering in it. Aren't you disgusted to know that there is an *other*, that there is a *you*, that there are other beings, that after you, in your expansion was *the* being? I can't contain myself anymore.

—Music transposes us anytime in spring time or autumn time. Like spring or like autumn it shatters our soul and body. There is no music for either summer or winter. Or why is it that every music is a sickness...

—*Absolute evil*: a being thirsty for ruining our nature would uproot all the trees in spring, it would eat up all the buds, it would poison the springs to kill all the living beings in them, it would stop up all the wells to hear the hoarse voices of the birds, it would cover all the flowers so that it would see them dry and fade, and bent sadly over the ground. It would kick the pregnant women in their bellies to kill the beginning of life, the fruit, all that is fruit, and the virgins' smiles, it would freeze them into a grimace. To the lovers, in their sexual spasm, it would throw a cadaver, and to the newborns, even before they opened their eyes, it would fix black glasses into their orbs. On a black board the size of the world, it would leap towards the sun to stop its rays, make it laugh into an eternal night, without stars, a sun in mourning, forever dressed up in black. And this being passes ironically by humanity



which waits in agony for the return of sunrays, and it smiles coldly to prayers raised towards the beclouded sky.

—*Evil* is hatred against all that is *fruit*.

—*History* must mean for you nothing other than the history of humanity within *you*. If everything that has been big so far, and everything that will be big in the future is not in you either memory or fruit, then you lose history and you are nothing. What man is he who will not remake and anticipate history on his own? Or better put: why is he not a man, the one who will not remake and anticipate history on his own?

Thus should you live, to be indifferent towards the forms in which the world dresses up indifferent towards epochs, styles and historical turns. Live as if before you there was nothing and as if nothing will follow you. You have to be disgusted at the idea of being a link in a chain, or perfecting or destroying an inheritance. There are no forerunners, nor followers of absolute thoughts. Only we die *beneath* them.

—Why do we not want to grant saints the privilege of madness? Is it because their madness ends in light, instead of darkness?

—All the concessions we make to Eros are holes in our desire for the absolute.

—Nostalgia, more than anything, gives us the shudder of our own imperfection. This is why with Chopin we feel so little like gods.

—The first and last chapter of an anthropodicy: about tears.

—Only hatred strengthens life, and destructive hatred maintains constructive life. In it we feel strong, able to kick up everything; in it all of our limbs burn; hatred calls us to action, it encourages us to make a gesture and act. This is not the interested hatred, provoked by mean causes and oriented towards an immediate act of revenge, but the grand passionate hatred, under which everything trembles. Hatred is the main spring of prophecy; hatred makes every prophet talk passionately about love. Prophecy is a hatred that is both destructive and creative. The Jews would have perished a long time ago if they hadn't the *divine* gift of hatred. To the chosen people God ensured eternity through hatred. To us, the Christians, God gave a transitory existence through the curse of love. Jesus came for the Jews, not for us. Their God sent us the great seducer. How inspired were the Jews when they refused the Messiah.

—Thought that doesn't express the struggle of an existence is pure theory. To think without a destiny, this is the fate of the theoretical man. All those that don't want to change themselves and the world, those that do no remake

everything and sense what will come theorize. They amount to zero, all those thoughts that don't grow on a soul and a body, and so do all pure ideas; it is futile, the knowledge that comes for free. Let steam come out of thought; sparks from ideas; from knowledge fire. Let other dimensions give things the fever of this thought. Let this thinking proceed from a will to reform the world, from the passion to overturn all orders, visible and invisible. Let this strong thinking bust the natural laws, give the cosmic basis another depth, and let the columns of the world gain another height through it. Let the world lean on us; let our resistance mean more than it meant for Atlas. Let our thoughts be the shoulders on which the endless worlds would lean. Earthquakes will create endless unease, and the flames will carry like halos the endless worlds. If everything that is in time and space did not contain our dimensions, why would we then think about space and time? If everything that lives and dies did not live and die within ourselves, why would we then think about life and death?

—Those days in spring, when matter dissolves in the sunrays and the soul gets lost in remembrance... That's when all the dreams we've had so far will be reborn in ourselves, all the dreams of our nights, all the absurd and the imaginary stuff, woven in our unconscious by our fear, our voluptuousness, and our hidden pain. I thought that the dreams had died in us with every day and every night that passed. But the voluptuous decomposition of our soul, under the vast spring sky, is the call of remembrance. The more the soul is fragmented, the more it approaches the zone of forgetfulness. Towards everything that we forgot, this is the pilgrimage towards our inner being the eternal presence of spring invites us to undertake. The shattering of our soul only shows us what we have been. Why can't we always awaken our past? We sleep within ourselves, and the ego is a shroud that covers our sleep.

