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Between Literature and Philosophy. Frameworks for Analysing Cioran's Oeuvre

Abstract: The controversies surrounding the possibility of approaching Cioran's oeuvre as quintessentially philosophical or literary arise not just from personal or subjective interpretive codes but also from the different ways in which the two disciplines may be conceived and defined. A brief overview of some of these critical perspectives will reveal areas of agreement and disagreement about the nature of his writings and the larger frame of the relations between philosophy and literature. Moreover, tapping into Cioran's two-pronged views on literature may reveal a conceptual bridge between these interpretations.

Keywords: Emil Cioran; Literature; Philosophy; Literary Criticism; Existentialism.

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DOI: 10.24193/cechinox.2026.50.25

Unlike Mircea Eliade, a writer with a twofold – literary and philosophical – propensity, Cioran was a self-avowed anti-writer and anti-philosopher, who, from the outset, sparked debate over whether his work belonged to either of these domains. Most commentators are adamant that Cioran wrote works of literature. Others, however, associate him with philosophy and, occasionally, with other disciplines, such as music, psychology and biology, or use the ambivalent label “writer-philosopher” to describe him¹. To some, being a writer suggests a noble cast of mind. To others, this appears as a debasing title. In addition to this, both the domain of literature and that of philosophy have received different, fluctuating and often ambiguous definitions in time.

If, as Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari claim, philosophy is “the discipline that consists in creating concepts”², it would be difficult to regard Cioran as a philosopher. If, however, philosophy is “a particular literary genre”, related to poetry and characterized by certain topics and by the frequency of certain terms and forms, as Paul Valéry³ believed, then he was a philosopher,

particularly since he can be seen as a continuator of the romantic strand of thought. Antonio di Gennaro, for instance, regards Cioran as “one of the most important philosophers of the 20th century” and as “one of the foremost metaphysicians”⁴, while other analysts contend that he was not a philosopher but a genuine writer, a poet even.

Throughout his career, Cioran was, indeed, subject to conflicting assessments and the value of his books elicited mixed opinions. For instance, Mircea Eliade said that Cioran’s debut book entitled *On the Heights of Despair* (1935), which had been signed up for a literary competition, was as “exciting as a novel”⁵. G. Călinescu thought it contained “a sort of airy, philosophical essays”, “a juvenile seminar exercise” inspired by the lectures of Nae Ionescu, whereas *The Twilight of Thoughts* (1940) comprised “rather childish aphorisms grounded in paradox and exclamation, or, rather, Kierkegaard pastiches”⁶. One of the major detractors of Cioran’s 1936 *Book of Delusions* was Mihail Sebastian, who saw it as a delirious book and wondered whether Cioran’s delirium was biological or literary in nature (in the sense of an exercise in style). His conclusion was that Cioran “gives us a mere book of literature, in which the shadows of Nietzsche, Gide, and Dostoyevsky jostle against one another quite conspicuously”⁷. It is surprising that philosophers like Constantin Noica and Grigore Popa described Cioran as a great writer, while writers like Mihail Sebastian and Eugen Ionescu pejoratively dismissed it as a mere work of literature.

Debates have not focused on the forms or species to which these works of “literature” belong but, overall, the categories are quite varied: poetry, meditative

prose, drama, essay, intimate journal, autobiography, aphorism, etc. William Kluback considers Cioran to be a “gnomic poet”, whose poems are also moral stories.⁸ Ion Negoïtescu defines him as “a great poet of thought”, or the author of “constrained prose”⁹. Other commentators associate him with a character of his own literary discourse. Marin Sorescu deems him to be “a poet who will never write poetry”, an author who “speaks about everything in prose but thinks in poetic verse”, or a “literary talent that goes beyond philosophy”, closer to Dostoyevsky than to Kierkegaard and akin to the two Caragiales in terms of style¹⁰. Eugen Simion thinks he is “a misanthropic philosopher who was ultimately redeemed by his grand and paradoxically exuberant style” and who “created literature even though, theoretically, he despised it”, ending up being appreciated precisely for the “literariness of his philosophical discourse”¹¹.

