

## PASCAL AND CIORAN

Ciprian VĂLCAN

### (Résumé)

Pascal est le penseur pour lequel Cioran manifeste la plus grande estime et en le défendant avec virulence contre toute critique possible. S'identifiant avec sa manière de surprendre l'absurdité qui gouverne l'existence de l'homme dans le monde, admirant sa pensée ascétique et la sobriété stylistique spécifique à toutes ses sentences, approuvant complètement sa vie libérée de tout penchant histrionique, le plaignant pour l'immense souffrance qui l'a marqué jusqu'à la fin, Cioran voit dans Pascal le modèle du penseur paradigmatique qui extrait toute sa connaissance d'une expérience personnelle effroyable, au-delà de toute influence livresque ou impulsion ludique.

La vision esquissée par Pascal dans *Pensées* imprègne toute l'œuvre française de Cioran. L'homme décrit par l'auteur des *Syllogismes de l'amertume* est scindé entre ses penchants contradictoires, étant placé sous le signe d'une malédiction originelle qui le transforme dans un être grotesque, dans un déchet risible de la création, dans un imposteur à de hideux accès de mégalomanie. En assimilant en grande partie le diagnostic de Pascal sur les infirmités et les vices de l'humanité, Cioran radicalise le message de celui-ci, en démontant brillamment tous les messages des prophètes de l'optimisme et du progrès, en présentant sans ménagements l'abyssalité de la condition humaine et l'incapacité des individus d'atteindre le bonheur. L'horizon de la vie dans le monde est dominé par la triade pascalienne inconstance-ennui-inquiétude, et les conséquences de cette hégémonie sont décryptées avec malice par Cioran, qui insiste sur la comédie délirante offerte par les hommes pris dans le piège de leurs propres insuffisances, plongeant vainement dans le monde fictionnel de l'imagination pour essayer de s'échapper à l'insupportable spectacle de la réalité.

**Keywords :** Pascal, Cioran, boredom, desire, lucidity, self, imagination, reason, Fall, vanity.

(Rezumat)

Pascal e gânditorul față de care Cioran manifestă cea mai mare prețuire de-a lungul întregii sale vieți, construindu-i un portret cvasi-hagiografic și apărându-l cu virulență de orice posibilă critică. Identificându-se cu modul său de a surprinde absurditatea ce prezidează existența omului în lume, admirând gândirea lui ascetică și sobrietatea stilistică specifică tuturor sentințelor sale, aprobând întru totul viața sa eliberată de orice înclinație histrionică, compătimentându-l pentru imensa suferința ce l-a marcat pînă la capăt, Cioran vede în Pascal modelul gânditorului paradigmatic care își extrage întreaga cunoaștere dintr-o experiență personală înfricoșătoare, dincolo de orice influență livrescă sau de orice impuls ludic.

Viziunea schițată de Pascal în *Pensées* impregnează întreaga operă franceză a lui Cioran. Omul pe care îl descrie autorul *Silogismelor amărăciunii* e scindat între înclinațiile sale contradictorii, fiind plasat sub semnul unei maledicții originare ce-l transformă într-o ființă grotescă, într-un deșeu rizibil al creației, într-un impostor cu hidoase accese de grandomanie. Însușindu-și în mare parte diagnosticul lui Pascal asupra infirmităților și viciilor umanității, Cioran radicalizează mesajul acestuia, demontînd cu strălucire toate mesajele profeților optimismului și progresului, înfățișînd fără menajamente abisalitatea condiției umane și incapacitatea indivizilor de a atinge fericirea. Orizontul trăirii în lume e dominat de triada pascaliană inconstanță-plectiseală-neliniație, iar consecințele acestei hegemonii sînt decriptate cu malițiozitate de Cioran, care insistă asupra comediei delirante oferite de oamenii prinși în capcana propriilor insuficiențe, plonjînd zadarnic în lumea ficțională a imaginației pentru a încerca să se salveze de insuportabilul spectacol al realității.

Pascal's meditation on human nature seems to be under the sign of a stubborn *how could it be?* The fragments from *Thoughts* are the testimony of the amazement shown when faced with a human being, who is an amorphous conglomerate, a metaphysical hybrid, a combination forever imperfect of vices and virtues, of qualities and flaws, of grandeur and imposture: "What chimera is, therefore, a man? What newness, what monster, what chaos, what marvel? Judge of all things, idiot worm of earth; agent of the truth, pool of uncertainty and error; glory and scrap of the Universe"<sup>1</sup>. The variety of approach methods

<sup>1</sup> Pascal, *Pensées*, Paris, Bookking International, 1995, p.156.

that the human being p  
profound, that Pascal fee  
wondering if man could  
his extraordinary incons  
democratic incapacity to coin  
this eternal conflict, of m  
and his ignoble reality, b  
took God's image, being  
perfect and idiotic, the  
closer and closer to imp  
ing perfection is one th  
and mundane situation  
appearances, which are  
and instincts that tend  
noble origin of man a  
creator: "What does th  
was in man a genuine l  
an empty trace, and wh  
him, searching again in  
what he has, but whic  
can be filled only by an

Man is marked  
happiness, and the im  
various stratagems he  
forcing him to always  
ing peace, cannot bu  
potential duality impos  
found on the level of  
radical difference bet

<sup>2</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 143.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 148.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 143.

that the human being permits is so great, its versatility and duplicity are so profound, that Pascal feels bound to agree for a moment with those who were wondering if man could have two souls<sup>2</sup>, thus allowing the easy explanation of his extraordinary inconstancy, of his duality of attitudes and gestures, his endemic incapacity to coincide with his own self. For him, the essential motive of this eternal conflict, of man's self tear, is the distance between his initial potential and his ignoble reality, between the Paradise man of the very beginnings, who took God's image, being created after a divine model, and the historic man, imperfect and idiotic, the one who lost his resemblance with the divinity, getting closer and closer to impure image of the animal. The wound caused by dislocating perfection is one that is impossible to heal using the palliatives of objects and mundane situations, its memory persisting beyond the entire cortège of appearances, which are often ignoble, beyond the mean mechanics of passions and instincts that tend to block remembering, trying to impose oblivion of the noble origin of man and separation from the beatitude of contemplating his creator: "What does this avidity tell us, then, if not that once upon a time there was in man a genuine happiness, from which now there is only left a mark and an empty trace, and which he tries in vain to refill with everything that surround him, searching again in the absent things the help that he does not obtain from what he has, but which they are incapable of giving, because the infinite abyss can be filled only by an infinite and immutable object, that is, God himself?"<sup>3</sup>.