—In that cathedral, in which you were alone, and where you entered to forget the world and yourself, you did it to feel the lack of motion and to forget waiting, to feel how you were solemnly born in the colonnades and in the arches, to feel how you were disseminated in the purple shrouding, the majestically curbed and undulating lines of the temple, whose vaults you measured, and in whose transcendental geometry you lost yourself. Your soul has become a column, an arch, and a vault. Above the world and in its forms your forms have been intertwined, and this non-movement of your nature has become a block of stone. And in your bending, without emotion, you have looked down on earth. What was your soul, if not the stone that does not rest on the ground? Down you were in your heights, weak in your toughness, heavy in your flight, stone on its way to heaven...

But suddenly, the miracle of the sound of the organ, a miracle in the cathedral in which you thought you were alone. How the arches moved, the colonnades and vaults, and in vibration did your matter dilate itself, and the cathedral grew bigger in the world's dimensions. In the sound of the organ, where you may

still look for boundaries, what music comes from beyond the margins, from beyond the margins of the world and the soul?

... And then, the heavens leaned on your soul.

—The atoms that sleep in people, and which have never slept in me.

The continuous awakening from matter's sleep...

Matter as the cradle of forgetting...

The life of the soul, the spirit which shows us our traces...

Matter leaves no traces, and therefore it is the cradle of forgetting.

All traces, all that is not matter in us, follows us...

But descending into matter, we love our traces...

Not spirit, but music is the antipode of matter...

Rummaging through the most distant past, music awakens us constantly from matter's sleep...

But music like matter is eternal.

The formation of the worlds has spread the first harmonies in space.

Music expresses all that is chaotic in the cosmos: therefore there exists only one music of the beginning and one music of the end...

Absurd thought in music: a physics from which one proceeds from tears rather than atoms.

Imagine if we were to roll with the entire world in a crazy avalanche to conquer forever matter's sleep, and like the atoms, let no one sleep. We should have lived when the earth breathed through volcanoes and when it was wrested out of the sun.

Everything is already in every moment: now the world is born, and now it dies; the rays of light and the dark; transfiguration and the crash, melancholy and horror. The world: we can make it absolute *within ourselves*.

—The fact that the will to power is the last card played in the game with life is proven by power's supreme ability to tempt all those that have nothing to lose or for whom life had nothing to offer. Jesus: the weakest man—was also the strongest (because he hasn't exhausted himself in hovering over two

millenniums). There is no spiritual strength other than in biological deficiency. The vital holes, in the ambitious and visionary souls, have turned and ravaged history. The individual goes ahead with history every time life leaves him behind. The Christians are right when they explain history through the fall. Adam's sin is the first historical act, that is, the first act against human nature or besides human nature. *In* human nature, in the law of the human nature there is no history. History is a fall from life's cradle, a jump from it; it is a treason, without which we would have remained the anonymous slaves of life. Freedom through history, that is, through the *history* of every unhappiness, the history of *everyone*.

We have become *everyone* since we have run away from life's cradle. Life, which had one name, has taken many innumerable ones, in each individual, thus retreating anonymously among them. History began when the phenomenon of individuation took a nominal character. Since then individuals have stopped believing that they are the sons of life, thus estranging themselves from their Alma Mater.

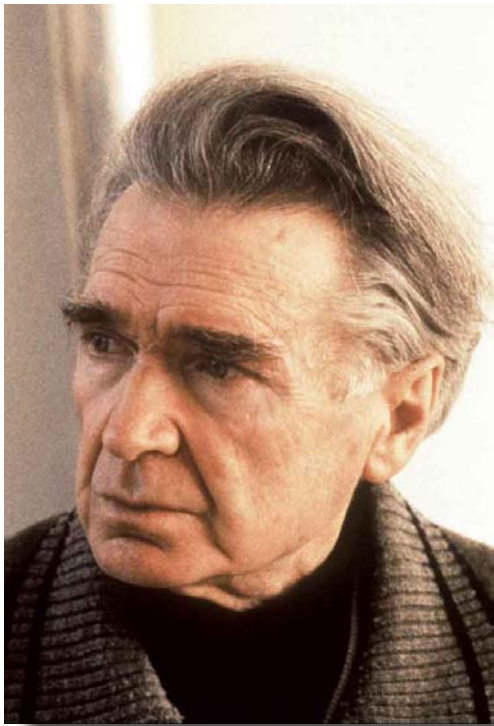
—Who can save me from the idea that this world can also be made on other bases, and who can give me the illusion that we can build it on other bases? How many times could this world, then, be *different*? How many times should it not, indeed, be thus, different? Or could this world have been made up by uncountable hidden faces, which we can uncover? Then we would do nothing other than *reform* the world; but we want another one altogether. We want to begin our world, because the one created by God is about to end...