When the anti-literary aesthetics that was in vogue in the first half of the 20th century fell into abeyance, the idea that was nourished, among others, by Mihail Sebastian, according to which Cioran produced a mere work of literature vanished or underwent significant changes. Literature tended to become a blazon of writerly noblesse, but the relationship of disjunction or subordination between philosophical and literary discourse did not disappear, nor was the distinction between them clearly outlined. In short, for critics like Eugen Simion, literature existed at the core of philosophical discourse and was “made” to “redeem” the content, while for writers like Marin Sorescu, the literary talent attributed to Cioran lay “beyond” philosophy. Literariness was either inside

or outside philosophy but continued to be separate from it and was oftentimes subordinated to it.

Discussing Cioran's writerly profile, critical texts explain, from different angles and in different ways, yet rarely systematically, what the differences between the two discourses are. In general, the link between philosophy and literature lies in the expressiveness of language, the "beauty" of the philosophical discourse, and literariness is seen as an attribute of the text, which is seen as mere writing, through lens that distinguish between form and content. The assumption is that there is, on the one hand, a philosophical content, or a body of ideas, and on the other hand, a verbal garment for these ideas, which may be beautiful, captivating, and expressive, granting the text additional aesthetic value, even though this is of secondary import. If expressiveness, stylistic richness, and rhetorical eloquence are remarkable, as in the case of Cioran's writing, then literariness may be said to "dazzle the eye", as a highly knowledgeable analyst of Cioran's work, Adrian Buzdugan¹², has recently claimed, to the point of entirely obliterating its content. In other words, if what is said is said too neatly or too beautifully, it means that how something is said matters more than what is said, which is why the form ends up substituting the content. If that is the case, we are looking at a contentless form, or at a form with obscured content. Many writers of the interwar period, Cioran included, protested against such a definition of literature.

Still, as many critics hold, Cioran was a man of language, defined by the stylistic qualities of his books. Constantin Noica, who was utterly reluctant towards

literature and literary criticism, confessed, in a letter he wrote in 1936, that he was enchanted by the beauty and expressive force of Cioran's writing:

I then really like the way in which you write so beautifully, so close to literature. It does not seem to be in your nature to express your thoughts so beautifully. Your thoughts look for forceful expressiveness and that's all. And yet, your style is often carefully built, keen on paradox, alert to possible puns and full of high rhetorical panache. [...] How can you still write so beautifully? I think that is what drew me towards you in the first place: the fact that despite your frank revolt against philosophizing and 'literaturizing', your writing is both philosophical and literary¹³.

Noica suggests a potential dichotomy between the expressive force that this is typical of Cioran's thought and the aesthetic value of the text, which relies on the "literary" science of language and hovers in-between philosophy and literature, but also between literariness and literature. In other cases, content is on a par with expression, as the texts have both conceptual poignancy and artistic value. Commenting on the volume *The Twilight of Thoughts*, Grigore Popa for instance, a Kierkegaard specialist, approached through philosophical lens the expressive force Noica had detected, appreciating "the clarity of thought and transparency of expression", existing in correlation, and concluded that Cioran was an authentic thinker, and, above all, a great writer for whom expression was con-substantial with thinking¹⁴. In somewhat

similar terms, Patrice Bollon identifies a biunivocal link between the two, stating that Cioran is “an authentic thinker because he is an authentic stylist” and a great stylist because he is a rigorous thinker¹⁵.

There are even more numerous critics who dispute Cioran’s appetite for literature and philosophy in terms of a relationship of disjunction or subordination between them. Adrian Buzdugan, for instance, demonstrates that Cioran’s work is entirely philosophical despite its “poetic form, laborious style, rhetorical figures, prosaic, ordinary, journal-like notes, which fool or trick the eye”¹⁶. Here, literature is sheer appearance, a diversion, the weak side of discourse, and style is lacking compared to the fulness of the content. In other cases, literature is assigned a delusive role, which evocatively compromises the philosopher. “Since he is keen on witty phrases,” Pierre-Yves Boissau states, “as well as on formulas rather than what is formulated, or the astounding rather than the profound, he writes to distinguish himself in the eyes of others. People too often forget that Cioran is not a specialist of despair but of words, that he excels at mounting a performance of the self through writing”¹⁷.

