A Thwarted Promise. A Short History of Decay

What are we to make of Western Buddhism? Glenn Wallis argues that in aligning their tradition with the contemporary wellness industry, Western Buddhists evade the consequences of Buddhist thought. This book shows that with concepts such as vanishing, nihility, extinction, contingency, and no-self, Buddhism, like all potent systems of thought, articulates a notion of the “real.” Raw, unflinching acceptance of this real is held by Buddhism to be at the very core of human “awakening.” Yet these preeminent human truths are universally against in contemporary Buddhist practice, contravening the very heart of Buddhism. The author’s critique of Western Buddhism is threefold. It is immanent, in emerging out of Buddhist thought but taking it beyond what it itself publicly concedes; negative, in employing the “democratizing” deconstructive methods of François Laruelle’s non-philosophy; and re-descriptive, in applying Laruelle’s concept of philofiction. Through applying resources of Continental philosophy to Western Buddhism, A Critique of Western Buddhism suggests a possible practice for our time, an “anthropotechnic”, or religion transposed from its seductive, but misguided, idealist haven.

It’s Always Sunny and Philosophy

Dubbed “Nietzsche without his hammer” by literary critic James Wood, the Romanian philosopher E. M. Cioran is known as much for his profound pessimism and fatalistic approach as for the lyrical, raging prose with which he communicates them. Unlike many of his other works, such as On the Heights of Despair and Tears and Saints, The New Gods eschews his usual aphoristic approach in favor of more extensive and analytic essays. Returning to many of Cioran’s favorite themes, The New Gods explores humanity’s attachment to gods, death, fear, and infirmity, in essays that vary widely in form and approach. In “Paleontology” Cioran describes a visit to a museum, finding the relatively pedestrian destination rife with decay, death, and human weakness. In another chapter, Cioran explores suicide in shorter, impressionistic bursts, while “The Demiurge” is a shambolic exploration of man’s relationship with good, evil, and God. All the while, The New Gods reaffirms Cioran’s belief in “lucid despair,” and his own signature mixture of pessimism and skepticism in language that never fails to be a pleasure. Perhaps his prose itself is an argument against Cioran’s near-nihilism: there is beauty in his books.

The Fall Into Time

In this volume, which reaffirms the uncompromising brilliance of his mind, Cioran strips the human condition down to its most basic components, birth and death, suggesting that disaster lies not in the prospect of death but in the fact of birth, “that laughable accident.” In the lucid, aphoristic style that characterizes his work, Cioran writes of time and death, God and religion, suicide and suffering, and the temptation to silence. Through sharp observation and
patient contemplation, Cioran cuts to the heart of the human experience. “A love of Cioran creates an urge to press his writing into someone’s hand, and is followed by an equal urge to pull it away as poison.”—The New Yorker “In the company of Nietzsche and Kierkegaard.”—Publishers Weekly “No modern writer twists the knife with Cioran’s dexterity. . . His writing . . . is informed with the bitterness of genuine compassion.”—Boston Phoenix

The Temptation to Exist

E. M. Cioran confronts the place of today’s world in the context of human history—focusing on such major issues of the twentieth century as human progress, fanaticism, and science—in this nihilistic and witty collection of aphoristic essays concerning the nature of civilization in mid-twentieth-century Europe. Touching upon Man’s need to worship, the feebleness of God, the downfall of the Ancient Greeks and the melancholy baseness of all existence, Cioran’s pieces are pessimistic in the extreme, but also display a beautiful certainty that renders them delicate, vivid, and memorable. Illuminating and brutally honest, A Short History of Decay dissects Man’s decadence in a remarkable series of moving and beautiful pieces.

Flights

In this personal portrait of Edward Said written by a close friend, Dominique Eddé offers a fascinating and fresh presentation of his oeuvre from his earliest writings on Joseph Conrad to his most famous texts, Orientalism and Culture and Imperialism. Eddé weaves together accounts of the genesis and content of Said’s work, his intellectual development, and her own reflections and personal recollections of their friendship, which began in 1979 and lasted until Said’s death in 2003. Throughout, she traces the connection between personal history and theoretical options, illuminating the evolution of Said’s thought. Both specialists of Said’s work and newcomers will find much to learn in this rich portrait of one of the twentieth century’s most important intellectuals.