His world was neither appearance, nor illusion, but reality. It was one that *was*. And therefore it must die. *He* has to conclude to his own *beginning*.

—The last man, and also the most depraved, thinks he is superior to Socrates. Even in front of Napoleon's grave you cannot hide your smile filled with scorn. For every man who dies, we feel more contempt than pity. It is as if people "compromise" themselves by dying. Don't we sometimes consider other peoples' deaths as a form of cowardice? I remember facing that skeleton and exclaiming: "you, moron!"

—If we were to begin our daily activities with a funereal march, what dimensions would our acts assume! A life that would unfold solemnly, and in which we would "officiate," and in the last act...

—They love Rembrandt, those who suffer from the attraction to grand sunsets. For Rembrandt, light comes neither from the outside, nor from the logic of a tableau as such. The sun sets in every man and in every thing. The portrait reflects from the interior rays that *don't belong to it*. Light goes down in man, and in this vanishing it dresses up the soul in shadows. For Rembrandt, the sun dies every day within each man, and the portrait seems to



represent the last flickers, the final stage of this trajectory. Light coming from the pale and disseminated rays of a decline. Here, the people come from the shadow, and the *Rembrandtesque* secret consists of nothing other than an act of waiting for darkness. A kind of darkness that wants to free itself from itself through light; the darkness which awaits the defeat of its own principle. For Rembrandt, everything *tends* towards old age. Rembrandt is the tiredness of the shadow and the tiredness of the sun, and beings are placed undecidedly between death and life. Having come from the shadow and raised under it, *where* would they return to? Towards what light do they aspire, when the sun offers them only its agony...

—*Botticelli*: the symbol of the world—a flower; becoming as grace; life's auto-ecstasy; every gesture, a miracle; the veils that shroud matter; enthusiasm heavier than matter; Botticelli is there where things are not weighed anymore; aurora is universal finality; the rays of light dance in space; stones vibrate; the sound of distant voices approach swinging...

—The more blood thins out, the more it means that man approaches his eternity. The whole of eternity is a question of red cells...

—Time dominates over us every time our blood circulation, the carnal resistance, and the organic rhythms are the dominants of our existences! But when blood becomes an intangible fluid, the flesh, an immaterial shiver, the organic rhythm, an abstract cadence, we are as far away from time as we are from being.

The voice of the blood is the voice of time, of the things which begin, and those that end. Why does blood lose its voice in thinking? Is it not because thoughts suck the blood? This is how *abstract passions* are born.

Eternity? An *anemia* of human nature.

—About abstract passions or: diaphanous hands; pale hands that burn; transparent hands that falter;—

Angelic and suave face, under which is hidden the impulse for crime; atemporal expression, which covers future overturns and future crashes; lowered eyes, lost eyes, with the objective in everything, losing the objects.

Distancing, a modality of love; the vague as a form; non-life, an apotheosis.

Ideas flow in the blood (the definition of abstract passions). Ideas that possess

the blood—or when passions are born without an objective. Passions that are bound with nothing, and which don't bind us with anything. That is to say, to die for that which is *the furthest away* from us. These distances, they are our only presence.

Neuter passions. Can they be explained, can they be understood? Passions that are not born under the sun, because the sun is too close... *Neuter vis-à-vis* all that is *here*, but not vis-à-vis infinity. Music and metaphysics spring from neuter passions vis-à-vis our world. For them there exists only a world of final distances; here is everything that is too little and too close. Beethoven's sadness and joy begin there where they end for everybody else. They are so deep that they have no cause. All that is profound in us has no cause: our depths don't come from the outside. And therefore, they are not about things here. About the absolute dimension of the soul... and about the diaphanous hands embracing distances.

—Why does the thought of eternity seem so complex to us? Because no one knows with certitude whether eternity is plenitude or vacuum.