In fact, when the volume *On the Heights of Despair* appeared, the sincerity of Cioran’s “confessions” started to be questioned precisely because of his stylistic exquisiteness. It was this style that led Mihail Sebastian to see *The Book of Delusions* as a mere work of literature, at a time when anti-literary aesthetics was in fashion. Yet the negative connotations attributed to literature dominate the exegesis of Cioran’s works. Livius Ciocârlie believes that *Notebooks* exhibit a form of literature that is “deceitful by its very formulaic nature”

and identifies a Baudelairean mask, a substantial dose of histrionics and theatrical self-display, noting that had it not been for his excessive concern with selfhood, Cioran would have been a great writer¹⁸. Subjective expression, which, in the opinion of some analysts, removes his discourse from the corral of philosophy and draws it closer to literature, is the mark of Cioran’s “literariness”.

According to other interpretations, literature, a secondary component of his works, is a sign of redemption. As Eugen Simion argues, the content’s nihilism is “redeemed” through style¹⁹. Despair, Cioran’s foundational feeling, is lessened by his concessions to an aesthetic dimension that belongs to the world of appearances, considers Sylvie Jaudeau²⁰. Cultivating style to the detriment of meaning, Jaudeau shows, Cioran enters a ludic space and becomes a mere character, a “skilful writer”, a frivolous and histrionic man²¹. When perceived from this angle, which is far from flattering for literature, salvation through writing coincides with failing on the level of Being. Literary discourse implicitly becomes a failed philosophical discourse and, more than that, a failed mystical project, in alignment with Cioran’s beliefs.

This problem however can also be approached from an opposite angle: every book the philosopher wrote meant “missing out” on a volume of poems. Ion Dur believes that *On the Heights of Despair* is a “theatrical, performed book precisely because of the expression that sincerely protects the body of ideas”²² Cioran produces literature “pro tanto”, considering that his work and, in particular, his first volume is a biography of the organic man, an immersion of physiology into philosophy: his

writing is sentimental, his nature is structurally poetic, and his language is non-specialized, so much so that we cannot speak of "science" in his case but of "loose essays, which are far from divorced from the imagination"²³. Dan Gabriel Onțeluș positions Cioran's work in the space of "philosophizing literariness"²⁴, akin to the so-called literature of ideas or literature of philosophical import.

Most of the critics who see Cioran as, first and foremost, a writer, possibly doubled by a "private" thinker, speak of the poetic style of many of his books, their fragmentariness and essayistic qualities, the autobiographical nature of his texts and the distinction between his biographical and fictional selves²⁵. Their critical approaches assume that Cioran is primarily "a writer", and do not explore the role of literature within philosophical discourse or the relationship between philosophical reflection and writing. It is of little relevance whether his style saves, redeems, and protects the thinker, or whether it compromises him. It does not matter whether literature is interior or exterior to the content and whether it represents discourse itself, contributing to its philosophical relevance, as Grigore Popa believes. There are also systematic approaches, such as Irina Mavrodin's poetic inquiry that identifies the literariness of Cioran's style as the mark of a literature of ambiguity, discontinuity, and fragmentariness, a literature that produces but does not represent, a writing whose playfulness invites a polyphonic, rather than univocal reading, which looks for the strictly denotative value of the philosophical text: it is a writing marked by the prevalence of metaphors, litotes, and paradoxes, but the literariness of his discourse does not cancel out

its philosophical propensity²⁶. Another criterion – theoretically correct yet extremely volatile – for setting the two domains apart is Cioran's penchant for different genres and species of both literary and philosophical writing, such as the essay, the aphorism, poetry, autobiography, etc.

Canadian researcher Sara Danièle Bélanger-Michaud constructs a genuine philosophy of literature starting from Cioran's work²⁷. Noticing that his "literature" resembles a narrative of the obsessions and failures of a "character" who "dramatizes" his sensations and emotions through a permanent "game" of composition and perspective, in other words, starting from the premise that Cioran's text is primarily a form of literary discourse, Bélanger-Michaud reflects upon the literary space as a *topos* of knowledge. In her opinion, writing itself, in which form overlaps the act of thinking, becomes a receptacle for traces of sacredness and epitomizes the transcendent embodied in the immanent, offering the "little knowledge" (*le petit savoir*), that is, an existential rather than a conceptual understanding.

Marta Petreu has a similar viewpoint on this aspect, including Cioran in a philosophical spiritual family that also comprises Seneca, Pascal, Kierkegaard, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, for whom matter and content, or expression and form are merged²⁸. Gheorghe Grigurcu, on the other hand, believes that Cioran's work confirms the existence of a unified matter of creation, where distinctions between philosophy and literature, idea and immersion, concept and image are not absolute²⁹.

