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Quotes by Cioran, E. M.

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Show me one thing here on earth which has begun well and not ended badly. The proudest palpitations are engulfed in a sewer, where they cease throbbing, as though having reached their natural term: this downfall constitutes the heart's drama and the negative meaning of history.

- Cioran, E. M.

A decadent civilization compromises with its disease, cherishes the virus infecting it, loses its self-respect.

- Cioran, E. M.

The source of our actions resides in an unconscious propensity to regard ourselves as the center, the cause, and the conclusion of time. Our reflexes and our pride transform into a planet the parcel of flesh and consciousness we are.

- Cioran, E. M.

Man must vanquish himself, must do himself violence, in order to perform the slightest action untainted by evil.

- Cioran, E. M.

There is no means of proving it is preferable to be than not to be.

- Cioran, E. M.

To exist is equivalent to an act of faith, a protest against the truth, an interminable prayer. As soon as they consent to live, the unbeliever and the man of faith are fundamentally the same, since both have made the only decision that defines a being.

- Cioran, E. M.

To want fame is to prefer dying scorned than forgotten.

- Cioran, E. M.

The fanatic is incorruptible: if he kills for an idea, he can just as well get himself killed for one; in either case, tyrant or martyr, he is a monster.

- Cioran, E. M.

Fear can supplant our real problems only to the extent --unwilling either to assimilate or to exhaust it --we perpetuate it within ourselves like a temptation and enthrone it at the very heart of our solitude.

- Cioran, E. M.

What we want is not freedom but its appearances. It is for these simulacra that man has always striven. And since freedom, as has been said, is no more than a sensation, what

difference is there between being free and believing ourselves free?

- Cioran, E. M.

Every thought derives from a thwarted sensation.

- Cioran, E. M.

Does our ferocity not derive from the fact that our instincts are all too interested in other people? If we attended more to ourselves and became the center, the object of our murderous inclinations, the sum of our intolerances would diminish.

- Cioran, E. M.

God: a disease we imagine we are cured of because no one dies of it nowadays.

- Cioran, E. M.

A civilization is destroyed only when its gods are destroyed.

- Cioran, E. M.

No one can keep his grieves in their prime; they use themselves up.

- Cioran, E. M.

To exist is a habit I do not despair of acquiring.

- Cioran, E. M.

Progress is the injustice each generation commits with regard to its predecessors.

- Cioran, E. M.

Impossible to spend sleepless nights and accomplish anything: if, in my youth, my parents had not financed my insomnias, I should surely have killed myself.

- Cioran, E. M.

One does not inhabit a country; one inhabits a language. That is our country, our fatherland --and no other.

- Cioran, E. M.

Great persecutors are recruited among martyrs whose heads haven't been cut off.

- Cioran, E. M.

No human beings more dangerous than those who have suffered for a belief: the great persecutors are recruited from the martyrs not quite beheaded. Far from diminishing the appetite for power, suffering exasperates it.

- Cioran, E. M.

The fact that life has no meaning is a reason to live --moreover, the only one.

- Cioran, E. M.

The mind is the result of the torments the flesh undergoes or inflicts upon itself.

- Cioran, E. M.

Music is the refuge of souls ulcerated by happiness.

- Cioran, E. M.

Tyranny destroys or strengthens the individual; freedom enervates him, until he becomes no more than a puppet. Man has more chances of saving himself by hell than by paradise.

- Cioran, E. M.

Only one endowed with restless vitality is susceptible to pessimism. You become a pessimist --a demonic, elemental, bestial pessimist --only when life has been defeated many times in its fight against depression.

- Cioran, E. M.

Sperm is a bandit in its pure state.

- Cioran, E. M.

Reason is a whore, surviving by simulation, versatility, and shamelessness.

- Cioran, E. M.

Negation is the mind's first freedom, yet a negative habit is fruitful only so long as we exert ourselves to overcome it, adapt it to our needs; once acquired it can imprison us.

- Cioran, E. M.

When you have understood that nothing is, that things do not even deserve the status of appearances, you no longer need to be saved, you are saved, and miserable forever.

- Cioran, E. M.

If we could see ourselves as others see us, we would vanish on the spot.

- Cioran, E. M.

Much more than our other needs and endeavors, it is sexuality that puts us on an even footing with our kind: the more we practice it, the more we become like everyone else: it is in the performance of a reputedly bestial function that we prove our status as citizens: nothing is more public than the sexual act.

- Cioran, E. M.

We would not be interested in human beings if we did not have the hope of someday meeting someone worse off than ourselves.

- Cioran, E. M.

Alone, even doing nothing, you do not waste your time. You do, almost always, in company. No encounter with yourself can be altogether sterile: Something necessarily emerges, even if only the hope of some day meeting yourself again.

- Cioran, E. M.

Speech and silence. We feel safer with a madman who talks than with one who cannot open his mouth.

- Cioran, E. M.

It is not worth the bother of killing yourself, since you always kill yourself too late.

- Cioran, E. M.

The obsession with suicide is characteristic of the man who can neither live nor die, and whose attention never swerves from this double impossibility.

- Cioran, E. M.

Those who believe in their truth -- the only ones whose imprint is retained by the memory of men -- leave the earth behind them strewn with corpses. Religions number in their ledgers more murders than the bloodiest tyrannies account for, and those whom humanity has called divine far surpass the most conscientious murderers in their thirst for slaughter.

- Cioran, E. M.

Torment, for some men, is a need, an appetite, and an accomplishment.

- Cioran, E. M.

What would be left of our tragedies if an insect were to present us his?

- Cioran, E. M.

We derive our vitality from our store of madness.

- Cioran, E. M.

Consciousness is much more than the thorn, it is the dagger in the flesh.

- Cioran, E. M.

A sudden silence in the middle of a conversation suddenly brings us back to essentials: it reveals how dearly we must pay for the invention of speech.

- Cioran, E. M.

Criticism is a misconception: we must read not to understand others but to understand ourselves.

- Cioran, E. M.



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