The three big paths towards the absolute: mysticism, music, and eroticism get fulfilled in the oscillation between plenitude and vacuum. *Ecstasy*, be it of a mystical kind, of a musical or erotic kind, what does it do other than place us in the presence of some infinity, which is as empty as it is full. Never is the exact plenitude so reduced that it will not also dissolve itself, and never is the void so limited that it cannot fill us as well. Infinity is inseparable from nothingness.

—The closer we are to eternity, the further away we are from life. The sense for infinity is a hindrance and a curse on the way to re-conquer life. Infinity paralyzes us harder than the most horrible sickness. As a sick man, you can do anything without coming into conflict with, or contradicting the illness itself. But what can you *do* so that you may not be ashamed where eternity is concerned?

—The flowers that are not picked by pale hands have bloomed for nothing. Only pallor alone can naturally approach the delicate life of flowers. Only a face without color can gain some from the flowers, and only lifeless hands can take the illusory life of flowers.

—The first condition for our freedom: freeing ourselves from God; we cannot create anything, as we ourselves are creatures. So far, we have done nothing other than compromise the work of creation. Ah! If only we could destroy it! And on its ruins, as creators, build our terrestrial paradise, a second paradise, by defeating sin, and pain, and death. The world that would be born, and that would exist only *through ourselves*...

—There is no thought that is more criminal than that of sin. And there is no excuse for this thought. You don't know who you should hate more:

this world, which occasions such thoughts, or yourself, who can think and feel such crimes. Any thought of sin has to be vanquished from the human consciousness, and all religions and philosophies that promote such a thought revealing life as a sin must be likewise destroyed. To talk about sin, without regretting that you grasp its idea, is the first stage on the scale of criminal thoughts. Only a humanity that knows no sin can be tolerated now, one which lives all of life's acts as virtues. Humanity must be attacked down to its very roots and destroying sin in consciousness must be the first attack. Let everything change once and for all!

—The reaction against your own thought in itself lends life to thought. How this reaction is born is hard to describe, because it identifies with the very rare intellectual tragedies. —The tension, the degree and level of intensity of a thought proceeds from its internal antinomies, which in turn are derived from the unsolvable contradictions of a soul. Thought cannot solve the contradictions of the soul. As far as linear thinking is concerned, thoughts mirror themselves in other thoughts, instead of mirroring a destiny.

—All your torments, what are they reduced to, if not to the regret that you are not God? But after such regret, can one think in other ways than only in elegies and curses? I'm like a hanged man who knows not why he hangs, or from what. Perhaps from his consciousness... I would like to write the hymns of loathing.

It will have to be repeated a thousand times over that only life can be loved, pure life, the pure act of life, because we hang from consciousness, hanged in nothing.

—My problem is that I always know what is most essential and necessary, to have the prejudice of eternity. Even the sun seems ephemeral, in this hysteria of infinity. So then, how to *start* anything, how to become history, your own pulsation, action! To know what is most necessary is a curse from which only God can save us, or the devil. I can't make up my mind whether knowledge comes from God or from the devil.

—Corpses are disgusting, death is disgusting, and people's way of dying is disgusting. Out of so many types of dying, why has life chosen the most disgusting form? Why does it stop at *coldness*? I think of a death that occurs in youth, in a medium of illusions and anticipations, in which we would dissolve in space, under the pressure of an infinite fever, and we would float in the ether, as vapors of being. Imagine death as an immaterial dissolution in the infinite, as an ethereal leap, death as a dream and a poem of matter! But not death as a type of verifying matter, as an illustration of the laws of human nature, as a fatality of human nature. I don't revolt against death, but against the way of dying. The way in which we all die, man, animals, flowers, constitutes a plot that matter devises to conspire against us. Through dying according to how

nature has prescribed it for us, we betray all our gazes oriented upwards, all our wishes to dissolve ourselves somewhere beyond ourselves, our wishes to break our wings in a silence without matter. We fall on this side of ourselves, dying. And therefore every death is a shame. Verily, verily, I'm ashamed of dying! Why doesn't every atom try to go astray in space, so that I can dissolve myself, happy not to be able to find myself again...

—In a world full of disappearing people, who would be God? The one who holds the last hope.