The Trouble with Being Born

Denis Donoghue has been a key figure in Irish studies and an important public intellectual in Ireland, the UK and US throughout his career. These essays represent the best of his writing and operate in conversation with one another. He probes the questions of Irish national and cultural identity that underlie the finest achievements of Irish writing in all genres. Together, the essays form an unusually lively and far-reaching study of three crucial Irish writers – Swift, Yeats and Joyce – together with other voices including Mangan, Beckett, Trevor, McGahern and Doyle. Donoghue’s forceful arguments, deep engagement with the critical tradition, buoyant prose and extensive learning are all exemplified in this collection. This book is essential reading for all those interested in Irish literature and culture and its far-reaching effects on the world.

Charles Simic and the Poetics of Uncertainty

“Born of a terrible insomnia which E. M. Cioran called “a dizzying lucidity which would turn even paradise into hell,” this book presents the youthful Cioran, a self-described “Nietzsche still complete with his Zarathustra, his poses, his mystical clown’s tricks, a whole circus of the heights." On the Heights of Despair shows Cioran’s first grappling with themes he would return to in his mature works: despair and decay, absurdity and alienation, futility and the irrationality of existence. It also presents Cioran as a connoisseur of apocalypse, a theoretician of despair, for whom writing and philosophy both share the “lyrical virtues” that alone lead to metaphysical revelations. An exorcism of despair, this book offers insights into the ironic anguish of Cioran’s philosophic mind while providing fascinating information on his early development as a writer and thinker.”

Searching for Cioran

In this collection of aphorisms and short essays, E.M. Cioran sets about the task of peeling off the layers of false realities with which society masks the truth. For him, real hope lies in this task, and thus, while he perceives the world darkly, he refuses to give in to despair. He hits upon this ultimate truth by developing his notion of human history and events as “a procession of delusions,” striking out at the so-called “Fallacies of Hope.” By examining the relationship between truth and action and between absolutes, unknowables, and frauds, Cioran comes out, for once, in favor of being.
The Demons

Writings on the South, Catholicism, and more from the National Book Award winner: “His nonfiction is always entertaining and enlightening” (Library Journal). Published just after Walker Percy’s death, Signposts in a Strange Land takes readers through the philosophical, religious, and literary ideas of one of the South’s most profound and unique thinkers. Each essay is laced with wit and insight into the human condition. From race relations and the mysteries of existence, to Catholicism and the joys of drinking bourbon, this collection offers a window into the underpinnings of Percy’s celebrated novels and brings to light the stirring thoughts and voice of a giant of twentieth century literature.

Irish Essays

"Only a monster can allow himself the luxury of seeing things as they are," writes E. M. Cioran, the Romanian-born philosopher who has rightly been compared to Samuel Beckett. In History and Utopia, Cioran the monster writes of politics in its broadest sense, of history, and of the utopian dream. His views are, to say the least, provocative. In one essay he casts a scathing look at democracy, that “festival of mediocrity”; in another he turns his uncompromising gaze on Russia, its history, its evolution, and what he calls “the virtues of liberty.” In the dark shadow of Stalin and Hitler, he writes of tyrants and tyranny with rare lucidity and convincing logic. In “Odyssey of Rancor,” he examines the deep-rooted dream in all of us to “hate our neighbors,” to take immediate and irremediable revenge. And, in the final essay, he analyzes the notion of the “golden age,” the biblical Eden, the utopia of so many poets and thinkers.