Man is marked for eternity by the desire to recover the paradisiacal happiness, and the imperfections gathered all through his daily existence, the various stratagems he uses to escape the shade of nostalgia that haunts him, forcing him to always appeal to other tricks in his desperate attempt of finding peace, cannot but fix more consistently his painful separation, his existential duality imposed by two different sets of ideals and beliefs that can be found on the level of his natural composition, which is also governed by the radical difference between body and soul. "Incomprehensible monster"<sup>4</sup>, as he

---

2 *Ibidem*, p. 143.

3 *Ibidem*, p. 148.

4 *Ibidem*, p. 143.

frequently appears to Pascal, incapable of having the most common certainty, his life is under some constant signs that constantly mark his unhappiness: "inconstancy, ennui, inquietude"<sup>5</sup>.

His numerous infirmities, that we shall enumerate following the suggestions from Pascal's fragments, are the result of his detachment from the original plenitude, are the consequence of his unjustified pretence for independence and uniqueness. Created as a member of a mystical body, belonging to Jesus Christ's universal church, he finds himself lonely, isolated, self-insufficient, dispossessed of the principle of real life, living his precariousness unconsciously, believing that he is complete and autarchic, however, always conscious of his mortal nature and of an acute lack of meaning caused by the brutal separation imposed on him by the consequences of the original sin: "The separated member, not seeing anymore the body to which it used to belong, has nothing left but perishable and dying human being. Yet, he believes he is a whole, and not seeing himself from the body it used to depend from, he believes he depends only on himself and wants to transform himself in centre and body. But, not having a principle of life in himself, he gets lost and is amazed in the uncertainty of his being, feeling that he is not body and yet not seeing that he should be member of a body"<sup>6</sup>.

a. Man is incapable of acquiring certain knowledge because of his imperfect composition and his finite nature. In front of a universe whose complexity he admires, he finds himself lacking the necessary means to undertake the detailed understanding of the entire chain of beings, placed between the two abysses, infinity and nothingness, forced to contemplate them full of humility and silenced<sup>7</sup>. Any attempt of taking the control of the world is destined to failure, because man, intermediary being, situated at an equal distance between everything and nothing, is given a type of knowledge proportional with his ontological position, noticing only median realities, without any access neither to the principles nor to the goals of all existences because of his

<sup>5</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 56.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 170.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 34.

incapacity of perceiving  
strates that, apart from t  
he proves incapable of e  
types. First, he shows th  
poses, in fact, an infinite  
and the whole<sup>9</sup>. Then, h  
made of body and soul,  
things, either material o  
all know, and if we are r  
the simple things, spiri

Another series o  
ties of man's knowledg  
and make it impossib  
precarious equilibrium  
offering false informat  
age of the world: "Ser  
deceptiveness that the  
takes its revenge. The  
impressions. They lie a  
possible perturbing fa  
the possibility of reac  
which alter both the  
precision of the infor  
of passion for new co  
that falsifies judgmen  
principle<sup>14</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 36.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 38.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 39.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 46.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 46.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 45.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 46.

incapacity of perceiving extremes, of understanding infinity<sup>8</sup>. Pascal demonstrates that, apart from the fact that man cannot acquire the entire knowledge, he proves incapable of even partial knowledge, and his arguments are of two types. First, he shows that even a supposed knowledge of the parts presupposes, in fact, an infinite approach, due to the interdependence between them and the whole<sup>9</sup>. Then, he refers to the composite nature of the human being, made of body and soul, considered, for this reason, unsuitable to know simple things, either material or spiritual: "if we are simply material, we could not at all know, and if we are made of spirit and matter, we could not know perfectly the simple things, spiritual or corporal"<sup>10</sup>.

Another series of arguments show the conflict among different faculties of man's knowledge who, mutually conditioning each other, mislead him and make it impossible for man to get closer to the truth because of their precarious equilibrium and of the non-homogenous way of communication, offering false information and contributing to the elaboration of a wrong image of the world: "Senses abuse reason by false appearances; and that same deceptiveness that they bring to reason, they receive from it in return. Reason takes its revenge. The passions of soul trouble the senses and give them false impressions. They lie and they deceive"<sup>11</sup>. To this fatal incongruence, a series of possible perturbing factors, more or less accidental, that limit more drastically the possibility of reaching truth, from which list Pascal names the diseases, which alter both the capacity of reason to estimate things correctly and the precision of the information sent by senses<sup>12</sup>, the preeminence of customs or of passion for new compared with reason<sup>13</sup>, the intervention of selfish interest that falsifies judgment at his own use, ignoring any rapport to an impersonal principle<sup>14</sup>.

---

8 *Ibidem*, p. 36.

9 *Ibidem*, p. 38.

10 *Ibidem*, p. 39.

11 *Ibidem*, p. 46.

12 *Ibidem*, p. 46.

13 *Ibidem*, p. 45.

14 *Ibidem*, p. 46.

A third series of observations is related to the very condition of thinking, considered „an admirable and incomparable thing by its nature”<sup>15</sup>, the principal resort of man’s dignity and faculty thanks to which man can understand his misfortunate fate. However, apart from its war against passions and senses, which seriously affects its capacity to get to truth, its functioning is seriously endangered by a series of flaws, which if examined, throws light upon the ridicule, thus proving that, despite its remarkable potential, it cannot be useful at all, because of its ridiculous fragility, which determines, as in Pascal’s charming example, the defeat in front of flies: “The spirit of that sovereign judge of the world is not that independent, in order not to be subjected to being troubled by the first din about it. [...] Do not be amazed if it does not reason well at present; a fly buzzes at its ears; it is sufficient for making it incapable of good advice. If you want it to be able to find truth, chase that animal that keeps its reason in failure and trouble that strong intelligence that governs cities and kingdoms”<sup>16</sup>.

But, for Pascal, the most important obstacle in front of knowledge proves to be imagination, “the master of error and falsity”<sup>17</sup>, always capable to destroy any inclination towards rigueur, any approach towards searching for the truth, thanks to its colossal influence that transforms it into the most powerful enemy of reason. The author of *Provincial Letters* proves himself to be, from this point of view, extremely close to Descartes, who had declared “the madness of logic”, as well as a series of great philosophers, such as Plato, Kant or Spinoza, who have warned about the perturbing role it plays in the process of knowledge<sup>18</sup>.

If reason aims at building a real image on the world, if it looks for conformity and preciseness, risking to hurt people’s conservation instinct showing them their unfortunate and inconstant fate, not tolerating any adaptation or disguise of truth, imagination seems to act as a deforming filter, mystifying

15 *Ibidem*, p. 132-133.