—Not only once has the whole ethical problem appeared to me to be miraculously simple. Everything that is built on hope belongs to goodness; the rest belongs to the satanic principle. A criminal who proceeds from hope is closer to the world of good than a passive desperate. Ultimately, there is only one criminal: the one who doesn't even have a minimum of love for life. Who loves life more? The one for whom life is the only problem. There are several ways to love, but unfortunately there's only one way to die. About that thrill of love, the one that is born after the final moments of sadness...

—A regret understood by no one: the regret to be a pessimist. It's not easy to be *on the wrong foot* with life.

—So few realize that heroism exhausts itself in all those equally few people, in the resistance and the courage of every moment. When your existence defines itself in the attributes of fear and unease, the sheer fact of living is the supreme courage, it is a heroic act. Distancing yourself from Eros becomes fatal, because all that is in you concentrates itself on sustaining you as such; the pleasures found in such heroism of resistance would seem serious cowardice. When your whole being knows no other problem than the postponement or dismissal of destruction, than in truth you will not have time for love. Autonomy from Eros presupposes subjectivity as an absolute, and the torments of this subjectivity turn Eros into a fatal luxury.

—In those days when the sense of sight substitutes thought, when you approach things as *objects*; the flower as flower, water as water, sky as sky, sunset as sunset; the thing in the world of things—then the visual man is in everything and nothing.

—I only love death from plenitude, from excess, only the death which adds to life a sense of infinity which life didn't have until that point, as it had to die.

Musical life: the only modality to sanctify life.

—Why then, when we stare at the sky do we do it as if to wait for an answer? Could this be only a Christian prejudice? Ah, if only the heavens would open!

—My only "virtue" is not to even have sinned against eternity. The naïve minds

of most people value this virtue, without knowing that catastrophe begins from it.

—Man must be made to face a new beginning of history. A new Adam without sin must mean a new man and a history without sin must contain his activities. Only thus can one think of a new life, a life changed at its roots. Humanity awaits only a prophet: the one of a life without sin. If death cannot be conquered or destroyed, sin must be conquered or destroyed. As this individual effort is illusory, a cataclysm of history and an anthropological revolution, in which the age-long inheritance will be blown up, will signify the dawn of another world. Man will then compete with all the gods of the conquered centuries, and every being will signal a new dawn. Many worlds will die. But many more will be born. And then we shall know the crossroads of human nature, and not only those of man.

—I don't understand how people can believe in God, even when I myself think of him everyday.

—The fear of your own solitude, of its vast surface and its infinity... Remorse is the voice of solitude. And what does this whispering voice say? Everything in us that is not human anymore.

—The greater the thirst for life is for some souls, the more solitude swallows them...

Veil after veil is released from your soul, veil after veil swirls intangibly in the air. How many veils covered your soul, how many secrets have they buried? Why have you hidden your depths from light, from air, from surface? You told yourself: everything is *extreme*, unutterable. And off you went taking the church bell, covering the windows, and under darkened vaults you built your temple.

Veils that covered secrets, and secrets that hid sadness. The mystery of veiling is revealed unto us in the aerial dance of the veils, the mystery of all that is unutterable. Veil after veil is lifted from the soul; mysteries approach the world, the light, the air, and the surface. How veiled were these mysteries, and each a tombstone. So many dead lay under them, so much sadness in you.

—The fear of the secret of the smallest thing; the fear that all the indifferent things that surround us would turn to life for a moment, and would whisper to us unforgettable words, dangerous and fatal; the fear that these words would entrust us with secrets that we don't want, and confessions that we don't expect; the fear that mute things would give us a heavy-duty mission, unrealizable, tormenting; the fear that we might become the interpreters of these things, their spokespersons... The fear of the things which are silent, of their mysterious approaching, of their solemn infinity, or the fear that their non-motion would be an illusion, the endless fear that all of these things will once

tell *everything*, absolutely everything, and the burning desire that everything be unutterable.

—The impossibility to separate infinity from death, death from music, and music from melancholy! ...

—Far from myself and close to distances...

Come, unheard of corners, and unsuspected worlds, come furiously, snatch me and place me forever in your isolation, because under the world's melodies my soul would succumb, deaf in this resounding universe!

Whispers of the earth and hymns of the stars, what can you add to the musical murmur of the soul? How many times have we been the victims of these musical callings and which of the temptations to respond has offered me a musical death?

Everything is unutterable and everything wants to talk. Sonorous apocalypse.

After the word will not touch things anymore, and things will not respond to words, the music of human nature will be the bridge that links the soul to everything. On it, we cross over a great divide, with the fear in our souls of everything that ends.