Anathemas and Admirations

As RuPaul has said, this is the Golden Age of Drag—and that’s chiefly the achievement of RuPaul’s Drag Race, which in its eleventh year is more popular than ever, and has now become fully mainstream in its appeal. The show has an irresistible allure for folks of all persuasions and proclivities. Yet serious or philosophical discussion of its exponential success has been rare. Now at last we have RuPaul’s Drag Race and Philosophy, shining the light on all dimensions of this amazing phenomenon: theories of gender construction and identity, interpretations of RuPaul’s famous quotes and phrases, the paradoxes of reality shows, the phenomenology of the drag queen, and how the fake becomes the truly authentic. Among the thought-provoking issues examined in this path-breaking and innovative volume:

- What Should a Queen Do? Marta Sznajder looks at RuPaul’s Drag Race from the perspective of rationality. Where contestants have to eliminate each other, the prisoner’s dilemma and other well-known situations emerge. ? Reading Is Fundamental! Lucy McA dam analyzes two different, important speech acts that regularly appear on Drag Race—reading and throwing shade. ? The Values of Drag Race. Guile Treiber observes two competing sets of values being presented in Drag Race. The more openly advertised “charisma, uniqueness, nerve, and talent,” advancing the skills of every single contender, are opposed by the fading set of “acceptance, support, solidarity, and empowerment,” which has historically been the cornerstone of the LGBTI+ community. ? The Importance of Being Fabulous. Holly Onclin challenges the preconceived notion that drag queens are mainly about female impersonation and instead proposes to understand drag queens as impersonators of celebrity. ? RuPaul Is a Better Warhol. Megan Volpert compares RuPaul and Andy Warhol in their shared pursuit of reality. ? Is Reading Someone to Filth Allowed? Rutger Birnie asks whether there are ethical restrictions on reading someone, since reads are ultimately insults and could cause harm. ? Serving Realness? Dawn Gilpin and Peter Nagy approach the concept of reality in Drag Race, to discuss the differences between reality, authenticity and the nature of being. ? Death Becomes Her. Hendrik Kemp explores the topic of death both in philosophy and in Drag Race, starting from the claim that “Philosophy is training for death.” ? We’re All Born Naked. Oliver Norman follows up on Ru’s mantra, “We are all born naked and the rest is drag.” ? Fire Werk with M.e. Carolina A re looks into the fan-subcultures of Drag Race and Twin Peaks, which have come together to form a unique sub-subculture, in which members of both fan-subcultures create memes and idiosyncrasies. ? Towards a Healthier Subjectivity? Ben Glaister looks at the way Drag Race contestants adopt their drag personae almost as second selves, without finding themselves violating their other self. ? RuPaul versus Zarathustra. Julie and Alice van der Wielen ask the question, Who would win an intellectual lip-sync battle—RuPaul or Nietzsche’s Zarathustra? ? Playing with Glitter? Fernando Pagnoni and pals explore the game and play elements of Drag Race. ? The Origins of Self-Love. Anna Fennell expounds upon RuPaul’s question, “If you can’t love yourself, how in the hell you gonna love somebody else?” ? The Sublime. Sandra Ryan thinks about Kant’s concept of the sublime and explores how we find its applications in Drag Race. ? You Want to Be Anonymous? You Better Work! Alice Fox watches
Drag Race through the lens of criminal law and the problem of decreasing anonymity through ubiquitous data surveillance. Drag Race can teach us how to create misleading patterns of online behavior and public presentation to render the blackbox persona useless. Drag and Vulnerability. Anneliese Cooper contrasts Drag Race’s demand for vulnerability and perceived authenticity with the inherent inauthenticity of creating a new persona.

A varice House

This collection of eleven essays originally appeared in France thirty years ago and created a literary whirlwind on the Left Bank. Cioran writes incisively about Western civilizations, the writer, the novel, mystics, apostles, and philosophers. The Temptation to Exist first introduced this brilliant European thinker twenty years ago to American readers, in a superb translation by Richard Howard. This literary mystique around Cioran continues to grow, and The Temptation to Exist has become an underground classic. In this work Cioran writes about Western civilizations, the writer, the novel, about mystics, apostles, philosophers. For those to whom the very word philosophy brings visions of arduous reading, be assured: Cioran is crystal-clear, his style quotable and aphoristic. "A sort of final philosopher of the Western world. His statements have the compression of poetry and the audacity of cosmic clowning”—The Washington Post