16 *Ibidem*, p. 133.

17 *Ibidem*, p. 42.

18 See Ciprian Vălcan, *Recherches autour d’une philosophie de l’image*, Timișoara, Augusta, 1998, p. 35-72.

all those aspects of extreme perspective, proposing a picture the unbearable to replace reality with its relation to things, any of forging, coherently him the impression the tragic, a world of the less belief in themselves whereas the partisans capable of acquiring the first, impressed by the tion to please themselves ably. They look at people others, with fear and the advantage in the imagination have the cannot transform the unlike reason, which ers them in glory the

Imagination in of the vision it proposing the individual but also because of the supposed to go to the perspicacity of species of appearances, built explanation, based on established among the they shock, they have sible to dislocate an

19 Pascal, *Pensées*, p. 4

all those aspects of existence upon which it meditates and offering an attenuate perspective, proposing a saccharine picture of life, eliminating from that picture the unbearable details. Imagination is a faculty of illusion that tends to replace reality with its own productions, ignoring any exigency of adequacy in relation to things, any subordination to a previous model, thus being capable of forging, coherently and completely man's vision of the universe, offering him the impression that he lives in a peaceful world, freed from suffering and tragic, a world of the eternal present. Its admirers are eloquent; prove a tireless belief in themselves, seem to be capable of the most extraordinary deeds, whereas the partisans of reasons are always doubtful, suspicious, timorous, incapable of acquiring the approval of masses, who appreciate and glorifies the first, impressed by the certainty they exhibit: "The skilful ones, use imagination to please themselves, the prudent ones cannot please themselves reasonably. They look at people to dominate, they argue with boldness and trust; the others, with fear and mistrust: and that happiness from their face gives them the advantage in the opinion of the listeners, so much the wise people using imagination have the favor compared with the judges of the same nature. It cannot transform the mad people in wise people; but it makes them happy, unlike reason, which cannot make its friends anything but miserable, one covers them in glory the other in shame"<sup>19</sup>.

Imagination imposes on reason not only because of the lack of asperities of the vision it proposes, evacuating every trace of pessimism and anxiety, offering the individual a certain stability and sheltering him from uncertainties, but also because of the intrinsic characteristics of his creations, which are not supposed to go to the basics of things, which do not require the rigueur and perspicacity of specific to the approaches of reason, but remain at the level of appearances, building around them an accessible and perfectly plausible explanation, based on a series of details which are easy to notice. The relations established among things are absolutely arbitrary and they lack necessity, but they shock, they have the force to impress constantly, appearing to be impossible to dislocate and corresponding to the individuals' expectations, to their

---

<sup>19</sup> Pascal, *Pensées*, p. 42-43.

median nature, which is also hybrid, incapable of having a purely rational attitude, an examination of relations hard to detect, however necessary from nature, and also incapable of a careful scrutiny of the data provided by senses. For this reason, most people agree with its principles, marking the defeat of reason which lacks the means of prevailing. The consequences of this triumph of imagination are a series of inexplicable behaviours from the point of view of thinking, but perfectly motivated in relation to the composition of the nature of human beings: "Let the preacher appear, because nature has given him a hoarse voice, and a strange face, his barber has badly shaven him, if fate has still given him more, some great truths that he announces, I bet on the loss of gravity of our senator.

The greatest philosopher of the world, on a larger board than he would need, if there is an abyss above although his reason has convinced him of it being sure, his imagination will prevail. Many would not know to support thinking without becoming weak and sweating<sup>20</sup>."

b. The hegemony of imagination has as a consequence the preeminence of appearances in relation to reality, the individuals' attempt to mask their real nature, coming in an advantageous disguise in front of others, which would occult their flaws. Dominated by self-love, people resort to a series of schemes to hide their insufficiencies both from themselves and from the others, trying to put themselves only in favourable positions that would allow them to be appreciated more than they really deserve<sup>21</sup>. Although they do not want to be cheated, people easily appeal to all the possible means to mislead the others, so that life becomes a masquerade, a space of ceaselessly disguise, a domain of falsity and hypocrisy. In such a context, any attempt of revealing the truth is considered dangerous, as the entire formation of society is based on well-grounded assimilation of duplicity techniques, and the one who avoids them because he does not know, or by mistake, or thanks to virtue, that person risks losing his friends and be subjected to the disgrace of the strong people, always desiring to be valued and eulogized, however incapable of facing the

---

20 *Ibidem*, p. 43.

21 *Ibidem*, p. 49-50.

truth: "Thus, human life another and flatter one as they speak in our absence that mutual cheating; and what his friend spoke about sincerely and without any

c. Revealing the one everybody leads to analyzing gestures to reach glory. In rules of virtues, they always with an artificial one, which into the others' mind, this appreciation, satisfying the diers, chefs or even philosophers seem more than they are, I talk about them: "We are everybody on Earth, and more; and we are so vain us, only amuses us and co

Pascal remarks that, most obvious proofs of the ousness, of his permanent irrepressible inclination to of reality, of the fake in the same desire is the sign wants to attain glory, neither the appreciation of his feelings more than anything else,

---

22 *Ibidem*, p. 52.

23 *Ibidem*, p. 65.

24 *Ibidem*, p. 66.

25 *Ibidem*, p. 65-66.



truth: "Thus, human life is a perpetual illusion; we do nothing but cheat one another and flatter one another. Nobody speaks about us in our presence as they speak in our absence. The union that is among people is founded only on that mutual cheating; and very few friendships would resist if every one knew what his friend spoke about him when he was not there, although he spoke sincerely and without any passion"<sup>22</sup>.

c. Revealing the ominous effects of unhealthy self-love that dominates everybody leads to analyzing their vanity, which takes them to the most stupid gestures to reach glory. Discontented with a simple honest life, lived by the rules of virtues, they always feel the need to replace empirical individuality with an artificial one, which is to be built entirely in such a way that, projected into the others' mind, this one should be able to obtain their admiration and appreciation, satisfying their vanity<sup>23</sup>. This true obsession does not spare soldiers, chefs or even philosophers<sup>24</sup>, as everybody is dominated by the desire to seem more than they are, being ready to sacrifice their life only to have people talk about them: "We are so presumptuous that we would like to be known by everybody on Earth, and even by people will come when we are not here anymore; and we are so vain that the esteem of five or six people who surround us, only amuses us and contents us"<sup>25</sup>.