As a rule, however, scholars tend to situate Cioran either on the side of the "little knowledge" of literature mentioned

by Sara Danièle Bélanger-Michaud or on that of the traditional great knowledge specific to philosophy, despite the interference of philosophy and literature within the cultural context of the time and within the larger framework of philosophical thinking in general. The idea that Cioran's oeuvre belongs to the realm of philosophy is supported by numerous thinkers and literary critics. When his first volume, *On the Heights of Despair*, was published, Șerban Cioculescu firmly stated that:

Mr. Cioran is not, after all, a writer. His style is direct and temperamental. He writes tempestuously, following the zigzag of an irresistible inner impulse. He wields thoughts with dialectical ease and moves with great familiarity amongst general ideas. When he makes an effort, his phrases are precise and brilliant. But he has a quintessentially poetic, confessional, aggressive mind and he is keen on winning readers over by shocking them. His statements are always categorical and absolute, and he never admits doubt or questioning. [...] An illogical and irrational mind, he nonetheless relies on rigorous, affectual syllogisms³⁰.

This time, Cioran's famous style is no longer an element of literariness but the mark of his vitalistic, neo-romantic philosophy, and the temperamental poignancy of his writing is no longer reminiscent of literature but produces affectual syllogisms. Much later, critics like Ion Vartic would claim that Cioran practised an entirely philosophical discourse, and denounced "the current, frivolous error of considering

him a writer, since people easily forget that Job – whether the original or the derived one – was not, despite his literary expressiveness, a *writer* but a private thinker"³¹.

Besides literary critics who argue that Cioran's work belongs to the philosophical register, there are some philosophers who similarly point out that his discourse is typically speculative. Viorel Cernica, for instance, notices, from a phenomenological perspective, that the volume *On the Heights of Despair* is marked by "an organic logic accompanied by a visceral lyricism", that the Cartesian tradition of metaphysical faith is the starting point of experience, that Cioran's confessional tone is a sign of his "ontological reconstruction", and that his texts have metaphysical value; all in all, his oeuvre evinces a "phenomenological coherence" that grants it the status of a genuine philosophical text³². Adrian Buzdugan attempts to associate Cioran's book with a particular type of philosophy, which is an equally difficult exercise as that of associating it with "literature": "a pseudo-eclectic philosophy, with elements of stoicism, naive scepticism, heresy, cynicism, and unorthodox Epicureanism"³³. Buzdugan considers that Cioran anticipates postmodernism "in the sense that he refuses systematic discourse and upcycles different types of philosophizing"³⁴. Other commentators, such as Victor Isac, regard him as a typically romantic thinker, given his dominant subjectivity, his lyricism, his prevalent themes and, not least, his creative imagination and intuitive force³⁵.

Listing the distinctive marks of philosophical discourse – for instance, the prevalence of logic over meaning, of monosemy over polysemy, or of notion over metaphor, Aurel Codoban concludes that "by

contrast with the traditional discourse of western philosophy, Cioran's writing is both pre-philosophical, or sapiential, and post-philosophical, or post-modern, post-ontological and post-metaphysical³⁶.

If we add to this the classical, romantic, modern, symbolist (Baudelairean), avant-garde and postmodern features associated with Cioran's "literature", this unconventional portrait becomes even more conspicuous. A "literary" typology proposed by Livius Ciorărlie, for instance, sounds as follows: "a modern thinker in terms of the logic of contradiction, a post-modern thinker by way of his scepticism and fragmentary thinking that does not seek to impose ideas but to propose hypotheses, and a romantic in terms of his inheritance, Cioran is a classic because instead of being processual, he is conclusive [...]"³⁷.

It is significant that the difficulty of identifying him with a particular type of discourse derives from the diversity of opinions regarding the possible literary implications of his discourse. The stylistic expressiveness of his writing is generally associated with literariness and has the potential to eclipse its philosophical content, either by "corrupting" it or, on the contrary, by redeeming it. Literary qualities can merge with philosophical qualities under the umbrella of "little knowledge" or they can even be the guarantee of his clarity of thought and reflexive force. His style can be seen as detrimental to his meaning, which risks transforming the philosopher into a skilful writer who turns nihilism into aestheticism, as Sylvie Jaudeau believes³⁸. It can, at the same time, be a mere wrapping that protects the body of ideas or it can be the very philosophy of Cioran, as Patrice