Edward Said

Now in paperback, an "antidote to a world gone mad for bedside affirmation" (W ashington Post). E. M. Cioran has been called the last worthy disciple of Nietzsche and "a sort of final philosopher of the Western world" who "combines the compassion of poetry and the audacity of cosmic clowning" (Washington Post). All Gall Is Divided is the second book Cioran published in French after moving from his native Romania and establishing himself in Paris. It revealed him as an aphorist in a long tradition descending from the ancient Greeks through La Rochefoucault but with a gift for lacerating, subversively off-kilter insights, a twentieth-century nose for the absurdities of the human condition, and what Baudelaire called "spleen." The aphorisms collected here address themes from the atrophy of utterance and the condition of the West to the abyss, solitude, time, religion, music, the vitality of love, history, and the void. The award-winning poet and translator Richard Howard has characterized them as "manic humor, howls of pain, and a vestige of tears," but, as he notes too, in these expressions of the philosopher's existential estrangement, there glows "a certain sweetness for all of what Cioran calls 'amertume.'"

Tibetan Zen

First published in France under the title Precis de decomposition.

Drawn and Quartered

Published in association with the seminar series of the same name held by the University of Oxford, Samuel Beckett: Debts and Legacies presents the best new scholarship addressing the sources, development and ongoing influence of Samuel Beckett's work. Edited by convenors Dr Peter Fifield and Dr David Adyman, the volume presents ten research essays by leading international scholars ranging across Beckett's work, opening up new avenues of enquiry and association for scholars, students and readers of Beckett's work. Among the subjects covered the volume includes studies of: Â· Beckett and the influence of new media 1956-1960 Â· the influence of silent film on Beckett's work Â· death, loss and Ireland in Beckett's drama - tracing Irish references in Beckett's plays from the 1950s and 1960s, including Endgame, All That Fall, Krapp's Last Tape and Eh Joe Â· a consideration of Beckett's theatrical notebooks and annotated copies of his plays which provide a unique insight into his attitude toward the staging of his plays, the ways he himself interpreted his texts and approached theatrical practice Â· the French text of the novel M ercer et Camier, which both biographically and aesthetically appeared at a very significant moment in Beckett's career and indicates a crucial development in his writing Â· the matter of tone in Beckett's drama, offering a new reading of the ways in which this elusive property emerges and can be read in the relationship between published text, canon and performance

A Short History of Decay

This collection of eleven essays originally appeared in France thirty years ago and created a literary whirlwind on the Left Bank. E. M. Cioran writes incisively about Western civilizations, the writer, the novel, mystics, apostles, and philosophers. "An intellectual
bombshell that blasts away at all kinds of cant, sham and conventionality..."—Jonah Raskin, L.A. WEEKLY.

The Temptation to Exist

“A love of Cioran creates an urge to press his writing into someone’s hand, and is followed by an equal urge to pull it away as poison.”—The New Yorker In this volume, which reaffirms the uncompromising brilliance of his mind, Cioran strips the human condition down to its most basic components, birth and death, suggesting that disaster lies not in the prospect of death but in the fact of birth, “that laughable accident.” In the lucid, aphoristic style that characterizes his work, Cioran writes of time and death, God and religion, suicide and suffering, and the temptation to silence. Through sharp observation and patient contemplation, Cioran cuts to the heart of the human experience. “In the company of Nietzsche and Kierkegaard.”—Publishers Weekly “No modern writer twists the knife with Cioran’s dexterity... His writing... is informed with the bitterness of genuine compassion.”—Boston Phoenix

The World Republic of Letters

After the international success of his collection of World War II newspaper articles, German Autumn—a book that solidified his status as the most promising and exciting writer in Sweden—Stig Dagerman was sent to France with an assignment to produce more in this journalistic style. But he could not write the much-awaited follow-up. Instead, he holed up in a small French village and in the summer of 1948 created what would be his most personal, poignant, and shocking novel: A Burnt Child. Set in a working-class neighborhood in Stockholm, the story revolves around a young man named Bengt who falls into deep, private turmoil with the unexpected death of his mother. As he struggles to cope with her loss, his despair slowly transforms to rage when he discovers his father had a mistress. But as Bengt swears revenge on behalf of his mother’s memory, he also finds himself drawn into a fevered and conflicted relationship with this woman—a turn that causes him to question his previous faith in morality, virtue, and fidelity. Written in a taut and beautifully naturalistic tone, Dagerman illuminates the rich atmospheres of Bengt’s life, both internal and eternal: from his heartache and fury to the moody streets of Stockholm and the Hitchcockian shadows of tension and threat in the woods and waters of Sweden’s remote islands. A Burnt Child remains Dagerman’s most widely read novel, both in Sweden and worldwide, and is one of the crowning works of his short but celebrated career.