Pascal remarks that, if on the one hand, the desire for glory is one of the most obvious proofs of the corrupt nature of man, of his ontological precariousness, of his permanent dissatisfaction in relation to what he is, proving his irrepressible inclination towards the privilege of imagination, to the prejudice of reality, of the fake in comparison with the genuine, on the other hand, the same desire is the sign of his excellence, because for the individual who wants to attain glory, neither health, nor richness, nor other goods, but only the appreciation of his fellows, and this demonstrates that he values reason more than anything else, that is, exactly the main reason of his dignity: "He

---

22 *Ibidem*, p. 52.

23 *Ibidem*, p. 65.

24 *Ibidem*, p. 66.

25 *Ibidem*, p. 65-66.

esteems so much reason, that, whatever advantage he has on earth, if it is not advantageously placed in the reason of man, he is not content. It is the most beautiful place in the world, nothing could stray him from that desire, and it is the quality that cannot be erased from man's heart"<sup>26</sup>.

d. Behind vanity and the desire for glory there is the self's pretence for uniqueness, its firm presupposition that it is irreplaceable, which makes it appreciate itself even more than the rest of the world<sup>27</sup>. Convinced that the only way to spiritual progress is exactly the defeat of vanity, renouncing vanity and assuming humility, Pascal proclaims that "The real and unique virtue is to hate yourself"<sup>28</sup>, tracing the lines of a genuine program of self hatred, in the centre of which is the struggle against the most dangerous enemy of a genuine Christian life, the self. His project is not easy to fulfill, because it supposes not only a certain censorship of the lack of measure of the self, bringing it within acceptable limits, but it implies its complete evacuation, its radical dislocation, its definitive extirpation, so that the vices that have it at their root are not able to reproduce anymore. This attitude that goes against the strongest natural tendencies of man, who has to fight against the most infamous marks of the original sin, has as motivation the self's detestable characteristics, described by Pascal: "In a word, the *I* has two qualities: it is unjust because it makes itself centre of everything; it is uncomfortable for the others, because it wants them enslaved: because every *I* is the enemy and wants to be the tyrant of everybody else"<sup>29</sup>. Besides the ignoble characteristics of the self, besides the injustice and the desire to dominate that constitute it, Pascal also remarks its extreme volatility, the impossibility to identify it with the body or the soul, or with a series of perceptible qualities of the individual, the impossibility to define it or locate it<sup>30</sup>, which seems to be both a supplementary argument in the attempt of destroying it, and a supplementary difficulty to overcome in the struggle against it.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 140.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 164.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 171.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 163.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 120.

e. Beyond unhappiness and is illustrated by the stancy, boredom, and its lack of co and its ostentati only observe the in the middle of imperfection. Tr the middle of e fellows' company tertainment and the frightening s to one of Pascal' and all sentence everyday in front their fellow crea wait for their tur

However, front of despair us<sup>32</sup>. Incapable o which contains b instincts of the p cillating between always abandoni more intense an always prepare t

<sup>31</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 84.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 71.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 69.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 55.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 54.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 70.

e. Beyond all his flaws, man's main infirmity seems to be related to the unhappiness indestructibly attached to his transitory condition, unhappiness illustrated by the alternation of the three constant values named above, inconstancy, boredom, anxiety, characteristics which make the futility of existence and its lack of consistency visible, signaling the precariousness of earthly life and its ostentatious lack of meaning. The man separated from divinity can only observe the absurdity that surrounds him, as well as the contradictions in the middle of which he lives because of his fallen nature and of his painful imperfection. Trying to protect himself from despair, he throws himself in the middle of events, appreciates agitation, movement, noise, cultivates his fellows' company and the charm of conversation, he looks at any price for entertainment and pleasures of any kind, striving to keep his spirit far away from the frightening show of the real face of the world, face that we can see thanks to one of Pascal's fragments: "Let us imagine a number of people in chains and all sentenced to death, some of which are killed by a slit on the throat everyday in front of the others, the ones left see their own condition in that of their fellow creatures, and watching one another with pain and hopeless, they wait for their turn. This is the image of human condition"<sup>31</sup>.

However, the expedients to which we resort in order not to give up in front of despair are not sufficient to permanently mask the abyss that awaits us<sup>32</sup>. Incapable of continuity because of the contrary tendencies of our nature, which contains both the marks of the lost paradisiacal state, and the animal instincts of the present state, always preferring past and future to present<sup>33</sup>, oscillating between different inclinations of the soul and our diverse passions<sup>34</sup>, always abandoning vain pleasures of present, hoping that we can get others more intense and more durable<sup>35</sup>, "we never live but we hope to live; and we always prepare to be happy, it is inevitable that we will never be"<sup>36</sup>.

---

31 *Ibidem*, p. 84.

32 *Ibidem*, p. 71.

33 *Ibidem*, p. 69-70.

34 *Ibidem*, p. 55.

35 *Ibidem*, p. 54.

36 *Ibidem*, p. 70.

Apart from this deplorable inconstancy, which hinders him to feel happy with his invented schemes, in order to keep away from the constitutive unhappiness of his nature, man's intentions to avoid facing the truth about his terrible destiny are undermined by boredom, another infirmity of his transitory being. The need for newness, for surprise, for discontinuity cannot be infinitely maintained, existence has moments of calm, of repetition, of rest, and during this time, the spirit cannot be distracted from noticing his real state. These are the moments when, deprived of the protection of his exterior preoccupations, man feels the insinuation of the "venom"<sup>37</sup> of boredom, which forces him to contemplate his nothingness: "Ennui- nothing is so insupportable for man as being at full rest, without passions, without business, without entertainment, without application. He then feels his nothingness, his abandonment, his insufficiency, his dependence, his powerlessness, his void. Excessively, he will take out from the bottom of his soul the boredom, the blackness, the sadness, the sorrow, the resentment, the despair"<sup>38</sup>.

For this reason, even if boredom is a frightful infirmity of the fallen man, threatening to induce a limitless despair, it represents, at the same time, a means of finding the way to salvation exactly by revealing the truth about the self, occulted by the entire cortege of appearances and futile preoccupations, because, contemplating its precarious nudity, he can decide to begin the saving conversion, looking for the message of belief in God and trying to find his lost condition, the resemblance with the divinity<sup>39</sup>.

Cioran's man is not far from the characteristics of Pascal's man. Resembling the latter, he is a scandal for reason, a challenge for the common laws of nature, with the regular ways of nature always submitted to regularity, harmony, and coherence. However, if in Pascal's case, man's monstrosity is given by the incompatibility between his two natures, by the difficult coexistence of the marks of his lost divine image with his present animal image, by the conflict between his noble potential and his pathetic reality, for Cioran,

37 *Ibidem*, p. 61.