Bollon contends: his "philosophy of style" may play an ethical, aesthetic and epistemological role³⁹. The subjective, high-strung nature of his reflection may be reminiscent of fiction or literary writing, but it can also form the "affective syllogisms" that Șerban Cioculescu was talking about. In light of the nuanced and fluctuating relations between philosophy and literature, Cioran has been seen as a failed writer *and* as a failed philosopher, in alignment with his own confessions, but he has also been regarded as a great writer *and* a great philosopher. Although the "literary" component of his writing dominates all of these attempts to situate Cioran in two different typologies of discourse, the place of literature within the framework of his philosophical thinking is often considered to be minor. Literature serves and buttresses his discourse or, on the contrary, it lessens its strength, illustrates its content through a delectable "wrapping" or compromises it by muddling it. At best, it remains a mere marker of a content that can only be deciphered within the register of ideas. The writer represents the philosopher's secondary voice, camouflaged inside or outside his discourse, or he can be a fictional self who, even when overlapping the philosopher's own identity, offers merely some "little knowledge", separate from science proper.

The result is "loose essayistic writing, intimately bound to a certain imaginary", as Ion Dur calls it⁴⁰ or, in Marius Dobre's words, "a loose, literary philosophy" in opposition to the systematic one, but equally valid⁴¹. And while this type of philosophy allied with literature is prized over traditional philosophy, "fascinated by grand concepts and the solitude of abstraction"⁴², as Gabriel Liiceanu believes, then

we are no longer speaking about philosophy but about anti-philosophy. The title of the chapter dedicated to Cioran by the author of the 1992 book *The Quarrel with Philosophy* is “Cioran or philosophy as anti-philosophy”⁴³.

But what is Cioran’s position? He disavows both philosophy and literature. He refuses to accept the title of writer and, equally, that of philosopher. Philosophy means for him a refuge from life into mere ideas. On the other hand, literature means mystification, superficiality, and lack of substance. Literature is indicted in the 1956 volume *The Temptation to Exist* as follows:

Penetrating the literary inferno, you will come to learn its artifices and its arsenic; shielded from the immediate, that caricature of yourself, you will no longer have any but formal experiences, indirect experiences; you will vanish into the Word [...]. As for literary people, you will derive no benefit from them. But you will find this out too late, after having wasted your best years in a milieu without density or substance. The literary man? An indiscreet man, who devaluates his miseries, divulges them, tells them like so many beads: immodesty – the side-show of second-thoughts – is his rule; he offers himself⁴⁴.

On other occasions, we encounter similar remarks about literature, which he associates, like Schopenhauer, with the man of letters, with the “guild” of writers or with writing as a profession. He sometimes calls the German philosopher a “writer”, but not in this particular, literary sense⁴⁵.

The remarks of the pessimistic philosopher conceal an impassioned reader and prolific writer who regularly weaves writing into his existential program. He confesses, more than once, that he writes as a means of freeing himself from obsessions and avoiding crises, because he is incapable of killing others or himself. He also makes statements that cast a different light on writing. In his 1986 volume *Admiration*, he sees literary creation as a competition with the divine, as a form of vengeance and a reply that the created can give a creation “in shambles”, adding that:

Nothing more wretched than the word, yet it is by the word that one mounts to sensations of felicity, to an ultimate dilation where one is completely alone, without the slightest feeling of oppression. The Supreme achieved by syllables, by the very symbol of fragility! [...] Words as agents of an ecstasy inside out [...]⁴⁶.

His praise of writing can be spotted between the lines in other books as well, where he usually supports other negations. In a note from 1968, for instance, Cioran declares himself faithful to his daily scribbling in *Notebooks*, given that “the insignificant must have a right to be admitted into the city, all the more so since it is through it that we have access to what is essential”⁴⁷. In his 1973 volume on *The Trouble with Being Born*, the perfection of writing is compared to transcending relativity, becoming and death, as he contradicts the initial idea of a congruence between the act of writing and that of falling into sin: “To write a faultless page, or only a sentence, raises you above becoming and its corruptions.

You transcend death by the pursuit of the indestructible in speech, in the very symbol of nullity"⁴⁸.