Samuel Beckett: Debts and Legacies

Ilinca Zarifopol-Johnston's critical biography of the Romanian-born French philosopher E. M. Cioran focuses on his crucial formative years as a mystical revolutionary attracted to right-wing nationalist politics in interwar Romania, his writings of this period, and his self-imposed exile to France in 1937. This move led to his transformation into one of the most famous French moralists of the 20th century. As an enthusiast of the anti-rationalist philosophies widely popular in Europe during the first decades of the 20th century, Cioran became an advocate of the fascistic Iron Guard. In her quest to understand how Cioran and other brilliant young intellectuals could have been attracted to such passionate national revival movements, Zarifopol-Johnston, herself a Romanian emigré, sought out the aging philosopher in Paris in the early 1990s and retraced his steps from his home village of Rasinari and youthful years in Sibiu, through his student years in Bucharest and Berlin, to his early residence in France. Her portrait of Cioran is complemented by an engaging autobiographical account of her rediscovery of her own Romanian past.

Signposts in a Strange Land

Examines Gombrowicz’s modernist aesthetics in the context of his critique of nationalism, his exploration of queer eroticism, and his interest in hybrid and subaltern identities.

A Voice from the Chorus

of the human body, broaching life, death, motion, and migration. Chopin's heart is carried back to Warsaw in secret by his adoring sister. A woman must return to her native Poland in order to poison her terminally ill high school sweetheart, and a young man slowly descends into madness when his wife and child mysteriously vanish during a vacation and just as suddenly reappear. Through these brilliantly imagined characters and stories, interwoven with haunting, playful, and revelatory meditations, Flights explores what it means to be a traveler, a wanderer, a body in motion not only through space but through time. Where are you from? Where are you coming in from? Where are you going? we call to the traveler. Enchanting, unsettling, and wholly original, Flights is a master storyteller's answer.

A Critique of Western Buddhism

Drawn and Quartered


A laddin's Problem

Cioran was one of the greatest scholars of the twentieth century to be seduced by totalitarianism. The scene of Cioran's excesses is Romania and Europe in the 1930s and 1940s, a time of xenophobia, anti-Semitism, racism, Nazism, and Stalinism.

The Temptation to Exist

"(Cioran's) statements have the compression of poetry and the audacity of cosmic clowning".--WASHINGTON POST. In TEARS AND SAINTS, Cioran touches on nearly all the themes that would preoccupy the writer over the course of his career. Self-consciously perverse, this collection will fascinate anyone interested in saints, mysticism, philosophy, the history of Christianity, or the ultimate strangeness of the sacred.

RuPaul's Drag Race and Philosophy

Charles Simic and the Poetics of Uncertainty provides the first full account of the poetics of the former US Poet Laureate, who is one of the most popular and critically acclaimed English-language poets writing today. The book argues for uncertainty as the center of Simic's poetics and addresses the ways that his poetry grows from and navigates various forms of uncertainty. Donovan McAbee addresses uncertainty regarding the national character of Simic's poetry and how this is complicated by Simic's identity as a Yugoslavian refugee to the United States. The book assesses the theological and linguistic uncertainties of Simic's poetry and explores the ways that Simic articulates the aesthetic space created by poems, as a safe place of encounter for the reader. The book argues for the role of humor as a primary mode that holds together the uncertainties of Simic's poetry, and finally, it articulates the way that within these uncertainties, Simic develops a deeply humane political poetry of survival. Along the way, Simic's work is placed in conversation with key influences and other important American and international poets and writers, including James Tate, Mark Strand, Charles Wright, Nicanor Parra, Vasko Popa, and others.