Only through hearing do all the unsuspected things become clear in the soul. The one who has never heard has no God. Without the voices from beyond there is no mysticism, just like there is no final ecstasy, without the echoes of distant melodies from *beyond*. *We hear everything* in the voices that *precede* God. Then, unique vibrations, born before time, bring to us the indecision between being and non-being. The primordial unease, fed by the indecision between nothing and everything, dresses us up in resonant attire, as if to take us to places no one has ever seen or heard of. And after this cosmic dream, what nostalgia can take shape in the soul?

Distances, bury me, veil my sadness in your serenity and my soul in your inaccessible halo. Steal me away from all these dreams and save me from the perdition of tormenting nostalgia. Bring me to the places where dreams dwell and disseminate me on the surface of nostalgia.

HOW LIFE BECOMES THE SUPREME VALUE:

through the veneration of women; the rehabilitation of Eros as divinity; through natural health transfigured by delicacy; dancing enthusiasm in all of life's actions; grace rather than regret; smile instead of thought; momentum instead of passion; distance as finitude; life as the sole God, sole reality, and sole cult;

sin as a crime, and death as a shame.

...The rest is philosophy, Christianity, and other forms of the Fall.

Only exalted states, of inner drunkenness and of final tension can give us the tragic excellence, the voluptuousness in destroying ourselves for nothing or in sacrificing ourselves incommensurably. Depressions pay attention to life, they are the eyes of the devil, poisoned arrows which wound mortally any zest and love of life. Without them we *know* little, but with them, we cannot live. The one who doesn't know how to exploit them, to inseminate them, and then to avoid them, will not be able to escape collapsing. The ideal would be to conquer depressions totally; a fight to the death must be declared against these instruments of death; definite annihilation through the whole arsenal of knowledge, based on ironic lucidity. If ecstasy would not vindicate the sinister world of depressions, we would not be able to find any excuse for them.

We should create a world in ourselves that knows nothing of the poison of depressions. I can only accept a world in which tears flow from excess and exuberance, from plenitude and voluptuousness. Let the vital thrills replace thoughts, and let life die in its own ecstasy.

—For two thousand years the cross has reached the four corners of the world, and all the dimensions of the soul. For two thousand years, death has sanctified life. The symbol of the cross is the universality of death, and its vertical predominance is the crowning of life through death. Opened onto the four cardinal points of the cosmos, the cross reveals infinity to us as a cradle of death.

But the cross has become distorted, and its collapse will cost many souls. Many lives will be choked, squashed, and crushed. But the others, the ones that sob for light in its shadow, will find freedom. This is freedom that the cross will only bestow unto the defeated ones.

In the stead of the cross we shall introduce undulation as a way for all forms of life to play and receive grace. And let life sing of all its delusions, let it give delusions brightness and reflections of infinity. Let life's eternity turn from illusion into faith, and the superficial charm of so many vital undulations, let it be solemnly crowned with memories of paradise. Let life's ecstasy be the sole knowledge, and death, the hatred against life.

—No one should forget:

Eros alone can fulfill life; knowledge, never. Only Eros makes sense; knowledge is empty infinity;—for thoughts, there is always time; life has its time; there is no thought that comes too late; any desire can become a regret.

—The impossibility of believing in life's substitutes: God, the spirit, culture, morality, to give history the smallest credit.

The burning desire for solitude, and the fear of solitude, the absolute desire to be unique, and the passionate love of life. The most insignificant act in the middle of life seems sometimes to be more important than the biggest mission in solitude. Cowardice or veneration? The impossibility of not giving credit to life's delusions.

—All my life is a baptism of shadows. Their kiss made me mature for darkness and sadness.