The contradictions – numerous when he speaks about literature, writers, style, literary criticism and literary speeches (poetry, novels, essays aphorisms, autobiography, etc.) – come from the fact that Cioran appears to be using the term “literature” in different ways. Just like there are two philosophies, “objective” and “subjective”, there are also two literatures, two types of poetry, prose or criticism: one is exterior to the subject, the fruit of effort, of the will to create or of abstract reflection, while the other is consubstantial with thought, or an unmediated expression of the most intimate form of life. The former is that “mere” literature governed by formal rules and generic distinctions, “the Republic of Letters” invoked by Schopenhauer, a world of superficialities, as Constantin Noica calls it, whereas the latter represents an existential trajectory that is not just therapeutical, but also soteriological. This can be considered a literature that takes precedence over the former. It is an untold literature, which is not created or “made”, but is an expression of creation, which is not elaborated, but spontaneously ignited into existence by inspiration, thanks to a unique “inner style”. It is neither interior nor exterior to the discourse. It is discourse itself: it does not serve nor harm it, but is its underlayer and its cornerstone.

The subjective philosophy of the “private” thinker comes very close to this type of existential literature, especially since the separation from philosophy is followed by the praise of aesthetic emotion – the alternative pathway to knowledge through music, mysticism and poetry, as related

expressions. There is a poetry associated with literature in a pejorative sense, as “verbosity”, and another one, comparable with mysticism. “Authentic poetry has nothing in common with ‘poetry’⁴⁹, we read in the book on *The Trouble with Being Born*, while in *Notebooks* he says that “true poetry begins beyond poetry; the same happens with philosophy, and with everything else”⁵⁰. Moreover, the styles of writing, be it literary or philosophical, can be distinguished by the same criterion of interiority: a purely conventional style v. another, authentic, self-expressive style. Style as the life of ideas defines the second form of literature, which is intimately connected to “private” thinking:

How can you talk about suffering, immortality, heavens and wasteland, without being suffering, immortality, heavens and wasteland? A thinker must be everything he says. This can be learned from poets and from the voluptuous pains experienced while living⁵¹.

The autobiographical nature of all his books does not refer to the autobiographical genre *per se*, but to the intimate, existential nature of authentic writing, the primordial discourse at the core of any kind of discourse. Similarly, the literary criticism he practices is a kind of living, an identification with the author and the book, as well as an opportunity for self-confession. Cioran does not reject all literary criticism, despite many statements to that effect. He really repudiates “methodical” or “systemic” criticism, which has nothing to do with the genuine pleasure of reading:

A book must be read and then thrown away; it's useless to speak about it, to

sum it up and comment on it. What would be the point of weighing its qualities against its flaws? If it's good, you've incorporated into your substance; if it's bad, it will have caused you to waste some time. Nothing more. Why should you endlessly reflect on what you've read?⁵²

True literature entails an organic assimilation of books, whereas the sciences of literature perform acts of analysis and deconstruction that run counter to the integrative vision of pure reading. The critic's sole role is to discern whether a book is the outcome of an innermost need for self-expression or just of labour, in other words, to distinguish between the two types of literature: the lived and the "made". In Cioran's praises and reproaches, one can detect the same twofold understanding of literature, poetry and the notion of the "writer". Being a writer has no negative connotation; on the contrary, when Cioran speaks of

Borges, Pascal, Schopenhauer and Kierkegaard, he calls them "writers".

Cioran separates himself firmly from philosophy, but he is more lenient, more nuanced, and apparently inconsistent when he speaks about literature. Towards the end of his life, he expresses his regret of not having been able to write literature, a regret that he never experienced in relation to philosophy. In his "anti-literary" creeds, affirmation and negation converge in an incompletely assumed scepticism⁵³; his rejection of literature always opens up new forms of acceptance. The literature Cioran appreciated and practised, situated beyond genres and species, is similar to, or identical with the philosophy in which the thinker is the equivalent of his discourse, fully present in the midst of his ideas. His reflections on literature, which became ever more consistent over time, confirm the claim he made in *The Notebook of a Wicked Man*⁵⁴, according to which he had been looking for philosophy in art and for art in philosophy, as well as for both in religion.

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NOTES

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40. Ion Dur, *op. cit.*, p. 188.
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44. Cioran, "Scrisoare despre câteva impasuri", in *Ispita de a exista*, Translated from the French by Emanoil Marcu, București, Humanitas, 2016, p. 89. The English translation is extracted from Emil Cioran, *The Temptation to Exist*, Translated from the French by Richard Howard, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1998, p. 108-109.
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