38 *Ibidem*, p. 57.

39 *Ibidem*, p. 69.

man's deformity is the consequence of his virtuous of fiasco"<sup>40</sup>. Pascal's man is the unhappiness that grinds him, by his vain estrangement from himself, by his being the traces of the god he denies, of his ignorance, the most obvious sign of his demiurgic insufficiency.

Agent of the dissolution of the human animal"<sup>41</sup>, "angel who has lost his way" man illustrates with a remarkable clarity all the consequences of an unhappiness of anomaly, of baroque oddity, of "being" *ing*"<sup>43</sup>. Belonging to some incorporeal being bearing the print of some moral law, dinosaurs used to be<sup>44</sup>, he represents a being whose coming by his presence, the inner being the uncertainty and doubt, the inner being smearing irremediably with dirt.

Unlike his Romanian works, which explore the theme of individuality, of difference, of the loss of man's lack of measure, coming from his French works explore the theme of the unity of original fullness, of the unity of original fullness, of the unity of original fullness, considering individuality the beginning of the world's collapse. If, for Pascal, the world's collapse was supposed to end in the world's collapse. If, for Pascal, the world's collapse was supposed to end in the world's collapse. If, for Pascal, the world's collapse was supposed to end in the world's collapse, thus assuming the divine commandment, thus assuming the divine commandment, thus assuming the divine commandment.

40 Cioran, *La chute dans le temps* in *Oeuvres complètes*.

41 Cioran, *Histoire et utopie* in *Oeuvres complètes*.

42 Cioran, *Précis de décomposition* in *Oeuvres complètes*.

43 Cioran, *La chute dans le temps* in *Oeuvres complètes*.

44 *Ibidem*, p. 1077.

45 Cioran, *Précis de décomposition* in *Oeuvres complètes*.

man's deformity is the consequence of an accident of creation the work of "a virtuous of fiasco"<sup>40</sup>. Pascal's man is responsible for his present state, for the unhappiness that grinds him, bearing the consequences of the original sin, of his vain estrangement from his creator, whereas Cioran's man bears within his being the traces of the god's ignorance, being the most significant proof of his ignorance, the most obvious example of a failed creation because of his demiurgic insufficiency.

Agent of the dissolution of universal order, impenitent rebel, "schismatic animal"<sup>41</sup>, "angel who has lost his wings or monkey who has lost its hair"<sup>42</sup>, man illustrates with a remarkable talent all the possible anarchic inclinations, all the consequences of an unhealthy nature, signaling at every step his statute of anomaly, of baroque oddity, of imprecise composition, of "runaway of being"<sup>43</sup>. Belonging to some incompatible orders, as if situated outside regnum, bearing the print of some moral tars that make him even more deformed than dinosaurs used to be<sup>44</sup>, he represents a violation on life, on natural living, poisoning by his presence, the innocence of natural rhythms, infiltrating by his being the uncertainty and doubt, making almighty the curse of conscience<sup>45</sup>, smearing irremediably with dirt the original purity.

Unlike his Romanian work, where he proceeded to a genuine eulogium of individuality, of difference, of singularity, speaking highly of vanity and of man's lack of measure, considering them the main engines of dignity, his French works explore the catastrophe produced after the shattering of the unity of original fullness, of the violation of the harmony of being, considering individuality the beginning of an irreversible process of decline that was supposed to end in the destruction of all creation, in the show of the world's collapse. If, for Pascal, man is guilty because he refuses to obey divine commandment, thus assuming the separation from his creator and

---

40 Cioran, *La chute dans le temps* in *Oeuvres*, Paris, Gallimard, 1995, p. 1080.

41 Cioran, *Histoire et utopie* in *Oeuvres*, p. 1039.

42 Cioran, *Précis de décomposition* in *Oeuvres*, p. 601.

43 Cioran, *La chute dans le temps* in *Oeuvres*, p. 1076.

44 *Ibidem*, p. 1077.

45 Cioran, *Précis de décomposition* in *Oeuvres*, p. 584.

triggering the painful descendant route of the Fall, tearing the primordial unity, committing the sin that marks his fate forever, in Cioran's case, man, naturally endowed with a malefic nature, is a genuine vehicle of the propagation of ontological heresy, being responsible to nature for losing his initial innocence, for destroying the protective unconsciousness of the beginning. Detaching from the perfect sphere of the being, he introduces the obsession for knowledge, the separation between subject and object, replacing the original kindness with the destructive violence of the self who wants to take over the world. Detaching from the whole, he commits *the* sin, a sin whose consequences are impossible to repair, sealing, thus his doomed destiny. Cioran's man does not have a possible conversion at hand, he cannot do anything anymore to change his fate. If Pascal's man can obtain clemency by his feverish search, being directed towards salvation by the descent of divine grace, succeeding in saving himself from damnation, Cioran's man, lacking any hope or consolation, calls for his destruction, seeming to want it arrive sooner.

Sketching man's essential features, describing his miserable condition, exploring his flaws, Pascal highlights especially the tragic dimension of his existence that seems to fit better with the sad history of his decay, of the loss of his initial innocence. In return, discussing the same subjects, concentrating for the largest part of his work on the deficient composition of man and assimilating the cardinal elements of Pascal's diagnosis, Cioran acts completely different. For him, man is a ridicule being, the trash of creation, an infatuated nothing who forgets his modest origin, posing as the prince of the Universe, considering himself the centre of the world. Pascal's vision allows a certain compassion for man, whereas Cioran's acid point of view justifies only sarcasm, transforming his reflections on humanity in a merciless satire.

If Pascal invokes losing the divine image as being the beginning of all evil, as the starting point of man's misfortunes, Cioran's starting point is diametrically opposed, as he cannot admit the idea of his past grandeur. Instead of the closeness to divinity, he invokes man's vicinity with monkey as a sufficient explanation to invalidate all his pretences for superiority: "In our veins runs macaque blood. If we thought about this more often, we would end by abandoning our mission. No more theology, no more metaphysics- in other

words, no more divagating thing...."<sup>46</sup>. The fight of Cioran, who does not know the most severe passage to make his opinion heard, a new-born, he writes with his head to all sides, his baldness, this little man forgetting his origins.