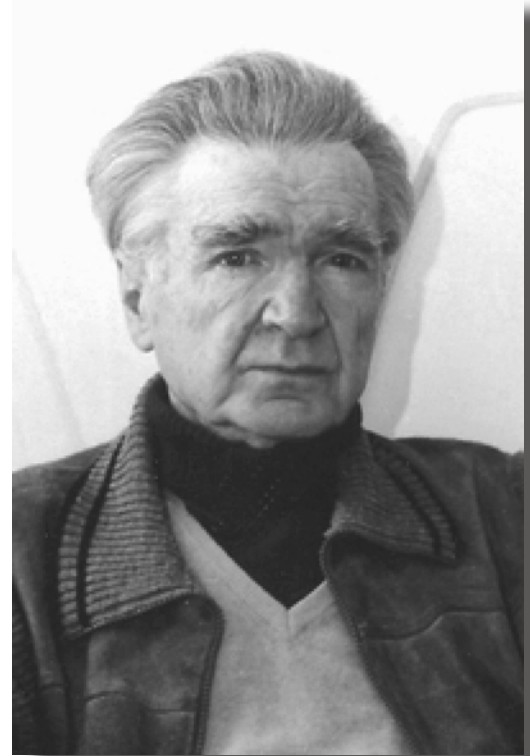
—It may be that life was immortal before so many privileges were granted the spirit. The spirit has taken over life's infinite reservoirs, in order to later pay dearly for this act of theft. The punishment of the spirit is the punishment of man. Prometheus has chained himself, so that he, in penance, can obtain forgiveness from life.

—All that is and all that is not tears me to pieces. Do things ask for my caress? Or do I ask everything to caress me?

—To withstand any truth...

—That fear which gives birth to thoughts, and the fear of thoughts...

From Rembrandt I've learned how little light there is in man. The *Rembrandtesque* portrait exhausts all its light resources; there is no more light in it. Light itself seems to be the interior refraction of a light that dies somewhere, far away. Rembrandt's chiaroscuro doesn't derive from bringing



clarity and darkness in close proximity but from the illusion of light and from the infinity of the shadow. From Rembrandt I've learned that the world is born out of the shadow...

—To detach yourself elegantly from the world; to give contour and grace to sadness; a solitude in style; a walk that gives cadence to memories; stepping towards the intangible; with the breath in the trembling margins of things; the past reborn in the overflow of fragrances; the smell, through which we conquer time; the contour of the invisible things; the forms of the immaterial; to deepen yourself in the intangible; to touch the world airborne by smell; aerial dialogue and gliding dissolution; to bathe in your own reflecting fragmentation...

—Detachment from the world as an attachment to the ego... Who can realize the detachment in which you are as far away from yourself as you are from the world? To displace the center from nature to the individual and from the individual to God. This is the final end of grand detachment.

—The fear that we might encounter ourselves... (The source of all fears.)

—There is beauty for which we are not born, and which is too full and definitive for the oscillations of the soul; there is beauty that hurts us. So many silences, during the nights that we don't deserve, and heavens whose distances we are not worthy of, and the trees' profiles drawn against the ghostly blue of twilights, when we look for our shadows as a presence and a solace...

—The sense of smell takes us out of space. Perfume diffuses space in time. Roses have the same influence on us as does music. The sense of smell brings us closer to our time than anything else. They dig out the forgotten and give life to memories. And thus they conquer time.

—Only thoughts that are randomly born die. The other thoughts we carry with us without knowing them. They have abandoned themselves to forgetfulness so that they can be with us all the time.

—When man will be able to talk of delusions as he does of realities, then he will be saved. When everything is equally essential to him, and he is equally essential to everything, then he will no longer understand the myth of Prometheus.

RULES TO CONQUER PESSIMISM, BUT NOT SUFFERING:

to accompany the most delicate rustling of the soul with an intentional tension;

to be lucid in all intimate dissolutions;

to oversee one's musical fascination;

to be methodically sad;

to read the Bible with political interest, and the poets in order to verify one's own power of resistance;

to use nostalgia for thoughts or acts; to kidnap them for the soul;

to create an exterior center for oneself; a country, a scenery; to tie one's thoughts to space;

to maintain one's hatred artificially, it doesn't matter against whom—a nation, a city, a person, a memory;

to love the force that comes after each dream: to be brutal with everything that is pure or sublime;

to learn a tactics of the soul; to conquer the spiritual states;

to not learn anything from people; only nature is in control of its own doubts;

to annul one's fear of motion, while running; every time we stand still, things remain silent and nothingness calls us;

to make a system out of delusions.

THE ART OF AVOIDING SAINTHOOD

Learn to consider:

delusions as virtues; sadness as elegance; fear as pretext; love as forgetfulness; detachment as luxury; man as memory; life as a swing; suffering as an exercise; death as plenitude, as a goal; existence as a "piece of cake."