The History of Time: A Very Short Introduction

Gombrowicz's Grimaces

Friedrich Baroh, an East German soldier, defects to the West, where he obtains a college degree and decides to build Terrestra, an international, nondenominational necropolis, in a remote area of Turkey

A nathemas and A dmirations

On the Heights of Despair

A Burnt Child
Until the early twentieth century, hardly any traces of the Tibetan tradition of Chinese Chan Buddhism, or Zen, remained. Then the discovery of a sealed cave in Dunhuang, full of manuscripts in various languages dating from the first millennium CE, transformed our understanding of early Zen. This book translates some of the earliest surviving Tibetan Zen manuscripts preserved in Dunhuang. The translations illuminate different aspects of the Zen tradition, with brief introductions that not only discuss the roles of ritual, debate, lineage, and meditation in the early Zen tradition but also explain how these texts were embedded in actual practices.

History and Utopia

The result is at once an oblique evocation of prison life, a celebration of literature and art, and a tribute to the endurance of the human spirit." "Originally published in 1976, A Voice from the Chorus is now available with a new preface from the author."--BOOK JACKET.

Tears and Saints

In this collection of essays and epigrams, E.M. Cioran gives us portraits and evaluations— which he calls "admirations"— of Samuel Beckett, Jorge Luis Borges, F. Scott Fitzgerald, the poet Paul Valéry, and Mircea Eliade, among others. In alternating sections of aphorisms— his "anathemas"— he delivers insights on such topics as solitude, flattery, vanity, friendship, insomnia, music, mortality, God, and the lure of disillusion.

The Trouble with Being Born

Why do we measure time in the way that we do? Why is a week seven days long? At what point did minutes and seconds come into being? Why are some calendars lunar and some solar? The organisation of time into hours, days, months and years seems immutable and universal, but is actually far more artificial than most people realise. The French Revolution resulted in a restructuring of the French calendar, and the Soviet Union experimented with five and then six-day weeks. Leofranc Holford-Strevens explores these questions using a range of fascinating examples from Ancient Rome and Julius Caesar's imposition of the Leap Year, to the 1920s' project for a fixed Easter. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

Anathemas and Admirations

Epigrams accompany essays on Samuel Beckett, Jorge Luis Borges, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Paul Valéry, and Mircea Eliade

A Soviet Heretic
Philosophers wittily and expertly uncover amazing philosophical insights from the endlessly fascinating TV show, It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia. Littmann shows how the values of the gang are the same as those of Homeric heroes. Ketcham argues that the Church should make Charlie a saint, partly because It's Always Sunny is "all about free will." Hamer shows how closely the gang's activities comply with the scientific method. Alkema and Barkman analyze the way the gang perceives happiness and how they try to get it. Leonard proves beyond doubt that the game of Chardee MacDennis reveals everyone's unconscious desires. King examines the morality of the gang's behavior by the standard of how they respond to extreme suffering. Chambers agrees that each of the five central characters is a terrible person, but argues that, given their circumstances, they are not truly to blame for their actions. Tanswell demonstrates that many of the gang's wrong actions result not from immoral motives but from illogical thinking. Aylesworth uses examples from It's Always Sunny to bring out some of the moral problems with real consent to sex. Jones reveals that Nietzsche foresaw everything the gang at Paddy's Pub would do.

All Gall Is Divided

This collection of eleven essays originally appeared in France thirty years ago and created a literary whirlwind on the Left Bank. Cioran writes incisively about Western civilizations, the writer, the novel, mystics, apostles, and philosophers. The Temptation to Exist first introduced this brilliant European thinker twenty years ago to American readers, in a superb translation by Richard Howard. This literary mystique around Cioran continues to grow, and The Temptation to Exist has become an underground classic. In this work Cioran writes about Western civilizations, the writer, the novel, about mystics, apostles, philosophers. For those to whom the very word philosophy brings visions of arduous reading, be assured: Cioran is crystal-clear, his style quotable and aphoristic. "A sort of final philosopher of the Western world. His statements have the compression of poetry and the audacity of cosmic clowning"—The Washington Post