This ignoble orality of man, of his historical brag about noblesse, described in detail by his deficiency, which drives him to mania. It manifests as a call, pushing the individual to explain the intensity of the myth of the Fall, to be corrected, writing to know the good and the bad, a man transforms the world into a privileged engine of constituting the belief in himself, not being able to find a nature would start to live in a sort of anxious themselves, merciful, can only stay in our n

46 Cioran, *Aveux et an*

47 Cioran, *Écartèlemen*

48 Cioran, *La chute dan*

49 *Ibidem*, p. 1119.

words, no more divagations, or arrogance, or lack of measure, no more everything....<sup>46</sup>. The fight against the pride of being human is a true obsession for Cioran, who does not hesitate to resort to cruel images, remembering some of the most severe passages from St. Augustine's and Luther's writings, in order to make his opinion more suggestive. Thus, describing the helpless being of a new-born, he writes ferociously: "This little man, a few days old, who turns his head to all sides, looking for who knows what, his bald head, the original baldness, this little monkey who lived for months in a latrine and who, soon, forgetting his origins, will spit on all galaxies...."<sup>47</sup>.

This ignoble origin seems to be the main impulse of methodic imposture of man, of his histrionic instincts of parvenu who claims imagined merits and brags about noblesse titles who were never given to him. His need for glory, described in detail by Cioran, seems to be a consequence of this original insufficiency, which drives him to bluff, to repeated exaggeration, to an inexplicable mania. It manifests as a tyrannical wish, as a physiological necessity, as a visceral call, pushing the individual to rather die in despire than forgotten. In order to explain the intensity of such a wish, Cioran pretends to be interested by rewriting the myth of the Fall from the book of Genesis, considering that this should be corrected, writing that man sacrificed paradise not because he wanted to know the good and the evil, but "risking everything to be somebody"<sup>48</sup>. Or, such a man transforms the wish for glory in a constitutive component of his being, in a privileged engine of his actions, transforming in his most stable illusion, substituting the belief in immortality with that always more virulent aspiration and not being able to find comfort except from the moment when even inanimate nature would start to praise him: "However full of ourselves we would be, we live in a sort of anxious bitterness, that we could not get away from unless stones themselves, merciful, decided to praise us. As long as they remain speechless, we can only stay in our misery, filled with our own venom"<sup>49</sup>.

---

46 Cioran, *Aveux et anathèmes* in *Oeuvres*, p. 1719.

47 Cioran, *Écartèlement* in *Oeuvres*, p. 1457.

48 Cioran, *La chute dans le temps* in *Oeuvres*, p. 1113.

49 *Ibidem*, p. 1119.

The wish for glory is closely related to the irrepressible need for differentiation felt by the individual, incapable of admitting the possibility of existence of a original unity, of a state of perfect homogeneity, unprepared, because of his natural data, to understand the absolute. Opaque faced to himself and to the world because of the protective veil of appearances, he appreciates only doing, the agonic struggle, the unlimited diversity, condemned to a metaphysical ignorance that permits him to keep all his illusions, allowing him to take part in the protective charm of multiplicity, in return for the blocking of every intuition of truth. The natural result of this tendency is the constant attachment to the superstition of the self, celebrating individuality, subjectivity, and spasmodic subjectivity. As Pascal, Cioran is aware that for reaching salvation we should be able to renounce the self, to free us from the trap of plurality, discovering the ontologically consistent world of the One, the world beyond appearances, but the obstacles that stay in the way of such an attempt seem too important to be overcome by the precarious means of human nature: "The more we try to free ourselves from the self, the more we sink into it. We try in vain to destroy it: the very moment we think we have succeeded, we see it more solid than ever before; whatever we used to ruin it, has no other effect but to strengthen it, and its vigor and perversity are of such nature, that suffering agrees with it more than joy"<sup>50</sup>. Man does not have sufficient resources to overcome the fiction of the Universe, to search for the phantasmagoric character, in order to assume genuine knowledge. That is exactly why he always remains a slave of illusions, a prisoner of his own flaws, which prevent him from knowing the truth, however, making his survival easier.

For this reason, Cioran is very preoccupied in his French works to describe and disqualify the numerous imaginations that govern people's life, trying to prove their insanity, to dismantle them and to cover them in ridicule. His posture as a disabused skeptic allows him to treat with a merciless lucidity all phantasmagorias, undermining their pretence for justification methodically and revealing their purely utilitarian function. Considering himself less naïve than the others, as in the genuine portrait he draws for himself in "Is

---

50 Cioran, *Histoire et utopie* in *Oeuvres*, p. 1022.

the demon skeptical conscious, however, ble of these, the belief you know that a man nothing, you will co in facility. And even you will still think h rience of beings and all children, incapable the mortals, who do And yet, you will ha to believe you have

Conscious of t but not for a truth<sup>52</sup>, contagiousness of th inclination to let the enormous, but also th in front of the const left no name, it mark or of a transparent ic by the false mysterie

Cioran declar dopes on illusions, h would allow him to to that emptying of ness, discovering the ing their statute of s would be the hegem superficially dealing

---

51 Cioran, *La chute da*

52 Vezi Cioran, *Histoie*

53 Cioran, *Précis de dé*



the demon skeptical?”, he considers himself to be right to reveal all illusions, conscious, however, that he risks to succumb when faced with the most terrible of these, the belief that he could be sheltered from any illusion: “Although you know that a man has talent or knowledge, which compared to yours, mean nothing, you will consider that, incapable of getting the essential, he got stuck in facility. And even though he has surpassed many and extraordinary trials, you will still think he did not get to the unique experience, to the capital experience of beings and things, that you have. He is nothing but a child, they are all children, incapable of seeing what only you have seen, you the most lucid of the mortals, who do not have any illusion about the other and about the self. And yet, you will have an illusion: the tenacious illusion, the unshaken illusion to believe you have none”<sup>51</sup>.

Conscious of the fact that people would accept martyrdom for a chimera, but not for a truth<sup>52</sup>, he observes, just like Pascal, how important is the force of contagiousness of the most improbable imaginary visions, remarking people’s inclination to let themselves be seduced by everything that is imprecise, funny, enormous, but also their incapacity to join a rigorous thought, their indifference in front of the constructs of reason: “No *rational* being was ever a cult object, it left no name, it marked no event. Imperturbable in front of a precise conception or of a transparent idol, the crowd is fascinated by what cannot be verified and by the false mysteries. Who ever died in the name of rigueur?”<sup>53</sup>.