RULES AGAINST FALLING PRAY TO MELANCHOLY:

to think of the world politically (power and domination);

to make rhythm divine: a military march before a symphony;

to hate all the colors: they awaken spiritual states which end fatally in melancholy; even red dissolves everything, if we are immersed in it a long time. To lose ourselves in the last degradation of the color white, to lose ourselves in the absence of color;

to not look for nuances in feelings; each of them exerts a suggestion, seducing us, and one by one we glide into ourselves as into the unknown;

everything is heartrending, melancholy tells us. To which we would answer: to die objectively;

to be a margin to yourself;

to give a dancing expression to all feelings; to search ourselves on the outside; to take ourselves out into the world of exterior signs;

everything is about overcoming the sensation of weakness which dissolves the body and the soul. And in order to conquer, there is no modality that is either too delicate or too vulgar. To think music politically;

to deliver force through thoughts, and to force the feelings to serve it;

to tear yourself apart in form. A methodology of breaking-up; to liquidate yourself in good taste and in control; to die, that is, to lose your trajectory.

To *untie* the fear of your own destiny.

The discordances of a vulgar music awaken in us more sadness and more memories than the zest of a sublime music, because, by eliminating the dream, they approach that which is discontinuous, crushed, and abysmal in us, evoking all the holes which we don't have the courage to confess we have. We are sad to see all the subterranean discordances appear at the surface when pure memories and sublimated sadness are vainly trying to assure us of their quashing.

The past attacks me with every step I take, my memories beleaguer me, kidnap me for their world, one which I don't love. Time flows towards its source, tearing me apart in its irreversible drama. Why haven't you died, you places? There where I will not have been, where nothing reminds me of how many times I was left behind! Does time search for me or do I search for myself in time? How many times has time hurt my pride in reclaiming myself? The past belongs to time, and as many times I've lived so far, as many times it has knocked at the gate of my astonishment. In it, I was. And now it can only awaken for me the shadows of a life that cannot be tied to another, born in the twilight.

I can hear the transformations of the world into senses, sad resonances of a cosmic whirl, the murmur of time and all the things that pass through the valley of my soul, in order to spill themselves somewhere far away, in the soul.

—All people's moments of sadness are occasional. Like their fears, these moments have a cause, the disappearance of which instantly suppresses them. People's needs for consolation are also occasional; they have lost something and wait for the comforting recompense. But there is a need of consolation that is not born after a major defeat or unhappiness, one which is not even born in a painful moment. Every time moments of happiness approach without our being ready for them, a desire to be consoled floods us. But every time we wish for consolation, we would not be consoled if it came. That's why it is mysterious, because we run away from it every time we wait for it. We would accept it, if no one could see us; first and foremost if we couldn't see us. And we would receive it if we knew that there exist words of consolation, if we knew that there exist words like the wings of the angels, whose touch would give the body the quality of the soul.

—What am I, other than a chance in the infinite probabilities of not having been!

—Sexuality makes no other sense than when it conquers the infinite in Eros.

—I love those vibrations which are born after a major sadness; another world starts then, in which you don't look for feelings, even though they are there, nor do you look for passions, even though they give birth to this world. And this world, sprung from the triumph over sadness, is the most distant from people. So often music lives and breathes in this world, and so always do the founders of religions; rarely the poets, and never the people.

I ask myself: when are people going to stop querying themselves? When will they definitively renounce theory and mystery? What *is* seems to me to be neutral to appearance and to essence. The inessential has always been defined in opposition to death. All thinkers, whether they wanted it or not, have assimilated the essence of death. The appearances have constituted in their eyes all that which wants itself independent of death. The last thought of every man disfigures life in illusion.

Every time you separate the world in appearances and essences, you declare yourself implicitly against life. Out of every type of thought, life has nothing other than what it loses. The prejudice of the essential is the cult of death. When we destroy the categories of thinking, and we attach ourselves to the world in a completely different way, only then will we be able to smash this cult and this prejudice. This duality, appearances/essences, is a catastrophic duality. The first act of distinguishing made in the world was an attempt for which we should not hold only the spirit responsible. It seems to me that the whole future process of humanity will be nothing other than a regaining of delusions.

—I have started the battle thus: either me, or existence. And we both came out defeated and diminished.

—Ah! if only I could worship the ephemeral things once, to disseminate the breeze of memories in the wind, and if only thoughts would become breezes! So few of them I can catch—these thoughts, of the world and of things—that it would be better for thoughts to touch these things and caress them than to remain, estranged, with them! Because thoughts are deep in themselves; not in the depth of things and the world!

—Why are thoughts born with so much difficulty under the clear sky? There are only thoughts in the night. And they have a mysterious precision, a troubling laconism; the thoughts in the night are without appeal.



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