Cioran declares himself to be persuaded that man loves appearances, dopes on illusions, because he is not ready to make that interior effort that would allow him to proceed to expel from the self all the pain and the things, to that emptying of the spirit that would permit him to analyze his nothingness, discovering the fragrant non-reality of all existence, their deficit of being their statute of simple simulacra. One of the causes of this insufficiency would be the hegemony of thought in relation to meditation, to the habit of superficially dealing with a series of ideas instead of studying stubbornly “one

---

51 Cioran, *La chute dans le temps* in *Oeuvres*, p. 1110.

52 Vezi Cioran, *Histoire et utopie* in *Oeuvres*, p. 1043.

53 Cioran, *Précis de décomposition* in *Oeuvres*, p. 672.

and the same problem”, giving up to the charm of becoming, the seduction exercised by the numerous exteriorities, of futile and non-substantial. Incapable of focusing on contemplation the essence, incapable of separating the reality of One from the phantasmagoric cortege of multiplicity, man gives up in front of his own weaknesses and legitimates non-reality by acting, by his frenetic collaboration with the illusory world that surrounds him, proving thus, his predisposition for failure, letting himself be defeated by the “grace state given by consenting to non-reality”<sup>54</sup>, unable to understand that: “It is a thousand times better to dedicate to madness or to be defeated for God rather than strive by means of simulacra.”<sup>55</sup>.

Being used to the protective layer of illusions, used to let themselves be cheated out of superficiality and out of a strange complicity with the inconsistent world of multiplicity, people transform their lives in a genuine carnival of masks, being subjected to the most extravagant mystifications. Not being able to bear but a certain dose of truth, they are forced to accept the comedy of social lives, to act according to the hypocrite imperative word, ‘sparing the others’ imposture in the name of their own imposture. In this respect, Cioran’s vision is identical in every detail with Pascal’s, and the examples he uses are similar to those of the author of the *Provincial Letters*, as the following quotation indicates: “If our fellows could know what we really believe about them, love, friendship and devotion would be forever erased from dictionaries; and if we had the courage to look straight in the face the doubts we have about ourselves, none of us would say the word <I> without being ashamed”<sup>56</sup>.

For Cioran, the complete man, lacking any comedian talent is the “ideally miserable”<sup>57</sup> being, a being always vulnerable and dangerous, incapable of interiorizing the principles of masquerade and it is exactly for this reason that he risks to blow up all conventions and to reveal the immense fraud on which society is based. The fool functions according to this principle, he cannot dis-

---

54 Cioran, *La chute dans le temps* in *Oeuvres*, p. 1079

55 *Ibidem*, p. 1079.

56 Cioran, *Précis de décomposition* in *Oeuvres*, p. 675.

57 *Ibidem*, p. 675.

guise his  
his true  
seems th  
of disgu  
need to  
the gam  
cheeks. E  
Losing h  
comer, h  
quence, i

Or  
ed by th  
deeply m  
mask his  
his super  
himself i

Pe  
ferent pe  
himself,  
tween h  
condem

*Divided:*  
ness of b  
used wit  
interpret  
success o  
in Parad  
to concl

“In him

---

58 Cioran

59 Cioran

60 Cioran

guise his drives, he cannot stop his brutal sincerity, displaying with obscenity his true nature<sup>58</sup>, and his way of acting is considered dangerous, his behaviour seems the sign of a dissolving nihilism, threatening to make the entire science of disguise useless. For this reason, his fellows, masters of disguise, feel the need to shelter themselves from his contagious example, placing him outside the game: "We hide behind our own cheek, while the fool confesses using his cheeks. He offers himself, he lets his feelings out, he surrenders to the others. Losing his mask, he lets the public see his anxiety, he imposes it to the first comer, he lets his enigmas out. So much indiscretion irritates. As a consequence, it is natural that he should be tied up and isolated"<sup>59</sup>.

Or, Cioran's man suffers from the same flaws as Pascal's man he is waited by the same scary triad made of anxiety, inconstancy and boredom, he is deeply mined by a terrible feeling of the absurd and that is why he strives to mask his abyss, to hide his fear, remaining as shallow as possible, assuming his superficiality as a means of escaping. His obstinacy in the refuse to know himself is the only found formula to ensure his survival.

People's incapacity to be happy is captured by Cioran from two different perspectives. First, he observes man's eternal disaccord in relation to himself, his incapacity to coincide with himself, the distance maintained between him and his manifestations. Creation of censorship, of hiatus, he is condemned to live a curse, which was deciphered by the author of *All Gall is Divided*: "We will never be anything else but what you are not, and the sadness of being what you are"<sup>60</sup>. Then, resorting to one of his favourite artifices, used with virtuosity in more speculative hypothesis, he launches himself in an interpretation of the episode of the Fall, starting from the hypothesis that the success of Adam's temptation was encouraged by the anxiety that he felt even in Paradise, by his tireless anxiety in front of perfection, which permitted him to conclude that the inaptitude for happiness is a reality of the human race: "In him that inaptitude for happiness manifested itself even at that time, that

---

58 Cioran, *Cahiers*, Paris, Gallimard, 1997, p. 57.

59 Cioran, *Syllogismes de l'amertume* in *Oeuvres*, p. 767.

60 Cioran, *Précis de décomposition* in *Oeuvres*, p. 699.

incapacity to bear it that we have all inherited. He had happiness at hand, he could make it his forever, but he refused it, and from that moment on, we continue to run after it in vain; and even if we found, we would not know what to do with it"<sup>61</sup>.

If the main means of Pascal's man to try to keep away from contemplating his miserable condition is entertainment, amalgam of futile preoccupations, without any existential means, but extremely useful for not giving him a moment of rest when to find the time to analyze his destiny, the people described by Cioran practice the same avoidance of truth, but use other ways of avoiding it. They try to produce in order to run from themselves, to hide their panic, accelerating the rhythm of living, apparently wishing to dissolve themselves in speed, from the desire to occult the inevitable end that awaits for them, to conceal the certainty which is "obscure, unformulated, coming out from their mad blood, which they fear to look in the face, which they want to forget, hurrying, walking faster, refusing to have at least one moment for themselves"<sup>62</sup>.

The fight against inconstancy and anxiety is made more difficult by the fact that man cannot totally identify either with the world or with own self, being eternally fascinated by the imaginary show of possibility, accumulating unrealistically and dilating in forgery, governed by his aspiration for enormous, epochal and unforgettable. Or, this unhealthy temptation pushes him towards an eternal discontent, forcing him to comply "in an dissatisfaction close to madness"<sup>63</sup>, to forever live from the angle of a dangerous duality, avoiding any definitive assimilation, choosing the perpetual non-coincidence, for the originality of detachment, maintaining far away both from his own gestures and feelings, and from the entire phenomenal horizon of beings and things, refusing every certainty and refusing to let himself be defined, be caught in a rigid and definitive formula.

However, for Cioran, the most serious infirmity of the human condition is boredom and he meditates upon this for long time in some of his most

---

61 Cioran, *La chute dans le temps* in *Oeuvres*, p. 1072.

62 *Ibidem*, p. 1095.

63 *Ibidem*, p. 1078

brilliant page  
from books,  
of individual  
himself, with  
together with  
he knew it o  
tensity, start  
"As others re  
dicate the m  
with ennui. I  
bored. I reme  
myself on th  
then, that is  
the mourning  
in Berlin an  
in Braşov w  
me, was the

Armed  
drawing of a  
significant f  
impact that  
motivating f  
the being an

Just as  
inventorying  
form life in  
asm or pleas  
form in a pr  
the layer of  
out of the ci

---

64 Cioran, *Oeuvres*, p. 1072.

65 *Ibidem*, p. 1078.

brilliant pages, mobilizing not only the abstract knowledge, which is taken from books, spread with speculative impudence, but also his entire experience of individual tortured by the curse of boredom, which allows him to consider himself, with bitter vanity, one of the best connoisseurs of its ominous effects, together with Baudelaire and Leopardi<sup>64</sup>. Tracing the history of boredom as he knew it on his own, Cioran points some of its moments of maximum intensity, starting with its abrupt and inexplicable beginning during childhood: "As others remember precisely the date of their first asthma crisis, I could indicate the moment when, for the first time, at 5 years old, I was overwhelmed with ennui. Nevertheless, what is that good for? I have always been extremely bored. I remember some afternoons in Sibiu, when, home alone, I would throw myself on the ground, overwhelmed by an unbearable void. I was a teenager, then, that is, I lived those melancholy crises intensely and they would cause the mourning of my childhood, otherwise happy. Terrible ennui, *generalized*, in Berlin and especially in Dresden, then in Paris, let me not forget the years in Braşov when I used to write *Tears and Saints*, which, Jenny Acterian told me, was the saddest book ever written"<sup>65</sup>.

Armed with this concrete knowledge, Cioran launches himself in the drawing of a genuine phenomenology of boredom, trying to capture the most significant features and translate in a little more understandable terms the impact that it has on individuals, trying to explain in what way its dissolving motivating force can be motivated, its capacity to insinuate itself deeply inside the being and to cause the failure of any mystification.

Just as in Pascal, boredom can be approached from two points of view, inventorying either its disastrous effect on living, its characteristics that transform life in a monotonous inferno, making impossible to keep your enthusiasm or pleasure, or, on the other hand, following the way in which it can transform in a privileged instrument of scattering illusions, allowing to penetrate the layer of unreality which veils the truth about the world, permitting to go out of the circle of appearances and imaginations in order to obtain freedom.

---

64 Cioran, *Cahiers*, p. 488.

65 *Ibidem*, p. 63.

However, unlike Pascal, who reflects in a strictly Christian frame of thinking, Cioran adds a series of oriental elements, transforming boredom in a privileged way for the revealing of universal vacuum.

Describing boredom from the point of view of its ominous role for life, Cioran notes: "There is no other dissolving feeling. Not only does it have you understand the universal nothingness but it pushes you to drown in it. The sensation of being swallowed, of diving forever, of touching the bottom of *nothing*; negative infinity, which always ends at himself, ecstasy of nothingness, dead end into .... a desert"<sup>66</sup>. Trying to draw the outlines of this state considered a true doom, he remarks the fact that in boredom there is "a cruelty that dissolves itself, and which, dissolving, grinds us and destroys our flesh, our bone marrow"<sup>67</sup>. Boredom, in other contexts, appears as a hero of time that unwinds, as "the infinity of rotten souls wanting superstitions"<sup>68</sup>, as incurable convalescence<sup>69</sup>. Starting from this last attempt of metaphorically defining boredom, we arrive at one of the motives that are usually present in the reflections on this subject, that of the relation between illness and boredom.

To make more obvious the noxiousness of boredom, Cioran points out that it is infinitely more difficult to bear it than it is to bear illness and pain, usually considered the supreme evil, the main enemies of a normal life. Comparing them, he reaches the conclusion that the lack of intensity, the anxious vague, the lack of content, the indefinite monotony of boredom make the individual prefer the concrete evil and the precise suffering of illness, thus offering at least a preoccupation, forcing him to occupy his time with the healing of a pain that can be limited, while boredom makes us think of a barren infinity, of an irritating infinity: "Once the *ennui* insinuates itself in us and we fall under its invisible control, everything seems meaningless compared to it. We could say the same thing about pain. Definitely. However, pain is localized, while *ennui* evokes evil without a specific place, without support, without

66 *Ibidem*, p. 64.

67 *Ibidem*, p. 375.

68 Cioran, *Précis de décomposition* in *Oeuvres*, p. 591.

69 *Ibidem*, p. 592.

nothing, apart from this whose effect is imperceptible, others do not see, a ruin

Analyzing boredom as an illusion, to make ridiculous by putting it with truth itself.<sup>71</sup> the putting in brackets of the relative removal of the spirit of one who is bored arrives at what makes life possible. From themselves in their presence of hope, thus open to the complicity of anything, we take from all things both subjective and objective conditions of a research

70 Cioran, *Écartèlement*

71 Cioran, *Cahiers*, p.

72 *Ibidem*, p. 508.

nothing, apart from this nothing, unidentifiable, that eats us. Pure erosion, whose effect is imperceptible and which changes us slowly in a ruin that the others do not see, a ruin that we ourselves do not see<sup>70</sup>.

Analyzing boredom from the point of view of its capacity to mine every illusion, to make ridiculous any ardor, any delirium, Cioran starts by identifying it with truth itself.<sup>71</sup> The reason of this equivalence is that boredom allows the putting in brackets of all wishes and excesses, making possible the definitive removal of the spells off the world. The grade of lucidity to which the one who is bored arrives does not permit him to consent to any naivety that makes life possible. Freed from the charm of universal cheating, people find themselves in their precarious nudity, incapable of keeping the slightest trace of hope, thus open to the receiving of undisguised truth: "Ennui is not the accomplice of anything, and it cannot be deceived. It results from the distance we take from all things, from the intrinsic void of all things that we feel as both subjective and objective evil. In its doing there is no illusion; it fulfills the conditions of a research. Boredom is a *research*"<sup>72</sup>.

70 Cioran, *Écartèlement* in *Oeuvres*, p. 1481.

71 Cioran, *Cahiers*, p. 507.

72 *Ibidem*, p. 508.